

Ali the Master

The event of 18th Zilhaj 10 A. H. was neither a matter of secrecy, nor an underground gathering nor a hidden endeavor. As such no room is left for any sort of doubt, suspicion, uncertainty or ambiguity. This mammoth congregation attended by thousands was held by the mandate of God, under the supervision of the Prophet of Islam, in a vast desert, in the full light of the day. The main proceedings of this feast are preserved in the official documents of Islam (Qur'an and Hadith).

Similarly statements, the accounts of the eyewitnesses and feelings of prominent literary figures and intellectuals who attended this important session of Islamic History has been recorded in the books of history and biography. How strange it is that in spite of all these undeniable facts some persons have tried to present their own biased sentiments in regard to the event of Ghadir. In the writings of such prejudiced writers the word 'Mawla' has been the center of discussion and comments.

They consider that the word 'Mawla' does not mean 'master, leader, head, superior' but it has been used in the sense of 'friend, helper and cousin'. Had this been a minor objection we would have definitely overlooked it. But the word 'Mawla' is the most important word uttered on the day of Ghadir.

Every reasonable person would have to admit that the Holy Qur'an does not present enigmas and the Apostle of God never indulged in quibbles and puns. This mode of conversation is against the very spirit of sincere guidance and purity of thought and speech.

The word 'Mawla' in the Arabic language has twenty-seven meanings. The Prophet while using this word in his Prophetic discourse had clarified its reference and its context so clearly that everyone among those who heard his sermon proclaimed, "Ali, is 'Mawla' in the same sense in which the Prophet is master".

Moreover, the Holy Prophet later on explained the true sense of this word at length. Ali bin Hameed on page 38 of his book 'Shamsul Akhbar' writes, "When it was enquired from the Apostle of God about the Hadith 'Whose master am I' he said, "As God is My Master, so I am the master of the faithful and in the same sense Ali also is their master".

Among the companion of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, Omar, Abdullah bin Ja'afar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Salman Farsi, Jabir bin Abdullah Al-Ansari, Abu Saeed Khudri, Zaid bin Arqam, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Qais bin Sa'ad bin Ubada, Hassan bin Thabit and Ammar bin Yasir have also considered the meaning of the word 'Mawla' to be the master who holds the greatest right of disposal.

Among the religious heads and scholars Muhammad bin Saib Kalbi (deceased 146 A.H.), Yahya bin Ziad Kufi (deceased 207 A.H.), Abu Obaida Basri (deceased 210 A. H.), Abul Hasan Akfash Nahwi (deceased 215 A.H.), Abu Zaid bin Aus Basri (deceased 125 A.H.), Ibne Qutaiba Deenwari (deceased 276 A.H.), Abul Abbas Salab Shaibani (deceased 291 A.H.), Abu Bakr Anbari (deceased 328 A.H.), Abul Hasan Rummani (deceased 384 A.H.), Abul Hasan Wahidi (deceased 468 A.H.), Sa'ad- Uddin Taftazani (deceased 791 A.H.), Shahab Uddin Khafaji (deceased 1069 A.H.), Hamzawi Maliki (deceased 1303 A.H.). Abu Is'haq Salabi (deceased 427 A.H.), Husain Bin Mas'ud (deceased 510 A.H.),

Jarullah Zamakhshari (deceased 538 A.H.), Abu Baqa Ukbari (deceased 616 A.H.), Qazi Nasiruddin Baizawi (deceased 692 A.H.), Alla Uddin Khazin Baghdadi (deceased 741 A.H.), Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari (deceased 215 A.H.), Ibne Hajar Haithami (deceased 974 A.H.), Mohammad bin Jarir Tabari (deceased 310 A.H.), Hafiz Uddin Nasafi (deceased 701 A.H.), Abu Sa'ud Hanafi (deceased 972 A.H.), Sharif Jurjani (deceased the reflections of the event of Ghadir have continued to shed their rays throughout the wide expanse of the entire human civilization.

Ask the commentators of the Qur'an, contact the compilers of Hadith, interrogate the historians, inquire from the biographers, discuss with the intelligentsia, consult the scholars and then ponder on the importance of the event of Ghadir.

Every heart has been moved by the event of Ghadir and every soul has been stirred by it. This event has established its authority among various religious and social groups and almost every school of thought has acknowledged its authenticity.

Ghadir is that living truth which emerged from the horizon of history shedding its light, like the sun and the stars on every age and region.

Anyone researching on Ghadir would surely come to know that five verses of the Holy Qur'an describing this august event have been revealed vis., verse 68 of Chapter 'The Food' (Chap. 5), verse number 3 of the same chapter and three verses of chapter, 'The Ways of Ascent'.

Regarding the revelation of the first verse a summary of the research of thirty famous commentators is that when the caravan of the Apostle of God, while on his way from Mecca to Medina, stopped at the place of 'Khum' the archangel Gabriel descended with the proclamation of God Almighty, "O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord".

