

Chapter 45: On What Al-Ma'mun did to Please Ar-Ridha' (a.s.): His Debates With the Opponents Regarding Divine Leadership and Ali's Nobility

45-1 Tamim ibn Abdullah ibn Tamim al-Qurashi – may God be pleased with him – narrated that his father quoted on the authority of Ahmad ibn Ali Al-Ansari, on the authority of Ishaq ibn Ham'mad that Al-Ma'mun used to set up debate meetings in which the opponents of the Members of the Holy Household gathered together and he argued with them about the

هَذِهِ مِنْهَا ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيَّ فَقَالَ يَا عَبْدَ السَّلَامِ إِذَا كَانَ النَّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ عِبِيدَنَا عَلَى مَا حَكَوهُ عَنَّا فَمِمَّنْ نَبِيعُهُمْ فَقُلْتُ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَدَقْتَ ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا عَبْدَ السَّلَامِ أَمْكُرُ أَنْتَ لِمَا أَوْجَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَنَا مِنَ الْوَلَايَةِ كَمَا يُنْكِرُهُ غَيْرُكَ قُلْتُ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنَا مُفَرِّجُ بَوْلَانِكُمْ

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَاكِمُ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ بْنُ نَعِيمٍ بْنُ شَاذَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِدْرِيسَ، عَنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ هَاشِمٍ، - 7 - عَنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ الْعَبَّاسِ قَالَ: مَا رَأَيْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ الرَّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ جَفَا أَحَدًا بِكَلَامِهِ قَطُّ وَمَا رَأَيْتُ قَطَعَ عَلَيَّ أَحَدٍ كَلَامَهُ حَتَّى يَفْرُغَ مِنْهُ وَمَا رَدَّ أَحَدًا، عَنِ حَاجَةٍ يَفْدِرُ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا مَدَّ رَجُلِيهِ بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ جَلِيسٍ لَهُ قَطُّ وَلَا اتَّكَأَ بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ جَلِيسٍ لَهُ قَطُّ وَلَا رَأَيْتُهُ شَتَمَ أَحَدًا مِنْ مَوَالِيهِ وَمَمَالِيكِهِ قَطُّ وَلَا رَأَيْتُهُ تَفَلَّ قَطُّ وَلَا رَأَيْتُهُ يَقَهْقَهُ فِي ضَحِكِهِ قَطُّ بَلْ كَانَ ضَحِكُهُ التَّبَسُّمَ وَكَانَ إِذَا خَلَا وَتَصَبَّبَتْ مَائِدَتُهُ أَجْلَسَ مَعَهُ عَلَى مَائِدَتِهِ مَمَالِيكَهُ حَتَّى الْبُؤَابِ وَالسَّائِسِ وَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَلِيلَ النَّوْمِ بِاللَّيْلِ كَثِيرَ السَّهْرِ يُحْيِي أَكْثَرَ لَيَالِيهِ مِنْ أَوْلَاهَا إِلَى الصُّبْحِ وَكَانَ كَثِيرَ الصِّيَامِ فَلَا يَفُوتُهُ صِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فِي الشَّهْرِ وَيَقُولُ ذَلِكَ صَوْمُ الدَّهْرِ وَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَثِيرَ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ فِي السِّرِّ وَأَكْثَرَ ذَلِكَ يَكُونُ مِنْهُ فِي اللَّيَالِي الْمُظْلِمَةِ فَمَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّهُ رَأَى مِنْهُ فِي فَضْلِهِ فَلَا تُصَدِّقُوهُ.

بَابُ ذِكْرِ مَا يَتَقَرَّبُ بِهِ الْأَمُّونُ إِلَى الرَّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

مِنْ مُجَادَلَةِ الْمُخَالِفِينَ فِي الْإِمَامَةِ وَالتَّفْضِيلِ

حَدَّثَنَا تَمِيمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ تَمِيمٍ الْقُرَشِيُّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ عَنْ - 1
إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ حَمَّادٍ قَالَ: كَانَ الْأَمُّونُ يُعْقَدُ مَجَالِسَ النَّظَرِ وَيَجْمَعُ الْمُخَالِفِينَ لِأَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَيُكَلِّمُهُمْ فِي
إِمَامَةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي

Divine Leadership of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and his nobility over the rest of the companions in order to please Abil Hassan Ali ibn Musa Ar-Ridha' (a.s.). Ar-Ridha' (a.s.) told his trusted companions, "Do not get fooled by what he says. I swear by God that he is my murderer. However, I have no choice but to be patient until my pre-recorded time of death arrives."

45-2 My father and Muhammad ibn Al-Hassan ibn Ahmad ibn al-Waleed – may God be pleased with them – narrated that Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Attar and Ahmad ibn Idris quoted on the authority of Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Imran al-Ash'ari, on the authority of Abul Khayr Salih ibn Abi Hammad Ar-Razi, on the authority of Ishaq ibn Hammad ibn Zayd, "Yahya ibn Aktham al-Qadhi brought us all into one room and told us, 'Al-Ma'mun has ordered me to bring together a group of experts on traditions, and some of the rhetoricians and theoreticians. I have brought together forty men from these two classes. I took them with me and told them to wait at the door to inform Al-Ma'mun's gate-keeper about their arrival. They stayed there until Al-Ma'mun was informed about their arrival. Al-Ma'mun granted them permission to come in and they went in and greeted him. Al-Ma'mun spent an hour talking with and welcoming them. Then he said, "I want to take you as witnesses for me in the presence of the Blessed the Sublime God. Whoever needs to go to the toilet should do so. Then take off your shoes and coats and sit down and relax." They did as he ordered. Then he faced the people and said, "O people! I have called you in to serve as witnesses in the presence of the Sublime God. Fear God. Look at yourselves and your leaders. My position and majesty should not prevent you from accepting what is right no matter who says it, or rejecting what is wrong no matter who says it. Be afraid of the Fire for yourselves and seek nearness to the Sublime God by pleasing and obeying Him. Know that those who get close to creatures by disobeying the Creator will be subdued to those creatures by God. Therefore, use your full power of reasoning in arguing with me. I am a man who thinks that Ali (a.s.) is the best man after the Prophet of God (a.s.). Therefore acknowledge me, if you consider what I say to be right and if I am correct. And argue with me and reject my claim using reasoning if I am wrong. Either I will question you, or you will question me as you please." Once Al-Ma'mun said this, the experts on traditions said, "Fine. We will ask you." Al-Ma'mun said, "Ask, but appoint one of you to

طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَتَفْضِيلِهِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الصَّحَابَةِ تَقَرُّبًا إِلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسَى الرَّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَكَانَ

الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ لِأَصْحَابِهِ: الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُ بِهِمْ لَا تَغْتَرُوا بِقَوْلِهِ فَمَا يَفْتَلِنِي وَاللَّهِ غَيْرُهُ وَلَكِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِي مِنَ الصَّبْرِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ الْوَلِيدِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى الْعَطَارُ وَأَحْمَدُ بْنُ 2
إِدْرِيسَ جَمِيعًا قَالَا: حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ الْأَشْعَرِيَّ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الْحُسَيْنِ صَالِحُ بْنُ أَبِي حَمَّادٍ
الرَّازِيُّ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ حَمَّادِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْنَا يَحْيَى بْنَ أَكْثَمَ الْقَاضِيَّ قَالَ أَمَرَنِي الْمَأْمُونُ بِإِحْضَارِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنْ
أَهْلِ الْحَدِيثِ وَجَمَاعَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكَلَامِ وَالنَّظَرِ فَجَمَعْتُ لَهُ مِنَ الصَّنَفَيْنِ زُهَاءَ أَرْبَعِينَ رَجُلًا ثُمَّ مَضَيْتُ بِهِمْ فَأَمَرْتُهُمْ
بِالْكَيْنُونَةِ فِي مَجْلِسِ الْحَاجِبِ لِاعْلِمِهِ بِمَكَانِهِمْ فَفَعَلُوا فَأَعْلَمْتُهُ فَأَمَرَنِي بِإِدْخَالِهِمْ فَفَعَلْتُ فَدَخَلُوا وَسَلَّمُوا فَحَدَّثْتُهُمْ سَاعَةً
وَأَنَسَهُمْ ثُمَّ قَالَ: إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَجْعَلَكُمْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فِي يَوْمِي هَذَا حُجَّةً فَمَنْ كَانَ حَاقِنًا أَوْ لَهُ حَاجَةٌ
فَلْيَقُمْ إِلَى قِضَاءِ حَاجَتِهِ وَانْبَسِطُوا وَسَلُّوا أَخْفَافَكُمْ وَضَعُوا أُرْدِيَتَكُمْ فَفَعَلُوا مَا أَمَرُوا بِهِ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْقَوْمُ إِنَّمَا
اسْتَحْضَرْتُكُمْ لِاحْتِجَّ بِكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَانظُرُوا لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِمَامِكُمْ وَلَا تَمْنَعُكُمْ جَلَالَتِي وَمَكَانِي مِنْ قَوْلِ
الْحَقِّ حَيْثُ كَانَ وَرَدَّ الْبَاطِلَ عَلَى مَنْ أَتَى بِهِ وَأَشْفَقُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَتَقَرَّبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِرِضْوَانِهِ وَإِيتَارِ
طَاعَتِهِ فَمَا أَحَدٌ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَى مَخْلُوقٍ بِمَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ إِلَّا سَلَطَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فَنَظَرُونِي بِجَمِيعِ عُقُولِكُمْ إِنِّي رَجُلٌ أَزْعَمُ أَنْ
عَلِيًّا خَيْرُ الْبَشَرِ بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَإِنْ كُنْتُ مُصِيبًا فَصَوِّبُوا قَوْلِي وَإِنْ كُنْتُ مُخْطِئًا فَارْدُّوا عَلَيَّ وَهَلِّمُوا
فَإِنْ شِئْتُمْ سَأَلْتُكُمْ وَإِنْ شِئْتُمْ سَأَلْتُمُونِي فَقَالَ لَهُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ بِالْحَدِيثِ بَلْ نَسَأُكَ فَقَالَ هَاتُوا وَقَلِّدُوا كَلَامَكُمْ رَجُلًا

speak. Once he speaks if others have something to add, they can do so. Or if he makes a mistake, others can correct him.” Then one of them said, “We believe that the best of the people after the Prophet of God (a.s.) was Abu Bakr. This is because there is a unanimously accepted tradition in which we read that God’s Prophet (S) said, ‘Follow those who will be after me – Abu Bakr and Umar.’ We know that he is the best of the people after the Prophet (S), since the Prophet of Mercy issued this decree and ordered that we follow them since we know that only the best of the people will be appointed as leader.”

Then Al-Ma’mun said, “There are many traditions. Either they are all correct or all incorrect. Or some are correct and some are incorrect. If we say that they are all correct, then they are all incorrect since some of them violate others. If we say they are all wrong; then the religion is wrong and the holy jurisprudence will be invalidated. Then we must accept the third option: that is some of the traditions are correct and some are incorrect. Now it is so that we must have some reason for their being correct to believe them and reject what is opposite to them. If the reason behind the tradition is right, we must believe it, accept it and put it into action. However, the tradition which you cited includes the proof which invalidates it within itself, since the Prophet of God (a.s.) is the most knowledgeable and wise. He is the most honest of the people. He is the person most improbable to misguide the people towards the impossible or towards believing what is wrong. Therefore, he should not have issued a decree to have these two people become his successors and Divine Leaders. This is because either both of them follow the same manners or followed opposite manners. If they were the same in all aspects, then they must be one in number, form and body. It has not been so and will never be so that two people be one and the same. But if they were different from each other, how is it permissible to follow both of them? This is impossible to do, since as you know obeying one would imply disobeying the other one, and vice versa.

