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Chapter 21: Answers To Questions

Two Questions

The dearest prophet of Islam announced Ali's caliphate on the day of Ghadir and made the Muslims' obedience towards him compulsory.

Now, here are two Questions:

- 1. If Ali's caliphate was announced on such a day, then why was his caliphate ignored altogether and why did people follow somebody else?
- 2. Why didn't the Imam employ the content of this narration to prove his legibility?

The Answer to the first Question

Although some of the Prophet's followers forgot about Ali's Imamate and ignored the divine order on the day of Ghadir and despite the fact that the number of indifferent people is very high in any community, there were a great number of people who remained faithful towards Ali (as). Compared with the first group their number was low, but this group consisted of a large list of the Prophet's distinguished followers, such as Salman Farsi, Abuzar Ghaffari, Meqdad Ibn Aswad, Ammar Yaser, Abi Ibn Kaab, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Khozaymah Ibn Sabit, Baridah Aslami, Abu Heytham Ibn Altyhan, and Khalid Ibn Saeed and tens of others whose names and criticisms of caliphate are recorded in history books and who were famous for their loyalty towards Imam Ali (as).

The history of Islam records two hundred and fifty Sahabi (the Prophet's friends) who were the Prophet's faithful followers and never left him up to their last days and some of them got martyred while they were at the Imam's service1.

It should be regretfully said that the issue of Imam Ali's Imamate was not the only issue against which some of the Prophet's friends rose; rather, even at the time of the Prophet, some Muslims explicitly

ignored the Prophet's orders or interpreted them in their own interest.

In other words some of the Prophet's followers would carry out the Prophet's orders if they were not an obstacle to their political thoughts or wishes. However, if the Prophet's religious instructions did not match their thoughts or ideas, they would try to advise the Prophet against those instructions. And if the Prophet did not surrender to their wishes, they would entirely either ignore the Prophet's orders or they would complain, insisting that the Prophet give up his position.

Here are some samples of misbehavior:

1. In his last days the Prophet ordered a pen and an inkpot so that he could write something which could have stopped his ummah from going astray. However, some of the audience, through their special political guess–work, understood the reason for the demand of the pen. So they opposed the Prophet's orders and did not provide him with it.

While weeping profusely Ibn Abbas used to say: the Muslims' calamity started on the day where the Prophet, severely ill, asked for a pen so that he could write something which could stop the Muslims' misery after his death but at this moment there was a dispute among those present: some agreed, but others disagreed. Finally, seeing this opposition, the Prophet gave up doing what he had planned to. 2

2. Upon the death of Zayd Ibn Haritha, the army commander, in the war with the Romans, the Prophet, in his last days, started collecting some troops and made some distinguished men of Muhajirs and Ansars its members and appointed Usamah as the army commander. He then prepared a flag and submitted it to Usamah but that day the Prophet had come down with a fever which caused him to fall ill. At this time there started confusion and disagreements among the Prophet's close followers. Some became upset over Usamah's election as the leader and angrily asked the Prophet to take away that position from him.

A group for whom the Prophet's death was imminent refused to attend the battlefields rationalizing that it was not advisable to leave Medina at such a critical moment.

Whenever the Prophet became aware of his army-men's negligence to carry out their military operations, he would become furious and irritated and would issue strict orders to them to leave for the roman borders. Despite the orders however some of the troops ignored the Prophet's commands and preferred to follow their own wishes.

3. The objections of some of the Prophet's followers to his orders far exceeded these two cases. Such people expressed their disagreement towards the Prophet even at Hudabiyyah while the Prophet was convening a peace treaty with the Quraish.

The objections of such people to the Prophet's orders after his death are more, because these people changed the quality of prayer and call for prayer and ignored the verse on temporary marriage and

performed the special prayers of Ramadan in congregation while they had to be performed individually. They brought forth some other changes in inheritance laws as well.

The elaboration of each one of these distortions, disturbances and conflicts is beyond the scope of the present book. In this regard it will suffice for the reader to refer to the valuable book called Al-Morayeat (pp.218–282) and another precious book called Al-Naswa Al-Ejtehad.

The opposition of the Prophet's followers towards him had reached such a critical level that the Holy Quran, using a severe language, warned them against such cases of disobediences. In this regard, the Holy Quran says,

"Therefore let those beware who go against his orders lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement"3.

Elsewhere the Holy Quran warns those who insist that the Prophet should follow their advice:

"O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Apostle, and be careful of your duty to Allah; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing"4.

These events and verses all lead us to realize that not all of the Prophet's followers showed him the necessary obedience and discipline; rather, in most cases where divine orders were in contrast with their personal desires, they preferred to disobey the Prophet and tried in vain to force the Prophet to follow them blindly.

It was the same group of people who, after the Prophet's demise, convened those so-called consuls and openly defied the Prophet.

The answer to the second Question

It should be pointed out that Imam Ali (as) in different occasions, used the Event of Ghadir to prove his rights. Whenever he could, he used this event to suppress his opponents and to boost his position in the eye of people; in this way, he revealed the truth to the people.

Not only Imam Ali, but also Fatima (sa), her sons Hasan (as) and Husain (as) and a group of distinguished Islamic personalities, such as Abdullah Ibn Jaafar, Ammar Yasir, Asbaq Ibn Nabata Qais Ibn Saad, and even some of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, such as Umar Ibn Abdol Aziz and

Maamun, the Abbasid caliph, and above all dignitaries, such as Amr Waas Save reasoned over the Event of Ghadir.

