

ALLAMAH AL-HILLI ON IMAMATE IN HIS *KASHFUL MURAD*, PART III

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ABSTRACT: An Imam who exceeds all people in every virtue whether it be knowledge, bravery, or piety, and who leads fairly leads people and guides them towards morality is a grace of God. The concept of Imamate in Shi'i Islam refers to the necessity of having a divinely-appointed leader who will lead the Islamic nation after the Prophet's death. This series is a list of responses to objections raised against Imamate from prominent scholar Allamah Hilli's *Kashf ul-Murād*, expanded on from Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-I'tiqād* – the first treatise on Shi'i theology. *Kashful Murad* is one of the most widely read of Allamah al-Hilli's publications as it is the first commentary written on Allamah al-Tusi's work. The previous part included discussions on the proofs for the Imamate of Ali, the Imamate of the eleven Imams after him, and rules concerning those opposed to his leadership. This part expands on the proofs for his authority over the companions that qualify him for leadership such as his extraordinary courage, deep insight, matchless asceticism and devotion, and boundless patience.

The Seventh Issue: Ali was superior to all other Companions.

Allamah al-Tusi: Ali is superior because of his participation in numerous battles and the courage displayed in all the battles attended

by the Prophet.¹ No other person achieved his rank in the battles such as Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, Khaybar and Hunayn.

Allamah al-Hilli: ‘Uthman, Ibn ‘Umar, and Abu Huraira, Al-Hasan al-Basri, ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubaid, al-Nazzam and Abu ‘Uthman al-Jahiz disagreed over the superiority of Ali as they claimed Abu Bakr to be the most qualified one.

Among those who held Ali as the superior one: 1) The companions: Al-Zubair, Salman, al-Miqdad, Jabir ibn Abdullah, Ammar, Abu Dharr, and Hudhayfah. 2) The successors to the Companions: (the *Tabi‘un*), ‘Ata’, Mujahid, Salamah ibn Kuhail, the Baghdadis, Abu Abd Allah al-Basri, and all the Shi‘ites and held the same view.

Those who were undecided: Al-Jubba‘iyan (Abu Ali al-Jubba‘i and Abu Hashim al-Jubba‘i) and Qadi al-Qudat. Ali ibn al-Jubba‘i said: “If the tradition (*hadith*) of the roasted bird was authentic, Ali would be superior.”

We say: Certainly the best qualities are either of a spiritual or physical nature, and Ali was more perfect and admirable in both respects than the other companions. This claim is supported by the following proofs by Allamah al-Tusi:

Ali was the most courageous warrior in all the battles attended by the Prophet; no other person was as brave. For example, in the Battle of Badr, the first battle in which the faith of the believers for their being few in number were put to the test against a large number of

¹ *Sharh al-Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn al-Hadid, vol. 1, pp. 7-10; *Hadith al-Ta‘ir al-Mashwi* (*Hadith of the roasted bird*), *Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, pp. 44, Beirut; *Fara‘id al-Simtayn*, vol. 1, p. 209, nos. 165, 166 and 167.

polytheists, Ali killed al-Walid ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, al-'As ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As, Hamzah ibn Abi Sufyan, Tuaymah ibn 'Adi, and then Nawf ibn Khuwaylid, a dauntless man. After the Prophet beseeched God to protect Ali against him, Ali was victorious. He continued fighting until he killed half of the pagans; the rest of the Muslims and three thousand marked angels killed the other half and the banner was in the hand of Ali.²

In the battle of Uhud, the Prophet gave Ali both the white flag (*al-Liwa'*) the black banner (*al-Rayah*); the banner of the pagans (*al-Rayah*) was in the hand of Talhah ibn Abi Talhah, the leader of the battalion. When Ali killed him, and another pagan took hold of the banner, and Ali also killed him, and he continued killing one after the other until he killed nine people. When the pagans were defeated, and the Muslims preoccupied themselves with collecting the war booty, Khalid ibn Walid and his companions attacked the Prophet, striking him with swords, spears, and stones until he was overcome by faintness. Out of fear, the Muslims scattered away from the Prophet except Ali. When the Prophet regained consciousness, he looked towards Ali and said: 'Spare me the evil of these men'. Ali then rushed at them and drove them away. In the end, most of the enemies were killed by Ali.³

On the day of the Parties (*al-Ahzab*), Ali killed a large number of the pagans, including 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd, one of the boldest men among the pagans who called out several times: "Is there anyone who will engage in single combat?" and the Muslims avoided fighting him. It was

² *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam 'Ali* (the biography of Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him), vol. 1, nos. 206-208; *al-Manaqib* of al_khwarazmi, p. 167. Malik al-Mahmudi (Ed.), *al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi vol. 1, pp. 19-152.

