

Book Introduction

The Sermon of Prophet Muhammad at

Ghadir Khum

Author and translator: Vahid Majd*

"Certainly, I just conveyed what I have been ordered to convey as an argument against everyone, be him present or absent, a direct witness or not, and already born or not yet born. Hence, everyone who is present should convey (this sermon) to those who are absent, every parent should convey it to his/her children, (and they should continue to do so) until the Day of Judgement."

*A part of Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) last —
public sermon delivered in Ghadir Khum*

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** Book introduced by: Hamid Shahedi

The sermon of Prophet Muhammad at Ghadir Khum prepared by Dr.Majd, as its name denotes, is a book on the last sermon of Prophet. It is 123 pages, publishing in 2005, in 5000 copies by Naba Cultural organization. It divided into two main parts “Introduction and the Sermon”. The first chapter of the book is an introduction of 40 pages – a pretty extended introduction, very rich in shaping background knowledge essential for studying the sermon. The second chapter is allocated to sermon including the Arabic text of the sermon of the holy Prophet with its translation.

As the introduction part of the book is very well-designed and informative regarding introducing the book and the sermon per.se. I take the advantage of it, and here and by, I include the intact parts of it in this introduction.

Chapter One

Introduction

This part can be divided into four parts:

- The Ghadir Event and Its Significance

It starts with picturing the day of Ghadir Khum: “By the order of Allah, the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) stopped at the pond of Khum, gathered the crowd of pilgrims, and delivered his last universal speech. ...” (p.1). The main issue that the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) addressed in his speech in Ghadir Khum is highlighted by the author: “Allah appointed Ali Ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.) as the guardian (*Wali*), the master (*Mawla*), the leader (*Imam*), and the commander (*Amir*) of all believing men and women, the

deputy and the executor of his affairs (*Wasi*), and his successor (*Khalifa*). ... Whoever follows him (and his sayings) is a believer under the guardianship of Allah, and whoever turns away from him (or his sayings) is a disbeliever under the guardianship of Satan.”(p.3)

An interesting point declared here is underscoring the existence of bilateral relation between the guardian and the people. “Observing *al-Walaya* by people means adhering to the guardian and acknowledging his authority by heart, tongue, and action. On the other hand, the action of *al-Walaya* by the guardian means offering protection from evil, spiritual assistance, care, support, and guidance for his adherents. A divinely appointed guardian guards his adherents from misguidance, spiritual destruction, wrongdoing, and sin as much as they adhere to him and his commands.” (p.3)

- What Does the Sermon Establish for Ali (p.b.u.h.)?

-- the first sub-part is dealt with answering this question “Does successorship only refers to political authority?” which in response we read: “... the Prophet wanted to pass on much more than political authority to Imam Ali. People will benefit from their Imams... whether or not the guardians that Allah appointed become a ruling authority, the believers of all generations have a duty to abide by their instructions...” (p.8) “it is also interesting to observe that the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) mentioned the titles *Wali*, *Mawla*, and *Imam* for Ali (p.b.u.h.) in his sermon over 27 times, whereas he used the word *Khalifa* for him only three times.”(p.9)

The next subparts are triggered at revealing the rights and virtues of Ali, his followers, and enemies and our obligations towards the sermon.

--The rights and virtues of Imam Ali and other Imams:

The followings are some of the virtues confirms by the sermon of Ghadir Khum to Ali's merits and the Imams' after him counted by the author:

1. Having absolute authority over the believers, decreed to them by Allah...
2. Having priority over people... .
3. Being the leaders of the believers and the medium of divine guidance after the Prophet
- 4....

--His Followers, His Enemies, and Their Fate:

In the sermon of Ghadir Khum, the Prophet describes the followers and the enemies of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) and the Imams after him, and informs them of their destinies.

--the Ghadir event leaves no excuse: as Lady Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, said:

"Allah did not leave any argument or any excuse for anyone after the event of Ghadir Khum."¹(p.17)

-Our Obligations Towards the Sermon and the Event

In this part the author aims at clarifying some of our duties towards the Ghadir event, as what goes at following:

--The necessity of submitting to the Prophet's sayings

¹Dala'il al-Imama, p. 38. See also, *al-Khisal*, vol. 1, p. 173; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 30, p. 124.

