GHADEER

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In the Name of Allah

Ghadeer Khum is located in a place called Jahfa between Mecca and Madina. A place in a desert where water gathers is named Ghadeer. Since it was like the barrel of diers and some of the tribes used to wash their dyed clothes there, it became known as Khum.

The Prophet traveled from Madina to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage there. It was in the tenth year of Hijra. News of his journey had reached the ears of the Muslims located in various locations. In order to be in the company of the Prophet and perform the rituals of the pilgrimage along with the Prophet, many groups and classes of people had gathered in Mecca.

The Prophet completing the pilgrimage delivered several speeches among the crowds. He then decided to return to Madina. The crowds continued to accompany the Prophet. On his journey back the Prophet reached the hilly spot of JAHFA in the desert, also known a GHADEER KHUM. It was here that the Angel of Revelation, Gabreil, descended upon the Prophet with this verse of the Holy Quran:

“Oh, Messenger. Proclaim what descended to you from your Lord; and if you do not so, you have not proclaimed His message. God protects you from the people.”

The event of GHADEER shows us that the Prophet’s life was soon to end, because he lived for only seventy days thereafter. On the other hand there was no Divine decree or commandment that the Prophet did not proclaim to the people. Hence, it is quite evident from this verse that the issue of succession to him is the point. The Prophet acted accordingly, then and there. After the noon prayers, he gave the order to have a pulpit made which was done so by heaping the camel’s saddles on top of each other. Everyone gathered around this pulpit. According to historians the gathering of that day was 120,000 people.

The Prophet went on the pulpit. The people were all too anxious to know the importance and the magnitude of the reason to as why the Prophet had stopped...
in that heat of the desert to speak. Not allowing him to postpone it to be made in
the ease and the comfort of a town. Every indication was to show that the matter
was of great importance. The Prophet predicted the nearness of his death, which
he had also said in Mecca too. Then he spoke of his being the Prophet and that
of his having acted upon the will of God in announcing the revelations to them
and that he had to announce this last issue in completion of the religion. After
these words he called Ali Bin Abi Taleb. Ali went next to him on the pulpit. The
Prophet then took his hand and lifted it above his head so that as historians say,
the whiteness of their armpits showed.

There in the hot searing desert, holding Ali’s hand high above his head,
automatically stopping all passing caravans, the Holy Prophet’s voice rang out;
“To whomsoever I was the guardian, Ali to be his guardian.” Then the Prophet
blessed those who would help Ali and cursed those who would refrain from
helping him.

Under such a ceremony Ali was installed by the Prophet as his successor. The
religion of Islam, according to this verse, was made consummate and perfect.
“Today I have completed for you your religion and completed my bounties
upon you and am pleased for Islam to be your religion.”

People from that gathering approached Ali one by one congratulated him and
kissed his hand as a token of their resignation to him. After all this the Prophet
bestowed the title of ‘AMIRULMOMENEEN’, Lord of the Believers, to Ali
and ordered at to call him by his new title. According to some historians the
Prophet remained three days and nights at Ghadeer so that all the people could
kiss his hand - the act of surrendering to his authority.

The event of Ghadeer that we briefly passed over is the backbone in the
history of Islam. All the scholars such as Abu Rihan Bironi, Khaja Naseeruddin
Tosi and the famous philosopher Farabi have mentioned it. The philosopher
Farabi has analyzed the IMAMAT on that basis. Ibn Sina in his book SHIFA
has mentioned the event of Ghadeer with great importance and suggested that it
was the best method of installing a successor. Besides and apart from the Shia
scholars who all are all authorities in this field, tens and tens of Sunni scholars,
historians, and interpreters have also mentioned this event. Among them are
Tabari, Ibn Atheer, and Ahmad Hanbal...

In our own times Allama Amini, the clergy and scholar; in his great book
AL-GHADEER has expounded the event by quoting 360 sources from the
Sunni scholars. Of that book eleven volumes have so far been printed.

The event of Ghadeer is not the only proof or authority to establish the
caliphate of Ali. There are several traditions of the Prophet to show that Ali is
his only successor. Of those several, we will only briefly mention here an event
that occurred in the third year of the Prophet’s prophet hood.

The Prophet till three years after his pro prophet hood had not made his
mission public. After an elapse of three years he was assigned to invite his own tribe to Islam. The Prophet ordered Ali to invite forty men from his tribe Quraish. The Prophet disclosed to them the mission and his prophet hood. Then he asked: “Now who is there among you to help me in this mission so that he can be my successor and my Caliph after me?” Nobody replied to him except Ali, saying, “I will help you.”

The Prophet repeated his question three times. No one responded to him except Ali, on the third time the Prophet turned to Ali and said: “You will be my caliph and my successor after me.”

There is a famous tradition - the saying of the Prophet. All the scholars from both the sects, Shia and Sunni, have narrated it. And the tradition is this:

“I leave behind me two great things amidst you - The Book of God (the Quran) and my own family (that is Ali and the other Imams, his sons). You Muslims will not go astray as long as you follow the both.”

