

Na'd-e Ali in Shi'i Ismaili Tradition: Origins, Doctrinal Foundations, & Spiritual Applications

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Abstract: This study examines the origins, theological interpretations, and practical applications of the invocation Na'd-e Ali as preserved in Shi'i Ismaili traditions. Rooted in narrations from classical works such as Majalis Hatimiyyah and other Ismaili devotional heritage, Na'd-e Ali is believed to have been divinely revealed during the Ghazwah Ohud and Ghazwah Khaybar, providing divine aid to Rasulullah (S) through Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as). In Ismaili cosmology, the Dua serves as a spiritual link to the Imam al-Zaman (as), the son of Mazhar al-Ajaib, it represents the protective shield of the Imam's Walayah. General Shi'i thought frames it within Tawassul, seeking proximity to Allah through His chosen Wali, Ali. The text outlines prescribed recitations for protection, healing, social harmony, spiritual elevation, and prosperity, illustrating the multi-dimensional role of Na'd-e Ali in devotional life. Revered for its perceived spiritual benefits-always sought bi-idhnil'lah (with Allah's permission), this study provides a comprehensive understanding of this Dua's historical background, doctrinal foundations, interpretations, and spiritual applications. This article presents a thematic reconstruction of Amaliyat Na'd-e Ali. The source text is a Yemeni Risalah written by a learned Shaikh of Al Waleed dynasty of Du'at and Hudud of Yemeni Ismaili Daw'ah, Sayyidi Abd al-Qadir bin Al Qadi Habibullah al-Waleed, as a practical handbook of spiritually framed recitational exercises, talismanic usages, and prescriptive devotional routines intended for seekers looking for relief in times of distress, illness, financial hardship, domestic difficulty, and other worldly concerns. The present draft offers an academically styled, critically organised presentation of the work's central structure, operative logic, and devotional worldview. Particular attention is given to the text's repeated emphasis on ritual purity, intention, numerical recitation, continuity of practice, and the use of written forms or numerical tables as adjuncts to Dua. .

Keywords: Amaliyat; Wadifah; Tawidh; Na'd-e Ali; Shia; Majalis Hatimiyyah; Sayyiduna Hatim Muhiyuddin; Tawassul; Walayah; Mazhar al-Ajaib; spiritual benefits; protection; healing; amulets, Tawidh;

1. Introduction

The text under consideration, *Amaliyat Nad'e-Ali*, belongs to a recognisable genre of Arabic devotional literature concerned primarily with doctrine, jurisprudential argument, or systematic theology, but with applied religious practice. Works of this nature occupy an important place in the lived Shi'i and Sufi worlds. They are commonly read not for speculative reflection but for *Hidayah* in confronting concrete human difficulties: illness, fear, poverty, domestic strain, delayed marriage, hostility from others, and legal or social entanglement. At the center of the present text lies the *Nida* known as *Na'd-e Ali*, a *Dua* traditionally associated with appeal, assistance, and relief in adversity. Around this central *Dua*, the work constructs a complete practical system: one of ritual preparation, prescribed recitation, numerically structured repetition, focused intention, and, in certain cases, the preparation of *Tawidh* forms. The text's tone is not argumentative. It assumes the value of the practice and proceeds directly to instruction. Its purpose is descriptive, translational, and interpretive. It seeks to make the text intelligible to an English-reading audience while preserving the character of the original as a manual of devotional application.

2. Na'd-e Ali in Shi'i Ismaili Thought:

Na'd-e Ali is a *Dua* invocation centered on Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as), widely known. In doctrinal terms, it occupies the sacred status. In Shia world, generally, *Na'd-e Ali* is best understood as an expression of *Tawassul* through Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as): the *Mumineen* seeks divine aid by invoking the spiritual rank, sanctity, and *Walayah* of Ali (as). This rests on a broader Shi'i understanding of Ali (as) as *Wasi* and sole *Warith* of *Rasulullah* (S), whose authority encompasses over the Universe. Therefore, centrality of Ali (as) in Shia metaphysics and devotion, including the idea that 'ilm 'ilahi is mediated through the divinely designated figures of prophecy and *Walayah*. Accordingly, in Shia world, usage of the invocation functions less as a technical philosophical proposition than as applied theology in devotional form: attachment to *Moula Ali* (as) becomes a means of nearness to Allah, confidence in intercession, and hope for deliverance in *Mushkil*. The text's popularity is therefore a fact of religious culture, even where its transmission history remains debated.

