Explanation of *Reports Concerning the Virtues of the Pure Imams*

By Qadi Abu Hanifa al-Nuʿman ibn Muhammad al-Tamimi al-Maghribi, who died in 363 AH.

Part Seven

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Compassionate

[On the Virtues of the Commander of the Believers]

And among what has been transmitted concerning the merits of ʿAli, peace be upon him, his virtues, and his precedence:

[517]

Al-Duʿashi, through his chain of transmission, from ʿAbd Allah ibn Riqim al-Kinani, said:

"I came to Medina and met Saʿd ibn Abi Waqqas. He said to me, 'From where have you come?'

"I said, 'From Iraq.'

"He said, 'How did you leave ʿAli, peace be upon him?'

"I said, 'Well.'

"He said, 'Did you hear him mention me in any way?'

"I said, 'No.'

"He said: 'He is a man whom I shall never cease loving because of three things I heard from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny. I heard him say to ʿAli, peace be upon him:

"You are to me in the position that Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me."

"And the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, ordered that the doors that opened onto his mosque be closed, while the door of ʿAli, peace be upon him, was left open.

"Some of his uncles said, 'O Messenger of God, you have closed our doors and left open the door of this young man'—meaning ʿAli, peace be upon him.

"The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

'It was not I who closed your doors and left his door open. Rather, God did that and commanded me to do it, so I obeyed His command.'

"And the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent Abu Bakr with *Barāʾah* [the declaration of disassociation] to the people of Mecca. When he

had gone some distance, he sent ʿAli, peace be upon him, after him and commanded him to take it from him and deliver it on his behalf to the people of Mecca.

“Abu Bakr said, ‘O Messenger of God, has something been revealed concerning me?’

“He said, ‘No. Except that it has been revealed to me that no one may deliver [a proclamation] from me except myself or a man who is from me—and ʿAli is from me.’”

---

[518]

And through another chain, from Jamiʿ ibn ʿUmayr al-Tamimi, who said:

“I prayed in the mosque of the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and saw ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar sitting there. I went to him, greeted him, and sat with him.

“I said, ‘Tell me about ʿAli, peace be upon him.’

“He said, ‘This is the house of ʿAli, and this is the house of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny. If you wish, I can tell you about him.’

“I said, ‘Yes, tell me about him.’

“He said:

‘The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, established bonds of brotherhood among his Companions, but left ʿAli, peace be upon him, out.

“‘So he said to him, “O Messenger of God, you established brotherhood among the Emigrants and left me out. So who is my brother?”

“‘He said, “Are you not pleased, O ʿAli, that you should be my brother?”

“‘He said, “Yes, O Messenger of God.”

“‘He said, “Then you are my brother in this world and in the Hereafter.”’

“And the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said on the day of Khaybar:

‘Tomorrow I shall give the banner to a man who loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger love him.’

“So every one of us hoped that he would be its bearer.

“When morning came, he said, ‘Where is ʿAli?’

“They said, ‘He has an eye ailment.’

“He said, ‘Call him to me.’

“So he was brought to him. When he came, [the Prophet] spat into his eye and gave him the banner. He advanced, and we went with him. The last of us had not yet caught up with the first of us before God had granted victory through him.

“He said:

‘The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent Abu Bakr with *Barāʾah*. When he reached Dhu al-Hulayfah, he sent ʿAli, peace be upon him, who took it from him.

“‘Abu Bakr said to ʿAli, peace be upon him, “Has something been revealed concerning me?”

“‘He said, “No. Except that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said: No one may deliver [a proclamation] from me except myself or a man from my household.”

“‘Abu Bakr returned to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and said, “O Messenger of God, has something been revealed concerning me?”

“‘He said, “No. But no one may deliver [a proclamation] from me except myself or a man from my household.”’”

---

[519]

And through another chain, from ʿAli, peace be upon him, that he said:

“When the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, commanded me to catch up with Abu Bakr, take *Barāʾah* from him, and proceed with it among the people of Mecca, reciting it to them and delivering it to them on his behalf, I said:

‘O Messenger of God, I am not an orator, and I am a young man.’

“He said:

‘You must either go with it, or I will go with it myself.’

“I said:

‘If that is the case, then I will go with it, O Messenger of God.’

“He said:

‘Go. God will make your tongue firm and guide your heart.’”

---

[520]

And through another chain, from Abu Hazim, who said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, came out and said:

‘O people, close your doors onto the mosque.’

“So the people stopped.

“Then he came out a second time and said the same thing, and they stopped.

“[Ibn ʿAbbas said:] The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, came out a third time and said:

‘O people, close your doors, [including] the door of ʿAli, before punishment descends.’

“So they closed their doors, [except] the door of ʿAli.

“Some people said, ‘He only left ʿAli’s door open because of their kinship.’

“Others said, ‘If it were because of kinship, Hamza would have been closer to him than ʿAli: he is his paternal uncle and his brother through nursing. Rather, it is because of his daughter Fatima.’

“When their disputation over this became extensive, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, came out to them and said:

‘O people, I am only a human being. By God, I do nothing except what I have been commanded to do, and I know nothing except what I have been taught.

“‘You know that I stayed at Qubaʾ and established a mosque and dwelling there. I had no intention of moving, but my she-camel carried me away. The Ansar met me, and I said, “Leave her, for she has been commanded [by God].”

“‘She knelt at the place where the mosque was built.

“‘And God revealed to Moses, peace be upon him, that he should take a purified mosque as a dwelling in which he, Aaron, and the sons of Aaron would reside.

“‘And God has commanded me to take a purified mosque as a dwelling in which I, ʿAli, and the sons of ʿAli shall reside.

“‘By God, I did not close [the doors], nor did I open [the door].’”

---

[521]

From Umm Salama, that she said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

‘This mosque is not lawful for one in a state of major ritual impurity, nor for a menstruating woman, except for the Messenger of God, his wives, ʿAli, and Fatima daughter of Muhammad.

‘Indeed, I have made this clear to you, lest you go astray.’”

[twice]

---

[522]

From ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, that he said:

“ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, was given three merits which, if I possessed even one of them, would be dearer to me than red camels:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, married him to Fatima, peace be upon her, and she bore him the two grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be upon them.

“He gave him the banner on the day of Khaybar after saying:

‘I shall give it to a man who loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger love him.’

“And he closed the doors of all the people onto the mosque, except his [ʿAli’s] door.”

---

[523]

And through another chain, from Anas ibn Malik, that he said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent a collector of alms to a people. They attacked him and killed him.

“So the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent ʿAli, peace be upon him, to them. He killed the combatants and took the women and children captive, and returned with them.

“When the Prophet heard that he was approaching, he was pleased with what ʿAli had done. He went out and met him outside Medina.

“When he encountered him, he embraced him and kissed him between the eyes, saying:

‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for the one through whom God strengthened my arm, just as He strengthened Moses’ arm through Aaron.’”

---

[524]

And through another chain, from Abu Ishaq, who said:

“[ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Khalid asked Qutham] ibn ʿAbbas:

‘By what means did ʿAli ibn Abi Talib inherit from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, rather than al-ʿAbbas?’

“He said:

‘Because he was the most closely attached to him among us and the quickest to follow him.’”

---

[525]

And through another chain, from al-Hasan al-Basri:

“A man came to him and said:

‘O Abu Saʿid, your brothers among the Shiʿa claim that you hate ʿAli, peace be upon him.’

“He remained silent for a long time. Then he raised his head and said:

‘By God, you have mentioned a well-aimed arrow among the arrows of God, Mighty and Glorious, against His enemies:

“the spiritual teacher of this community [after its Prophet], its scholar, its possessor of virtue, its possessor of nobility, and the one closely related to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

“‘He was not one who slept heedlessly regarding God's right, nor one who stole from the wealth of God.

“‘God gave him the Qur’an and, by God, its decisive obligations concerning what is due to him and what is due from him.

“‘He [God] therefore made him into verdant gardens and flourishing orchards—this ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him.

“‘So how could I hate him?

“‘O wretch!’”

---

[526]

And through another chain, from Jabir ibn Yazid, that he said:

“I examined the jurists of the people of the Hijaz, Iraq, and the Maghrib—more than eight hundred and seventy men.

“I discreetly and gently investigated what they held in their hearts, and I found none of them except those who recognized ʿAli, peace be upon him, [and his status]—with the exception of three men.

“So I took what I had found from them and threw it into the water.”

---

[527]

And through another chain, from ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAli ibn al-Husayn, raising it [through his chain]:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, came with a group of his Companions to ʿAli, peace be upon him, to check on him.

“‘ʿAli looked around and found nothing with which he could receive and honor them.

“So he went out seeking a loan of a dinar with which to buy something to offer them.

“He came upon a path and suddenly found a dinar lying on the ground. He picked it up and announced it, but found no one claiming it.

“He thought to himself:

‘I will buy with it something that I can offer them. If its owner comes looking for it, I will give it to him.’

“So he did this. He bought food with the dinar and brought it to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and his Companions. They ate and then departed.

“‘ʿAli continued announcing the lost dinar, but found no one claiming it. When he found it had become worn from exposure, he brought it to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and informed him of what had happened.

“He said:

‘O ʿAli, God, Mighty and Glorious, gave it to you when He saw what was in your heart and [saw that] you did not desire it [for yourself]. It does not belong to the people.’

“And the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, prayed for good for him.”

The Eleven Qualities

Saʿid ibn Jubayr, from ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbbas, that he said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to ʿAli, peace be upon him:

‘Indeed, God, Mighty and Glorious, has given you eleven qualities in which no one else has a claim alongside you. And whoever disbelieves—indeed God is independent of all the worlds.

‘You are my brother in this world.

‘You are my brother in the Hereafter.

‘You are the bearer of my banner in this world.

‘You are the bearer of my banner in the Hereafter.

‘You are my trustee in this world regarding my family.

‘Your dwelling in Paradise is near my dwelling.

‘Your enemy is my enemy, and my enemy is the enemy of God.

‘Your ally is my ally, and my ally is the ally of God, Mighty and Glorious.

‘Your war is my war.

‘Your peace is my peace.’”

ʿAli's Argument before the Council of Consultation

From al-Aʿmash, from ʿAmir ibn Wathilah [the original has: ʿAmr ibn Waʾilah]:

“I was at the door on the day of the *shura* [council of consultation]. Their voices became raised, and I heard ʿAli, peace be upon him, say:

‘O people, fear God regarding yourselves! By God, it is the blind, deaf, mute, paralyzed tribulation.

“How long will you disobey God?

“Do you not know that there is no soul that is unjustly killed, no person who dies from hunger, and no injustice, oppression, or corruption that occurs on earth from this day onward, except that the burden of it falls upon the one who turns the right away from its rightful people—and by God, I am its rightful person?

“By God, I do not desire this world. I know that you will not do it, that you will not become upright, and that you will not unite upon me. But I am presenting my proof against you and establishing my excuse before God, Mighty and Glorious, between you and me.

“The people pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr. By God, I had a greater right and was more entitled to it than he was. But I feared that the people would turn back on their heels when I saw the eagerness of the hypocrites for disbelief.

“Then Abu Bakr assigned it after himself to ʿUmar. I feared, in the end, what I had feared at the beginning.

“And you, ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿAwf, followed Abu Bakr concerning ʿUmar. Your situation is like what God, Mighty and Glorious, said concerning the people of misguidance:

“Indeed, we found our fathers upon a way, and indeed we are following in their footsteps.” [Qur'an 43:23]

“I shall be upright with you so long as you are upright with me. If you betray [your pledge], I will change.

“And God is witness over what we say.

“Do you not know that ʿUmar placed me among five, making me the sixth, while none of them had any superiority over me in any respect?

“I present arguments to you by which neither the Arab among you, nor the non-Arab, nor the protected non-Muslim can deny any of my proofs or refute any of my merits.

“By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“Is there among you anyone who is a brother of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, besides me?”

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whose allegiance is the allegiance of God and whose enmity is the enmity of God besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whom the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said, “You are to me in the position that Aaron was to Moses,” besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who has an uncle like my uncle, Hamza ibn ʿAbd al-Muttalib, the Lion of God and the Lion of His Messenger and the master of the martyrs before God, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who has a wife like my wife, Fatima, daughter of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and the mistress of the women of her world, whose mother was the first to believe in God and His Messenger, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who has two grandsons like my two grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the two masters of the youths of Paradise, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone closer to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, than I?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who is the trustee of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who believed in God and His Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, before me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who gave his charity before his private conversation [with the Messenger], besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who fought in the path of God as I fought, killed as many of the polytheists as I killed, and offered himself before the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, as I offered myself?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone to whom the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, gave two shares—one special share and one general share—besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who took charge from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, of what I took charge of when he was dying, to the extent that his soul [i.e. the Prophet himself] asked with his own hand concerning his being specifically appointed to this, and prayed for him to undertake it after him, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone to whom God's consolation came when Gabriel called out to us at the death of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, while no one was in the house except me, Fatima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, and he was laid out among us?

“‘He said:

“Peace be upon you, People of the Household, and God's mercy and blessings. Every soul shall taste death, and you will only be given your rewards in full on the Day of Resurrection. So whoever is removed far from the Fire and admitted into Paradise has indeed triumphed. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.” [Qur'an 3:185]

“‘Indeed, with God there is consolation for every calamity, compensation for everything missed, and a successor for everything lost. So place your trust in God, return to Him, worship Him, and know that the afflicted person is the one who is deprived of the reward.

“‘And peace be upon you, and God's mercy and blessings.’

“‘[Is there anyone besides me who received this consolation from God?]’”

