

A glance on The Diw'an of Ali ibn Abi Talib:

A master piece of the Fatemi Literature

By: Qazi Dr. Shaikh Abbas Borhany

PhD (USA), NDI, Shahadat al A'lamiyah (Najaf, Iraq), MA, LLM (Shariah)

Member, Ulama Council of Pakistan

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Ali ibn Abi Talib does not need any introduction. His upbringing, nourishment and training were completed under Nabavi supervision. Each word of his poetic collection is wonderful and has mystical power, which covers the theme of Hikmah. Like his prose, recorded in "Nahj al Balagha", his poems provide us morality and decency. He encourages pious, steadfast life with the motto of "refraining from wrongdoing, and to sticking to the faith". Poetic collection of Ali is restricting for the discussion of loyalty, humility, modesty, chastity, piety, and connects with divine frequency of the will of Allah. His prose and poems both influenced Arabi literature in general, because of its vast canvas. He handled the Muamlat beautifully with perfection. We do not find romance in his poetry like that of other poets of the era. Among the Qasaid of "Saba Muallaq'at", Imra ul Qaiys had top position. He had discussed in his famous poetry, his 'private pleasure' with his pretty tempting cousin, Uneza, in a manner that seems and resembles 'Kama Sutra', the sex manual and piece of Sanskrit literature.

From Imra ul Qaiys to Umru bin Rabiya, and from Jamil to Qaiys, "woman" was the theme and focal point of poetry in the Arabian Peninsula. In the poetic literature of the 'Jahiliyah era', description of 'erotic pleasure', and elaboration of the physical attributes of the lover was a common phenomena. Arab poets discussed woman and favourite she-camel in their poems, with equal leisure. Ibn Kulthum al Taghlabi was also amongst the seven poets (one amongst "Saba Mualliq'at"), whose Qasidah was hung on the wall of Kabah, written in gold. Favourite topics of his poetry included drinking and womanizing. This inferior mode of poetry was blindly followed by many of the later "Umayyad and Abbasids" poets too. Later, court poets of Muslim monarchs ignored the poetry of Ali with sheer hostility; whereas otherwise, the poetry of Ali is the best example for the younger generations to learn.

"Diw'an Ali ibn Abi Talib", which is commonly available, is not all genuine, as many doubtful verses are found in it, which are wrongly labelled to Ali. There are concrete reasons, as to why it was done? Some verses of others are also quoted in the name of Ali with malicious intention to defame him. Experts can examine which is modern and has no resemblance to the verse of that era. It is important for researchers to find out first the genuineness of the poem. It is right time that through detailed study and scrutiny; genuine poetic collection of Amir al Muminin should be compiled under the supervision of competent scholars.

Syedna Abi Hatim al Razi (d.322 A.H), Hujjat al Jazirah of Ray (a person in-charge to promote the mission of Islam in that region), during the era of 11th Fatemi Imam Abdullah al Mahdi (d.322/934, Mahdiyyah, Tunisia), had discussed a good collection of the verses of Amir al Muminin Ali, and also provided us the meaning behind the lines in his famous work "Kit'ab al Zinah". Later on in Yemen, the 3rd Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Hatim Mohiyuddin (d.596/1199, al Hutaib, Yemen) provided us authentic verses in his famous book: "Al Majalis al Hatimiyah". Afterwards, the 19th al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Idris Imaduddin (d.872/1468, Shib'am, Yemen) recorded a good poetic collection of Ali ibn Abi Talib in his famous historical account, "Uyun al Akhb'ar". Ali had discussed the realities of life here and hereafter, in his poetic collection. His poetic collection is the best manual of learning, in which he has discussed a number of topics, relating to human life. In half a verse only, he communicates the message fully, for which other poets take space of an entire poem.

A few examples are presented here for the information of readers. He condemned superiority complex on the ground of family lineage. He denounced class conscious and proud people, and taught them lesson as follows:

*"Ayyu'hal Fakhiru Jah'lan Bin Nasabi;
Inna'man N'asu Le Ummin Wa Le Abbi"*

Due to narrow mindedness and short understanding you are proud of your lineage and family tree; otherwise for all people there is one mother and father.

