

‘ALĪ B. ABĪ ṬĀLEB: A READING IN HIS BIOGRAPHY DURING THE SECRET AND PUBLIC DA‘WAH FOR ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF THE SHĪ‘ITE AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

Saleh Abboud, Ph.D.

Emek Yezreel College

ABSTRACT: *This study observes the character of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb during the Meccan historical period, which lasted for thirteen years and can be divided into two stages: the stage of the secret Da‘wah, which lasted for three years, and the public stage, which lasted for ten years. The Shī‘ites exploited in their sources all the details and information about that important historical period in Islam. These are very few details but the Shī‘ites tried to magnify Ali’s role in them in order to raise his rank and confirm his important role in that period. It appears that their sources made use of certain historical gaps that were mentioned by the historical Islamic sources that are also adopted by the Sunnis. They subjugated them and exploited them in the formation of Ali’s character and his role during that early stage in his life.*

KEYWORDS: ‘Alī B. Abī Ṭāleb, Secret Da‘wah for Islam in Mecca, Public Da‘wah for Islam in Mecca, The Shī‘ites, Sunnis.

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the issue of the presence of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb’s personality (40 H.\ 660 CE) in the historical sources that have Sunni inclination and the Sunni sources on the one hand, and the Imāmiyyah Shī‘ite sources on the other. The study depends in its context on observing some scenes that are connected to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb’s biography during the secret and public periods of Da‘wah (summoning, call, and invitation) to accept Islam in the Meccan stage. In general, the study reflects the degree of contributions of the classical Shī‘ite heritage to the crystallization of ‘Alī’s personality which is different from that personality whose biography appears in the non-Shī‘ite sources.¹

‘Alī in the Period of the Meccan Secret Da‘wah

Islam made its way into Mecca through a secret Da‘wah in which a limited group of the first believers took part. It seems that that group constituted a secret cell that expanded slowly due to the bad environmental circumstances that surrounded them and as a result of their following of the rules of strong precautions which prevailed in those days.

In the midst of that period of the secret Da‘wah, which lasted for three years till it was made public in Mecca,² the early Moslems and the Prophet passed through difficult circumstances

¹ For more information about ‘Alī’s personality in the Shī‘ite heritage, see: Eliash, Joseph, *‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in Ithnā-‘Asharī Shī‘ī Belief*, Ph.D. Dissertation (London: University of London, 1966), 7-14.

² Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230 H.\ 845 CE) says in his *Ṭabaqāt*: "The Prophet, God’s blessings and peace be upon him, lived in Mecca for three years from the beginning of his prophecy in secret and in the fourth year, he declared it and called people to accept Islam...". See: Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 1: 147.

that prevented them from spreading it quickly and publicly. We can imagine the strictness of measures that accompanied the Da'wah in its first secret stage that is reflected through the shortage of historical news that observed it or dealt with it. Therefore, it is impossible to depend on those bits of news to draw a complete image to the secret Da'wah and the important events that accompanied it. In reality, we did not receive sufficient news about the nature of the role of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb in that early period of Islam and that is a result of combined factors, some of which are the rarity of news from that period in general and 'Alī's young age at that time. The last factor has a logical impact on the faintness of 'Alī's role in that period.³ In spite of that, the little amount of news that reached us confirm the attribution of important missions to him, despite his young age.

Some sources completely denied any role by 'Alī in the secret stage. The 'Uthmāniyyah trend had a great contribution to this antagonistic attitude to the Shī'ites. Their preference of Abū Bakr to 'Alī pushed them to exploit Abū Bakr's role in that classical period to prove his precedence and preference to 'Alī. Their pointing out of Abū Bakr's advantages over 'Alī's coincided with the attempt to conceal any role for 'Alī in the same period.⁴

In spite of that, the Prophet's bringing up to 'Alī and his growth at his home allows us to suppose that 'Alī accompanied the Prophet during the period of the secret Da'wah as some historical sources point out.⁵

The importance of this accompaniment that joined 'Alī and the Prophet lies in 'Alī's performance of some religious rites during his going out to the mountain passes of Mecca in company with the Prophet. The traditions tell that he used to pray for some time with the Prophet and then he would leave the Prophet on his own and he, ('Alī) would guard him and watch the place.⁶

The specific mission that some Shī'ite traditions mentioned, and which was connected to 'Alī during the stage of the secret Da'wah, lies in a secret mission in which the Prophet participated. According to those traditions, he destroyed one of the idols that were erected on the Ka'ba during the night. The most important scene of that secret operation lies in 'Alī's

³ What is meant by 'fainting of 'Alī's role in the secret Da'wah' is his limited contribution to the spread of Islam and increase of affiliates. Lots of stories gave statements about the role of Abū Bakr in that. Abū Bakr appeared to be a successful preacher (Dā'iyah) thanks to his preaching styles and skills in persuading a lot of the first companions to accept Islam. For more information about Abū Bakr's preaching role, see in: Muḥammad ibn 'Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, Edited by: Suhail Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), p. 140; 'Abd al-Malek b. Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, Edited by: Muḥammad 'Alī al-Qutub and Muḥammad al-Dālī Balṭa (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyah, 2001), 1: 187.

⁴ Al-Jāhiz (d. 255 H.\ 868 CE) showed in his book *al-'Uthmāniyah* this argument which denies any role by 'Alī in the secret Da'wah. He says that: "Abū Bakr has better attitudes than 'Alī's attitudes". Abū Bakr has attitudes in which neither 'Alī nor any other one shared him. 'Alī was tested from the battle of Badr till the end of the Prophet's expeditions". See: 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāhiz, *Al-'Uthmāniyah*, Edited by: 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo: Maṭābi' Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1955), p. 41.

⁵ Ibn 'Ishāq (d. 151 H.\ 768 CE) tells the story of Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī's Islam and his meeting with the Prophet in the Secret period of Da'wah. He points out that 'Alī was then on a mission that the Prophet sent him to perform without giving details. See: Ibn 'Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, p. 141.

⁶ Some classical historical versions mention 'Alī's role in guarding the Prophet during his prayers outside Mecca during the secret period. One of these versions was given by: Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Balādhurī in *Ansāb al-'Ashraf*, Edited by: Suhail Zakkār and Riyāḍ Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996) 1, 126. Some of the classical Shī'ite sources dealt with this mission. One of these stories is given in: Muḥammad al-Karājikī, *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, Edited by: al-Sheikh 'Abd Allāh Ne'meh (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1985), 1, 276.

climbing over the Prophet's shoulder to reach the targeted idol.⁷ This scene was evidence to a characteristic that 'Alī enjoyed, which no one else shared with him. Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 H.\ 915 CE) mentioned this event in his book *al-Khaṣā'is* as an argument and evidence that indicates 'Alī's advantage and virtues.⁸

Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 H.\ 915 CE) gives a detailed description of the event by an authority that returns to 'Alī himself. He says: "I went out with the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, till we arrived at al-Ka'ba; the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, climbed on my shoulder, and I stood up with him. When the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, saw my weakness, he said to me: Sit down. I sat. The Prophet of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, went down and sat next to me and said: Get on my shoulders; I got on his shoulders; the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, stood up. 'Alī said: I imagine that if I wanted heaven, I would get it, I climbed to Ka'ba and there was an idol of yellow (zinc) or copper. I tried to deal with it, to move it to the right or to the left or ahead or from its hands or back till I was able to catch it; the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, said: Throw it, and I threw it, and I broke it as flasks are broken; then I went down. I and the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, set out running till we were out of sight for fear that a certain person might meet us".⁹