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who undertook the washing of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, with spirit and fragrance, in the presence of the noble angels, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who shrouded the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and embalmed him together with the angels, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who placed the Messenger of God in his grave and was the last of the people to have contact with him, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who used to hear the rustling of the angels' wings besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who fought before the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, while Gabriel was on his right, Michael on his left, and the Angel of Death before him, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whose purification the Scripture bore witness among the five Companions of the Cloak, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, brought forward—together with his children and family—for the *mubahala*, when God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed to him:

“Say: Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves…” [Qur'an 3:61]

“‘And he was like the self of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and he said, “You are as my own self,” besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whose door the Messenger of God left open onto the mosque while he closed the doors of all his Companions, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who inherited from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, so that his estate passed to him after him, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the Messenger of God appointed as his successor over his family and placed the divorce of his wives in his hand, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who, by the prayer of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, experiences neither heat nor cold, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the Messenger of God appointed over all the people on the day he gathered the Banu ʿAbd al-Muttalib and warned them, just as God, Mighty and Glorious, commanded him to warn his nearest relatives?

“‘He called upon them to support him in his affair, on the condition that he would make that person his brother and minister during his lifetime, and his trustee and successor over the community after his death.

“‘They refused this, but he accepted it, appointed him to it, and commanded them to listen to him and obey him—besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the Messenger of God raised up at the Farewell Pilgrimage, when the entire community needed him, and he said to them:

“‘“Do you not know that I have greater authority over you than you have over yourselves?”

“They said, ‘O God, yes.’

“He said:

‘Then whoever has me as his *mawla*, this man has him as his *mawla*. O God, befriend whoever befriends him and oppose whoever opposes him.’

“‘Besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the Messenger of God lifted onto his back on the night the idols of the Kaʿba were broken, and who threw them down from it and smashed them, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whom the hypocrites were known to hate because of what he had done to the polytheists, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone whose name was called out from heaven on the day of Uhud:

“There is no young man except him; there is no sword except Dhu al-Fiqar,”

“besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone to whom the jinn responded with a message from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whom the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

“Tomorrow I shall give the banner to a man whom God and His Messenger love and who loves God and His Messenger; one who repeatedly charges and does not flee, and who will not return until God grants victory through his hands.”

“‘Then he gave it to him, and God granted victory through his hands—besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whom the Messenger of God testified that he was the most knowledgeable of people regarding judicial judgment, struck him upon the chest, and prayed for him to possess knowledge of it, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone for whom as much of the Qur’an was revealed in praise and in recognition of his virtue as was revealed concerning me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone who claims the distinction of every verse of the Qur’an beginning with “O you who believe,” because of his precedence in faith, besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whom God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed:

“Your guardian is only God, His Messenger, and those who believe—those who establish prayer and give alms while bowing,” [Qur'an 5:55]

“besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

“‘By God, I adjure you, O five men, by God, besides whom there is no deity:

“‘Is there among you anyone concerning whom God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed:

“And they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive…”

“…Indeed, this is your recompense, and your striving has been appreciated.” [Qur'an 76:8–22]

“besides me?’

“They said, ‘O God, no.’

“He said:

‘What you have acknowledged of my merits and virtues is sufficient for me. Had I wished to mention more of them, I would have done so.

“So after that, do whatever you are going to do.

“God is witness over what you do.’”

ʿAmir ibn Wathilah said:

“This is what I remembered of what ʿAli, peace be upon him, enumerated that day of his merits before the members of the council of consultation. They acknowledged them and affirmed them.

“Then I did not hear him say anything else to them until they concluded what they concluded among themselves and dispersed.”

The Author's Commentary

“I have mentioned in an earlier chapter an incident in which similar speech occurred, explaining what necessitated this statement from ʿAli, peace be upon him, and that this was because of the distinction God had given him through the virtue of the Imamate.

“Therefore, it was not appropriate for him to turn away from it and abandon it, just as it is not appropriate for one whom God, Mighty and Glorious, has distinguished with prophethood to turn away from it and renounce it.

“This is not to say that ʿAli did this because he desired something of worldly affairs.

“Both the elite and the general public knew of his asceticism toward it before the matter of the Imamate came to him, and afterward.”

Saʿd ibn Abi Waqqas and ʿAli

Al-Aʿmash, through his chain of transmission, from Saʿd ibn Abi Waqqas:

“He heard some people insulting certain Companions of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

“He said:

‘Do not insult the Companions of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny. They are better than you, even if you criticize them for whatever you criticize them.’

“A man from the group said to him:

‘By God, we certainly criticize you and find fault with your failure to follow the master of the Muslims and Imam of the God-fearing, ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him.’

“Saʿd said:

‘By God, I did not do that out of resentment toward him, nor because I did not regard him as the person most entitled to it.

“Rather, it was an opinion I held. It may have been right or wrong.

“How could what you suppose about me be the case, when I heard from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, such noble merits concerning ʿAli, peace be upon him, that I wished even one of them belonged to me in exchange for everything upon which the sun has risen?

“I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, say on the day of Ghadir Khumm:

“Whoever has me as his *mawla*, then ʿAli is his *mawla*. O God, befriend whoever befriends him, oppose whoever opposes him, support whoever supports him, and forsake whoever forsakes him.”

[The text here appears corrupted or interrupted in the supplied edition: “ شايلا بيده قد أسس مع أهل النادي من جميع الناس - الاقصين و الادنين.”]

“And I heard him say to him, when he went out to Tabuk and appointed him over Medina and his family—and [ʿAli] had said to him:

‘O Messenger of God, some people say that you only left me behind because you found me burdensome.’

“He said to him:

‘O ʿAli, there must be an imam and an amir. I am the imam and you are the amir.

“‘Are you not pleased to be to me in the position that Aaron was to Moses, when he appointed him over the Children of Israel, except that there is no prophet after me to whom revelation comes?

“‘By God, I did not leave you behind on my own initiative, nor did I punish you on my own initiative, nor did I command you on my own initiative. I am only one who has been commanded.’

“And he said on the day of Khaybar—when Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and those with them had been defeated:

‘Tomorrow I shall give the banner to a man whom God and His Messenger love and who loves God and His Messenger. God Most High will surely grant victory through his hands, God willing.

‘He is neither one who flees, nor one who retreats, nor one who betrays. He gives the sword its due, and the Qur’an its decisive obligations, and [gives] its rightful people sincere counsel.’

“When the following day came, every person of distinction eagerly anticipated it. He called for ʿAli, peace be upon him, who was suffering from an eye ailment.

“He seated him before him, spat into his eyes and upon his body, and then said:

‘O God, remove heat and cold from him, have mercy upon him, bestow mercy upon him, aid him, seek aid through him, grant him victory, and gain victory through him. For he is Your servant and the brother of Your Messenger.’

“He handed the banner to him.

“‘ʿAli went forth walking like a lion, and God granted him victory at Khaybar.

“Then he carried the gate of the city until he placed it aside. Seventy men subsequently gathered around it, but they were unable to lift it.

“By God, ʿAli, peace be upon him, never again felt either heat or cold.

“I had indeed looked down upon him that day, and they said to the army:

‘Who is your commander?’

“They said:

‘ʿAli ibn Abi Talib.’

“Some of them said to one another:

‘You cannot withstand him. This is the trustee of Muhammad, and he is the master of the trustees.

“Muhammad is the master of the prophets.

“But we are not willing to become slaves when we are kings.’”

The Closing of the Doors

“And the Messenger of God ordered his uncles and the rest of his Companions to close their doors onto the mosque, while leaving the door of ʿAli, peace be upon him.

“Hamza ibn ʿAbd al-Muttalib even said concerning this:

‘How amazing is the bounty of God, Mighty and Glorious! He gives it to whomever He wills.

“He removes the uncle from the mosque but leaves the son of the uncle.’

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, heard about this. He encountered Hamza while we were with him.

“He said:

‘O Hamza ibn ʿAbd al-Muttalib, I have been informed of what you said concerning the mosque and my closing the doors of my uncles while leaving ʿAli's door open.

“By God, I did not open these doors on my own command; rather, it was by the command of the Lord of the worlds.

“Nor did I close what I closed or leave what I left on my own command; rather, it was by the command of the Lord of the worlds.

“So which of you is displeased with the command of the Lord of the worlds?’

“Hamza said:

‘May my father and mother be your ransom! We are not displeased with that. Rather, we accept it and submit.

“You were sent to us while among your people there were those older than you, more obedient to them, wealthier, and more widely heard.

“But God Most High knows where He places His message, so He singled you out for it over them.

“Our Lord is worthy of that, and you are worthy of it from Him, and ʿAli is worthy of it from God and from you, O Messenger of God.

“For ʿAli believed in you when we disbelieved in you, affirmed you when we denied you, and was content with God and with you while he was a young boy, whereas we denied that while we were grown men.

“You called us and all the Banu ʿAbd al-Muttalib and sought from among us someone who would support you, on the condition that you would make him your brother and minister during your lifetime, your trustee, and your successor after you.

“We shrank back and refused that while we were grown men.

“He offered himself for you while he was a young boy.

“So congratulations to ʿAli for what God, Mighty and Glorious, bestowed upon him and distinguished him with. We do not deny his virtue.’

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was delighted by the words of his uncle and praised him favorably.”

The Debate with Ibn ʿAbbas

[Ibrahim ibn al-Fadl al-Kufi, through his chain of transmission, from Musa ibn Ghassan, said:]

“The people of Syria used to insult ʿAli, peace be upon him.

“One day they gathered and said:

‘Our insulting this man has gone on for a long time. Here is ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbbas, who gives legal opinions to the people in Mecca. Come, let us send a messenger to ask him:

Why did ʿAli, peace be upon him, kill those Muslims whom he killed, when they did not associate partners with God Most Great, did not kill a soul whom God had forbidden [to kill], did not abandon prayer, almsgiving, or fasting, and did not deny the obligation of pilgrimage or ʿumra?’

“They selected one of them, bought him a she-camel, provided him with provisions, and sent him.

“He departed until he reached Mecca. He found ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbbas sitting at Zamzam, speaking to the people.

“He greeted him, and Ibn ʿAbbas, peace be upon him, returned his greeting.

“The man said:

‘May God have mercy upon you. I am a stranger, so give me your hearing and your attention, and listen to what I have to say.’

“[The text has a variant here: in the original and manuscript C, ‘Ibn ʿAbbas said,’ rather than ‘he placed [his hand]’.]

“[Ibn ʿAbbas] placed his hand over his mouth, gesturing to the people to be silent. They became silent.

“Then he turned toward the man and said:

‘Where are you from?’

“He said:

‘From the people of Syria.’

“Ibn ʿAbbas said to him:

‘Supporters of every oppressor, except those whom God protects! So what do you need, O brother from Syria?’

“He said:

‘I come from a people who curse ʿAli.’

“[Ibn ʿAbbas] had been leaning against the circular structure surrounding the well of Zamzam [the original reads: ‘upon a circle at Zamzam’].

“He sat upright and said:

‘And why is that? May God curse them! Is it because of his close kinship to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, or because of his precedence in Islam?’

“The man said:

‘May God have mercy upon you. Then on what grounds did he kill the Muslims who did not associate partners with God Most Great, who did not kill a soul whom God had forbidden [to kill], who did not abandon prayer, almsgiving, or fasting, and who did not deny pilgrimage or ʿumra?’

“Ibn ʿAbbas said:

‘Woe to you, O brother from Syria! Ask about what concerns you and leave aside what does not concern you.’

“The man said:

‘By God, I did not come for pilgrimage or ʿumra. I came only so that you might explain to me the matter of ʿAli and his killing of people who professed “There is no god but God.”

“Guide me, and guide with me many people.

“I have only come to you on behalf of a people who bought my mount for me, supplied me with provisions, and sent me to you to ask you about what I have asked you, so that I might return to them with your answer.’

“Ibn ʿAbbas said:

‘O brother from Syria, a report should only be transmitted by someone who heard it and then conveyed it exactly as he heard it.’

“The man said:

‘May God have mercy upon you. Had they not known that I am exactly the sort of person they wanted for conveying the answer to them, they would not have selected me.’”

He said to him:

“Woe to you, O Syrian! The likeness of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, in this community is only like that of the righteous servant to whom Moses said:

‘May I follow you so that you may teach me some of what you have been taught of right guidance?’[1]

Woe to you! Sit down, and I will tell you what I heard and preserved from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

He said: When God, Mighty and Glorious, gave Moses the Torah and taught him of everything, Moses said: ‘I am the most knowledgeable of people.’ Then, when he met al-Khiḍr, peace be upon him, he acknowledged his knowledge and did not envy him, as you have envied ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

Al-Khiḍr’s making a breach in the ship was pleasing to God and displeasing to the ignorant among the people. And his killing of the boy was pleasing to God and displeasing to the ignorant among the people.”

The Syrian said: “Enough for me, O Ibn ʿAbbās. May God have mercy on you. You have relieved my distress, revived me, and revived a whole people along with me. May God grant you the good life in this world and the Hereafter.

I call God to witness, and I call you and those present to witness, that ʿAlī is my master and the master of every Muslim.”

Then he departed for Syria. He informed those who had sent him of what had happened with Ibn ʿAbbās, and a number of the people of Syria returned with him from cursing ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

[532]

Wakīʿ, through his chain of transmission, from Salmān al-Fārisī, said:

The Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, ascended the pulpit. He praised God and extolled Him, invoked blessings upon the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and mentioned something that he wished to mention.

The people said to him: "Tell us, O Commander of the Faithful, about yourself."

He said: "Do you not know that God, Mighty and Glorious, says in His Book:

'So do not declare yourselves pure; He knows best who is God-fearing.'[3]"

They said: "O Commander of the Faithful, we would like you to tell us about yourself."

He said: "We are a Household whom no one can be compared with."

