

Islam first began in secret, with the Prophet ﷺ, at first, preaching only to those close to him, until Allah ﷻ ordered him to declare his message openly. Those who accepted Islam in its early stages became known as Sābiqūn Awwalūn (the forerunners to Islam). They were the first to embrace Islam and establish its foundations. They endured torture and were persecuted mercilessly; however, despite this, they answered the call of Islam and remained firm on their belief.

### SAYYIDUNĀ 'ALĪ IBN ABĪ TĀLIB ﷺ

Amongst these Sābiqūn Awwalūn (forerunners to Islam) is Sayyidunā 'Alī ﷺ, who was the first amongst the youth to embrace Islam. Humble, brave, and just, Sayyidunā 'Alī was also amongst those Sahābah who were given glad tidings of Paradise by the Prophet ﷺ.

### RAISED IN THE PROPHET'S ﷺ HOME

Makkah was afflicted with severe deprivation which negatively impacted them, especially those with large families and who were not wealthy. Abū Tālib was of this group. When this happened, the Prophet ﷺ told 'Abbās, his uncle, who was one of the most prosperous of the Banū Hāshim, "O 'Abbās, your brother Abū Tālib has a large family and you are aware of the famine that people have been afflicted with. Let us go to him and lessen his burden. I will take one of his sons and you will take one of his sons, and we will care for them on his behalf." 'Abbās agreed. Subsequently, the Prophet ﷺ took 'Alī, and 'Abbās took Ja'far, into their respective families. [Tārikh al-Tabarī] Thus, Sayyidunā 'Alī ﷺ was granted the opportunity to be raised under the guardianship of the Prophet ﷺ.

### LIGHT OF ISLAM DAWNS

Sayyidunā 'Alī ﷺ then came in one day, while the Prophet ﷺ and Khadijah ﷺ were performing salāh. 'Alī ﷺ enquired what they were doing and the Prophet ﷺ explained, "This is the dīn of Allah which Allah selected for Himself and sent His Messengers with. I, thus, invite you to Allah, He is alone with no partner and, to His worship; and to belie Lāt and 'Uzzā." 'Alī ﷺ said, "This is a colossal matter which I never heard of before today. Hence, I am not going to reach a decision until I speak to

Abū Tālib about it." Because Islam was still in its early days, being propagated in secret, the Prophet ﷺ urged him to keep it to himself if he was not going to embrace it at the moment. 'Alī ﷺ spent the entire night contemplating over it, until Allah placed the truth of Islam in his heart, and the next morning he came to the Prophet ﷺ and embraced Islam. [Al-Bidāyah wa Al-Nihāyah]

### LIFE IN MAKKAH

After receiving the message of Nubuwwah, the Prophet ﷺ remained thirteen years in Makkah, and during this time Sayyidunā 'Alī ﷺ remained close to the Prophet ﷺ. Although he was still young at that time, unable to provide the Prophet ﷺ with much service, his enthusiasm and willingness stands out from his desire to never leave the side of the Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidunā 'Alī ﷺ would accompany the Prophet ﷺ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ when they would meet with the various tribes visiting Makkah. [al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah] It is also reported that on some occasions he would go with the Prophet ﷺ to the Haram in the late hours of the night, and they would then secretly destroy a few idols the Mushrikīn kept around the Ka'bah. [Musnad Ahmad]

### LOVE FOR THE PROPHET ﷺ

Despite the efforts of the Mushrikīn to quell the Dīn of Islam, it continued to spread and soon the city of Madīnah was ripe for emigration. This enraged them to no end, and they resolved to kill the Prophet ﷺ and extinguish this light once and for all. Allah ﷻ informed His Prophet ﷺ about their plans and instructed him to leave for Madīnah that very night. In order to fool them, and ensure they would keep their attention focused on his home, he instructed 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ to sleep in his bed that night. Who could dare to stay in the bed of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when his enemies were surrounding the house, lying in wait to kill him? Who would be able to stay in that house, knowing that the enemies would not see the difference between him and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his bed? No one except the most heroic of men, and the most courageous, by the grace of Allah ﷻ. [Ibn Hishām]

