

Letter 56

Muharram 22, 1330

Suffices to prove its application as an argument what we have mentioned in Letter No. 24 above.

I. Natural Laws Necessitate the Consecutive Reporting of Hadith al-Ghadir

1) The consecutive reporting of the Ghadir hadith is necessitated by the natural laws which Allah has created. Its similitude is like that of any great historical step undertaken by the most important man of a nation who announces, in the presence of thousands of his nationals, the undertaking of a major step, so that they may convey its news to various lands and nations, especially if such an undertaking enjoys the concern of his own family and their supporters in all generations to come, so that such an announcement might receive the widest possible publicity.

Can such an announcement, as significant as it is, be transmitted by, say, just one single person? Certainly not. Its news would spread as widely as the early morning sun rays, encompassing the plains as well as the oceans;

"And you shall never find any alteration to Allah's order (Qur'an, 33:62)."

II. The Almighty's Benevolence

2) Hadith al-Ghadir has won the divine concern of Allah, the Dear One, the Sublime, Who inspired to His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, including it in His Qur'an which is recited by Muslims even during the late hours of the night or the early hours of the day, in public and in private, in their supplications and ceremonial prayers, from the top of their pulpits and the heights of their minarets, stating:

"O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message at all, and Allah will protect you from (evil)"

men." (Qur'an, 5:67)[1](#)

When he, peace be upon him and his progeny, conveyed the divine Message (implied in this verse), appointing 'Ali as the Imam and entrusting him with the caliphate, Allah Almighty revealed the following verse:

"Today have I perfected your religion (Islam) for you, completed my blessing unto you, and accepted Islam as your religion." (Qur'an, 5:3)[2](#)

So, congratulations upon congratulations to 'Ali; this is Allah's favour; He grants it to whomsoever He pleases. Anyone who looks into these verses will be profoundly impressed by such divine favours.

III. Concern of the Messenger of Allah (S)

3) If divine concern is as such, no wonder, then, that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, expressed such a profound concern when death approached him, may my life be sacrificed for his sake. It was then that, according to the order which he received from Allah Almighty, he set to announce 'Ali's *wilayat* during his supreme pilgrimage, in the presence of so many witnesses, without being satisfied with similar previous announcements such as his warning in Mecca, or on other occasions with some of which you have by now become familiar. He, therefore, invited the believers to participate in his very last pilgrimage, known as the Farewell Pilgrimage. People from far and wide responded to his invitation, and no less than one hundred thousand pilgrims left Medina with him.[3](#)

On the standing day at 'Arafat, he informed the attendants that: "Ali is of me, and I am of 'Ali, and nobody discharges the responsibility [of my religion] on my behalf except I and 'Ali."[4](#) And when he came back from the pilgrimage and arrived at the valley of Khumm, trusted Gabriel descended upon him with "ayat al-tabligh," verse of conveying the Message, from the Lord of the Worlds.

Immediately thereupon, he alighted there till those who lagged behind him, as well as those who went ahead of him, joined him. When they all assembled, he conducted the obligatory prayers then delivered a sermon about Allah, the Dear and the Omniscient, emphasizing the significance of 'Ali's *wilayat*. You have already heard a glittering report of its news, and what you have not heard is even more exact and more explicit; yet what you have heard should suffice you. Its news was carried on behalf of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, by all those masses who were present with him there and then and who are estimated to have been over one hundred thousand pilgrims from various lands.

The order of Allah, the Dear and Sublime, which does not suffer any alteration in His creation, necessitates the consecutive reporting of this hadith in spite of all obstacles in conveying it. Yet the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as) follow their own wise methods of disseminating it and publicizing for it.

IV. Concern of the Commander of the Faithful

4) Referring to the latter, I suggest that you may consider the measure taken by the Commander of the Faithful (as), then Caliph, in gathering people in the spacious meeting place, the Rahba plain. He then said: "I ask in the Name of Allah each Muslim who heard what the Messenger of Allah (S) said on the Ghadir Day to stand and testify to what he heard. Nobody should stand except those who saw the Prophet with their own eyes and heard him with their own ears."

Thirty *sahabis*, twelve of whom had participated in the Battle of Badr, stood and testified that the Prophet (S) took 'Ali by the hand and asked people: "Do you know that I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?" They answered in the affirmative. He, peace be upon him and his progeny, then said: "To whomsoever I have been *mawla*, this ('Ali) is his *mawla*; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him, and be the enemy of whosoever chooses to be his enemy." You know that accusing thirty *sahabis* of being liars is rejected by reason; therefore, the achievement of consecutive reporting through their testimony is an irrefutable and undeniable proof.

