



'ALĪ B. ABĪ ṬĀLEB

'ALĪ B. ABĪ ṬĀLEB (b. ca. 600, d. 40/661), cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Moḥammad, first Shi'ite Imam, father of the Imams Ḥasan and Ḥosayn by Fāṭema, and fourth caliph (35-40/656-61).

i. Life.

ii. 'Alī as seen by the community.

i. Life

'Alī's life falls into three distinct phases: 1. from his birth until the death of the Prophet in 11/632; 2. until the murder of 'Oṭmān in 35/656; 3. from his election to the caliphate to his death. When 'Alī's father Abū Ṭāleb, chief of the Banū Hāšem clan, became impoverished, 'Alī was adopted by Moḥammad, who himself had been cared for by Abū Ṭāleb as a child. When Moḥammad was called by God to be a prophet, 'Alī, though only ten years old, became one of his first followers (in *al-Sīrat al-nabawīya* I, ed. M. Saqqā, Cairo, 1936, pp. 262-64, Ebn Hešām states that 'Alī was the first male to accept Islam; see also Ṭabarī, Cairo², II, pp. 309ff.; Ebn Sa'd, III/I, pp. 12ff.). The night Moḥammad fled from Mecca to Medina, 'Alī risked his life by sleeping in his bed; he also carried out the Prophet's request to restore all the properties that had been entrusted to him as a merchant to their owners in Mecca. Only then did 'Alī leave for Medina; there he married Moḥammad's daughter Fāṭema.



‘Alī’s courage during the military expeditions became legendary. Along with Ḥamza, Abū Dojāna, and Zobayr, he was renowned for his charges against the enemy; at Badr he is said to have killed more than one third of the enemy army single-handedly. He stood firm and stoutly defended the Prophet at Oḥod and Ḥonayn, while the Muslim victory at Kaybar, where he used a heavy iron door as a shield, is attributed to his valor (Ebn Hešām, *al-Sīra* II, pp. 298, 365ff., III, pp. 77f., 306, 349-50; Wāqedī, *Ketāb al-mağāzī*, ed. M. Jones, London, 1966, I, pp. 68-69, 76, 145-52, 225-26, 228, 240, 244, 255-56, 259, 307-09, II, pp. 470-71, 496, 653-57, III, pp. 900-02). He was one of Moḥammad’s scribes and was chosen to lead several important missions. After the Hijra when the Prophet instituted brotherhood between the emigrants (Mohājerūn) and the helpers (Anṣār), he chose ‘Alī as his own brother. The treaty of Ḥodaybiā was written down by ‘Alī. In 9/631 when Abū Bakr led the pilgrimage, ‘Alī was delegated by the Prophet to proclaim the *sūrat al-barā’a* (Qur’ān 9) to the pilgrims assembled at Menā. He was chosen to destroy the idols worshiped by the Aws, Kazraj, and Tayy, and those in the Ka’ba.

According to the Shi’ites, the Prophet unequivocally nominated ‘Alī as his successor at Ġadīr Kōmm while returning from his “farewell pilgrimage” to Mecca (the earliest historian to report the Ġadīr tradition seems to be Ya’qūbī, II, Naḥaf, 1964, p. 102; see also Mas’ūdī, *Eṭbāt al-waṣīya le-‘Alī*, Naḥaf, 1955; Kolaynī, *al-Kāfi* I, Tehran, 1388/1968, pp. 292ff.; Qāzī No’mān, *Da’ā’em al-Eslām* I, ed. Fyze, Cairo, 1963, pp. 14ff.; Shaikh Moḥīd, *al-Erṣād*, Naḥaf, 1962, pp. 91ff.; in *al-Ġadīr fi’l-ketāb wa’l-sonna wa’l-adab*, Tehran, 1372/1952-53, ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Amīnī has listed all the available sources and references to Ġadīr). The Sunnis reject this claim, maintaining that the Prophet died without naming a successor. All the early sources present the Medinan Muslim community behaving as if they had not learned about ‘Alī’s alleged designation.

At the Prophet’s death the community split into groups contending for political succession. The Anṣār were about to proclaim Sa’d b. ‘Obāda caliph, but this was not acceptable to the Mohājerūn, who considered themselves closer to the Prophet in kinship. Among them was a group led by ‘Alī and his supporters, i.e., Zobayr, Ṭalḥa, ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd-al-Moṭṭaleb, Meqdād, Salmān Fāresī, Abū Ḍarr Ġefārī, and ‘Ammār b. Yāser, who viewed ‘Alī as the Prophet’s legitimate heir. Muslim historians agree that a crisis was averted by three prominent Mohājerūn: Abū Bakr, ‘Omar, and Abū ‘Obayda, who rushed to the gathering of the Anṣār and imposed Abū Bakr as caliph. Their success was facilitated by the jealousy between the Aws and the Kazraj, the two main tribal factions of



the Anṣār, and the inactivity of the Prophet's kinsmen in promoting their own cause (M. Shaban, *Islamic History A.D. 600-750: A New Interpretation*, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 16ff.; E. Shoufani, *Al-Ridda and the Muslim Conquests of Arabia*, Toronto, 1973, pp. 48ff.). When Abū Bakr's selection to the caliphate was presented as a *fait accompli*, 'Alī and the Hashimites withheld their oaths of allegiance until after the death of Fāṭema. 'Alī did not actively assert his own right because he did not want to throw the nascent Muslim community into strife (Menqārī, *Waq'a Ṣeffīn*, ed. 'A. Hārūn, Cairo, 1382/1962, p. 91). He retired to a life in which religious works became his chief occupation; the first chronologically arranged version of the Qur'ān is attributed to him, and his knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunna aided the caliphs in various legal problems (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* I, ed. M. Ḥamīdallāh, Cairo, 1959, pp. 586-87; Ya'qūbī, II, pp. 125-26; Ebn Sa'd, II/2, pp. 100-02; Shaikh Mofīd, *al-Erṣād*, pp. 107ff.). He did not participate in the wars of *redda* and conquest; his actions after becoming caliph seem to indicate that he did not approve of the policies of his predecessors. In contrast to 'Omar he recommended that the entire revenue of the *dīvān* be distributed without keeping anything in reserve (Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ* III, ed. Ṣ. Monaḥḥed, Cairo, 1956, p. 549. Disagreement with policies of Abū Bakr and 'Omar can be inferred from an evasive answer he gave to 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf at the *ṣūrā* when he was asked whether he would follow the Qur'ān, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the *sīrat al-ṣayḳayn* or the policies of Abū Bakr and 'Omar; Ṭabarī, IV, p. 233; Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, p. 22).

In the period preceding 'Alī's caliphate 'Oṭmān was faced with problems arising from conflicts of interest between the traditional tribal and the new Islamic leadership (H. A. R. Gibb, "An Interpretation of Islamic History," *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Shaw and Polk, London, 1962, p. 7). The so-called *qorrā'*, the original conquerors from minor clans, resented 'Oṭmān's tightening of central control and felt that their interests were threatened by the growing influence of the traditional tribal leaders, who were newcomers to the provinces. This was the common cause of opposition in all provinces except Syria, which was kept free from uncontrolled immigration and was held in firm control by Mo'āwīa, governor since 20/641. In mid-35/656 discontented provincial groups from Egypt, Kūfa (led by Mālek Aṣṭar), and Baṣra arrived in Medina (S. M. Yūsof, "The Revolt against 'Uṭhmān," *IC* 27, 1953, pp. 1-7; Shaban, *Islamic History*, pp. 60ff.; M. Hinds, "The Murder of the Caliph 'Uṭhmān," *IJMES* 3, 1972, pp. 450-69).