--Learning, acknowledging, and protecting the text of the sermon

--Acting upon the instructions of the sermon and observing the covenant

--Transmitting the sermon through modern ways

--Keeping alive the event and observing its anniversary

--Thanking Allah for this greatest blessing

The forth part of the introduction which is an interesting part allocated to go over:

Some Statistics About the Text of the Sermon

“Here are some statistical facts about the sermon: (p.33)

The Prophet explicitly mentioned the name of Imam Ali in his sermon about forty times besides many more instances that he referred to him by pronoun.

He repeatedly used the following titles for Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) in this sermon:

Wali and *Mawla* (guardian) fifteen times.

Imam (leader) twelve times.

Amir (commander) seven times.

Wasi (executor of the will and deputy of the affairs) seven times.

Akh (brother) four times.

Khalifa (successor) three times.

Hadi (guide) three times.

The Prophet explicitly mentioned the word *A'Imma* (Imams), referring to the eleven Imams after Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.), nine times in his sermon.

“.....”

An Overview of the Sermon

In this part, the author prepares an outline of what is expressed in the sermon by Prophet. I take the advantage of comprehensibility of this part in providing you with a brief look over the sermon cited in following page in “chapter two”.

Documentation of the sermon

As the author cites: “Different pieces of the sermon of the Prophet at the pond of Khum are found separately in many books ...but the most distinguished of those Is al-Ihtijaj, compiled by Ahmad Ibn Ali al-Tabarsi... .”

In this part Dr.Majd is compared the other sources which mentioned this sermon with minor differences in wording; then in the text itself he precisely highlights the differences by putting them into brackets. The sources include the sermon are as follows:

**al-Yaqin*, Sayyid Ibn Tawus

**Rawdhat al-Wa'idhin*

**Iqbal al-A'mal*

* *al-Tahsin*

Chapter Two

The second chapter of the book, as mentioned earlier, allocated to the sermon of ghadir khum.

Of the interesting classifications is dividing the sermon into different parts which gives an overview of the whole sermon before reading it; it clearly depicts the starting point, and the direction of the sermon: what the sermon is about to achieve. According to the author, mentioned in the introduction part of his book (p. 33-35), the ten major parts of the sermon are:

1. The opening of the sermon is dedicated to praising Allah and regarding Him pure from any resemblance with His creation. It includes great lessons on the Unity of the Essence of Allah. In addition, it contains important information concerning His names, attributes, and actions.

2. This part of the speech informs the listeners of the reasons behind delivering this sermon. It includes the revelations that came down to the Messenger of Allah just before the event, and the divine order concerning what he must convey to the people. It also explains the reason that the Prophet has delayed the speech until he reached that place.

3. The Prophet officially declares Allah's decree regarding the appointment of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) and the pure Imams after him. He then enumerates some of the virtues of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.), his rights, and the duties of people regarding him.

4. The Prophet announces that Allah has completed His religion through the leadership of Imam Ali and reminds people more about his exclusive virtues.

5. The Prophet recites some verses of the Holy Quran concerning the hypocrites, and states what they intend to do after him. He advises people against violating Allah's commands and emphasizes that what will happen after him is but a test for people, which will distinguish the believers from the disbelievers.

6. The Prophet gives a detailed description of the followers and the enemies of Ahl al-Bait, and informs people of the final destiny of each, giving references to many verses of the Holy Quran.

7. To give hope to the believers despite all the future misconduct of the enemies of Allah, the Prophet informs people that justice and faith will finally prevail, and the righteous will inherit the earth. He dedicates this part of his speech to describe Imam al-Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) and to confirm his advent as a promise from Allah and His decisive decree.

8. Reciting some verses of the Holy Quran, the Prophet informs people that pledging allegiance to Imam Ali is, in fact, identical to pledging allegiance to Allah, the mighty and the majestic.

9. The Prophet emphasizes that the divine commandments including the obligatory and prohibited actions will never change in future, and that Imam Ali and other Imams of his offspring are fully aware of all final commandments and their limits. They are the expounders of the religion and the divinely appointed judges for any question pertaining to religion.

10. The Prophet asks people to recite the sentences of the covenant with him. He takes their verbal oath of allegiance to Imam Ali and other Imams of his family. He also asks people who can reach him to confirm their oath by shaking hands with him, Ali, Hasan, and al-Husain, peace be upon them.