

## Letter 76

Safar 19, 1330

### I. Her Yielding to Sentiment

1) You have stated, while dealing with the first issue, that it is wellknown from the lady's lifestyle that she does not yield to emotion, and that she does not seek any special interest. Please free your own self from the shackles of convention and sentimentality and carefully and studiously research her method of dealing with those whom she liked, as well as with those whom she did not like, for there you will see sentimentality most manifestly.

Do not forget her dealing with 'Uthman ibn 'Affan by word and deed,<sup>1</sup> her secret and public schemes against 'Ali, Fatima, alHasan and al-Husayn (as), and her behaviour towards other mothers of the believers; nay, even with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, himself; for in these there is a great deal of manifestations of her sentiments and interestseeking.

Suffices you for a proof what we, proving how sentimentality tempts some people into misbehaving, have cited regarding the masters of conspiracy and purgery, out of animosity towards Lady Mary [the Copt, consort of the Prophet] and her son Ibrahim, peace be upon him, till Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted One, cleared them of such unjust accusations at the hands of the Commander of the Faithful (as), in a manner that is tangible and clear:<sup>2</sup>

***"And Allah turned the spiteful disbelievers back emptyhanded (Qur'an, 33:25).***

" If you desire, I may recount more proofs and state the fact that, following her own sentiments, she once said to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, "It seems as if you reek of the odor of maghafir [odorous tiny flowers],"<sup>3</sup> so that he might not taste some honey at the house of the mother of believers Zainab bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her.

If a trivial reason like this permits her to address the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, in such a manner, how can she be relied upon when she denies that he (S) left a will for 'Ali

(as)? Do not also forget her yielding to sentiment when Asma' bint alNu'man was wedded to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

She said to her: "When the Prophet (S) weds a woman, he likes to hear her say: 'I seek refuge with Allah against you,'" [4](#) aiming thereby to turn the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, against his wedding altogether and make him hate the poor woman, as if she allowed herself to attribute statements to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as long as such statements served her own purpose, even when her purpose was petty or prohibitive.

Once he, peace be upon him and his progeny, asked her to see how a particular woman was doing, and she informed him of the opposite of what she had observed, seeking her own selfinterest. [5](#)

Once she complained about him, peace be upon him and his progeny, to her father, succumbing again to her sentiments, saying, "Do not now be biased," [6](#) whereupon her father slapped her so hard that her clothes became soaked with her blood. Once, having felt angry with him (S), she said: "... and you claim to be Allah's Messenger...", [7](#) in addition to many such incidents the narrative of which would require a much larger space, and what we have quoted here must suffice.

## **II. Rationale Regarding the Pleasant and the Unpleasant**

2) You have said, while commenting on the second point, that Sunnis do not subscribe to what is called rationally pleasant or unpleasant, etc. I think of you as being above making such a statement which is reminiscent of sophists who deny even concrete facts. Among our deeds are those of whose goodness we are quite sure, and they are praiseworthy and rewardable due to their own merits, such as charity and fairness, since we know what they are, while there are others with whose ugliness we also are familiar, and they demand repudiation and punishment because of their own evil, such as injustice and aggression, since they are what they are.

The wise know that there is a need that necessitates such judgments, and the wise are as certain regarding these matters as they are certain that the single is half the pair. Simple common sense always determines the distinction between your treatment of someone who is good to you and of someone who is not. Reason determines the goodness of the first person's treatment to you and its being praiseworthy by you, as well as the ugliness of the second and its being worthy of renunciation and punishment. Whoever doubts this is a rebel against his own reason.

Had the goodness or the evil of what we have mentioned here been matters of the legislative code, then they would not have been adopted and implemented by those who denied all divine codes such as atheists and secular rulers. In spite of their denial of religion, the latter still condone equity and goodness, determining thereupon their praise and rewards, without doubting at all the ugliness of injustice or aggression, nor the necessity to denounce such deeds and to punish their doers.

Their criterion in their judgment is nothing other than reason; so, talk no more about those who belittle reason and conscience, nor of those who deny what all wise men know, ruling in the contrary of what the human nature dictates, the nature which Allah, the Praised One, has created and embedded within His servants.