The reasons supporting that they were different in manners is that Aba Bakr used to capture the Ahl ar-Riddeh and Umar set them free. Umar asked Abu Bakr to put Khalid (ibn Valid) out of office and execute him for killing Malik ibn Nowayrah. Abu Bakr did not accept this and did not execute him. Umar forbade two *Mutt'as* (that of women and *Hajj*), but Abu Bakr did not. Umar set up the payroll for the armed forces, while Abu Bakr did not do

مِنْكُمْ فَإِذَا تَكَلَّمَ فَإِنْ كَانَ عِنْدَ أَحَدِكُمْ زِيَادَةٌ فَلْيَزِدْ وَإِنْ أَتَى بِخَلَلٍ فَسَدِّدُوهُ فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ أَمَا نَحْنُ فَنَزَعُمْ أَنْ خَيْرَ النَّاسِ بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَبُو بَكْرٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ الرَّوَايَةَ الْمُجْمَعَةَ عَلَيْهَا جَاءَتْ عَنِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ افْتَدُوا بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ فَلَمَّا أَمَرَ نَبِيُّ الرَّحْمَةِ بِالْإِقْتِدَاءِ بِهِمَا عَلِمْنَا أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَأْمُرْ بِالْإِقْتِدَاءِ إِلَّا بِخَيْرِ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ الرَّوَايَاتُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ كُلُّهَا حَقًّا أَوْ كُلُّهَا بَاطِلًا أَوْ بَعْضُهَا بَاطِلًا فَلَوْ كَانَتْ كُلُّهَا حَقًّا كَانَتْ كُلُّهَا بَاطِلًا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ بَعْضُهَا يَنْقُضُ بَعْضًا وَلَوْ كَانَتْ كُلُّهَا بَاطِلًا كَانَ فِي بَطْلَانِهَا بَطْلَانُ الدِّينِ وَدُرُوسُ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَلَمَّا بَطَلَ الْوَجْهَانِ ثَبَتَ الثَّلَاثُ بِالِاضْطِرَارِ وَهُوَ أَنْ بَعْضُهَا حَقٌّ وَبَعْضُهَا بَاطِلٌ فَإِذَا كَانَ كَذَلِكَ فَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ دَلِيلٍ عَلَى مَا يَحِقُّ مِنْهَا لِيُعْتَقَدَ وَيُنْفَى خِلَافُهُ فَإِذَا كَانَ دَلِيلُ الْخَبَرِ فِي نَفْسِهِ حَقًّا كَانَ أَوْلَى مَا أَعْتَقَدَهُ وَأَخَذُ بِهِ وَرَوَايَتِكَ هَذِهِ مِنَ الْأَخْبَارِ الَّتِي أَدَلَّتْهَا بِاطِلَةٌ فِي نَفْسِهَا وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَحْكَمَ الْحُكْمَاءِ وَأَوْلَى الْخُلُقِ بِالصِّدْقِ وَأَبْعَدُ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ بِالْمَحَالِ وَحَمَلَ النَّاسَ عَلَى التَّيِّبِ بِالْخِلَافِ وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ هَذَيْنِ الرَّجُلَيْنِ لَا يَخْلُو مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَا مُتَّفَقَيْنِ مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ أَوْ مُخْتَلِفَيْنِ فَإِنْ كَانَا مُتَّفَقَيْنِ مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ كَانَا وَاحِدًا فِي الْعُدَدِ وَالصِّفَةِ وَالصُّورَةِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَهَذَا مَعْدُومٌ أَنْ يَكُونَ اثْنَانِ بِمَعْنَى وَاحِدٍ مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَا مُخْتَلِفَيْنِ فَكَيْفَ يَجُوزُ الْإِقْتِدَاءُ بِهِمَا وَهَذَا تَكْلِيفٌ مَا لَا يُطَاقُ لِأَنَّكَ إِنْ افْتَدَيْتَ بِوَاحِدٍ خَالَفْتَ الْآخَرَ وَالِدَّلِيلُ عَلَى اخْتِلَافِهِمَا أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ سَبَى أَهْلَ الرِّدَّةِ وَرَدَّهُمْ عُمَرُ أَحْرَارًا وَأَشَارَ عُمَرُ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ بِعَزْلِ خَالِدٍ وَيَقْتُلِهِ بِمَالِكِ بْنِ نُؤَيْرَةَ فَأَبَى أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَلَيْهِ وَحَرَّمَ عُمَرُ الْمُتَعَةَ وَلَمْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَوَضَعَ عُمَرُ دِيْوَانَ الْعَطِيَّةِ وَلَمْ يَفْعَلْهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ

so. Abu Bakr appointed a successor for himself but Umar did not do so. There are many other examples.”

The author of the book – may God be pleased with him – said, “There exists another point here which Al-Ma’mun did not mention to the enemy. That is the tradition which has not been narrated as the Prophet (S) said, ‘Follow those who will be after me – Abi Bakr and Umar.’ It has been narrated it as ‘Follow those who will be after me – Abu Bakr and Umar.’ Also some have narrated it as ‘Follow those who will be after me – Abu Bakr and Umar.’ If so, it would have the following meaning considering what was said afterwards: ‘Follow those who will be after me – O people, and Abu Bakr and Umar – follow what (exists) after me – God’s Book and my Household.’ Now let us return to the rest of what Al-Ma’mun said.

Another one of the experts on traditions said, “God’s Prophet (S) said, ‘If I were to choose a friend, I would choose Aba Bakr as my friend.’ Al-Ma’mun said, “This is impossible, since according to your traditions the Prophet (S) established the bonds of brotherhood between his companions, but did not do so for Ali (a.s.). Ali (a.s.) asked the reason for that. The Prophet (S) told him, “I have kept you to be my own brother.” Whichever of these we accept, the other one is rejected.

Someone else said, “Ali (a.s.) himself said the following on the pulpit, ‘The best of the people in this

nation after the Prophet (S) are Abu Bakr and Umar.”

Al-Ma'mun said, “This is impossible too. If the Prophet (S) knew that those two were the noblest of all, he (a.s.) would not have appointed Amr ibn al-Aas and Osama ibn Zayd to be their governors. Also Ali's words after the demise of the Prophet (S) also reject this. Ali (a.s.) said, ‘I was closer to him to be his successor than I am to my own shirt. However, I feared that there may be discord (in the nation), and the new Muslim converts might return to their state of unbelief.’ Ali (a.s.) also asked, “How could those two (Abu Bakr and Umar) be better than I am, while I worshipped God out of my own free will before they did, and will continue to worship Him after them?”

Someone else said, “Abu Bakr closed the door of his house and asked, ‘Is there anyone to cancel his pledge of allegiance to me?’ Ali (a.s.) said, ‘God's Prophet (S) put you ahead. Who then can push you back?’”

وَاسْتَخْلَفَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَلَمْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُمَرُ وَلِهَذَا نَظَائِرُ كَثِيرَةٌ

قَالَ مَصْنَفُ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي هَذَا فَصَلَّ لَمْ يَذْكُرْهُ الْمَأْمُونُ لِخَصْمِهِ وَهُوَ أَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ اقْتَدُوا بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَإِنَّمَا رَوَوْا أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ رَوَى أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ فَلَوْ كَانَتِ الرَّوَايَةُ صَحِيحَةً لَكَانَ مَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ بِالنَّصَبِ اقْتَدُوا بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَالْعِتْرَةَ يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَمَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ بِالرَّفْعِ اقْتَدُوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَالْعِتْرَةَ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى حَدِيثِ الْمَأْمُونِ فَقَالَ آخَرُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْحَدِيثِ فَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ لَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا خَلِيلًا لَاتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيلًا فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا مُسْتَحِيلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ رَوَايَاتِكُمْ أَنَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ آخَى بَيْنَ أَصْحَابِهِ وَأَخَّرَ عَلِيًّا فَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ مَا أَخَّرْتُكَ إِلَّا لِنَفْسِي فَأَيُّ الرَّوَايَتَيْنِ تَبَتَّتْ بَطَلَتْ الْأُخْرَى قَالَ آخَرُ إِنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ عَلَى الْمُنْبَرِ خَيْرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بَعْدَ نَبِيِّهَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا مُسْتَحِيلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَوْ عَلِمَ أَنَّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ مَا وُلِّيَ عَلَيْهِمَا مَرَّةً عَمْرُو بْنُ الْعَاصِ وَمَرَّةً أُسَامَةُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ وَمِمَّا يُكَذِّبُ هَذِهِ الرَّوَايَةَ قَوْلُ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قُبِضَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَنَا أَوْلَى بِمَجْلِسِهِ مِنِّي بِقَمِيصِي وَلَكِنِّي أَشْفَقْتُ أَنْ يَرْجِعَ النَّاسُ كُفَّارًا وَقَوْلُهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنِّي يَكُونَانِ خَيْرًا مِنِّي وَقَدْ عَبَدْتُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَبْلَهُمَا وَعَبَدْتُهُ بَعْدَهُمَا قَالَ آخَرُ فَإِنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ أَغْلَقَ بَابَهُ وَقَالَ هَلْ مِنْ مُسْتَقِيلٍ فَأَقْبَلَهُ فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَدَّمَكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ ذَا يُؤَخَّرُكَ؟

Al-Ma'mun said, “This is not right, since Ali (a.s.) himself refused to pledge allegiance to Abi Bakr. You have narrated yourselves that Ali did not pledge allegiance for as long as (the Blessed Lady) Fatima (a.s.) was alive. Fatima (a.s.) willed that they bury her at night so that those two (Abu Bakr and Umar) could not be present at her funeral. And as another reason for the Prophet (S) not having established him (Abu Bakr) as his successor is that the Prophet (S) said, “Cancel the pledge of allegiance for me.” And also the Prophet (S) told the Helpers¹, “Vote for either Abu Obaydah or Umar.”

Someone else said, “Amr ibn al-Aas said, ‘O Prophet of God! Which of your wives do you love the most?’ The Prophet (S) said, ‘Aa'isha.’ He asked, ‘Which of the men do you like the most?’ The Prophet (S) said, ‘Her father (Abu Bakr).’”

Al-Ma'mun said, "This is not right either. You yourselves have narrated that when they brought some fried chicken for the Prophet (S), he (a.s.) said, 'O my God! Please make the most beloved of your creatures be present here.' And that was Ali (a.s.). Then which of the two of your traditions can we believe?"

Someone else said, "In fact, Ali himself said, 'I will carry out the punishment for accusation upon whoever considers me to be nobler than Abi Bakr and Umar.'" Al-Ma'mun asked, "How could Ali have said that he will punish one for whom punishment is not decreed? If so, he would have transgressed the limits of the Honorable the Exalted God, and have acted against His orders. Considering him (Ali (a.s.)) to be nobler than those two is not an accusation, either. You yourselves have narrated that your leader (Abu Bakr) said, 'I have become your master, but I am not any better than you are.' Then tell me which of these two men do you consider to be more honest? Which one do you consider to be correct: what Abu Bakr said about himself or what Ali said about Abi Bakr? And yet there is a contradiction in this tradition. We have to say that either Abi Bakr is honest in what he says, or he is not. If he is honest, we must ask from where he got to know that. Was it through revelation or did he just think it up himself? If you say that it was due to revelation, we know that the revelations stopped (after the Prophet (S)). And if you say that it was what he himself thought, it cannot be so since we know that there is no way one could think of such things. If you say that he was dishonest,

فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا بَاطِلٌ مِنْ قِبَلِ مَنْ قَبِلَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَعَدَ عَنْ بَيْعَةِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَرَوَيْتُمْ أَنَّهُ قَعَدَ عَنْهَا حَتَّى قُبِضَتْ فَاطِمَةُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَأَنَّهَا أُوصِتَتْ أَنْ تُدْفَنَ لَيْلًا لَيْلًا يَشْهَدُهَا جَنَازَتَهَا وَوَجْهَ آخِرٍ وَهُوَ أَنَّهُ إِنْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ اسْتَخْلَفَهُ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ لَهُ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيلَ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ لِلْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَدْ رَضِيَتْ لَكُمْ أَحَدَ هَذَيْنِ الرَّجُلَيْنِ أَمَا عَبِيدَةَ وَعُمَرَ قَالَ آخِرُ إِنَّ عَمْرَو بْنَ الْعَاصِ قَالَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَحَبَّ النَّاسَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ فَقَالَ عَائِشَةُ فَقَالَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ فَقَالَ أَبُوهَا فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا بَاطِلٌ مِنْ قِبَلِ أَنْكُمْ رَوَيْتُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَضَعَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ طَائِرٌ مَشْوِيٌّ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ ابْتِنِي بِأَحَبِّ خَلْقِكَ إِلَيْكَ فَكَانَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَأَيُّ رَوَايَتِكُمْ تُقْبَلُ فَقَالَ آخِرُ فَإِنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ مَنْ فَضَّلَنِي عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ جَلَدْتُهُ حَدَّ الْمُفْتَرِي قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ كَيْفَ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يَقُولَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَجَلِدُ أَحَدًا مَنْ لَا يَجِبُ الْحَدُّ عَلَيْهِ فَيَكُونُ مُتَعَدِّيًا لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَامِلًا بِخِلَافِ أَمْرِهِ وَلَيْسَ تَفْضِيلٌ مَنْ فَضَّلَهُ عَلَيْهِمَا فَرِيَةً وَقَدْ رَوَيْتُمْ عَنْ إِمَامِكُمْ أَنَّهُ قَالَ وَوَلِيْتَكُمْ وَلَسْتُ بِخَيْرِكُمْ فَأَيُّ الرَّجُلَيْنِ أَصْدَقُ عِنْدَكُمْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَوْ عَلِيٌّ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ مَعَ تَنَافُضِ الْحَدِيثِ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَا بُدَّ لَهُ فِي قَوْلِهِ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ صَادِقًا أَوْ كَاذِبًا فَإِنْ كَانَ صَادِقًا فَأَنَّى عَرَفَ ذَلِكَ أَبُو حَنِيْفٍ فَالْوَحْيُ مُنْقَطِعٌ أَوْ بِالنَّظَرِ فَالْنَّظَرُ مُتَحَيِّرٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ غَيْرَ صَادِقٍ فَمِنْ الْمَحَالِ أَنْ

then it is impossible for such a dishonest person to be in charge of the affairs of the Muslims, to uphold the decrees and exercise Divinely-Ordained Punishments."

Someone else said, "It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) said, 'Abu Bakr and Umar are the Masters of the Elders in Paradise.'"

Al-Ma'mun said, "This is impossible, since once an old lady called Ashja'iyya was with the Prophet (S) and the Prophet (S) said, 'An old lady does not enter Paradise.' She cried. Then the Prophet (S) said, 'In fact, the Sublime God says, *We have created (their Companions) of special Creation. And made them*

Someone else said, “The Prophet (S) has said, ‘Should the penalty descend no one but Umar ibn al-Khattab will be saved.’”

Al-Ma'mun said, “This is in complete contradiction with the text of the Book. In fact, the Sublime God told His Prophet (S), ‘But Allah was not going to send them a penalty whilst thou wast amongst them...’⁶ You are setting up Umar to be like the Prophet (S).”

Someone else said, “The Prophet (S) has testified that Umar is one of the ten companions who will be in Paradise.”