They said: "Tell us, O Commander of the Faithful, about what God and His Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, singled you out with."

He said: "When I asked, I was given; and when I remained silent, I was addressed first."

Then he descended from the pulpit.

[Another version from him:]

He said:

God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed to Moses and his brother:

"Settle your people in houses in Egypt, and make your houses a direction of prayer."[4]

So Moses built a mosque, and Moses and his brother Aaron, peace be upon them, and their families were in it.

And when the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, entered Medina [the original has: "entered the mosque"], he built the mosque, and his Companions built their houses around it, opening their doors toward the mosque.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent Muʿādh ibn Jabal to al-ʿAbbās and said to him:

"Close your door that faces the mosque."

He said: "I hear and obey."

Then he sent to Ḥamzah. He was displeased and spoke about the matter, then said: "I hear and obey."

He sent to Abū Bakr, and he said: "I hear and obey."

Then he sent to ʿUmar with the same command.

ʿUmar said: “But let a small opening remain for me, through which I can look at the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, when he goes out for prayer and when he returns.”

The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said: “No—not even a hole.”

He said: “I hear and obey.”

Then he sent to ʿUthmān and to everyone who had a door opening onto the mosque, ordering them to close their doors, except for ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

They said: “We hear and obey.”

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, said to Muʿādh:

“Has the Messenger of God commanded you concerning anything?”

He said: “No.”

ʿAlī said: “Then ask him.”

Muʿādh informed him of what ʿAlī had said.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to him:

“Return to him and tell him: ‘Remain in your state of purity and purification.’”

When ʿAlī was left alone [with this privilege], some people felt resentment in their hearts and spoke against it.

Al-ʿAbbās said to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny:

“You have excluded your uncle, the sons of your uncle, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar, yet you have left ʿAlī alone.”

He said:

“O uncle, by God, I am not the one who excluded them, nor am I the one who left ʿAlī. Rather, I am commanded, and I have done what I was commanded to do.

I was commanded that no one should have intercourse in the mosque and that no one in a state of major ritual impurity should enter it, except me and ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

ʿAlī is to me in the position of Aaron to Moses. What is lawful for me is lawful for him, and what is unlawful for me is unlawful for him.”

Al-ʿAbbās said: “I hear and obey.”

The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, then said:

“Whoever takes me as his master has taken ʿAlī as his master; whoever does not affirm loyalty to ʿAlī has denied my own authority.

Whoever has me as his mawla, ʿAlī is his mawla. May God disavow Himself from whoever shows loyalty to him, and may God oppose whoever opposes him.

ʿAlī clears my responsibility, fulfills my trust on my behalf, guarantees my promises, protects my covenant, is the repository of my knowledge, revives my law, and fights on behalf of my Sunnah.

He is from me and I am from him. He is with me in the highest summit.

He will be clothed with me when I am clothed, called with me when I am called, presented with me when I am presented, and adorned with me when I am adorned.

He is the Imām of the believers, the leader of those with radiant marks, and the slayer of the breakers of allegiance, the unjust, and the seceders.”

[534]

Ibn Lahīʿah, through his chain of transmission, from Muʿādh ibn Jabal, said:

When the affair of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became widespread in Mecca, and some of the Muslims accepted Islam, their tribesmen rose against them, torturing them in order to turn them away from their religion.

The Messenger of God gave them permission to migrate. Whoever feared for himself from his people migrated, and they dispersed throughout the lands.

Those from his people who protected him remained with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

One day, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was missed. They did not know where he was until evening. The Messenger of God’s grief over him became intense.

Khadījah, may God be pleased with her, noticed the grief upon him and said:

“O Messenger of God, what is this grief I see upon you?”

He said:

“ʿAlī has been absent since today, and I do not know what has happened to him. God, Mighty and Glorious, has granted me three things concerning him in this world and three in the Hereafter, so that I have no fear that he will die or be killed until God grants me the appointment He has made with me. [This additional wording is found in *Biḥār al-Anwār*.]

Except that I fear one thing concerning him.”

She said:

“O Messenger of God, what are the three things God has granted you concerning him in this world? What are the three things He has granted you concerning him in the Hereafter? And what is the one thing you fear for him?”

He said:

“O Khadījah, concerning ʿAlī in this world, God has granted me:

He will kill eighty-four opponents in single combat before he dies or is killed;

he will conceal my nakedness when I die;

and he will discharge my debts and fulfill my promises after me.

And concerning ʿAlī in the Hereafter:

he will possess my key when I open the gates of Paradise;

he will possess my banner on the Day of Resurrection;

and he will possess my pool.

As for the thing I fear for him, it is grudges against him in the hearts of a people.”

Khadījah went out during the night seeking news of ʿAlī, peace be upon him. She encountered him and informed him of the Messenger of God’s grief at his absence.

She found him returning to him, so she went ahead of him to bring the Messenger of God the good news.

He stood upright, praising God Most High and raising his hands.

[535]

Another version, from ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

He said:

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to me:

“Gabriel, peace be upon him, said to me:

‘O Muhammad, the recording angels of ʿAlī boast before the angels.’

I said: ‘About what, O Gabriel?’

He said:

‘They say that they have not written a single sin against ʿAlī since they accompanied him.’”

[536]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-ʿAnbarī, through his chain of transmission, from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny:

He was sitting in the mosque with a group of his Companions around him, among them ʿAlī, when a Bedouin stopped before him.

He said:

“O Messenger of God, I have come to you to ask about a verse from the Book of God Most High. I heard it commanding something whose meaning I did not understand.”

The Messenger of God said:

“Ask, O Bedouin.”

He said:

“I heard God, Mighty and Glorious, say:

‘And hold fast, all together, to the rope of God.’[5]

So what is this rope that He has commanded us to hold fast to?”

The Messenger of God took the Bedouin by the hand, placed his hand upon the shoulder of ʿAlī, peace be upon him [the original reads: “placed it from behind upon his shoulder”], and said:

“This is the rope of God to which I command you to hold fast.”

The Bedouin went around behind ʿAlī, peace be upon him, embraced him, and said:

“O God, I hold fast to him.”

The Messenger of God said:

“Whoever wishes to look upon a man from the people of Paradise, let him look at this Bedouin.”

[537]

Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Rūrī, through his chain of transmission, from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī:

He said:

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

“‘ʿAlī was given something that was given to no one except a prophet.

ʿAlī never associated anything with God;

he never told a lie;

and he never drank wine."

[538]

Sufyān, through his chain of transmission, from ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

He said:

When the verse was revealed:

"O you who believe, when you privately consult the Messenger, then offer a charity before your private consultation,"[6]

I asked the Messenger of God about the amount of the charity.

He said: "One dīnār."

I said:

"Most people cannot find that."

He said:

"Then whatever you are able."

I gave charity and privately consulted the Messenger of God.

Then God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed:

"Do you fear to offer charities before your private consultations?"[7]

God thus lightened this for the community, and no one did it other than me.

[539]

Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qaṣīr al-Muqrī, through his chain of transmission, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Saddād ibn al-Hādibah:

He said:

"I wish that I had stood up and mentioned the merits of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, and what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said concerning him, from one day until night, and then been brought forward and had my neck struck."

[540]

Another version, from Abū Rajāʾ al-ʿUṭāridī:

He heard some of the Khārijites insulting ʿAlī, peace be upon him, so he said:

“Enough! Woe to you! Do you insult the brother of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and his cousin, and the first person to affirm him and believe in him?

By God, ʿAlī’s standing with the Messenger of God for a single hour of the day is better than all your lifetimes put together.”

[541]

Abū ʿAwānah [in a copy of the original: Abū ʿAwān], through his chain of transmission, from ʿAmr ibn Maymūn:

We were with ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās when some people came to him.

They said:

“We would like to speak privately with you.”

He got up and sat with them apart. Then he departed from them, shaking his garment, and saying:

“Ugh, for these people! They have spoken against a man concerning whom the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said ten things, each one of which is better than the world and everything in it.

They have spoken against ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful.

The Messenger of God said:

‘Tomorrow I shall give the banner to a man who loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger love him. God will not disgrace him.’

And he gave it to ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

The Messenger of God said to the Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, when he gathered them:

‘Who among you will take me as his master?’

He presented this to them one by one, and they refused, until he reached ʿAlī, peace be upon him, who was the youngest of them.

He said:

‘I will take you as my master, O Messenger of God.’

He said:

‘Then you are my brother and my intimate ally [walī] in this world and the Hereafter.’

The Messenger of God placed his garment over himself, his wife Fāṭimah, peace be upon her, and his two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, and said:

‘God only desires to remove impurity from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you completely.’[8]

And the Messenger of God said:

‘Whoever has me as his mawla, ʿAlī has him as his mawla.’

The Messenger of God sent Abū Bakr with Barāʾah [the declaration of disassociation] to the people of Mecca, then sent ʿAlī, peace be upon him, after him.

ʿAlī took it from him, and [the Prophet] said:

‘No one conveys from me except a man who is from me; and ʿAlī is from me and I am from him.’

The Messenger of God went to Tabūk and appointed him as his deputy over Medina and over his family.

ʿAlī wept and said:

‘Let me go out with you, O Messenger of God.’

The Messenger of God said to him:

‘Are you not pleased that you are to me in the position of Aaron to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me?

You are my minister and my successor among my people, just as Aaron was the minister of Moses and his successor among his people.’

He was the first of us to embrace Islam.

The Messenger of God closed the doors of the mosque, except his door. [Thus he would enter the mosque while in a state of major ritual impurity, since it was his only route.]
(This addition is from *Manāqib al-Khwārazmī*.)

On the night when the Messenger of God migrated, ʿAlī slept in the Messenger of God’s bed, so that he would make the polytheists who had agreed to kill him think that he was still there. Thus he consoled him with his own person and offered his life for him.

God, Mighty and Glorious, informed [us] in His Book that He was pleased with him and with the People of the Tree, saying:

‘God was certainly pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you beneath the tree.’[9]

And ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was one of them.”

[A report from Yaḥyā ibn Abī Bukayr, through his chain of transmission, from Maʿdān ibn Sinān:]

He said:

Fāṭimah, peace be upon her, the daughter of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became ill. He came to visit her, and she wept and complained to him about her condition.

He said:

“O Fāṭimah, are you not pleased that I married you to the foremost of my community in accepting Islam, the most knowledgeable of them, and the greatest of them in forbearance?”

She said:

“Yes, I am pleased, O Messenger of God.”

[543]

Al-Aʿmash, through his chain of transmission, from Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī:

He said:

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became ill, and his daughter Fāṭimah, peace be upon her, visited him.

When she saw the illness that had befallen the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, she wept.

He said:

“Enough, my daughter.

Do you not know that God looked upon the earth with a single look and chose for you a companion? He chose ʿAlī for you and revealed to me that I should marry you to him.

So I married you to the most knowledgeable of them, the foremost of them in accepting Islam, and the greatest of them in forbearance.”

The merits and virtues of ʿAlī are too numerous for this book to encompass, let alone this chapter.

However, we have mentioned in it some points concerning them, according to what we stipulated at the beginning of this book.

Everything that is mentioned in it is therefore among his merits and virtues. We have explained many of those mentioned previously in the chapters preceding this chapter of the book.

Some of that has been repeated in this chapter because it was included among the reports that came before it. The explanation of it earlier therefore suffices instead of repeating it, and it has merely been mentioned in this section.

We have mentioned in this book only what the general body [al-ʿāmmah] have transmitted concerning the virtues and merits of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, rather than what many of the Shīʿah have transmitted, which ordinary people reject.

I have omitted that for the sake of brevity, and so that by mentioning it I would not expose it to the suspicion of opponents, the denial of the ignorant, and the rejection of those who reject.

Moreover, what they have transmitted and agreed upon is sufficient in place of what they reject and disagree about.

Perhaps someone might say, upon hearing some of the virtues and merits of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, that we have established in this book:

“Others possess some of these same virtues.”

And they may produce examples of this, since hardly anyone who is mentioned favorably is entirely without some virtue.

But one who possesses many virtues cannot be compared with one whose virtues are few or deficient in comparison with the virtues of the person against whom he is being compared.

Likewise, someone who possesses even the smallest amount of virtue is superior to one who possesses no virtue.

The virtues by which the believers are distinguished from one another—those matters upon which they agree and about which they do not differ, and which the Book has articulated, with God, Mighty and Glorious, mentioning therein the excellence of those who possess them—are of several kinds:

The Grounds of Superiority

1 — Faith

The first of these is that which God, Mighty and Glorious, first made obligatory upon His servants: faith in Him and in His Messenger.

He explicitly indicated the virtue of being foremost in it, saying:

“And the foremost are the foremost. They are those brought near.”[10]

And He Most High said:

“And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any rancor toward those who believe.’”[11]

And He Most High said:

“The foremost, the first among the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who followed them with excellence...”[12]

They therefore unanimously agreed that being foremost in Islam is among the greatest virtues by which believers are distinguished from one another.

We have previously mentioned that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was the first of the males of this community to believe in God and His Messenger.

I also mentioned those whom some people, out of stubbornness, have inserted into this category, and what invalidates their inclusion.

We find that they mention those who were foremost in accepting Islam as possessing the virtue of precedence, approximately according to their degree of merit.

They name and enumerate them, saying:

"The foremost of the Companions of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, in accepting Islam were ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him; Zayd ibn Ḥārithah; Abū Bakr; ʿUthmān; Ṭalḥah; al-Zubayr; Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf; ʿUmar, after many others; Salmān al-Fārisī; Abū Dharr; al-Miqdād; ʿAmmār; ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd; Saʿd ibn Zayd; Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt; Ṣuhayb; and Bilāl."