He has enabled them thereby to realize facts that are discernable by their faculty of reason, just as He made them able to recognize matters through their senses and feelings. Their nature, then, demands that they should be able to rationally judge equity and the like as good, and injustice and its peers as ugly, just as being able to distinguish through the sense of taste between the sweetness of honey and the bitterness of colocynth [*citrullus colocynthis*], and through their sense of smell can they distinguish between the fragrance of musk [*chenopodium botrys*] and the stink of cadaver, and through their sense of touch can they distinguish between what is soft and what is rough, and through their faculty of seeing can they tell the difference between a pleasant and an ugly view, and through their faculty of hearing can they tell the difference between the music of the pipe and the braying of a donkey. Such is the nature which Allah has created:

***"He created people in such a way; indeed, there is no way anyone can change His creation; this is the straight religion, though most people do not know (30:30)."***

The Ash'aris desired to exaggerate the power of faith in the legislative system and the attitude towards a total submission to its judgment; therefore, they denied the judgment of the wise, saying that there is no judgment other than what is legislated.

Thus did they become oblivious of the absolute rational theory stating that "Whatever a wise person decides should be the decision of the legislator," and heedless of the fact that they by doing so in fact left no excuse for their own selves, thus discarding any criterion whereby they might ascertain a legislative code or discard it altogether.

This is so due to the fact that to arrive at such a conclusion through legislative proofs is like running in a circle, and no pretext can be applied therewith. Had there been no authority for reason, implementing tradition or consecutively reported hadith would have been rejected. Nay! Had there been no intellect, nobody would have worshipped Allah nor come to know Him. Expounding in this subject has been recorded in a library containing works of our renowned scholars.

### **III. Rejecting the Claim of the Mother of Believers**

3) As regarding the claim of the mother of the believers that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, died on her chest, it is a claim which we reject based upon *sahih*s sequentially reported by members of the purified progeny (as). Refer to what others have stated as quoted by Ibn Sa'd. He quotes 'Ali (as) saying: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, during his ailment [preceding his demise], said: 'Fetch me my brother,' so I came to him and he asked me to come closer,

and so did I; thereupon, he reclined on me.

He continued reclining on me thus and talking to me, so much so that some of his saliva fell on me, then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, breathed his last;" as stated on page 51, Part Two, Vol. 2, of the author's *Tabaqat*, in a section about those who said that the Messenger of Allah died in 'Ali's lap. It is hadith number 1107 on page 55, Vol. 4, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.

Abu Na'im in his *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, Abu Ahmad alFardi in his *Naskh*, and many other authors of books of traditions have all quoted 'Ali (as) saying: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, taught me," meaning during that sickness, "a thousand doors each one of which leads to a thousand others." It is hadith number 6009 quoted at the end of page 392, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*. Whenever 'Umar ibn alKhattab was asked about anything regarding these matters, he would say nothing other than: "Ask 'Ali, since he is the one who can handle it."

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah alAnsari is quoted saying that Ka'b alAhbar once asked 'Umar: "What were the last words of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny?" 'Umar answered: "Ask 'Ali." Ka'b did so, and 'Ali (as) said: "I let the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, recline his head on my flanks till he finally uttered: 'Prayers! [i.e. uphold prayers] Prayers!" Ka'b said: "This, indeed, is the call of all prophets, and for this purpose are they sent." Then Ka'b asked 'Umar who gave the ceremonial funeral bath to the Prophet's corpse, and his answer was again: "Ask 'Ali."

When Ka'b asked 'Ali (as), 'Ali answered that it was he who did so, as stated by Ibn Sa'd on page 51, Part Two, Vol. 2, of *Tabaqat*, and it is hadith 1106 in *Kanz al-'Ummal* quoted on page 55, Vol. 4. Ibn 'Abbas was asked once: "Have you seen when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, died, if his head was on anyone's lap?" He answered: "He died reclining on 'Ali's chest."