*"Innamal Fakhru Le Aqlin Sabit'in;
Wa Haya'in Wa Afaf'in Wa Adabi"*

Only those pious by nature, intellect and high in morals and who are learned have (right of) honour and dignity.

In our society, it is a common practice to treat people according to their family background and social status. People also feel glorified and happy with having for relationships with famous personalities, whether it be in religious or secular hierarchies, and thus demand priority in all affairs on the ground that they are sons or relations of so and so. Ali disliked this class-discrimination and family nepotism. He teaches the Ummah clearly that respect, status and honour is earned and deserved, only on the basis of personal learning and achievements. He says:

*"Innal Fata Mayn Yaqulu Ha Ana'za;
Laeyisal Fata Mayn Yaqulu Kana Abi"*

He is the honourable person who says: come on, judge my calibre; He is not a (honourable) youth who says (only) so and so was my father (and has no calibre).

Ali has a commanding position amongst the noblest of the Arabian Peninsula, and on this status he was happy. Syedna Jabir bin Abdullah al Ansari says: "One day I heard Ali submit the following verses in Nabavi presence, with reverence as follows":

*"A'na Akhul Mustafa La Shakka Fi Nasabi;
M'a Hu Rubiytu Wa Sibta'hu Huma Waladi"*

I am cousin-brother of Mustafa, no doubt in my lineage; my nourishment, upbringing and training was completed in his house and his two grandsons (Hasan & Husain) are my sons.

*“Jaddi Wa Jaddu Rasulillahi Muttahidun
Wa Fatemu Zawjati La’aqula Zi Fanadi”*

Grandfather of Rasulullah (S) and mine are one and the same; Wallah! Fatemah is my wife, this is not the wordings of a fabricator.

*“Fal’hamdu Lillahi Fardan La Sharika Lahul;
Barru Bil Abde Wal Baqi Bila A’madi”*

Hamd for Allah, Who is peerless, and has no partner of Him; Magnanimous upon people and ever-living without any end.

*“Saddaqtahu Wa Jameyun N’asi Fi Zulamin;
Minal Zalalati Wal Ishr’aki Wal Nakadi”*

While all were committing Shirk, and were confused, and involved in various dark faiths and superstitions; I supported Mohammad, and asserted faith in his Dawah.

Hearing these couplets, Rasulullah (S) smiled and confirmed:

“Sadaqta Ya Ali”-very correctly said: O Ali!

Once, the ruler of Syria, Muawiyah proclaimed among the masses, that his position was superior to that of Ali. He declared: “my father was a chief of tribe, during the era of Jahiliyah and I am an emperor after Islam. I am father in law of Rasulullah (S) and copier of Wahi”. When this proclamation was heard by Ali, he sent the following verses through his slave to the ruler of Syria:

*“Mohammadanal Nabi u Akhi wa Sahari;
Wa Hamzatu Syed us Shuhadai Ammi”*

Nabi Mohammad (S) is my cousin and father-in-law; Hamzah Syedush Shuhada is my (paternal) uncle.

*“Wa Jafarun al Lazi Yazha Wa Yumsi
Yatiru M’al Malaekati Ibn u Ummi”*

And Jafar, who day and night enjoys flying accompanied by Malaek, is my brother.

*“Wa Bintu Mohammadin Sakani Wa Irsi;
Mashubun Lahmuha Bey Dami Wa Lahmi”*

Daughter of Rasulullah (S) is my life-partner and peace for me; and her flesh is blended in my flesh and blood.

*“Wa Sibta Ahmadin Waladaya Minha;
Famayn Minkum Lahu Sarimun Kasahmi”*

And grandsons of Ahmad are my sons from Fatemah; so amongst you who is parallel to me?

*“Sabaqtukum ilal Islame Turran
Ghulaman Ma Balaghtu Awana Hulmi”*

I have a leading position over all of you in having responded to the Dawah of Islam from my infancy.

*“Wa Awjaba Lee Walayatuhu Aleykum;
Rasulullahe Yawma Ghadiri Khummi’*

Rasulullah (S) had declared obligatory upon you (O Ummah)my Walayah on the day of 'Ghadir'.