The same hadith was transmitted from those thirty *sahabis* by all those crowds who were then present at the Rahba, and who disseminated it after their dispersal throughout the land, thus providing it with extremely wide publicity. Obviously, the Rahba incident took place during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful (as) who received the oath of allegiance in the year 35 A.H.

The Ghadir event took place during the Farewell Pilgrimage, 10 A.H. The time period separating the first date from the second is twenty-five years during which many events took place such as a devastating plague, wars, the opening of new countries, and the invasions contemporary to the three righteous caliphs.

This time period, one fourth of a century, merely due to its duration, wars and invasions, in addition to a sweeping and devastating plague, had ended the lives of many of those who had witnessed the Ghadir event, especially the elderly among the *sahabah* as well as their youths who were eager to meet their Lord through conducting *jihad* in His way, the Exalted, the Omniscient, and in the way of His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, so much so that their dead outnumbered their survivors.

Some of them were scattered throughout the land, and many of those were not present at the Rahba except those who kept company with the Commander of the Faithful (as) in Iraq, and these were only males.

In spite of all this, thirty *sahabah*, twelve of whom were participants in the Battle of Badr, had heard hadith al-Ghadir from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

There may have been others who hated to testify, such as Anas ibn Malik⁵ and others who received their due punishment in lieu of the prayers of the Commander of the Faithful to Allah to punish those

who hid the truth while knowing it.

Had he been able to gather all *sahabis* who were alive then, males and females, and address them in the same way which he employed at Rahba, several times that many would have testified; so, what if he had asked people in Hijaz before the passage of such a long time after the incident of the Ghadir?

Contemplate upon this fact and you will find it a very strong proof testifying to the consecutive reporting of hadith al-Ghadir.

The books of tradition should suffice you in their documentation of hadith al-Ghadir. Take, for example, what Imam Ahmad has quoted on page 370, Vol 4, of his *Musnad* from Abul Tufayl who has said: "Ali gathered people at the Rahba, then he said to them: 'I adjure in the name of Allah every Muslim who heard what the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, had said on the Ghadir Day to state his testimony.' Thirty persons stood up."

Abu Na'im has said: "Many stood up and testified how the Prophet (S) took 'Ali by the hand and asked people: 'Do you know that I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?' They answered: 'We do, O Messenger of Allah!' Then he said: 'To whomsoever I have been a *mawla*, this 'Ali is his *mawla*; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him and be the enemy of whoever sets himself as his enemy.'"

Abul-Tufail continues to say: "I left the place dismayed (disgusted with many people's ignorance of this hadith), and I met Zayd ibn Arqam and said to him: 'I have heard 'Ali say such and such.' Zayd said: 'Then do not deny that you have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, say so about him.'"

Zayd's testimony stated above, and 'Ali's statement in this regard, may be added to the testimony of the thirty *sahabis*, thus bringing the number of narrators of this hadith to thirty-two *sahabis*. Imam Ahmad has recorded 'Ali's hadith on page 119, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad* as transmitted by Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Layla. The latter says: "I saw 'Ali at the Rahba abjuring people to testify, emphasizing that only those who had seen and heard the Prophet (S) should stand and testify. Twelve participants in the Battle of Badr, whom I remember so well as if I am looking at them right now, did so."

Abdul-Rahman quotes the latter testifying that they had all heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, asking people on the Ghadir Day: "Do not I have more authority over the believers' lives than they themselves do, and my wives are their mothers?" The audience responded: "Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah!"

Then he said, as Abdul-Rahman quotes him, "Then whosoever takes me as his *mawla* must take 'Ali as his *mawla*; O Mighty Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him and be the enemy of whoever bears animosity towards him!"

Another narration is recorded by imam Ahmad on the same page. It quotes the Prophet (S) saying: "O

Lord! Befriend whoever takes him as his *wali* and be the enemy of whoever antagonizes him; support whoever supports him, and abandon whoever abandons him." The narrative goes on to state that with the exception of three men, the witnesses stood to testify. 'Ali invoked Allah to curse those who hid the truth, and his invocation was heeded.

If you add 'Ali and Zayd ibn Arqam to the afore-mentioned twelve participants in the Battle of Badr, then fourteen is obviously the number of witnesses. By tracing the traditions regarding the Rahba incident, 'Ali's wisdom becomes manifest in disseminating hadith al-Ghadir and publicizing for it.

