

## 14. The Mawla of the Muslims

The tenth year after the Hijrah was full of important events. Two of those events were outstanding and pointed to the Messenger's belief in the nearness of his death and that he was about to be summoned by God and that he would respond.

The Messenger announced to the inhabitants of the Arabic Peninsula that he would perform the duty of pilgrimage. He urged them to accompany him during the days of his journey to learn from him the manner of its performance; and being concerned with the future of the Muslims he wanted to recommend to them what a Prophet recommends to his followers to do in the future for he thought that they would not see him in a future year.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims hastened to join the Holy Prophet. He went on leading them in their "Ihram" circumnavigating the Kaaba praying walking between Safa and Marwa; and at the sojourn at Arafat and at the time of their sacrifices.

They followed him and did what he ordered them to do. He addressed them while they were on Arafat and his Message was most impressive. He announced to them at the beginning of his sermon the nearness of his death when he said after he prayed to the Almighty: "O people listen to my words for I do not know if I will meet you after my present year at this place at any time....".

Then he spoke to them about the sanctity of the human blood and Muslim's properties saying:

"O people certainly your lives and properties are as sacred to you as your present day and your present month until you meet your Lord. And you shall meet your Lord and He will ask you about your deeds and I have delivered the Message."<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Messenger went on urging people to discharge their trusts and declaring that every usury is prohibited. Islam prohibits retaliation for blood that was shed during the pre-Islamic days. He also reaffirmed the right of women and re-emphasized Islamic brotherhood.

The main concern of the Messenger was the future of his nation. As he was fully aware of the crises

which the nation would go through he was expected not to leave the nation without a minaret of guidance through which people could pass the future crises safely. The Prophet therefore declared to the Muslims what he considered to be a security against deviation from the right road if they chose to have that security.

Al-Tirmidhi in his Sahih reported through his channel to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari that he said: "I have seen the Messenger of God in his pilgrimage on the day of Arafat while he was riding his female camel (Al-Quswa) delivering a sermon and I heard him saying: O people I have left among you that which if you uphold you will never go astray: The Book of God and the members of my House."<sup>2</sup>

By these words the Messenger announced to his nation that he left for it what would be a security against deviation from the right road if the nation would take what he left for it. That security is composed of two harmonious elements:

One of them is the revelation of God which is recorded in the Holy Qur'an and the second is the members of the House of the Prophet who have the knowledge of the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Holy Prophet.

It is worthy to note that masses of the Muslims do not know these reported words of the Holy Prophet yet these words were reported by about twenty companions. What the Muslim masses know is what Ibn Hisham recorded in his Biography of the Prophet that the Prophet said in his sermon on Arafat:

"I have left among you what if you fortify yourselves with you will never go astray: The Book of God a clear order and teaching of His Messenger." Furthermore these Muslims think that there is a contradiction between the first and the second hadiths.

It should be known that the reporters of what Ibn Hisham recorded are not known. Their names are not recorded in the hadith; therefore it should not be considered authentic. It should be noted also that Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not record in their report of the sermon of the Prophet on the day of Arafat the word "Sunnat Nabyeh" (the teaching of His Prophet). The two sheikhs mentioned only the Book of God.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore the Book of God is well known to the Muslims and it was recorded during the days of the Messenger. The "Sunnah" (teachings of the Prophet) on the other hand was not recorded during the days of the Prophet and what was written of the hadiths decades after him is not completely a place of agreement among the Muslims.

There are many contradictory hadiths contained in the books which we call Sahihs. It is recorded for example in some of the Sahihs that Abdul-Rahman Ibn Abu Omeirah reported that the Prophet prayed for Muawiya saying: "God make him well-guided and make him lead people to the right road." It is also reported in a Sahih that the Messenger said to Ammar Ibn Yasir: "Ammar be cheerful the aggressor party will kill you."

Yet the party that killed Ammar was the party of Muawiya. When Muawiya is the head of the aggressors he would not be well-guided nor could people be led through him to the right road.

A hadith commending a man such as Muawiya cannot be a security against deviation. It would be rather a cause of confusion. A man that waged against 'Ali the Imam of the truth and the brother of the Prophet a war in which tens of thousands of Muslims were killed cannot be a guide to the right road.

