

= Assassination of Ali =

Ali ibn Abi Talib , the fourth ( last ) Sunni Rashidun caliph and first Shia Imam , was assassinated by a Kharijite called Ibn Muljam on 26 January 661 at the Great Mosque of Kufa , in present @-@ day Iraq . Ali , who was then 62 or 63 years of age , died due to his injuries two days after Ibn Muljam struck him on his head by a poison @-@ coated sword , on the 21 ( or 19 ) Ramadan 40 AH ( 28 January 661 CE ) . He was the third successive caliph , after Umar and Uthman , to be assassinated .

Ali became the caliph after the assassination of Uthman in 656 . However he faced opposition from various factions including the Levant governor , Muawiyah I. A civil war , called the First Fitna , took place within the early Islamic state which resulted in the overthrow of the Rashidun caliphs and the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty . It began when the caliph Uthman ibn Affan was assassinated in 656 and continued through the four @-@ year reign of Ali . After Ali agreed to arbitration with Muawiyah I following the Battle of Siffin ( 657 ) , a revolt happened against him by some members of his army , later known as Kharijites ( " those who leave " ) . They killed some of Ali 's supporters , but they were crushed by Ali 's forces at the Battle of Nahrawan in July 658 .

Ibn Muljam met up with two other Kharijites namely al @-@ Burak ibn Abd Allah and Amr ibn Bakr al @-@ Tamimi at Mecca , and concluded that the situation of the Muslims at the time was due to the errors of Ali , Muawiah and Amr ibn As , governor of Egypt . They decided to kill the three in order to resolve the " deplorable situation " of their time and also avenge their companions killed at Nahrawan . Aiming to kill Ali , Ibn Muljam headed toward Kufa where he fell in love with a woman whose brother and father had died at Nahrawan . She agreed to marry him if only he could kill Ali . Consequently , Ali was stabbed by Ibn Muljam at the Great Mosque of Kufa . After Ali 's death , Ibn Muljam was executed in retaliation by Hasan ibn Ali .

= = Background = =

Events leading to Ali 's assassination can be traced back to the death of Muhammad , prophet of Islam , where the community of Muslims disputed over his succession as the leader of Ummah . The assembly at the Saqifat Bani Saïda gave allegiance to Abu Bakr as the caliph . While Sunni muslims believed that Muhammad had not selected a successor , Shia Muslims believed that Ali was appointed as Mohammad 's successor by God referring to the event of Ghadir Khumm . Abu Bakr was succeeded by Umar , who was murdered in 644 . After Umar 's death , Ali , the cousin and son @-@ in @-@ law of Muhammed , and Uthman were contenders for the post . Uthman was elected as caliph by an election council . Ali became the caliph after the assassination of Uthman in 656 .

Ali 's caliphate was coincident with First Fitna . Though Ali was elected as the fourth Rashidun ( the " rightly guided " ) caliph five days after Uthman 's death , he faced opposition during his rule . On one hand , A 'isha , Talhah and Al @-@ Zubayr revolted against him in Mecca and on the other hand Muawiyah I , the Umayyad governor of Levant , refused to pledge allegiance to him as the new caliph . Therefor , civil war took place which was about succession to the office of caliphate . Ali 's opponents asked the killers of Uthman should be punished . Ali , first emerged victorious at the Battle of Camel in 656 , against an army primarily led by Muhammad 's wife Aisha and other sahaba . Then , Ali also fought the Battle of Siffin in 657 against Muawiyah . The battle ended in a stalemate with Ali entering into arbitration with Muawiyah .

A group of Ali 's army , later known as Kharijites or Khawarij ( " those who leave " ) , opposed against arbitration after the battle of Siffin , when he accepted arbitration with Mu 'awiya . They opposed to human judgement in the matter of religion and used " Judgment belongs to God alone , " as their slogan . In 658 they violated their oath of allegiance , revolted and openly threatened to kill any Muslim who would not join them . Ali defeated them at the Battle of Nahrawan . The killing of the Kharijites was " the most problematic event " during Ali 's caliphate , because they had been among his most vigorous allies in the war against Muawiah .

Ibn Muljam along with two other men , namely al @-@ Burak ibn Abd Allah and Amr ibn Bakr al @-@ Tamimi , all considered as belonging to Kinda , met at Mecca and had a long discussion after

the pilgrimage ceremony . They concluded that the situation of Muslims at the time was due to Ali , Mu?awiya and Amr ibn al @-@ As , " whom they regarded as being in error " , and swore to kill them to also " avenge their companion 's massacred at al @-@ Nahrawan . " They arranged the date of assassination and each of them chose his victim .

= = Death = =

= = = Assassination = = =

Ali was assassinated by Ibn Muljam , a Kharijite from Egypt , at the Great Mosque of Kufa , located in Kufa , Iraq , on 26 January 661 . Ibn Muljam was of Himyar by male descent but counted among Murad due to his maternal kinship , and allied with the Banii Jabala of Kindah . He had entered Kufa with the aim of killing Ali to avenge the Kharijite leaders at al @-@ Nahrawan .

In Kufa , he encountered a group of people from Taym al @-@ Ribab tribe who were mourning ten of their tribemates killed at Nahrawan by Ali 's army . Among them was a woman named Quttaam . According to cleric Ali al @-@ Sallabi , on seeing Quttaam , he " lost his senses " and " forgot the assignment " for which he was roaming , and proposed to her . Quttaam said that she would marry him if he could " heal " her by giving her three thousand dinars , a chanteuse , a male slave and the death of Ali . Quttaam wanted revenge too as her father and brother had been killed by Ali 's forces at Al @-@ Nahrawan . Ibn Muljam persuaded a man called Shubayb to assist him in killing Ali . Besides Shablb ibn Bujra , Wardan ibn al @-@ Mujalid also were Ibn Muljam 's accomplice . The conspirators stationed themselves opposite the door from which Ali would enter the Mosque .

