

9) The merits of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) According to Ibn ‘Abbas

Ahmad bin Hanbal says:

Yahya bin Hammad has related to us from Abi ‘Awwanah from Abi Balj from ‘Amr bin Maymunah who narrated the hadith, saying:

“I was sitting with (‘Abdullah) bin ‘Abbas when nine parties approached him and said:

Either get up and come with us or leave this place for us.

Ibn ‘Abbas who at that time had not yet lost his eyesight, answered:

I will come with you.

They conferred with him in slow tones and we did not understand what they spoke about. Ibn ‘Abbas then returned to his place and while shaking his clothes said:

Alas, alas! They are trying to fault with a man who has ten privileges (which he recounted as follows):

A. The Prophet (on the day of the conquest of Khaybar) said: “I will send the one whom God will never turn back distressed; he loves Allah and His Prophet.” Then he enquired: “Where is ‘Ali?” They answered that he was at home writhing in pain.

He said: “May none of you be afflicted with pain.” Then ‘Ali came with his sore eyes in a state that he was almost unable to see a thing or the way. The Prophet blew his breath into his eyes and after shaking the standard thrice, handed it to ‘Ali, who returned victorious from this mission and brought with him (for the Prophet) Safiyyah bint Ibn Akhtab. [1](#)

B. The Prophet had sent someone (Abu Bakr) for conveying Surah al-Bara’ah (to the people of Mecca). Then he sent (Imam) ‘Ali (‘a) after him to take charge of the Surah and said: “This Surah should not be

conveyed except by him who is from me and I am from him.”

C. He told his near of kin (children of ‘Abdul-Muttalib): “Who among you is ready to accept my wilayah in this world and the hereafter?” They did not reply to him. ‘Ali (‘a) who was sitting near him said: “I am your friend in this world and the hereafter.” The Prophet said: “You are (indeed) my friend in this world and the hereafter.” The Prophet again turned to the gathering and asked: “Who among you will choose my friendship in the world and the hereafter?” They did not reply but ‘Ali said: “O Messenger of Allah! I choose your friendship in this world and hereafter.” He said: “You are certainly my friend in this world and the hereafter.”

D. He is the first one after Khadijah to practice the Muslim faith.

E. The Prophet raised his cloak and covering ‘Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn with it, said:

“Indeed, Allah desires to remove uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and keep you pure as pure can be.” (Holy Qur’an 33:33)

F. (Imam) ‘Ali sold (risked) his life, put on the Prophet’s clothes and slept in his place when the infidels (of Mecca) intended to make the Prophet the target of their malevolence. ‘Ali (‘a) was sleeping when Abu Bakr approached him thinking him to be the Prophet. (Imam) ‘Ali (‘a) told him: “The Prophet has gone towards the well of Maymun, go and join him.” Abu Bakr left and entered the Cave of Thaur with him. The infidels started pelting (Imam) ‘Ali (‘a) with stones (mistaking him to be the Prophet). He flexed himself, writhed in pain but did not remove the cloth covering his head. Only with the break of dawn did he remove aside the cloth covering his head.

G. When the Prophet was leaving Medina with the people for the Tabuk expedition, (Imam) ‘Ali (‘a) asked him: “Am I not accompanying you?” The Prophet replied in the negative. (Imam) ‘Ali (‘a) sighed and the Prophet told him: “Are you not pleased that your position to me is similar to that of Aaron to Moses, except that you are not a Prophet? Is it not proper for me to leave and you should stay as my vicegerent?”

H. The Prophet told him: “After me you are the Master and Leader of all faithful people.”

I. The Prophet said: “Close all doors (of houses) leading into the Mosque (of Medina) except that of the house of ‘Ali.” As a result he could enter the mosque in any state, since except for this passage there was no other entrance to his house.

J. The Prophet said: “For whomsoever I am Master, ‘Ali is his Master.”²

¹. The conquest of Khaybar by Imam ‘Ali (‘a) is among the widely related hadith. Ibn Hanbal has recorded this several times in his Musnad, e.g. refer to vol. 3, p. 116 and vol. 4, p. 52, al-Maymuniyyah print.

². We have mentioned this hadith in brief because of its length. For the full text refer to Musnad, hadith 3062 (Ahmad Shakir), and also hadith no. 3063 recorded through different isnad. Ahmad Shakir considers the isnad of both the hadith as sahih.

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