It was said to him that 'Urwah narrates a tradition from 'Ayesha saying that he (S) died reclining on her chest, and Ibn 'Abbas denied it, asking the person who put the question forth: "Do you believe it?! By Allah, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, died reclining his head on 'Ali's chest, and Ali is the one who gave him his bath," as quoted by Ibn Sa'd on the same page mentioned above, and it is hadith number 1108 of the ones enUmarated in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 55, Vol. 4.

Ibn Sa'd cites Imam Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zainul'Abidin (as) saying: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, breathed his last while his head was in 'Ali's lap," as quoted by Ibn Sa'd on page 51.

Traditions documenting this subject are consecutively reported from all Imams of the purified progeny (as). Many of those who opted to deviate from their path admit that, too, so much so that Ibn Sa'd has quoted alSha'bi saying: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, passed away while his head was in 'Ali's lap; and it was 'Ali who gave him his [funeral] bath," as mentioned on the page referred to above in *ATabaqat*.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, used to declare the same publicly; therefore, you may refer to his statement in one of his sermons where he says: "Custodians of the hadith among the companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, know very well that I never hesitated to implement the commandments of Allah, nor lagged in discharging the orders of His Messenger, not even for one hour. I, by the Grace of Allah, on many occasions risked my own life defending his, when even heroes retreated and feet slowed down, and he (S) breathed his last while his head rested on my chest, and even his saliva fell on my hand, whereupon I rubbed it on my face. I took care of washing his corpse, the angels assisting me, and the house and its courtyards became full of the noise of angels descending and ascending..., and I never ceased hearing their prayers unto him, till we buried him; so, who is more worthy of him alive or dead than I?" as stated at the conclusion of page 196, Vol. 2, of *Nahjul Balaghah*, and on page 590, Vol. 2, of Ibn alHadid's *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah*.

So is his soliloquy when he, peace be upon him, was burying the Mistress of all Women, peace be upon her. He said:

"Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, from me and from your daughter who has come now to be your neighbour, rushing to reunite with you... My patience, O Messenger of Allah, about the death of your chosen one has run out, and my consolation has waned and withered. Deep, indeed, is my grief for being separated from you, and great is the calamity, while the extent of your grief is a source for consolation, for I laid you to sleep in the tomb of your grave, after your soul had parted from your body that was resting on my chest; therefore, we are God's, and unto Him is our return,"

up to the end of his statement which is stated at the end of page 207, Vol. 2, of *Nahjul Balaghah*, and on page 590, Vol. 2, of *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah* by Ibn Abul Hadid. Umm Salamah has also narrated an authentic hadith saying: "By the One by Whom alone do I swear, 'Ali was the closest to the Messenger of Allah (S) upon his death. We [she and Ali] visited him one afternoon, and he happily and repeatedly said: 'Ali has come! 'Ali has come!' Fatima (as) inquired whether 'Ali had been sent on an errand.

Later on, 'Ali came again, and I thought that probably he needed to have some privacy with the Prophet (S); so, we came out and sat at the door. I was closer to the door. The Messenger of Allah (S) bent his head over 'Ali and started talking to him confidentially, addressing him affectionately, till he passed away; so, 'Ali was the last person to be with him before his death."[8](#)

Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrates the following:

"During his sickness, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, asked that his brother be fetched; so, Abu Bakr came in, but he turned away from him and reiterated his request. This time 'Uthman was brought in, but he turned away from him, too.

Then 'Ali was called in his presence. The Prophet (S) covered him with his own robe and reclined on him. When he came out of his room, people asked him what the Prophet (S) had said, and he answered: 'He taught me a thousand subjects each one of which leads to a thousand others.'[9](#)

You know that this hadith portrays a behaviour typical of prophets, while the other one portrays a man ruled by his lust. If a shepherd dies on his wife's chest, between her chin and navel, or on her thigh..., having laxed in looking after his herd, he would surely be labelled as wreckless and irresponsible. May Allah forgive the mother of the believers. I wish that she, while denying 'Ali such a will, had attributed the denial to her father, whom she thinks is more worthy of such a will, but her father was already in the army raised by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, under his own honourable patronage; he was in Usamah's army which was then camping at Jurf.