To make what Ibn Hisham reported logically acceptable we have to understand from the word "Sunnah " the statement of the Prophet and his actions which are known to have come from him. These represent a security against deviation if we follow them.

But that which is known of his statements and actions are very little because most of the hadiths were not reported by numerous reporters in every link of its chain of narration; they were rather reported by one or two or a few reporters. Many of these hadiths contradict each other. Therefore we cannot acquire certainty through those hadiths about what the Messenger said or did.

There is only one logical way through which we can be certain of Sunnah of the Prophet: The Prophet himself could inform us of a reliable source through which we know exactly what he said and did.

The first hadith which was reported by more than twenty companions informs us of that reliable source namely: the members of the House of the Prophet who knew the interpretation of the Book of God and the instructions of the Messenger completely. By this the hadiths of Al-Termathy and Ibn Hisham would be agreeing with each other and explaining one another.

'Ali possessed the knowledge of the Qur'an and the words and the deeds of the Prophet and their interpretations. The Muslims could have avoided deviations if they were to follow his interpretation and assist him in communicating his knowledge to the nation.

However the other outstanding event which took place during the last year of the life of the Messenger has made this matter crystal clear. The event was fully expressive concerning the elements of security against deviation.

That outstanding event was the Messenger's Declaration at Ghadir Khum. While he was coming back from the valedictory pilgrimage to Medina he stopped at that place to tell the thousands of pilgrims who were accompanying him that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib is the "Mawla" (guardian) of every believer.

Al-Hakim through his channel to Abu-Tufail reported that Zayd Ibn Arqam said: "When the Messenger of God was coming from the Valedictory pilgrimage he stopped at Ghadir Khum. He ordered the pilgrims to sweep what was under the trees at that place.

Then he said: 'I am about to be summoned by God and I shall respond. I am leaving among you the two valuables. One of the two is bigger than the other: The Book of God and my Itrah (members of my house). Beware how you shall treat them after me for they shall not part with each other until they join

me on the Day of Judgement." Then he said: "Certainly God is my "Mawla" (Guardian) and I am Mawla of every believer. Whoever I am his Mawla this 'Ali is his Mawla. God love whoever loves him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him." [4](#)

From this we understand that the Messenger wanted to declare to the Muslims at that stand three important matters which are related to each other:

1. He was expecting to depart from this world soon. Therefore he spoke to them as if he had been summoned by his Lord.
2. As he was about to meet his Lord he viewed it mandatory to have for his followers a means of guidance which would illuminate for them the road after the Heavenly revelation ceased by his absence. Therefore he declared to them that he was leaving to them the Book of God and his "Itrah" (the members of his House); and that if they follow the Book and the "Itrah " they guarantee for themselves the continuation on the clear road in their near and remote future.
3. The members of the House of the Holy Prophet were to lead the nation only because they were unequalled in their knowledge of interpretation of the Book and the instructions of the Messenger and their adherence to both of them. The Messenger wanted to declare to the nation that the man who had all qualifications for that leadership from among his close relatives was 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

Therefore he put him in his own place and made him his own replacement. God is the Guardian of the Messenger and the Messenger is the guardian of the believers. He has the right to administer the affairs of the believers more than the believers have to administer their own affairs and 'Ali is the one who has a right equal to that of the Prophet in leading the Muslims and administering their affairs.

The Messenger was fully aware that people differ in memorizing what they hear and in understanding what they memorizing. Therefore he was expected to record in a special document what he verbally declared at Ghadir Khum leaving no excuse for anyone to argue in the future about the contents of the Declaration. But he did not do that.

History does not inform us of any document dictated by the Messenger and sealed by his blessed seal declaring that he had chosen 'Ali or any other person for the leadership of the nation after him. What is the reason for the absence of such a document? We shall find the answer in the following pages.

[1.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 6.

[2.](#) Al-Tirmidhi in his Sahih Part 5 p. 328 Al-Tirmidhi said also that Abu Dharr Abu-Sa-eed (Al-Khidri) Zeid Ibn Arqam and Huthaifa Ibn Oseid reported what agrees with this.

[3.](#) Al-Bukhari Sahih Al-Bukhari Part 5 p. 224. Muslim in his Sahih Part 8 (Book of Pilgrimage) p. 184 reported the hadith without mentioning the "Sunnah" (The Teaching of the Prophet)

[4.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 109.

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