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From The Heights of the Pulpit

The possessor of unique distinction of 'not speaking out of personal desire' gracefully ascended the pulpit, glanced at the anxious crowd and started his speech cast in the mold of revelation:

"All praise is for God, We seek only His help. We have Faith in Him. We rely only upon Him. Also we seek shelter with Him from blemishes of our character and evil desires. There is no guide for one who goes astray and one whom He guides nothing can cause him to deviate from the right path. I witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger".

Therefore, the Prophet said, "God, the Knower of subtleties and the Aware has apprised me that no prophet had lived more than half of the age of his predecessor. Now very soon I shall meet death. Yes! What about the message of God? Look here! In this respect not only will I be held responsible but you also will be interrogated. Now let me know what would be your answer?"

The historians relate that in reply to this question of the Holy Prophet the surging congregation of 150,000 persons with one voice said, "O God! We witness that you have ably performed the responsibilities of Prophet Hood, advised us and constantly kept yourself busy for our guidance. God may bestow upon you His reward".

The stream of eloquence overflowed again and the 'interlocutor of the Holy of Holies' continued his fascinating discourse, "Do you not acknowledge that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and Apostle? Do you not believe that His Paradise, His Hell, His 15 Law of Death, the Prospective Doomsday (devoid of any doubt or suspicion) and restoration of life afresh on the Day of Resurrection are incumbent and positive?"

The participants of the congregation said in chorus, "Without the slightest doubt we unequivocally affirm all these eternal truths". When the voices gradually died down the Prophet said, "O God! Be our witness". Then he enquired, "Is my voice reaching all of you?" The Muslims replied in the affirmative saying, "Yes my Lord! Every word of yours is piercing our hearts".

Continuing his sermon the Apostle of God said, "I am reaching the Fountain of Kawthar before you and

you all will follow me. The width of the Fountain of Paradise would be equal to the distance that lies between Sana'a and Basra (the way between Yemen and Syria). What to say of the number of silver bowls and drinking-vessels? They are countless like the stars in the sky. Now it is to be seen that after me with what respect you regard these two most precious things that I shall leave behind".

At this stage somebody from the crowd said loudly, "O Apostle of God! What do you mean by these two most precious things?" The Prophet rep lied, "One is the Book of God. One end of which is in the Hand of God, the Glorious and Majestic and the other is in your hands. Hold it fast, lest you deviate from the right path. And the second valuable thing is 'my Descendants'. God, the Knower of the subtleties and the Aware has informed me that both these things will never separate from each other till they reach me at the Fountain of Kawthar. (Their union is eternal). I have also sought the same for them from my God. You should never dare to linger behind or surpass them. If you venture to do so you would be doomed and ruined".

Saying this, the Prophet of Islam taking the hand of Ali raised it high to its full extent. And then he addressed the grand mammoth gathering in these words, "O Muslims! Let me know, who else has got more power over the believers than they themselves?" The audience replied, "God and His Prophet know better".

Hearing this, the 'confidant of the Holy Secrets' declared from the heights of the pulpit of Ghadir, "God is my Master. I am the master of the faithful and I have right over them even more than they themselves possess. Therefore, of whomsoever I am master 1 Ali is his master too"

The historians write that the Messenger of God repeated this sentence thrice. But Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal insists that the Prophet repeated this sentence not only three times but also four times. After that the Prophet said, "O My God! Be a Friend of him who is a friend of Ali and treat him like a Foe who opposes Ali. Help them who help Ali and abandon them who go against Ali. And O My Lord! Whichever way Ali turns orient, the Right is in the same direction".

He continued, "Look here! This is binding upon them who are here that they should convey this message to those who are not present".

The celebrated historian Muhammad bin Jarir Tabari (deceased 310 A.H.) in his book 'Al– Wilaya' with reference of the famous companion, Zaid bin Arqam (died in 66 A.H.) has discussed a few more parts of the sermon.

According to his description the Prophet at the end said, "O Muslims! Say that we pledge for this. We give our word of honor and extend our hands of allegiance. We shall transmit your message to our children and other members of our family. We shall not make any sort of alteration or change in it. You should stand witness to our pledge and acknowledgement and for this God's witness is enough".

Later the Prophet said, "Gentlemen! Repeat whatever I have said and salute Ali on his designation as

the Commander of the faithful".

Zaid bin Arqam narrates that at the end of the Prophet's discourse people advanced group by group towards the pulpit and amidst the tumult of greetings and congratulations they began to swear allegiance to Imam, Ali.

According to the research of the commentators, in the meantime, the possessor of the Revelation descended with this word of God,

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion ". (Qur'an, 5:3)

1. The word used for `master' by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was `Mawla' (in Arabic)

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