Al-Ma'mun said, “Were it as you claim, Umar would have never asked Huthayfa⁷, ‘I swear to you by God to tell me if I am one of the hypocrites?’ Had the Prophet (S) told him that he was going to Paradise, would he have denied what God’s Prophet (S) had said and ask that from Huthayfa? Then it could be seen that he acknowledged Huthayfa and not the Prophet (S) which is in opposition to being a Muslim. And if he had acknowledged the Prophet (S), why then did he ask that from Huthayfa? Thus these two traditions contradict each other.”

Someone else said, “In fact, the Prophet (S) said, ‘They weighed me against my nation, and I weighed more. Then they put Abu Bakr in my place and he weighed more than me. Then they put Umar in my place and he weighed more than Abu Bakr. Then they took away the scale.’”

Al-Ma'mun said, “This is also impossible. Either they measured their weight or they measured their deeds. If they measured their weights, it is not acceptable that they weighed more than the whole nation. And if they weighed their deeds, the deeds of all the nation were available to weigh at that time⁸. Still those Muslims were not created to have done any deeds. Tell me, how did they outweigh the nation?” Some said, “According to their good deeds.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Tell me, would someone who had more noble deeds after the demise of the Prophet (S)

قَالَتِ الشَّيْبَعَةُ عَلِيَّ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ فَقُلْتُمْ عَبْدُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِأَنَّ السَّابِقَ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الْمَسْبُوقِ وَكَمَا رَوَيْتُمْ أَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَوْرُ مِنْ حَسِّ عُمَرَ وَأَلْقَى عَلَى لِسَانِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَنَّهُنَّ الْغَرَائِبُ الْعُلَى فَفَرَّ مِنْ عُمَرَ وَأَلْقَى عَلَى لِسَانِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِزَعْمِكُمْ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ آخَرُ قَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَوْ نَزَلَ الْعَذَابُ مَا نَجَا إِلَّا عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا خِلَافُ الْكِتَابِ نَصًّا لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ: وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَجَعَلْتُمْ عُمَرَ مِثْلَ الرَّسُولِ قَالَ آخَرُ فَقَدْ شَهِدَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِعُمَرَ بِالْجَنَّةِ فِي عَشْرَةِ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ فَقَالَ لَوْ كَانَ هَذَا كَمَا زَعَمْتَ كَانَ عُمَرُ لَا يَقُولُ لِحَدِيثِكَ نَشَدْتُكَ بِاللَّهِ أَمِنَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ أَنَا فَإِنْ كَانَ قَدْ قَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَنْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَلَمْ يُصَدِّقْهُ حَتَّى زَكَاهُ حُدَيْفَةُ وَصَدَّقَ حُدَيْفَةُ وَلَمْ يُصَدِّقِ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ هَذَا عَلَى غَيْرِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَإِنْ كَانَ قَدْ صَدَّقَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَلِمَ سَأَلَ حُدَيْفَةُ وَهَذَا الْخَبْرَانِ مُتَنَاقِضَانِ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمَا فَقَالَ آخَرُ فَقَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَوَضِعَتْ أُمَّتِي فِي كِفَّةِ الْمِيزَانِ وَوَضِعْتُ فِي أُخْرَى فَرَجَحْتُ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ وَضِعَ مَكَانِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَرَجَحَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ عُمَرُ فَرَجَحَ ثُمَّ رَفَعَ الْمِيزَانَ فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ هَذَا مُحَالٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ لَا يَخْلُو مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَجْسَامِهِمَا أَوْ أَعْمَالِهِمَا فَإِنْ كَانَتْ الْأَجْسَامُ فَلَا يَخْفَى عَلَى ذِي رُوحٍ أَنَّهُ مُحَالٌ لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَرَجَحُ أَجْسَامُهُمَا بِأَجْسَامِ الْأُمَّةِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمَا فَلَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدَ فَكَيْفٍ يَرَجَحُ بِمَا لَيْسَ وَخَبَرُونِي بِمَا يَنْفَاضِلُ النَّاسُ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ بِالْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ قَالَ فَأَخْبَرُونِي فَمَنْ فَضَلَ صَاحِبَهُ عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ

attain the same position as those who lived at the time of the Prophet (S), but had done less noble deeds? If you answer in the affirmative, I know of some people today whose good deeds – participation in a holy war, visiting the *Kaaba* (i.e. House of God), fasting, praying and giving charity – are much more than those who lived at the time of the Prophet (S).” They said, “You are right. The noble ones of our times are as noble as the noble ones at the time of the Prophet (S).” Al-Ma’mun replied, “Then consider what your religious leaders from whom you have learned your religion – have told you about the nobilities of Ali (a.s.); and what they have said about the ten companions whom they have promised to be sure to go to Paradise and compare them. If you see that their deeds are slightly nobler, then what you say is right. However, if you see that what they have narrated about Ali’s nobilities is more, then accept what your religious leaders have said about Ali and do not deviate from that.”

The narrator added, “All of them lowered their heads.” Then Al-Ma’mun asked, “Why have you become silent?” They said, “We are finished asking questions.” Al-Ma’mun said, “Then let me ask. What was the most rewarding deed on the day in which God appointed His Prophet (S)?” They said, “Rushing ahead of others in accepting Islam since the Sublime God says, *‘And those Foremost (in Faith) will be Foremost (in the Hereafter). These will be those Nearest to Allah.’*”⁹

Al-Ma’mun asked, “Do you know of anyone who accepted Islam before Ali did?”

The man said, “That is right, but he was still too young to accept Islam. Abu Bakr was older and the decree was designated for him (to be the Caliph). There is some difference between these two conditions.” Al-Ma’mun said, “Tell me whether Ali’s acceptance of Islam was due to Divine Inspirations from the Sublime God, or was it just due to the invitation of the Prophet (S)? If you say that it was due to receiving inspirations, you have placed him above the Prophet (S) since the Prophet (S) did not receive any inspirations. It was Gabriel who descended (from Heaven) and delivered the messages of the Sublime God to him (a.s.). However, if you say that it was due to the Prophet’s invitation, tell me whether the Prophet (S) invited Ali (a.s.) out of his own will or was his invitation according to God’s order. If you say that it was due to the invitation of the Prophet (S) himself, this would contradict how the

ثُمَّ إِنَّ الْمَفْضُولَ عَمِلَ بَعْدَ وَفَاةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِأَكْثَرِ مِنْ عَمَلِ الْفَاضِلِ عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ
 أَيْلِحَقُ بِهِ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ نَعَمْ أَوْجَدْتُمْ فِي عَصْرِنَا هَذَا مَنْ هُوَ أَكْثَرُ جِهَادًا وَحَجًّا وَصَوْمًا وَصَلَاةً وَصَدَقَةً مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ قَالُوا
 صَدَقْتَ لَا يَلْحَقُ فَاضِلٌ دَهْرِنَا فَاضِلَ عَصْرِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ فَانظُرُوا فِيمَا رَوَتْ أُمَّتُكُمْ الَّذِينَ
 أَخَذْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ أَدْيَانَكُمْ فِي فَضَائِلِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَقَابَسُوا إِلَيْهَا مَا رَوَوْا فِي فَضَائِلِ تَمَامِ الْعَشْرَةِ الَّذِينَ شَهِدُوا لَهُمْ
 بِالْجَنَّةِ فَإِنْ كَانَتْ جُزْءًا مِنْ أَجْزَاءِ كَثِيرَةٍ فَالْقَوْلُ قَوْلُكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانُوا قَدْ رَوَوْا فِي فَضَائِلِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَكْثَرَ فَخُذُوا
 عَنْ أُمَّتِكُمْ مَا رَوَوْا وَلَا تَعْدُوهُ قَالَ فَاطَرَ الْقَوْمِ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ مَا لَكُمْ سَكْتُمْ قَالُوا قَدْ اسْتَفْصَيْنَا قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ
 فَإِنِّي أَسْأَلُكُمْ خَبْرُونِي أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ كَانَ أَفْضَلَ يَوْمَ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالُوا السَّبْقُ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ
 تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَقُولُ: السَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ قَالَ فَهَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ أَحَدًا أَسْبَقَ مِنْ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِلَى
 الْإِسْلَامِ قَالُوا إِنَّهُ سَبَقَ حَدَّثَنَا لَمْ يَجِرْ عَلَيْهِ حُكْمٌ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ أَسْلَمَ كَهَلَا قَدْ جَرَى عَلَيْهِ الْحُكْمُ وَبَيْنَ هَاتَيْنِ الْحَالَتَيْنِ فَرْقٌ
 قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ فَخَبْرُونِي عَنْ إِسْلَامِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَبَالِهَامٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَمْ بَدَعَاءِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ
 فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِالِهَامِ فَقَدْ فَضَلْتُمُوهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ لَمْ يَلْهَمْ بَلْ أَنَا جَبْرَائِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنِ اللَّهِ

عَزَّ وَجَلَّ دَاعِيًا وَمُعَرِّفًا وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِدُعَاءِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَهَلْ دَعَا مِنْ قَبْلِ نَفْسِهِ أَمْ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ نَفْسِهِ فَهَذَا خِلَافٌ مَا وَصَفَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ نَبِيَّهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى:

Sublime God describes His Prophet (S) when He says, ‘...nor am I a pretender’¹⁰ or when He says, ‘Nor does he say (ought) of (his own) Desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him.’¹¹ If you say that it was due to God’s order, then God has ordered him to choose Ali (a.s.) from amongst all the children of the people to invite (to Islam). Therefore, the Prophet (S) has invited Ali (a.s.) to Islam due to trusting him and his being approved of by the Sublime God.

On the other hand, tell me whether the Wise God would oblige His creatures to do what would be beyond their own power to do? If you answer in the affirmative, then you are an atheist. If, however, you answer in the negative, how would God order His Prophet (S) to invite someone (to Islam) who cannot accept the decree due to his being too young and not able to accept (the invitation)? Moreover, have you ever seen the Prophet (S) invite (to Islam) any other children from his family or outside his family to be designated as a model for Ali (a.s.)? If you think that the Prophet (S) has not invited any other child but Ali (a.s.) to Islam, then this itself would designate that Ali (a.s.) is nobler than all other children.” Al-Ma’mun then added, “Tell me, what would be the noblest deed after having faith.” They said, “Fighting in the way of God.” He said, “Do you know of a record of fighting in the way of God for any of those ten (companions) similar to that of Ali’s record in fighting with atheists and enemies in all the battles which the Prophet (S) conducted in history? Consider the Battle of Badr in which a total of a few more than sixty people were killed. Ali (a.s.) killed more than twenty of them himself, while all the other people killed nearly forty of them.” One of those present in the meeting said, “Abu Bakr was in his own tent along with the Prophet (S) and was directing the battle.” Al-Ma’mun said, “What a strange thing you are saying! Did Abu Bakr plan the battles by himself and without the Prophet (S), or did he participate in the planning along with the Prophet (S), or was it the case that the Prophet (S) needed Abu Bakr’s opinion and leadership? Which of the three cases do you prefer to choose?” The man said, “I take refuge in God from thinking that he participated along with the Prophet (S) in planning the battles, or that he himself decided what to do without the Prophet (S), or that the Prophet (S) needed his opinion.” Then Al-Ma’mun asked, “Then what is the nobility of sitting in a tent and watching the fighters? If the nobility of Abu Bakr was due to his abandoning holy war and not going to the

وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ وَفِي قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَقَدْ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ نَبِيِّهِ بِدُعَاءِ عَلِيٍِّّ مِنْ بَيْنِ صِبْيَانِ النَّاسِ وَإِثَارِهِ عَلَيْهِمْ فَدَعَاَهُ تَفَعُّلًا بِهِ وَعِلْمًا بِتَأْيِيدِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ إِيَّاهُ وَخَلَّةً أُخْرَىٰ خَبَرُونِي عَنِ الْحَكِيمِ هَلْ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُكَلَّفَ خَلْفَهُ مَا لَا يُطِيقُونَ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ نَعَمْ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ لَا فَكَيْفَ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يَأْمُرَ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِدُعَاءِ مَنْ لَمْ يُمْكِنَهُ قَبُولُ مَا يُؤْمَرُ بِهِ لِصِغَرِهِ وَحِدَاثَةِ سِنِّهِ وَضِعْفِهِ عَنِ الْقَبُولِ وَخَلَّةً أُخْرَىٰ هَلْ رَأَيْتُمْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ دَعَا أَحَدًا مِنْ صِبْيَانِ أَهْلِهِ وَغَيْرِهِمْ فَيَكُونُ أَسْوَأَ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَإِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَدْعُ غَيْرَهُ فَهَذِهِ فَضِيلَةٌ لِعَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ جَمِيعِ صِبْيَانِ النَّاسِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ بَعْدَ السَّبْقِ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ قَالُوا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ فَهَلْ تُحَدِّثُونَ لِأَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَشْرَةِ فِي الْجِهَادِ مَا لِعَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي جَمِيعِ مَوَاقِفِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنْ الْأَثَرِ هَذِهِ بَدْرٌ قُتِلَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ فِيهَا نِيفٌ وَسِتُّونَ رَجُلًا قَتَلَ عَلِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنْهُمْ نِيفًا