Anyhow, the claim that he (S) died in her lap is attributed to nobody other than 'Ayesha, whereas the claim of his demise, may I sacrifice my parents for his sake, is narrated through 'Ali (as), Ibn 'Abbas, Umm Salamah, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, alSha'bi, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as), and all Imams of the progeny of Muhammad (as), thus making it more reliable and more fit of the personality of the Messenger of God (S).

## IV. Preference of Umm Salamah's Hadith over Hers

4) Had 'Ayesha's hadith been disproved by Umm Salamah alone, the latter's hadith would have been preferred over hers for many reasons besides the ones mentioned above, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

*Sh*

[1.](#) Refer to page 77, Vol. 2, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by the Mu'tazilite scholar, and pages 457 and its succeeding pages of the same volume, and you will find her conduct towards 'Uthman, 'Ali and Fatima depicting sentimentality in its most manifest forms.

[2.](#) Whoever wishes to be familiar with the details of this calamity must research the biography of Lady Mary [or Mariyya, the Copt, wife of the Prophet, S], peace be upon her, on page 39, Vol. 4, of al-Hakim's Al-Mustadrak, or to his Talkhis by al-Thahbi.

[3.](#) From what al-Bukhari has quoted in his explanation of Surat al-Tahrim in his Sahih, page 136, Vol. 3; so, refer to it and be amazed. There are several ahadith quoted from 'Umar stating that the two women who conspired against the Messenger of Allah (S) were 'Ayesha and Hafsa. There is a lengthy hadith dealing with this issue.

[4.](#) As quoted by al-Hakim in his biography of Asma' in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak, page 37, Vol. 4, and is quoted by Ibn Sa'd who discusses her biography on page 104, Vol. 8, of his Tabaqat, and the incident is very well known. It is narrated in the biography of Asma' by both authors of Isti'ab and Al-Isabah, and it is quoted by Ibn Jarir and others.

[5.](#) The details of this incident are preserved in the books of traditions and history; so, refer to page 294, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal, or page 115, Vol. 8, of Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat, where he also states the biography of Sharaf daughter of Khalifah.

[6.](#) This issue is quoted by the authors of books of tradition and history; so, refer to hadith number 1020 of the ones narrated in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 116, Vol. 7, and it is quoted by al-Ghazali in the third section of his treatise on marriage on page 35, Vol. 2, of Ihya'ul-'Ulum. It is also quoted in section 94 of his book Mukashafatul Qulub, at the conclusion of page 238.

[7.](#) As quoted by al-Ghazali in both sections of the books cited above.

[8.](#) This hadith is quoted by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 139, Vol. 3, of his authentic Al-Mustadrak, succeeded by his comment: "This hadith is authentic, but they [Bukhari and Muslim] did not publish it." Al-Thahbi, too, has admitted its authenticity when he quoted it in his Talkhis al-Mustadrak. It is also quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah in his Sunan, and it is hadith number 6096, page 400, Vol. 6, in Kanz al-'Ummal.

9. This is quoted by Abu Ya'li through a chain of narrators including Kamil ibn Talha, Ibn Lahi'ah, Hay ibn 'Abdul-Maghafiri, Abu 'Abdul-Rahman al-Habli, ending with 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar. It is quoted by Abu Na'im in his Hilyat al-Awliya', by Abu Ahmad al-Fardi in his own version as stated on page 392, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal. Al-Tabrani, in his book Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, has stated that when the Ta'if campaign was underway, the Prophet (S) took his time in confiding with 'Ali, so much so that when Abu Bakr passed by them, he said: "O Messenger of Allah! Your confidential talk with 'Ali has lasted for quite some time." He (S) said: "It is not I who has confided in him; it is Allah..." This is hadith number 6075, page 399, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal. He often used to sit with 'Ali (as) and confide in him. Once 'Ayesha entered and found them engaged in a confidential conversation. Said she: "O 'Ali! I spend one day out of nine [in the company of my husband]; so, why don't you, son of Abu Talib, leave me alone on that day?" The Prophet's face immediately showed the redness of anger. Refer to this incident at the beginning of page 78, Vol. 2, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by al-Hamidi.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/fr/al-murajaat-abd-al-husayn-sharaf-al-din-al-musawi/letter-76#comment-0>