In Medina itself opposition came from three main groups. First, a number of



prominent Mohājerūn accused ‘Oṭmān of nepotism and deviation from Islamic principles, e.g., the alteration of the number of *rak‘as* to be prayed at Menā and ‘Arafāt (Ṭabarī, IV, p. 267). Shortly before his death, ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf is said to have declared that Oṭmān had departed from his promise to adhere to the Qur‘ān, the Sunna, and the *sīrat al-ṣaykayn*, and he requested that he should not be allowed to pray at his funeral (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, p. 57; Ebn A‘ṭam, *al-Fotūḥ* II, Hyderabad, 1968-75, p. 151). ‘Abdallāh b. Mas‘ūd, who seems to have been dismissed from the Kufan treasury, ejected from the mosque, and beaten for criticizing ‘Oṭmān, is reported to have made the same request (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, pp. 36-37). Abū Ḍarr Ġefārī, who was critical of ‘Oṭmān and Mo‘āwīa, was exiled from Medina (ibid., pp. 52-56; Mas‘ūdī, *Morūj* II, ed. M. Moḥyī-al-dīn, Cairo, 1964, pp. 348-51). ‘Ammār b. Yāser was beaten for his criticism of ‘Oṭmān (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, pp. 48, 83; Ebn A‘ṭam, *al-Fotūḥ* II, pp. 154-55). The second group of Medinan opponents formed around Ṭalḥa and became clearly distinguishable from the first only at the battle of the Camel. It included Zobayr and ‘Ā’eṣa, who were opposed to Omayyad domination but favored the Qorayš. Both Ṭalḥa and Zobayr had enormous income from their estates, mainly in Iraq, and their opposition stemmed from the strengthening of Omayyad power (Ebn Sa‘d, III/1, pp. 77, 157). Ṭalḥa became vocal in his criticism of ‘Oṭmān, used his influence on the people of Baṣra to encourage their opposition, and was active against ‘Oṭmān at the time of the siege (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, p. 81; Ebn A‘ṭam, *al-Fotūḥ* II, p. 229; Ṭabarī, IV, pp. 379, 405). ‘Ā’eṣa, who had also played her part in fomenting opposition, left for Mecca when ‘Oṭmān was besieged, hoping that he would be killed and that Ṭalḥa would become caliph (Balāḍorī, *Ansāb* V, p. 91; Ṭabarī, IV, p. 407). The Anṣār, who had lost their influence under ‘Oṭmān, formed the third group. The appointment of Ḥāreṭ b. Ḥakam as market overseer in Medina added insult to injury; they felt impotent in their own town (Balāḍorī, op. cit., V, p. 47).

In the meantime, ‘Alī had acted as a restraining influence on ‘Oṭmān without directly opposing him. Making this point, Ebn A‘ṭam states that ‘Alī knew that ‘Oṭmān would not dare to act against him (*al-Fotūḥ* II, pp. 158, 164, 168, 184). On several occasions ‘Alī disagreed with ‘Oṭmān in the application of the *ḥodūd*; he had publicly shown sympathy for Abū Ḍarr and had spoken strongly in the defense of ‘Ammār b. Yāser. He conveyed to ‘Oṭmān the criticisms of other Companions and acted on ‘Oṭmān’s behalf as negotiator with the provincial opposition who had come to Medina; because of this some mistrust between ‘Alī and ‘Oṭmān’s family seems to have arisen. He tried to mitigate the severity of the siege by his insistence that ‘Oṭmān should be allowed water.



Following 'Oṭmān's murder most of the Omayyads fled Medina, thus leaving the provincial opposition in control of the situation. The strongest groups were the Egyptians, the Anṣār, and the prominent Mohājerūn. They invited 'Alī to accept the caliphate; reluctant, he agreed only after long hesitation, probably several days after 'Oṭmān's death. The sources suggest that before the murder of 'Oṭmān, the Basran opposition group at Medina considered Ṭalḥa as its champion, while the Kufans supported Zobayr; later both groups supported 'Alī (Ṭabarī, IV, pp. 427ff.). Thus the situation in Ḥeḥāz and the provinces on the eve of 'Alī's election was far from settled. His brief reign was beset by difficulties attributable to the state of affairs that he inherited. Moḡīra b. Šo'ba advised 'Alī against immediately removing all governors appointed by 'Oṭmān, especially Mo'āwīa; 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās also counseled him to proceed slowly, but responding to the demands of his supporters, he replaced 'Oṭmān's governors with his own, thereby setting off a series of reactions which culminated in the battles of the Camel and Ṣeffīn (Ṭabarī, IV, pp. 438ff.; Mas'ūdī, *Morūj* II, pp. 363-65).

The Battle of the Camel. Returning to Medina, 'Ā'eša learned that 'Oṭmān had been murdered and that 'Alī was caliph. She turned back to Mecca and actively participated in a campaign against him; her grudge against 'Alī stemmed from the incident of the slander against her (cf. Qur'ān 24:10-20), when 'Alī had advised the Prophet to divorce her (Ebn Hešām, *al-Sīrat al-nabawīya* III, pp. 313-14; Wāqedī, *Ketāb al-maḡāzī* II, p. 430; Ebn Sa'd, II/2, p. 29). Meanwhile, the Omayyads who had fled from Medina gathered in Mecca; they were joined by the deposed governors of Baṣra and Yemen, who had brought with them money appropriated from the public treasury. Ṭalḥa and Zobayr, already frustrated in their political ambitions, were further disappointed by 'Alī in their efforts to secure for themselves the governorships of Baṣra and Kūfa. When they learned that their supporters had gathered in Mecca, they asked 'Alī's permission to leave Medina on the pretext of making the 'omra (lesser pilgrimage). They then broke with 'Alī, placing the responsibility for 'Oṭmān's murder on him and demanding that he bring the murderers to trial; they were joined by the Omayyads, whose objectives, however, were different. Unable to muster much support in Ḥeḥāz, Ṭalḥa and Zobayr decided to move to Baṣra with the expectation of finding the necessary forces and resources to mobilize Iraqī support. When 'Alī discovered this, he set out in pursuit but did not succeed in overtaking them. The rebels occupied Baṣra, killing many people. 'Alī raised support in Kūfa and followed the conspirators to Iraq. After negotiations for a peaceful settlement failed, the rebels were defeated in the



Battle of the Camel, so named because of ‘Ā’eṣā’s presence at the center of the battle mounted on a camel (Ġalābī, *Waq‘at al-ġamal*, ed. M. Āl Yāsīn, Baghdad, 1970).

‘Alī entered Baṣra and divided the money found in the *bayt al-māl* (public treasury) equally among his supporters. This act may be taken as an indication of his policy to give equal value to the Muslims who served Islam in its early days and to the later Muslims who played a role in the conquests. He appointed ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās governor of Baṣra, and went to Kūfa in order to gain support against Mo‘āwīa. He succeeded in forming a broad coalition which brought two more groups into his camp, the *qorrā’*, who saw in him their last hope of regaining influence, and the traditional tribal leadership, attracted by his equal division of the booty. The successful formation of such a diverse coalition—comprised of men like ‘Ammār b. Yāser (Mohāġer), Qays b. Sa’d b. ‘Obāda (Anṣārī), Mālek Aṣṭar (*qorrā’* group), and Aṣ‘at b. Qays Kendī (a former *redda* leader who had emerged as a tribal leader in Kūfa)—seems to be due to ‘Alī’s remarkable character.