وَعَشْرِينَ وَأَرْبَعُونَ لِسَائِرِ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ كَانَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فِي عَرِيشِهِ يُدِيرُهَا فَقَالَ الْمُؤْمِنُ
لَقَدْ جِئْتُ بِهَا عَجِيبَةً أَكَّانَ يُدِيرُ دُونَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَوْ مَعَهُ فَيَشْرِكُهُ أَوْ لِحَاجَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ
إِلَى رَأْيِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ أَيُّ الثَّلَاثِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ فَقَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ أَنْ أَزْعِمَ أَنَّهُ يُدِيرُ دُونَ النَّبِيِّ أَوْ يَشْرِكُهُ أَوْ يَفْتَقِرُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ فَمَا الْفَضِيلَةُ فِي الْعَرِيشِ فَإِنْ كَانَتْ فَضِيلَةً أَبِي بَكْرٍ بِتَخَلُّفِهِ عَنِ الْحَرْبِ فَيَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ
كُلُّ

battlefield, then we must say that all of those who disobey (God) and do not go to the battlefield are nobler than those who fight. The Honorable the Exalted God says, *'Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) Hath God promised good: But those who strive and fight Hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward.'*"¹²

Ishaq ibn Hammad ibn Zayd said, "Al-Ma'mun then told me to recite the Qur'anic Chapter Insan. I recited it, *'Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing...'*"¹³ until I reached the following verse, *'And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive.'*"¹⁴ And I continued reciting the Chapter up to (a.s.aying), *"Verily this is a Reward for you, and your Endeavor is accepted and recognized."*"¹⁵ Then Al-Ma'mun asked, "About whom were these verses recited?" I said, "About Ali." He asked, "Do you know of any traditions in which it is narrated that while Ali (a.s.) fed the poor and assisted the orphans and the captives, he said, *'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks'*"¹⁶ as it appears in the Qur'an?" I said, "No." Al-Ma'mun said, "Then the Honorable the Exalted God was aware of what went on within Ali's (a.s.) heart and expressed it in His Book to make it known to His creatures." Al-Ma'mun asked, "Do you understand what the Sublime God describes when He describes Paradise in this verse saying, *'Crystal-clear, made of silver: they will determine the measure thereof (according to their wishes).'*"¹⁷ I said, "No." He said, "This is another nobility. How could there be any crystal-clear silver?" Ishaq said, "I do not know." Al-Ma'mun replied, "He wants us to imagine silver so clear that one can see its inside from the outside. O Ishaq! This is similar to what the Prophet of God (a.s.) said, *'O slower! Be more patient with these crystal-clear ones'* referring to ladies' ears to their being so delicate. It is also similar to what the Prophet of God (a.s.) said, *'I rode Abu Talha's horse and found it like a sea'* implying that it galloped very fast just as the sea waves do. And as the Sublime God says, *'...death will come to him from every quarter, yet will he not die: and in front of him will be a chastisement unrelenting'*"¹⁸ even though he will die even if death comes to him from just one side."

مُتَخَلِّفٍ فَاضِلًا أَفْضَلَ مِنَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ وَاللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ: لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ
وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ
اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ حَمَّادِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي: اقْرَأْ هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ، فَقَرَأْتُ حَتَّى بَلَغْتُ: وَطُعْمُونَ
 الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مَسْكِينًا وَبَيْتِيًّا وَأَسِيرًا... إِلَى قَوْلِهِ وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا. فَقَالَ فِيمَنْ نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتُ قُلْتُ فِي
 عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ فَهَلْ بَلَغَكَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ حِينَ أَطْعَمَ الْمَسْكِينِ وَالْيَتِيمِ وَالْأَسِيرَ إِنَّمَا نَطَعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ
 اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا عَلَى مَا وَصَفَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي كِتَابِهِ فَقُلْتُ لَا قَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَرَفَ سَرِيرَةَ
 عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَبَيْتَهُ فَأَظْهَرَ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابِهِ تَعْرِيفًا لَخَلْقِهِ أَمْرُهُ فَهَلْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَصَفَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِمَّا
 وَصَفَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مَا فِي هَذِهِ السُّورَةِ قَوَارِيرًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قُلْتُ لَا قَالَ فَهَذِهِ فَضِيلَةٌ أُخْرَى فَكَيْفَ يَكُونُ الْقَوَارِيرُ مِنْ
 فِضَّةٍ؟ قُلْتُ لَا أُدْرِي. قَالَ يُرِيدُ كَأَنَّهَا مِنْ صَفَائِهَا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ يَرَى دَاخِلَهَا كَمَا يَرَى خَارِجَهَا وَهَذَا مِثْلُ قَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
 يَا أَنْجَسَةَ رُؤِيدًا سَوْقَكَ بِالْقَوَارِيرِ وَعَنَى بِهِ النِّسَاءَ كَأَنَّهِنَّ الْقَوَارِيرُ رِقَّةً وَقَوْلُهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ رَكِبْتُ فَرَسَ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ
 فَوَجَدْتُهُ بَحْرًا أَيْ كَأَنَّهُ بَحْرٌ مِنْ كَثْرَةِ جَرِيهِ وَعَدْوِهِ وَكَقَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ
 وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ أَيْ كَأَنَّهُ مَا يَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُ مِنْ مَكَانٍ وَاحِدٍ لَمَاتَ

Then Al-Ma'mun asked, "O Ishaq! Are you not one of those who testify that those ten (companions) are in Paradise?" I said, "yes." He said, "If you saw that someone did not know whether this tradition was correct or not, would you consider him to be an atheist?" I said, "No." Al-Ma'mun asked, "What if he asks whether this Chapter is from the Qur'an or not, will you then consider him to be an atheist?" I said, "Yes." Al-Ma'mun said, "Then I consider the nobility of this man (Ali (a.s.)) to be more. [19](#) O Ishaq! Tell me if you consider the tradition about the fried chicken (which was brought for the Prophet (S)) to be correct or not?" I said, "Yes." Al-Ma'mun said, "By God, your animosity can be seen from this. There are only three possibilities. It is either that he was accepted due to the supplications of the Prophet (S), or he was rejected, or that God could not recognize between the noble one and the others. Tell me, which one do you like the most?" Ishaq said, "I kept my head down for some time and then I said, 'O Commander of the Faithful! The Sublime God said the following regarding Abi Bakr: He had no more than one companion; the two were in the cave, and he said to his companion, *'Have no fear, for Allah is with us': then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Wise.*" [20](#)

Al-Ma'mun said, "Glory be to God! How little is your knowledge of the Book? Can an atheist be a companion of a believer? What kind of nobility is this? Didn't you hear the Words of the Sublime God, *'His companion said to him, in the course of the argument with him: Dost thou deny Him Who created thee out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned thee into a man?'*" [21](#) Thus you see that God made an atheist a believer's companion. Or according to the following poems from al-Hothali:

The morning came and the horse which I rode was wild
 It saw the East from beneath its cover.

Or as Al-Azdi said,

I was frightened about being alone there with my only companion,
 being a gentle, tall, four-legged animal with thin forelegs.

ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا إِسْحَاقُ أَلَسْتَ مِمَّنْ يَشْهَدُ أَنَّ الْعَشْرَةَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَقُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ مَا أَدْرِي أَصَحِيحٌ هَذَا الْحَدِيثُ أَمْ لَا أَكَانَ عِنْدَكَ كَافِرًا قُلْتُ لَا قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ قَالَ مَا أَدْرِي أَهَذِهِ السُّورَةُ قُرْآنٌ أَمْ لَا أَكَانَ عِنْدَكَ كَافِرًا قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ أَرَى فَضَلَ الرَّجُلِ يَتَأَكَّدُ خَبْرِي يَا إِسْحَاقُ أَنْ حَدِيثَ الطَّائِرِ الْمَشْوِيِّ أَصَحِيحٌ عِنْدَكَ قَالَ بَلَى قَالَ بَانَ وَاللَّهِ عِنَادُكَ لَا يَخْلُو هَذَا مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ كَمَا دَعَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَوْ يَكُونَ مَرْدُودًا أَوْ عَرَفَ اللَّهُ الْفَاضِلَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَكَانَ الْمَفْضُولُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ أَوْ تَزَعُمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَعْرِفِ الْفَاضِلَ مِنَ الْمَفْضُولِ فَأَيُّ الثَّلَاثِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ أَنْ تَقُولَ بِهِ قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ فَأَطْرَقَتْ سَاعَةٌ ثُمَّ قُلْتُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ فِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ ثَانِيِ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَتَبَّهَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَى صُحْبَةِ نَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقَالَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مَا أَقَلَّ عِلْمَكُمْ بِاللُّغَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ أَمَا يَكُونُ الْكَافِرُ صَاحِبًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ فَأَيُّ فَضِيلَةٍ فِي هَذِهِ أَمَا سَمِعْتَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ: (قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا؟

فَقَدْ جَعَلَهُ لَهُ صَاحِبًا. وَقَالَ الْهُذَلِيُّ

وَلَقَدْ غَدَوْتُ وَصَاحِبِي وَحَشِيَّةٌ

تَحْتَ الرِّدَاءِ بِصِيرَةٍ بِالْمَشْرِقِ

وَقَالَ الْأَزْدِيُّ

وَلَقَدْ دَعَوْتُ الْوَحْشَ فِيهِ وَصَاحِبِي

مَحْضُ الْقَوَائِمِ مِنْ هِجَانِ هَيْكَلِ

Here the poet has likened his horse to his companion. And when the Sublime God says, ‘...for God is with us...’ [22](#) means that the Blessed the Sublime God is with every good-doer and every evil-doer. Have you not heard the Words of the Sublime God, ‘Seest thou not that Allah doth know (all) that is in the heavens and on earth? There is not a secret consultation between three, but He makes the fourth among them, nor between five but He makes the sixth, nor between fewer nor more, but He is in their midst, wheresoever they be: In the end will He tell them the truth of their conduct, on the Day of Judgment. For Allah has full knowledge of all things.’ [23](#) And regarding His words, ‘Have no fear...’ [24](#) Tell me about the fears of Abi Bakr. Were they said in obedience, or disobedience? If you consider them to be said in obedience, you have said that the Prophet (S) admonished him against obedience. However, this contradicts what a wise person would do. And if you think that he has disobeyed, then what is the nobility of one who is disobedient? Tell me, upon whom did God send down peace in the following

Words of the Sublime God, ‘...then Allah sent down His peace upon him...’²⁵

Ishaq replied, “To Abi Bakr since the Prophet (S) did not need any peace. The Prophet (S) was not afraid.”

He said, “Let me know about the Words of the Honorable the Exalted, ‘Assuredly Allah did help you in many battlefields and on the day of Hunain²⁶: Behold! your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat. But Allah did pour His calm on the Messenger and on the Believers...’²⁷

Al-Ma'mun asked, “Do you know who is meant by the believers to whom the Sublime God refers in this verse?” I said, “I do not know.” Al-Ma'mun said, “On the day of the Battle of Hunain the people fled from the battlefield. Only seven people from the *Hashemites* stayed with the Prophet of God (a.s.). They consisted of Ali (a.s.) who fought with his sword, Abbas who held the horse-strap for the Prophet of God (a.s.), and five others who surrounded the Prophet (S) fearing that the pagans might strike him (a.s.) with their weapons, until the Blessed the Sublime God granted victory to His Messenger (a.s.). Therefore, the reference to the believers in this verse is to Ali (a.s.) and those of the *Hashemites* who stayed there. Then who is nobler? The one (Ali (a.s.)) who was with the

فَصَيَّرَ فَرَسَهُ صَاحِبَهُ وَأَمَّا قَوْلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَإِنَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى مَعَ الْبَرِّ وَالْفَاجِرِ أَمَا سَمِعْتَ قَوْلَهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا يَكُونُ
مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةَ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا وَأَمَّا
قَوْلُهُ لَا تَحْزَنْ فَخَبَّرَنِي عَنْ حُزْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ أَكَانَ طَاعَةً أَوْ مَعْصِيَةً فَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ طَاعَةً فَقَدْ جَعَلْتَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَنْهَى عَنِ الطَّاعَةِ وَهَذَا خِلَافُ صِفَةِ الْحَكِيمِ وَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُ مَعْصِيَةٌ فَأَيُّ فَضِيلَةٍ لِلْعَاصِي وَخَبَّرَنِي عَنْ قَوْلِهِ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ عَلَى مَنْ قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ فَقُلْتُ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ لَأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ كَانَ مُسْتَعْنِيًا
عَنِ السَّكِينَةِ قَالَ فَخَبَّرَنِي عَنْ قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلْتَدْرِي مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي هَذَا الْمَوْضِعِ قَالَ قُلْتُ لَا قَالَ إِنَّ النَّاسَ انْهَزَمُوا يَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ فَلَمْ يَبْقَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِلَّا
سَبْعَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَضْرِبُ بِسَيْفِهِ وَالْعَبَّاسُ أَخَذَ بِلِجَامِ بَعْلَةَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَالْخَمْسَةُ
مُحَدِّقُونَ بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ خَوْفًا مِنْ أَنْ يَنَالَهُ سِلَاحُ الْكُفَّارِ حَتَّى أُعْطِيَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى رَسُولُهُ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ الظَّفَرَ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي هَذَا الْمَوْضِعِ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَمَنْ حَضَرَ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ أَفْضَلَ؟ أَمْنَ
كَانَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ

Prophet (S) and peace descended upon him and the Prophet (S), or the one (Abu Bakr) who was with the Prophet (S) in the cave, but was not deserving enough for peace to be descended upon?²⁸ O Ishaq! Which one is nobler? The one (Abu Bakr) who was in the cave with the Prophet (S) or the one (Ali (a.s.)) who slept in the Prophet's (a.s.) bed sacrificing himself to allow the Prophet (S) to complete his Emigration. In fact, the Blessed the Sublime God ordered His Prophet (S) to order Ali (a.s.) to sleep in the Prophet's (a.s.) bed, so that the Prophet's (a.s.) life would be saved. Ali (a.s.) asked, “O the Prophet of GOD! Will you be saved this way?” The Prophet (S) said, “Yes.” Then Ali (a.s.) said, “I hear and obey.” Then he slept in the Prophet's (a.s.) bed and wrapped a sheet around himself. The pagans

surrounded the house and went in. They had no doubt that the Prophet (S) was there. One man from each tribe had come there to each deliver a blow to the Prophet (S), so that the *Hashemites* could not demand retribution. Ali (a.s.) heard their plans and knew that his life was in danger. However, nothing could scare him as Abu Bakr was scared in the cave. Yet, Abu Bakr was with the Prophet (S) while Ali was there alone. Ali (a.s.) was patient and steadfast. The Sublime God sent down angels to guard him from the evils of the *Quraysh* (tribe) enemies. When dawn came, they saw him, looked at him and asked, “Where is Muhammad?” Ali (a.s.) replied, “I do not know.” They said, “You have tricked us.” Ali (a.s.) joined the Prophet (S) later. Thus it was Ali (a.s.) who was nobler and good deeds were done by him day after day, until the Sublime God took his life and he was well forgiven by Him.”