V. al-Husain's Concern

5) The Master of Martyrs, Abu Abdullah al-Husain, peace be upon him, has left us a legacy of a very memorable stand which he took during the reign of Mu'awiyah. It was then that truth became manifest. It was similar to the stand taken by 'Ali at the Rahba.

During the pilgrimage season, al-Husain (as), surrounded by throngs of pilgrims, praised his grandfather, father, mother and brother, and delivered an unprecedented, wise and eloquent speech that captivated his audience and won their hearts and minds. His sermon was inclusive, one wherein he reawakened the masses, traced and researched history, and paid the Ghadir incident its fair and just dues. His great stand, therefore, produced great results, and it became equivalent to hadith al-Ghadir in its fame and wide publicity.

VI. Concern of the Nine Imams (as)

6) His nine descendants, all sinless Imams, applied their own methods to publicizing and propagating the same hadith. Their methods reflect their wisdom which is comprehended by all those who possess sound senses. They used the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah as a special annual feast to congratulate and congratulate one another, merrily and humbly seeking nearness to Allah, the Exalted, the Mighty, through fasting, prayers and supplications.

They go beyond limits in their deeds of goodness and acts of righteousness, thanking Allah for the blessings which He bestowed upon them on that Day by virtue of the text that nominated the Commander of the Faithful (as) as Caliph, and His divine promise for him to be the Imam. They used to visit their kin, give more generously to their families, visit their brethren, look after their neighbours, and enjoin their followers to do likewise.

VII. Shi'as' Concern

7) For this reason, the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah of every year is celebrated as a feast by the Shi'as of all times and climes.⁶ It is then that they rush to their mosques to offer obligatory and supererogatory prayers, recite the Glorious Qur'an, and read the most celebrated supplications as a token of thanking

Allah Almighty for perfecting His religion and completing His blessings upon them by nominating the Commander of the Faithful (as) as the Imam [in the theological as well as the secular sense].

It is then that they exchange visits and happily wish each other the best, seeking nearness to Allah through righteousness and goodness, and through pleasing their kin and neighbours. On that day, every year, they visit the mausoleum of the Commander of the Faithful (as), where no less than a hundred thousand pilgrims come from far and wide. There, they worship Allah on that day in the same way their purified Imams used to worship Him: through fasting, prayers, and remembrance of Allah. They seek nearness to Him through acts of righteousness and the payment of *sadaqat*.

They do not disperse before addressing the sacred shrine with a highly commended address authored by some of their Imams. It includes testifying to the glorious stand taken by the Commander of the Faithful (as), honouring his feats and struggle to lay the foundations of the principles of the faith, his service of the Master of Prophets and Messengers (S), and his virtues and merits, among which was the honour which he had received from the Prophet on the Ghadir Day. This is the custom of the Shi'as every year.

Their orators have always been referring to hadith al-Ghadir, quoting its tradition or even without reference to them, and their poets are accustomed to compose poems in its commemoration in old as well as modern times;⁷ therefore, there is no way to cast doubts about its being consecutively reported from the sources of Ahl al-Bayt (as) and their Shi'as.

Their motives to memorize it by heart, their efforts to maintain its pristine text, safeguard its authenticity, publicize and disseminate it..., all have indeed resulted in the achievement of their most aspired objectives. Refer to all the four major Shi'a *Musnads*, as well as other Shi'a references, containing well-documented and supported traditions, and you will find each one of them reverberating with the same meaning, and each tradition supporting the other. Whoever acquaints himself with these traditions will find out that this hadith is *mutawatir* through their precious sources.

VIII. Its Consecutive Reporting Through the Masses

8) There is no doubt about its being consecutively reported through Sunni sources, according to natural laws, as you have come to know;

"Allah's creation suffers no alteration; this is the Right Guidance, but most people do not know."
(Qur'an, 30:30)

The author of *Al-Fatawa alHamidiyya*, in spite of his stubbornness, admits the consecutive reporting of this hadith in his abridged dissertation titled *Al-Salawat al-Fakhira fil Ahadith al-Mutawatira*." Al-Sayyuti and other scholars of exegesis all admit the same. Refer to Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, author of the famous works titled "Tafsir" and "Tarikh,"

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id ibn Aqdah, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Uthman al-Thahbi, have all written critiques of the sources of this hadith. Each one of them has written an entire book on this subject. Ibn Jarir includes in his own book as many as one hundred and five sources for this hadith alone.⁸ Al-Thahbi, in spite of his fanaticism, has testified to the truth of many of its sources. In chapter sixteen of *Ghayat al-Maram*, as many as eighty ahadith transmitted by Sunnis testify to the authenticity of the Ghadir hadith.