The Battle of Ṣeffīn. ‘Alī opened negotiations with Mo‘āwīa with the hope of regaining his allegiance. Mo‘āwīa insisted on Syrian autonomy under his own leadership, but ‘Alī maintained that all the provinces should share equally in problems facing the Muslim community. Mo‘āwīa replied by mobilizing his Syrian supporters and refusing to pay homage to ‘Alī on the pretext that his contingent had not participated in his election. Furthermore, as ‘Oṭmān’s *walī* (near relative), he demanded the surrender of ‘Oṭmān’s murderers. ‘Alī rejected Mo‘āwīa’s demands, asserting that he was duly elected by the people, who had the right to exercise their judgment, and that ‘Oṭmān had been killed because people were outraged at his arbitrary actions; hence they were not liable for punishment (Menqarī, *Waq‘at Ṣeffīn*, pp. 29-32, 81-82, 86-91, 200-01).

Toward the end of 36/657 the two armies met on the plain of Ṣeffīn. The confrontation lasted three months, most of the time being spent in negotiations. Finally, a week of combat was followed by a violent battle known as *laylat al-harīr* (the night of clamor); the Syrians were on the point of being routed when ‘Amr b. ‘Āṣ advised Mo‘āwīa to have his soldiers hoist *maṣāḥef* (either parchments inscribed with verses of the Qur’ān, or complete copies of it) on their spearheads in order to cause disagreement and confusion in ‘Alī’s army. Aware of the divisions within the ranks of ‘Alī’s camp, Mo‘āwīa exploited the situation. As the main purpose of raising the *maṣāḥef* was to bring about the cessation of hostilities, it is worth noting that the call for peace



was addressed not to 'Alī but to the *ahl al-'Erāq* (people of Iraq) who formed the bulk of 'Alī's army, thereby isolating 'Alī from his followers by appealing to their regional interests. 'Alī saw through the stratagem, but only a minority was in favor of continued fighting; the most powerful tribal leader of Kūfa, Aš'at b. Qays Kendī, insisted on accepting Mo'āwīa's call, reportedly telling 'Alī that not a single man from his camp would fight for him if he did not accept the proposal for settlement (Menqarī, *Waq'at Şeffīn*, p. 482; Ya'qūbī, *Morūj* II, p. 178). This refusal of the largest bloc in his army to fight was the decisive factor in 'Alī's acceptance of the arbitration. With the majority of the *qorrā'* also favoring a settlement, 'Alī stopped the fighting and sent Aš'at b. Qays to ascertain Mo'āwīa's intentions. Mo'āwīa suggested that each side should choose an arbiter, who together would reach a decision based on the Qur'an; this decision would then be binding on both parties.

At this time Mo'āwīa seems to have made no specific reference to his earlier insistence on vengeance for 'Otmān's blood or return to *şūrā*. Most of the people in 'Alī's camp, now satisfied, turned to the designation of the *ḥakam* (arbiter) who would meet 'Amr b. 'Āṣ, the Syrian representative. The question as to whether the arbiter would represent 'Alī or the Iraqis (mainly the Kufans) caused a further split in 'Alī's army. Aš'at b. Qays and the *qorrā'* rejected 'Alī's own nominees, 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās and Mālek Aštar, and insisted on Abū Mūsā Aš'arī, who was opposed by 'Alī, since he had earlier prevented people from supporting him. Abū Mūsā was favored by the *qorrā'* because he had stood for provincial autonomy, while Aš'at b. Qays hoped to prolong the deadlock between 'Alī and Mo'āwīa in order to check 'Alī's power and regain his own former influence. 'Alī finally accepted Abū Mūsā.

The drafting of the agreement proceeded only after 'Alī had agreed to be referred to by name and not as *amīr al-mo'menīn*; Mo'āwīa objected that if 'Alī were indeed caliph, he would not have fought him. The main terms of the agreement were: 1. The Qur'an was to decide between the two sides; 2. the task of the arbiters was to reach a binding agreement; 3. the arbiters would be guided by the Qur'an, but failing to find guidance they would resort to *al-sonnat al-'ādelat al-jāme'a ḡayr al-mofarreqa* (see M. Hinds, "The Şifīn arbitration agreement," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17, 1972, pp. 93-129). With the drafting of this agreement, 'Alī's coalition began to collapse. The question of having recourse to the Sunna seems to be the main cause of the reaction of the *qorrā'*. They had agreed to the arbitration because it was a call for peace and application of the Qur'an; the terms of the agreement had not yet been



settled and there was no indication that ‘Alī would not be regarded as *amīr al-mo’menīn*. More serious was that extending the authority of the arbiters beyond the Qur’ān to the vague Sunna compromised the authority of the Qur’ān; it was thus tantamount to *taḥkīm al-rejāl fi’l-dīn* (or *fi ketāb Allāh*). Thus they raised the cry *lā ḥokm ellā lellāh* (the jurisdiction rests with Allah alone). By this time the Syrians claimed that the document was an agreement that the Qur’ān should be consulted as to whether ‘Oṭmān had been killed justly or unjustly, though the *qorrā’* had no doubts that he had been killed justly. The raising of the question of ‘Oṭmān’s murder by Mo’āwīa at this critical stage should be viewed in conjunction with his earlier evasiveness on the issue. The whole affair looks like a skillfully organized attempt to destroy ‘Alī’s coalition. The *qorrā’* told ‘Alī that if he did not repent of his acceptance of the arbitration, as they had done, they would declare themselves dissociated (*barā’a*) from him. On the army’s return to Kūfa some of the *qorrā’* stopped at Ḥarūrā’, but ‘Alī succeeded in reconciling them, probably by making concessions. Only after returning to Kūfa did ‘Alī make it clear that he would not infringe on the arbitration. At this time those who had protested against the arbitration seceded from ‘Alī’s camp (hence known as *Ḳawārej*) and gathered at Nahrawān.

The first meeting of the arbiters appears to have taken place at Dūmat al-Jandal around Ramaẓān, 37/February, 658, as stipulated in the agreement. The conclusion was reached that the acts of which ‘Oṭmān was accused were not arbitrary (*aḥdāt*), thus implying that he had been killed unjustly and that Mo’āwīa had a right to claim vengeance. The verdict was not made public, but both parties came to know about it (L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Il conflitto ‘Alī-Mu’āwīya e la secessione khāregita riesaminati alla luce di fonti ibadite,” *AIUON*, 1952, pp. 1-94; idem, “‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,” *ET*² I, p. 384). ‘Alī protested, stating that it was contrary to the Qur’ān and the Sunna and hence not binding. Then he tried to organize a new army, but only the Anṣār, the remnants of the *qorrā’* led by Mālek Aṣṭar, and a few of their clansmen remained loyal. He left Kūfa with his new army to engage Mo’āwīa, but first turned to Nahrawān to deal with the dissidents. He tried to enlist their support by declaring that he would fight Mo’āwīa, but they persisted in their demand that he first confess his sin in accepting the arbitration; after promising quarter to those who would submit, ‘Alī attacked. The resulting massacre was widely condemned, and defections from his army forced him to return to Kūfa.



By now 'Alī and Mo'āwīa were no longer a caliph and a rebel governor, but two rivals for the caliphate. It seems that the arbiters and other eminent persons, with the exclusion of 'Alī's representatives, met at Aḍrūḥ in Ša'bān, 38/January, 659 to discuss the selection of the new caliph. 'Amr b. 'Āṣ supported Mo'āwīa, while Abū Mūsā preferred his son-in-law, 'Abdallāh b. 'Omar, but the latter refused to stand for election in default of unanimity (Mas'ūdī, *Morūj* II, p. 408). Abū Mūsā then proposed, and 'Amr b. 'Āṣ agreed, to depose both 'Alī and Mo'āwīa and submit the selection of the new caliph to a *šūrā*. In the public declaration that followed Abū Mūsā observed his part of the agreement, but 'Amr b. 'Āṣ declared 'Alī deposed and confirmed Mo'āwīa as caliph.