Though there is no historical evidence that confirms the occurrence of this event in the Sunni classical historical sources, the story in its Sunni conclusion confirms the Sunni acknowledgement of it and their exploitation of it to raise 'Alī's position. The Shī'ites on their part, took it as evidence to 'Alī's advantage to other Moslems due to his being the only one who participated with the Prophet in it.¹⁰

Al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 H.\ 992 CE) dealt with this event in his book *Ilal al-Sharā'ī* and tried to explain the cause ('illah) which made 'Alī unable to bear holding the Prophet on his back to perform this secret mission. Though the cause lies in 'Alī's young age and his inability to hold the Prophet, who was then a man over forty, it was logical that the man with less weight should stand over the shoulders of the man with more weight. However, Al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq found other causes of 'Alī's mounting the Prophet's back and shoulders, which are in harmony with the Shī'ite belief such as:

⁷ This event is mentioned by more than one Sunni and Shī'ite historian such as: al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh* (al-Najaf: Dār al-Kutub al-'islāmiyyah, 1957), 2: 154; al-Qādī 'Aḥmad b. 'Abdullah 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-'Adl wal-Tawḥīd*, Edited by: 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Sulaymān Duniā (Cairo: al-Sharikah al-'Arabiyyah lil-Ṭibā'ah, 1962), 20/2: 143; 'Alī b. Muḥammad B. Al-Maghāzilī al-Shāfi'ī, *Manāqib al-'Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*, Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1983), 429.

⁸ Al-Nasā'ī's defense (d. 303 H.\ 915 CE) of 'Alī and the appearance of his Shī'ism were a reason for his death. See: Aḥmad b. Shu'yb al-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'is 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*, Edited by: al-Dānī b. Munīr Al Zahāwī (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah, 2000), 10; Adam Metz, *al-Ḥaḍārah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijrī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wal-Tarjamah wal-Nashr, 1957), 1: 109.

⁹ See: al-Nasā'ī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, 96-97.

¹⁰ Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173 H.\ 789 CE) composed lines of poetry on this occasion that raises 'Alī. Some of these lines are: "They went out at a certain night, and were going about al-Ka'ba in darkness When they arrived, the Prophet said to him: we are trying to pull down the idol, Climb on my back, and the best of humans rose up, without feeling shy or ashamed, When Abu Hasan's ('Alī) legs straightened, he fell down to the ground and crumbled, Ahmad called him: jump, 'Alī, on my back you did well; God bless you, and attacked". See: 'Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, *Dīwān al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, Edited by: Shāker Hādī (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1966), 382-383. He also composed another passage that deals with the same event: 77-78.

1. The Prophet is higher than 'Alī and more honorable and if the Prophet mounted 'Alī's back and shoulders, he would be honored by that and would rise more, but it is better that 'Alī should rise by the Prophet and not the opposite.
2. The Prophet is an Imām and a Prophet and 'Alī is an Imām but not a prophet, and he cannot bear the prophecy.
3. By holding 'Alī, the Prophet wanted to imply that he was the father of his son and that the Imām of Imāms is from his core and essence.
4. 'Alī is the one who decreases the weight of debts and their amounts and pays them for him.
5. So that people would know that 'Alī was infallible, does not carry any sins and all his deeds are correct and stem from wisdom.¹¹

As we see, the Shī'ites exploited that event to raise 'Alī's status and justify the idea of 'Imāmate', which is considered a fundamental component in their religious and political theory.

There are reports that refer to another date in which the operation of demolition of idols was conducted. Some reports said that it took place during the conquest of Mecca in the seventh century of Hegira (630 CE) when the Prophet ordered to demolish all the idols which were in the sacred sanctuary¹² Actually, the occurrence of that event during the secret period is far from being possible, and it appears to carry intellectual thoughts that serve the Shī'ites and their main religious principles.

'Alī During the Period of Public Da'wah in Mecca

At the beginning of the public Da'wah to Islam in Mecca, the Prophet and his companions were not met by malicious plotting or cunning from Quraysh. The relationship between the parties was mostly characterized by calmness that is charged with tension. The situation continued to be like that till Moslems criticized the religion of Quraysh by being pagan and they mentioned their gods in bad expressions. They mentioned the death of their fathers and forefathers as disbelievers. At that point, the people of Mecca became hostile to the Prophet and his companions, and gradually started persecuting them in various ways.¹³

The relationship between the first Moslems and the pagan Qurayshis in Mecca worsened in most cases but improved in fewer cases. The nature of severity continued to dominate the mutual relationship between the two sides and continued for the ten years of the public Da'wah in Mecca and outside it.¹⁴

¹¹ The five causes ('ilal) and other issues were mentioned in a long version by Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148 H.\ 765 CE) in: Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī al-Sheikh al-Šadūq, *'Ilal al-Šarā'i'* (al-Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydariyyah, 1963), 174-175.

¹² See version 240 in: Ibn al-Maghāzili, *al-Manāqib*, 202-203. However, some versions that observed the event of destroying the larger idols on the day of "Fath" Mecca (Conquest of Mecca) did not refer to 'Alī's participation in it. See what is mentioned in: Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Naysābūrī, *Al-Jāmi' al-Šaḥīḥ* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Tijārī lil-Ṭibā'ah, n.d.), 5: 173.

¹³ See: Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 135-136.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 1: 147.

‘Alī lived for a long time in this period with the Prophet. He accompanied him on a lot of important occasions, which were documented in the sources but his presence in that long period was not prominent due to his young age. His missions were limited to missions that suit his age and this is what explains the marginality of his presence in the historical sources that observed that period and recorded its detail.

Some reports refer to ‘Alī's accompaniment to the Prophet during these delicate periods and the first thing that draws attention on reviewing the texts that are mentioned in the Islamic heritage is those stories that confirm ‘Alī and the Prophet's participation in the ordinary rites.¹⁵ Ibn ‘Ishāq (d. 151 H.\ 768 CE) mentioned in his book *al-Sīrah* the story about ‘Afīf al-Kindī that he said: "I was a merchant and came on the day of Mina during the days of pilgrimage; al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭaleb was also a merchant and I came to sell and buy to him. He said: while we were trading, a man went out of a tent and started praying towards al-Ka‘ba and then a woman went out and started to pray with him, and then a child went out and began to pray for him and then I asked: O ‘Abbās, what is this religion? We do not know what this religion is? Al-‘Abbās said: This is Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh and he claims that Allah sent him and the treasures of Kisrā and Caesar will be open to him and this is his wife Khadījah b. Khuwayled believed him and this young man his cousin ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb believed him. Al-‘Afīf said: I wish I believed him that day; then I would be the second".¹⁶ This historical version came to confirm ‘Alī's precedence in accepting Islam and though it does not refer to the time of the event, it appears to be more appropriate to the beginning of the period of the public Da‘wah, when the Prophet declared his views in front of the chiefs of Quraysh. However, the Shī‘ite sources that mentioned this event and introduced it in its close version and authority to the historical text that is mentioned in the sources of the Sunnis add to it a clear definition of time; they mention that this event took place in Mecca during the secret stage of the Da‘wah.¹⁷ The Shī‘ite heritage exploited it in an attempt to confirm ‘Alī's belief and his precedence in Islam. The news item (al-khabar) is mentioned to show that ‘Alī shared the Prophet and his wife in their prayers together and that sharing carries indication of his precedence in acceptance of Islam.

