

Letter 34

Thul-Hijjah 27, 1329

Research the biography of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, and you will find him describing 'Ali and Aaron as two bright stars in the heart of the skies, the eyes positioned in the face, neither of them is distinguished in his nation from the other.

I. The Occasion of Shabar Shubayr and Mushbir

1) Have you noticed how he, peace be upon him and his progeny, had insisted that 'Ali should name his sons just like Aaron did, calling them Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin? He (as) has said: "I have named them after Aaron's sons, Shabar, Shubayr, and Mushbir,"¹ intending thereby to emphasize the similarity between himself and Aaron, and generalizing such a similarity in all areas and aspects.

II. The Occasion of Fraternity

2) For the same reason, 'Ali has cherished his brother and favoured him over all others, thus achieving the goal of generalizing the similarity of both Aarons to their respective brothers, making sure that there must be no difference between them.

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, created brotherhood among his companions, as stated above, making, in the first incident, Abu Bakr brother of 'Umar, and 'Uthman brother of 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf. In the Second Fraternity, Abu Bakr became brother of Kharijah ibn Zayd, and 'Umar was made brother of 'Atban ibn Malik. Yet on both occasions, 'Ali was made brother of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as you have come to know.

There is no room here to quote all verified texts citing Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, Zayd ibn Arqam, Zayd ibn Abu 'Awfah, Anas ibn Malik, Huthayfah ibn al-Yemani, Makhduj ibn Yazid, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, al-Bara' ibn 'Azib, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, and others narrating this hadith as such. The Messenger of Allah (S) has also said to 'Ali: "You are my Brother in this life and the life hereafter."² In Letter No. 20, we stated how he (S) took 'Ali by the neck, saying: "This is my Brother, vicegerent and successor among you;

therefore, listen to him and obey him." He, peace be upon him and his progeny, came out to meet his companions with a broad smile on his face. 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf asked him what pleased him so much. He answered: "It is due to a piece of good news which I have just received from my Lord regarding my brother and cousin, and also regarding my daughter. The Almighty has chosen 'Ali a husband for Fatima."

When the Mistress of all women of the world was wed to the master of the Prophet's progeny (as), the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "O Umm Ayman! Bring me my brother." Umm Ayman asked: "He is your brother, and you still marry him to your daughter?!" He said: "Yes, indeed, Umm Ayman." She called 'Ali in.³

Quite often, the Prophet (as) used to point to 'Ali and say: "This is my brother, cousin, son-in-law, and father of my descendants."⁴ Once he spoke to him and said: "You are my brother and companion." In another occasion, he said to him: "You are my brother, friend, and companion in Paradise." He once addressed him in a matter that was between him, his brother Ja'far, and Zayd ibn Harithah, saying: "O 'Ali! You are, indeed, my brother and the father of my descendants. You are of me and for me."⁵

He made a covenant with him once saying: "You are my brother and vizier; you complete my religion, fulfill my promise, pay my debts on my behalf, and clear my conscience."⁶ When death approached him, may both my parents be sacrificed for him, he said: "Fetch me my brother." They called 'Ali in. He said to him: "Come close to me." 'Ali (as) did. He kept whispering in his ears till his pure soul departed from his body. 'Ali even caught some of the Prophet's saliva.⁷

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has also said: "It is written on the gate of Paradise: 'There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali is the Brother of the Messenger of Allah.'"⁸

The Almighty, when the Prophet left 'Ali sleeping in his bed while the enemies were outside plotting to murder him, addressed Gabriel and Michael thus: "I have created brotherhood between both of you and let the life-span of one of you be longer than that of the other. Which one of you wishes to have the life of the other be longer than his own?" Each held his own life dearer. The Almighty said: "Why can't you be like 'Ali ibn Abu Talib between whom and Muhammad (S) I have created brotherhood, and he has chosen to sleep in Muhammad's bed, offering to sacrifice his own life for his brother? Go down to earth and protect him from his foes." They both came down. Gabriel stood at 'Ali's head while Michael stood at his feet. Gabriel cried:

