

Letter 36

Thul-Hijjah 29, 1329

I. Hadith by Ibn 'Abbas

1) Refer to what Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi has reported, as stated in a chapter discussing 'Ali in *Isti'ab* through the authority of Ibn 'Abbas who is quoted saying: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib: 'You are next to me alone as the *wali* of every believer.'" ¹

II. 'Umran's Hadith

2) Another authentic hadith is narrated by 'Umran ibn Hasin who says: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, deployed an army division under the command of 'Ali ibn Abu Talib who chose, as his share of the *khums*, a slave-girl for himself, and people criticized him. Four men vowed to complain against him to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

When they came to the Prophet, one of them stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Have you seen how 'Ali has done such and such?' The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him. The second stood up and spoke likewise, and the Prophet (S) ignored him, too. The third stood up and repeated what his fellows had previously stated, and he, too, was ignored. The fourth one stood up and stated exactly as had been stated by his fellows.

It was then that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, turned to them with anger in his eyes and said: 'What do you want of 'Ali? 'Ali is of me and I am of him, and only after me is he the *mawla* of all believers.'" ²

III. Buraydah's Hadith

3) Also refer to Buraydah's hadith quoted verbatim on page 356 of Vol. 5 of Ahmad's *Musnad*. He says: "The Messenger of Allah sent two armies to Yemen. One of them was led by 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), and the other by Khalid ibn al-Walid. He instructed them thus: 'When you combine your forces, let 'Ali be the

overall leader.³

But if you disperse, then each one of you is the leader over his own troops.' We then battled Banu Zubayda, and 'Ali selected one of the captives, a slave-girl, for himself; so, Khalid and I wrote to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, to inform him of the incident. When I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and the letter was read for him, I noticed anger in his eyes; therefore, I pleaded to him by saying: 'This is the place for those who seek refuge; you have sent me with a commander and ordered me to obey him, and I have done just that.' The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: 'Do not ever plot against 'Ali, for he is of me and I am of him, and he is your *wali* after me.'⁴

Al-Nisa'i has quoted the following words of the Prophet (S) *verbatim* on page 17 of his *Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyyah*: "O Buraydah! Do not try to make me dislike 'Ali, for 'Ali is of me, and I am of him, and he is your *wali* after me." Jarir, too, quotes Buraydah's statement *verbatim* thus: "The Prophet's face became red with anger, and he said: 'To whomsoever I have been *mawla*, 'Ali is his *mawla*;' therefore, I forgot my own anger against 'Ali and said that I would never speak ill of 'Ali again.'⁵

Al-Tabrani, too, has quoted this hadith in detail. Among what he narrates is that when Buraydah came from Yemen and entered the mosque, he found a crowd standing by the room of the Prophet (S). Upon seeing him, they stood up to greet him and ask him what news he had brought them. He said: "Good news. Allah has rendered victory upon the Muslims." They asked him: "Then what brought you here?" He answered: "An incident regarding a slave-girl whom 'Ali chose as his share of the *khums*, and I have come here to inform the Prophet about it."

They said: "Inform him of it, do inform him, so that he may change his heart about 'Ali," while the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, was standing overhearing their conversation from within. He, thereupon, came out angrily and said: "What is the matter with those who bear grudge against 'Ali? Whoever hates 'Ali hates me, too, and whoever abandons 'Ali abandons me. 'Ali is of me and I am of him; he has been created of my own mould, and my own mould is Ibrahim's (Abraham's), and I am even superior to Ibrahim,⁶ one progeny descending from another, and Allah is all-Hearing, all-Knowing. O Buraydah! Have you not come to know that 'Ali's share is a lot more than the slave-girl he took, and that he is your *wali* after me?"⁷ – There is no doubt about the authenticity of this hadith, and its narrators are quite numerous, and they are all reliable.

IV. Hadith Recounting Ten Exclusive Attributes [of 'Ali]

4) Similar to this narration is what al-Hakim has narrated from Ibn 'Abbas who cites a particular hadith of weight and significance. In it he counts ten exclusive attributes of 'Ali, and he quotes the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, addressing 'Ali thus: "You are the *wali* of every believer after me."⁸

V. 'Ali's Hadith

5) Likewise, in another hadith, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said, "O 'Ali! I have prayed Allah to grant me five wishes concerning you, and He granted me four and denied the fifth." He continues to say: "He has granted me that you are the *wali* of the believers after me."⁹

VI. Wahab's Hadith

6) A similar hadith is transmitted by Ibn al-Sakan from Wahab ibn Hamzah and is quoted in Wahab's biography in *Isti'ab* thus: "I travelled once with 'Ali and found him to be cold towards me; therefore, I decided to complain about him to the Prophet upon returning.

So I mentioned him to the Messenger of Allah and I spoke ill of him, whereupon he (S) said: 'Do not say so about 'Ali, for he is your *wali* after me.'" Al-Tabrani, in his book *Al-Mujma' al-Kabir*, cites Wahab's statement with a minor alteration in its wording thus: "Do not say this about 'Ali, for he is the most worthy of being your leader after me."¹⁰

VII. Ibn Abu 'Asim's Hadith

7) Ibn Abu 'Asim has quoted 'Ali's hadith from the Prophet through a chain of narrators thus: "Do I not have more authority over the believers than they themselves have?" People answered in the affirmative. The Prophet (S) then said: "To whomsoever I have been *wali*, 'Ali is his *wali*,"¹¹ and our *sahih* books in this regard are *mutawatir* from the Imams of the Purified Progeny (as).

This much should suffice to prove our point, although *ayat al-wilayat* alone suffices to support our claim, and praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Wassalamo Alaikom.