The second event that shows a similar difference between the Shī‘ite and the non-Shī‘ite versions is an even known by the name "Yawm al-Dār" which the Shī‘ites consider a reason for the revelation of a Koranic verse in which the Prophet is ordered to call his tribe and relatives to enter Islam. The Koranic text that is connected to this event is the verse that says: "And warn, [O Muḥammad], your closest kindred. And lower your wing to those who follow you of the believers. And if they disobey you, then say, "Indeed, I am disassociated from what you are doing".¹⁸ The Sunnis considers the revelation of these verses an official beginning of the public Da‘wah in Mecca after it had been secret for three years.¹⁹ The Shī‘ites, however, tend to believe that its revelation took place at the beginning of the secret Da‘wah.²⁰ Ibn ‘Ishāq (d. 151 H.\ 768 CE)²¹ mentions in his biographies about ‘Alī b. Abī

¹⁵ W. A. Rice, "‘Alī in Shī‘ah Tradition", *Islamic Law and Legal Theory* 7 (1996), 457.

¹⁶ Ibn ‘Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, 137-138. The event is mentioned in a different text: ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ashraf* (al-Dawḥa: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1993), 83; al-Nasā‘ī, *al-Khaṣā‘is*, 21-22.

¹⁷ See the text of the Shī‘ite version in: Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād fī Ma‘rifat Hujaj illāh ‘Alal-‘ibād* (Beirut: Mu‘asasat ‘Āl al-Bayt li‘ihyā‘ il-Turāth, 1955), 1: 29-30; Al-Karājīkī, *Kanz al-Fawā‘id*, 1: 262-263.

¹⁸ *The Holy Koran*, Surat al-Shu‘arā’, 26: 214-216.

¹⁹ See that opinion in: Ibn ‘Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, 145; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 136; Muslim, al-Jāmi‘, 1: 133-134.

²⁰ See that in: al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 48; al-Jāhiz, *al-Uṭhmāniyah*, 303.

Ṭāleb that he said: "when this verse was revealed to the messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, the Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, said: I knew that if I ask my clan, I will see something that I hate, and I kept silent but Gabriel came to me and said: O Muḥammad, if you do not do what I order you to do, God, be He exalted, will torture you. 'Alī said: The Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, called me and said: O 'Alī. God ordered me to warn my close family. I knew that if I asked them to do so, I will see something from them that I hate and I kept silent about that till Gabriel came and said: O Muḥammad, if you do not do what I ordered you to do, your God will torture you. O 'Alī, prepare a lamb-leg with a measure of food; and prepare for us a large cup of milk. Then gather Banū 'Abd il-Muṭṭalib and I did. They all came and they were forty men or about; they included his uncles: Abū Ṭāleb, Ḥamzah, al-'Abbās and Abū Lahab, the malicious infidel. I offered that bowl to them. The Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, drank from it and he handed a Sip and split it with his teeth and then threw it around and said: Eat in the name of God, and they ate till they were satisfied. Nothing was seen except the traces of their fingers and I swear by God that each of them would eat a whole one like it. Then the Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him: Give them to drink, 'Alī. I brought that big cup and all of them drank till they were satisfied. I swear by God that each man of them was able to drink the whole cup. When the Messenger of God wanted to talk to them, Abū Lahab initiated the speech and said: I am shocked. Did your friend enchanted you? They separated and the Messenger of God did not talk to them. The next day, the Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, said: O 'Alī, prepare for us the same food and drink that you prepared yesterday; this man surprised me by what you heard before I spoke to the family. I did what he asked me to do. Then he gathered them for him. The Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, did for them what he did the day before till they finished eating. Then I brought them that large cup and they drank from it. I swear by God that any man of them would eat what he could and drink what he could. Then the Messenger of God, Gods' blessings and peace be upon him, said: O Banī 'Abd al-Muṭṭaleb, I do not know any young man among the Arabs who brought his kinsfolk something better than what I brought to you. I brought you with the truth of this life and afterlife".²² This event shows 'Alī's accompaniment and his closeness to the Prophet, who asked him to prepare food and drink after he had told him about what happened to him and the revelation of the verse. Besides, he asked him to gather his uncles at his home and calling them twice. Those missions that were given to 'Alī to perform point out the Prophet's dependence on him despite his young age. The event of Yawm al-Dār in the non-Shī'ite sources to focus on the takeoff of the public Da'wah and seeks to emphasize 'Alī's precedence to acceptance of Islam and that it preceded all Banī Hāshem in that. In addition to that, the event in Ibn 'Ishāq's version and others carry evidence to the Prophetic miracles that confirmed the truth of the Prophet's Da'wah as he managed to give little food

²¹ Historian Muḥammad b. 'Ishāq (d. 151 H.\ 768 CE) is considered a Non-Shī'ite historical source despite the fact that he was known to be a supporter of *Ahl al-Bayt*. The clear difference between what he conveys in his biography in comparison with the ancient Shiite sources proves that his Shī'ism did not drift him to the point where he can be considered a Shī'ite in his versions. Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 H.\ 1067 CE) mentioned him saying about him and other writers about *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*: "Muḥammad b. 'Ishāq, Muḥammad b. al-Mukander... and al-Kalbī are from the common people but they have strong inclination and love". Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rafat al-Rijāl* (Iran: Isfand, 1929), 5: 390. Adam Metz dealt with his adoption of Shī'ism, saying: It should be mentioned that Ibn 'Ishāq, writer of *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah* became a Shī'ite and preferred 'Alī to 'Othmān and inserted in his book poems about Shī'a". Metz, *al-Ḥaḍārah al-'Islāmiyyah*, 1: 109.

²² See: Ibn 'Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, 145-146.

and drink to a large number of people, which is a miracle that is parallel with the miracle of Jesus Christs, who fed thousands of people with two fishes and five loaves only.²³

The Shī'ite sources adopted the last event to prove what has been said above,²⁴ but they focus through it on 'Alī's virtues that are mentioned in them. They seek to confirm preponderance of 'Alī's mind, despite his young age and the truth of his Islam.²⁵ The Shī'ite version of the news item (*khābar*) of Yawm al-Dār, there are important details that are not mentioned in the version that Ibn 'Ishāq and others give. The Prophet addressed his uncles saying and calling them "...He who responds to this issue and supports me to perform it will be my brother and trustee and minister and heir and successor (Calīph) after me. No one answered him, and 'Alī said, and he was the youngest at that time; it's me, Messenger of God- I support you in this matter. He said: Sit down, and repeated what he said to the family but they were kept silent and then I stood up again and said what I said in my previous statement. He said: sit down. Then he repeated his statement for the third time but no one uttered a letter. I said: I support you- Messenger of God- in this matter. He said: Sit down. You are my brother and minister and heir and successor after me".²⁶

The quoted Shī'ite version is included in the frame of the texts of 'Alī's Imāmate and the signs of his *Walāyah* (leadership) in their ideological heritage in general. The Shī'ite depend on the confirmation of this event (*khābar*) in order to emphasize 'Alī's *Walāyah* and his imamate by a clear direct text by the Prophet. By that, the Shī'ite additions to the news item, which are not in harmony with the sources of the others,²⁷ are significant additions that serve

²³ See: *The New Testament*, Mattews Gospel (Cairo: Association of the Holy Book, 2009), *al-Iṣḥāḥ* 14: 13-21.

²⁴ See what al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173 H.\ 789 CE) wrote about Yawm al-Dār in which he mentions 'Alī's virtues and his precedence to accept Islam: "Who is that who said, and he is the youngest and the best mentioned in the book, I believed in God, I was given a gift that neither a human nor a jinn was given, And what I said was right and if they did not answer, they betrayed and lost, He won it and God honored him he was a forerunner to goals and hurried when asked". Al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Dīwān*, 203-205.

²⁵ Al-'Iskāfī (d. 240 H.\ 854 CE) replies to al-Jāhīz (d. 255 H.\ 868 CE) and denounces his view by asking a rhetorical question: "Is it possible that a non-distinguished child and an inexperienced immature young man be entrusted to prepare the food and call the family? Can the secret of the Prophecy be entrusted to a five or seven years old child? Is it possible that Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, put his hand on his and give him his oath of brotherhood and the caliphate if he was not qualified to it and was not mature enough to be entrusted and is able to bear the authority of God (Walayat Allāh) and the hostility of his enemies?!" See: al-Jāhīz, *al-'Uthmaniya*, 303.