Al-Ma'mun asked, “O Ishaq! Have you not been the one who narrated the tradition on Mastery?” Ishaq said, “Yes.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Please narrate it for me.” Ishaq narrated it for him.²⁹ Al-Ma'mun said, “Don't you see that this tradition established a right for Ali (a.s.) incumbent upon Abi Bakr and Umar, but has not established any rights for those two incumbent upon Ali (a.s.)?” Ishaq said, “The people say that God's Prophet (S) has said this the following regarding Zayd ibn Haritha.” He asked, “Where and when did the Prophet (S) say this?” I said, “In the Ghadir Khom after returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage of the *Kaaba*.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Where was Zayd ibn Haritha killed?” I said, “In Mo'ta.” He said, “Was Zayd ibn Haritha not killed before the Qadir Khom instance?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Tell me, what if your fifteen year old son says, ‘O people! Accept that my servant belongs to my cousin.’ Will

وَأَلِهَ وَتَزَلَّتِ السَّكِينَةُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ أَمْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْغَارِ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلًا لِنَزُولِهَا عَلَيْهِ يَا إِسْحَاقُ مَنْ أَفْضَلُ مَنْ كَانَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فِي الْغَارِ أَمْ مَنْ نَامَ عَلَى مِهَادِهِ وَوَقَاهُ بِنَفْسِهِ حَتَّى تَمَّ لِلنَّبِيِّ مَا عَزَمَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْهَجْرَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَمَرَ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَنْ يَأْمُرَ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِالنُّومِ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ وَوَقَايَتِهِ بِنَفْسِهِ فَأَمَرَهُ بِذَلِكَ فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَسَلَّمَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ سَمِعًا وَطَاعَةً ثُمَّ أَتَى مَضْجَعَهُ وَتَسَجَّى بِنُوبِهِ وَأَحْدَقَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ لَا يَشْكُونَ فِي أَنَّهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَقَدْ أَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَضْرِبَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ بَطْنٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ رَجُلٌ ضَرْبَةً لِنَلَا يُطَالِبَ الْهَاشِمِيُّونَ بِدَمِهِ وَعَلِيٌّ يَسْمَعُ مَا الْقَوْمُ فِيهِ مِنَ التَّدْبِيرِ فِي تَلْفِ نَفْسِهِ فَلَمْ يَدْعُهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَى الْجَزَعِ كَمَا جَزِعَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فِي الْغَارِ وَهُوَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَعَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَحَدَهُ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مَلَائِكَةً تَمْنَعُهُ مِنْ مُشْرِكِي قُرَيْشٍ فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحَ قَامَ فَانظَرَ الْقَوْمَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا أَيَنْ مُحَمَّدٌ قَالَ وَمَا عَلِمِي بِهِ قَالُوا فَأَنْتَ عَرَرْتَنَا ثُمَّ لَحِقَ بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ عَلِيٌّ أَفْضَلَ لِمَا بَدَأَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا مَا يَزِيدُ [إِلَّا] خَيْرًا حَتَّى قَبِضَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ مَحْمُودٌ مَغْفُورٌ لَهُ يَا إِسْحَاقُ أَمَا تَرَوِي حَدِيثَ الْوَلَايَةِ فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ قَالَ أَرَوِيهِ فَرَوَيْتُهُ فَقَالَ أَمَا تَرَى أَنَّهُ أُوجِبَ لِعَلِيِّ عَلِيٍّ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ مَا لَمْ يُوجِبْ لَهُمَا عَلَيْهِ قُلْتُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا قَالَهُ بِسَبَبِ زَيْدِ بْنِ حَارِثَةَ قَالَ وَأَيْنَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ هَذَا قُلْتُ بِعَدْرِ خُمٍ بَعْدَ مُنْصَرَفِهِ مِنْ حَجَّةِ الْوُدَاعِ قَالَ فَمَتَى قُتِلَ زَيْدُ بْنُ حَارِثَةَ قُلْتُ بِمَوْتِهِ قَالَ أَفَلَيْسَ قَدْ كَانَ قُتِلَ زَيْدُ بْنُ حَارِثَةَ قَبْلَ عَدْرِ خُمٍ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ فَخَبَّرَنِي لَوْ رَأَيْتَ ابْنًا لَكَ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ خَمْسَ عَشْرَةَ

you be hurt from this?” I said, “Yes. I will not like that and tell him.” He said, “You tell your son not to say what you believe that the Prophet of God did. Woe be to you who have taken your jurists as your Masters! In fact, the Sublime God says, ‘They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah...’³⁰ Yet I swear by God that they neither fasted for them nor did they pray to them.

They only obeyed whatever they said. Then Al-Ma'mun added, "Have you narrated the tradition in which God's Prophet (S) told Ali (a.s.), "Your position relative to me is as same as Aaron's position relative to Moses." I said, "Yes." He said, "Don't you know that Aaron was Moses' brother from the side of both his father and mother?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Was Ali the same?" I said, "No." He said, "Aaron was a Prophet but Ali (a.s.) was not. Then what was the third rank which he (a.s.) had other than that of being the successor? This was said because the hypocrites said, 'It was hard for the Prophet (S) to take Ali with him and left him (a.s.) behind while the Prophet (S) wanted him to remain there with peace of mind and that is why he (a.s.) said that. This is similar to what Moses (a.s.) told Aaron as said by the Sublime God, 'Act for me amongst my people: Do right, and follow not the way of those who do mischief.'³¹ I told him, "But Moses (a.s.) left Aaron to be his successor for all his people while Moses (a.s.) was alive and just went to meet his Lord – the Sublime. But the Prophet (S) left Ali (a.s.) as his successor only when he (a.s.) went to the battles.³²" Al-Ma'mun said, "Tell me. Were there some of his companions along with him when Moses (a.s.) left Aaron as his successor to go to meet his Lord – the Honorable the Exalted?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Did he not establish him as his successor for all of them?" I said, "Yes." He said, "The Prophet (S) also established Ali (a.s.) as his successor for the weak ones, the women and the children when he (a.s.) went to the battlefield while most of his people were along with him. However, the Prophet (S) appointed Ali (a.s.) to be the successor over all of them. Moreover, the proof that he (a.s.) appointed Ali (a.s.) to be his (a.s.) successor over them during his lifetime when he was not there, and after his demise is that the Prophet (S) said, 'The position of Ali relative to me is like that of Aaron's position relative to Moses with the only difference that there will be no more Prophets after me.' Therefore, according to this expression, Ali (a.s.) is like the prime minister for the Prophet (S), since Moses (a.s.) prayed to the Sublime God and in his prayers and said, 'And give me a Minister from my family – Aaron, my brother, add to my

سَنَةَ يَقُولُ مَوْلَايَ مَوْلَى ابْنِ عَمِّي أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَاقْبَلُوا أَكُنْتُمْ تَكْرَهُ ذَلِكَ فَقُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ أَفْتَنَزَهُ ابْنَكَ عَمَّا لَا تَنْزَهُ
النَّبِيِّ وَيُحْكَمُ أَجْعَلْتُمْ فَقَهَاءَكُمْ أَرَبَابَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَا
صَامُوا لَهُمْ وَلَا صَلَّوْا لَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ أَمَرُوا لَهُمْ فَأَطِيعُوا ثُمَّ قَالَ: أُنْتَرِي قَوْلَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِعَلِّي عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
أَنْتَ مِنِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى قُلْتُ نَعَمْ قَالَ أَمَا تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَارُونَ أَخُو مُوسَى لِابِيهِ وَأُمِّي قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ فَعَلِي عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ كَذَلِكَ قُلْتُ لَا قَالَ فَهَارُونَ نَبِيٌّ وَلَيْسَ عَلِيٌّ كَذَلِكَ فَمَا الْمَنْزِلَةُ الثَّلَاثَةُ إِلَّا الْخِلَافَةُ وَهَذَا كَمَا قَالَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ إِنَّهُ
اسْتَخْلَفَهُ اسْتِنْقَالًا لَهُ فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يُطَيِّبَ نَفْسَهُ وَهَذَا كَمَا حَكَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَنْ مُوسَى حَيْثُ يَقُولُ لِهَارُونَ أَخْلُفْنِي فِي
قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ فَقُلْتُ إِنَّ مُوسَى خَلَفَ هَارُونَ فِي قَوْمِهِ وَهُوَ حَيٌّ ثُمَّ مَضَى إِلَى مِيقَاتِ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ
وَجَلَّ وَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ خَلَفَ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ حِينَ خَرَجَ إِلَى غَزَاتِهِ فَقَالَ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ مُوسَى حِينَ
خَلَفَ هَارُونَ أَكَانَ مَعَهُ حَيْثُ مَضَى إِلَى مِيقَاتِ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ قَالَ أَوْلَيْسَ قَدْ اسْتَخْلَفَهُ
عَلَى جَمِيعِهِمْ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ فَكَذَلِكَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ خَلَفَهُ النَّبِيُّ حِينَ خَرَجَ فِي غَزَاتِهِ فِي الضُّعَفَاءِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالصِّبْيَانِ
إِذَا كَانَ أَكْثَرَ قَوْمِهِ مَعَهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ قَدْ جَعَلَهُ خَلِيفَتَهُ عَلَى جَمِيعِهِمْ وَالِدَائِلُ عَلَى أَنَّهُ جَعَلَهُ خَلِيفَةً عَلَيْهِمْ فِي حَيَاتِهِ إِذَا غَابَ
وَبَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ قَوْلُهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلِيٌّ بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي وَهُوَ وَزِيرُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ
أَيْضًا بِهَذَا الْقَوْلِ لِأَنَّ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَدْ دَعَا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَقَالَ فِيمَا دَعَا: وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي، هَارُونَ
أَخِي، اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَرْزِي، وَأَشْرِكُهُ فِي أَمْرِي. وَإِذَا كَانَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ

strength through him. ³³ So Ali (a.s.) was to the Prophet (S) like Aaron was to Moses (a.s.). Aaron was the Moses' Minister, and Ali (a.s.) was the Successor of the Prophet (S) as Aaron was the Successor of Moses (a.s.).” Then Al-Ma'mun looked at the theoreticians and the rhetoricians and asked, “Should I ask you questions or will you ask me?” They said, “We will ask.” He said, “Go ahead and ask.” One of them asked, “Is it not that the Divine Leadership of Ali (a.s.) as expressed by the Prophet of God (a.s.) similar to his expression of the other obligatory deeds such as ‘There are four units for the noon prayer’ or ‘The alms tax for two hundred *Dirhams* is five *Dirhams*’ or ‘Go on the pilgrimage to Mecca?’” Al-Ma'mun said, “Yes.” He asked, “Why then are there no differences of opinion about the obligatory deeds, but there are differences concerning the Successorship of Ali?” Al-Ma'mun said, “That is because the obligatory deeds are not such that the people would all compete with each other over them, but there is competition over becoming the successor.”