Meanwhile, Mo'āwīa had followed an aggressive course by making incursions into the heart of Iraq and Arabia. By the end of 39/660 'Alī, who was regarded as caliph only by a diminishing number of partisans, lost control of Egypt and Ḥeǰāz. Early one morning while praying in a mosque at Kūfa, he was struck with a poisoned sword by a Kharijite, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Molǰam, intent on avenging the men slain at Nahrawān. Two days later, on 19 (or 21) Ramaẓān 40/27 January 661, 'Alī died at the age of sixty-three and was buried near Kūfa. The burial was kept secret, but in the time of Hārūn al-Rašīd his tomb was identified a few miles from Kūfa and a sanctuary was established around which a town called Naǰaf grew up. Of his fourteen sons and nineteen daughters by nine wives and several concubines, Ḥasan, Ḥosayn, and Moḥammad b. Ḥanafiya are well known. 'Alī's political discourses, sermons, letters, and sayings were collected by Šarīf Raẓī in a book entitled *Nahj al-balāǰa* ("The road of eloquence"), well known in Arabic literature; the most famous of its commentators is Ebn Abi'l-Ḥadīd (*Šarḥ Nahī al-balāǰa*, ed. M. Abu'l-Faẓl, Cairo, 1965); a *dīvān* is also attributed to 'Alī.

Since the conflicts in which 'Alī was involved were perpetuated in polemical sectarian historiography, biographical material is often biased. But the sources agree that he was a profoundly religious man, devoted to the cause of Islam and the rule of justice in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Sunna; he engaged in war against "erring" Muslims as a matter of religious duty. The sources abound in notices on his austerity, rigorous observance of religious duties, and detachment from worldly goods. Some authors have pointed out that he lacked political skill and flexibility.

His position among the Shi'ites. The Shi'ites maintain that the Prophet designated 'Alī as his successor by God's command; on reaching Ġadīr Ḳomm



from the “farewell pilgrimage,” the Prophet announced a congregational prayer. As the people gathered he took ‘Alī by the arm and made him stand next to him, and said: “O people, know that what Aaron was to Moses, ‘Alī is to me, except that there shall be no prophet after me, and he is my *walī* to you after me. Therefore, he whose master (*mawlā*) I am, ‘Alī is his master.” Then he lifted ‘Alī’s arm and said: “O God, be affectionate to him who is devoted to ‘Alī, show enmity to him who is his enemy, give victory to him who helps ‘Alī and forsake him who forsakes ‘Alī. May the truth encompass ‘Alī to the end of his life” (Kolaynī, *al-Kāfi* I, pp. 286ff.; Qāzī No‘mān, *Da‘ā’em al-Eslām* I, pp. 14ff.; see also Tabrīzī, *Meškāt al-maṣābiḥ* III, ed. M. Albānī, Damascus, 1961-62, pp. 242-47). This tradition, which is accepted by the Sunnis but interpreted differently by them, epitomizes the Shi‘ite veneration of ‘Alī and their doctrine of the imamate (see “*Emāma*”).

The imamate of ‘Alī is a cardinal principle of Shi‘ite faith. Through *walāya* (devotion to ‘Alī and the Imams) true knowledge of Islam can be obtained. The first three caliphs had usurped ‘Alī’s right and the majority of the early community had apostatized because they deviated from the rightful Imam. According to a saying attributed to ‘Alī himself, those who fought against him in the battle of the Camel were “breakers of allegiance” (*nāketūn*), those who opposed him in the battle of Şeffīn were “wrongdoers” (*qāsetūn*), and those who fought against him in the battle of Nahrawān (the *Ḳawārej*) were “deviators” (*māreqūn*). Only the Batriya among the early Zaydīs upheld the imamate of Abū Bakr, ‘Omar, and ‘Oṭmān, on the grounds that ‘Alī did not oppose them. Considering him the most excellent man (*fāzel*) after the Prophet, they permitted the imamate of the less excellent (*mafzūl*). But from the 3rd/9th century onward the views of the Jārūdīya, who rejected the imamate of the first three caliphs, prevailed among the Zaydīs. ‘Alī, the *waṣī* of the Prophet, was specially instructed and authorized by him on God’s command to assist him in his task. The Prophet brought the revelation (*tanzīl*) and laid down the *ṣarī‘a*, while ‘Alī, the repository of the Prophet’s knowledge, provided its interpretation (*ta’wīl*). During the Prophet’s lifetime ‘Alī’s position was next to his and after him he succeeded him as the next most excellent man. He was divinely guided, infallible (*maṣūm*), purified from all defilement, and could not commit any sin, minor or major. He is the disposer of heaven and hell and the dispenser of drink (*sāqī*) at the celestial pool of Kawṭar. He will intercede with God on the Day of Judgment on behalf of his followers; he is the Guide for mankind, the Proof (*ḥojja*) of God’s existence to His creatures, and the Gate of His mercy. Salvation is reserved solely for those who declare



their belief and devotion to him (Qāzī No'mān, *Šarḥ al-aḳbār* MS; Ebn Bābūya, *Resālat al-e'teqādāt*, tr. Fyzee, London, 1942; Ḥelli, *Šarḥ al-bāb al-ḥādī 'ašar*, tr. Miller, London, 1958; Maḵlesī, *Behār al-anwār*, Tehran, 1376/1956, VII, pp. 326-40, VIII, pp. 16-63, XV, pp. 1ff., XXVII, pp. 1ff., XXXV-XLII, passim). Some extreme Shi'ite groups (*gōlāt*) even attributed divinity (*robūbiya*) to 'Alī. Thus the imamate, the heart of Shi'ism, is closely connected with 'Alī. His personality not only provided this doctrine with historical perspective but also served as a point of departure for the highly sophisticated philosophical speculations on the imamate which evolved over the centuries (Mofīd, *al-Efšāḥ fī emāmat 'Alī*, Najaf, 1950; Kermānī, *al-Mašābih fī etbāt al-emāma*, ed. M. Ġaleb, Beirut, 1969; W. Madelung, "Imāma," *EI*²).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Ebn 'Abd Rabbeh, *al-'Eqd al-farīd*, ed. A. Amīn, Cairo, 1948-53, IV, pp. 310-61, V, pp. 90-102.

Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr Yaman, *al-Šawāhed wa'l-bayān* MS. Edrīs 'Emād-al-dīn, *Oyūn al-aḳbār* II-III MS. Bharūcī, *Ketāb al-azhār* VI MS. Amīn, *A'yān al-šī'a*, Beirut, 1960, III, pt. 1 and 2.

L. Caetani, *Annali*. E. Petersen, *'Alī and Mu'āwīya in Early Arabic Tradition*, Copenhagen, 1964.

The following recent biographies are worth noting: Ṭ. Ḥosayn, *al-Fetnat al-kobrā*, Cairo, 1954.

J. Jordāq, *al-Emām 'Alī: Šawt al-'adālat al-ensānīya*, Beirut, 1958.

'A. 'Aqqād, *Abqarīyat al-emām 'Alī*, Cairo, 1961.

M. Ḳalīlī, *Zendagānī-e hażrat-e 'Alī*, Tehran, 1342 Š./1963.

'Abd-al-Fattāḥ, *al-Emām 'Alī*, Cairo, n.d.

'A. Ḳaṭīb, *'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb: Baqīyat al-nobūwa wa ḳātem al-ḳelāfa*, Cairo, 1966.