³ *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 20, p. 137.

only Ali who dared to fight him. Though the Prophet prevented him in order to give the Muslims a chance to fight, they avoided moving forward. The Prophet then permitted Ali. He dressed Ali in his own turban and prayed for him.

Hudhayfah said, "When 'Amr called out to fight, all the Muslims except Ali kept away from him. He advanced towards him and God killed him with his hands. By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Hudhayfah, Ali's achievement on that day deserves a far greater reward than the companions of Muhammad on the Day of Resurrection. The victory was achieved in the hands of Ali."⁴

Regarding the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet said, "Verily, Ali's single stroke on the day of Khandaq is better than the worship of all human beings and the jinn up to the Day of Resurrection."⁵

Allah granted victory to the Muslims through Ali in the Battle of Khaybar. The Prophet besieged their fortress for ten days while the banner was with Ali. When he became afflicted with ophthalmia, and the Prophet handed over the banner to Abu Bakr accompanied by a group of men led by him, but they returned terrified and defeated. The Prophet then gave the banner to 'Umar on the following day, and he too returned defeated. The Prophet then said, "I shall give the banner to the one whom God and his Messenger love, and he loves God and His Messenger. He attacks and does not retreat. He shall not return until

⁴ *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-Imam 'Ali* (The Biography of Imam Ali), vol. 1, pp. 150-155, no. 216 and 217; *al-Mustadrak* of al-Hakim, vol. 3, p. 32; *Kanz al-'ummal*, vol. 11, p. 623, no. 33035; *Shawahid al-Tanzil*, vol. 2, pp. 7-17, no. 629-636; *al-Tafsir al-kabir* of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, vol. 32, p. 31.

⁵ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 39, p. 2.

God opens Khaybar at his hands.” The next morning, he said, “Call Ali for me.”

When the Prophet was told that Ali was suffering from ophthalmia, he spat some saliva into his hand and rubbed it on Ali’s eye, which eventually healed him. Afterwards, Ali received the banner.

Ali also killed Marhab when his companions ran away. The enemies closed the gates of the stronghold and Ali opened the gate and pulled it off its hinges. He then used it as a bridge across the trench for the Muslim army to cross. They once again were victorious. Afterwards, when the enemies left, Ali took hold of the gate with his right hand and threw it many yards away. Twenty people closed it, and the Muslims could not move it so that seventy men moved it, and Ali, said, “By God, I did not pull the gate of Khaybar off its hinges with my physical power, but I did it by Divine power.”⁶

In the Battle of Hunayn, the Prophet set out with ten thousand Muslim horsemen. The Prophet said, “Today, we will never be defeated as a result of being few in number.” However, when the Muslims met the polytheists, it was not long before they all left except the Prophet and nine people, including Ali, al-Abbas, his son al-Fadl, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harth, Nawf ibn al-Harth, Rabi‘ah ibn al-Harth, Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr, ‘Utbah and Mu` attab, and the sons of Abu Lahab.

When Abu Jarwal came forward to fight, Ali killed him. The pagans then left and the Muslims advanced after the Prophet’s call, and they arrayed themselves against the enemy. When Ali killed forty of them,

⁶ *Tarikh* of Ibn `Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam `Ali* (the biography of Imam `Ali, peace be upon him), vol. 1, pp. 156-225; *al-Manaqib* of al-Khwarazmi, p. 166.

and the others ran away. After the victory, the Muslims gained a large amount of war booty.⁷

The biographers narrated other similar transmitted battles and well-known expeditions in which Ali excelled in all of them. Since he struggled for the cause of God more than the others, he was superior to – and was rewarded more – than his companions.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was the most learned due to his power of intuition, his time spent with the Prophet, and because the companions constantly referred to him in most cases after they made mistakes. The Prophet said, “Ali is the best in judgement among you.”⁸ In other words, experts in all disciplines rely on him as an authority.

