

Ghadeer: The Day of Salvation of Mankind

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O' Messenger! Proclaim what has been revealed from your Lord, if you do not do it, then you" have not discharged your mission, and Allah will protect you from the (evil of) people." Holy Qur'an 5:67

On 18th Zil-Hijja in 10 AH, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), while returning to Medina from his farewell Hajj pilgrimage and shortly after parting ways at Juhfa with pilgrims that had come from different directions of the Arabian Peninsula, was suddenly stopped in the scorching sands beside a pond (Ghadeer in Arabic) in the obscure place called Khum by the emissary of God, Archangel Gabriel, who brought the above verse. As is clear from the wording of the ayah there was urgency in the matter. The divine tone was rather unusual and stern to the person whom God refers in the Holy Qur'an as "Mercy to the creation".

It was reassuring as well, as is clear from the Lord's promise in the last part of the ayah to protect the Last and Greatest of Prophets from the evil of mankind. It means people were averse to follow whatever the Prophet preached and could easily veer off the track in pursuit of selfish tendencies in absence of divine authority. After the Seal of Prophets no divine messenger would ever come since the All- Wise Creator had decreed Islam as the universal faith for all humanity with emphasis on the dynamism of the Qur'an, whose timeless wisdom was designed to cater to all aspects of mankind's needs even anticipating ideas and progress in scientific and other spheres. Still the mission of the Messenger was not quite complete.

Obviously there was something vital, which needed public proclamation in view of the fact that Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) was God-sent and was not someone who had been chosen to guide and reform society by the Arabs, the majority of whom until recently were fiercely opposed to his mission because of the residue of polytheism that lingered in most minds and prevented them from understanding the dynamics of monotheism. Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) "never speaks, but it is revelation revealed", says God in Surah Najm (Holy Qur'an 53). Without an iota of doubt this is confirmation of the Prophet's every single word by the One and Only Creator, Who among other things reminds humanity in the Holy Book about the creation of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent (khalifa) on earth with explicit orders for angels and the until then obedient genie Iblis, to prostrate to the first ever man. The Qur'an then tells us that all prostrated except Iblis who was cast out as the Satan for having disobeyed divine commandment by resorting to the warped reasoning of his fallible mind.

The Qur'an cautions us against the seditious whispers of the ever-deceiving devil - granted respite by the All-Wise in order to test the faith of the children of Adam, whether they heed divine decrees or are misled by satanic reasoning. We read in the Holy Qur'an the prayer of Prophet Abraham (AS) after being appointed by God as Imam (Leader of mankind) to keep this divinely ordained authority among his descendants.

Prompt comes the reply that the imamate will never reach oppressors (of all kinds and various degrees even if it means living a part of life in ignorance of God's commandments) We also read in the Holy Qur'an the prayer of Prophet Moses (AS) to God to make Aaron his legate, a request that was granted since deputizing for the Prophet needs divine decree and not the choice of people who could be easily swayed by that avowed enemy of humanity, the Satan.

The heavenly scripture then mentions how Satan deceived the Israelites (just delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh) to ignore the divine appointee Aaron and worship the golden calf in a 'democratic manner' during the absence of Moses (AS) who was in meditation on Mount Sinai. We are also informed by God that it was He Who sent Prophet Jesus (AS) to guide the lost sheep of Israel but the treacherous Israelites ganged up against the Messiah in violation of divine commandments. Thus in view of these realities,

the express commandment to Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) to stop then and there in his tracks in the wilderness on 18th Zil-Hijja and proclaim a very important matter (more significant than prayer, fasting, zakat and other forms of worship that need no urgency). Moreover barely 9 days ago the Prophet in his memorable sermon at Jabal ar-Rahma (Mount of Mercy) in the plain of Arafat during the Hajj had informed the huge multitude that his days in the world were numbered and in order to prevent the ummah from going astray after him he was leaving behind amongst it the Thaqalayn (two weighty things).

Although he specified these two as the Holy Qur'an and his progeny the Ahl al-Bayt, still a sort of ambiguity prevailed as to which person actually had the God-approved authority to be in charge of mankind's affairs. Certainly, it is against the principle of Divine Justice to leave people groping in the dark. Thus in obedience to God's commandment and after receiving assurance of safety from evildoers, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) recalled all those who had parted ways some hours earlier and waited for those who lagged still behind. At midday (in broad daylight) amongst a 140,000 strong gathering, he proclaimed those memorable words: "Man konto Mowla fa haza Aliyun Mowla (For whomsoever I am Master, this Ali is his Master)."

This was in fact an official declaration of all that he had formally and informally said about the prime position after him of his dear cousin Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) right from the day 23

years ago in Mecca when the barely 10-year old lad had stood up to voice support for his divine mission as the Prophet while the rest of the Arab gathering had mocked at him. The Day of Ghadeer is thus a vital link in the chain of divine authority (wilayat) from Adam's proclamation as khalifa to the promised advent of Imam Mahdi (AS) to establish the global government of justice, and ensures adherence to God's Will, without which mankind is liable to fall into the dark abyss of Saqifa and all other democratically disguised devilish plots to confound the fate of humanity by that avowed enemy of mankind, the Satan. That was the reason that God swiftly sent Gabriel again that day with the tidings - amidst the greetings of the Prophet's companions bakhin bakhin laka ya Ali (congratulations to you O' Ali), you are our Master and the Master of all true believers (Amir al-Mo'menin): "Today I have completed your religion for you, chosen Islam as your faith and perfected My favours upon (you." (Holy Qur'an 5:3