K. M. Kāled, *Fī reḥāb ‘Alī*, Cairo, 1980.

A. Oways and M. Āšūr, *Rābe‘ al-rāšedīn ‘Alī*, Cairo, 1981.

M. Ġorayb, *Ḳelāfat ‘Alī*, Cairo, 1982.

(I. K. Poonawala)

ii. ‘Alī as seen by the Community

In popular thought. ‘Alī’s position in popular religion and thought is second only to that of Moḥammad himself. Generations of admirers, not all of them Shi‘ites, embellished the traditional biographical data with anecdotes stressing his outstanding physical, moral, and spiritual qualities. According to popular ‘Alid belief, ‘Alī was not only the first person to have embraced Islam; he also surpassed all other Companions in his devotion to the Prophet and in his bravery, generosity, humility, and piety. (Abū Bakr may be called al-Ṣeddīq and ‘Omar al-Fārūq, but ‘Alī is both al-Ṣeddīq al-Akbar and al-Fārūq al-A‘zam.) He is said to have participated with the Prophet in the ascension (*me‘raj*) to heaven, and to have sat by him whenever a revelation came down; he wrote down each verse together with its hidden meaning, and this then became the *moṣḥaf* ‘Alī. Like Moḥammad, ‘Alī was given many names and honorific appellations: Three hundred of these are said to be found in the Old and New Testaments and more especially in the Koran (where numerous terms, such as *sabīl*, *mīzān*, *ṣerāṭ* and *ne‘ma* are interpreted as referring to him); others are preserved in heaven. ‘Alī’s title, *amīr al-mo‘menīn*, was bestowed on him by God before the creation of Adam.

Of ‘Alī’s various exploits during Moḥammad’s lifetime, his encounters with demons became a favorite subject among story-tellers. He was said to have fought with Eblīs, whom he would have killed but for Moḥammad’s intervention. On another occasion he was sent by Moḥammad to the valley (*wādī*) of the jinn after Gabriel had informed the Prophet of a plot being hatched there against him; ‘Alī was victorious over the jinn, converted many of them to Islam, and appointed one of them as his representative (*kalīfa*) in charge of propagating of faith among the infidel jinn. It was from one of the believing jinn that ‘Alī learned about the Yemeni tyrant Joḏām (or Hožām) b. Ḥajjāf; his journey to combat this infidel provides the framework for a series of miraculous events which confirm ‘Alī’s supernatural powers: He walked so fast that no one could keep pace with him; he could jump across a lake 12 *derā‘*



wide; when attacked by large numbers of the enemy he slew them all single-handedly. Similar motifs appear to be prevalent in the Mağreb: 'Alī is said to have been encircled by a Christian army somewhere in North Africa, but to have been saved by opening a passage in the mountains with one stroke of his sword. Stories circulating in Iran (modeled perhaps on the feats of the legendary Rostam) dealt especially with 'Alī's adventures in the company of Mālek Aštār and Abū Meħjan and his successful wars against the Sasanian king Qobād (Kavād) and against dragons and demons.

'Alī's entire life is in fact seen as a series of miraculous events, from the time the earth lit up on the night of his birth until, at the moment of his death, the stones around the Jerusalem temple were covered with blood. The miracles attributed to him, many of which are also ascribed to Moħammad, are so numerous that only a few typical ones can be mentioned here. 'Alī understood the language of animals and plants, as well as all human tongues. He could order the plants to do his bidding: A dried-up tree turned green and bore fruit at his behest. Inanimate objects also obeyed him. At Şeffīn, he ordered a rock to move; abundant water was found underneath it, with which his supporters quenched their thirst; the rock then returned to its original position. On another occasion, 'Alī lowered the waters of the Euphrates with his stick, thus averting the danger of a flood. Pebbles turned to gold in his hand; the waters of a *wādī* turned to stones over which 'Alī then walked (a Jew who witnessed that miracle adopted Islam). On at least three occasions (in Mecca, Kaybar, and Iraq) the sun was turned back, or brought to a standstill, to enable 'Alī to pray at the prescribed time. He could heal the sick and bring the dead back to life: When he addressed the people of the cave (*ahl al-kahf*) they returned to life and answered his questions.

Some of the miracles associated with 'Alī serve to show that he was the object of God's special love: Gabriel is said to have brought the Prophet a citron (*otrojja*) from heaven; when opened, it was found to contain a piece of silk from Paradise with an inscription that this was a present from God to 'Alī. Another present from God was a shirt which had belonged to Aaron (a reference to the wide-spread tradition that 'Alī holds the same rank with respect to Moħammad as does Aaron with respect to Moses, except that 'Alī is not a prophet). 'Alī also possessed Adam's shirt, Moses's rod, and Solomon's ring. 'Alī was born circumcised (like some of the prophets), could see from behind as well as from the front, and did not cast a shadow; his excreta were never seen (since by God's command the earth immediately swallowed them),



and he exuded a fragrance more pleasing than musk.

These and similar anecdotes were spread among the populace by popular preachers and story-tellers, and poems (usually in the form of *qaṣīdas*) extolling ‘Alī’s virtues and exploits are known to have been recited in the bazaars by professional *manāqeb-kʿānān* at least from the 4th/10th century. As Goldziher has shown, many ‘Alid fables provided a convenient means for preserving pre-Islamic traditions: Thus the celebration of Nowrūz was said to be legitimate because on this day Moḥammad had appointed ‘Alī as his successor. Attempts to combine Persian and Muslim traditions are evident in legends such as that of the marriage of ‘Alī’s son, Ḥosayn, to the daughter of Yazdegerd, the last Sasanian king.

‘Alī’s shrine. Several places are mentioned as ‘Alī’s shrine (*mašhad*). Some authorities claim that it is located at the Baghdad quarter of Karḳ or at Ḥella, while others place it in various spots outside Iraq, including Medina, Damascus, Ray, and Mazār-e Šarīf (in Afghanistan). Among the Shi‘ites, a minority believes it to be in Kūfa proper—in the palace, the mosque, the public square, or the house of ‘Alī’s nephew Ja‘da b. Hobayra. But most Shi‘ite scholars are in agreement that ‘Alī was buried at Ġarī, west of Kūfa, at the site of present-day Naḡaf. These scholars explain the discrepancies among the various reports by maintaining that ‘Alī himself requested to be buried in a secret place so as to prevent the Kharijites and other enemies from desecrating his grave. Legend has it that both the location and the manner of ‘Alī’s burial were preordained by God : The camel carrying his body knelt down and refused to budge when it reached the site of the appointed shrine, where a wooden tablet was then found bearing a Syriac inscription announcing that the grave had been dug for ‘Alī by Noah 700 years before the Deluge. According to Shi‘ite tradition, ‘Alī is buried in the same tomb as Adam and Noah.

‘Alī’s resting-place remained secret throughout the reign of the anti-‘Alid Omayyads. The ‘Abbasid Dāwūd b. ‘Alī is said to have ordered a small structure built over the grave in 133/750-51. According to other reports, Hārūn al-Rašīd was the first ruler who discovered its location when he accidentally stumbled upon it during a hunting expedition; thereupon a tomb was erected and people began to settle in the vicinity. The geographer Ebn Ḥawqal reports that the Hamdanid governor of Mosul, Abu’l-Hayjā’ (d. 317/929), was responsible for the restoration of the tomb: He built a dome on four columns and adorned the shrine with carpets and hangings. The Buyid ruler ‘Azod-al-dawla (d.



372/983) took the two sanctuaries of 'Alī in Naǧaf and Ḥosayn in Karbalā under his special protection; he built a new mausoleum over 'Alī's grave, around which a defensive wall was constructed by Ḥasan b. Faẓl (d. 414/1023-24). The mausoleum was burned down in 443/1051-52 during anti-Shi'ite riots, but was restored before 479/1086. 'Alī's tomb was spared from destruction during the Mongol invasion of Iraq. The Il-khanid Öljeytü (d. 716/1316), after embracing Twelver Shi'ism in 710/1310, even entertained the idea of transporting the remains of 'Alī and Ḥosayn to his capital Solṭāniya, but did not live to realize this scheme. Ebn Baṭṭūṭa, who visited Naǧaf in 726/1326, describes the walls of the mosque where 'Alī's tomb was shown as covered with enameled tiles; four gates led to the shrine, each curtained and having a silver doorstep. The shrine seems to have escaped the devastation wrought on Iraq during Tīmūr's raids. The extremist Shi'ite rebel and leader of the Moša'sa' movement, 'Alī b. Moḥammad b. Falāḥ, plundered it after conquering Naǧaf in 857/1453, but no permanent damage appears to have been inflicted.