So, even if these people differ among themselves in the degree and virtue of their precedence, the least that can be said is that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, is one of them—even though he preceded them.

2 — Kinship

Then, after precedence in accepting Islam, they mention as a virtue the virtue of closeness of kinship to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, because of God's saying:

"Say: I ask of you no reward for it except love for the near kin."[13]

And His saying:

"Indeed, God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of ʿImrān above the worlds—descendants, some of them from others. And God is Hearing, Knowing."[14]

And His saying:

"And fear God, in whose name you ask one another, and [honor] the wombs."[15]

And His saying:

"And warn your nearest relatives."[16]

And His saying:

"Whoever argues with you concerning him after knowledge has come to you, say: 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God upon the liars.'"[17]

And His saying:

“And blood relatives are closer to one another in the Book of God.”[18]

And His saying:

“And know that whatever you acquire as spoils, one-fifth belongs to God, the Messenger, and the near kin.”[19]

Those whom they counted among the relatives of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, were:

ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him; Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib; Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib; al-Ḥasan; al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them; al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib; and his sons ʿAbd Allāh, ʿUbayd Allāh, and al-Faḍl; ʿUbaydah ibn al-Ḥārith; and his brother Abū Sufyān; as well as those who took their place among those upon whom God, Mighty and Glorious, prohibited charity through the tongue of His Messenger because of their kinship to the Messenger of God.

He prohibited it to them just as He prohibited it to himself, because charity is the purification of the people and the washing away of their sins. Instead, He gave them one-fifth [of the spoils] as an honor to them.

ʿAlī was among the closest of them to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and the most closely attached to him—as we have mentioned—and he inherited from him to the exclusion of all of them.

And, as we have mentioned, he was his successor concerning those of his family who remained alive.

Thus he surpassed those people of precedence whom we mentioned earlier by virtue of kinship, a virtue that they did not possess and by which he was distinguished from them.

And, as we have also mentioned, he was distinguished by precedence [in Islam], making him the foremost of them.

None of them is counted or mentioned alongside him in merit in the manner we have explained and established—not the leading Companions, nor those who preceded him while appropriating for themselves his right to the Imamate, nor those who were mentioned alongside him among the members of the shūrā and others.

Then they mention as a virtue, after precedence and kinship, knowledge of the Book of God, Mighty and Glorious, and of its rulings, its lawful and its unlawful, because God says:

“Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only those possessed of understanding take heed.”[20]

And He says:

“So ask the people of remembrance if you do not know.”[21]

And He says:

“God will raise those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge by degrees.”[22]

And He says:

“Those among them who are capable of deriving it would know it.”[23]

And He says:

“Rather, they are clear signs in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge.”[24]

And He says:

“But none understand them except those who possess knowledge.”[25]

And He says:

“Only those who possess knowledge fear God among His servants.”[26]

I have previously mentioned what has come from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, testifying to ʿAlī’s knowledge.

After this, we shall mention what supports that testimony—namely, what the Companions themselves testified concerning him.

Among his statements is:

“Ask me before you lose me, for you will never find anyone more knowledgeable than I concerning what lies between the two covers [of the Book].”

No one other than him claimed such a position for himself.

Throughout his lifetime they continued to ask him questions, while he did not ask any of them.

They also counted among the Companions certain men whom they described as knowledgeable.

They said:

“Those among the Companions known for knowledge were ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him; Ubayy ibn Kaʿb; ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd; ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān; Zayd ibn Thābit; Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh; Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī; ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; Muʿādh ibn Jabal; Salmān al-Fārisī; and Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān.”

All of these acknowledged ʿAlī, peace be upon him, as possessing knowledge and recognized his superiority in it.

Although they too are counted among the learned, they did not attain his position in knowledge, nor can any of them be compared with him in this regard.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, surpassed and exceeded them in the degrees of virtue that we have mentioned and that we shall mention concerning him.

Then they mention the virtue of striving in the path of God [jihād], and the excellence of those who engage in it, because God, Mighty and Glorious, says:

"Those believers who sit back—except those who have an impairment—and those who strive in the path of God with their wealth and their lives are not equal. God has given those who strive with their wealth and their lives a degree over those who sit back. To each God has promised the finest [reward], and God has favored those who strive over those who sit back with a tremendous reward—degrees from Him, forgiveness, and mercy."[27]

And He says:

"Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their selves and their wealth, in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the path of God..."[28]

There are many verses of the Qurʾān in which God, Mighty and Glorious, mentions the virtue of jihād and the virtue of those who engage in it.

I have mentioned in this book ʿAlī's jihād during the lifetime of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and afterward.

He never ceased striving from the time he accepted Islam until the Messenger of God died, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

God, Mighty and Glorious, sealed this for him with martyrdom.

His jihād was greater than that of every person who engaged in jihād. This is known, and both the particular and the general public have agreed upon it, and they acknowledged it—as we have mentioned—among the Companions of the Messenger of God.

Certain Companions were also mentioned for their jihād and the hardships they endured in it. Among those mentioned were:

ʿAlī, Ḥamzah, ʿUbaydah ibn al-Ḥārith, al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, Ṭalḥah, Abū Dujānah al-Anṣārī, Muḥammad ibn Maslamah, Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, al-Barāʾ ibn ʿĀzib, and Saʿd ibn Muʿādh.

Yet neither any of these nor anyone else can be compared with ʿAlī, peace be upon him, in jihād and the hardships endured in it.

Rather, he was the foremost of them in this regard, and he possessed, in addition, the virtues that we have already mentioned, which were particular to him and not shared by them.

Then, after jihād with one's life, they mention spending wealth in it, citing God's saying:

“And spend in the path of God, and do not throw yourselves into destruction.”[29]

And His saying:

“And spend from what We have provided for you.”[30]

And His saying:

“And strive with your wealth and your lives.”[31]

And His saying:

“Who is it that will lend God a good loan, so that He may multiply it for him?”[32]

And His saying:

“Here you are, being called to spend in the path of God. Yet among you are those who are miserly; and whoever is miserly is only miserly toward himself.”[33]

Generosity is of two kinds:

generosity with one's life, and generosity with one's wealth.

It has been transmitted from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, that he said:

“Whoever is too cowardly for jihād should equip a man with his wealth to fight in the path of God.”

The person who fights in the path of God, even if another person equips him with wealth, receives the virtue of jihād, while the one who equips him receives the virtue of spending in the path of God.

Both possess a virtue.

Yet generosity with one's life is superior, in the path of God, to generosity with one's wealth.

It has also been transmitted from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, that he said:

“The most generous of people is the one who gives his life in the path of God, and the stingiest of people is the one who is stingy with the greeting of peace.”

Whoever combines generosity with his life and his wealth is superior to one who possesses only one of the two.

It is known to the particular and the general that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was the greatest of people in jihād, and that his jihād was with both his life and his wealth.

After that, he would not keep with himself anything beyond what he needed for his expenses in jihād and for the sustenance of himself and his dependents, except that he would spend it in the path of God, whether it was little or much.

It has been transmitted from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, that he was asked:

“Which spending in the path of God is the most excellent?”

He said:

“The effort of one who has little.”

Those known among the Companions for spending in the path of God have also been mentioned.

Among them they named ʿAlī, peace be upon him, and concerning him God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed—as has already been stated:

“Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly...”[34]

They also named Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf.

But concerning ʿAlī, peace be upon him, there is in this regard the virtue of what was revealed concerning him in the Qurʾān.

Among this is the verse:

“And they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive.”[35]

This verse was revealed concerning ʿAlī, peace be upon him, as we have previously mentioned, along with other verses that we have mentioned and shall mention in this book.

And ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was superior to them in this respect, by virtue of the distinctive merits that he possessed and that we have mentioned previously.

Footnotes

[1]
Al-Kahf (18): 66.

[2]
Al-Aḥzāb (33): 53.

[3]
Al-Najm (53): 32.

[4]
Yūnus (10): 87.

[5]
Āl ʿImrān (3): 103.

[6]
Al-Mujādilah (58): 12.

[7]
Al-Mujādilah (58): 13.

[8]
Al-Aḥzāb (33): 33.

[9]
Al-Fatḥ (48): 18.

[10]
Al-Wāqiʿah (56): 10.

[11]
Al-Ḥashr (59): 10.

[12]
Al-Tawbah (9): 100.

[13]
Al-Shūrā (42): 23.

[14]
Āl ʿImrān (3): 33.

[15]
Al-Nisāʾ (4): 1.

[16]
Al-Shuʿarāʾ (26): 214.

[17]
Āl ʿImrān (3): 61.

[18]
Al-Anfāl (8): 75.

[19]
Al-Anfāl (8): 41.

[20]
Al-Zumar (39): 9.

[21]
Al-Anbiyāʾ (21): 7.

[22]
Al-Mujādilah (58): 11.

[23]
Al-Nisāʾ (4): 83.

[24]
Al-ʿAnkabūt (29): 49.

[25]
Al-ʿAnkabūt (29): 43.

[26]
Fāṭir (35): 28.

[27]
Al-Nisāʾ (4): 95–96.

[28]
Al-Tawbah (9): 111.

[29]
Al-Baqarah (2): 195.

[30]
Al-Munāfiqūn (63): 10.

[31]
Al-Tawbah (9): 41.

[32]
Al-Baqarah (2): 245.

[33]
Muḥammad (47): 38.

[34]
Al-Baqarah (2): 274.

[35]
Al-Insān (76): 8.

Endnotes

[i]

She is Zaynab bint Jaḥsh ibn Wiʾāb al-Asadiyyah.

She was born 33 years before the Hijrah. She was the wife of Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, who divorced her. Her original name was Barrah, and the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, married her and renamed her Zaynab.

She died in 20 AH.

[ii]

He is Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muʿādh ibn Jabal ibn ʿAmr ibn Aws al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī.

He was born 20 years before the Hijrah.

He died without offspring in the region of Jordan in 18 AH, and was buried at al-Quṣayr al-Mīʿānī, in the al-Ghawr region.

[iii]

He is Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd Allāh ibn Lahīʿah ibn Furʿān al-Ḥaḍramī al-Miṣrī, the judge of Egypt.

He was born in 97 AH and died in Cairo in 174 AH.

[iv]

He is Khālid ibn Zayd al-Khazrajī, a Companion.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, stayed in his house in Medina on the day of the Hijrah, until a mosque was built for him.

He fought in most of the military expeditions.

He died during the siege of Constantinople and was buried beneath its walls in 52 AH.

The Ottoman sultans used to carry the sword of the caliphate before his grave, where a famous mosque was established.

---

[v]

He is Ṭalḥah ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-Qurashī al-Taymī, a Companion and one of the wealthy men of Quraysh.

He was killed at the Battle of the Camel, while he was alongside ʿĀʾishah, in 36 AH.

[vi]

Al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām al-Qurashī al-Asadī, the son of the Prophet's paternal aunt, Ṣafiyyah bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.

He embraced Islam while still very young.

He migrated to Abyssinia and then to Medina.

ʿUmar selected him as one of the members of the shūrā.

He withdrew from fighting ʿAlī at the Battle of the Camel.

He was killed by Ibn Jurmūz in 36 AH.

[vii]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf al-Qurashī al-Zuhrī, a Companion.

He was a very wealthy merchant and was the eighth person to embrace Islam in Mecca.

He migrated to Abyssinia and then to Medina.

He died in 32 AH.

[viii]

He is al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, a Companion and one of the heroes.

He was attributed by lineage to al-Aswad ibn ʿAbd Yaghūth.

He was one of the seven people who were among the first to openly proclaim Islam.

He migrated to Abyssinia and fought at Badr and Uḥud.

He was given the title "the beloved of God and the beloved of the Messenger of God."

He died in Medina in 33 AH.

[ix]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Hudhalī.

He died in 33 AH.

---

[x]

[The note describes him as] al-Qurashī al-ʿAdawī, one of the earliest people to respond to the call to Islam.

He and his wife, Fāṭimah, the sister of ʿUmar, were among the early converts.

They migrated to Abyssinia.

He fought alongside the Messenger of God and participated in the conquests of Syria.

He died in Medina in 51 AH.

[xi]

Abū ʿAbd Allāh Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt ibn Jandalah ibn Saʿd ibn Khuzaymah al-Tamīmī, the distinguished Companion.

Baḥr al-ʿUlūm says in his biographical work:

“He was one of the earliest converts, among those who were tortured because of their religion and endured the harm inflicted upon them by the polytheists.”

It is reported that Quraysh lit a fire for him and dragged him over it in order to extinguish it. His back was badly burned, and the marks of the fire remained visible on his body.

He died in Kūfah in 37 AH.

The Commander of the Faithful [ʿAlī] performed the funeral prayer over him.

He was approximately 73 years old.

[xii]

Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān, a Companion and one of the earliest people to embrace Islam.

He was a merchant in Mecca and accumulated considerable wealth.

The polytheists of Quraysh prevented him from migrating to Medina with his wealth, so he abandoned it and migrated.

He died in Medina in 38 AH.

[xiii]

Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ al-Ḥabashī, a Companion.

He was the first person to give the call to prayer [adhān].

He fought alongside the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

He died in Damascus in 20 AH.

[xiv]

Abū Muḥammad ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī.

He was born in 1 AH.

He was one year younger than his brother ʿAbd Allāh.

He saw the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, but did not transmit anything from him.

The Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, appointed him over Yemen.

He was generous and slaughtered a camel every day.

He was the first person to establish food tables along the roads.

He died in Medina in 87 AH.

[xv]

He was among the brave and prominent Companions.

He was the eldest son of al-ʿAbbās.

He stood firm on the day of Ḥunayn.

During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, mounted him behind himself.

For this reason he was given the title "the one who rode behind the Messenger of God."

He died in 13 AH.

