

Imam Ali (A.S.): The Greatest

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His Sending back the Sun

Among the wonderful signs which God, the Exalted, has brought forth through the hands of the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, is one, the reports of which have become widespread among the biographers and historians ('ulama' al-siyar wa al-athar) and about which the poets have composed verses (namely) when he, peace be on him, sent back the sun (to its earlier position) on two occasions, once during the life of the Prophet and another time after his death.

The account of it being sent back on the first occasion has been reported by Asma' daughter of 'Umayy, Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and a group of the Companions. One day the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was in his house and 'Ali, peace be on him, was in front of him when Gabriel, peace be on him, came to him to speak privately to him about God. When inspiration closed in upon him, he used the thigh of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, as a pillow. He did not raise his head from it until the sun had set. Thus he compelled the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, (to remain) in that position. So he prayed the afternoon prayer sitting, giving a nod (with his head) for his bowing and prostration. When (the Apostle) awoke" from his trance, he said to the Commander of the faithful: "Have you missed the afternoon prayer?"

"I could not pray it standing because of your position, Apostle of God, and the circumstances of hearing inspiration which I was in," he answered.

"Ask God to send the sun back for you so that you may pray it standing at its proper time just as (it was) when you missed being able to do it," he told him. "God, the Exalted, will answer you because of your obedience to God and to His Apostle." The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked God to send back the sun. It was sent back for him so that it came into its position in the sky at the time for the afternoon prayer. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, prayed the afternoon prayer at its proper time. Then it set. [Asma' reported:]

By God we heard it at it's setting, screeching like the screech of the saw in wood. Its being sent back for him after the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was when he wanted to cross the Euphrates at Babylon, many of his followers were occupied in taking their animals and baggage across. He, peace be on him, prayed the afternoon prayer himself with a

group who were with him. The people did not finish their crossing and many of them missed the time of the prayer. The people recalled the merit of being together for that (prayer) and they spoke about that.

When he heard their talk about it, he asked God to send back the sun so that all his followers might be together to perform the afternoon prayer at its proper time. God, the Exalted, answered him by sending back the sun for him. The horizons became such as they are for the time of the afternoon prayer. When the people had said the final greeting (at the end of the prayer), the sun disappeared and a violent throbbing was heard from it which terrified the people. They became profuse in their glorification of God, in their declarations of His uniqueness, and in seeking forgiveness from him, and in praising God for the favour which he had shown to them.

The reports of that have reached the (distant) horizons and its account is widespread among the people. Concerning that al-Sayyid b. Muhammad al-Himyari, may God have mercy on him, recited:

The sun was sent back for him when he missed the time of the afternoon prayer and sunset had drawn near.

So that its light shone (the same as) at its time for the afternoon. Then it fell like a shooting star.

For him it was sent back another time at Babylon. It has not been sent back for any Arab creature, Only so that his first (view of it) may be mixed with his later (view of it) and so that it .being sent back may be an explanation of a wondrous matter

Source - The Book of Guidance (Kitab al-Irshad), By Shaykh al-Mufid. Translated by I.K.A. Howard

Delivery of the Verses of Renunciation in Mecca

Similar to that is the story of (the document of renunciation (bara'a) which the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, gave to Abu Bakr so that he could abrogate the alliance with the polytheists through it. When he had travelled far away, Gabriel, peace be on him, descended to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. He told him: "God recites His greeting to you and says to you that the act of renunciation should not be performed for you except by yourself or a man (related) to you."

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, summoned 'Ali, peace be on him, and

told him: "Ride my camel, al-'Adba', and go after Abu Bakr. Take (the document of) renunciation from him and go with it to Mecca. You abrogate the alliance with the polytheists through it. Give Abu Bakr the choice of continuing to ride with you or of returning to me."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, rode al-'Adba; the camel of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family and caught up with Abu Bakr. The latter was disturbed at being caught up with by him.

"Why have you come, Abu al-Hasan?" he asked as he greeted him. "Are you going to travel with me? Or is it for some other reason?" "The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, ordered me to come after you," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said, "to take the verses of renunciation (bara'a) from you and to abrogate the treaty with the polytheists through them. He ordered me to let -you choose between going with me or returning to him."

"Indeed, I will return to him," he said.

He went back to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. When he came to him, he said: "Apostle of God, you regarded me as worthy to undertake a mission on account of which men craned their necks towards me. When I had set out on it, you dismissed me from it. What has come down in revealed message (Qur'an) concerning me?"

"The trusty one, Gabriel, peace be on him, came down to me from God, the Mighty and Exalted," the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, answered, "with (the command) that: 'The act of renunciation should not be performed for you except by yourself or a man (related) to you.'

'Ali is related to me and it should only be performed for me by 'Ali.'"