When the shrine came under Safavid occupation it became the focus of much devoted attention, exemplified in the pilgrimage made by Shah Esmā'īl I (d. 930/1524) to Naǧaf and Karbalā. Not to be outdone, Solaymān the Magnificent also visited the sanctuaries (in 1534), after the first conquest of Iraq by the Ottomans. In 1803 the shrine at Naǧaf had to endure yet another attack, this time by the Wahhābīs, but it stood firm. Today a gold-plated dome rises above 'Alī's tomb. The interior is decorated with polished silver, mirror work, and ornamental tiles. Over the grave itself is a silver tomb, and the courtyard has two minarets.

The importance of a pilgrimage to Naǧaf is emphasized in all Shi'ite works on *zīārāt*. The occasions especially recommended for visits are the anniversaries of 'Alī's birth and death, the Ġadīr Ḳomm festival, the Prophet's birthday, and the 27th day of Raǧab, traditionally the date of the beginning of Moḥammad's prophetic mission. The recitation of special prayers over 'Alī's grave is considered particularly beneficial in view of 'Alī's role as intercessor on the Day of Judgment. Sunni polemicists have often accused the Shi'ites of preferring pilgrimages to the tombs of 'Alī and the other Imams over the *ḥajj* to Mecca.

Among extremist Shi'ites. One of the basic differences between Emāmī Shi'ism and the various Shi'ite branches known collectively as *ḡolāt* concerns the question of the respective roles of 'Alī (and the other Imams) on the one hand, and Moḥammad on the other. Emāmī Shi'ism shares with Sunni Islam the belief that Moḥammad, as seal of the prophets, was the last to have received



revelation (*waḥy*). Classical Emāmī Shi‘ite doctrine holds that ‘Alī and the other Imams were the recipients of inspiration (*elḥām*) and were thus *moḥaddaṭūn* (“those addressed by angels”), but that they were subordinate to Moḥammad. In contrast, some of the *ḡolāt* believed that ‘Alī was equal or even superior to Moḥammad, while others went so far as to claim that ‘Alī was the locus of the divine.

The gamut of *ḡolāt* thinking on the subject is illustrated by the following examples (which must, however, be treated with some caution as they are found mostly in hostile sources): Some of ‘Alī’s followers (often identified as the adherents of ‘Abdallāh b. Saba’) believed in ‘Alī’s divinity, while others maintained that he had not died and would return to earth to restore justice. The Ḡorābīya believed that Moḥammad resembled ‘Alī more closely than one raven (*ḡorāb*) another; when Gabriel was dispatched by God with a revelation for ‘Alī, he was (or pretended to be) misled by the great similarity between ‘Alī and Moḥammad, and handed the revelation to the latter. The Manṣūriya (followers of Abū Manṣūr ‘Ejlī) claimed that ‘Alī was the stone (*kesf*) which had fallen from heaven (cf. Koran 34:9, 52:44), and that he was the second person whom God created (the first being Jesus). Some adherents of the Rāwandīya maintained that the divine spirit had lodged in Jesus, then in ‘Alī, and later in the other Imams, while Jāber Jo‘fī supposedly identified ‘Alī with the eschatological “beast of the earth” (*dābbat al-arḏ*) (cf. Koran 27:82). One subsect of the Kaṭṭābīya (the disciples of Abu’l-Kaṭṭāb) reportedly believed that ‘Alī (and all other Imams) were prophets and apostles, and that Moḥammad was the speaking apostle (*nāṭeq*) while ‘Alī was the silent one (*ṣāmet*). The ‘Alyā’īya (or ‘Elbā’īya) maintained that Moḥammad was the apostle, or even the slave, of ‘Alī; they not only believed in ‘Alī’s divinity but also condemned Moḥammad for claiming authority for himself (whence their appellation *Ḍammīya*). According to a different report, the ‘Alyā’īya believed in the divinity of both Moḥammad and ‘Alī, but gave preference in divine matters to ‘Alī. They are therefore also known as ‘Aynīya, and are distinguished from the Moḥammadīya (or Mīmīya) and the Sīnīya, who deify Moḥammad and Salmān Fāresī respectively. The ‘Alyā’īa share with other *ḡolāt* (known collectively as Moḡammesa) a belief in the infusion (*ḥolūl*) of the divine spirit in the bodies of five person: Four of these are generally held to be the “people of the cloak” (*aḥl al-kesā* [See *Āl-e ‘Abā*], i.e., ‘Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥosayn, and Fāṭema), while there is disagreement as to whether the fifth is Moḥammad or Salmān. The Moḡammesa are also said to have argued that each of the five had his opposite (*zedd*) in whom the evil principle of the divine was revealed (a doctrine



attributed specifically to Šarīfī and Šalmaġānī [executed in 322/934]), and that God had delegated (*fawwaḏa*) the creation of the world to Moḥammad, who in turn transferred responsibility for its management to ‘Alī.

Although the Isma‘ilis are not generally viewed as belonging to the *ġolāt*, some Isma‘ili doctrines on ‘Alī are clearly influenced by extremist ideas. In the Fatimid Isma‘ili hierarchy, ‘Alī’s position as *asās* (fundament) means that he is superior to all other Imams (hence the Isma‘ili Bohra community of India does not consider him an Imam); this position is also generally taken to mean that he is subordinate to Moḥammad, though some writers argue that Moḥammad’s superiority is only valid during his terrestrial life. In the Nezārī Isma‘ili doctrine of the Qīāma, with its emphasis on a perennial Emām-e Qā’em, ‘Alī is made to appear as Imam with a rank notably higher than that of Moḥammad; the imamate is then seen as the source of prophethood.

A combination of extremist Shi‘ite doctrines and non-Islamic pagan elements is apparent in the Noṣayrī deification of ‘Alī. For the Noṣayrīs (see [‘Alawī](#)), ‘Alī is the incarnation of the universal soul and an emanation of God. Thus ‘Alī has not begotten and has not been begotten (cf. Koran 112:1); he has always existed and is unique and immortal. According to the Ešhāqīya branch of the Noṣayrīs, ‘Alī is God, who appeared in every generation in a different guise: Once as Ḥasan, then as Ḥosayn. ‘Alī sent Moḥammad to the world as prophet; Moḥammad is the veil (*hejāb*) under which ‘Alī was hidden. ‘Alī’s symbol is the meaning (*ma’nā*), while that of Moḥammad is the name (*esm*).

Extremist criticism of ‘Alī appears to be limited to the early Kāmeliya or Komayliya) sect, whose members reportedly branded him an unbeliever for letting himself be supplanted by the first three caliphs; but he and his followers returned to the fold of Islam when he became caliph and waged wars against his opponents. In the writings of Ḥamza b. ‘Alī, the founder of the Druze religious doctrine, ‘Alī plays a negative, albeit negligible, role: He and Moḥammad, Abū Bakr, ‘Omar, and ‘Oṭmān are all ministers of evil. Such a hostile view was apparently not shared by the Druze writer Esmā‘īl Tamīmī (fl. early 5th/11th century): According to writings attributed to him, ‘Alī, one of the five fundamentals, is master of the esoteric aspect; “uniqueness” is to be claimed only for him. During the *me’rāj* Moḥammad noted someone looking like ‘Alī: It was an angel created to look like him because of the angels’ deep longing for him.