[xvi]

ʿUbaydah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Manāf, Abū al-Ḥārith.

He was one of the heroes of Quraysh in both the pre-Islamic period and Islam.

He was born in Mecca 62 years before the Hijrah.

He embraced Islam before the Prophet entered the house of al-Arqam.

After arriving in Medina, the Prophet gave him the second banner that he had ever appointed.

He sent him with sixty horsemen from the Emigrants.

He encountered the polytheists, who were commanded by Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, at a place called Thanīyat al-Murrah.

This was the first fighting that took place in Islam.

He then participated in Badr, where he was martyred in 2 AH.

[xvii]

Abū Khārijah Zayd ibn Thābit ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, the scribe of revelation.

He was born in Medina 11 years before the Hijrah.

He grew up in Mecca and migrated to Medina when he was eleven years old.

He died in 45 AH.

[xviii]

Abū ʿAmārah, the Companion.

He died in 72 AH.

They then mentioned the merit of piety and abstinence from doubtful or sinful matters [waraʿ], followed by righteous deeds, on account of the saying of God, Mighty and Glorious:

“Successful indeed are the believers,
those who are humble in their prayer,
and those who turn away from vain speech,
and those who perform the zakāt,
and those who guard their private parts,
except with regard to their wives or those whom their right hands possess—for indeed, they are not blameworthy.
But whoever seeks beyond that, those are the transgressors.

And those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenant,
and those who carefully maintain their prayers.
Those are the inheritors,
who shall inherit al-Firdaws; therein they shall remain forever." [1]

And His saying, Exalted is He:

"Men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of God, the establishment of prayer, and the giving of zakāt. They fear a Day in which hearts and eyes will turn about." [2]

Thus, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was the foremost of people in these deeds.

After the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, he was the person whose prayer was most complete and who was the most humble in it. It is reported that after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, no one was able to imitate or reproduce the prayer of the Messenger except ʿAlī, peace be upon him; and no one reproduced the prayer of ʿAlī except ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, and likewise the Imams after him.

He was the first to pray toward both qiblahs.

He was the person who most turned away from vain and frivolous speech.

He was the most diligent of people in giving the zakāt of his wealth. Concerning him God, Mighty and Glorious, revealed—as has previously been mentioned in this book:

"Those who establish prayer and give zakāt while they are bowing." [3]

And this continued among the Imams from his descendants, as the statement to that effect has been related earlier in this book.

He was the person who most carefully guarded his private parts. We have already mentioned what Jibrīl, peace be upon him, testified concerning him before the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny: that his two recording angels boasted over the other [recording angels], because they had never had to record a sin against him.

This was also because he accompanied the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, as a child, and never worshipped God while associating anything with Him, never took a protector besides Him, never worshipped an idol, and never committed a sin.

He was the most pious [waraʿ] of the community.

They counted among those Companions who were mentioned for their piety a group of men. Among those whom they named were:

- ʿAlī, peace be upon him;
- Abū Bakr;

- ʿAmr ibn Masʿūd;
- Abū Dharr;
- Salmān;
- ʿAmmār;
- al-Miqdād;
- and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar.

And ʿAlī was superior to them in this, in addition to the other merits that he possessed, which have already been mentioned and which they did not possess to the same extent.

They then mentioned the merit of **asceticism in this world [zuhd]**, on account of the saying of God, Mighty and Glorious:

"The life of this world is only play, amusement, adornment, boasting among yourselves, and rivalry in wealth and children. It is like rain whose vegetation pleases the unbelievers; then it dries up, and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes debris. And in the Hereafter there is severe punishment, and forgiveness from God and approval. And the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion." **[4]**

And His saying, Exalted is He:

"The example of the life of this world is only like water that We sent down from the heaven, and the plants of the earth mingle with it, from which people and livestock eat. Then, when the earth takes on its adornment and becomes beautiful, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes upon it by night or by day, and We make it like a harvested field, as though it had not flourished yesterday." **[5]**

And His saying, Exalted is He:

"So do not let the life of this world deceive you, and do not let the deceiver deceive you concerning God." **[6]**

Thus God, Mighty and Glorious, described this world, its enjoyment, and what is in it as subject to **perishing and coming to an end**, while He described the Hereafter, its bliss, and what is in it as possessing **permanence and duration**.

Nevertheless, He did not prohibit seeking the things of this world through their proper means and with their rightful due, because the livelihoods of God's servants come from it. Rather, He permitted this, saying, Glorified is He:

"And We have made for you therein means of livelihood." **[7]**

And He said:

“Eat from what God has provided for you, lawful and good.” [8]

And He said:

“And He subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.” [9]

He repeated this in many places in His Book.

But He mentioned what He mentioned concerning the nature of this world, its coming to an end, and the passing away of its enjoyment so that its inhabitants would not rejoice excessively in it and become distracted by it from the Hereafter, which is the abode of permanence and true life.

They should look toward it—and toward what they possess of this world—with an eye of ascetic detachment, neither delighting excessively in anything of it, nor withholding it from what God, Mighty and Glorious, has obligated them to spend upon, nor sending ahead from it to the Hereafter whatever they are able to send.

This, then, is the true meaning of asceticism in this world. It does not mean that it should be abandoned altogether, nor that acquiring anything from it should be disliked.

For if that were the virtue, and if that were what God, Mighty and Glorious, had encouraged, then His prophets and His friends would not have possessed even a small portion of it, nor acquired anything from it.

Yet they possessed much of it and acquired much of it.

Rather, they regarded it with an eye of smallness and contempt, viewing it according to the description God, Mighty and Glorious, gave it: that it is perishing and coming to an end.

They were detached from it and desired the Hereafter and its enjoyment, which God, Mighty and Glorious, encouraged them to desire. They would put forward for the sake of the Hereafter what they possessed of this world, and they would fulfill what God, Mighty and Glorious, had obligated them to do concerning it.

If this world and everything in it were something to be rejected, something that should neither be sought nor acquired, then it would have been obligatory upon God's servants to act accordingly.

And if they did so, they would ruin the world and soon become extinct from it.

Yet God, Mighty and Glorious, commanded preparation from its resources in order to terrorize His enemies and to acquire strength with which to fight them and to spend in His path. He said:

“And prepare against them whatever force you are able to, and steeds of war, by which you may terrify the enemy of God and your enemy.” [10]

And He said:

“And spend in the path of God, and do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction.” [11]

He also prescribed expenditures for wives. He said:

“And provide for them therein and clothe them, and speak to them words of kindness.” [12]

And He said:

“Let the one possessing abundance spend according to his abundance; and whoever has his provision restricted, let him spend from what God has given him.” [13]

So can such expenditures come from anything other than acquiring the things of this world and its enjoyment, making use of them, and seeking provision through them?

This is something that no person of knowledge denies or rejects.

It has been related that some people criticized this world in the presence of ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

He stood among them and delivered a sermon. He praised God and extolled Him, and invoked blessings upon the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and then said:

“Why do you criticize the world, while you work within it?

This world is an abode of truth for the one who treats it truthfully;
an abode of wealth for the one who takes provisions from it;
and an abode of well-being for the one who understands from it.

It is the mosques of the friends of God, the place where His revelation descends, and the place where His angels pray.

From it they acquire Paradise, and within it they earn mercy.

So who is there to criticize it?

It has announced its departure and warned of its afflictions. It has aroused longing for its joys, as both encouragement and warning, and as a means of removing excuses and giving warning.

“O criticizer of the world, who is afflicted by its changes—when did it ever remain with you? Rather, when did it deceive you?

Was it by the places where your fathers fell in calamity?
Or by the resting places of your mothers beneath the earth?

How many beloved ones have you tended with your own hands while they were sick? How many physicians have you summoned for them, seeking their recovery, while forcing them to endure the bitter medicine?

Through them the world has shown you your own fate, and through their place of death it has shown you your own place of death, on a morning when your loved ones will not benefit you and your weeping will avail you nothing."

This is from a well-known sermon of his.

Some of the theologians also mentioned the monasticism of the Christians, their abandonment of marriage, their rejection of the world and everything in it, and the things that call people toward it.

He said:

"God, Mighty and Glorious, sends His prophets only to revive His religious laws.

If this [monasticism] had been part of the religion of Christ, then the religious law would necessarily come to an end. For if this were something to which he called people, then people would be obligated to follow him in it.

If that were so, they would not reproduce, and they would soon become extinct; and with their extinction, the religious law would come to an end."

He said:

"This demonstrates that what the Christians introduced in this regard was not something that Christ, peace be upon him, brought to them."

There are many reports and proofs of this kind.

God, Mighty and Glorious, gave many of His prophets and His friends a great deal of this world.

Had that been something disliked, He would not have given it to them.

Solomon, peace be upon him, asked Him for a kingdom such as no one after him should have, yet God did not reproach him for asking for it. Rather, He mentioned that He had given it to him.

We ourselves observe and see in the hands of God's friends much of what God, Mighty and Glorious, has bestowed upon them and given them of this world.

And we know that this is something that they regard as a great expression of God's favor toward them, and they increase in their gratitude to Him for it, even though they do not look upon it with an eye of envy or excessive desire for it.

Nor does the greatness of what they possess from it distract them from what God, Mighty and Glorious, has obligated them to do, or from that with which He has entrusted them concerning the affairs of their worldly and religious lives.

Rather, that obligation is greater in their eyes and more exalted in their hearts.

This, then, is the praiseworthy way of practicing asceticism in this world and its enjoyment concerning whatever one has been given from it.

It is not that one must reject it and everything in it completely, dislike it, or declare it forbidden.

Whoever declares forbidden or dislikes what God, Mighty and Glorious, has made lawful has opposed His command and transgressed it.

They also mentioned men among the Companions as being characterized by asceticism.

Among those whom they named were:

- ʿAlī, peace be upon him;
- ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb;
- ʿUthmān ibn Maẓʿūn [i];
- Abū Dharr;
- Salmān;
- and al-Miqdād.

And ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was superior to them in this, in addition to the virtues previously mentioned in which he was distinguished from them.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, also described him in this respect, saying:

"ʿAlī neither takes from the world what does not belong to him, nor does the world take anything from him."

Meaning that he does not take from it what is not rightfully his, and it does not tempt him in a way that diminishes him.

These, then, are the virtues that I have enumerated, to which the Book has testified and about which the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, has informed us.

They were all brought together in ʿAlī, peace be upon him, whereas they were dispersed among different people.

He was the foremost of them in these virtues.

We have already explained the superiority of the one in whom virtue is greater over the one in whom it is lesser.

The one who possesses complete virtue is the one in whom all these virtues are gathered; such a description cannot properly be applied to one in whom they are not gathered.

The Banū Umayyah exerted themselves greatly to conceal the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, during the days of their domination and the ascendancy of their authority.

They publicly cursed him from the pulpits and intimidated everyone who possessed any of his virtues or transmitted anything of his merits from mentioning them.

They imposed the harshest punishments upon anyone who spread any of them, mentioned them, or related them.

But God, Glorious is His remembrance, refused except to make his excellence and his merits manifest.

Their cursing of him only increased his greatness in the hearts of the community, as well as their reverence for him, their recognition of his right, and their acknowledgment of his excellence.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Iskāfī [ii], who was one of the theologians and practitioners of disputation among the general body [al-ʿāmmah], mentioned the disagreement among the sects concerning preferring ʿAlī, peace be upon him, over the rest of the Companions, and concerning preferring others over him, after having mentioned his excellence.

He said:

“We shall now mention the position of those who placed another before him, and who went to extremes or fell short concerning him, whether Harūrī or Khārijī, Ḥashwī or Muʿtazilī.”

This speaker said:

“One group claimed that Abū Bakr was the best of people after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny; after him came ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; after ʿUmar, ʿUthmān; and then they stopped [at that point].

“Another group affirmed the superiority of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, then withheld judgment concerning ʿUthmān and ʿAlī.

“Another group affirmed the superiority of Abū Bakr and withheld judgment concerning those after him.

“Another group withheld judgment concerning everyone and said: ‘God knows where superiority lies.’

“Another group believed in declaring ʿAlī an unbeliever and disavowing him.”

He said:

“They are all the Khārijites; this is their position.”

He said:

“The reason for their declaring him an unbeliever, according to their claim, was his acceptance of the arbitration of the two arbitrators.”

He said:

“Another group openly attacked ʿAlī, peace be upon him, and allied themselves with Muʿāwiyah.”

He said:

“Another group outwardly allied themselves with ʿAlī, but then manifested hatred toward him through what was known from the indirect expressions of their speech, just as God, Mighty and Glorious, said:

‘And you will surely recognize them by the tone of their speech.’” [14]

This speaker from the general body mentioned these sects and what each had adopted as a position, refuting them after establishing that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was the best of people after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

This speaker was one of those who professed the imamate of Abū Bakr and claimed that it was permissible for the less excellent [al-mafḍūl] to exercise authority over the more excellent [al-fāḍil] when doing so was more beneficial.

The invalidity of this doctrine, based on the evidence of the Book and the Sunnah, has already been discussed in this book.

But we wanted to mention this speaker's acknowledgment of the excellence of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, and the fact that those who held his view were the majority of the general body.

We do this to demonstrate what we stated earlier: that in this book we have established no virtue of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, except those transmitted and affirmed by the general body, rather than those virtues reported exclusively by the Shīʿah.

The speaker whose statement we have quoted said:

“As for those who claim that Abū Bakr was the most excellent person of this community after its Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and that the community's consensus upon appointing him as leader establishes this because of what we have mentioned—that it is permissible for the less excellent to exercise authority over the more excellent when doing so is more beneficial—

“the response to these people is that we should mention the virtues of these men, their merits, and their circumstances, bringing some of them together with others, and examining them with the perspective of one who seeks the truth.