On Friday , 19 ( or 17 ) Ramadan , Ali entered Kufa mosque to perform the morning prayer . Ibn Muljam wounded Ali on the " crown of his head " by a poisoned sword after Ali had recited verses from the Sura al @-@ Anbiya as part of the worship , or when he was entering the mosque . Shablb 's sword did not hit Ali and instead " hit the wooden frame of the door or the arch . " He fled and was caught near the gates of Kinda by ' Uwaymir ' , but could finally escape through the crowd . Wardan ran away to his home and was killed there by a relative , " ' Abd Allah b . Najaba b . Ubayd , after confessing his involvement . " Ibn Muljam was caught by the Hashimite al @-@ Mughlra ibn Nawfal ibn al @-@ Harith .

= = = The role of Al @-@ Ash 'ath ibn Qays = = =

al @-@ Ash 'ath ibn Qays was the chief of Kindah tribe in Kufa . According to Wilferd Madelung , in the final years of Ali 's reign he had tendency towards Muawiah and received letter including offers of money from him to show reluctance about Ali 's campaign against Muawiah . Some sources have accused al @-@ Ash 'ath of being informed of the plot of the assassination of Ali . According to al @-@ Yaqubi , Ibn Muljam was hosted by al @-@ Ash 'ath for a month when Ibn Muljam had been preparing his sword . Another report by Ibn Sa 'd says that al @-@ Ash 'ath stayed the night of the killing at mosque counseling Ibn Muljam and that al @-@ Ash 'ath signaled the time of attempting the assassination by saying " the morning has smiled . " The majority of the sources narrates an ambiguous phrase from Al @-@ Ash 'ath : " the dawn has risen for thee " and those who has Shia tendency give it as a clear encouragement to Ibn Muljam : " Deliverance , deliverance ! The dawn has risen for thee . " After assassination , Hujr ibn ' Adi accused him for Ali 's murder . There is even a report which says he warned Ali about Ibn Muljam . According to Laura Veccia Vaglieri , the sources narrate different reports which vary from outright accusation to a suspicion of complicity and even to an act of loyalty .

However al @-@ Sallabi believes that these accusations against al @-@ Ash 'ath seem baseless as he was a loyalist and was against Kharijites from the time they first appeared and fought them at Nahrawan . He was also the first one to fight against the people of Syria in the battle for the water . Moreover , he believes there exists no narration from the family of Ali ibn Abi Talib supporting these accusations against al @-@ Ash 'ath , neither his family did not discuss it with any member of al

@-@ Ash 'ath 's family . After Ali was injured by Ibn Muljam , al @-@ Ash'ath sent his son to determine Ali 's condition , his words suggesting that he knew Ali would not survive .

= = = Death and burial = = =

Ali ordered that if he died from the wound , Ibn Muljam had to be executed in retaliation . Otherwise , if he survived , he would decide on how to treat him . Ali died two days later on 21 Ramadan 40 / 30 January 661 ( or 19 Ramadan 40 / 28 January 661 ) at the age of 62 or 63 , and Ibn Muljam was killed in retaliation ( Qisas ) by Hasan ibn Ali , in accordance to Ali 's instruction .

Ali 's body was washed by his sons , Hasan , Husayn , Muhammad ibn al @-@ Hanafiyyah and one of his nephew , Abdullah ibn Ja 'far . Then secretly buried by those men and ' Ubaydullah ibn al @-@ Abbas , since it was feared that his body would be " exhumed and profaned " . Some sources claim Ali was buried at the Imam Ali Mosque at Najaf in present @-@ day Iraq , while others , usually Afghans , say he was buried at the Rawze @-@ e @-@ Sharif in the Afghan city of Mazar @-@ e @-@ Sharif . Ali 's death is commemorated by Shia Muslims every year .

= = = Ali 's prediction of his fate = = =

Two types of traditions exist regrading Ali 's awareness of his fate long before the assassination . This foreknowledge was through his own " premonition of it " or by Muhammad . Based on numerous traditions , Ali 's beard staining with " blood flowing from his head " had been revealed by Muhammad or Ali . Another set of traditions by Muhammad says that " the most evil man among the ancients was he who had killed the camel of the prophet Salih and among his contemporaries , he who would kill Ali . " The night of the assassination , Ali said that his fate was about to come true , and when he left home in the morning , " geese followed him , cackling " weeping for his funeral , as he said later .

= = Aftermath = =

According to Wilferd Madelung , a small minority of people were convinced that " he was the best of Muslims after the Prophet and the only one entitled to rule them , " and after Ali 's death people were divided regarding their view toward him . " Distrust of , and opposition to , Mu 'awiya and his Syrian cohorts " was what united the majority . Ali 's admirers then turned into majority due to " highhandedness , misrule and repression " of Umayyad .

After Ali 's death , the Shias of Iraq declared Ali 's eldest son Hasan the successor to Ali , thus proclaiming him as their new caliph . However , Hasan was not interested in becoming caliph , and to prevent further bloodshed , he signed the Hasan ? Muawiya treaty and abdicated in favor of Muawiyah , who became the first caliph of the Umayyad caliphate . Muawiyah died in Medina at the age of forty @-@ five in 669 , and was succeeded by Yazid I in 61 AH ( 680 CE ) but Hasan 's brother Husayn ibn Ali refused to accept Yazid 's leadership . After being invited by the Shiites of Iraq in the same year , Husayn started his march to Iraq . However , during their stay at Karbala , his army was massacred by Yazid at the Battle of Karbala on 10 Muharram ( 10 October ) and his death is commemorated by Shia every year during Muharram .