In Ismaili thought, the interpretive framework shifts from a stand-alone *Dua* to the larger doctrine of *Walayah* and the *Wasayah*, as devotion to the *Moula Ali* (as), and divinely guided authority through whom the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of *Wahy* are understood. From that perspective, a call of Ali (as) points beyond his individual sanctity to the continuing reality of his *Rutbah* that begins with him and persists through his descendants. In Ismaili doctrinal literature, *Walayah* is described as the cornerstone of *Aqidah*, indicating that devotion to the Sole Successor of Muhammad (S) is not incidental but constitutive of religious life. Therefore, while Shia usage often preserves *Na'd-e Ali* as a cherished devotional formula in its own right, an Ismaili philosophical reading would more naturally absorb it into the wider theology of the Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) as the authoritative guidance, superior to the Imam. In other words,

the significance of calling upon Ali (as) lies not only in reverence for the Wasi of Rasulullah (S), but in affirming the principle of ongoing divinely sanctioned authority.

Na'd-e Ali is seen as a call to the Mazhar al-Ajaib (Manifestation of Wonders), who is the spiritual Qutub (axis) and Hujjah of Allah. His remembrance aligns the Mumin with Rahmah and Noor (light). The Walayah acts as a protective shield against both visible and unseen adversities. In this view, Na'd-e Ali embodies seeking refuge in his spiritual guardianship. "Mazhar al-Ajaib" signifies the divine status of Ali (as) as the Mazhar of Qudrah 'ilahiyyah (locus of divine power), whose Dhikar fortifies the soul. In Ismaili cosmology, Na'd-e Ali functions as a spiritual "password," connecting the Mumin to the Noor of Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as). Awliya stress that invoking Ya Ali is an act of Tawassul-seeking Qurba to Allah through His Wali. This is anchored in the Qur'an injunction:

Seek a means of approach to Him, Qur'an 5:35

Na'd-e Ali is read on at least three levels: literal invocation, theological mediation, and symbolic disclosure of Walayah of Amir al-Mumineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as). The familiar text, in one common form, begins:

Nād-e 'Aliyyan maẓhar al-'ajā'ib, Tajid-hu 'awnan laka fī al-nawā'ib, Kullu hammin wa ghammin sayanjālī, Bi wilāyatika yā 'Alī, yā 'Alī, yā 'Alī

Call upon Ali, the manifestation of wonders; You will find him a helper in times of affliction and calamities. Every anxiety and grief shall be dispelled Through your Walayah, O Ali, O Ali, O Ali.

In a literal-devotional reading, the Dua voices distress and seeks relief. Its surface structure is important: the Dua does not end with Ali as an independent source of power, but places the appeal within a graded sacred order-Allah, then Muhammad, then Ali's Walayah. That is why Shia usually construe it as Tawassul, not Ibadah: Ali (as) is invoked as the divinely authorized means through whom aid is sought from Allah. In a Shia Philosophical interpretation, the key phrase is "Maẓhar al-Ajaib"-"manifestation of wonders."* This is not usually taken Ali as Divinity, like Essa in Christianity, but as presenting him as the supreme human disclosure of Allah-given Quwah, 'ilm, Adl, and spiritual authority. Read this way, the text compresses an entire Shi'i theology into devotional language: Ali (as) is the Wasi of Rasulullah (S), who is Wali of Allah, and the one through whom divine help becomes experientially near to the believer. The Dua popularity therefore lies in what it does: it translates doctrine into piety.*

Its second major term, "Awnan Laka Fi al-Nawaib"-"a helper for you in calamities"*-is also spiritually rich. In a narrow reading, it means help in crisis. In a deeper Shi'i reading, "calamities" includes not only worldly misfortune but also moral bewilderment, spiritual estrangement, and the trial of misguidance. The helper is therefore not merely a wonder-worker, but a Moulā*

whose Fard Walayah rescues the seeker from inward disorder. That interpretive move is consistent with broader Shi'i notions of Ali as the gateway to right understanding and fidelity to Rasulullah's truth. The closing line—"by Your Walayah, O Ali"—is the densest phrase of all. In Shi'i thought, Walayah is not only love; it also denotes sanctified authority, nearness to Rabb, and the bond that joins the Mumin to Hidayah. Shi'i Ismaili materials define Walayah as devotion and Bayah to the Imam al-Zaman (as), and they place it at the center of religious life. Once that is seen, Na'd-e Ali can be read not simply as "calling upon a saintly figure," but as appealing to the principle of sacred authority embodied in Ali (as).

