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Letter 58

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I. Hadith alGhadir Cannot be Interpreted

1) Somehow I have the feeling that your heart is not satisfied with what you yourself have stated, and your soul is not thereby pleased! You revere the Messenger of Allah (S) and cherish his pristine wisdom, infallibility, conclusive Prophethood, believing that he is the master of the wise, and the seal of the prophets:

"He does not speak of his own inclination; it is but a revealed inspiration; he has been taught by one mighty in power (Qur'an, 53:3-5)."

Suppose a philosopher from another faith asks you about the Ghadir Day saying:

"Why did he (S) stop all those thousands of companions from proceeding, confining them in midday heat in such a sunbaked plain? Why did he make sure to call back whoever advanced, and wait for whoever lagged behind? Why did he camp with them in such a desolate place where neither water nor vegetation was available? Then why did he preach to them about Allah Almighty in that place and enjoined those who were present there to convey, upon dispersing, what they had heard to those who had not, and why did he start with a selfeulogizing sermon, saying: 'It looks like my Lord's Messenger [angel of death, Isra'il] is about to come to call me [to return to my Lord] and I will respond to the call; I am responsible, and so are you,' and what message was the Prophet (S) enjoined to convey and which the nation was enjoined to heed?

Why did he ask them: 'Do not you believe that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (S) is His Servant and Messenger, that His Paradise is just and His Fire is just, that death is just and the life after death is just, that the Hour is undoubtedly approaching, that Allah will bring to life all those who are lying in their graves?' and they responded in the affirmative? Why did he immediately take 'Ali's hand, lift it till the white hair in his armpit became visible, saying: 'O people! Allah is my *mawla*, and I am the *mawla* of the believers;' then why did he explain his statement 'I am the *mawla* of the believers' by asking them:

‘Do not I have more authority over your lives than you yourselves have?'

Then why did he say, having made such an explanation, ‘Whoever has accepted me as his *mawla*, this (‘Ali) is his *mawla*; O Lord! Befriend whosoever befriends him and be the enemy of whosoever antagonizes him; support whosoever supports him and betray whosoever betrays him,' and why did he specifically choose him and pray for him in such a manner which is worthy only of just Imams and truthful successors?

And why did he require them to testify by asking them: ‘Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have?' and they answered in the affirmative; then he said: ‘To whomsoever I have been a *mawla*, ‘Ali is his *mawla*,' or ‘To whomsoever I have been a *wali*, ‘Ali is his *wali*, and why did he link the Qur'an to his progeny, thus making them the examples for the wise to follow till the day of Judgment?

Why so much concern from such a wise Prophet? What was the mission that necessitated all these introductions, and what was the aspired objective from such a memorable stand? What was the message which Allah Almighty ordered him to convey when He said:

‘O Messenger! Convey what has just 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),'

and what mission required so much emphasis from Allah Who demanded, in a tone so close to threatening, to be conveyed? What was the affair regarding which the Prophet feared dissension if not conveyed by him, one the announcement of which required a profound protection from Allah against the harm of the hypocrites...?"

I ask you, in the name of your grandfather, if you are asked all these questions, will you answer them by saying that Allah, the omniScient, the allPowerful, simply wanted to explain to the Muslims how ‘Ali had been supporting them, and how friendly he was to them? I do not think that you would give such an answer, and I do not think that you would interpret Allah's words, or the words of the master of the wise, the seal of messengers and prophets, as such.

You are above thinking that he (S) would exhaust his means and resources in explaining something too clear, according to reason and common sense, to require such an explanation. There is no doubt that you look at the actions and statements of the Prophet (S) in a better light, one which is not derided by the discreet, nor criticized by philosophers or sages. There is no doubt that you appreciate the value of his statements and actions and render them to wisdom and infallibility.

Allah the Almighty has said:

"He is a blessed Messenger endowed with strength from the One with the Throne, obeyed, able, and trustworthy; certainly your fellow is not possessed (Qur'an, 81:19-22)."

You are above accusing him of clarifying what is already clear, or expounding upon what is already common knowledge, or bringing unusual introductions for such clarifications, or introductions having no bearing over nor correlation thereto. Allah and His Messenger are above that. You, may Allah support the truth through your person, know that what suits such measures, undertaken in the midday heat of that place, ones that are conducive to his actions and statements on the Ghadir Day, is nothing less than the conveying of the divine Message, and the appointment of his vicegerent.