²⁶ al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 50; Furāt b. 'Ibrāhīm (d. 325 H.\ 937 CE) mentions in his *Tafsīr Furāt* (Furat's Interpretation) that the Prophet caught 'Alī's neck and said: "This is my brother and successor; listen to him and obey him". Furāt b. 'Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt*, Edited by: Muḥammad al-Kāzīm (Beirut: Mu'sasat al-Nu'mān, 1992), 1: 300-301. Compare with Rice, "'Alī". 457.

²⁷ The report about Yawm al-Dār is mentioned by al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 H.\ 915 CE) in his book *al-Khaṣā'is* in a text that is close to the Shī'ite text which is quoted above. It says that the Prophet addressed his relatives saying: "O Sons of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib! I was sent to you in specific and people in general and you have seen what you have seen of this aya (verse) and who would like of you to be my brother, my companion, my successor and my vizier? No one stood up and came to him, and I was the youngest of the family. He said: Then he said that question three times and each time, I stood and he said: Sit down till the third time; her shook my hand and said: You are my brother and companion and successor and vizier". See: al-Nasā'ī, *al-Khasa'is*, 62. Al-Nasā'ī's story does not tell about 'Alī's right to the Calīphate and Imāmate after the Prophet as the Shī'ite text tells that clearly. Al-Ṭabarī, however, (d. 310 H.\ 923 CE) transmitted a similar version in his interpretation of the 'Āya (verse), which was revealed on the issue of Yawm al-Dār, but the text of his long version which is supported by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās (d. 68 H.\ 687 CE) from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb himself told the story in detail till it reached the point that the Shī'ites agree on. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 H.\ 923 CE), however, ignored the declaration of certain expressions that the Shī'ites adhered to in order to confirm 'Alī's political right and his imamate; he did not say "anyone who supports me will be my brother, my companion and my heir" as al-Nasā'ī mentioned but he hinted saying "any of you who will support me on this issue, provided that he is my brother, and so and so?... then he

their viewpoints and beliefs regarding 'Alī. The Prophet's statement to him "and my successor (Calīph) after me" is a pretext and proof among the Shī'ites to 'Alī's right to the Calīphate after the Prophet.²⁸

The central activity that the Prophet practiced on his declaration of his Da'wah, as some sources mentioned, is his meetings with the Arab tribes at the season of pilgrimage (Ḥajj); the Prophet approached some tribes by himself asking for their protection in order to continue his Da'wah.²⁹ Some sources pointed out 'Alī's participation in this stage of Da'wah and mentioned that he used to go out with the Prophet accompanied by Abū Bakr during his call to the different Arab tribes.³⁰ However, his role was secondary compared to Abū Bakr's role, who was at that time the spokesman of the Da'wah, thanks to his knowledge of the ancestry (Ansāb) of the Arabs and their origins and conditions and their knowledge of him and trust in his preponderance. Despite its marginality, 'Alī's role in those Da'wah rounds in some non-Shī'ite sources, the Shī'ite sources ignore this role categorically and do not give it any weight in their news and stories. Probably this Shī'ite attitude is connected to some extent to the failure of the Da'wah to achieve its goals during that period and to the supremacy of Abū Bakr, which is a question that perplexes the Shī'ite sources a lot.³¹

During the ten years in which the Prophet called the people of Mecca publicly, especially in the seventh year of his mission,³² and after the success in sending a group of the first believers to Ethiopia aiming to seek protection,³³ and strengthening the attitude of the Moslems by accepting Islam of some influential dignitaries headed by 'Omar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 H.\ 644 BC),³⁴ the Prophet and his family from Banū Hāshem were exposed to a total isolation siege that lasted two or three years.³⁵ The siege pushed the Prophet and his family to enter the mountain path (*Shi'b*) of Abū Ṭāleb,³⁶ which is a narrow place in Mecca in order to protect him after they received warnings about plans to assassinate him.³⁷

'Alī accompanied the Prophet in that hard period and also entered the siege of the path like all Banū 'Abd al-Muṭṭāleb and performed some missions that they assigned to him despite his

said: This is my brother and so and so" and his usage of the phrase "so and so" is beyond what al-Nasā'ī mentioned (d. 303 H.\ 915 CE) and what the Shī'ites added contains some speech that confirms 'Alī's political right. See in: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992), 9: 483-484.

²⁸ Al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 48-49; 'Alī b. al-Husayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Qaṣīdah al-Mudhahhabah fī Madh Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*, Edited By: Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭāb (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1970), 120-121.

²⁹ See: Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 146-147.

³⁰ See: 'Alī b. al-Husayn al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'āden al-Jawhar*, Edited by: Sa'īd al-Laḥḥām (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1977), 2: 295.

³¹ The Prophet's call to the tribes failed for a long period. None of them responded to his call. See: Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 147.

³² *Ibid*, 1: 142.

³³ For more information about the First Migration and the Second Migration to al-Ḥabashah (Ethiopia), see: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 1: 238-253; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 138-141.

³⁴ About the story of 'Omar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's acceptance of Islam and its importance, see: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 1: 261.

³⁵ "They stayed in siege for three years and others said for two years but there is disagreement on that. See: 'Alī b. al-Husayn al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh wal-'Ishrāf* (Beirut: Dār waMaktabat al-Hilāl, 1993), 216.

³⁶ For more details about the siege of the Prophet and his clan in Shi'b Abū Ṭāleb, you can see: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 5-7, 23-26; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 141-143; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1: 270-273.

³⁷ Mūsā b. 'Uqbah, *al-Maghāzī* (al-Ribāt: Maṭba'at al-Ma'āref al-Jadīdah, 1994), 82; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 142; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1: 268.

young age. It was mentioned that he used to smuggle food to them after Quraysh prevented selling to them or buying from them.³⁸ The Shī'ite sources add to this mission another mission, which 'Alī performed despite its danger. The sources mentioned that 'Alī risked his life for the Prophet several times. For example, he lay in the Prophet's bed in order to protect him from the plots of his enemies during his hiding in the mountain path.³⁹ Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 H.\ 1044 BC) says something that indicates disagreement among the Shī'ites regarding 'Alī's staying in the Prophet's bed during the period of the *Shi' b*.⁴⁰ However, few of the historical sources mention stories about the stay of one of the members of the family of Abū Ṭāleb in the Prophet's bed during the siege of the *Shi' b*.⁴¹ The Shī'ites confine the performance of this mission to 'Alī exclusively and use it in their arguments to prove his advantage and see it a virtue of his great virtues that indicate his bravery and truth of his sacrifice despite his young age.⁴²

The addition of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 H.\ 1044 BC) in his version with some poetry lines that are attributed to 'Alī on that occasion⁴³ points out certain difference between the Shī'ite heritage with other traditions regarding the question of 'Alī's role in the period of the *Shi' b*. The Shī'ites confirm his sacrificial redemptive role in order to raise his status in comparison with other companions, and to confirm his intrepidity and courage and his attainment of manhood in his strong will despite his young age while the historical sources and the Sunni sources keep away from confirming this issue of appointing 'Alī to perform that specific mission.