“For God, Mighty and Glorious, has established a path to every branch of knowledge, through which alone the truth can be known, and through which alone it can be demonstrated.”

He said:

“When we gather these merits and mention these virtues, we demonstrate to those who disagree with us that the virtues are gathered together in the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him; and that among his merits are those which are greatest in rank, weightiest in measure, and highest according to the criterion of truth.

“We mention nothing concerning this except what is famous and well known, something which those who disagree with us know and which no one who examines our book can deny.”

He said:

“As for the excellence of the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, over all the believers, it has become clear and established to us through compelling, striking, manifest proofs.

“When we disclose these proofs and transmit the reports concerning them, only an obstinate person or an ignorant person overwhelmed by ignorance could turn away from them.”

This speaker said to those who claimed that Abū Bakr was superior to ʿAlī, peace be upon him, because of the people's consensus upon giving allegiance to him:

“We will not argue with you using what the Rāfiḍah have transmitted—that Abū Bakr's allegiance was established through competition and coercion rather than through consensus.

“Rather, we will argue with you using what you yourselves have transmitted: that when the people learned that the Anṣār had gathered together, they hastened to give allegiance to Abū Bakr out of fear of civil strife.”

This speaker then mentioned their report concerning this.

[545]

From **Ibn ʿUyaynah**, through his chain of transmission, from **ʿUmar**, who said:

“When the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, died, the Anṣār gathered at the **Saqīfah of Banū Sāʿidah** [iii] to give allegiance to **Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah** [iv].

“‘ʿUmar said: ‘I went to them together with Abū Bakr and Abū ʿUbaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ.’ [v]

“Abū Bakr said to them: ‘The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to me: “This matter [of authority] belongs only to Quraysh.”

“‘So give allegiance to whichever of these two men you wish: ʿUmar or Abū ʿUbaydah.’”

“He said: ‘At that time, no one from the Muhājirūn other than us was present at the place.’

“‘ʿUmar said: ‘Whenever the voices became raised and I feared civil strife, I would say to Abū Bakr: “Extend your hand so that I may give allegiance to you.”

“So he extended his hand, and I gave allegiance to him. Abū ʿUbaydah gave allegiance to him, as did those of the Anṣār who were present, except Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah, who did not give allegiance until he died.’”

He said:

“The reason for this was that there had been a dispute between the Aws and the Khazraj among the Anṣār.

“Some of them said: ‘We shall give allegiance to Saʿd.’

“Others said: ‘We will give allegiance only to a man from the Aws.’

“Others said: ‘There should be one leader from the Aws and one leader from the Khazraj.’

“The dispute that existed among them caused them to remove the matter from among themselves and assign it to Abū Bakr when he arrived.”

This speaker said:

“‘ʿUmar likewise said: ‘The allegiance to Abū Bakr was a **faltah**, from which God protected us from its evil.’”

Faltah means an affair that occurs without careful deliberation and comes about suddenly.

He said:

“Therefore, the people did not incline toward Abū Bakr because they considered him superior.”

He said:

“Rather, Abū Bakr pushed aside what the Anṣār wanted by invoking kinship with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and by arguing that the imamate was among Quraysh.

“If that was as this speaker said—and indeed that is how it happened, and the report concerning it is established and famous—and if Abū Bakr only displaced the Anṣār from the matter and claimed it instead of them because of his kinship with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, then whoever was closer to the Messenger of God and more excellent than Abū Bakr would have greater right to it than Abū Bakr, especially in light of the explicit statement of the Messenger of God that we mentioned earlier.”

Then this speaker said:

“Among the things that confirm and substantiate what we have said is Abū Bakr's statement:

‘I have been placed over you, but I am not the best of you.’”

Meaning that he was speaking about lineage.

The interpretation [that this referred to lineage], however, is erroneous, because the word “best” [khayr] was expressed in an unrestricted and general manner and was then restricted to a particular meaning.

If this were allowed, then the evidentiary force of reports would collapse and arguments based upon transmitted traditions would fall away.

Nothing could then be known except through what is found in the Qur'an.

Debate itself would become impossible, and every person advancing a false argument could employ the same reasoning, making a general expression particular and a particular expression general.

He said:

“If this were permissible, it would also be permissible for someone to say that by his statement ‘I am not the best of you’ he meant ‘I am not the best of you in religion,’ while the wording itself is general.

“Whoever claims a meaning that cannot be known except through an explicit report must produce that report.

“But the person making this claim will not arrive at such a meaning.”

This is because Abū Bakr's lineage was known to the people; it was not unknown.

There was no dispute among them concerning lineage that would have required Abū Bakr to mention his lineage.

They all knew that Abū Bakr was not the best of them in lineage.

Nor does this interpretation have any meaning beyond what the wording itself indicates in general.

This speaker said:

“Rather, according to us, the meaning of Abū Bakr's statement was to make the matter clear.

“Some people imagined that his appointment was based upon superiority and precedence. So he clarified the matter about himself, rejected the error into which some people had fallen, and returned them to the truth.

“For it was incumbent upon him to lead people toward correctness concerning this matter and to explain to them where they had erred.

“Thus he said: ‘I have been placed over you, but I am not the best of you.’

“So do not make my authority over you a cause for your falling into error by saying: ‘I am better and more excellent than others.’”

This speaker said:

“Some people devised another interpretation of this statement.

“They said that he said this as an expression of humility and compassion, because a believer does not praise himself or declare himself pure.”

This speaker said:

“This interpretation is even more clearly erroneous than the first, in addition to the deficiency that follows from it for the person who makes this claim.

“Humility does not consist in lying, because this statement of Abū Bakr was a lie.

“How can it be a lie when spoken by someone else but humility when spoken by him?

“You know that the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was the most humble of people and the most compassionate of them.

“Yet it would not be permissible for him to say, ‘I was sent to you, but I am not the best of you,’ on the grounds of humility and compassion.”

He said:

“It is not humility for a righteous person to say, ‘I am not righteous,’ for a believer to say, ‘I am not a believer,’ or for an intelligent person to say, ‘I am not intelligent,’ such that saying this would constitute a lie on the part of the speaker.

“Rather, humility consists in a person refraining from mentioning his own excellence, practicing good conversation, and showing consideration for others as part of good companionship.”

This speaker's description of humility is persuasive.

And someone occupying the position that Abū Bakr occupied—the position of the imamate—should not, if he were truly entitled to it, refrain from mentioning his own excellence out of humility.

It has been reported from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, that he said:

“I am the best of the children of Ādam, and there is no boast in that.

“And I am the master of the prophets, and there is no boast in that.”

And ʿAlī, peace be upon him, said:

“I am the best of the legatees.

“Ask me before you lose me, for you will not find anyone more knowledgeable than I am concerning what lies between the two covers [of the Qur'an].”

I have mentioned in this book what he enumerated concerning his merits and virtues over the members of the shūrā and others.

Therefore, it is obligatory upon people of excellence, whose excellence God has made it incumbent upon His servants to recognize, to mention that excellence to them so that they may know it and believe in it—not to remain silent about it, as this speaker claimed.

Nor should they diminish themselves concerning what God, Mighty and Glorious, has elevated them in and what He has made it obligatory upon His servants to recognize concerning them.

For they will not recognize it except by having it made known to them.

Had Abū Bakr regarded himself as belonging to this category, he would not have said what he said: that he was not the best of them.

And if he had said that he was the best of them, they would not have believed him or accepted it from him.

Thus he affirmed about himself what he knew that, had someone else said it, they would not have accepted it.

Then the speaker whose statement we have quoted said:

“We now return to those who placed Abū Bakr before ʿAlī, peace be upon him, in this matter.

“We ask them: What is your proof for preferring Abū Bakr over ʿAlī?

“If they resort to the people's agreement upon choosing him—and this is the majority of their arguments—

“we say to them:

“Their placing Abū Bakr first by their choice does not establish for him superiority over another person before the choice, when he possessed no superiority beforehand.

“And if you say that he became superior through their choice, then he became superior through the action of someone else, not through his own action.

“Their choosing him was their action.

“Therefore, if he only became superior through their choosing him, then before their choice he was already someone possessing superiority.

“So show us his superiority over ʿAlī and his precedence over him through some virtue by which he was entitled to the imamate and through which their choice was justified.”

He said:

“If they say that the evidence for what we have said is his leading the people in prayer during the lifetime of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and the Messenger's statement, ‘Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer,’

“we say to them:

“This is a report that comes only from ʿĀʾishah. It does not establish a proof, nor did the community transmit it by accepting it and agreeing upon it.

“Furthermore, even if we grant you this report, it does not establish the precedence of Abū Bakr over ʿAlī.

“And when we examine the end of the report, we need to find an interpretation that removes its deficiency and shortcoming.

“For at the end of the report it says that when the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, recovered consciousness, felt some strength, and came out until he reached the mosque, he went forward, took Abū Bakr by the hand, moved him away from his place, stood in his position, and prayed with them.”

Some people said:

“This action of the Messenger of God demonstrates that Abū Bakr's being placed ahead to lead the prayer was not by his command.

“For if it had been by his command, he would not have come out immediately despite his weakness and illness in order to move him aside and take his place.

“And if it had been by his command, he would have left him in his place and prayed behind him, just as he prayed behind ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf when he came and found him leading the people in prayer.”

You all acknowledge that the Prophet's praying behind ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf [vi] does not establish his precedence over the Prophet.

This, together with what enters into your own report of weakness and irregularity, undermines your argument.

“Your bāʾ carries a charge, while our bāʾ carries none.”

[That is, the same standard is not being applied equally to both sides.]

The Rāfiḍah have also opposed you concerning this report.

They say to you:

“You accepted ʿĀʾishah's statement concerning the prayer and made it a proof, yet you did not accept the statement of Fāṭimah, peace be upon her, concerning Fadak, nor the testimony of Umm Ayman on her behalf—even though the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, testified that she was destined for Paradise and said: ‘She is the mistress of the women of the worlds.’

“If you say: ‘Because judgments concerning property cannot be established by the testimony of one woman,’

“we say to you: Likewise, judgments concerning religion cannot be accepted merely on the statement of one woman.”

And if Abū Bakr's leading the prayer establishes his precedence over those behind whom he prayed, and establishes that he was superior to them, then **ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ's leading Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in prayer** would establish his precedence over both of them.

If someone says:

“Perhaps Abū Bakr possessed virtues that we cannot identify and reasons that we do not know. We know that the community chose him because of precedence and superiority.”

He is told:

“What is the difference between you and someone who says: ‘Perhaps they chose Abū Bakr for a reason that I cannot identify; I only know that they did not choose him because he was superior’?

“If, before the choice, he had been superior to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, that would have become evident, famous, and publicly known rather than remaining concealed.

“If their choice of him was because of his superiority, and if the imamate of the less excellent over the more excellent were permissible, then it would not have been permissible for the Anṣār—whose position in religion and knowledge you already know—to say:

“‘There shall be one leader from us and one leader from you.’

“Nor would it have been permissible for Abū Bakr to extend his hand toward ʿUmar and Abū ʿUbaydah and say:

“‘Whichever of the two you wish, let him extend his hand and I shall give allegiance to him.’

“How can an ignorant person imagine that the people placed him first because he was supposedly the best of them, when the Anṣār did not recognize that superiority in him and said:

“‘There shall be one leader from us and one leader from you, O company of the Muhājirūn.’

“Moreover, Abū Bakr himself rejected the superiority that they were claiming for him over others and contradicted their statement when he said to the Anṣār:

“‘I am content for you with either of these two men; give allegiance to whichever of them you wish’—

“meaning ʿUmar and Abū ʿUbaydah.

“And how can an ignorant person imagine that they placed him first because he was the best of them, when ʿUmar says:

“‘The allegiance to Abū Bakr was a faltah, from which God protected us from its evil’?

“Thus none of them possessed an argument by which to claim the precedence of Abū Bakr over ʿAlī, peace be upon him.”

The speaker then continued, in accordance with this argument, by mentioning the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

He brought examples like those which we have mentioned and which we shall mention in this book concerning what has been transmitted of his virtues and merits.

We say:

Whoever, when mentioning a response to his opponent, does not fully investigate the proofs of his opponent, or deliberately or out of ignorance omits something from them, has given his opponent an avenue through which to refute his argument and attack him.

We see that this speaker mentioned that the report about Abū Bakr leading the prayer came only from ʿĀʾishah, and he weakened it on that basis by the argument of another person.

Most of the transmission of this report indeed revolves around ʿĀʾishah, as he described.

But the report has also come through that route.

We shall mention the chain through which it came so that no one may retain an argument concerning it.

We shall also support this speaker's position concerning the invalidity of using the prayer as evidence with something stronger than his argument.

Likewise, he omitted mention of what they used as evidence for Abū Bakr's virtues and merits according to their claim, and did not mention any of them.

He said:

“If they say: ‘Perhaps Abū Bakr possessed virtues that we have not identified,’ we say to them:

“That is so—they themselves transmit many virtues concerning Abū Bakr.”

We shall mention what they transmitted of these virtues and what they used as evidence for his superiority and for establishing his imamate, as well as what invalidates their argument.

Our purpose in doing so is only to mention the virtues of ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

For we have established in this book that he was the best of people after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

We do not intend here to reinforce the case for his imamate, because that would go beyond the scope of this book, as we have said.

We have dealt with that subject at length in another book.

Whoever claims, as this speaker claimed, that Abū Bakr did not become entitled to the imamate by virtue of superiority because ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was superior to him has spared us the trouble of refuting him in this book.