Another one asked, “Why do you deny that the Prophet (S) ordered that the people be allowed to choose someone from amongst themselves to be his successor due to the compassion and kindness which the Prophet (S) had for his nation, and did not appoint a Successor for himself whom the people would disobey as a result of which punishment would descend upon them?” Al-Ma'mun said, “The reason I deny this is because the Sublime God is kinder to His creatures than the Prophet (S). God appointed a Prophet (S) for the people, but did not let them choose him themselves – even though He knew that there were some people among them who would disobey him and there were others who would obey him. This did not prevent the Sublime God from sending the Prophet (S). Another reason is that there would be two possibilities if God had let the people themselves choose a man (to be their Prophet). Either God orders all of them to choose someone or God orders only some of them to choose someone (to be the Prophet). If God orders all of them to choose someone, then no one could be considered to have free will and be free to choose (a.s.ince they are all ordered to vote for someone else). And if God has ordered only some of them to choose someone to be their Prophet, then the ones who are ordered to choose the Prophet must have some significant traits. If you say that they are the jurists, then the significant signs of jurists should be clarified.” Another one said, “It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) said, ‘In the presence of the

السَّلَامُ مِنْهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى فَهُوَ وَزِيرُهُ كَمَا كَانَ هَارُونَ وَزِيرَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَهُوَ خَلِيفَتُهُ كَمَا كَانَ هَارُونَ خَلِيفَةَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ النَّظَرِ وَالْكَلامِ فَقَالَ أَسَأَلُكُمْ أَوْ تَسَأَلُونِي قَالُوا بَلْ نَسَأَلُكَ فَقَالَ قُولُوا فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ أَلَيْسَتْ إِمَامَةً عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ نَقَلَ ذَلِكَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَنْ نَقَلَ الْفَرَضَ مِثْلَ الظُّهْرِ أَرْبَعُ رَكَعَاتٍ وَفِي مَائَتَيْنِ [مَائَتَيْنِ] دَرَاهِمٍ خَمْسَةَ دَرَاهِمٍ وَالْحَجُّ إِلَى مَكَّةَ فَقَالَ بَلَى قَالَ فَمَا بِالْهُمُ لَمْ يَخْتَلَفُوا فِي جَمِيعِ الْفَرَضِ وَاخْتَلَفُوا فِي خِلَافَةِ عَلِيٍّ وَحَدَّثَهَا قَالَ الْمَأْمُونُ لَأَنَّ جَمِيعَ الْفَرَضِ لَا يَقَعُ فِيهِ مِنَ التَّنَافُسِ وَالرَّغْبَةِ مَا يَقَعُ فِي الْخِلَافَةِ فَقَالَ آخَرَ مَا أَنْكَرْتُ أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَمْرَهُمْ بِاخْتِيَارِ رَجُلٍ يَقُومُ مَقَامَهُ رَافَةً بِهِمْ وَرِقَّةً عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَسْتَخْلِفَ هُوَ بِنَفْسِهِ فَيُعَصَى خَلِيفَتُهُ فَيَنْزِلُ الْعَذَابُ فَقَالَ أَنْكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ قِبَلِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَرَأْفَ بِخَلْقِهِ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَقَدْ بَعَثَ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّ فِيهِمُ الْعَاصِي وَالْمُطِيعَ فَلَمْ يَمْنَعَهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ إِرسَالِهِ وَعِلَّةُ أُخْرَى لَوْ أَمْرَهُمْ بِاخْتِيَارِ رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ كَانَ لَا يَخْلُو مِنْ أَنْ يَأْمُرَهُمْ كُلَّهُمْ أَوْ بَعْضَهُمْ فَلَوْ أَمَرَ الْكُلَّ مَنْ كَانَ الْمُخْتَارَ وَلَوْ أَمَرَ بَعْضًا دُونَ بَعْضٍ كَانَ لَا يَخْلُو مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَلَى هَذَا الْبَعْضِ عِلَامَةً

فَإِنْ قُلْتَ الْفُقَهَاءُ فَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ تَحْدِيدِ الْفَقِيهِ وَسِمَتِهِ قَالَ آخَرُ فَقَدْ رَوِيَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ مَا رَأَهُ
الْمُسْلِمُونَ حَسَنًا فَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ

Sublime God, whatever the Muslims consider to be good is good. In the presence of the Sublime God, whatever the Muslims consider to be evil is evil.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Here we must see whether the Prophet (S) meant all the believers or only some of them. If we say that the Prophet (S) meant all the believers, then this is an impossible thing. And if we think that the Prophet (S) meant only some of them, then as we know each group says something is good. This is like the traditions which the Shiites have narrated about Ali (a.s.), and the non-Shiites have narrated about the others. Then how could that Divine Leadership which is in your mind be proven?”

Another one asked, “Is it then permissible to think that the companions of Muhammad (a.s.) made mistakes?” Al-Ma'mun said, “How could we think that they all made a mistake and they were all at a loss, while as you think they considered Divine Leadership neither to be necessary nor a tradition. You think that Divine Leadership is not a necessity in the opinion of the Sublime God, and it is not one of the traditions of His Prophet (S). Then how could what is neither obligatory nor a tradition be a mistake?”

Another one said, “Present your reasons if you claim that Ali (a.s.) and no one else deserves the position of Divine Leadership.” Al-Ma'mun said, “I do not claim this, but I confess to it. There are no reasons for what one confesses to. The claimant is him who thinks that he is in charge of all appointments and dismissals, and that he is in charge of everyone. As for reasons, they may be either cited by those of his (Ali's) peers like Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman and their followers who are all his (Ali's) enemies, or others whose reasoning has no effect and does not exist at all. Then how could any reasons be presented in such a case?”

Another one asked, “What was incumbent upon Ali (a.s.) to do after the demise of the Prophet of God (a.s.)?” Al-Ma'mun said, “That which he (a.s.) did.” The man asked, “Was it not incumbent upon him to declare to the people that he (Ali) is the Divine Leader?” Al-Ma'mun said, “In fact, Divine Leadership is neither in his (Ali's) hands, nor is it in the hands of the people so that they may choose him or prefer him over others. Rather, it is in the hands of the Sublime God as God told Abraham (a.s.), ‘...I will make thee an Imam to the Nations...’³⁴ and as the Sublime God told David (a.s.), ‘O David! We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on

وَجَلَّ حَسَنٌ وَمَا رَأَوْهُ قَبِيحًا فَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَبِيحٌ فَقَالَ هَذَا الْقَوْلُ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ أَنْ يُرِيدَ كُلُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَوْ
الْبَعْضَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَ الْكُلَّ فَهُوَ مَفْقُودٌ لِأَنَّ الْكُلَّ لَا يُمَكِّنُ اجْتِمَاعَهُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ الْبَعْضُ فَقَدْ رَوَى كُلُّ فِي صَاحِبِهِ حَسَنًا مِثْلُ
رَوَايَةِ الشَّيْبَعِيِّ فِي عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَرَوَايَةِ الْحَشَوِيِّ فِي غَيْرِهِ فَمَتَى يَتَّبِعُ مَا يُرِيدُونَ مِنَ الْإِمَامَةِ قَالَ آخَرُ فَيَجُوزُ أَنْ
يُزْعَمَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ أَخْطَأُوا قَالَ كَيْفَ نَزَعُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَخْطَأُوا وَاجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ فَرَضًا وَلَا سُنَّةً لِأَنَّكَ تَزْعُمُ أَنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ لَا فَرَضَ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَا سُنَّةً مِنَ الرَّسُولِ فَكَيْفَ يَكُونُ فِيمَا لَيْسَ
عِنْدَكَ بِفَرَضٍ وَلَا سُنَّةٍ خَطَأً قَالَ آخَرُ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَدْعِي لِعَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنَ الْإِمَامَةِ دُونَ غَيْرِهِ فَهَاتِ بَيِّنَتَكَ عَلَى مَا
تَدْعِي فَقَالَ مَا أَنَا بِمُدْعٍ وَلَكِنِّي مُقِرٌّ وَلَا بَيِّنَةٌ عَلَيَّ مُقِرٍّ وَالْمُدْعَى مَنْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ إِلَيْهِ التَّوَلِيَّةَ وَالْعَزْلَ وَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ الْاِخْتِيَارَ

وَالْبَيِّنَةُ لَا تَعْرَىٰ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ شُرَكَائِهِ فَهُمْ خُصَمَاءُ أَوْ يَكُونَ مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ وَالْغَيْرُ مَعْدُومٌ فَكَيْفَ يُؤْتَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَةِ عَلَىٰ هَذَا
 قَالَ آخَرَ فَمَا كَانَ الْوَاجِبَ عَلَىٰ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بَعْدَ مُضِيِّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ مَا فَعَلَهُ قَالَ أَفَمَا
 وَجَبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يُعْلِمَ النَّاسَ أَنَّهُ إِمَامٌ فَقَالَ إِنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ لَا تَكُونُ بِفِعْلٍ مِنْهُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَا بِفِعْلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ فِيهِ مِنْ اخْتِيَارٍ أَوْ
 تَفْضِيلٍ أَوْ غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَكُونُ بِفِعْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ كَمَا قَالَ لِأَبِرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا
 وَكَمَا قَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِذَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَا

earth...³⁵ And in the case of Adam the Honorable, the Exalted God told His angels, ‘...I will create a vicegerent on earth...’³⁶ Therefore, a Divine Leader is appointed by the Sublime God and because of His choice. A Divine Leader is perfect in Creation, from a good family, pure in nature, and innocent throughout life. If it was in one’s own hands, then anyone who was like this was a Divine Leader or deserved to be one; and once he acted against these characteristics he would be dismissed from the position of Divine Leadership automatically. In that case, the appointment and dismissal of the Divine Leader was subject to one’s deeds.”

Another one asked, “Then why did you consider Divine Leadership to be a must for Ali (a.s.) after the demise of the Prophet (S)?” Al-Ma’mun said, “Since Ali (a.s.) came into existence with faith from the time of his birth, just like the Prophet (S) had faith from his childhood. Also Ali (a.s.) was free from the deviations of his people (of Quraysh) who had no real reasons for their idol-worshipping, just as the Prophet (S) was free from deviations and idol-worshipping. Idol-worshipping is, in fact, a form of oppression. Any oppressor cannot be a Divine Leader. One who worships idols could not become a leader by the acceptance of all the Muslims. In fact, whoever worships idols has adopted the enemy of God as a god. His decrees would be the decrees of a pagan by the unanimous consensus of all of the nation who bear witness to his atheism, unless they again bear witness that he is no longer an atheist. Whoever once professes to be an atheist should never become a ruler since in that case there would be no differences between one who has professed atheism and a ruler.”

Another one asked, “Why did Ali (a.s.) not fight with Abu Bakr and Umar as he (a.s.) did with Mo’awiya?” Al-Ma’mun said, “This is impossible to ask. They should ask about positive actions, not negative ones. That is they would ask for the reasons if Ali (a.s.) had risen to fight them. They cannot ask the reasons for his not rising. We must see whether the issue of the Mastery of Ali (a.s.) was decreed by God, or by others. If it is the case that it was decreed by the Sublime God, then any doubt in His Plan constitutes atheism as the Sublime God said, ‘But no, by the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against Thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction.’³⁷ Therefore, one’s deeds are due to one’s origin. If the appointment of Ali (a.s.) was

ذَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَمَا قَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ فِي آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً
 فَالْإِمَامُ إِنَّمَا يَكُونُ إِمَامًا مَنْ قَبِلَ اللَّهَ بِاخْتِيَارِهِ إِيَّاهُ فِي بَدْءِ الصَّنِيعَةِ وَالتَّشْرِيفِ فِي النَّسَبِ وَالتَّطَهَّارَةِ فِي الْمُنَشَأِ
 وَالْعِصْمَةِ فِي الْمُسْتَقْبَلِ وَلَوْ كَانَتْ بِفِعْلٍ مِنْهُ فِي نَفْسِهِ كَانَ مَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ الْفِعْلَ مُسْتَحِقًّا لِلْإِمَامَةِ وَإِذَا عَمِلَ خِلَافَهَا

اعْتَزَلَ فَيَكُونُ خَلِيفَةً قَبْلَ أَفْعَالِهِ وَقَالَ آخِرُ فَلَمْ أَوْجِبْتَ الْإِمَامَةَ لِعَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بَعْدَ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقَالَ لَخُرُوجِهِ مِنَ الطُّفُولِيَّةِ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ كَخُرُوجِ النَّبِيِّ مِنَ الطُّفُولِيَّةِ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَالْبِرَاءَةِ مِنْ ضَلَالَةِ قَوْمِهِ عَنِ الْحُجَّةِ وَاجْتِنَابِهِ الشِّرْكَ كَبِرَاءَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنَ الضَّلَالَةِ وَاجْتِنَابِهِ الشِّرْكَ لِأَنَّ الشِّرْكَ ظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ وَلَا يَكُونُ الظَّالِمُ إِمَامًا وَلَا مِنْ عِبْدٍ وَتَنَا بِاجْتِمَاعِ وَمَنْ أَشْرَكَ فَقَدْ حَلَّ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَحَلَّ أَعْدَائِهِ فَالْحُكْمُ فِيهِ الشَّهَادَةُ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْأُمَّةُ حَتَّىٰ يَجِيءَ إِجْمَاعٌ آخَرٌ مِثْلُهُ وَلَئِنْ مَنْ حُكِمَ عَلَيْهِ مَرَّةً فَلَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ يَكُونَ حَاكِمًا فَيَكُونَ الْحَاكِمُ مَحْكُومًا عَلَيْهِ فَلَا يَكُونُ حِينَئِذٍ فَرْقٌ بَيْنَ الْحَاكِمِ وَالْمَحْكُومِ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ آخِرُ فَلَمْ لَمْ يُقَاتِلْ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ وَعُتْمَانَ كَمَا قَاتَلَ مُعَاوِيَةَ فَقَالَ الْمَسْأَلَةُ مُحَالٌ لِأَنَّ لَمْ اقْتِضَاءً وَلَا يَفْعَلُ تَفِيٍّ وَالتَّفِيُّ لَا يَكُونُ لَهُ عِلَّةٌ إِنَّمَا الْعِلَّةُ لِلْإِتِّبَاتِ وَإِنَّمَا يَجِبُ أَنْ يُنْتَظَرَ فِي أَمْرِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَمِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ أَمْ مِنْ قِبَلِ غَيْرِهِ فَإِنْ صَحَّ أَنَّهُ مِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَالشُّكُّ فِي تَدْبِيرِهِ كُفْرٌ لِقَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَلَا وَرَيْكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا فَأَفْعَالُ الْفَاعِلِ تَبِعَ لِاصْلِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ قِيَامُهُ عَنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَأَفْعَالُهُ عَنْهُ

decreed by the Sublime God, then Ali's deeds come from Him and the people must be content with (the appointment) and submit to Ali's orders. Even the Messenger of God (a.s.) quit fighting on the day of Al-Hodaybiyeh, when the pagans prevented him from performing the 'Umra (recommendable pilgrimage) ceremonies to the House (of God). And once the Prophet (S) brought together his troops, he fought with them as the Sublime God says, '...So overlook (any human faults) with gracious forgiveness.'³⁸ Then the Honorable the Exalted said, '...then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, an seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)...'³⁹

Another one asked, "If it is the case as you think that the appointment of Ali (a.s.) to the Divine Leadership was decreed by God and it is obligatory to obey him, why is it then not permissible for the Prophets to abandon the (God's) invitation and the call, but it was permissible for Ali (a.s.) to abandon what he was ordered to do in calling the people to obey him?" Al-Ma'mun said, "We do not claim that Ali (a.s.) had the mission to invite the people as the Messengers (a.s.) did. We consider him to be a sign or link between the Sublime God and His creatures. Whoever obeys Ali (a.s.) is obedient to God, and whoever opposes Ali (a.s.) is disobeying God. Ali (a.s.) would have strived to call the people to obey him if he had found any helpers. Ali is not to blame for not having found any helpers. Those who did not help him are to be blamed, since they were supposed to obey him anyways. However, he was not ordered to fight without having any helpers. He is like the House of God towards which the people go to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. If they do so they have performed what is incumbent upon them to do. If, however, they do not go, it is they who are to blame, not the House of God."