(This account occurs) in a famous tradition. The abrogation of a treaty was limited to the one who made it or to one who could take his place in terms of the necessary obedience, dignified regard, high rank, noble position, and one who was above suspicion in his actions and whose words could not be (legitimately) opposed- one who was the same as the maker of the treaty and whose affair was his affair.

Since it was judged by what he had done in the past it was established and was secure from opposition and (since) the strength of Islam, the completion (of the laws) of religion, the well-being of the Muslims, the conquest of Mecca, and the good organization of well-being was involved in the abrogation of the treaty, God, the Exalted, preferred that that should be entrusted to one who was illustrious in name, exalted in fame. This indicates the outstanding merit of such a man; it gives evidence of his high rank and distinguishes him from others. Those (things) belonged to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. None of the other people had merit which came near to the merit which we have described nor did any of them share with him (any) of what we have explained.

Examples of what we have mentioned are so numerous that our work in presenting them would lengthen this book, and the speeches would encompass it. It is sufficient for those of intelligence to include what we have set out in the aims which we have outlined

Note:

1- This account follows most closely the account given in al-Tabari, 1720-1, however it makes Gabriel responsible for the change. The name of the Prophet's camel is given by Ibn Hisham, .Sira, 922

Source - The Book of Guidance (Kitab al-Irshad), By Shaykh al-Mufid. Translated by I.K.A. Howard

The Conversion of Yemen

(Another example) of that which is agreed upon by all the historians (biographers ahl al-sira) is that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, sent, Khalid b. Walid to the people of Yemen to call them to Islam. With him, he sent a group of Muslims, among whom was al-Bara' b. 'Azib, may God have mercy on him. Khalid stayed with the people for six months calling them (to Islam) but no one of them responded. That depressed the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He summoned the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and ordered him to send back Khalid and those who were with him. However, he told him that if anyone of those who had been with Khalid wanted to stay, he should let him [Al-Bara' reported:]

I was one of those who followed him. When we came to the first people among the Yemenis and the news reached the people (generally), they gathered before him. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, prayed the dawn prayer with us, then he advanced in front of us. He praised and glorified God. Then he read the letter of the Apostle of God. The whole of Hamdan became Muslim in one day. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, wrote about that to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. When he read his letter, he was pleased and delighted. He prostrated in thanks to God, the Exalted. He raised his head and sat. He said: "Greetings to Hamdan. After the submission to Islam of Hamdan, (the rest of) the people of Yemen will follow (them) into Islam." This is another achievement of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, which no other of the Companions had done anything like or similar to. For (the Prophet), when he wanted to stop Khalid from carrying on with the mission on which he had sent him and he was afraid that corruption would be caused by him, could not

find anyone to succeed him except the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. So he asked him (i.e. 'Ali) and the latter undertook it in the best possible manner. And as was God's custom with him, he performed it with success since it conformed to the preference of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. He was a man of righteousness, gentleness, good administrative ability and sincere intentions in obedience to God, the Mighty and High, (a man) with the ability to guide those of the people who would be guided, and to respond to those of them who responded to (the call of) Islam. He was (an important element) in the building of the religion, the strength of the faith in (explaining) the message of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, according to the meaning he (the Prophet) had traced for him. (Indeed he was capable) of organising matters in a way which delighted him (i.e. the Prophet).

The promise of heaven was revealed about him (as was) his delight in his perfection among all the people of Islam. It has been confirmed that obedience is of great importance by virtue of the great importance of the benefit gained by it, just as sin is of great consequence by virtue of the great harm which comes through it. Thus prophets, peace be on them, are the creatures with the greatest rewards by virtue of the greatness of their benefit through their call to the rest .of the beneficial things (which can be gained) by acts (performed) by the rest of the people

Note:

.1-. This report is the same as reported by al-Tabari, 1, 1731-2

**Source - The Book of Guidance (Kitab al-Irshad), By Shaykh al-Mufid. Translated by I.K.A.
.Howard**

Ghadir and the Prophet's Successor

The Holy Prophet(S.A.W.) Says Farewell to Kaaba

It was in 10 A.H. and the time for Hajj. The Hijazi deserts witnessed large crowds of Muslims who unitedly chanted the same slogans and proceeded towards the same holy end. That year the sight of the Hajj pilgrimage was much more exciting and moving than ever before. Muslims most hurriedly and eagerly traversed the way and went to Makkah - this holy city.

The celestial melody of Labbayk, Yes, I have come', resounded through Makkah. Caravans reached the city one after the other. The hajjis unitedly and harmoniously in pilgrim's garb,

while shedding tears of joy and love for God, hurried to the sacred threshold of God and circumambulated the Ka'aba - the Holy House built by the champion of monotheism - Abraham, the Friend of God. Farid Vajdi has calculated the number of hajjis to have been

90,000 (1) in the year 10 A.H., but there are some who hold that the number was 124,000.(2)

The Holy Prophet of Islam watched that splendid scene with the utmost affection and eagerness. He was pleased to observe that the Masjid al-Haram was overflowing with Muslims who had gathered together in conformity with the holy precept, Truly the faithful are brothers', and were worshipping God like brothers and angels.