The next morning, 'Alī ﷺ got up. The people recognised him and realised



that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had escaped. They said to 'Alī رضي الله عنه, "Where is your companion?" He said, "I do not know; was I watching over him? You told him to leave, and he left." The people were upset with this daring answer and were annoyed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had departed from among them; and that they had been blinded and did not see him. So, they rebuked 'Alī رضي الله عنه and beat him; then they detained him for a while, before letting him go. [Tārikh al-Tabarī]

## HIJRAH TO MADĪNAH

'Alī رضي الله عنه patiently endured all that befell him. His joy at the escape of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was more important to him than any harm that could befall him, so he did not weaken and he did not tell them where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was. 'Alī رضي الله عنه then returned the entrusted items that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had left him behind to deal with. Finally, after spending three days in Makkah, he prepared to set out and catch up with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'Alī رضي الله عنه hid by day and travelled by night, until he reached Madīnah, with his feet swollen and the skin broken. [Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah] 'Alī رضي الله عنه endured hardships during his migration. He had no mount to ride, and he could not travel during the day because of the severe heat, but walking at night in the intense darkness was very lonely and frightening. If we add to that the fact that he covered the distance on foot, with no companion to cheer him up and keep him company, we will realise the extent of the hardship that he endured because of the difficulty of the terrain and the hardships of travel, seeking only the pleasure of Allah. This was the hijrah of Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه, filled with sacrifice, patience, and courage.

## THE PROPHET'S ﷺ SON-IN-LAW

Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه remained close to the Prophet ﷺ in Madīnah, and the bond they shared was further strengthened in the second year after hijrah when the Prophet ﷺ wed his beloved daughter Sayyidah Fātimah رضي الله عنها to him, thus making him the son-in-law of the Prophet ﷺ. [Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā']

## BRAVERY UNPARALLELED

Sayyidunā 'Alī's رضي الله عنه courage and valour is legendary, and his bravery was displayed on every battle that he participated in. During the Battle of Khandaq some of the Mushrikin soldiers decided that a group of fighters led by 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd, 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahal, and Dirār ibn al-Khattāb, should attempt to cross the trench. They found a narrow end of the trench where they managed

to cross over. 'Amr challenged the Muslims to a duel and it was 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه who answered his challenge. 'Amr was a legendary warrior and struck fear into his opponents, but Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه was more than a match for him and made short work of him, leaving the others to flee in panic. [Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah]

During the Battle of Khaybar, when the Muslims were laying siege to the Na'im fort, Marhab, the hero and knight of the Jews, challenged the Muslims to a duel, and Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه came out to fight him. Marhab recited, "Khaybar knows certainly that I am Marhab, A fully armed and well-tried valorous warrior. When war comes spreading its flames." Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه responded, "I am the one whose mother named him Haydar (Lion), (And I am) like a lion of the forest with a terror-striking countenance. I give my opponents the measure of sandarah in exchange for sā' (i.e. return their attack with one that is much fiercer)." He then felled the infidel, leaving him in a pool of his own blood. [Bukhārī]

## EXPEDITION OF TABŪK

Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه participated in all the expeditions alongside the Prophet ﷺ, with the exception of the Tabūk expedition, where the Prophet ﷺ left him to look after his family in Madīnah. There was a scarcity of resources for this expedition and the Prophet ﷺ urged the Sahābah to donate generously for this cause. And the Sahābah rose to the occasion, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Awf, and 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه making generous contributions. When the Prophet ﷺ instructed 'Alī رضي الله عنه to remain behind to look after his family, the Hypocrites began to taunt him, saying, "He only left you behind because you are a burden to him," Unable to take the taunts anymore, Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه set out to join the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ was surprised to see 'Alī and asked him why he had not remained in Madīnah as instructed. Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه informed him of the jeers made by the hypocrites and the Prophet ﷺ comforted him, "You are to me like Hārūn was to Mūsā, except that there is no Nabī after me." Reassuring him that the order to remain behind was not disparaging to him in the least, but he is akin to Hārūn عليه السلام who remained behind while Mūsā عليه السلام was summoned to Mount Tūr by Allah سبحانه وتعالى. [Bukhārī] In this manner, he too was awarded a tremendous accolade with which he will be forever crowned.

May Allah سبحانه وتعالى shower endless mercies upon Sayyidunā 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه, and grant us the ability to instil within ourselves the same qualities that he possessed, so that we too can become amongst the beloveds of Allah سبحانه وتعالى and His Messenger ﷺ.



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