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## SHRINES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME OF HAZRAT ALI IN CENTRAL ASIA

**Abstract:** The article examines the origins of various legends associated with the deification of the personality of Hazrat Ali among Shiites, as well as the emergence of holy places associated with the name of Caliph Ali in modern Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. It has also been found that Shiites visit their holy cities on the basis of procedures such as performing rituals and customs that are followed during the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

**Key words:** Central Asia, Hazrat Ali, Iraq, Najaf, Shahimardon, Duldul, legends, Sunnis, Shiites, Mazari Sharif.  
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### Introduction

Before describing the holy places and customs of the Shia communities in Central Asia, it is necessary to first look at the history of the origin of these holy places and traditions. Indeed, to this day, we can see comparatively how these holy places and the ceremonies performed in them are observed by modern Shia communities.

For Muslims-Shiites (mainly Imams, Zaydis), the main pilgrimage sites after Hajj to Mecca and Medina are Najaf, Karbala, Qom and Mashhad.

Mashhadi Ali in Najaf is 10 km to the west from Kufa in Iraq, is a shrine on the border of the Mesopotamian valley and desert. If we talk about the history of the city of Najaf, we must first mention the identity of Ali ibn Abu Talib, the fourth of the first four caliphs, known as the "caliph Rashidin" or "choriyar" who made this city such a holy city. Cousins and sons-in-law of Muhammad (s.a.w.) Hazrat Ali (Fatima's husband). His father was Abu Talib ibn Abdulmuttalib, and his mother was Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim. Hazrat Ali was brought up by Muhammad (s.a.w.) from the age of nine. Nickname – Haydar.

He was reportedly wounded on January 19, 661, by a man named Abdurrahman ibn Muljam as-Sarimi (a representative of a foreign sect) as he was leaving the mosque of Kufa, and died two days later.

There are also various narrations related to the death of Hazrat Ali. According to one of these narrations, Hazrat Ali, knowing that his death was imminent, bequeathed not to kill the foreigner who had wounded him, and to tie his body to a camel after his death, and to bury him wherever the camel sank. As Hazrat Ali had bequeathed, after his death his body was tied to a camel and left in an open field. Camel walked 20 km then sank down to rest, and they buried Hazrat Ali there. The ground was arranged as a high hill over his grave and tents were built around the tomb. After that, more tents were built around the tomb and the city of Najaf was built [7, p. 37; 2, p. 10-15]. Indeed, an-Najaf means "hill" in Arabic.

Najaf is now one of Iraq's major cultural and religious cities. It has a world-renowned Shiite university and several religious schools. It should be noted that studying at these universities and schools is not an easy task. Students study here for eight years and live a hermit life. Each student has their own room, which has only a rug, a few pillows and

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blankets. It is the students' responsibility to keep the rooms clean. The university has a very rich library, which contains various philosophical and religious works, the Qur'an and commentaries in various editions. The university building and surrounding areas have many toilets, fountains and pools.

However, the main attraction of Najaf is the Hazrat Ali Mosque, which is located in the middle of the city and covers a large area. Orientalist Jalal Ibrahimov described the Ali Mosque in Najaf in the 1980s: That is, the majesty of the mosque, the fact that not everyone has access to it, and the traditions that have survived for ten centuries, are proof of this.

J. Ibragimov writes, "The area where the Caliph Ali Mosque is located is surrounded by a high stone wall and has four gates. The walls, gates and domes of the towers are tiled. The roofs of the mosques are decorated with verses from the Qur'an, which decorate the mosque like a pattern, and they look more like a pattern than an inscription. The dome over the tomb of Caliph Ali is thinly covered with gold from the outside and glistens in the warm rays of the Iraqi sun. The inside of the dome is made of flat pearls, giving the impression of a cloudless blue sky above its head" [7, p. 40].

Najaf is home to Iraq's largest cemetery. Every Iraqi Muslim considers it an honor to be buried near the tomb of Hazrat Ali. However, burial in Najaf Cemetery is so expensive that only wealthy people can afford to build a mausoleum there.

Orientalist Jalal Ibragimov writes that for centuries a large treasure has been stored in the tomb of Hazrat Ali, and this treasure is stored in two warehouses. One of the warehouses is located under the tomb of Hazrat Ali. It is a collection of wonderful works of applied art - jewelry, antiques of great artistic, historical and cultural value. Many of them are adorned with precious stones, among which there are rare specimens. It is said that there was a Qur'an written by Ali in this warehouse. The second warehouse is located outside the mosque. It contains a variety of weapons, some of which are considered works of jewelry art. There are gems here too. The second warehouse is said to be the most expensive carpet in the world, currently priced at around \$ 2.5-3 million. valued at USD \$. It is 92 meters long and 1.8 meters wide. In fact, the wealth in these warehouses is enormous, as evidenced by many sources. These resources can be used only in times of great famine in the country [7, p. 40]. But so far these riches have not been used. The fate of these warehouses after the events in Iraq is still unknown.