The Holy Prophet was clearly happy with his great achievement with having fulfilled his divine mission in the best manner possible. Nevertheless, his resplendent face was sometimes

covered with a halo of sorrow and anxiety, and his pure heart filled with sadness and worry.

He was in fact worried about the fate of the Muslims after his leaving this world for heaven. He feared lest after him the society of Muslims should break apart; Muslims should disperse, the spirit of unity and fraternity should vanish among them, and consequently they regress. Obviously, the Holy Prophet of Islam was well aware of the fact that the Ummah of Islam was in great need of honest, knowledgeable leaders, or otherwise the fruits of his years of efforts would all be wasted. For this reason, whenever he was going to leave Medina either for war or for other purposes, even if his trip was short, he would assign a competent, trustworthy person to supervise their affairs and would never leave the people of Medina without any guardian and supervisor. (3)

Thus, how is it possible to imagine that such a compassionate, sympathetic prophet might have left the momentous affairs of his beloved Ummah of Islam to chance and not have designated any reliable administrator for them. And no doubt he knew very well who deserved the position of the caliphate of the Muslims and for whose mature stature the garb of the caliphate had been sewn. That celebrated man was the same who, in the presence of the chiefs of the Quraysh and the relatives of the Prophet who had been invited to the House of the Prophet of Islam at the beginning of his prophetic mission, had been acknowledged as the successor of the Holy Prophet of Islam by the Prophet himself. (4)

He was a pious, God-fearing man who did not associate anything with God and did not prostrate before idols even for a single moment. He was a sacrificial soldier of Islam. His knowledge originated in the knowledge of the Prophet of God and his judgment was the best. (5)

He was well-known. He was Ali, son of Abu Talib.

The Hajj ceremonies were over, and the Muslims were preparing to move towards their own

towns when suddenly the call of the herald of the Holy Prophet of Islam resounded in the Hijaz desert and made the Muslims stop. His heralds called on the people to gather together again. The Muslims, of course, did not know why they had been given this command, but the fact was that the Angel of Revelation had descended and conveyed this verse to the Prophet, "O Prophet! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and God will protect you from the people; surely God will not guide the unbelieving people". (5:67).

The issue about which God spoke to His Prophet in such a serious tone was nothing other than the formal announcement of the caliphate of Ali, the significant subject that the Prophet hesitated to declare, for he feared lest this announcement should cause dissension and discord among the Muslims and was thus waiting for a favourable occasion to make clear the matter to them. Upon receiving this revelation, he knew that the time had come for the crucial purpose. So he immediately assembled the Muslims at Ghadir Khum, which was a hot, arid desert, to clarify the vital issue in Islam - the issue of the caliphate.

The people started wondering why that command had been issued, but before long the congregational ritual prayers were announced and after saying the noon ritual prayers, the crowd of Muslims witnessed the celestial, enchanting countenance of the Prophet over a pulpit made of saddles of camels.

A profound silence prevailed. Then the divine, meaningful words of the Prophet broke the silence of the Hijaz desert. After praising Almighty God, he announced the heart-rending news of his oncoming death and then asked the Muslims, O people! What kind of a prophet have I been for you?

All exclaimed unitedly, "O Prophet of God! You did your best to admonish and rectify us and never neglected to train us and led us onto the path of piety. May God reward you best".

The Holy Prophet of Islam said, "After me, God's Book and the sinless leaders are side by side your leader and guide. You should perfectly follow them, so you will not go astray".

Then he took Ali by the hand, lifted him so that all would see him and exclaimed, "O people! Who is the guardian and supervisor of the faithful?"

The Muslims answered, "God and His Prophet know best".

The Holy Prophet of Islam said, "God is my Master and I am the Master of the faithful". Then he added without any pause, "Ali is the Master of those whose Master I am. Almighty God be the friend of his friend and be the foe of his foe. Help those who help him and frustrate the hope of those who betray him...".

The Prophet repeated the sentence, "Ali is the Master of those whose Master I am", three

times. At the end of the speech he said, "Those present should convey this truth to those who are absent".

The crowd of Muslims had hardly dispersed when this verse was revealed to the Prophet, "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (5:3).

After the magnificent ceremonies of designating the successor of the Holy Prophet of Islam were over, the Muslims hurried to congratulate Ali for being appointed as the Prophet's successor and Caliph.