*"Kama Harunu Min Musa Akhuhu;
Kazaka Ana Akhuhu Wa'zaka Ismi"*

As Harun (A.S) was brother of Musa (A.S); likewise I am his (Mohammad's) brother.(Hadith Manzilah)

*"Fa Waiylun Summa Waiylun Summa Waiylun;
Ley'mayn Yal'qal ilaha Ghaddan Bey Zulumi"*

Repeated Curse be upon the one who will appear before Allah blemished with having cause me pain.

Only in two verses, Ali had given five points to improve the lifestyle, of a Mumin.

*"Tagharab Anil Awt'ane Fee Talabil Ula;
Fa'safir Fa'fil Asf'ar Khamsu Fawa'edin"*

For elevation and promotion, do travel, five benefits are in travel.

*"Tafarruju Hammin Wa Iktisabu Maey'shatin;
Wa' ilmin Wa A'dabun Wa Suhbatu Majidin"*

Removal of grief

Achievement of source of sustain

Learning and understanding

Manners and etiquettes and

Company of experienced seniors

Study shows that natural sexual desires if not fulfilled legally lead towards crimes and mental disorders. Due to the neglecting guidance of the religious hierarchy, and ignorance, the pious family life is being disturbed, and immorality is spreading like virus, around the global village. Sexual corruption is mother of many evils. Today Muslim society at large has been facing a problem and that is the age limit of Nikah-marriage. Not only this, but several self created hurdles discourage the younger generation with marriage. Only in one verse, Ali had provided solution of these social evils. He advised man to establish Nikah tie, which in turn reduces, and controls his natural desire, and provides him satisfaction, as follows:

*"Aflaha Man Kana Lahu Muzakkha;
Yazukkuha Summa Yanamu Fakhkha"*

Successful person is the one who has a wife, with whom he takes legal pleasure, and then takes rest peacefully.

Amir al Muminin Ali has divided human society precisely in four categories. He discussed these four groups in one of his 'Mukhammas'-stanza as follows:

*"Arb'atun Finn'ase Mayaztuhum;
Ahwalu'hum Makshufatun Zahirah"*

There are four kinds of group of people and I have made them distinct from each other; their values (positions) are open and (crystal) clear.

*"Fa Wahidun Dunyahu Maqbuhatun;
Tatbauhu Akhiratun Fakhirah"*

One group is that for whom the present world is full of adversities, but the hereafter is happy, and full of bliss.

*“Wa Wahidun Dunyahu Mahmudatun;
Laiysa Lahu Min badeha Akhirah”*

Another group of people are those whose world is praiseworthy; but they have nothing in A'khirah (hereafter).

*“Wa Wahidun F'aza Be'kilte'hima;
Qad Jama Ad Dunya M'al Akhirah”*

And the third group of people are successful both here and hereafter; they achieve (blessings) of both the worlds.

*“Wa Wahidun Min Baynehim Zaiy'un;
Laysa Lahu Dunya Wal Akhirah”*

And group four is totally astray; they are blessed neither in this world, nor in A'khirah.

Many prominent scholars of Ahl al Sunnah have transmitted this tradition from “Behaqqi”, that, it is obligatory upon the devotees of Ahl al Bait, especially Ali to remember the above Aby'at, and to preserve the marvellous contribution of Ali for Islam. Learned writer of “Fusul al Mukhtarah” has admitted that it is not possible to ignore following Aby'at, because not only believers, even non-believers agree on its authenticity. Celebrated writer of “Al Ghadir”, Allamah Abdulhusain Al Amini has provided details of the names of 36 prominent Sunni scholars, who have quoted this Qasidah in their books Behaqqi, Abul Hajjaj, Yusuf bin Mohammad Lailavi, Al Maliki are a few amongst them.

Once someone asked a question at the doorstep of the house of Ali as he was entering his house. He went inside without answering him, but later on came back, and asked the person about his question. The Ash'ab of Ali asked as why he had delayed in replying? What was the reason that he came out again to give the reply? Ali said that I was in need of washroom, and when a person is in need to go to the washroom, he should never advise anyone and recited these' Aby'at:

*“Izal Mushkil'at Tasdeen Lee;
Kashafta Haqaiquha Bin'nazari”*

When faced with difficulties; I go for the best solutions.