Allamah al-Hilli:

Ali’s power of intuition:

1. Ali, who was raised by the Prophet, was a very clever person with an extraordinary power of insight. He always accompanied the Prophet and benefited from him, and the Messenger was the most perfect and meritorious of people. Whenever a person’s receptivity (*al-qabul*) is complete and effectiveness of the effector (*al-mu’aththir*) is perfect, the activity (*fi’l*), or state of being active in receiving in full becomes stronger. Ali engaged in the divine sciences from his childhood and according to a proverb, “Surely [The acquisition of] knowledge in childhood is like a drawing on a stone.” This is a causal proof (*burhan limmi*).

⁷ *al-Sirat al-halabiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 67.

⁸ *al-Shafi fi’l-Imamah*, vol. 1, pp. 201-206; *Mustadrak of al-Hakim*, vol. 3, p. 500; *al-Riyaz al-Nazrah*, vol. 2, pp. 160-170 and *Musnad of Ahmad*, vol. 5, p. 26.

2. When the companions hesitated with or were confused regarding religious rulings, with some at times offering wrong legal opinions, they referred to Ali; it has not been reported that he referred to any of them about anything at all.
3. The Prophet said, "Ali is the best in judgment among you, and judgment requires knowledge; therefore, Ali is superior to them."
4. All scholars rely on Ali as an authority. He developed Arabic syntax, the principles of the Divine sciences, and the principles of jurisprudence. Scholars of other sects claim to have learned from Ali, such as Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari, founder of the Ash'arite sect, was a student of Abu Ali al-Jubba'i, well-known Mu'tazilite, and all the Mu'tazilites go back to him. Qur'anic commentators trace back Qur'anic commentary to Ibn Abbas who was Ali's student. Jurists also give credit of their accomplishments to Ali. The Kharijites, in spite of their detachment to Ali, trace to their leaders, who were also Ali's students.
5. Ali declared on many occasions, "Ask me about the paths of the heavens because, indeed, I know the paths of the heavens more than I know the paths of the earth."⁹ "If I had been a ruler, I would have judged the people of the Torah by their Torah, the people of the Psalms by their Psalms, the people of the Gospel by their Gospel, and the people of the Qur'an by their Qur'an."

⁹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 93, p. 108. no. 13 based on al-Fada'il; *tarjamat al-Imam 'Ali* (The Biography of Imam Ali), vol. 3, pp. 23-25, al-hadith nos. 1043 and 1047; *Fara'id al-simtayn*, vol. 1, p. 340, no. 263; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 6, p. 148.

This indicates his perfect knowledge of all these revealed laws. On the whole, the principles of knowledge (*usul al-'ilm*) narrated from him were not narrated from anyone else, including the companions.

Allamah al-Tusi: “*Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, ‘Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars.’*” (3:61)

Allamah al-Hilli: In the above verse, Qur’anic commentators agree that “*sons*” refer to Hasan and Husayn, ‘*women*’ refers to Lady Fatimah, and ‘*souls*’ refers to Ali. It cannot be said that the souls of the Prophet and of Ali are one and the same [in extra-mental reality without there being any duality]; rather, what is intended by it is that they are equal in terms of spiritual and physical perfections, except for prophethood (*nubuwwah*). There is no doubt that the Prophet is the most estimable of people; thus Ali, who is like the soul of the Prophet, is the same.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was the most generous person [among the Companions of the Prophet].¹⁰

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali was the most generous of all after the Prophet. In one renowned occasion, he and his family vowed to fast for three days, and on each day, a needy person asked for food. As they sincerely and generously offered their food, they remained starved for three days until

¹⁰ *al-Riyaz al-Nazrah* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, vol. 2, p. 208, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 41, p. 144; *Sharh al-Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 21; *Fada'il al-Khamsah min al-sihah al-sittah*, vol. 1, pp. 301-305; *Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, p. 102, Maktabat al-Qudsi, Cairo.

God revealed on them the verse: “*They give food, for the love of Him, to the poor, the orphan and the captive*” (76:8). He gave all his wages in charity, and at that time, he possessed only four dirhams. He gave one dirham in charity during the night, one dirham during the day, one dirham secretly, and one dirham openly; and God revealed about him: “*...those who give their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly* (2:274).¹¹ His enemies even acknowledge that he would tie a stone over his stomach because of severe hunger.

Mu’awiyah said, “If Ali possessed a house full of gold and another full of straw, he would spend his gold for the sake of Allah before spending his straw¹² and he would not leave behind anything at all.” Indeed, in one hadith, Ali said, “O yellow [gold] and white [silver], deceive someone other than me.”