Abu Bakr was the first to congratulate Ali and Umar was the second. They parted with Ali while saying the following words, "Blessed are you, son of Abu Talib, who have become my Master (and every believer's Master)".(6)

The Narrators Of Ghadir

As a matter of fact, there are more than 120,000 narrators of Ghadir. According to the command of the Prophet, the Muslims present at Ghadir regarded the incident of Ghadir and the issue of appointing Ali as the successor of the Prophet as most significant and narrated it to the others.(7) And it was for this reason that in public gatherings of Muslims, the reminiscence of Ghadir was renewed repeatedly.

About 25 years after the day of Ghadir, when most of the faithful companions and followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam had passed away, and just a few were still alive, Ali asked the people to bear witness if they had been present in Ghadir and heard the Ghadir tradition from the blessed mouth of the Prophet. Immediately 30 people stood up and narrated the Ghadir tradition.(8) In 58 or 59 A.H., a year before the death of Mu'awiyah, Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, assembled the Bani Hashim and Ansar and other Hajji's at Mana and, during an extremely moving speech, asked them, I swear to you by God to speak out if you know that on the day of Ghadir, God's Prophet appointed Au as the Master and Leader of the Ummah of Islam and commanded the audience to convey this message to the others'. All said that they knew this fact.(9)

Sunni scholars have mentioned in their reliable books the names of 110 companions of the Prophet who had heard this tradition from the Holy Prophet of Islam and had narrated it to others.(10) Even a number of scholars and Islamic theologians wrote special books on (Ghadir.(11

The Purport Of The Discourse On Ghadir

The available documents reveal that the words mawla (master) and vali (guardian) refer to the successor of the Holy Prophet of Islam and the Guardian of the Ummah of Islam, and that no other meaning can be applied to these two words.

Now, take notice of the following points:

We have realized that the Holy Prophet of Islam was hesitant to propound the Ghadir tradition and that he did not declare it until God openly and seriously commanded him to do so. It is totally wrong to hold that by the Ghadir tradition the Prophet meant to remind the people of the position of Ali as a friend of the Holy Prophet of Islam and the Muslims. If that were the case, the Holy Prophet of Islam would never have hesitated to announce it, for obviously such an announcement would cause no discord or dissension among the Muslims. Thus the Holy Prophet of Islam surely had reference to the issue of the caliphate and the assignment of his own successor, which was clearly likely to elicit the mutiny and mischief of ambitious opportunists.

Before uttering the well-known sentence, "Ali is the Master of those whose Master I am", the Prophet asked the audience to admit that he himself was their guardian and leader and that he was to be obeyed by them, and after the people present in Ghadir Khum had admitted this fact, the Holy Prophet of Islam attributed the same position to Ali immediately, saying "Ali is the Master and Leader of anybody whose Master and Leader I am".

With the permission of the Prophet, Hassan ibn Sabit composed a poem about Ghadir Khum and circulated it. In this poem, the position of the Caliphate and Imamate of Ali have been openly expressed and specified. No one among that great crowd of Muslims protested that Hassan had misapplied the word mawla (master). Rather, Hassan was confirmed and applauded for this poem. The poem, in effect, said, After the Holy Prophet of Islam had the people admit that he was their divine Master and religious leader, he said to Ali, "Stand up, Ali. I assent to your Leadership and Imamate after myself. Then, "Ali is the Master and Leader of anybody whose Master and Leader I am. You should all be loyal followers and sincere friends of Ali'.'⁽¹²⁾

After the Ghadir ceremonies were over, the Prophet, together with Ali, sat in a tent and ordered all the Muslims, even the women of his own family, to congratulate Au, to swear allegiance to him, and to greet him as the Commander of the Faithful.⁽¹³⁾ It is obvious that all these ceremonies and orders testify to nothing other than the designation of Au as the Caliph and Imam of the Muslims by the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Twice the Prophet said to the people, Congratulate me, for God specifically appointed me

Prophet and my family Imams'.⁽¹⁴⁾ These testimonies and documents leave no doubt about the Ghadir Khum tradition and the caliphate of Ali

Notes:

- 1- Encyclopedia of Farid Vadi, Vol. 3, p. 542.
- 2- Al-Ghadir, Vol. 1, p. 9.
- 3- Kamil, p. 216, 278, 242.
- 4- Tarikh Tabari Vol. 3, p. 1171-1173.
- 5- Fadha'il ul-Khamsah, printed by Dar ul-Kutub ul-Islamiyah, Vol. 1 p. 178-186.
- 6- Al-Ghadir, Vol. 1, p. 9-11.
- 7- Ibid., p. 60-61.
- 8- Al-Ghadir, Vol. 1, p. 166-174.
- 9- Ibid., p. 198-199.
- 10- Ibid., p. 14-61.
- 11- Twenty six has been mentioned in the first volume of al-Ghadir, p. 152-157.
- 12- Al-Ghadir, Vol. 2, p. 34-41.
- 13- Ibid., p. 274.
- 14- Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 16, p. 220-229

.Source: A Glance at the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam, by Dar Rah Haqq Board of Writers