In addition to that, the Twelver Shī'a found the period of the *Shi' b* and the Prophet's concealment from Quraysh a pretext or testimony to the truth of the concept of Imām in their faith.⁴⁴ After the passing of the period of *Shi' b* by the appearance of the Prophet and Banī Hāshem from it and their return to their homes in Mecca on the first of *Dhū al-Qi'dah* (11th month) of the tenth year for the mission,⁴⁵ the death of the sheikh of Banū Hāshem at the age

³⁸ See: Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Mu'tazilī al-'Iskāfī, *al-Mi'yār wal-Muwāzanah fī Faḍā'il Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*, Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī (Beirut: n.d. 1981), 88; al-Jāhiz, *al-Uḥmāniyah*, 310-311.

³⁹ 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah min al-'Uyūn wal-Maḥāsīn*, Edited by: Al-Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Ja'faryān al-Aṣbahānī (Beirut: Dār al-Muḥīd, 1993), 58. Compare with: Rice, "'Alī", 457.

⁴⁰ Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah*, 59-60.

⁴¹ Mūsā b. 'Uqbā (d. 141 H.\ 758 CE) mentions in *al-Maghāzī* this news item: "When the people went to bed, Abū Ṭāleb used to order the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, to go to bed so that those who wanted to plot against him and assassinate him see that, and when they sleep, he [Abū Ṭāleb] would order one of his sons or brothers or cousins to lie in the bed of the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, and order the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, to come to the bed of one of them and sleep there". See: Mūsā b. 'Uqbā, *al-Maghāzī*, 82.

⁴² 'Alī was skillful in performing this mission despite his young age, and some people saw in it a pretext to use in analogy between him and Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq to prove 'Alī's advantage over Abū Bakr and point out his sacrifices during the period of the Siege of al-Shi' b for three years, in which Abū Bakr enjoyed an ordinary life. See: al-'Iskāfī, *al-Mi'yār wal-Muwāzanah*, 88; al-Jāhiz, *al-Uḥmāniyah*, 320.

⁴³ Some of the poetry that al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 H.\ 1044 CE) transmitted from 'Alī on his stay in the bed of the Prophet during the period of al-Shi' b is the following: "Do you order me to be patient in supporting Ahmad, by God I did not say what I said out of fear, But I liked to show my support and you know I am still obedient to you, My pursuit in supporting Ahmad was for God's sake when the honorable prophet of guidance was a child and a young man". Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah*, 59.

⁴⁴ Muḥammad b. al-Ṭūsī, *al-Iqṭisād fī mā Yata'allaq bil-'i'tiqād* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1986), 370-371. Compare with: Etan Kohlberg, "From Imāmiya to Ithnā-'Ashariyya", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, (1976), 529.

⁴⁵ See: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1: 273.

of more than eighty,⁴⁶ frustrated the Prophet, who suffered in the same year the passing away of his wife Khadījah, who provided him with a significant material and psychological assistance during all the previous years.⁴⁷ In this context, there is an exciting debate between the Sunna and the Shī'a regarding 'Alī's attitude from his father on his death. A certain story was mentioned in the *Sīrah* of Ibn 'Ishāq and other Sunni sources that tell about 'Alī's negative attitude about his father when he died. Ibn 'Ishāq mentioned a story about 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb that he said: "When Abū Ṭāleb died, I came to the Messenger of God, may He be praised, and said: Abu Ṭāleb, your disbelieving uncle, died. The Messenger of God, may He be praised, said: Go and bury him. I said: By God I will not bury him. He said: If you do not bury him, who will? Go and bury him. Then, do not do anything till you come to me. I went out and buried him, and then I returned to the Messenger of God, may He be praised, and he said: Go and wash yourself and come back to me. I did so and came back to him. Then he wished me good wishes which are most loved to me on the Earth".⁴⁸ This version points out the infidelity of Abū Ṭāleb, 'Alī's father, and points out 'Alī's strong disavowal from him so that he was able to vow that he would not bury him. However, the story does not focus on 'Alī's impiety, disobedience and denial to his father as much as it emphasizes his absolute obedience to the Prophet. The Shī'ites refuse any hint to Abū Ṭāleb's infidelity and turn the meaning of the mentioned version to other meanings, especially that they accept some parts from it and reject other ones. Al-Sheikh al-Mufīd (d. 413 H.\ 1022 CE), for example,⁴⁹ deduces from the Shī'ite version regarding 'Alī's attitude towards his father's death and his burial to him two items that constitute evidence to the belief of the Shiekh of the Hāshemites, Abū Ṭāleb.⁵⁰ Al-Sheikh al-Mufīd (d. 413 H.\ 1022 CE), for example, mentions in a treatise that he composed to prove the belief of Abū Ṭāleb some information that confirms that. He says that "when he passed away- May God have mercy upon him- Amīr al-Mu'minīn, peace and blessings be upon him, the Messenger of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, said to him: "Go 'Alī, go, and take care of his washing and embalmment; and when you put him on his bed, let me know; Amīr al-Mu'minīn, peace and blessings be upon him, did that and when he raised him onto his bed, the Prophet, God's blessings and peace be upon him, approached him, his heart softened and said: "*Mercy be upon you, and may you be rewarded with good; you brought up and guarded a child, and helped and supported an adult; then he approached the people and said: I swear by God I will plead for my uncle a plead that the humans and the jinn (al-Thaqalayn) will wonder about it*".⁵¹ From a comparison between the two versions, we notice that the Shī'ite version cut what 'Alī said and his negative attitude towards his father and added the Prophet's blessing and promise to intermedate for his deceased uncle.

A year after the death of Abū Ṭāleb and Khadījah, events took place consecutively in Mecca and its surroundings. The issue of the Islamic Da'wah became public and its news reached most parts of Ḥijāz. In this hard period the sources mention the event of *al-'Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj*

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1: 273; al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh*, 215.

⁴⁷ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 57. He related from Ibn 'Ishāq that: "Khadījah b. Khuwayled died in the same year, calamities fell on the Messenger of God consecutively by the death of Khadījah, who was his true vizier on Islam; he complained to her; and the death of his uncle, who was his supporter and his refuge and his fortified place and defender in the face of his clan before his migration to al-Madīna three years before...".

⁴⁸ Ibn 'Ishāq, *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*, 239. The news item was mentioned with some slight difference and a different source of authority: al-Nasā'ī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, 110-111.

⁴⁹ See his biography in: Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Tūṣī, *al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Wafā', 1983), 190-191.

⁵⁰ See: Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *Risalat 'Imān Abī Ṭāleb*, Edited: Muḥammad Ḥasan Al-Yāsīn (Bghdad: Maktabat al-Nahḍah, 1963), 75-76.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 75.

(Ascension and Diversion of the Prophet/ the Prophet's Night Journey to the Dome of the Rock),⁵² after his return from his failing journey to al-Ṭā'if to call its people to accept Islam and the immense troubles he had from them; they tortured him severely and insulted him strongly.⁵³ Both Shī'ites and Sunnis acknowledge the truth of the event of the Night Journey of the Prophet despite the differences between the Moslem trends regarding its occurrence.⁵⁴ The Shī'ites exploited the event to raise 'Alī's virtues.⁵⁵ Some Shī'ite versions add that the Prophet passed by a mosque in Kūfa and prayed in it on his way in the Night Journey ('*Isrā'*).⁵⁶

There is no doubt that inserting al-Kūfa into this version indicates the Shī'ite desire to raise its status because it is an old Shī'ite center and the burial place of 'Alī's remnants. In this way, the path of *al-'Isrā'* and *al-Mi'rāj* becomes connected to 'Alī in an indirect way. As for *al-Mi'rāj* path, it was also subject in the Shī'ite versions to some moderations that the Sunni sources do not mention. According to the Shī'ite versions regarding *al-Mi'rāj* heavenly path, the angel asked the Prophet about his successor on Earth and the Prophet told them that 'Alī is his Caliph on Earth.⁵⁷ It was also said that God created an angel on 'Alī's image and sat him down on his side so that the Prophets would see when they miss seeing 'Alī,⁵⁸ In a version that is mentioned by 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Khuzā'i (d. 476 H.\ 1083 CE) in his book *al-Arba'īn (The Forty)*, the Prophet said: "When I was sailed at night to heaven and I reached the veils of God, my God Almighty, spoke to me and said: O Muḥammad! Convey my greetings to 'Alī bin Abī Ṭāleb and tell him that he is my authority after you on my creation; by him I will water people with rain; by him I will repel evil from them; by him I will make excuses for them when they meet me; they should obey him and accept his orders and stop doing what he asks them not to do; I will put them on my seat of truth and allow them to enter my gardens, and if they do not do, I will put them in my fire with the evildoers and I will not care!"⁵⁹ This version clearly shows the degree of the Shī'ite exploitation to the event of *al-Mi'rāj* in an aim to sanctify 'Alī and his Shī'ite character and emphasize through it his rank as a divine Imām who has got high heavenly virtues that reflect his right over people authority (*Walāyah*) and Imāmate.