He also used to sweep the treasury-house (*bayt al-mal*) and pray in it even though a large part of the world was under his reign.¹³

Allamah al-Tusi: He was the most ascetic (*azhad*) of all people after the Prophet.¹⁴

Allamah al-Hilli: What is widely transmitted about him is that he was the epitome of piety; those on the spiritual path approached him to learn how to travel on the path of asceticism (*zuhd*) and about the hierarchical order of the spiritual states resulting from spiritual practices

¹¹ Quran 2:274; Ssee *Shawahid al-Tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vo. 1, p. 140, Iran, Majma’ ihya’ al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 41, p. 144; *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Ab’il-Hadid, vol. 1, pp. 21-22; *al-Riyaz al-Nazrah*, vol. 2, p. 207.

¹² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 41, p. 144; *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn Ab’il-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 22.

¹³ *al-Riyaz al-nazrah* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, vol. 2, pp. 210-211; *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 41, p. 144; *Dhakha’ir al-’uqba*, p. 101.

¹⁴ *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Ab’il-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 26; *Dhakha’ir al-’uqba* of al-Tabari, p. 100; *al-Riyaz al-nazrah*, vol. 2, pp. 210-217.

and the spiritual stations of the gnostics. His conduct displayed ascetic signs: He ate the simplest food and never ate to his full. He also wore the roughest garments and his slippers were made from palm fibers.

He patched his shirt sometimes with a piece of leather and sometimes with some palm fibers. He rarely would have a condiment with bread and when he did it, his additional food was salt, vinegar, or herbs, and at best he added milk. He did not eat much meat as he said “Do not make your stomachs graveyards for animals.” He divorced the world three times.

Ubaydullah ibn Abi Rafi` said, “One day, I called on him and he brought forward a sealed bag that contained dry pieces of barley bread when he opened it, and he ate some of it. I said, “O Commander of the faithful, why did you seal it?” He said, “I fear lest the two sons [Hasan and Husayn] should soften it with oil or cooking butter.” This is that which is specific to Ali. No one has achieved even a small degree of his virtues.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was the most devout of them all.¹⁵

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali was the most pious of all people. People learned from him the night prayer and also learned from him the proper order of the recommended (*mustahabb*) prayers and supplications.

There was a dent on his forehead like that of a camel (the prayer mark on his forehead was so deep; no better state than a camel's knees). He observed the recommended prayers to such an extent that a leather mat was spread for him between the two ranks [of the armies] on the Night

¹⁵ *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn Ab'il-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 27; *Hilyat al-abrar* of al-Sayyid al-Bahrani, vol. 2, p. 179; no. 17; *Irshad al-qulub* of al-Daylami, vol. 2, p. 11, Beirut and Qum, p. 217.

of Clamour (*Jaylat al-harir*) [of the Battle of Siffin], and he performed the recommended prayer while the arrows fell in front of him and at his sides. The arrowheads were removed from his body during prayer due to his deep concentration and attention to God so much so that he was not distracted by anything else.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was the most forbearing person.

Allamah al-Hilli: Imam Ali was the most forbearing person after the Prophet. He did not retaliate against anyone for their misdeeds. Among those he forgave were:

-The hostile Marwan ibn al-Hakam on the day of the Battle of the Camel (*jamaʿ*).¹⁶

-ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr who had taken his father a captive, and Zubayr openly swore at him.¹⁷ Ali said, “Zubayr was always a member of our household until ʿAbd Allah ibn Zubayr incited him.”¹⁸

-Saʿid ibn al-ʿAs, who was aggressive towards Ali.¹⁹

-Ali respected ʿAishah and sent her to Medina with twenty women following the battle she waged against him.²⁰

-The people of Basrah in spite of their battle with him. When Muʿwiyah fought against Ali, his followers seized the river earlier and held the army of Imam Ali back from the water.

¹⁶ ¹⁶ *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Abʿil-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁸ Translator’s note: According to another version of the above-mentioned hadith, it reads as follows: Ali, said: Zubayr was always a member of our household until ʿAbd Allah [ibn Zubair] became a young man.

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, p 23.

²⁰ Ibid., p 23.

-When Imam Ali's army became thirsty, he attacked and scattered Mu`wiyah's army and seized the river. As soon as his army wished to retaliate, he prohibited them from doing so. He said: "Clear part of the river, because the cutting edges of your swords will render it unnecessary."²¹

²¹ Ibid. pp. 23-24; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 41, p. 146.