

## Letter 49

Muharram 11, 1330

### I. Admitting 'Ali's Merits

1) Imam Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad ibn Hanbal has said: "Nobody among the companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) has possessed as many virtues as 'Ali ibn Abu Talib has."<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Abbas has said, "No verses of the Book of Allah have descended in honour of any man [besides the Prophet] as much as they have in honour of 'Ali."<sup>2</sup> On another occasion, he has said, "As many as three hundred verses of the Glorious Book of Allah, the Sublime, have been revealed in praise of 'Ali;" and yet in another instance he has said,<sup>3</sup>

"Whenever Allah reveals 'O ye who believe...', 'Ali is implied as their prince and dignitary; and Allah even rebuked the followers of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on several occasions, in His precious Book while always speaking well of 'Ali." 'Abdullah ibn Ayyash ibn Abu Rabi'ah has said, "Ali possessed a very sharp edge in knowledge; he has the seniority in embracing Islam; he is the son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and he is the *faqih* of his Sunnah, the hope for victory during wartime, and the most generous in giving."<sup>4</sup>

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked once about 'Ali and Mu'awiyah; he said:<sup>5</sup> "Ali used to have quite a few enemies. His enemies looked for something whereby they could find fault with him. Having found none, they came to a man [Mu'awiyah] who had fought and killed him, and they praised that man only out of their spite of 'Ali." Isma'il the judge, al-Nisa'i, Abu 'Ali al-Nisaburi and many others have said that nobody, among all the companions of the Prophet (S), was praised as much as 'Ali was.<sup>6</sup>

### II. Such Merits do not Necessitate his Caliphate

2) There is no argument about your point, yet an argument is raised if you claim that the Prophet (S), during his lifetime, had promised him the caliphate. All these texts are not bound proofs to support such a claim; they simply enUmarate the imam's attributes and virtues, and the number of such texts is indeed

high.

We believe that he, may Allah glorify his countenance, was worthy of all of them and of even more, and I am sure you have come across several times as many such texts suggesting his nomination for the caliphate. Yet a nomination is not akin to a binding pledge for caliphate, as you know, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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- [1.](#) Al-Hakim has quoted it on page 107 of his Sahih from Al-Mustadrak. Al-Thahbi did not comment on it in his book Talkhis al-Mustadrak.
- [2.](#) Ibn 'Asakir, as well as many other authors of books of traditions, have all quoted it.
- [3.](#) From one hadith quoted by al-Tabrani, Ibn Abu Hatim, and many other authors of books of tradition. It is transmitted by Ibn Hajar who also quotes the three ahadith that precede it in Section 3, Chapter 9, page 76, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
- [4.](#) This is quoted from Ibn 'Ayyash by chroniclers and authors of sunan, and it exists where Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa has already referred.
- [5.](#) As quoted by al-Salafi in his Tayyuriyyat, and it is transmitted by Ibn Hajar where we have indicated a short while ago while referring to Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
- [6.](#) This is well-known about them. Ibn Hajar has copied it at the beginning of Section 2, Chapter 9, page 72, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa

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