The Prophet found supporters to his Da'wah in the city of Yathrib two years after the event of 'Isrā'. The city, which is located at about 400 km. north of Mecca received a lot of Qurayshi

⁵² See the news about the story of *al-'Isrā'* *wal-Mi'rāj* in: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 40-50; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 144-146; Muslim, *al-Jāmi'*, 1: 99-110.

⁵³ For more information about the Prophet's journey to al-Ṭā'if with his Servant (Mawlā) Zaid b. Ḥārithah rather than 'Alī, see: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 59-60; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 143-144.

⁵⁴ See: al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh*, 216.

⁵⁵ See in the notes that were mentioned regarding this issue in: Meir Bar Asher, *Issue in the Interpretation of the Classical Imāmiyah Shī'ite*, A doctorate dissertation (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1991), 192-196.

⁵⁶ Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-'Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī* (Beirut: Mu'asasat al-'Alamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 1991), 2: 300. For more information about other Shī'ite versions about the advantage of al-Kūfa, see: Muḥammad b. 'Alī ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* (al-Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydariyyah, 1971), 135. See also: version N0. 3 in: Abū al-Ma'ālī b. al-Murajjā b. Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wal-Khalīl wa Faḍā'il al-Shām* (Shafā'amr: Dār al-Mashriq, 1995), 11. For more information about the status of al-Kūfa among the Shī'ites, see: Ofer Livneh Kafri, "The Classical Shī'ite and its attitude towards Jerusalem", *Journal of Arabic Teachers* (Giv'at Haviva: The Institute for Arabic Teaching, 1993), Issue 14-15, p. 130-136. For more information about the history of the 'Alī's scene in al-Najaf, see: Donaldson, Dwight, *The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Irak* (London: Luzac & Company, 1933), 55-60.

⁵⁷ See: Furāt, *al-Tafsīr*, 1: 73; al-Ṣadūq, *Ilal al-Sharā'i*, 314.

⁵⁸ See: Furāt, *al-Tafsīr*, 2: 374; al-Karājekī, *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, 2: 142-143.

⁵⁹ See: 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Aḥmad al-Khuzā'i, *al-'Arba'īn 'an al-'Arba'īn fī Faḍā'il 'Alī Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī (Teherān: Mu'asasat al-Ṭibā'ah wal-Nashr, 1996), 62-63.

Moslems who emigrated to it and were called al-Muḥājirūn (the Emigrants). Moslem men and women left for Yathrib and the only ones who stayed in Mecca were the Prophet, Abū Bakr, 'Alī and some of the weak ones who were jailed or captivated".⁶⁰

The Sunni historical sources unanimously agree that Quraysh hated the status that the Prophet's Da'wah achieved and became more angry about the acceptance of some Arabs from Yathrib to Islam and the Migration of the Qurayshis to it and settling there. They cooperated to prevent the Prophet from emigrating like his companions who emigrated before him. The Qurayshis decided on a plan to eliminate the Prophet in one strike in which all the tribes of Quraysh participate so that his blood will be lost among them and Banū Hāshem tribe (the Prophet's tribe) will not be able to think about taking revenge for his blood, and by that, his issue will end forever.⁶¹ 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb had a central role in this sensitive period that faced the Da'wah and its prophet. It was thanks to him that the Prophet was able to emigrate to Yathrib without being harmed or killed by the Qurayshis. 'Alī also had a hand in arranging the Prophet's movement and Hegira- Migration to Yathrib.⁶²

All the sources of the Islamic heritage agree that the Prophet entrusted 'Alī to sleep in his bed on the night of his Migration so that the Qurayshis, who were lurking for him, would think that he was still in his bed in his home. In reality, the Prophet went out of his home with Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq without being seen to a cave that was close to Mecca, where he spent two days. Then they continued their way to Yathrib through a concealed and in a camouflaging way that would prevent the Qurayshis from tracing and chasing them. 'Alī's performing this plan is considered a great sacrifice in the Islamic heritage but selecting him to fulfill it was not accidental or random or after examining several alternatives but because 'Alī was the only one who was able to perform that plan because Mecca had already become completely empty of the companions of the Prophet. Therefore, 'Alī's selection to fulfill that dangerous mission was inevitable in the light of the prevailing circumstances in Mecca at that time.⁶³ Apparently, 'Alī's sleep in the Prophet's bed was not an unusual thing for him, as Shī'ite and non-Shī'ite versions implied that he had slept in the Prophet's bed several times before that during the period of *al-Shi'b* siege. In spite of that, the Moslems kept 'Alī at a high position and held him in high esteem for his heroic attitude in the event of "*Laylat al-Hijrah*\ The Migration Night".⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 106; *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1: 306.

⁶¹ For more details about the meeting of Quraysh and its unanimous agreement to prevent the Prophet from migrating and murdering him before that happens, see the following non-Shī'ite historical sources: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 106-108; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 154-155; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1: 306-307. The Shī'ite sources confirmed this historical event. See: al-Sheikh al-Mufid, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 51-52; *al-Ikhtisās* (Beirut: Dār al-Mufid, 1993), 165.

⁶² Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346 H.\ 957 CE) mentions that 'Alī rented travel camels for the Prophet's migration. See: al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 2: 281. However, the *Sīrah* books point out that it was Abū Bakr who performed this mission. See: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 110; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 154.

⁶³ Al-Jāhīz (d. 255 H.\ 869 CE) mentions the argument of al-Rāfiḍah that the Prophet took Abū Bakr out with him because he feared that Abū Bakr would tell about him and would seek to tell his enemies about him. See: al-Jāhīz, *al-'Uthmāniyah*, 109.