The influence of *ġolāt* attitudes can be traced to modern times. The leader of



the 7th/13th-century Bābā’ī movement, Bābā Eshāq, allied himself to extremist forms of Shi‘ism prevalent in Irano-Turkish popular circles. The above-mentioned ‘Alī b. Moḥammad b. Falāḥ believed in ‘Alī’s divinity and claimed that the spirit of ‘Alī had been infused into his own body. Similar views are found in the unexpurgated version of the *Divān* of Shah Esmā‘īl I. Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā‘ī (d. 1241/1826), founder of the Šayḳīya movement, is said to have seen in ‘Alī an incarnation of the divine and to have maintained that God had delegated the power of creation to ‘Alī and the other Imams. And members of the Persian *Ahl-e Ḥaqq* sect, though they do not accord ‘Alī a central position in their doctrine, nevertheless believe that it was in his person that the second of seven successive manifestations of the divinity was made.

Among Sufis. In early circles of *zohhād* ‘Alī was especially renowned for his piety and poverty. He is said to have dressed simply, mended his own clothes and footwear (whence his sobriquet *Kāṣef al-naʿl* “sewer of the shoe”), worked as a day laborer, and often to have had to sell whatever few belongings he possessed, such as the sword with which he had defended the Prophet, in order to feed his family. He is also described as the most knowledgeable of the Companions of Moḥammad, as regards both theological questions and matters of positive law. Typical is the view of Jonayd (d. 298/910), who considered ‘Alī as “our master in the roots and branches (of religious knowledge) and in perseverance in the face of hardship.”

With the growth of Sufi doctrine in the 4th/10th and 5/11th centuries, increasing emphasis was placed on ‘Alī’s possession of secret or esoteric knowledge (*‘ilm-e ladonī*) transmitted to him by the Prophet; many considered it virtually boundless, since he was believed to have even been granted participation in the *ḡayb* (e.g., by being granted knowledge of future events and knowledge of seventy-two of the seventy-three letters of the Greatest Name of God). While ‘Alī’s position among the early Sufis was thus assured, he was sometimes regarded, in what may be seen as an echo of Sunnite-Shi‘ite rivalry, as less excellent than Abū Bakr, or as having to share the position of greatest excellence with the first three caliphs.

‘Alī’s position in the Sufi world was reinforced by a number of developments. There was, first, the reorganization of the Sufi-dominated *fotūwa* during the reign of the Caliph Nāṣer (575-622/1180-1225), with its attendant emphasis on ‘Alī as *sayyed al-fetyān*, the epitome of courage, generosity, and selflessness. This view was associated with the saying *lā fatā ellā ‘Alī*, which had allegedly been uttered by a divine voice during the battle of Oḥod. Second, ‘Alī often



occupied a central position in the Sufi orders, which were established from the 5th/11th century onward. For instance, the Naqšbandīya (who do not consider themselves Shi'ites) believe that the Prophet transmitted the method of vocal *dekr* to 'Alī, whereas the silent *dekr* was transmitted to Abū Bakr. Other, distinctly Shi'ite, orders regarded 'Alī as their patron and traced their descent back to him through different chains of transmission (*selsela*). One of the best known of these orders is the Turkish Bektāšīya, whose secret doctrine is imbued with extremist Shi'ite ideas. The Bektāšīs believe, for example, that 'Alī's death should be construed in a symbolic rather than a physical sense. They hold that 'Alī is united with God and Moḥammad in a trinity; at times 'Alī's superiority to Moḥammad is clearly implied, as in the belief that the Prophet was healed at Oḥod when he prayed for 'Alī's help, or that Moḥammad reached the state of *al-fanā' fi'llāh* (annihilation in God) because he rendered homage to 'Alī. The Bektāšīs also claim that 'Alī as a boy had the appearance of a lion (as his name Ḥaydara implies), and that he defeated the giant creature Dīv, releasing him only after he had become a Muslim and promised not to eat men again. Ḥorūfī influence on the Bektāšīya can be seen in calligraphic sentences connected with 'Alī worked into the shape of a lion; pictures of him are often drawn by combining letters of his name.

Other Shi'ite orders flourish in modern Iran. Members of these orders address each other with *yā 'Alī*; some of them maintain that 'Alī is greater than the Prophet (since the latter was sent to prepare men for the former), and that Moḥammad himself expressed the wish that 'Alī should be venerated above him. This is why 'Alī, and not the Prophet, was born in the middle of the Ka'ba. Some of these Sufis believe that each *pīr* received his knowledge directly from 'Alī. For many others, the investment with the cloak (*moraqqa'a*) as a symbol of the transmission of spiritual powers is closely associated with 'Alī: According to an often-quoted tradition, the two most precious things shown to Moḥammad during the *me'rāj* were spiritual poverty and a cloak. After his return to earth he was ordered by God to place the cloak on 'Alī, from whom it passed to the other Imams.

In addition to such Sufi orders there flourished, particularly in Mongol and Safavid Persia, individual scholars who united in their thought Shi'ite speculative theology and Sufi mysticism. One of the earliest representatives of this trend is 'Alī b. Miṭam Baḥrānī (d. 679/1280-81), who saw in 'Alī the original shaykh and *walī* of the Sufis, and who (in his *Šarḥ nahī al-balāḡa*) imbued 'Alī's utterances and speeches with a Sufi coloring. Other writers include Ḥaydar



Āmolī (d. after 794/1391-92), who does not conceal his indebtedness to Ebn al-‘Arabī for many of his ideas; Raḡab Borsī (d. after 843/1439); Ebn Abī Jomhūr Aḡsā‘ī (d. after 901/1496); and Mollā Ṣadrā Ṣīrāzī (d. 1050/1640). Some of the views of these writers have been the subject of recent research, but there is much about their thought which requires further study. For all their individual differences, it is probably correct to say that all of them agree in seeing the Islamic imamate as the hidden, secret aspect of prophethood. ‘Alī, who combines in his person the role of Imam and *walī*, thus embodies the esoteric aspect of Moḡammad. The Islamic imamate incorporates the imamate (i.e., the *bāṭen*) of all previously revealed religions; hence ‘Alī embodies the principle of esoteric religion as a whole. As such he existed before all mankind; he was sent secretly with each prophet, and openly with Moḡammad (this is the idea underlying utterances ascribed to ‘Alī such as “I carried Noah in the ark, I am Jonah’s companion in the belly of the fish . . . I am Keẓr, who taught Moses, I am the teacher of David and Solomon, I am Du’l-qarnayn”). ‘Alī is the seal of the absolute *walāya* (*walāya moṭlaqa*), while the Qā’em is the seal of the restricted, or particular, *walāya* (*walāya moqayyada*). Moḡammad and ‘Alī were created of the same light substance (*nūr*) and remained united in the world of the spirits; only in this world did they separate into individual entities so that mankind might be shown the difference between prophet and *walī*. ‘Alī represents the Greatest Name of God. He and Moḡammad are reflections of God’s attributes; since God can only be known through His attributes (His essence remaining hidden from mankind), it is through them that God may be known. “I am the dot underneath the *bā*” is a favorite statement ascribed to ‘Alī, referring to the belief that all secrets are contained in the dot underneath the first letter of the *basmala*. This is the dot through which the vertical *alef* of the pure Being of God assumed the horizontal form of the *bā*, representing the first stage of multiplicity.