"Congratulations! Congratulations! Who can be like you, O son of Abu Talib? Even Allah brags about you to His angels!" Regarding that incident, the verse "And there are among men those who trade their own lives for the Pleasure of Allah (Qur'an, 2:207)"

was revealed.⁹

‘Ali himself is quoted saying: "I am the servant of Allah and the Brother of His Messenger. I am the strongest in believing in the Prophet. Nobody else can say so except a liar."¹⁰ He has also said: "By Allah! I am his Brother and *wali*, his cousin and the inheritor of his knowledge; who else is more worthy of it than me?"¹¹

On the Day of Shura, he said to ‘Uthman, ‘Abdul-Rahman, Sa’d, and al-Zubayr: "Do you know of anyone among the Muslims other than myself with whom the Messenger of Allah established Brotherhood?" They answered: "We bear witness, no."¹² When ‘Ali stood to duel with al-Walid during the Battle of Badr, the latter asked him: "Who are you?" ‘Ali answered: "I am the servant of Allah and the brother of His Messenger."¹³

When ‘Umar was caliph, ‘Ali asked him:¹⁴ "Suppose some Israelites come to you and one of them told you that he was cousin of Moses, would he receive a preferred treatment than the others?" ‘Umar answered: "Yes, indeed." ‘Ali said: "I, by Allah, am the brother of the Messenger of Allah and his cousin." ‘Umar took off his mantle and spread it for ‘Ali to sit on, saying: "By Allah, you will sit nowhere else other than on my own mantle till each one of us goes his way." ‘Ali did so while ‘Umar was pleased by that gesture of respect for the brother and cousin of the Messenger of Allah as long as he was in his company.

III. The Occasion of Closing the Doors

3) ‘Well, I seem to have lost control over my pen. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered the doors of his companions' houses overlooking the mosque to be closed for good, as a measure to protect the mosque's sanctity against *janaba* or *najasa*, but he allowed ‘Ali's door to remain open, permitting him to cross the mosque's courtyard even while being in the state of *janaba*, just as Aaron was permitted to do, thus providing another proof for the similarity of positions of both men, peace be upon them, in their respective creeds and nations.

Ibn ‘Abbas has said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered all the doors of his companions closed except that of ‘Ali who used to enter even while in the state of *janaba*, having no other way out."¹⁵ ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab has narrated an authentic hadith which has been reproduced in both *sahih* books wherein he says:¹⁶ "

‘Ali ibn Abu Talib was granted three tokens of prestige; had I had one of them, it would have been dearer to me than all red camels [of Arabia]: his wife Fatima daughter of the Messenger of Allah, his residence at the mosque neighbouring the Messenger of Allah and feeling at home therein, and the standard during the Battle of Khaybar."

Sa’d ibn Malik, as quoted in an authentic hadith, once mentioned a few unique merits of ‘Ali and said: "The Messenger of Allah turned out everyone from the mosque, including his uncle al-‘Abbas and others. Al-‘Abbas asked him: ‘Why do you turn us out and keep ‘Ali?’ He, peace be upon him and his

progeny, answered: 'It is not I who has turned you out and kept 'Ali. It is Allah who has turned you out while keeping him.'" [17](#)

Zayd ibn Arqam has said: "A few companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) used to have the doors of their houses overlooking the mosque. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, then said: 'Close down all these doors except 'Ali's.'

Some people did not like it, and they talked about it. So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, stood one day, praised the Almighty then said: 'I have ordered these doors to be closed save 'Ali's, and some of you have disliked that. I have not closed down a door nor opened it, nor gave any order, except after being commanded by my Lord to do so.'" [18](#)

Quoting Ibn 'Abbas, Al-Tabrani has said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, stood up once and said: "I have not turned you out acting on my own personal desire, nor have I left a door open out of my own personal preference. I only follow whatever inspiration I receive from my Lord." [19](#) And the Messenger of Allah said once to Ali (as): "O 'Ali! It is not permissible for anybody other than your own self to be present [in the mosque] while being in the state of *janaba*." [20](#)

Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, al-Bara' ibn 'Azib, Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, and Huthayfah ibn al-Yemani, have all said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, came out to the mosque once and said: 'Allah inspired to his Prophet Moses to build Him a pure mosque in which nobody other than Moses and Aaron would live. Allah has inspired to me to build a sanctified mosque wherein only I and my brother 'Ali are permitted to sleep.'" [21](#)

There is no room here to state all the ascertained texts narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Zayd ibn Arqam, a companion from the tribe of Khath'am, Asma' bint 'Amis, Umm Salamah, Huthayfah ibn Asid, Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, al-Bara' ibn 'Azib, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, 'Umar, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, Abul Tufail, Buraydah al-Aslami, Abu Rafi', freed slave of the Messenger of Allah, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari, and others have all narrated the same hadith. It is also well known that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, invoked the Almighty once saying:

"O Lord! The my brother Moses had prayed you saying: 'Lord! Remove depression from my chest, untie my tongue's knot so that people may understand my speech, and let my brother Aaron be my vizier from among my household to support me in my undertaking and participate therein,' and you, Lord, responded with: 'We shall support you through your brother and bestow upon you a great authority (Qur'an, 28:35).'

Lord! I am your servant Muhammad; therefore, I invoke you to remove depression from my chest, to make my undertaking easier to carry out, and to let 'Ali be my brother from among my household." [22](#)

Al-Bazzaz has likewise indicated that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, took 'Ali's hand and said: "Moses had prayed his Lord to purify His mosque through Aaron, and I have prayed

my Lord to purify mine through you." He then sent a messenger to Abu Bakr ordering him to close down his door which overlooked the mosque, and Abu Bakr responded expressing his desire to honour the Prophet's command.

Then he sent another messenger to 'Umar to do likewise, and another to al-'Abbas for the same purpose. Then he, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "It is not I who has closed down your doors, nor have I kept 'Ali's door open out of my own accord; rather, it is Allah Who has opened his door and closed yours."

This much suffices to prove the similarity between 'Ali and Aaron in all circumstances and conditions, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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[1.](#) This is quoted by the traditionists according to their own authentic sources of the traditions of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. Refer to pages 265 and 168, Vol. 3, of Al-Mustadrak, and you will find the text of this hadith described as authentic according to the endorsement of both Shaykhs. Imam Ahmad has also quoted it from 'Ali's hadith on page 98, Vol. 1, of his Musnad. Ibn 'Abdel-Birr, too, quotes the biography of the grandson of the Prophet al-Hasan (as) from Isti'ab, and even al-Thahbi quotes it in his Talkhis, taking its authenticity for granted, in spite of his fanaticism and deviation from this nation's Aaron, and from its Shabar and Shubayr. It is also quoted by al-Baghwi in his Mu'jam, and 'Abdul-Ghani from his Idah, as is recorded on page 115 of Al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqa, from Salman whose text is almost similar, and also from Ibn 'Asakir.

[2.](#) Al-Hakim has quoted it on page 14, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak as narrated by Ibn 'Umar from two authentic sources and endorsed by both Shaykhs. Al-Thahbi has also quoted it in his Talkhis, taking its authenticity for granted. Al-Tirmithi, too, quotes it as cited by Ibn Hajar on page 72 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to the seventh hadith of the ones included in Section 2 of Chapter 9 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. All those who have discussed the brotherhood hadith among writers of traditions and chronicles have accepted it without any argument.

[3.](#) This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 159, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak. Al-Thahbi, too, has quoted it in his Talkhis, admitting its authenticity. Ibn Hajar copies it in Chapter 11 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. All those who wrote about the wedding of al-Zahra' (as) have, without any exception, mentioned it.

[4.](#) This is included by al-Shirazi in his chapter on surnames, and by Ibn al-Najjar who quotes Ibn 'Umar. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi has transmitted it in his Kanz al-'Ummal and Al-Muntakhab which he attaches to the footnote of his Musnad; so, refer to the second line of the footnote on page 32 of its fifth volume.

[5.](#) Al-Hakim quotes it on page 217, Vol. 3, of his Mustadrak, the authenticity of whose narrators is endorsed by Muslim. Al-Thahbi has admitted the same in his own Talkhis.