Logical proofs and rational explanations unequivocally prove that what he intended to do on that day was nothing other than the appointment of ‘Ali as his vicegerent and successor. This hadith, supported by proofs, is an explicit text regarding ‘Ali's caliphate, one which does not even require an interpretation, and there is no way to understand it otherwise. This is quite clear for anyone who is

"... with a sound mind, attentive, and a witness (Qur'an, 50:37)."

II. Pretext for its Interpretation is Speculative and Misleading

2) As regarding the pretext they claim, it is nothing but a speculation and an adulteration. It is the sophistry of confusion and embellishment. The Prophet (S) dispatched ‘Ali to Yemen twice, the first took place in 8 A.H. It was then that scandalmongers spread rumours about him, and some people complained about him to the Prophet (S) upon their return to Medina. It was then that he resented their complaints,[1] and they saw the sparkle of anger on his face; yet they did not refrain from trying again.

The second time took place in 10 A.H. It was then that the Prophet (S) tied a knot on ‘Ali's standard, fixed his headwear with his own hands, and said: "Proceed, and do not be distracted;" whereupon ‘Ali (as) proceeded to his destination as the divinely guided leader of the rest till he discharged the responsibility entrusted to him by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

Then he participated in the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage. It was then that the Prophet welcomed him very warmly and even shared with him his own offering. It was then that no scandalmonger dared to open his mouth, nor did any unfair person charge him with anything; so, how can this hadith be necessitated by the objections of those in the opposition party? Or how could it be only an answer to their charges, as some people claim?

Yet mere antagonism to ‘Ali is not sufficient for the Prophet to pile praises on him in the way which he has done from a pulpit of camel saddles on the Ghadir Day except, Allah forbid, that he risks his own deeds and statements, responsibilities and mission, just to please ‘Ali. His divine wisdom is way above that, for Allah, praised be His Name, says: "It is the saying of a glorious Messenger; it is not the speech of a poet; little do you believe; nor is it the speech of a monk; little do you remember; it is but revelation from the Lord of the Worlds." (69:40–43)

Had he desired to just show ‘Ali's contributions, and to rebut those who bore grudge against him, he (S)

would simply have said: "This is my cousin, my soninlaw, the father of my descendants, the master of my household; therefore, do not harm him," or something like this to show mere admission of status and dignity.

But the way this hadith is worded gives no impression other than what we have suggested. It points out rational and deductive proofs. Let the reason be whatever it may be, the statements quite obviously bear explicit meanings which demand no inquiry into their causes.

As regarding his reference to his household in hadith alGhadir, it is only to support the same meaning which we have suggested, since he correlated them to the Glorious Book of Allah, setting them as examples for all the wise, saying: "I am leaving with you these which, as long as you adhere to, shall never let you stray: the Book of Allah, and my progeny, my household." He did not do that only so that the nation might realize that it had none to refer to, nor rely upon, after the Prophet, other than both of them.

Suffices you for a testimony regarding the Imams from the Prophet's purified progeny (as) is that they are correlated to Allah's Book which no wrong can approach from front nor from back. Just as it is not possible to refer to any book which differs in its judgment from the Book of Allah, the Praised One, the Sublime, it is not possible likewise to refer to an Imam who opposes in his judgment the Imams from the purified progeny (as).

Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "They shall never separate till they join me at the Pool;" it is a proof that the earth shall never be without an Imam from his loins who is equivalent to the Book. Anyone who scrutinizes this hadith will find it restricting the caliphate to the Imams from the purified progeny of the Prophet (S).

This is supported by the hadith reported by Zayd ibn Thabit and quoted by Ahmad in his *Musnad* at the beginning of page 122, Vol. 5. It states that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "I am leaving you with two successors: the Book of Allah, like a rope extending from heavens to earth, and my household, for they both shall never part from each other till they join me at the Pool."

Such a statement is indeed indicative of assigning the caliphate to the Imams from the purified progeny, peace be upon them. You know that the text which emphasizes following the Prophet's progeny implies following ‘Ali's leadership, since ‘Ali, after the Prophet (S), is the undisputed master, and the obeyed Imam of his household. On one hand, hadith alGhadir and others like it imply that ‘Ali is the Imam of the Prophet's household whose status, according to Allah and His Messenger, is equal to that of the Holy Qur'an. On the other hand, it gives credit to his own great personality because of which he became the *wali* of all those whose *wali* is none other than the Messenger of Allah (S), Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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1. We have clarified the same in our Letter No. 36; so, refer to it and do not overlook our comment in this regard.

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