Yet he did not quote al-Tirmithi, al-Nisai, al-Tabrani, al-Bazzar, Abu Ya'li, or quite a few other reporters who transmit this hadith. Al-Sayyuti quotes this hadith while discussing 'Ali in his book *Tarikh al-Khulafa'* transmitted by al-Tirmithi, adding, "This hadith is also recorded by Ahmad as transmitted by 'Ali (as), and also by Ayyub al-Ansari, Zayd ibn Arqam, 'Umar [ibn al-Khattab], and Thu Murr. Abu Ya'li quotes it from Abu Hurayrah, al-Tabrani from Ibn 'Umar and from Ibn Abbas as transmitted by Malik ibn al-Huwayrith, Habshi ibn Janadah, and Jarir, and also by Ammarah and Buraydah."

A proof of the fame of this hadith is evident from the fact that imam Ahmad records it in his *Musnad* from Riyah ibn al-Harish as transmitted by two sources. It states that a group of men once came to 'Ali (as) and said: "Assalamu Alaikum, our *mawla*."

The Imam asked who they were, and they answered him by saying that they were his subjects. The Imam asked them: "How can I be your *mawla*, while you are [stranger] bedouin Arabs?" They said: "We have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on the Ghadir Day saying: 'Whoever I have been his *mawla*, 'Ali is his *mawla*.'"

Riyah says that when they left, he followed them and asked them who they were, and that they said to him: "We are a group of the Ansar (Medenite Supporters) in the company of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari." Another proof of its fame is what has been recorded by Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi while explaining Surat al-Ma'arij in his book *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, relying on two very highly respected sources, and stating the following:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered people on the Ghadir Day to assemble, then he took 'Ali's hand and said: "Whoever accepts me as his *mawla*, 'Ali is his *mawla*." The news of this announcement spread throughout the land, and al-Nu'man al-Fahri came to know about this hadith. Riding his she-camel, he came to meet the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

Having alighted, he said the following to the Prophet: "O Muhammad! You ordered us to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah, and we obeyed; then you ordered us to offer prayers five times a day, and we agreed; then you ordered us to pay *zakat*, and we agreed; then you ordered us to fast during the month of Ramadan and we agreed; then you ordered us to perform the pilgrimage and we agreed; then, as if all of this is not sufficient, you favoured your cousin to all of us and said 'Whoever accepts me as his *mawla*, 'Ali is his *mawla*;' is this one of your own orders,

or is it Allah's?"

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered: "I swear by the One and only God that this is the command of Allah, the Exalted and omni-Scient;" whereupon al-Harith left heading towards his animal murmuring softly to himself: "O Lord! If what Muhammad (S) says is true, then let it rain stones, or let a severe torment descend upon us."

He hardly reached his animal before Allah caused a stone to cleave his head, penetrate his body and come out of his anus, leaving him dead on the spot. It is in reference to that incident that Allah Almighty revealed the following verse:

"A man who brought a question (to the Prophet) asked for a sure penalty - which cannot be warded off by those who reject the truth - from Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent."⁹ (*Qur'an, 70: 1-3*)

This is how the tradition, quoted *verbatim*,¹⁰ concludes. Its authenticity is accepted by many Sunni scholars as a common fact, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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¹. We do not dispute its revelation in reference to 'Ali's wilayat on Ghadir Khumm Day, and our narratives from the sources of the purified progeny are consecutive. Suffices you for reference to its narration by others besides the latter what Imam al-Wahid has quoted in his exegesis of Surat al-Ma'ida on page 150 of his book Asbabul Nuzul from two respected sources: 'Atiyyah and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri. The author says: "This verse [that is, the one reading: "O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord"] was revealed on Ghadir Khumm Day in reference to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (as)." The same is narrated by al-Hafiz Abu Na'im who interprets it in his book Nuzul al-Qur'an relying on two sources one of which is Abu Sa'id and the other is Abu Rafi'. It is also narrated by Imam Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Hamawaini al-Shafi'i in his book Al-Fawa'id from various sources ending with Abu Hurayrah. It is quoted by Imam Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi while explaining the meaning of this verse in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir from two respected sources. What testifies to its reference to 'Ali (as) is the fact that prayers had been already established, zakat was enforced, fasting was legislated, the pilgrimage to the House was being conducted, what is permissible was clarified and so was what is forbidden, the Shari'ah was already regulated and its injunctions enforced; so, what else required Allah to place so much emphasis other than on the issue of caliphate, one which prompted Him to pressure His Prophet in a way which was almost similar to threatening? And regarding what, if not caliphate, could the Prophet (S) feel presentiment of dissension if he did not convey it, something which required God's own immunity against any harm that might result from discharging it?

