

Letter 60

Evasion Refuted

Muharram 30, 1330

You have, may Allah support the truth through your person, asked us to be convinced that the gist of hadith alGhadir is that 'Ali is the most worthy of imamate when and if the Muslims choose him as such and swear the oath of allegiance to him, hence his priority to which the hadith hints is futuristic, rather than immediate. In other words, such a priority will take place when and if it is forcibly taken, rather than being actual, so that it does not clash with the caliphate of the three Imams who preceded him [in ruling the Muslims].

We ask you in the light of the truth, the dignity of justice, the honour of fairness, and the logic of fair play, if you yourself are convinced of it so that we may follow suit and follow in your footsteps. Do you agree to give such an explanation yourself, or can it be attributed to you, so that we may follow in your footsteps and do as you do?

I do not think that you are convinced or pleased with a view such as this. I am convinced that you yourself wonder about anyone who would accept to derive such a meaning for this hadith when the text does not at all suggest it, nor can anyone conceive it as such; nay, it even challenges the wisdom and discretion of the Prophet (S)..., *astaghfir-Allah*.

It neither agrees with his great deeds nor very serious statements made on the Ghadir Day, nor with the irrefutable proofs which we brought forth above, nor with what alHarith ibn alNu'man alFahri understood, and what is emphasized by Allah and His Messenger, as well as all the companions.

Yet even the pending priority does not actually agree with the general meaning of this hadith, for it obviously does not necessitate that 'Ali (as) should *not* have been the *mawla* of the three caliphs, nor the *mawla* of anyone who died while being contemporary to any of them.

This is exactly the opposite of the conclusion driven home by the Prophet (S) who asked: "Do I not have

more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?" and people answered him in the affirmative; then he (S) said: "To whomsoever I have been the *mawla* (i.e. master of each and every Muslim individual, without any exception), 'Ali is his *mawla*."

So, as you see, nobody is made the exception [other than, of course, the person of the Prophet Himself.] implied in this statement; 'Ali is indeed the *mawla* without any argument. Both Abu Bakr and 'Umar, having heard the words of the Prophet (S) on the Ghadir Day, said to 'Ali: ¹ "You have, O son of Abu Talib, become the *mawla* of every believing man and woman," thus admitting that he had become the master of every believing man and woman, generalizing the application to all believing men and women since the sun set on the Day of the Ghadir.

Once 'Umar was asked: "Your conduct with 'Ali is quite different from that of any other companion of the Prophet (S)." 'Umar responded by saying: "Why, he is my *mawla*," as stated by Dar Qutni on page 36 of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*.

He thus admitted that 'Ali was his master, and he (Ali) had not been chosen to be a caliph yet, nor had he yet received the oath of allegiance from anyone. Consider how his ('Umar's) statement proved that 'Ali was his *mawla* and the *mawla* of every believing man and woman right then, not by virtue of futurity, since the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on behalf of the Almighty Allah, conveyed the same on the Ghadir Day. 'Umar once asked 'Ali to arbitrate in a case brought forth before him involving two bedouins disputants.

One of them asked: "Is this man ('Ali) to judge between us?" 'Umar immediately leaped in rage, took the man by the neck and said to him: "Woe unto you! Do you know who this man is? He is your *mawla*, my *mawla*, and the *mawla* of all believers; whoever rejects him as the *mawla* is certainly not a Muslim," as stated near the conclusion of Chapter 11 of Ibn Hajar's *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*. Those who have recorded this incident are quite a few.

You, may Allah support the truth through your person, are aware of the fact that had the philosophy of Ibn Hajar and his supporters regarding the Ghadir hadith been accepted, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, would have been proven to be tampering with his own mission and responsibility – we seek refuge with Allah against thinking in such a manner – hallucinating in his speeches and deeds – Allah is above letting His Messenger do that – without having, according to such a philosophy, any purpose in that awesome situation other than making an announcement that after 'Ali had been elected as caliph, he would be most fit for it, and that, the theory goes on, nobody should monopolize it, for 'Ali and all other companions, and Muslims in general, are in that respect equal. What characteristic did the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, intend then and there to attribute to 'Ali, and 'Ali alone, from among all others who are wellknown for their history in serving Islam, if such philosophy, O Muslims, is proven accurate?

As regarding their claim that had 'Ali's priority regarding the Imamate *not* been futuristic, he would have

become then *the* Imam in spite of the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, we say that such a claim is indeed quite odd; it is the watering down of the truth, an unmatched misrepresentation which ignores the covenants of all prophets, caliphs, kings and princes to their successors. It overlooks the meaning of the hadith: "You to me are like Aaron to Moses except there will be no prophet after me."

It is an attempt to forget his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, in the hadith relevant to his kin when he warned them saying, "Therefore, listen to him [to 'Ali] and obey him," and to other numerous texts in this meaning. Even if we suppose that due to the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, 'Ali's priority of the imamate could not be effective immediately, then obviously it had to be effective after his demise, following the unanimously accepted rule of interpreting a statement the absolute truth of which is unattainable by its closest meanings. As regarding the honour of the good ancestors, it is safeguarded without forcing such an interpretation as we will explain if necessary, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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1. This is quoted by Dar Qutni, as indicated near the conclusion of Section 5, Chapter One, of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* by Ibn Hajar; so, refer to page 26. It is also narrated by many traditionists, each from his own source, and in their own books of traditions. Ahmad has quoted something similar from 'Umar of the ahadith narrated by al-Bara' ibn 'Azib on page 281, Vol. 4, of his *Musnad*, which we have already quoted in Letter No. 54 above.

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