Thus discussions over the Ghadir event have always been the issue since Imam Ali's time and it is being used to prove the issues of Imamate and Welayat. Here we shall present some of these arguments:

1. The six-member council, which was convened by the second caliph, formed in a special way so that everybody knew Ali would not be the winner. This is because Umar had given the right of veto to Abdol Rahman Ibn Auf, the great capitalist (and the relative of Othman).

With regards to the special relations between Abdul Rahman and Ali's opponents it was obvious that Ali (as) would not win on the day when the council was in operation, and when the ball of caliphate was shot towards Othman by Abdul Rahman, the Imam began his speech to question the validity of this session. He said I will use such an argument which nobody can deny. He then asked the audience:

Do you swear to God that the following sentence could have meant anybody else than me?

"Whoever I am the superior to, Ali is superior to him. O God, love anybody who loves Ali and assist anybody who assists Ali and let those present tell the absentees what happened today".

At this moment, all the members rose up to confirm Ali's speech. All of them declared: we swear to God that nobody has your virtues5.

This was not, of course, the last time that the Imam used Ghadir in his argumentation.

In other cases, too, the Imam referred to Ghadir.

2. Once Imam Ali was lecturing in Kufa during his speech he addressed his audience asking those who heard the Prophet, that appoint him as his successor to stand up and tell others what they had heard. I want those people who have directly heard from the Prophet to stand up. At this moment thirty people rose.

We should note that at the time, the Ghadir event was twenty-five years old, and some of the caliph's close followers were not living in Kufa anymore, or had already died, and those present were not ready to testify.

Allamah Amini has provided us with a lot of proofs in his worthy book; those interested could refer to that book6.

3. During the reign of Othman two hundred distinguished personalities of Muhajirs and Ansars had

gathered at the Prophet's mosque and were deliberating on different issues.

One of the issues dealt with the Quraish's virtues and their backgrounds and their migrations.

During this session, which had started early in the morning and continued till noon, Ali (as) only was listening to people without uttering a word. Having noticed Imam Ali's silence the crowd begged him to talk upon people's insistence, Imam rose up and talked, in detail, about his relation with the Prophet's household and about his past glories adding:

Do you remember the day of Ghadir when the Prophet was ordained by Allah to introduce me as his genuine successor in the same way he had made clear the nature of prayer, alms and hajj ceremonies? Do you remember the Prophet had declared: God wants me to declare something; but I fear that people might not accept it; but God had ordered the Prophet to declare it, having promised to guard him against people.

O people! Do you accept said the Imam that God is my superior and I am superior to the believers?

Every one answered: yes. Do you remember at that time the Prophet asked me to rise, I did, he then declared:

Do you remember, Ali asked the people once more. The minute when Salman asked the Prophet:

How is Ali superior? The Prophet replied Ali's superiority over you is like that of mine over you; anybody upon whom I am superior Ali is superior upon him7.

- 4. It was not only Ali who used the event of Ghadir to prove his right to Imamate; the Prophet's daughter too during a historical day when she was talking about her rights asked the people whether they had forgotten the day when the Prophet had told Ali من كنت مولاه فهذا على مولاه المالية.
- 5. When Hasan Ibn Ali decided to sign a cease fire with Muawiyyah, he added:

"God purified the members of the Prophet's Household by Islam" and further said: Everybody heard the Prophet having said to Ali: what you are to me is like what Harun was to Musa.

Then Fatimah (s) continued: everybody saw and heard that the Prophet raise Ali's hand telling people8

6. In a huge meeting at Mecca, were some of the Prophet's closest followers, Husain Ibn Ali (as) said,

"By God, do you know that at Ghadir event, the Prophet appointed Ali as his successor and asked those present to relate the event to those who were absent?"

Theaudience said in unison: we do confirm this event.

- 7. In addition to these events, as we have seen previously, a group of the Prophet's close followers, such as Ammar Yasir, Zayd Ibn Arqam, Abdullah Ibn Jaafar, Asbaq Ibn Nebatah and others have reasoned on this event on their argumentation through Ali's successorship9.
 - 1. Seyyed Ali Khan "Madani" in his book called Al-Darayat Al-Raf'iah fi Tabaqat Al-Shi'atul Emamiyah", has gathered the names of those who remained faithful towards Ali (as). And in his book "Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah" (pp. 177–192), Sharaf Aldin Ameli has added some more names to this list. The writer of the present book, has written a book on "the Islamic personalities in Shiism," and through some authentic documents has dealt with the life of people. This book will be published in several volumes.
 - 2. . Sahih Bokhari, vol. 1, p.22 [the book of science].
 - 3. . Quran 24:63.
 - 4. . Quran 49:1.
 - 5. . Manaqib Kharazmi, p. 217.
 - 6. . Al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 153-171.
 - 7. Fara'ed Al-Simtein, ch 58. Besides these three cases, Imam Ali (as) had reasoned on his Imamate in other occasions: in Kufah on a day called "Youm Al-Rahbah", on the day of Jamal, during an event called Hadythul Rakban and during the war of Siffin.
 - 8. Yanabi Al-Muwaddah, p. 482.
 - 9. For more information on these argumentations and their documents, refer to the worthy book of Al–Ghadir (vol 1/pp. 146–a 195): in this book there are 22 such arguments based on documents.

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