[6.](#) Al-Tabrani has quoted it in his Al-Kabir from Ibn 'Umar, and it is transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in his Kanz al-'Ummal as well as Al-Muntakhab; so, refer to Al-Muntakhab to see the inclusion of the footnote on page 32, Vol. 5, of the Musnad.

[7.](#) This is quoted by Ibn Sa'd on page 51, Part Two, Vol. 2, of his Tabaqat, and also on page 55, Vol. 4, of Kanz al-'Ummal.

[8.](#) This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Al-Awsat, by al-Khatib in his Al-Muttafaq wal-Muftaraq, and it is transmitted by the author of Kanz al-'Ummal; so, refer to Al-Muntakhab and see the inclusion of a footnote on page 35, Vol. 5, of Ahmad's Musnad. It is also transmitted by Ibn 'Asakir in his footnote on page 46.

[9.](#) This is quoted by authors of books of traditions in their respective works, and it is briefly referred to by Imam Fakhrul-Din al-Razi as he interprets this verse of Surat al-Baqara, on page 189, Vol. 2, of his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir.

[10.](#) This is quoted by al-Nisa'i in Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya, and by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 112, Vol. 3, of his Al-

Mustadrak, by Abu Shaybah and Ibn Abu 'Asim in Al-Sunnah, and by Abu Na'im in Al-Ma'rifa. It is also transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in Kanz al-'Ummal and Muntakhab al-Kanz. Refer to Al-Muntakhab and read what Ahmad has included in the footnote on page 40, Vol. 5, of his Musnad.

[11.](#) Refer to page 126, Vol. 3, of the Al-Mustadrak. It is quoted by al-Thahbi in his Talkhis, where the author does not dispute its authenticity at all.

[12.](#) This is quoted by Ibn 'Abd al-Birr in 'Ali's biography in the Isti'ab, in addition to many other trusted authorities.

[13.](#) This is quoted by Ibn Sa'd while discussing Badr's military campaign in his Tabaqat, page 15, part One, Vol. 2.

[14.](#) As Dar Qutni quotes in the fifth maqsad of the Maqasid of the verse enjoining kindness to the Prophet's kin, and it is verse 14 of the ones counted by Ibn Hajar in Part 11 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to page 107 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.

[15.](#) This hadith is quite lengthy, and it contains ten exclusive merits of 'Ali, and we have quoted it Letter No. 26.

[16.](#) It exists on page 125, Vol. 3, of Al-Mustadrak. It is quoted by Abu Ya'li, as stated in Part 3, Chapter 9, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to page 76 of this book. It is also quoted in this meaning in almost similar wording by Ahmad ibn Hanbal while quoting ahadith by 'Umar and his son 'Abdullah, and by many other trusted traditionists through various avenues.

[17.](#) As stated at the beginning of page 17, Vol. 3, of Al-Mustadrak. This hadith is included in Sunni books of traditions, and it is quoted by many trusted Sunni authorities.

[18.](#) As quoted about him by Ahmad on page 369, Vol. 4, of the Musnad. It is also quoted by al-Diya as stated in Kanz al-'Ummal and its Muntakhab; so, refer to Al-Muntakhab to see what is included in the footnote for page 29 of the fifth volume of the Musnad.

[19.](#) As he is quoted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi at the end of the footnote on the page referred to above.

[20.](#) As quoted by al-Tirmithi in his Sahih and quoted from him by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi as we have stated when referring to his Muntakhab. It is also quoted by al-Bazzaz from Sa'd, as stated in hadith 13 of the ahadith which Ibn Hajar quotes in Section 2, Chapter 9, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to page 73 of the same.

[21.](#) As they are quoted by 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Khatib, the Shafi'i faqih who is better known as Ibn al-Maghazli, in his book Al-Manaqib from various sources, and transmitted by the trusted researcher al-Balkhi in Chapter 17 of his Yanabi' al-Mawaddah.

[22.](#) This is quoted by Imam Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi from Abu Tharr al-Ghifari in his interpretation of the following verse of Surat al-Ma'ida: "Verily, your wali are: Allah, His Messenger, and the Believers," in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, similar to which is transmitted from Imam Ahmad's Musnad by the Balkhi researcher.

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