Another of the rules of pilgrimage is stated in Ibn Battuta's work: "In gold and jam (vessels), plants that emit roses, muskrats and other fragrant odors are placed next to the grave, and pilgrims put their hands on it and rub it on their heads and faces" [13, p. 185]. Ibn Battuta also describes the rules of pilgrimage: "The shrine of Caliph Ali is the source of all

prophecies. They sit on the ground around him, praying and reciting dhikr. As time goes on, all the healed patients become healthy and get up on their own. They say, "La ilaha illa Allah Muhammadu rasulullah Ali waliullah." This is how they tell a story about themselves. Although I didn't understand them that evening, this story was told by someone else. He saw three people in a harem madrasa. All three of them were sitting on the ground. One of them was from Rome, the second from Isfahan, and the third from Khorasan. I searched for them. They say they have not been relieved of their pain this year. Now they are waiting for him to come on the same evening next year" [13, p. 185-186].

In addition, Ibn Battuta said, "If everyone in the cities of Iraq falls ill, he should come to the tomb of Caliph Ali," especially if the villagers are sick. He also wrote in his Travelogue that if the members were sick, they would bring gold and silver in the form of these members and give them as gifts.

According to reports, one of the largest Shia cemeteries is located near the tomb of Hazrat Ali in Najaf. Every Muslim-Shia considers it an honor to be buried there. But burial there is costly [1, p. 174; 14, p. 8-15].

According to the narrations, it is assumed that a person buried in a holy place will be free from the torment of the grave, the questions of Munkar and Nakir, i.e. the soul of the deceased will be under the protection of the imams. For this purpose, for centuries, relatives of the deceased have been bringing corpses to holy cities. In the recent past, the transportation of corpses to the holy city was carried out only by horse-drawn carriages. That is why it would take a long time before the corpses arrived in these lands. "Sometimes in Najaf, when the dust is used in conjunction with the air, there is a smell of the corpse. Najaf is a place where the corpses of the dead from India, Iran and other places meet the corpses of great and powerful people" [16, p. 88]. Despite such difficulties, the custom of burial in holy places has not lost its significance even today.

In Islam, attitudes towards the person of Hazrat Ali and visiting his grave are different. Hazrat Ali entered the history of Islam as a tragic person. The Sunnis recognized him as the fourth caliph. Although foreigners had a very negative attitude towards Ali in his time, although the hadiths considered pilgrimage a controversial issue and condemned it in the Hanbali creeds, the works of Ibn Taymiyya, and the religious practices and works of the Wahhabis, some sects of Shiites and Shiites deified Ali. , they place him even higher than Muhammad (s.a.w.). Hazrat Ali is an innocent person of religious and secular life. Shiites consider him to have all the good qualities, to know and interpret internal and external religious knowledge [17, p. 112].

The deification of the personality of Hazrat Ali among the Shiites has led to the emergence of various

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legends and the sanctification of several shrines and tombs in Central Asia in the name of Hazrat Ali. In Central Asia, such shrines are called Shahimardon, meaning "king of the earth", "king of the brave". This is one of the names given to Hazrat Ali, and according to various narrations, Hazrat Ali was awarded this title for his bravery in battle. It is narrated that on the eve of his death, he called his sons, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, and said: The next morning a Bedouin on a white camel will come and ask you for my body. You hand over my body to him immediately! But do not follow him. " His sons wept and asked, "If we do not follow him, where will we find your grave?" Hazrat Ali passed away, saying that where there is a plain surrounded by mountains on three sides, that place will be my grave. There are seven such places in the world [13, p. 51-54; 18, p. 320].

In the village of Shohimardon, Fergana region of Uzbekistan, there is a sacred place named after Hazrat Ali, which is located at the height of 1540-1570 m. There is no information about Shahimardon in medieval written sources. Apparently, this sanctuary became popular in the XVII-XVIII centuries and became the most revered sanctuary of the Fergana Valley. In the 19th century, Shahimardon became the main place of pilgrimage for the governors and officials of the Kokand Khanate [15, p. 310-311].