That opens the door to a Shi'i Ismaili Philosophy. In Shi'i Ismaili thought, Al Imam al-Zaman (as) is the divinely guided authority through whom Mumin access both the Zahir and Baṭīn - the outward and inward meanings of Wahy, the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of the Qur'an. On that basis, Na'd-e Ali is naturally read less as a self-contained miracle Dua and more as a symbolic call of the Noor of the Nubuwwah, Risalah, Wasayah, Imamah inaugurated in Ali (as) and continued in the hereditary line of living Imams. So, in a Shi'i Ismaili reading, "Call Ali" may be heard on two planes at once. On the devotional plane, it expresses love and dependence. On the esoteric plane, it means: turn toward Walayah, toward the Imam as the interpreter of Wahy, toward the living chain of Hidayah rooted in Ali. The "wonders" then are not only martial feats or miraculous rescues; they are also the unveiling of meaning, the transformation of the soul, and the recovery of inner orientation through Tawil. A useful way to put the distinction is this. General Shi'i ideology tends to preserve the Dua as an act of intercessory devotion centered on the singular rank of Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as). Shi'i Ismaili Philosophy tends to absorb it into a larger metaphysic of Walayah, Tawil, and the continuing Imamah.

3. Method and Devotional Applications of the Dua Na'd-e Ali:

This manual presents Na'd-e Ali as a supplication for assistance, relief, and the removal of hardship. Its recitation is to be undertaken with sincerity, ritual purity, and inward confidence. Before commencing any prescribed recitation, the practitioner should be in a state of Wudu, seated in a clean and quiet place, and possessed of a clear intention as to the object of the practice. It is further recommended that the recitation begin and conclude with Salawaat upon Muhammad and aal-e Muhammad. The Dua is then to be recited in a fixed number according to the particular need in issue. Numerical precision is treated as significant, and repetition in Amaliyat is presented not as redundancy but as an essential part of disciplined devotional practice. Upon completion, the practitioner may blow upon water and drink it, administer it to another, blow upon the hands and pass them over the face or body, or blow upon the person or object connected with the intended purpose. Where the practice is assigned for a number of days, it should be continued consistently, preferably at the same time and in the same place each day, and without interruption. This structure suggests that efficacy is understood to lie not in a detached formula, but in the sustained conjunction of purity, intention, recitation, and constancy.

Throughout, the text insists that recitation be accompanied by proper spiritual and practical conditions, which may be gathered under four principal headings:

i. Taharah - Cleanliness

The body, clothing, and place of recitation should be clean. Wudu is regularly assumed, and in some instances expressly required. Where feasible, orientation towards the Qiblah is also treated as part of the devotional discipline.

ii. Moral Seriousness

The practitioner is encouraged to abstain from sinful conduct during the prescribed period. In this way, devotional efficacy is framed as ethically conditioned rather than mechanically obtained.

iii. Concentration

The act should be performed with inward focus, free from distraction, idle speech, and carelessness. Presence of mind is treated as integral to the practice.

iv. Certainty

The text places marked emphasis upon Yaqeen - certainty or firm inward conviction. The Dua is not to be uttered mechanically, but with humility, seriousness, and confidence in divine assistance.

The manual further assigns Na'd-e Ali to a wide range of personal, domestic, and worldly difficulties. For grief, anxiety, fear, and overwhelming hardship, the Dua is prescribed in fixed daily counts, sometimes followed by blowing upon water or upon oneself. For protection against enemies, malice, or apprehended harm, it is likewise recited in measured cycles, and in certain cases supplemented by a written form carried on the person or placed within the home. In cases of illness, the Dua may be recited over water for the patient to drink, or recited directly over the afflicted person, with the practice continued for the prescribed number of days. For financial hardship and constriction in livelihood, regular recitation - often after Dua and over a fixed period - is recommended, sometimes together with water over which the Dua has been recited, the object being the opening of sustenance, increase in blessing, and alleviation of difficulty. In matters of delayed marriage, difficulty in securing a proposal, domestic discord, or weakness in family relations, the same pattern of ritual preparation, fixed recitation, and sustained continuity is applied, occasionally accompanied by a written form retained by the person concerned. The Dua is there presented as a means of removing impediments and promoting harmony within relationships. With respect to pregnancy, childbirth, and maternal hardship, prescribed counts are similarly employed and may in some cases be combined with the use of water or written forms for the purposes of ease, safety, and divine assistance. In disputes, legal proceedings, and difficult worldly entanglements, the text prescribes the Dua as a means of seeking favourable resolution and overcoming obstacles. Certain sections also include numerical grids or symbolic written forms to be copied exactly and used strictly as directed, whether by carrying, wearing, or placing them in a specified location. These, however, remain ancillary to the central act of recitation, intention, and trust in divine aid. The manual closes, in substance, by affirming continuity, gratitude, and the value of regular devotional recitation, such that Na'd-