As such, it becomes evident that the successor of the Prophet should be fixed or installed by God Himself. In support of this we refer to the incident of Bani Aqmer Bin Sasa’ a. The incident runs thus: The Prophet invited the tribe to Islam. The head of the tribe asked: “If we follow you and if you succeed in establishing your religion; then would you give us the charge of the affairs after you will be no more?” The Prophet replied: “The matter belongs to God. He does however He wishes.”

Reason too dictates the same. There comes a Messenger from God; he then leaves his people and the religion without a guardian or a caretaker giving the people a room to do whatever they desire. Reason spurns such a thing. In such a case what would remain of the religion? When things go such, Yazid Bin Mawiya and Motawakkil Abbasi could have easily become the caliph of the Prophet. It is common sense that a religion has a system regulated by God. Therefore, every thing of it should be regulated by God. The Prophet was quick aware of this fact. He introduced Ali as his successor on every occasion of his proclamations of the Divine decrees. Ghadeer was one among several.

Now let us see who Ali was and what distinction he had, that he became the choice of God for the office of the leadership of the Moslems in succession to the Prophet.

Since his childhood, Ali was brought up by the Prophet. (The year of drought had hit Mecca. The Prophet by way of sympathy with his uncle, Abu Taleb, took Ali, one among his cousins, and kept him with himself in his home. Ali (hen was a boy of six years.) Amidst all the people Ali was the first one to comply with the call of the Prophet to accept Islam. Ali was then between ten or twelve years of age. This shows that since his infancy Ali was acquainted with Islam and Islam became rooted in him to the extent that as blood it flowed in his veins. Next to the Prophet there was no one else except Ali who had deeply
rooted faith in Islam.

Khaja Naseeruddin Tosi describes thus: “Ali was cleverer than all. He was a man of strong sense. He was always in the company of the Prophet. In generosity, he was the foremost of all. Besides the Prophet he was one of the most pious ones and great worshippers. Among all, the preference of faith goes only to him. He was the man of eloquence in which his word was strength and faith to which others were short. His opinion was to the point and most correct while others erred. Towards protection of the Quran and towards the execution of its commands his attention surpassed all.

According to an English thinker and historian, Thomas Carlyle, Ali was a man of brave nature and a great soul. Love and virtue flowed from the fountain of his conscience while flames of bravery leaped from his heart. His courage surpassed that of a lion but blended with kindness.

Poles Salama, a Christian law scholar of Beirut says: “In judgment he never allowed a distinction. Whatever to be distributed among the people he used to do equally and on parity. He never drew a line of distinction between a servant and a master. The condition of the miserable ones used to upset him. It was always before his sight that the pains and misery of life, like the rhyme of a verse, is felt by all people.”

This shows the merit that qualified Ali to be the choice of God. And on the pedestal of these realities the Shia sect adhered to the path pointed out by the Prophet. In other words they obeyed Ali in his capacity as the leader of Islam, the Imam of the nation, leader of the people, executor of the commandments of the Holy Quran, the protector of justice and law and the guardian of the rights of the masses; in short, the immediate successor and the rightful caliph of the Prophet. They recognized him as the leader who translated the Quranic banners into practice. Ali always adhered to the contents of the Ghadeer that had taken place by God’s decree. He thus remained faithful to Islam, to the Prophet of Islam and to the commandments of Islam to such an extent that he neither added anything thereto nor did he reduced there from. He did not walk the spots where the Prophet had not set his foot. He only followed the footprints of the Prophet.

Had they acted, after the demise of the Prophet, in line with the decree dictated by the Prophet at? Ghadeer or in line with the Prophet’s declarations or various and several occasions to the effect that Ali was his successor, Islam would have had been much stronger worldwide. Indeed, justice too would have ruled from horizon to horizon. Walter, the French philosopher, says this: “The last wish of Mohammed was not acted upon. He had installed Ali in his own place.”

It is a remarkable fact to mention here that the event of GHADDEER is not only a historical one, but a religious event based on truth and was the truth is distinguished from the false. Hence, its importance binds every Muslim to
investigate the truth and stick to it once found. The contents of Ghadeer are such that they mould life and society. The main thing that comes to light in Ghadeer is the right and correct choice of the leadership, guardianship and the guidance for the people of truth. One should believe in the just government of the just leader. An example of such a government can not be found beyond that of Ali himself, which lasted nearly five years when he was the caliph, the torch of Ghadeer is burning from age to age in our minds and from generation to generation. Its spirit is in the skeleton of societies. To discuss this issue of Ghadeer so often and so repeatedly is only to point to the truth and preserve its challenge, so as to keep the banner of justice high against tyranny and ignorance. As such, Ghadeer is the issue of mankind. The voice of the Prophet is still ringing in the ears of those that seek truth and defend the truth. It is the obligation of man to accept the fact and remind others of it. And it shall be as long as man is alive.

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