In the 1920s, the sheikhs of Shahimardon were in a mood to oppose the Soviet government. In 1929, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyazi, a famous revolutionary writer and statesman, was assassinated in Shahimardon. After that, the village around the shrine in Shahimardon was named Khamzaabad. In the 50s, the former mausoleum there was demolished and a mausoleum was built in its place to Hamza's tomb. Nevertheless, this place is considered a sacred place associated with the name of Hazrat Ali and remains a place of pilgrimage not only for the Fergana Valley, but for all the inhabitants of Central Asia. The Shahimardon area and its surroundings have been officially turned into a holiday resort. After the independence of Uzbekistan, [2, p.202] the village was renamed Shohimardon [12, p. 110].

There are many other legendary holy places in Central Asia associated with the name of Hazrat Ali. One of them is 1 km away from the Shahimardon gate of the outer fortress of Khiva. It is the tomb of the great cemetery in the remote village of Badirkhan, and it is called "in this tomb lies the king of men, Hazrat Ali" [10, p. 8]. There is also the tomb of Hazrat Ali in the Yigitpirim cemetery in the Sokh area of the Fergana Valley and in the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

In some parts of Central Asia, there are places where people associate these lands with the name of Hazrat Ali. According to the legends, Hazrat Ali personally took part in the conquest of Central Asia and liberated the land from the infidels and died in battle. That is why the lands where Hazrat Ali stopped,

prayed or showed some courage were also sanctified. Such places are kadamjo, ie "footprints". There are also places where traces of Hazrat Ali's sword are left, and they are called Zulfiqar. For example, the Keskantash cemetery in the village of Gova in Namangan Province is a case in point. In other places, there are holy places where a spring or a spring came out and tall trees grew when Hazrat Ali hit the ground with his stick. For example, the tombs of Khauz-e Muron in Uratepa, Tajikistan, Chashma-e Arzanak in Leninabad, Sultan Weiss in Balikli, Namangan, and Akhtam Sahoba in Toytepa, Tashkent. There are other holy places where handprints (called "panja") left by Hazrat Ali while praying can be found in various parts of Central Asia. Traces of Hazrat Ali's horse Duldul are also considered sacred, and such holy places are located under the name of Duldul in Yonbosh, Eski Nisa village, Khwarazm, Fergana and Tashkent regions of Ashgabat district of Turkmenistan [8, p. 110].

At the foot of Mount Kopetdag, in the village of Yanbosh in Turkmenistan, there is a stone associated with the name Duldul, which is called Duldul dash. According to the narrations, when Ali stopped to pray, he tied his horse to an iron peg and nailed it to the stone. He was praying on a rock 30 meters below. This stone is also preserved and is called Namaz dash. In it, Hazrat Ali left his footprints. Another 50-60 meters below there is a sacred stone called Bogaz dash (Stone of Pregnancy). This stone is visited mainly by women who want to cure infertility and have children.

There are also legends that Hazrat Ali came to Khwarazm and showed his skills. For example, when he came to Khwarazm, he jumped from the Amu Darya on his winged horse Duldul to pray in Duldul[11, p. 40].

It is known that Hazrat Ali had never been in Central Asia. Those who serve in the holy places will try to explain in different ways how the tomb of Hazrat Ali came to Central Asia [4, p.314] in order to prove them, based on the mythical narrations about Hazrat Ali. For example, one such explanation is as follows: After the death of Hazrat Ali, various groups sought to bury his body in his homeland. When each group that came to the funeral opened their coffins, the body of Hazrat Ali was lying in the coffin of each of them. That is why he was buried in seven (according to some narrations, eleven) places. According to another narration, Ali's body was taken from the sky by a camel and they disappeared without a trace. However, there is evidence that the tomb of Hazrat Ali is located at the confluence of two rivers, the White and the Black. It is said that the white river is the water that comes from the melting of the white snow in the mountains, and the black river is the water that comes out of the ground. One of such places is the tomb of Hazrat Ali in Shahimardon [12, p.64].

The reason for Hazrat Ali's popularity in Central Asia [3, p.4540] is the influence of various sects of the

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Shia sect in Islam - the Kaysanis, the Ismailis and other sects. Because these currents were active in the area in the early Middle Ages. In addition, Sufism also played a major role in the deification of the personality of Hazrat Ali. Because the Sufis had a great respect for the personality of Hazrat Ali, they considered Hazrat Ali to be esoteric (hidden) and considered him their master.

Thus, due to the deification of the personality of Hazrat Ali among the Shiites, various legends have emerged, and in the territories of present-day Uzbekistan, [5, p.50] Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, sacred places associated with the name of Hazrat Ali have appeared.

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