

Letter 102

Rabi' al-Thani 11, 1330

I. Why the Imam Abstained on the Saqifa Day from Citing Such Texts

1) Everybody knows that neither the Imam nor any of his supporters among the descendants of Hashim and others witnessed such an allegiance, nor did they enter that saqifa then. They were distracted from it and whatever went on inside it. They were totally preoccupied by their tremendous calamity: the demise of the Messenger of Allah, and their conducting of the appropriate funeral preparations for him, peace be upon him and his progeny, paying no attention to anything else.

As soon as they finished burying him in his sacred resting place, those at the saqifa had already commenced their act, conducted the allegiance, and tightly tied their knot, being extremely careful in forbidding any speech or deed that would weaken their allegiance, affect their deal, or annoy their commoners; so, where were the Imam during the events of the saqifa, the giving or the taking of allegiance to al-Siddiq so that he might argue with them?

How can he or anyone else be expected to argue after the allegiance had already been taken, and those who had a say had taken such measures? Can any one person in our present time face the authorities, uproot their power, and abolish their government? Would they leave such a person alone if he attempted to do so? Impossible. So, compare the past with the present, for neither people nor times have changed much.

Yet 'Ali (as) did not expect his arguments with them then to cause anything other than dissension. He preferred to lose what was his over its attainment under such circumstances. He feared that such dissension might harm Islam and its *kalima*, as we have previously explained, saying that he was inflicted in those days more than anyone else by two major catastrophes:

On one hand, caliphate, in its texts and wills, cried unto him and invoked him in a complaint that would

make the heart bleed, and the oppressive dissension on the other warned him of an uprising in the peninsula, a possible rebellion of the Arabs that would sweep Islam away, threatening it with the hypocrites among the residents of Medina who were accustomed to hypocrisy, supported by the bedouins who, according to the text of the Book of Allah (9:101), are hypocrites, nay, even worse in disbelief and hypocrisy, so much so, that it would be better for them not to know the limits of what Allah has revealed unto His Messenger (9:97).

These have become stronger by the loss of the Prophet (S), peace be upon him and his progeny, and Muslims became like frightened cattle in a winter night, surrounded by assaulting jackals and wild beasts. Musaylamah the Liar, conspirator Talhah ibn Khuwaylid, and sorceress Sajah daughter of al-Harath, in addition to their rogues and hoodlums, were all trying their best to wipe Islam out and crush the Muslims.

Add to this the fact that the Romans, the followers of Kisra and Caesar, besides many others, were plotting against the Muslims. Still add to these other elements full of grudge against Muhammad, his progeny and companions, and full of hatred towards the message of Islam. All these parties desired to uproot Islam's foundations.

These were active in doing so, rushing their steps, seeing that the wind was finally blowing in their direction, and the opportunity because of the departure of the Prophet (S) to the Sublime Companion had come; so, they wished to make use of that opportunity before Islam regained its strength and resumed order. 'Ali (as) was aware of both dangers, and it was only natural that he would offer his own right on the altar of sacrifice for the sake of the Muslims. [1](#)

But he also wanted to maintain his right for the caliphate and argue with those who departed from it in a way that would neither harm the Muslims, nor cause dissension among them, nor encourage their enemy to take advantage thereof.

He, therefore, remained at home till he felt obligated, not forced, to leave it. Had he rushed to them, he would not have had any argument, nor would his followers have had any proof, but he secured, by taking such a stand, both the protection of the faith, and the maintaining of his own right to rule the Muslims.

When he saw that preserving Islam and responding to the plots of its enemies depended during those days on calm and peace, he paved in person the way for calmness, preferring to make peace with those who had a say just to protect the nation and out of his concern about the faith, being concerned about religion and in preference of the good to come to the present one, implementing his jurisdic as well as moral obligation to prefer, while still opposing, what was most important to what was more important, since the circumstances then permitted neither the use of the sword, nor the response through one argument against another.

II. Reference to his and his Followers' Arguments Despite Obstacles

2) In spite of all this, he and his descendants (as), in addition to the learned among his followers, used to follow wisdom when mentioning the will, publicizing for its clear texts, as is obvious to those who research, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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1. He, peace be upon him, has declared so in a letter which he sent to the people of Egypt with Malik al-Ashtar when he vested on him its government. He said in it: "Allah, praise be to Him, has sent Muhammad (S) as a warner to the worlds and as master of all Messengers. When he, peace be upon him, left (this world), Muslims after him disputed among themselves. By Allah, I never dreaded nor expected the Arabs to remove such responsibility from his Household, nor would they distance me therefrom after him, but what alarmed me most was their leaning towards that person to swear allegiance to him; so, I controlled myself till I saw that people had deviated from Islam and started inviting everyone to wipe out Muhammad's faith. I, therefore, feared that if I did not support Islam and Muslims while witnessing the structure of Islam cracked or partially demolished, the catastrophe on me would be greater than missing your government which is nothing but the enjoyment of a few days after which it would vanish like a mirage, or disappear like summer clouds," so he rose in those events till wrongdoing was removed, and the religion became deeply rooted and settled. Refer to his statement in Nahjul-Balaghah.

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