Another one asked, "If it has been made incumbent upon the people that they must have a Divine Leader whom they must obey, why should it be Ali (a.s.) and no one else?" Al-Ma'mun replied, "That is because the Sublime God would not make some vague thing incumbent upon the people, since that is impossible to do. Thus His Messenger (a.s.) must introduce Ali (a.s.) and this obligation to the people, so that there are no more excuses left for the people in the presence of the Honorable the Exalted God. Don't you see that if the Sublime God had made it incumbent upon the people to fast for one month, but had not specified which month to fast in and had not given any signs to identify it; and if

وَعَلَى النَّاسِ الرِّضَا وَالتَّسْلِيمُ وَقَدْ تَرَكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ الْقِتَالَ يَوْمَ الْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ يَوْمَ صَدَّ الْمُشْرِكُونَ هَدْيَهُ عَنِ الْبَيْتِ فَلَمَّا وَجَدَ الْأَعْوَانَ وَقَوِيَّ حَارِبَ كَمَا قَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي الْأَوَّلِ فَاصْفَحَ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ ثُمَّ قَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخَذُوهُمْ وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ واقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ قَالَ آخَرُ إِذَا زَعَمْتَ أَنَّ إِمَامَةً عَلِيٍّ مِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَنَّهُ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ فَلِمَ لَمْ يَجْزِ إِلَّا التَّبْلِيغُ وَالدُّعَاءُ كَمَا لِلْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَجَازَ لِعَلِيٍّ أَنْ يَتْرُكَ مَا أُمِرَ بِهِ مِنْ دَعْوَةِ النَّاسِ إِلَى طَاعَتِهِ فَقَالَ مَنْ قَبِلَ أَنَا لَمْ نَدْعُ أَنْ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أُمِرَ بِالتَّبْلِيغِ فَيَكُونُ رَسُولًا وَلَكِنَّهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَضِعَ عَلَمًا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَهُ كَانَ مُطِيعًا وَمَنْ خَالَفَهُ كَانَ عَاصِيًا فَإِنْ وَجَدَ أَعْوَانًا يَتَفَوَّيْ بِهِمْ جَاهِدَ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ أَعْوَانًا فَاللُّومُ عَلَيْهِمْ لَا عَلَيْهِ لِأَنَّهُمْ أُمِرُوا بِطَاعَتِهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ وَلَمْ يُؤْمَرْ هُوَ بِمُجَاهَدَتِهِمْ إِلَّا بِقُوَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْبَيْتِ عَلَى النَّاسِ الْحُجَّ إِلَيْهِ فَإِذَا حَجُّوا أُدُوا مَا عَلَيْهِمْ وَإِذَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا كَانَتْ اللَّائِمَةُ عَلَيْهِمْ لَا عَلَى الْبَيْتِ وَقَالَ آخَرُ إِذَا وَجِبَ أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ إِمَامٍ مُفْتَرَضِ الطَّاعَةِ بِالِاضْطِرَّارِ فَكَيْفَ يَجِبُ بِالِاضْطِرَّارِ أَنَّهُ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ دُونَ غَيْرِهِ فَقَالَ مَنْ قَبِلَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا يَفْرَضُ مَجْهُولًا وَلَا يَكُونُ الْمَفْرُوضُ مُمْتَنِعًا إِذِ الْمَجْهُولُ مُمْتَنِعٌ وَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ دَلَالَةِ الرَّسُولِ عَلَى الْفَرْضِ لِيَقْطَعَ الْعُدْرَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَبَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ صَوْمَ شَهْرٍ وَلَمْ

the people were left free to use their own intellect to recognize the month in which the Sublime God wanted them to fast, then the people no longer needed any Prophets or Divine Leaders to inform them about what the Prophet said.”

Another one asked, “How can you prove that Ali (a.s.) was mature when the Prophet (S) invited him (to accept Islam)? The people think that when he was invited (to accept Islam) he was a child and ordering him to do so was not permitted. The people think that Ali (a.s.) had not reached the age of maturity for men at that time.”

Al-Ma'mun replied, “At that time, Ali (a.s.) was either mature enough that God sent His Prophet (S) to him and invited him (to accept Islam) in which case it would be permitted to order him to abide by Divine decrees and perform the obligatory deeds, or Ali (a.s.) was not mature enough for God to send His Prophet (S) to him – which is not possible for the Prophet (S) to do as the Honorable the Exalted God says, *‘And if the apostle were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand and We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart.’*⁴⁰ Given this, would the Prophet (S) oblige God’s servants (people) to perform what the Blessed the Sublime God has not granted them the power to carry out? This is an impossibility which cannot be. No wise person would order to do so, neither would the Prophet (S). God is so Sublime that He would not order to do what is impossible to do. His Messenger’s (a.s.) rank is also much higher than to order to do what is impossible to do according to the Wisdom of the Wise One (God).”

At this point all the people became quiet. Then Al-Ma'mun said, “You asked me questions and argued with me. Can I ask you some questions now?” They replied, “Yes.”

Al-Ma'mun said, “Is it not unanimously accepted by the nation that the Prophet (S) said, ‘Whoever purposefully ascribes lies to me has prepared his seating place in the Fire (in the Hereafter)’?” They replied, “Yes.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Have they not also narrated on the authority of the Prophet (S) that he

(a.s.) said, ‘Whoever disobeys God – be it a minor sin or a major sin – and sets that to be his way and insists on it would reside in Fire (in the Hereafter)?’ They replied, “Yes.”

Al-Ma'mun said, “Tell me if it is permissible to consider someone that the people have chosen as their leader to be called the successor of God’s

يُعْلِمُ النَّاسَ أَيُّ شَهْرٍ هُوَ وَلَمْ يُسَمِّ كَانِ عَلَى النَّاسِ اسْتِخْرَاجُ ذَلِكَ بِعُقُولِهِمْ حَتَّى يُصِيبُوا مَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
فَيَكُونُ النَّاسُ حِينَئِذٍ مُسْتَعْتَبِينَ عَنِ الرَّسُولِ وَالْمُبِينِ لَهُمْ وَعَنِ الْإِمَامِ النَّاقِلِ خَبَرَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَيْهِمْ وَقَالَ آخَرُ مِنْ أَيْنَ
أَوْجَبْتَ أَنْ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَانَ بِالْغَا حِينَ دَعَاهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ صَبِيًّا حِينَ
دَعَا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَازَ عَلَيْهِ الْحُكْمُ وَلَا بَلَغَ مَبْلَغَ الرِّجَالِ فَقَالَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنَّهُ لَا يَعْرِى فِي ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتِ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِمَّنْ أُرْسِلَ
إِلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِيَدْعُوهُ فَإِنْ كَانَ كَذَلِكَ فَهُوَ مُحْتَمِلٌ لِلتَّكْلِيفِ قَوِيٌّ عَلَى آدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِمَّنْ لَمْ
يُرْسَلْ إِلَيْهِ فَقَدْ لَزِمَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ثُمَّ
لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ وَكَانَ مَعَ ذَلِكَ قَدْ كَلَّفَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يُطِيقُونَ عَنِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
وَهَذَا مِنَ الْأَمْحَالِ الَّذِي يَمْتَنَعُ كَوْنُهُ وَلَا يَأْمُرُ بِهِ حَكِيمٌ وَلَا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ الرَّسُولُ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَنَّا أَنْ يَأْمُرَ بِالْمَحَالِ وَجَلَّ
الرَّسُولُ عَنَّا أَنْ يَأْمُرَ بِخِلَافِ مَا يُمَكِّنُ كَوْنُهُ فِي حِكْمَةِ الْحَكِيمِ فَسَكَتَ الْقَوْمُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ الْمُأْمُونُ قَدْ
سَأَلْتُمُونِي وَنَقَضْتُمْ عَلَيَّ أَفَأَسْأَلُكُمْ قَالُوا نَعَمْ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ رَوَتْ الْأُمَّةُ بِإِجْمَاعٍ مِنْهَا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ مَنْ
كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ وَرَوُوا عَنْهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ مَنْ عَصَى اللَّهَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ
صَغُرَتْ أَوْ كَبُرَتْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذَهَا دِينًا وَمَضَى مُصِرًّا عَلَيْهَا فَهُوَ مُخَلَّدٌ بَيْنَ أَطْبَاقِ الْجَحِيمِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ فَخَبَرُونِي عَنْ رَجُلٍ
يَخْتَارُهُ الْعَامَّةُ فَتَنْصِبُهُ خَلِيفَةً هَلْ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُقَالَ لَهُ خَلِيفَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَمِنْ

Prophet (S) or not. Is it permissible to consider him to be appointed by the Honorable the Exalted God even though the Prophet (S) has not established him to be his successor? If you say ‘yes it is permitted’ you are undoubtedly deceitful. If you say ‘no’ then it is a necessary conclusion that Abu Bakr be not considered to be the successor to God’s Prophet (S) nor was he appointed to the position of Caliphate by the Honorable the Exalted God. Thus you have ascribed lies to God’s Prophet (S) and are possibly of those that the Prophet (S) said would enter the Fire. Then tell me which of the following that you say is true: ‘The Prophet passed away without establishing a successor for himself’, or that you call Abu Bakr ‘O successor of God’s Prophet (S)!’ If you claim that both of these statements are true, such a claim is not possible to make since these are contradictory statements both of which cannot be true at the same time. And if you consider one to be true, then you have disproved the other one. Therefore, fear God and consider your own conditions. Do not imitate others. Avoid what is doubtful. I swear by God that the Sublime God would not accept any opinions expressed by His servants, unless they are the result of contemplation and the intellect approves of its being right. Having opposing ideas (about something) is being doubtful. It is not considered to be certitude. Having continual doubt is denying the Sublime God, and would result in dwelling in the Fire.”

Al-Ma'mun added, “Tell me if it is permissible for a slave which one buys to become his master, and the buyer becomes a slave.” They said, “No.” He added, “How is it then possible for someone around whom you have gathered, supported him and put him in charge of the Caliphate be your master while you are

the ones who have granted him the mastery over you? Will it not be the case that you are his masters? You have made someone to be the Caliph and have then said that he is the successor to the Prophet of God (a.s.). Moreover, once you get discontented with him you would kill him, as you did with Uthman ibn Affan.”

Someone said, “That is because the Imam is an agent for the Muslims as long as they are pleased with him. They can dismiss him whenever they are displeased with him.”

Al-Ma'mun asked, “To whom do the Muslims, the servants (people) and the towns belong?” They replied, “To the Sublime God.” Al-Ma'mun

قَبِلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَمْ يَسْتَخْلِفْهُ الرَّسُولُ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ نَعَمْ كَابَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ لَا وَجِبَ أَنْ أَبَا بَكْرٍ لَمْ يَكُنْ خَلِيفَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلَا مِنْ قَبْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَكْذِبُونَ عَلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ مُتَعَرِّضُونَ لِأَنْ تَكُونُوا مِمَّنْ وَسَمَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِدُخُولِ النَّارِ وَخَبَرُونِي فِي أَيِّ قَوْلِكُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ أَفِي قَوْلِكُمْ مَضَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلَمْ يَسْتَخْلِفْ أَوْ فِي قَوْلِكُمْ لِأَبِي بَكْرٍ يَا خَلِيفَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ فِي الْقَوْلَيْنِ فَهَذَا مَا لَا يُمَكِّنُ كَوْنُهُ إِذْ كَانَ مُتَنَاقِضًا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ فِي أَحَدِهِمَا بَطَلَ الْأُخْرُ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَانظُرُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَدَعُوا التَّقْلِيدَ وَتَجَنَّبُوا الشُّبُهَاتِ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَّا مِنْ عَبْدٍ لَا يَأْتِي إِلَّا بِمَا يَعْقِلُ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ إِلَّا فِيمَا يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ حَقٌّ وَالرَّيْبُ شَكٌّ وَإِدْمَانُ الشُّكِّ كُفْرٌ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَصَاحِبُهُ فِي النَّارِ وَخَبَرُونِي هَلْ يَجُوزُ ابْتِغَاءُ أَحَدِكُمْ عَبْدًا فَإِذَا ابْتِغَاهُ صَارَ مَوْلَاهُ وَصَارَ الْمُشْتَرِي عَبْدَهُ قَالُوا لَا قَالَ كَيْفَ جَازَ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَنْ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ لِهَوَاكُمُ وَاسْتَخْلَفْتُمُوهُ صَارَ خَلِيفَةً عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ وَلِيَتُمُوهُ أَلَا كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ الْخُلَفَاءَ عَلَيْهِ بَلْ تُولُونَ خَلِيفَةً وَتَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ خَلِيفَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا سَخَطْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ قَتَلْتُمُوهُ كَمَا فَعَلَ بَعْثْمَانُ بْنُ عَفَّانَ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَأَنَّ الْإِمَامَ وَكَيْلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ إِذَا رَضُوا عَنْهُ وَلَوْهُ وَإِذَا سَخَطُوا عَلَيْهِ عَزَلُوهُ قَالَ فَلِمَنْ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَالْعِبَادُ

said, “Then God is more deserving to appoint an agent over His servants (people) and towns than anyone else, since one of the unanimously accepted principles among the nation is that whoever causes any harm to someone else’s property is held responsible for that, and no one is allowed to usurp the rights over anyone else’s property and he will be sinful and held responsible if he does so.”