e Ali may be adopted not only in moments of acute need, but also as part of one's daily spiritual practice.

4. Spiritual and Practical Benefits:

i. Opening Salawat

The recitation is ordinarily bracketed by Salawaat upon Muhammad and Aal e Muhammad (as)

ii. Relief from Distress

One of the principal uses of the recitation is for grief, worry, fear, anxiety, and overwhelming difficulty. Here the practice is framed as a means of obtaining inward calm and outward relief.

iii. Protection from Enemies or Harm

The text includes methods for protection against hostile persons, envy, threat, or generalized fear. In such contexts, recitation may be accompanied by blowing upon oneself or one's surroundings, and occasionally by carrying a written form.

iv. illness and Healing

A recurring method involves reciting over water and giving that water to the patient, or blowing directly upon the person affected. The text plainly treats recitation as a spiritual means of seeking healing.

v. Livelihood and Sustenance

The Dua is also prescribed for increase in lawful sustenance, removal of financial constriction, and the opening of means of livelihood.

vi. Marriage and Domestic Concerns

The work extends the same logic to delays in marriage, domestic discord, and weakness in family bonds. The purpose is not merely personal success but relational harmony.

vii. Pregnancy and Childbirth

The text further addresses maternal well-being, ease in childbirth, and related concerns. Such sections reveal the manual's intention to accompany believers through the full range of life's vulnerability.

viii. Court Cases, Disputes, and Entrenched Difficulties

Particularly notable is the inclusion of recitations intended for legal disputes, serious obstacles, and difficult affairs. This demonstrates the breadth of the devotional imagination at work: the Dua is not confined to inward states but extended to the formal arenas of worldly contestation.

ix. Numerical Tables and Written Forms

A significant element in the manual is the use of written symbolic materials, including numerical grids and talisman-like forms.

x. Protection, Victory Captivity:

Recite 7 times on earth on Jumuah and throw into the air for protection.

xi. Fear of the enemy:

Recite 70 times for victory.

xii. Surrounded by enemies:

Recite on earth and throw towards them; enemies will be unable to harm.

xiii. Daily courage:

Recite 17 or 25 times to gain strength over adversaries.

xix. Healing and Shifa'

Black Magic (Sihr): Recite 110 times over masjid water, drink and bathe.

Poison: Write with saffron on a plate, recite 21 times, wash, and drink.

General illness: Recite 110 times over rainwater, drink.

Incurable disease: Recite 21 times over water and give to the patient.

Daily healing: Recite 27 times to aid recovery.

5. Relief from Hardship and Distress:

Major problems: Recite 1000 times in one sitting for relief.

Urgent matters: Recite 15 times daily until resolved.

Divine insight: Recite 16 times daily for 40 days.

Release from prison: Recite 16 times daily.

6. Social Harmony and Influence:

General love and acceptance: Recite 110 times on Friday morning.

Conflict resolution: Recite 71 times before meeting; or 30 times daily for 20 days for reconciliation.

Protection from false accusations: Recite 40 times in the morning.

7. Spiritual Elevation:

Vision of Muḥammad Rasuḷullah (S) in dream: Recite 500 times with 110 Salawaat before and after; or 7 times nightly.

Increase in Knowledge: Recite 17 times after Ṣuḥr for 20 days.

8. Prosperity and Honour:

Honour: Recite 21 times daily.

Wealth: Recite 12 times every morning.

Success in efforts: Recite 50 times daily for 16 days, or 34/36 times as needed.

Power: Write Na'd-e Ali on paper and wear on right arm. Wear around the neck for numerous purposes.

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