But whoever claims that Abū Bakr was superior to him requires us to demonstrate the invalidity of that claim, in order to establish the principle we have set forth concerning ʿAlī's superiority over the entire community after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

As for what we mentioned concerning their report that Abū Bakr led the people in prayer, it was transmitted, as this speaker said, from:

- ʿĀʾishah

- Anas ibn Mālik
- ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb
- ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah

The report of ʿĀʾishah

As for the report of ʿĀʾishah, it was transmitted by **ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim**, from **ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿīd**, from **ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Mulaykah**, from ʿĀʾishah, who said:

"The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became severely ill on Monday night, and Bilāl called him to prayer.

"He said: 'Tell him to tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer.'

"So Bilāl said to Abū Bakr:

"'The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, commands you to lead the people in prayer.'

"She said:

"Abū Bakr went forward.

"When he prayed, he would not turn around and would not raise his head.

"He went forward, said the takbīr, and the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, felt some relief.

"She said:

"He came out, moving unsteadily between two men."

ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim said:

"The two men were **ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib**, peace be upon him, and **Usāmah ibn Zayd** [vii]."

Another narrator said:

"They were ʿAlī and **al-Faḍl ibn al-ʿAbbās**."

She said:

"When the people saw him, the rows opened up.

"Abū Bakr knew that no one would come forward in such a manner except the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

"So he went to move backward, but the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, pushed him forward and kept him in his place.

“Then the Messenger of God came and sat beside him.

“The Messenger of God would say the takbīr, Abū Bakr would say the takbīr according to his takbīr, and the people would say the takbīr according to Abū Bakr's takbīr.

“ʿĀʾishah said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, led the people in prayer.

“When he completed the prayer, he turned his face toward them and rested his back against my chamber.

“Abū Bakr stood before him.

“He said:

“‘O Messenger of God, I see that you have become well this morning. Today is the day of the daughter of Khārijah, and her house is outside Medina. So permit me, if you wish.’

“He said:

“‘Yes, I permit you.’

“She said:

“Abū Bakr went out to the house of the daughter of Khārijah, whose house was outside Medina.

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, remained sitting, speaking to the people and warning them about trials.

“He said:

“‘O people, do not hold anything against me, for I make lawful only what God, Mighty and Glorious, has made lawful in the Qur'an, and I make unlawful only what He has made unlawful therein.

“‘O Ṣafiyyah bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, O aunt of the Messenger of God; O Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad—work for what is with God, for I cannot avail you against God in anything.’

“She said:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became severely ill.

“He entered my room and died there.

“Upon him be the best of peace.”

Footnotes

[1] — al-Muʾminūn (23): 1–11.

[2] — al-Nūr (24): 37.

[3] — al-Māʾidah (5): 55.

[4] — al-Ḥadīd (57): 20.

[5] — Yūnus (10): 24.

[6] — Luqmān (31): 33.

[7] — al-Aʿrāf (7): 10.

[8] — al-Māʾidah (5): 88.

[9] — al-Jāthiyah (45): 13.

[10] — al-Anfāl (8): 60.

[11] — al-Baqarah (2): 195.

[12] — al-Nisāʾ (4): 5.

[13] — al-Ṭalāq (65): 7.

[14] — Muḥammad (47): 30.

Endnotes

[i]

Abū al-Sāʾib al-Qurashī al-Jumaḥī, a Companion known for bravery.

He was one of the wise men of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic period.

He migrated to Abyssinia, fought at Badr, and died in Medina in 2 AH.

[ii]

He is Abū Jaʿfar, originally from Samarqand.

He died in 240 AH.

[The reference is to his book] *al-Miʿyār wa-l-Muwāzanah*.

[iii]

It was a shelter/covered structure [ẓullah] beneath which they used to sit near the Biʾr Buḍāʿah.

It was the saqīfah in which the allegiance to Abū Bakr took place, at the settlement of Banū Sāʿidah, near Biʾr Buḍāʿah.

The well was in the middle of their houses, and to the north of the well, toward the west, there remained some of the fortified structures of Medina.

(ʿ*Umdat al-Akhbār*, p. 336.)

[iv]

A Khazrajī Companion, one of the noble leaders during both the pre-Islamic period and Islam.

He was one of the naqībs at the Pledge of al-ʿAqabah.

He participated in Uḥud and the Battle of the Trench [al-Khandaq].

He traveled to Ḥawrān, where he was killed in 14 AH.

---

[v]

He is ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurashī al-Fihrī.

He died during the Plague of ʿAmwās and was buried in the Ghawr of Baysān in 18 AH.

[vi]

He is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf ibn ʿAbd ʿAwf ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥārith al-Zuhrī al-Qurashī.

He was born ten years after the Year of the Elephant, that is, 44 years before the Hijrah.

He died in 32 AH.

[vii]

Abū Muḥammad Usāmah ibn Zayd.

He was born in Mecca 7 years before the Hijrah.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, appointed him [to command] before he reached the age of twenty.

When the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, died, Usāmah traveled to Wādī al-Qurā, where he settled.

He then went to Syria, and afterward returned to Medina, where he remained until he died at al-Jawf in 54 AH.

The Report of Anas

As for the report of Anas, it was narrated by Yazīd ibn Hārūn, from Sufyān, from al-Zuhrī, from Anas, who said:

When the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, fell ill with the illness from which he died, Bilāl came and called to prayer. He said: “I have conveyed [the call], so whoever wishes may pray.”

He said: “O Messenger of God, then who will lead the people in prayer?”

He said: “Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”

So Bilāl said to Abū Bakr: “The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, has commanded you to lead the people in prayer.”

When Abū Bakr came forward, the curtains were raised from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny. We looked at him, and it was as though he were a white sheet, and he was wearing his shirt. Abū Bakr thought that he wanted to come out, so he stepped back.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, gestured to him: “Pray in your place.”

So Abū Bakr prayed, and we did not see the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, after that. He died that very day, upon him be the best of peace.

The Report of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar

As for the report of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, it was narrated by Makkī ibn Ibrāhīm, from Mūsā, from Abū ʿUbaydah, from Nāfiʿ, from Ibn ʿUmar, who said:

Ibn Umm Maktūm came, and the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was informed of the first prayer at the place where he was later taken in death. He was unable to stand because of the severity of his illness.

He said to him: “Tell Abū Bakr to establish their prayer for the people.”

ʿĀʾishah said: “O Messenger of God, Abū Bakr is a tender-hearted man, and whenever he takes your place, tears will choke him.”

[The author says:] “And wait to see what the response of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, to her will be.”

She said to him: “Tell Abū Bakr to establish their prayer for the people.”

He did not answer ʿĀʾishah at all.

ʿĀʾishah looked toward Ḥafṣah and gestured to her to ask him to command her father, ʿUmar.

Ḥafṣah said: “O Messenger of God, if only you would command ʿUmar.”

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, slapped his hand [in exasperation] and said: “Indeed, you are the companions of Joseph!”

This was difficult for Ḥafṣah.

He said: “So Abū Bakr continued to establish the people’s prayer for several days, until the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, died.”

The Report of ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah

As for the report of ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah, it was narrated by Sahl ibn Muḥammad, from Sufyān, from Maʿmar, from al-Zuhrī, from ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah, who said:

The first complaint of illness of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was in the house of Maymūnah.

He said to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah: “Tell the people to pray.”

He went out and encountered ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and said to him: “Pray with the people.”

So ʿUmar went forward. The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, heard his voice and said:

“Is this not the voice of ʿUmar?”

They said: “Yes.”

He said: “God refuses that, and the Muslims [refuse it]. Let Abū Bakr lead the people in prayer.”

Then he asked his wives for permission to be nursed in the house of ʿĀʾishah.

She said: “O Messenger of God, Abū Bakr is tender-hearted and cannot hold back his tears if he takes your place. So if only you would command someone else to lead the people in prayer. By God, I would not want him to be the first to take your place.”

He refused this from her, but she went back over the matter with him two or three times.

He said: “Let Abū Bakr lead the people in prayer, for you are the companions of Joseph.”

The Narrations Concerning This Report

This is what has reached us from those among the *general body* [al-ʿāmmah] who transmitted this report. Those who transmitted it have differed over it with this degree of disagreement.

In some transmissions, it is reported that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, ordered Bilāl to tell Abū Bakr to lead the prayer, and that he [Abū Bakr] began it. Then the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, came out, removed him, and took his place.

This is the report of ʿĀʾishah. If this report were established, then what occurs at its end—namely, that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, removed him from the prayer—would demonstrate that his being put forward was not by his command, because if he had put him forward [to lead], he would not have removed him.

Likewise, a report has come from the Imams, peace be upon them, that when the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, became seriously ill, Bilāl came to call the Messenger of God to prayer.

ʿĀʾishah said to him: “The Messenger of God is gravely ill; he has fainted. Do not disturb him. Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”

He went out to him and informed him. Abū Bakr went forward, and the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, heard his voice.

He said: “What is this?”

They said: “ʿĀʾishah ordered Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”

He said: “Indeed, you are the companions of Joseph!”

Then he took ʿAlī, peace be upon him, by the hand, leaning upon him, and came out. He removed Abū Bakr from the prayer and prayed with the people.

He died that very day, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

This is the sound report, whose beginning confirms its end and whose transmission is established by its soundness.

As for what the *general body* transmitted concerning this matter, they differed over it.

In the report of ʿĀʾishah is what we have mentioned.

In the report of Anas ibn Mālik, the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, did not come out, and Abū Bakr prayed with the people in his absence.

Yet the two reports are both concerning the same time and the same prayer.

In the report of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, Abū Bakr prayed with them for several days.

And in the report of ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah, the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to his father—ʿAbd Allāh: "Tell the people to pray," and he did not command him that anyone in particular should lead them.

And ʿAbd Allāh encountered ʿUmar and said to him: "Pray with the people."

Then the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, rejected ʿUmar's leading them in prayer and said: "Abū Bakr should lead the people in prayer."

In some of these reports, he commanded Bilāl; in some, he commanded Ibn Umm Maktūm; and in some, he commanded ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUtbah.

Thus, there is hardly any contradiction that has not entered into this report.

One of their principles is that when a report differs to this degree, it cannot constitute a proof, because it is not known which of its versions is the correct one such that the proof could be established through it.

Even If Abū Bakr's Leading the Prayer Were Established

Even if this report were established—that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, ordered Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer—it would not give him any superiority over ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

For ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was not, by their own unanimous agreement, among the people over whom Abū Bakr prayed. Rather, he was with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, who was resting against his chest.

And if the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, had—as they claim—ordered Abū Bakr to lead the prayer, he would not have abandoned the prayer himself; rather, he prayed.

Therefore, ʿAlī's prayer with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, is superior to Abū Bakr's prayer leading the people. No one can deny this.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, had appointed ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in the expedition of Dhāt al-Salāsil, and ʿAmr used to lead them in prayer. Yet none of them said that ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ was superior to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

Likewise, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, sent military detachments and expeditions and appointed commanders over them. They used to lead them in prayer, yet none of them claimed the imamate on that basis.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, appointed ʿAlī, peace be upon him, as his deputy over Medina during the expedition of Tabūk. He remained leading the people in prayer from the time the Messenger of God departed until he returned.

He also appointed Abū Lubābah [i] during one of his expeditions, Ibn Umm Maktūm [ii] during another, and Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī during another.

He appointed ʿAbbād ibn Asad in Mecca.

Each of these men led the people for the period during which the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was absent from them—and that was longer than the period of Abū Bakr's prayer, if it is established that he actually prayed [as leader].

If prayer necessitated the imamate, as they say, then Abū Bakr would not have been entitled to put ʿUmar forward over the people.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, also rejected ʿUmar's leading them in prayer, according to their own reports, while among those present was a group whom the Messenger of God had previously appointed to lead the prayer.

Yet the greatest thing upon which they relied in putting Abū Bakr forward for prayer has been this.

We have already demonstrated the invalidity, confusion, and contradiction of the transmissions concerning it, and that—even if it were established and sound—it contains no proof necessitating the imamate.

ʿUmar also appointed the six members of the council of consultation, restricted the caliphate to them, excluded all of them from being put forward [to lead the prayer], and assigned the prayer to Ṣuhayb. He led them in prayer during the days of the consultation until ʿUthmān was put forward.

Most of them held that prayer was permissible behind the righteous and the wicked alike.

This, then, is their proof from the matter of prayer, and it is their strongest proof. We have demonstrated its invalidity after establishing everything that reached us of their narrations concerning it.

We did not restrict ourselves to what the person whose statement we mentioned restricted himself to—namely, only the report of ʿĀʾishah—and weaken it, lest someone who wished to establish that claim should bring other reports besides it, such as those we have mentioned, thereby causing the matter to become confused for someone whose knowledge is limited and whose understanding is slight.

The Claimed Virtues of Abū Bakr

As for what the person whose statement we previously mentioned said concerning their claim, “Perhaps Abū Bakr possessed virtues of which we have no knowledge,” they have indeed mentioned virtues for him, according to their claim.

We are not saying that he possessed no virtue or precedence. Rather, we have already mentioned that scarcely anyone among people is mentioned in a report without some virtue being mentioned for him.

But we have also stated that the person in whom the virtues are combined is superior to one in whom only some of them are found. Possessing some virtue does not mean that one must be compared with those who lack those virtues.

Among the virtues they transmitted concerning Abū Bakr is his early acceptance of Islam, and that ʿAlī’s acceptance of Islam before him occurred when ʿAlī was already an adult.

I have previously briefly mentioned the invalidity of what they use as proof for this, and that is sufficient without prolonging the discussion.

The person whose statement we related concerning ʿAlī’s acceptance of Islam said:

“They agree that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, accepted Islam before Abū Bakr, except that they claim his acceptance of Islam occurred while he was a child.”

He said:

“Thus, they are obliged to accept our affirmation that he accepted Islam before Abū Bakr. Their claim that he accepted Islam while he was a child, however, is not acceptable without proof.”