². sahihs documenting the occasion that necessitated the revelation of this verse are consecutive from the sources of the purified progeny (as). We do not doubt what the purified progeny of Muhammad (S) narrates even when al-Bukhari claims that the verse was revealed on the day of 'Arafat, for the members of the Prophet's house know what is revealed in their house.

³. Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, in a chapter on the Farewell Pilgrimage in his book Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyya [Biography of the Prophet], writes: "Ninety thousand - some say a hundred and twenty-four thousand, while others say more - accompanied him, peace be upon him and his progeny, from Medina, and this is just a rough figure of the number of people who accompanied him," to the end of his statement from which you come to know that those who went back with him were more than a hundred thousand, and they all witnessed the Ghadir hadith.

[4.](#) We have quoted this hadith in our Letter No. 48; so, if you refer to it, you will find it verbatim numbered 15 in the said reference; the same Letter refers to and comments on it in a way worthy of the attention of researchers.

[5.](#) He, peace be upon him, said to him then: "Why don't you stand with other companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) and testify to what you heard of him then?" He answered: "O Commander of the Faithful! I have grown old, and I have forgotten it." 'Ali (as) said: "If you are telling a lie, then may Allah strike you with a white [disease, i.e. leprosy] which your turban cannot conceal." He hardly left before his face was filled with the marks of leprosy; so, he used to say: "I have become the object of a curse invoked by the Righteous Servant." This incident is quite famous, and a testimony for its authenticity exists when Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal quotes it at the end of page 119, Vol. 1, of his Musnad, adding: "They all, except three men, rose to testify; and those three fell under the effect of his curse."

[6.](#) Ibn al-Athir, while narrating the significant events that took place in the year 352 in his Kamil, says the following on page 181, Vol. 8, of his history book: "On the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah of that year, Mu'izz al-Dawla ordered decorations to be installed in Baghdad, fires to be lit at the police quarters, and all merriments be displayed; so, market-places were opened at night just as is customary during 'Id nights; he did all that to celebrate 'Id al-Ghadir, Ghadir Khumm. Drums were beaten; and trumpets were sounded, and it was quite a memorable day."

[7.](#) Al-Kumait ibn Zayd has said:

On the day of the dawh, the Ghadir dawh day,

Caliphate was made manifest for him: were they to obey...

Abu Tammam, in a poetic masterpiece which he includes in his diwan, says:

On the Day of Ghadir, truth looked clear and bright;

Redolently, with no curtains nor bars to hide;

The Messenger of Allah stood there to invite

Them to come close to what is just and right,

Gesturing with his hands, introducing your wali

And mawla; yet see what happened to you and me!

He brings the news to people so eloquently,

While they come with grudge and depart grudgingly,

Yet he made the truth eloquently shine,

While they usurped even your right and mine.

You made its destiny the sharp blades of your sword:

And the grave for whoever wanted the truth to uphold...

[8.](#) The author of Ghayat al-Maram says near the conclusion of Chapter 16, page 89, of his book: "Ibn Jarir has quoted the Ghadir hadith from ninety-five sources in a book which he dedicated to this subject, calling it Al-Wilayat, and Ibn 'Uqdah has quoted it from one hundred and five sources written down in a book which he also dedicated solely for this subject-matter. Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddiq al-Magharibi has stated that both al-Thahbi and Ibn 'Uqdah have dedicated a special book solely for this hadith;" so, refer to the sermon in his valuable book titled Fath al-Malik al-'Ali Bisihhati Babil 'Ilm 'Ali.

[9.](#) This is quoted from al-Tha'labi by a group of Sunni dignitaries such as scholar al-Shibli of Egypt in a biography of 'Ali in his book Nurul Absar; so, you may refer to its eleventh page if you wish.

[10.](#) Refer to what al-Halabi has quoted of the narratives related to the Farewell Pilgrimage in his book of biography known as Al-Sira al-Halabiyya and you will find this hadith at the end of page 214 of its third volume.

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