⁶⁴ The Islamic sources referred to the revelation of 'Āyāt\ verses from the Koran regarding this event. One of them is: (*And [remember, O Muḥammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Makkah]. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners*). *The Holy Koran*, Sūrat al-'Anfāl, 8: 30. See also what was mentioned in the sources about the revelation of this aya regarding the event of The Night of Migration in: Mūsā b. 'Uqbah, *al-Maghāzī*, 105; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 109-110. Al-'Iskāfī commented on this 'Āyah, saying: "'Alī deceived them by the help of God at that night". See: al-'Iskāfī, *al-Mi'yār wal-Muwāzanah*, 186. The classical Shī'ite interpretations mention that 'Āyah 207 in

The conspirators who plotted to murder the Prophet were surprised when they understood the good brave deed that 'Alī did and his exciting sacrifice.⁶⁵ However, the treatment of the Shiite sources to 'Alī's favor during the night of Migration exceeded the extent of the Sunnis treatment and historians to it in a noticeable way. The historical version refers to 'Alī's sleep in the Prophet's bed during that night till dawn when the Qurayshis entered and revealed his deed. They asked him about the Prophet and he told them that he knew nothing where he was. They left him and went out to look for the Prophet.⁶⁶ The Shī'ites tend to exaggerate in 'Alī's attitude and his role in this event. It is reported in their sources that 'Alī was alert and felt the approach of the Qurayshis to him. He jumped up and attacked them holding his sword in his hand; they retreated and escaped.⁶⁷ The Shī'ite poets exploited the event of the Night of Migration and the honorable attitude and role that 'Alī played in it as an opportunity to praise him and spread his advantages and virtues. They composed beautiful poems that glorify his heroic deed and point out his sacrifice that went beyond any sacrifice according to the Shī'ites.⁶⁸ His sacrifice for the Prophet became a source of imagination for their poets.⁶⁹ This sacrifice was a prepared way for the Shiite to prefer 'Alī to other companions, mainly Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, whom the Shī'ites described as 'coward' and they giped him for it all the time.⁷⁰ In fact, they considered him disobedient to God, depending on what was revealed in the Koran concerning his migration (Hegira) in company with the Prophet.⁷¹ The event of the Night of Hegira became evidence to 'Alī's belief and his closeness to the Prophet and his

Sūrat al-Baqarah, which says: (*And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants*). was revealed about 'Alī when he sacrificed himself during the Migration Night on the Prophet's bed. See this interpretation in: al-Sheikh al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 53; Furāt, *al-Taḥṣīn*, 1: 65. Compare this Shī'ite interpretation with the argument of al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 H.\ 1067 CE) that it was revealed about Hijra of Ṣuhayb b. Sinān and his story in it. Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, 46-47. Compare with the Shī'ite interpretation of the *Koran* in: Meir M. Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in early Imāmī Shiism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 6-21.

⁶⁵ Veccia L. Vaglieri, "'Alī B. Abī Tālib", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, I, 381.

⁶⁶ This historical version, which was confirmed by the news reporters of Ahl al-Sunna, is mentioned in more than a classical source such as: Mūsā b. 'Uqbah, *al-Maghāzī*, 105; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 155; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1: 307.

⁶⁷ See: al-Shiekh al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 52; *al-'Ikhtisāṣ*, 165; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Qaṣīdah al-Mudhahhabah*, 126; al-Karājekī, *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, 2: 55. In an exciting version that is brought by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363 H.\ 973 CE) in his interpretation, he mentions that 'Alī jumped in the face of the plotters with the sword *Dhū al-Fuqār* in his hand. See in: al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfah bin Muḥammad al-Maghribī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-Akḥbār fī Faḍā'il al-'A'imma al-'Athār* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqalayn, 1994), 1: 260. It is known that all the historians transmitted that the sword *Dhū al-Fuqār* was not in 'Alī's possession at the time of the Migration and the Prophet gained it in Badr Battle (2 H.\ 624 CE), i.e. two years after the Migration. See what is written about *Dhū al-Fuqār*, which refutes what was mentioned by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363 H.\ 973 CE) in his version in: Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 332; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-'Umam wal-Mulūk* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988), 2: 48; 220.

⁶⁸ Compare al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 H.\ 1044 CE) and al-Karājekī (d. 449 H.\ 1057 CE) between 'Alī's sacrifice during the Migration Night and Prophet 'Ismā'il's sacrifice and his patience on the issue of his slaughter by his father 'Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl. They reached the conclusion that 'Alī is superior in his sacrifice to 'Ismā'il's sacrifice. See: al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukḥṭārah*, 61-65, al-Karājekī, *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, 2: 53-54.

⁶⁹ See the poetic passages that al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173 H.\ 789 CE) on this occasion, which emphasizes the Shī'ite version of the event of the Migration Night. See: al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Dīwān*, 94-97, 167, 194.

⁷⁰ Al-Jāḥiz (d. 255 H.\ 868 CE) confirms the attitude of al-Rāfiḍah in his book and reply to it in defense of Abū Bakr. See: al-Jāḥiz, *al-'Uthmāniyyah*, 42-43. The Shī'ites constantly made analogies between 'Alī's bravery and Abū Bakr's cowardice through the night of migration. See, for example, what is mentioned by: al-Karājekī, *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, 2: 54.

⁷¹ Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-Marzabānī, *Akḥbār Shu'arā' al-Shī'ah wa 'Akḥbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, Edited by: Muḥammad Hādī al-'Amīnī (Beirut: Sharikat al-Kutubī lil-Ṭibā'ah, 1993), 91-93.

heroic bravery and consequently, evidence to his bearing of troubles and difficulties during the Meccan period.⁷²

The historical sources dealt with the last missions that were entrusted to 'Alī by the Prophet before his migration to Yathrib including: the mission of handing the trusted deposits that were in charge of the Prophet to their owners from the people of Mecca.⁷³ When 'Alī performed all those tasks, he joined the Prophet.⁷⁴ The Shī'ite sources add to that another mission which is not less important than its preceding one. According to their reports, 'Alī was asked by the Prophet to take care of his daughters and members of the family who stayed in Mecca after his migration. 'Alī was asked to take care of them and protect them from enemies and then accompany them to Yathrib,⁷⁵ where the Prophet waited for them.⁷⁶

The Shī'ites consider this task as the end of the Meccan period and a virtue that distinguished 'Alī from all the members of his family and companions, which is an added virtue to what they see of his numerous virtues that indicate his supreme position that cannot be reached except by some prophets.⁷⁷ The historical sources do not mention anything about 'Alī's migration and its form while the Shiites mention in their sources that he faced difficulties and that he migrated on foot. These details bear an allusion to his courage, forbearance and sacrifice for Islam.⁷⁸

CONCLUSION

It is impossible to depend on the Shiite classical reports that observe the details of 'Alī's life during the Meccan period in order to formulate a complete objective biography because there are a lot of differences between what the Shī'ites tell and what the Sunni historians introduce in their sources regarding his role during that important historical era. It is necessary to pay attention that 'Alī's personality throughout the Meccan period differs in the light of the Sunni sources in many of its characteristics from his personality in the Shī'ite sources and this difference did not arise accidentally. In general, it is a recruited and targeted difference that was intended to support political goals. The study supposes that the Shī'ite written heritage

⁷² See what al-'Iskāfī (d. 240 H.\ 854 CE) said in his reply to al-Jāhiz when he compared between what 'Alī endured during the Meccan period and what Abū Bakr endured in it. See: al-Jāhiz, *al-Uthmāniyah*, 311.

⁷³ See in: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 2: 118, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 56; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1: 309; al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh*, 216; compare with: Etan Kohlberg, and Ismā'īl Poonawala, "'Alī B. Abī Ṭāleb", *Encyclopedia Iranica*, I, 1985, 839.

⁷⁴ Shī'ite sources mention that 'Alī did not stay overnight in Mecca after he emigrated from it. Al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 H.\ 992 CE) mentioned that: "' Amīr al-Mu'minīn, peace be upon him, did not stay overnight in Mecca after he emigrated from it till he died because he hated to stay in a land from which the Messenger of God, God's blessings be upon him and upon his family, emigrated". See: Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥdhuruhu al-Faqīh*, Edited by: al-Sheikh 'Alī al-Akhwandī (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Najaf, 1957), 2: 130.

⁷⁵ This is not in line with the historical versions that connect the migration of the Prophet's family with someone other than 'Alī. See, for example: al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tārīkh*, 2: 10.