He said:

“If someone says: ‘Your claim that he accepted Islam while he was an adult is itself a rejected claim,’ we say:

As for Islam, it is established, and its legal status became obligatory for him through the call and the affirmation. When the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, called him to Islam, commanded him to believe, and began with him before the other people, we know that he did not do this with him if his belief were impermissible.”

If it is said: “Perhaps he did this as an act of instruction/upbringing.”

We say:

That would only be the case in a land of faith, in the context of upbringing and birth [into the faith]. As for a land of polytheism and warfare, that is not permissible—especially at the beginning of the mission.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, would not abandon what he had been commanded and sent to accomplish and restrict himself to calling children

[to Islam]. Their being called [to Islam] would not be permissible, and the land was a land of polytheism.

It is therefore not permissible to occupy oneself with a voluntary act before the obligatory act.

And why would he not have called ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him?

There is no precedent in the Sunnah for the children of polytheists to be called to Islam and separated from their fathers.

Maturity and ʿAlī's Early Acceptance of Islam

This person said:

"An adult has a limit, and among people there are differences in the speed with which maturity is reached and in the completeness of their intellects. This is well known from the differences among people in knowledge.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, was known in his youth for dignity, forbearance, truthfulness, and soundness of intellect. His rank in this respect was unlike what is ordinarily known of the ranks of children.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, followed him in this regard. Therefore, he deserved to have from him the position of Hārūn with respect to Mūsā, peace be upon them both."

God, exalted be He, said concerning Yaḥyā:

"And We gave him judgment while he was a child." [1]

God's choosing of whomever He chooses through His grace cannot be measured against what is customary among people, because the exceptional case [khāṣṣ] is not the same as the general case [ʿāmm].

This person mentioned many arguments concerning such matters. We have already presented enough earlier to dispense with them.

It is sufficient, among these arguments and others, that if ʿAlī's Islam had not been an Islam [in the full sense], he would not have boasted of it before the members of the council of consultation, nor would they have acknowledged his merit, nor would the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, have mentioned it and counted it among his virtues.

We have already discussed this at a previous place in this book.

This also, as we have mentioned, is contradicted by Abū Bakr's own action, because he put ʿUmar forward, while among the Muslims whom he put ahead were many who had accepted Islam before him.

"al-Ṣiddīq"

Among the virtues they relate for Abū Bakr is that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, called him *Ṣiddīq* [the Truthful].

We have already mentioned, in numerous reports, that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

"You are al-Ṣiddīq al-Akbar [the Greatest Truthful One]."

This name also occurs in the Book of God generally for believers, in the saying of God, exalted be He:

"Those who believe in God and His messengers—they are the truthful and the witnesses with their Lord." [2]

And if that designation was specific [to Abū Bakr], why should it have been exclusive to Abū Bakr without thereby making him superior to anyone else?

For this reason, he said to them:

"You have placed me in authority over you, and I am not the best of you."

Abū Bakr in the Cave

They said that among his virtues was his being with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, in the cave, and that God described him as his companion, saying:

"The second of two, when the two were in the cave, when he said to his companion: 'Do not grieve; indeed God is with us.'" [3]

One of those from the Shīʿah who debated them about this said:

"Companionship may be with the righteous or with the wicked. God, exalted be He, has described in His Book the companionship of a believer with an unbeliever."

[The words between the parentheses are missing from the original manuscript and are present in manuscript B.]

"And he entered his garden while wronging himself. He said: 'I do not think that this will ever perish. And I do not think that the Hour will come. And if I am returned to my Lord, I will surely find something better than this as a place of return.'

His companion, while conversing with him, said to him: 'Do you disbelieve in Him who created you from dust, then from a drop, then fashioned you as a man? But as for me, He is God, my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with my Lord.'" [4]

He said:

"As for the Messenger of God's saying, 'Do not grieve; indeed God is with us,' [5] this was a prohibition against, and disapproval of, the grief that had occurred in him.

Had it not been an act of disobedience, he would not have prohibited him from it, because the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, does not prohibit obedience; rather, he prohibits disobedience."

They said:

"What merit do they claim for him in the statement, 'Indeed God is with us'?

For God, exalted be He, is with everyone, as He says:

"There is no secret conversation of three except that He is their fourth, nor of five except that He is their sixth, nor fewer than that nor more except that He is with them." [6]

And He says:

"They conceal themselves from people, but they cannot conceal themselves from God, and He is with them." [7]

And He says:

"Indeed God is with those who are mindful of Him and those who do good." [8]

Thus, He has mentioned that He is with the righteous and the wicked."

He said:

"ʿAlī, peace be upon him, was at that time lying on the bed of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, offering himself in his place.

He had informed him that the polytheists had conspired together to kill him.

In that, he was superior to Abū Bakr."

Abū Bakr's Spending of His Wealth

They mentioned among the virtues of Abū Bakr that he had accepted Islam while possessing wealth, and that he spent it in the path of God and used it to support others during hardship and at the time of the Messenger of God's migration, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

It is said to them:

This is not unknown or denied; he certainly possessed a virtue in this.

But as for that virtue making him equal to ʿAlī, peace be upon him, let alone superior to him, then no.

For God, exalted be He, imposed upon the believers jihād in His path with their wealth and their selves.

The one who strives with his own self and with whatever wealth he is able to provide, even if it is little, is superior to the one who strives with his wealth without his own self, even if that wealth is abundant.

This is because giving one's own self, together with the little wealth that the giver leaves himself without any other [resource], is superior to giving some of one's wealth while withholding one's own self.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, never ceased, from the time he accepted Islam, to offer himself and whatever wealth he was capable of and found, in the path of God, exalted be He.

Abū Bakr, nor anyone else with whom he might be compared in this regard, came close to him in this matter.

For when wealth is given away, it may be replaced; but once the self is lost, there is no means of restoring it.

The Hijrah of Abū Bakr and the Role of ʿAlī

They claim that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was his migration with the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, from Mecca to Medina, and that he alone, apart from all the other people, accompanied him in this migration. They regard this as a virtue.

But ʿAlī's virtue was that he remained behind for several days after the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, when he appointed him as his deputy.

He entrusted him with the succession over his family, the repayment of his debts, and the delivery of whatever trusts and deposits he had to those to whom they belonged.

This was despite the anger of the polytheists toward him, because they had intended to kill him on the night of the Messenger's departure. ʿAlī lay down in the Messenger's bed, deceiving them through his own person and concealing the Messenger's whereabouts from them.

They knew his position with the Messenger, and therefore they were among the people most enraged against him.

But God, exalted be He, protected him from them, defended him, and turned their force away from him.

Thus, throughout the period that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, remained in Mecca, he was in great fear, under threats and warnings, and in the loneliness resulting from the loss of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and the loss of the companionship and presence to which he had become accustomed.

Abū Bakr traveled to Medina in a state of security, comfort, goodness, and abundance.

Thus, ʿAlī's superiority over Abū Bakr in this matter is neither unknown nor hidden nor concealed.

"The Two Elders of the People of Paradise"

Among the virtues they attribute to Abū Bakr is their claim that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

"Abū Bakr and ʿUmar are the two leaders of the elders of the people of Paradise."

This has not been established.

And even if it were established, it would not give them superiority over ʿAlī, peace be upon him, because neither the elderly nor the old enter Paradise; rather, its inhabitants enter it as young people, as has been related from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

Thus, if the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, did say this, he merely made them leaders over those of his companions who had been testified to as being in Paradise and who were elders.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, at that time had not yet reached old age.

And the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

"Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are the two leaders of the young people of Paradise,"

and their father is better than the two of them.

This is a stronger indication of virtue, because the leadership of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn over the young people of Paradise could encompass everyone in it, since all of them are young.

And the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, distinguished ʿAlī, peace be upon him, by a degree above their degree.

Thus, what has been transmitted concerning him is greater than what has been transmitted concerning Abū Bakr.

"Follow Those after Me"

They said that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was the Messenger of God's saying:

"Follow those who come after me: Abū Bakr and ʿUmar."

It has also been narrated that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, applied this generally to all his Companions, saying:

"My Companions are like the stars; whichever of them you follow, you will be guided."

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, also said:

“I am satisfied for my community with what Ibn Umm ʿAbd”—meaning Ibn Masʿūd—“was satisfied with.”

This is a statement that the Messenger of God applied generally and did not make exclusive. Therefore, the virtue belongs to the one to whom it was specifically attributed.

Abū Bakr's Proximity to the Prophet

They said that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, would bring him close in his sitting.

Being brought close in one's seat is not something that necessitates superiority.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, would receive delegations of the Arabs. He would bring forward those among them who were senior in age and those of precedence among them.

In his presence were Companions who were superior, in the sight of God and in his own sight, to those whom he brought close.

He even spread his cloak for one of them and said:

“When the nobleman of a people comes to you, honor him.”

It is customary among people that a man may bring close to himself someone who has come to him from a distance, rather than his own family, close relations, and children.

Moreover, there are reports concerning his bringing ʿAlī, peace be upon him, close and saying about him what we have mentioned—something whose superiority over Abū Bakr and others cannot be ignored.

[And the most famous and greatest example of this is that] he closed their doors opening into his mosque, while he left the door of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, open into it.

This is the true proximity.

And he called for ʿAlī at the time of his death and rested against his chest, and died in that position, leaning upon him.

“Khalīfat Rasūl Allāh”

They said that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was that the Muslims called him “the Caliph of the Messenger of God” when he appointed him to lead the prayer.

We have already demonstrated the invalidity of their argument concerning the prayer.

The one who was appointed as the Messenger of God’s deputy over his family and over his community has a greater right to be called “the Caliph of the Messenger of God.”

We have already mentioned the Messenger's appointment of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, and his saying:

"You are to me in the position that Hārūn was to Mūsā."

Hārūn was indeed the successor of Mūsā among his people.

God, exalted be He, related this from him in His saying:

"Take my place among my people." [9]

The Claim of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as "Ministers"

They said that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was the Prophet's saying:

"My two ministers from the people of heaven are Jibrīl and Mīkāʾīl, and from the people of earth, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar."

Even if this report were established, it would not give them superiority over ʿAlī, peace be upon him, because what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said concerning him goes beyond the status of ministry.

For ministry entails consultation and opinion, whereas the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, says to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

"You are my brother and my *walī*, you are like my own self, you are from me and I am from you."

These are statuses that go beyond ministry.

We have mentioned these and other matters resembling them previously.

I also mentioned the statement of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, to the Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib when he gathered them:

"O Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib! God has never sent a prophet except that He appointed for him a brother, a minister, an heir, a legatee, and a successor over his family.

So who among you will rise and pledge allegiance to me on the condition that he be my brother, my minister, my heir, my legatee, and my successor over my family?"

They held back.

He said the same thing three times.

Then he said:

"If none of you rises, your position will be in someone other than yourselves, and then you will regret it."

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, rose from among them and pledged allegiance to him for what he had called them to.

The Claim That ʿAlī Preferred Abū Bakr and ʿUmar

They said that among the virtues of Abū Bakr was that ʿAlī, peace be upon him, said:

"The best of this community after its Prophet is Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, and I find no one who gives me precedence over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar except that I would flog him with the punishment prescribed for a slanderer."

This is a report that is not sound because of the falsehood contained in it.

The prescribed punishment is not required for someone who gives precedence to an inferior over a superior.

Even if he had said, "The best of people is Abū Bakr," that would not establish his superiority over him.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, said:

"The earth has not carried, nor the sky covered, anyone more truthful in speech than Abū Dharr."

Yet Abū Dharr was not, by this statement, more truthful than the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny.

This is a customary usage in speech: a man may say, "So-and-so is the most generous of people," or "the most giving of people," without intending that there is absolutely no one more generous or more giving than him.

A man may swear, "No one from among the people will enter my house," and then enter it himself, without thereby violating his oath.

And he may say, "Of all people, I find so-and-so most beloved to me," while his own self is more beloved to him than that person.

Some of them have transmitted this report with an explanation: He was asked, "And what about you?"

He replied:

"We are a household with whom no one else is to be compared."

It is also possible that his statement, "The best of this community after its Prophet are Abū Bakr and ʿUmar," means that those who assumed their positions after them among the usurpers were worse for the community, and that the two of them were better than those [later rulers] in their conduct toward the people.

End of Part Seven

The seventh part of *Sharḥ al-Akhbār fī Faḍā'il al-A'immah al-Aṭhār* has ended.

Praise belongs to God for His blessings, and His blessings upon His Messenger, our master Muḥammad, and upon his purified Imams among his family, and His peace and greetings upon them.

God is sufficient for us, and He is the best trustee, the best *mawlā*, and the best helper.

And there is no power and no strength except through God, the Most High, the Most Great.

Footnotes

[1] Maryam: 12.

[2] al-Tawbah: 40.

[3] al-Ḥadīd: 19.

[4] al-Kahf: 35–38.

[5] al-Ḥadīd: 19.

[6] al-Mujādilah: 7.

[7] al-Nisāʾ: 108.

[8] al-Naḥl: 128.

[9] al-Aʿrāf: 142.

Endnotes

[i] Bashīr; and it is said that his name was Rifāʿah ibn ʿAbd al-Mundhir al-Anṣārī.

[ii] He was ʿAmr ibn Qays ibn Zāʾidah ibn al-Aṣamm (Jundub) ibn Hurm ibn Rawāḥah al-Qurashī al-ʿĀmirī, the muezzin. His mother was Umm Maktūm, ʿĀtikah bint ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAnkathah. He was the maternal cousin of Khadījah, the Mother of the Believers. He migrated to Medina and participated in the conquest of al-Qādisiyyah, where he was martyred.