Sincerely,

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¹ This is quoted by Abu Dawud and other authors of books of traditions from Abu 'Awanah al-Waddah ibn 'Abdullah al-Yashkuri through a chain of narrators: Abu Balj Yahya ibn Salim al-Fizari, 'Amr ibn Maymun al-'Awdi, ending with Ibn 'Abbas. The men who have quoted this tradition are all authorities in their own right, and they are relied upon by both Shaykhs in their respective sahihs with the exception of Yahya ibn Salim whom they do not quote, yet even the pioneers of criticism and verification have all declared his trustworthiness, and that he used to mention the name of Allah most frequently. Al-Thahbi, while stating his biography in his *Al-Mizan*, quotes Ibn Ma'in, al-Nisa'i, Dar Qutni, Muhammad ibn Sa'id, Abu Hatim, and many others all testifying to the fact that the man is a trusted authority.

² This is quoted by many authors of books of traditions such as Imam al-Nisa'i in his *Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal (when quoting 'Umran's hadith at the beginning of page 438, Vol. 4, of his *Musnad*), al-Hakim on page 111, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*, admitting its authenticity due to its endorsement by Muslim. It is quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah and Ibn Jarir, and the hadith both men quote from him has been verified by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi at the beginning of page 400, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*. It is also quoted by al-Tirmithi from reliable sources as mentioned by al-'Asqalani while discussing 'Ali's biography in his *Al-Isabah*. The Mu'tazilite scholar has quoted it on page 450, Vol. 2,

of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, commenting: "This is narrated by Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] in his Musnad in more than one place." He also narrates it in his book Fada'il 'Ali ['Ali's virtues], and it is narrated by most traditionists.

[3.](#) The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as long as he lived, never required anyone to issue orders to 'Ali; on the contrary, he vested upon him the responsibility of issuing orders to others. He was his standard-bearer in every campaign, unlike many others. Abu Bakr and 'Umar were both ordinary soldiers in Usamah's troops, serving under the standard tied for him by the Messenger of Allah (S) who ordered him to take charge of the Mu'ta expedition. He personally enlisted both men, according to the consensus of chroniclers, and he also made them soldiers of Ibn al-'As. These facts are stated by al-Hakim on page 43, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak, and they are cited by al-Thahbi in his Talkhis al-Mustadrak, admitting the authenticity of the hadith. As regarding 'Ali himself, he was never to receive orders, nor to be the subject of anyone other than the Prophet himself since the inception of his mission and till his demise, peace be upon him and his progeny.

[4.](#) This is quoted by Ahmad on page 356 from 'Abdullah ibn Buraydah who quotes his father. On page 347, Vol. 5, of his Musnad, relying on a chain of narrators including Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Ibn 'Abbas, he quotes Buraydah saying: "I participated in 'Ali's campaign against Yemen, and I felt that his attitude towards me was cool. When I came to the Messenger of Allah and mentioned 'Ali, I belittled him. Having done so, I saw the face of the Messenger of Allah (S) change colour, and he said to me: 'O Buraydah! Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers have over their own selves?' I answered: 'Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'To whomsoever I am a mawla, 'Ali is his mawla.'" This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 110, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak, in addition to many traditionists. It is, as you see, quite clear in its gist, for when he starts with the question "Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers have over their own selves?" he bears testimony to the meaning of "mawla" in this hadith to be "the one who is awla, i.e. most worthy of ruling" them, as is quite obvious. Similar to this hadith is what has been quoted by many traditionists such as Imam Ahmad at the end of page 483, Vol. 3, of his Musnad, from 'Amr ibn Shas al-Aslami, one of those who were present at Hdaybiya, who quotes the same adding: "I accompanied 'Ali to Yemen, and he was cool to me during the trip, so much so that I concealed some feelings against him. When I came back, I complained about him at the mosque till the news reached the Messenger of Allah (S). I entered the mosque one afternoon, and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, was present there accompanied by many of his companions. As soon as he saw me, he stared at me till I sat down. He said to me: 'O 'Amr! By Allah you have hurt me.' I said: 'I seek refuge with Allah against hurting you, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Yes; whoever hurts 'Ali hurts me, too.'"

[5.](#) As he is quoted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi on page 398, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal. He is also quoted in Muntakhab al-Kanz.

[6.](#) When he was told that 'Ali was created of his own mould, peace be upon him and his progeny, thus by necessity becoming superior to this man, he said: "And I am created of Ibrahim's mould," mistakingly thinking that Ibrahim (Abraham) is superior to him, peace be upon him and his progeny, which contradicts the truth of the matter.

[7.](#) Ibn Jarir has quoted this hadith from al-Tabrani who includes it on page 103 of his book Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa while discussing the second maqsad of verse 14 of the ones which he discusses in Chapter 11 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. But when he comes to the statement "Have you not come to know that 'Ali's share is more than a slave-girl?" his pen halts, and he cannot finish the hadith in its entirety! This is not strange, coming from him and his likes; and praise be to Allah for our good health.

[8.](#) This is quoted by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 134, Vol. 3, of Al-Mustadrak, al-Thahbi in his Talkhis al-Mustadrak, admitting its authenticity, al-Nisa'i on page 6 of his Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya, and Imam Ahmad on page 331, Vol. 1, of his Musnad. We have quoted it verbatim at the beginning of Letter No. 26.

[9.](#) This hadith is number 6048 among the ones cited in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 396, Vol. 6.

[10.](#) This hadith is numbered 2579 among the ones cited in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 155, Vol. 6.

[11.](#) This is transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi from Ibn Abu 'Asim on page 397, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal.

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