Then Al-Ma'mun added, “Tell me if the Prophet (S) left anyone as his successor when he died.” They answered, “No, he did not appoint any successor.” Al-Ma'mun asked, “Was not doing so guidance or deviation?” They said, “It was guidance.” Al-Ma'mun said, “Then it is incumbent upon the people to follow guidance, and not become deviated.” They said, “They did so.” Al-Ma'mun asked, “Why then did they appoint a successor after the Prophet (S), even though the Prophet (S) had not done so?

Abandoning his way is in itself a form of deviation. It is impossible for what is against guidance to be guidance. If not appointing a successor is considered to be a form of guidance, then why did Abu Bakr appoint a successor for himself when the Prophet (S) had not done so? Umar also referred this issue to the council among the Muslims which was against what his friend (Abu Bakr) had done. You think that the Prophet (S) did not appoint a successor for himself, but Abu Bakr appointed a successor for himself, and Umar did not abandon appointing a successor as the Prophet (S) had done. And as you think Umar did not appoint himself a successor as Abu Bakr had done and used a third approach. Tell me, which of

these do you consider to be correct. If you consider what the Prophet (S) did to be correct, then you have considered Abu Bakr to have done wrong. The same holds true for the other options. Tell me, which of these ways is correct. Is what the Prophet (S) did in not appointing a successor correct, or is what the others did who somehow appointed a successor for themselves correct? Tell me, whether not appointing a successor by the Prophet (S) is guidance, and appointing a successor by the other ones is also guidance. Thus guidance is the opposite of guidance. Then what does deviation mean? Where is it? Tell me whether there have been any successors from amongst the Prophet's (a.s.) companions who have been appointed as the successor with a unanimous consensus after the Prophet's demise." Al-Ma'mun added, "If you say no, then you have surely decided that all the people have gone the wrong way after the demise of God's Prophet (S).

وَالْبِلَادُ قَالُوا اللَّهُ [لِلَّهِ] عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ أَنْ يُوَكَّلَ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ وَيَلِدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِهِ لَأَنَّ مِنْ إِجْمَاعِ الْأُمَّةِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي مُلْكِ غَيْرِهِ حَدَثًا فَهُوَ ضَامِنٌ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ أَنْ يُحْدِثَ فَإِنْ فَعَلَ فَآتَمُّ غَارِمٌ ثُمَّ قَالَ: خَبَرُونِي عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ هَلِ اسْتَخْلَفَ حِينَ مَضَىٰ أَمْ لَا فَقَالُوا لَمْ يَسْتَخْلَفْ قَالَ فَتَرَكُهُ ذَلِكَ هُدًى أَمْ ضَلَالٌ قَالُوا هُدًى قَالَ فَعَلَى النَّاسِ أَنْ يَتَّبِعُوا الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَنَكَّبُوا الضَّلَالَةَ قَالُوا قَدْ فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ قَالَ فَلِمَ اسْتَخْلَفَ النَّاسُ بَعْدَهُ وَقَدْ تَرَكَهُ هُوَ فَتَرَكَ فِعْلِهِ ضَلَالٌ وَمُحَالٌ أَنْ يَكُونَ خِلَافُ الْهُدَىٰ هُدًى وَإِذَا كَانَ تَرْكُ الاسْتِخْلَافِ هُدًى فَلِمَ اسْتَخْلَفَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَلَمْ يَفْعَلْهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلِمَ جَعَلَ عُمَرُ الْأَمْرَ بَعْدَهُ سُورَىٰ بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خِلَافًا عَلَىٰ صَاحِبِهِ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ لَمْ يَسْتَخْلَفْ وَأَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ اسْتَخْلَفَ وَعُمَرُ لَمْ يَتْرِكِ الاسْتِخْلَافَ كَمَا تَرَكَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَزَعِمُكُمْ وَلَمْ يَسْتَخْلَفْ كَمَا فَعَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَجَاءَ بِمَعْنَى ثَالِثٍ فَخَبَرُونِي أَيُّ ذَلِكَ تَرَوْنَهُ صَوَابًا فَإِنْ رَأَيْتُمْ فَعَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ صَوَابًا فَقَدْ خَطَأْتُمْ أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَكَذَلِكَ الْقَوْلُ فِي بَقِيَّةِ الْأَقَاوِيلِ وَخَبَرُونِي أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ مَا فَعَلَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَزَعِمُكُمْ مِنْ تَرْكِ الاسْتِخْلَافِ أَوْ مَا صَنَعْتَ طَائِفَةً مِنَ الاسْتِخْلَافِ وَخَبَرُونِي هَلِ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يَكُونَ تَرْكُهُ مِنَ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ هُدًى وَفِعْلُهُ مِنْ غَيْرِهِ هُدًى فَيَكُونُ هُدًى ضِدَّ هُدًى فَأَيْنَ الضَّلَالُ حِينَئِذٍ وَخَبَرُونِي هَلِ وُلِّيَ أَحَدٌ بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَآلِهِ بِاخْتِيَارِ الصَّحَابَةِ مِنْذُ قُبُضِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِلَى الْيَوْمِ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ لَا فَقَدْ أَوْجَبْتُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ عَمِلُوا ضَلَالَةً بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ نَعَمْ كَذَبْتُمْ الْأُمَّةَ وَأَبْطَلْتُمْ قَوْلَكُمْ

And if you say yes, then you have refuted the opinion of the whole nation and what you say will void undeniable things. Tell me whether what the Honorable the Exalted God says, 'Say: *To whom belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth?... 41* is true or false?' They said, "It is true." Al-Ma'mun said, "Is it not true that whatever is not with God belongs to God, since He is its creator and owner?" They replied, "Yes." He said, "This disproves what you have made incumbent yourselves being to appoint a successor for God's Prophet (S), so that the successor's decrees are in effect regarding you and that you consider him to be a Caliph. You put him out of office whenever you get mad at him. You kill him if he refuses to give up his power. Woe be to you! Do not ascribe lies to God, since you will face its punishment when you stand in the presence of the Sublime God, and go to see God's Prophet (S) having purposefully ascribed lies to him. The Prophet (S) has said, "Whoever purposefully ascribes lies to me will encounter his place prepared in the Fire."

Then Al-Ma'mun faced the prayer direction (the *Qibla*), raised his hands and said, "O God! I advised them and did not hesitate to tell them what I had to say. O God! I did not leave them in doubt. O God! In

the interests of my religion I sought to get close to you by preferring Ali over others after your Prophet Muhammad (S), just as your Messenger had ordered us to do.” The narrator said, “Then we all dispersed and there was never again such a congregation for as long as Al-Ma’mun lived.”

Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Imran al-Ash’ari said, “In another tradition we read that all the people became quiet. Then Al-Ma’mun asked, ‘Why have you become quiet?’ They said, ‘We do not know what to say.’ Then Al-Ma’mun said, ‘Therefore, this much debate suffices and you were convinced.’ Then he ordered that everyone be directed out. We were all directed out in a state of being confused and ashamed. Then Al-Ma’mun looked at Al-Fadhli ibn Sahl and said, ‘This is all that they had to say. No one should think that my majesty prevented them from rejecting what I said. God is the One who grants success.’”

الْوُجُودُ الَّذِي لَا يُدْفَعُ وَخَيْرُونِي عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ أَصْدَقُ هَذَا أَمْ كَذِبٌ قَالُوا صِدْقٌ قَالَ أَفَلَيْسَ مَا سَوَى اللَّهِ لِلَّهِ إِذْ كَانَ مُحَدَّثُهُ وَمَالِكُهُ قَالُوا نَعَمْ قَالَ فَفِي هَذَا بُطْلَانٌ مَا أَوْجَبْتُمْ مِنْ اخْتِيَارِكُمْ خَلِيفَةً تَفْتَرِضُونَ طَاعَتَهُ إِذَا اخْتَرْتُمُوهُ وَتَسْمُونَهُ خَلِيفَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ اسْتَخْلَفْتُمُوهُ وَهُوَ مَعزُولٌ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا غَضِبْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَعَمِلَ بِخِلَافِ مَحَبَّتِكُمْ وَهُوَ مَقْتُولٌ إِذَا أَبَى الْاِعْتِرَالَ وَيَلْكُمُ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَتَلْقُوا وَيَالَ ذَلِكَ غَدًا إِذَا فُتِمْتُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَإِذَا وَرَدْتُمْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَقَدْ كَذَبْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مُتَعَمِّدِينَ وَقَدْ قَالَ مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقْبَلِ الْقِبْلَةَ وَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ وَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي قَدْ نَصَحْتُ لَهُمُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي قَدْ أَرَشَدْتُهُمُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي قَدْ أَخْرَجْتُ مَا وَجِبَ عَلَيَّ إِخْرَاجُهُ مِنْ عُنُقِي اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَمْ أَدْعُهُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ وَلَا فِي شَكٍّ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَدِينُ بِالتَّقَرُّبِ إِلَيْكَ بِتَقْدِيمِ عَلَيَّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ بَعْدَ نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ كَمَا أَمَرْنَا بِهِ رَسُولُكَ صَلَوَاتِكَ وَسَلَامِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ ثُمَّ افْتَرَقْنَا فَلَنْ نَجْتَمِعَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى قُبِضَ الْمَأْمُونُ قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ الْأَشْعَرِيُّ وَفِي حَدِيثٍ آخَرَ قَالَ فَسَكَتَ الْقَوْمُ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ لَمْ سَكْتُمْ قَالُوا لَا نَدْرِي مَا نَقُولُ قَالَ يَكْفِينِي هَذِهِ الْحُجَّةُ عَلَيْكُمْ ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِإِخْرَاجِهِمْ قَالَ فَخَرَجْنَا مُتَحَيِّرِينَ خَجَلِينَ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ الْمَأْمُونُ إِلَى الْفَضْلِ بْنِ سَهْلٍ فَقَالَ هَذَا أَقْصَى مَا عِنْدَ الْقَوْمِ فَلَا يَظُنُّ ظَانَ أَنْ جَلَالَتِي مَنَعَتْهُمْ مِنَ النَّقْضِ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ التَّوْفِيقِ.

1. The Ansar in Medina: those who aided the Prophet (S) and his followers

2. Qur’an, 56:35–37

3. Qur’an, 4: 163

4. Qur’an, 33:7

5. This refers to the commentary by some of the Sunni interpreters of the Quran in which they say that Satan induced the above words to the Prophet (S) when they interpret the following verse, “Never did We send an Apostle or a Prophet before thee, but, when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire: but God will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, and God will confirm (and establish) His Signs: for God is full of Knowledge and Wisdom.”[Qur’an, 22:52]

6. Qur’an, 8:33

7. Huthayfa ibn al-Yaman who had discovered the hypocrites plans to assassinate the Prophet (S)

8. Since many of the Muslim people did not live at that time and lived after they did.

9. Qur’an, 56:10–11

10. Qur’an, 38:86

11. Qur’an, 53:3–4

12. Qur’an, 4:95

13. Qur’an, 76:1

14. Qur’an, 76:8

- [15.](#) Qur'an, 76:22
- [16.](#) Qur'an, 76:9
- [17.](#) Qur'an, 76:16
- [18.](#) Qur'an, 14:17
- [19.](#) Since his nobility is the Quran
- [20.](#) Qur'an, 9:40
- [21.](#) Qur'an, 18:37
- [22.](#) Qur'an, 9:40
- [23.](#) Qur'an, 58:7
- [24.](#) Qur'an, 9:40
- [25.](#) Ibid.
- [26.](#) Hunain is on the road to Ta'if from Mecca about fourteen miles to the east of Mecca. It is a valley in the mountainous country between Mecca and Ta'if.
- [27.](#) Qur'an, 9:25–26
- [28.](#) This argument of Al-Ma'mun would only be acceptable if we assume that Ishaq had accepted that peace descended upon the Prophet (S) in the cave, and not Abu Bakr.
- [29.](#) Ali is the Master of whoever I am the Master of.
- [30.](#) Qur'an, 9:31
- [31.](#) Qur'an, 7:142
- [32.](#) For the weak people who had excuse not to fight, the women and the children.
- [33.](#) Qur'an, 20:29–30
- [34.](#) Qur'an, 2:124
- [35.](#) Qur'an, 38:26
- [36.](#) Qur'an, 2:30
- [37.](#) Qur'an, 4:65
- [38.](#) Qur'an, 15:85
- [39.](#) Qur'an, 9:5
- [40.](#) Qur'an, 69:44–46
- [41.](#) Qur'an, 6:12

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/uyun-akhbar-ar-ridha-volume-2-shaykh-saduq/chapter-45-what-al-mamun-did-please-ar-ridha-his-debates#comment-0>