Popular thought. Practically every Emāmī Shi‘ite collection of traditions contains some material of a popular nature on ‘Alī. Many of these traditions are conveniently assembled in Maḡlesī, *Beḡār al-anwār*, Tabrīz, 1303-05/1886-88, esp. IX (the chapters dealing with ‘Alī’s biography): Of the numerous works which devote special sections to ‘Alī’s miracles, the following may be mentioned: Hebatallāh b. Ḥosayn Rāwendī, *Ketāb al-kaṛā’eġ wa’l-ġarā’eḡ*, Bombay, 1301/1883-84, pp. 16-21, 82-87, 129-44.

Moḡammad b. Ḥasan Ḥorr ‘Āmelī, *Eṭbāt al-hodāt be’l-noṣūṣ wa’l-moġezāt*, ed.



H. Rasūlī, Qom, 1379/1959-60, IV; V, pp. 2-121.

Abū‘Abdallāh Ja‘far b. Moḥammad Rab‘ī Nezārī, *al-Anwār al-‘alawīya*, Naḡaf, 1343/1924-25, p. 93ff.

See also Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh Bakrī Baṣrī, *Ġazwat ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb ma‘a Joḍām b. al-Ḥajḡāf*, Yale MS. Arabic 274 (cf. Brockelmann, *GAL* S. I, p. 616).

‘Abd al-Jalīl Qazvīnī, *Ketāb al-naqz*, ed. J. Ḥosaynī, Ormavī, Tehran, 1952, esp. pp. 33-37, 39-40, 342-52, 469-72, 556, 559-64, 570-72, 576-91.

Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, Halle, 1889-90 (tr. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, *Muslim Studies*, London, 1967-71), II, pp. 288, 297, 330-32.

D. Ṣafā, *Ḥamāsa-sarā’ī dar Īrān*, Tehran, 1324 Š./1945, pp. 355-65.

H. Massé, “Ḥamāsa,” *EI*². Sezgin, *GAS* II, pp. 278-79.

Shrine. Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 215. Heravī, *Ketāb al-eṣārāt*, ed.

J. Sourdel-Thomine, Damascus, 1953, pp. 46, 47, 76, 77.

Ebn Ṣahrāšūb, *Manāqeb āl Abī Ṭāleb*, ed. by a committee of Naḡaf scholars, Naḡaf, 1376/1956-57, II, pp. 171ff.

‘Abd-al-Karīm b. Ṭāwūs, *Farḡat al-ḡarī*, Naḡaf, 1368/1948-49.

Ebn Baṭṭūṭa, tr. Gibb, pp. 81-83.

Maḡlesī, *Behār al-anwār* XXII, pp. 35ff.

Idem, *Toḡfat al-zā’er*, Tehran, 1314/1896-97, pp. 60-114.

Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 76-78.

S. H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, Oxford, 1925, pp. 25, 90, 216-17, 229, 288.

E. Honigmann, “Nadjaf,” *EI*¹.

D. M. Donaldson, *The Shi‘ite Religion*, London, 1933, pp. 54-65.

R. Kriss and H. Kriss-Heinrich, *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islams* I, Wiesbaden,



1960, pp. 230, 242-03.

S. Māher Moḥammad, *Mašhad al-emām ‘Alī fi’l-Naǧaf*, Cairo, 1969.

Extremist Shi‘ites. Ebn Qotayba, *Ma‘āref*, ed. M. E. Šawī, Cairo, 1353/1934, p. 267.

Aš‘arī, *Maqālat*, index. Nawbaktī, *Ketāb feraq al-šī‘a*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1931, index.

Sa‘d b. ‘Abdallāh Aš‘arī Qommī, *Ketāb al-maqālāt wa’l-feraq*, ed.

M. J. Maškūr, Tehran, 1963, index.

Malaṭī, *Ketāb al-tanbīh wa’l-radd*, ed. S. Dederling, Istanbul, 1936, index.

‘Abd-al-Qāher Baǧdādī, *Ketāb al-farq bayna’l-feraq*, ed.

M. M. ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, 1964, index.

Ebn Ḥazm, *al-Feṣal*, Cairo, 1317-21, IV, pp. 183ff.

Šahrestānī, ed. ‘A. M. Wakīl, Cairo, 1387/1968, I, pp. 152, 174, 175, 179, 185, 189.

Maqdesī, II, p. 202; V, pp. 124-25, 129-33.

R. Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Noṣairīs*, Paris, 1900, esp. pp. 51-69.

I. Friedlaender, “The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm,” *JAOS* 28, 1907, pp. 1-80; 29, 1908, pp. 1-183, index.

C. Sell, *The Cult of ‘Alī*, Madras etc., 1910.

L. Massignon, *Salmān Pāk*, repr. in *Opera minora*, ed. Y. Moubarac, I, Beirut, 1963, pp. 468-71, 477.

V. Minorsky, “The Poetry of Shāh Ismā‘īl I,” *BSOAS* 10, 1940-42, pp. 1025-26.

J. Hollister, *The Shī‘a of India*, London, 1955.

M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins*, The Hague, 1955, pp. 16-17, 163, 170, 192.

H. Corbin, *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Tehran and Paris, 1961, index.



- V. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ," *EI²* I, pp. 260-63.
- H. Brentjes, *Die Imamatslehren im Islam nach der Darstellung des Asḥ'arī*, Berlin, 1964, pp. 18-30.
- H. Laoust, *Les schismes dans l'Islam*, Paris, 1965, pp. 15-18, 69, 257, 363, 390-92, 419.
- F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Leiden, 1970, pp. 151-53.
- E. Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Safawiden im 16. Jahrhundert nach arabischen Handschriften*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1970, index.
- ʿA. S. Sāmarrāʾī, *al-Ġolū wa'l-feraq al-ġālīa*, Baghdad, 1392/1972.
- T. Nagel, *Rechtleitung und Kalifat*, Bonn, 1975, pp. 197-208.
- D. R. W. Bryer, "The Origins of the Druze Religion," *Der Islam* 52/2, 1975, pp. 242, 250, 259, 260.
- Wadād Qāzī, "The Development of the Term *ghulāt* in Muslim Literature," *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. A. Dietrich, Göttingen, 1976, pp. 295-319.
- J. van Ess, *Chiliasmische Erwartungen und die Versuchung der Göttlichkeit*, Heidelberg, 1977, pp. 72-73, 80.
- H. Halm, "Das "Buch der Schatten"," *Der Islam* 55, 1978, pp. 219-65; 58/1, 1981, pp. 15-86.
- Sufism. Sarrāġ, *Ketāb al-loma'*, ed. ʿA. Maḥmūd and Ṭ. ʿA. Sorūr, Cairo, 1960, pp. 179-82.
- Abū Noʿaym Eṣṣafahānī, *Ḥelyat al-awlīā'* I, Cairo, 1932, pp. 61-87.
- Ḥaydar Āmolī, *Jāme' al-asrār*, ed. H. Corbin and O. Yaḥyā, Tehran and Paris, 1969, index.
- Raġab Borsī, *Mašāreq anwār al-yaqīn*, Beirut, n.d.
- Ebn Abī Jomhūr Aḥsāʾī, *Ketāb al-mojlī*, Tehran, 1329/1911.
- Monāwī, *al-Kawākeb al-dorrīya* I, Cairo, 1357/1938, pp. 38-45.



W. M. Miller, "Shi'ah Mysticism (the Ṣufis of Gunābād)," *Moslem World* 13, 1923, pp. 343-63.

J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London, 1937, pp. 132-48.

K. M. Ṣaybī, *al-Ṣela bayna'l-taṣawwof wa'l-taṣayyo'*, Baghdad, 1382-83.

J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, London, 1971, index.

H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Paris, 1971-72, index.

S. H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, London, 1972, pp. 104-20.

A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, index.

A. Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1180-1225)*, Berlin and New York, 1975, index.

R. Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischen Persiens. Zweiter Teil: Glaube und Lehre*, Wiesbaden, 1976, index.