In fact, Ali is emperor of the world of divine reality. The author of “Fusul al Mukhtarah” transmitted the following Aby'at of Ali, which he recited in the battlefield of Siffin:

*“Ana Aliyu Saheb'ul Samsama;
Wa Saheb al Hawze Lad al Qiyamah”*

I am Ali, an expert sword man; and possessor of the pond of Kawthar in the Qayamah.

*“Akhū Nabiyil'lahe Zil A'lamah;
Qad Qala Iz Amam'nil Amamah”*

And cousin brother of Rasulullah(S), who at the time of fixing his Turban on my head declared.

*“Anta Akhi Wa M'adin'il Karamah;
Wa Man Lahu Min B'adil Imamah”*

You are my brother, spring of generosity and holding the Power of Imamah.

Ali maintained the respect of human beings as per guidance of the Qur'an, and has left a glorious legacy with personal examples as how to treat people who differ with you in ideas and thinking. He taught his followers to respect the 'Rights' of all people, granted to them by Islam. Ali acknowledged his devotees and once at a critical time he visited the site, where Harith al Hamdan was on trial. Ali vehemently recited a beautiful poem, and discussed in it Haqaiq-divine realities, one of which verse is as follow:

*“Wa Anta Indas Siratey Tarefuni;
Fala Takhaf Asratan Wala Zala'lan”*

*And you, near 'The Street' will recognize me, so don't be afraid of error and slip.
This poetry exclusively deals the topic of ilahiy'at-sacred wisdom.*

Let's observe the poetic manner of Ali in the battle field, here his majestic expression warns and alerts the enemy to be ready for death. The thundering sound of death is ringing from his Rajz clearly. He always responded in 'Rajz' not only in similar 'Qafiyah' but also in the same "Radif". When Marhab proudly came in the battleground, to attack Ali, he recited following Aby'at:

*“Ana Unasun Waladtana Abharah;
Libasunal Washa Ware'tun Habarah”*

We are one of those who are born of gorgeous women, colourful clothes, and precious Yemeni stole are our costumes.

“Abnau Harbin Laiysa Feena Ghadarah

We are children of warriors, free from treacheries.

In reply to Marhab, the 'Rajz' of Ali is famous, and is written in the pages of history in gold.

*“Anal Lazi Sammatni Ummi Haiydarah;
Zirghamu A'jamin Wa Laiysun Qaswarah”*

I am the one, who has been named lion by his mother; such a lion who never turns back until he tears off (his enemies).

History witnessed, what this fearless warrior had claimed, he did it not only with perfection, but in a manner that people are still amazed at and remember with wonder. As soon as the dust would clear in the battlefield, the armies of both sides would witness that Ali would be cleaning the blood from his sword and the enemy down.

The 3rd al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Hatim Mohiyuddin, a paramount scholar of Arabia compiled his famous book: “Al Majalis al Hatimiyah” in “Kahaf al Naem”-the top side area of the mountainous region of Hir'az, Yemen. He discussed the merits of Amir al Muminin Ali in Majlis 104, and recorded his qualities in prose and poetry with especial reference to Ali's sermon of “Mudiyah”, in which following Aby'at are available:

*“Allahu Akramna Bey Nasare Nabiyehe;
Wa Ban'a Aqama Daem'al Islami”*

Allah granted us honour to help his Nabi; and through us established “Daem’al Islam”- the pillars of Islam.

*“Wa Bena A’aza Nabiyahu Wa Kitabahu;
Wa A’azzana Bin Nasare Wal Aqd’ami”*

He made us help his Nabi overpower his opponents and spread Qur’an; and provided us an opportunity to defend him and fight for him.

*“Wa Yazuruna Jibrelu Fee Abyatena;
Bey Faraez’il Islame Wal Ahkami”*

Jibrael (A.S) visited “Bait al Sharaf”-Nabi’s House; where I was living, with the commandments of Islam.

The above verses were recited in the full court of Khilafat, sometime around the year’s 634//13 (A.H) to 644//23 (A.H).

These concluding lines are “Khit’amah ul Misk”-sealed with the fragrance of Musk, and I humbly submit it as a tribute in the presence of Amir al Muminin Ali with a determination that his help shall continue towards his devotees.

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The Writer is Attorney at Law & Religious Scholar

Email:qazishkborhany@hotmail.com

Website: www.durrenajaf.com

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