

Letter 38

I. Explaining the Implications of "Wali"

II. Proving its Connotation

Thul-Hijjah 29, 1329

1) You have indicated, while explicating the meanings of "wali," that whoever takes charge of anyone becomes the latter's *wali*. This, indeed, is the connotation of "wali" in as far as those ahadith are concerned. It is the same that comes to mind. Its meaning is similar to saying "The minor has had for his *wali* both his father and his paternal grandfather, then he was put in the custody of either of them, then in the custody of the legal administrator." This implies that these persons are the ones who are in charge of looking after him and administer his affairs on his own behalf.

2) The proofs testifying to the meaning connoted in the word concealed from the discreet. His statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "And he is your *wali* after me" clearly restricts "wilayat" to him and only him. This mandates that we should underscore the meaning which we have just attached to this word, a meaning which does not agree with that of any other interpretation.

Support, love, friendship, and the like are not confined to one single person, and the believers, men and women, are *walis* of one another. What merit, other than what we have just indicated, could the Prophet (S) have emphasized in this hadith regarding his brother and *wali* if we say that the meaning of the word *wali* is something else that differs from what we have indicated above? What a hidden matter has the Prophet (S) decided to unveil through the medium of such ahadith had the meaning of "wali" been the supporter, the loved one, or the like?

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, is above clarifying what is already clear, or pointing out what is already taken for granted. His wisdom is vast, his infallibility is incumbent, his Message is conclusive and is more than what some people think. Yet these ahadith are quite clear in stating that *wilayat* is assigned for 'Ali after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

This, too, requires applying the same meaning which we have suggested. It simply is not conducive to the meanings of supporter, loved one, etc., since there is no doubt that 'Ali is known to have been supported, loved, and befriended by Muslims due to his being raised in the lap of prophethood, to his contributions to the promotion of its message, till he, peace be upon him, passed away. Supporting, loving and befriending the Muslims, therefore, are not confined to 'Ali alone after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as is quite obvious.

Suffices you for a testimony to this meaning what Imam Ahmad has stated on page 347 of Vol. 5 of his *Musnad* through the correct path of narrators who cite Sa'id ibn Jubayr quoting Ibn 'Abbas citing Buraydah saying: "I participated in 'Ali's invasion of Yemen, and I found him to be cool to me; so, when I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, I mentioned 'Ali and belittled him; thereupon, I saw the Messenger's face changing colour, and he asked 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 (S) then said: 'To whomsoever I have been *mawla*, 'Ali, too, is his *mawla*."

This hadith is also quoted by al-Hakim on page 110, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*, where he considers it authentic relying on the authority of Muslim. Al-Thahbi has quoted it in his *Talkhis*, taking its authenticity for granted for the same reason that Muslim, too, considers it authentic. You yourself know the implication the introductory question "Do I not have more authority over the believers than they themselves have?" carries, a meaning that supports what we have suggested. Anyone who scrutinizes these ahadith, as well as all matters relevant to them, will have no doubt in what we have stated, and praise be to Allah.

Sincerely,

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