Sixteen eminent scholars presenting their researches regarding the second verse write that when the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) had proclaimed the succession of Ali bin Abi Talib as the Commander of

the Faithful the angel assigned with the task of conveying the words of God descended with the Holy verse, 'Today have I perfected for you your religion'.

The reason why three verses of the chapter 'The Ways of Ascent' (Chap. 70) came down is said to be that Hadith bin Noaman Al-Fahri or Nazr bin Harith Al-Abdari denying the leadership of Ali had said, "If God has bestowed this exaltation on Ali and the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is correct in respect of the declaration of the leadership of Ali then I may be cursed with God's punishment".

That very moment he received chastisement and God Almighty through threefold verses viz., 'One demanding, demanded the chastisement which must befall' preordained the universal and eternal proclamation of this great event. The literary investigations of thirty most prominent commentators of the Qur'an and Hadith have confirmed this event.

In the same way when we look towards the origins, sources and authorities of Ghadir we feel that the enthusiasm and spirit, which the scholars, commentators and historians have shown in this connection, has been exemplary. Perhaps no other event of Islamic History has been related or written with such zeal and zest. For brevity's sake only a brief statistics is presented here:

In the list of the narrators of the event of Ghadir we find 110 names of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)

Among the narrators we come across the names of 84 "Tabe'in". Tabe'in (followers) were those respected persons who had not seen the Prophet, but who followed him immediately in time and had remained in the company of the Prophet's companions.

If you hurriedly go through the period from the first century Hijri to the fourteenth century Hijri you will find that there are about four hundred scholars of Hadith, commentary, history and criticism who have discussed the details of Ghadir in their world famed writings. About one of them, Hafiz Abul (See Note page 43- 3 8) Ya'ala Al-Attar Al-Hamdani who belonged to the fifth century Hijri. It is said that he used to relate the tradition of Ghadir under the authority of quotations from 250 narrators (Al-Qawlul Fasl, Vol.I, page 545).

During the early history of Islam the event of Ghadir has been quoted many times, but on it has been recorded on 22 definite occasions for reference.

About 32 full-fledged books have so far been written on the subject of Ghadir; e.g., the famous historian and commentator Muhammad bin Jarir Tabari has collected the traditions of Ghadir in two volumes (Tarikh Ibne Katheer, Vo1.V); and some other historians have written books on this subject in at least 29 volumes (Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, page 36).

In every age, Ghadir has stirred the imagination of so many poets and writers. From the very inception of this event up to this day in all ages the masters of art and poetry have written in praise of Ghadir. This

event is an everliving topic for the literary gatherings of the Orient.

A celebrated Lebanese Christian literature of our age, Polas Saldma has versified his feelings under the name of `Al-Ghadir'. This masterpiece comprises 3,151 couplets and Al-Nasr Press, Beirut, has published it. Allama Amini in a number of volumes of his celebrated book `Al-Ghadir' has dealt with the poems and literary works relating to this event and it is considered to be a scholarly work.

Impressed by the extra-ordinary fame and importance of the event of Ghadir no less a scholar than the famous Allama Zia-Uddin Muqbihi (deceased 1108 A.H.) had to decide that `if the tradition of Ghadir is not considered to be wellknown then no aspect of the religion of Islam can be traced and proved'.

Abu Reihdn Al-Biruni, Sa'alebi, Ibne Talh`a Shafeyi, Ibne Khallekan and Mas'udi have regarded the day of Ghadir among the big days of rejoicings of the Islamic world. For reference books, Al-A'sarul Baqiya, page 334; Thamaratul Quluob, page 511; Matalibus-Su'ul, page 53; Al-Wafiyat, Vol.II, page 223; and Al-Tanbeeh wal Ishraf, page 221, can be consulted. Muhaqqiq Al-Kulaini (deceased 329 A.H.) in his valuable writing `Usul-e-Kafi' narrates from Sahl bin Ziad that it was enquired from Hazrat Imam Ja'afar Sadiq (a.s.) whether there is any other day of rejoicing in the Islamic world besides the days of rejoicings of Friday, Eid Al-Azha and Eid Al-Fitr. The great Imam said, "Yes, the most revered one".

The questioner asked, "Which celebration is it?" The reply was, "When the Apostle of God appointed the Commander of the Faithful as his successor and proclaimed `whose master I am Ali also is his master' ". When asked about the date the Imam replied, "Eighteenth of the month of Zilhaj".

When further asked as to what the Muslims should do on this auspicious day the Imam said, "Keep fast on this day, busy yourselves in prayers, and devote yourselves to the service of God. It is also essential to remember and narrate the virtue of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his Descendants because the Prophet had asked Ali to observe the day of Ghadir as a day of rejoicings. The conduct of all the Prophets had been to declare the day of appointment of their successors to be the day of rejoicings".

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