⁷⁶ al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 54. See what was mentioned by: Henri Laoust, "le Role de 'Alī dans la Sira Chiite", *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 30 (1963), 9. Compare with Vaglieri's conclusions regarding the migration of the Prophet's daughters including Fātimah, who said that the Prophet's helper Zayd b. Ḥārithah, who undertook the mission of moving them from Mecca to al-Madīnah and the risks that the mentioned caravan met on their way. See: L. V. Vaglieri, "Fāṭima", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, II, 842.

⁷⁷ See: al-Mufīd, *al-'Irshād*, 1: 54.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 1: 54.

employed any available materials and details that are related to the presence of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb during the secret and public Da'wah throughout the Meccan period because its historical authoritative data are scarce and the Shī'ites added anything that fits in with the Shī'ite faith and its religious and political interests in an aim to lend a halo of excellence, distinction, and sanctification to 'Alī's character.

REFERENCES

- 'Ayyāshī, Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd. *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*. Beirut: Mu'asasat al-'Alamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 1991.
- Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā. *Ansāb al-Ashraf*. Edited by: Suhail Zakkār and Riyāḍ Zirīklī. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996.
- Bar Asher, Meir M. *Issue in the Interpretation of the Classical Imāmiyah Shī'ite*. Doctorate dissertation. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1991.
- _____. *Scripture and Exegesis in early Imāmī Shiism*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Donaldson, Dwight. *The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Irak*. London: Luzac & Company, 1933.
- Eliash, Joseph. *'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in Ithnā-'Asharī Shī'ī Belief*. Ph.D. Dissertation. London: University of London, 1966.
- Furāt b. 'Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī. *Tafsīr Furāt*. Edited by: Muḥammad al-Kāzim. Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Nu'mān, 1992.
- Ḥimyarī, 'Ismā'īl B. Muḥammad al-Sayyid. *Dīwān al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*. Edited by: Shāker Hādī. Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1966.
- Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad. *al-'Ashraf*. al-Dawḥa: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1993.
- Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malek. *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*. Edited by: Muḥammad 'Alī al-Qutub and Muḥammad al-Dālī Balṭa. Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyah, 2001.
- Ibn 'Ishāq, Muḥammad. *al-Siyar wal-Maghāzī*. Edited by: Suhail Zakkār. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978.
- Ibn Karāmah, Sharaf al-'Islām b. Sa'īd al-Muḥsen. *Tanbīh al-Ghafīlīn 'an Faḍā'il al-Tālibīyyīn*. Beirut: Markiz al-Ghadīr lil-Dirāsāt al-'Islāmiyyah, 2000.
- Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994.
- 'Iskāfī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Mu'tazilī. *al-Mi'yār wal-Muwāzanah fī Faḍā'il Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*. Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī. Beirut: n.d. 1981.
- Jāhiz, 'Amr b. Baḥr. *al-'Uthmāniyah*. Edited by: 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn. Cairo: Maṭābi' Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1955.
- Kafri, Ofer Livneh. "The Classical Shī'ite and its attitude towards Jerusalem". *Journal of Arabic Teachers*. Giv'āt Ḥavīva: The Institute for Arabic Teaching, 1993, Issue 14-15, p. 130-136.
- Karājīkī, Muḥammad. *Kanz al-Fawā'id*. Edited by: al-Sheikh 'Abd Allāh Ne'meh. Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1985.
- Khuzā'ī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad. *al-'Arba'īn 'an al-'Arba'īn fī Faḍā'il 'Alī Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn*. Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī. Teherān: Mu'asasat al-Ṭibā'ah wal-Nashr, 1996.
- Kohlberg, Etan "From Imāmiya to Ithnā-'Ashariyya". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39 (1976), 521-534.
- _____. and Ismā'īl Poonawala. "'Alī B. Abī Ṭāleb". *Encyclopedia Iranica*. I, 1985, 838-848.

- Laoust, Henri. "le Role de 'Alī dans la Sira Chiite". *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 30 (1963), 7-26.
- Maghribī al-Nu'mān, al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfah bin Muḥammad. *Sharḥ al-Akḥbār fī Faḍā'il al-'A'imma al-'Athār*. Beirut: Dār al-Thaqalayn, 1994.
- Mas'ūdī, 'Alī b. al-Husayn. *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'āden al-Jawhar*. Edited by: Sa'īd al-Lahḥām. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1977.
- _____. *al-Tanbīh wal-'Ishrāf*. Beirut: Dār waMaktabat al-Hilāl, 1993.
- Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Naysābūrī. *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Tijārī lil-Ṭibā'ah, n.d.
- Mu'tazilī 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī 'Aḥmad b. 'Abdullah. *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-'Adl wal-Tawḥīd*. Edited by: 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Sulaymān Duniā. Cairo: al-Sharikah al-'Arabiyyah lil-Ṭibā'ah, 1962.
- Maghāzili al-Shāfi'ī, 'Alī b. Muḥammad. *Manāqib al-'Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*. Edited by: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī. Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1983.
- Maqdisī, Abū al-Ma'ālī b. al-Murajjā b. Ibrāhīm. *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wal-Khalīl wa Faḍā'il al-Shām*. Shafa'amr: Dār al-Mashriq, 1995.
- Marzabānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān. *Akḥbār Shu'arā' al-Shī'ah wa 'Akḥbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*. Edited by: Muḥammad Hādī al-'Amīnī. Beirut: Sharikat al-Kutubī lil-Ṭibā'ah, 1993.
- Metz, Adam. *al-Ḥadārah al-'Islāmiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijrī*. Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wal-Tarjamah wal-Nashr, 1957.
- Mufīd, Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān al-Sheikh. *al-Irshād fī Ma'rifat Hujaj illāh 'Alal-'ibād*. Beirut: Mu'asasat 'Āl al-Bayt li'ihyā' il-Turāth, 1955.
- _____. *Risalat 'Imān Abī Ṭāleb*. Edited: Muḥammad Ḥasan Al-Yāsīn. Bghdad: Maktabat al-Nahḍah, 1963.
- _____. *al-Ikhtishāṣ*. Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1993.
- Murtaḍā, 'Alī b. al-Husayn al-Sharīf. *al-Qaṣīdah al-Mudḥahhabah fī Madḥ Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*. Edited By: Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1970.
- _____. *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah min al-'Uyūn wal-Maḥāsin*. Edited by: Al-Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Ja'faryān al-Aṣbahānī. Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1993.
- Mūsā b. 'Uqbah. *al-Maghāzī*. al-Ribāṭ: Maṭba'at al-Ma'āref al-Jadīdah, 1994.
- Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'yb. *Khaṣā'is 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb*. Edited by: al-Dānī b. Munīr Al Zahāwī. Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 2000.
- Rice, W. A. "'Alī in Shī'ah Tradition". *Islamic Law and Legal Theory* 7 (1996), 443-460.
- Ṣadūq, al-Sheikh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*. al-Najaf: Dār al-Kutub al-'islāmiyyah, 1957.
- _____. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*. Edited by: al-Sheikh 'Alī al-Akḥwandī. Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Najaf, 1957.
- _____. *Ilal al-Sharā'i'*. al-Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1963.
- _____. *al-Khiṣāl*. al-Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1971.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr. *Tārīkh al-'Umam wal-Mulūk*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988.
- _____. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992.
- Ṭūsī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan. *Ikhtiyār Ma'refat al-Rijāl*. Iran: Isfand, 1929.
- _____. *al-Fihrist*. Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Wafā', 1983.
- _____. *al-'Iqtisād fī mā Yata'allaq bil-'i'tiqād*. Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1986.
- Vaglieri, Veccia L. "'Alī B. Abī Ṭālib". *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, I, 381-386.

_____. "Fāṭima", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, II, 841-850.
Wāḥidī, 'Alī b. Aḥmad. *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*. Beirut: Dār waMaktabat al-Hilāl, 1991.