

Imam Ali's Priority in Belief in God

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Reports of his Priority in Belief in God and His Apostle and of his Being the First of all Responsible Men in (Faith)

[Abu al-Jaysh al-Muzaffar b. Muhammad al-Balkhi informed me: Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi Thalj informed us: Abu alHasan Ahmad b. (Muhammad b.) al-Qasim al-Barqi told us: `Abd al-Rahman b. Salih al-Azdi told me: Asad b. `Ubayda told us on the authority of Yahya b. °Af b. Qays, on the authority of his father (`Affil' b. Qays),² who said:)

I was sitting with al-`Abbas b. `Abd al-Muttalib, may God be pleased with him, in Mecca, before the affairs of the Prophet became known to the public. A man came and looked up towards the sky where the sun hovered above. He turned in the direction of the Ka`ba and stood to pray. Then a youth came and stood at his right and a woman came and stood behind them both. The man bowed, and the youth and the woman bowed. The man raised his hands and the youth and the woman raised their hands. Then he prostrated and they both prostrated.

"`Abbas!" I exclaimed, "it is a fantastic affair!"

"Indeed, it is a fantastic affair," replied al-`Abbas. "Do you know who that man is? He is Muhammad b. `Abd Allah b. `Abd alMuttalib, my cousin. Do you know who that youth is? He is `Ali b. Abi Talib, my cousin. Do you know who that woman is? She is Khadija, daughter of Khuwaylid. This cousin of mine (i.e. Muhammad) has told me that his Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who has ordered him to carry out this religion (din) which he is practising. No, by God, there are not any on the face of the earth, who practise this religion except these three."

[Abu Hafs `Umar b. Muhammad al-Sayrafi informed me: Muhammad b. Ahmad b. AbT Thalj told me on the authority of Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Barql, on the authority of Abu Salih Sahl b. Silih - it was about the year 100 (A. H.) - who said I heard Abu al-Mu'ammara `Abbad b. `Abd al-Samad who said: I heard Anas b. Malik say:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said: "The angels bless me and `All for seventy years, because (for a time) only 'Ali and I raised the testimony to heaven that there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Apostle of God."

[By the same chain of transmitters on the authority of Ahmad b. (Muhammad b.) al-Qasim al-Barql: Ishaq told us: Nuh b. Qays told us: Sulayman b. `All al-Hgshimi Abu Fatima told us: I heard Mu adha al-`Adawiyya say:]

I heard `All b. Abi Talib say on the pulpit at Basra: "I am the greater testifier of truth (siddTq) for I believed before Abt7 Bakr believed; I became a Muslim before he became a Muslim."

[Abu Nasr Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Muqrl al-Basrl alSayrawani informed : Abu Bakr Muhammad b. (Ahmad b.) Abl Thalj told us: Abu Muhammad al-Nawfahtold us on the authority of Muhammad b. `Abd al-Hamld, on the authority of `Umar b. `Abd alGhiffar al-Faqlml who said: IbrahTm b. Hayyan reported to me qt the authority of Abu `Abd Allah, retainer of Banu Hashim, on the authority of Abu Sukhayla, who said:]

I and `Ammar went on the pilgrimmage. We stopped at the house of Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, and stayed with him for three days. When the time of our departure was at hand, I said to him: "Abu Dharr, we consider that nothing except confusion has come over the people. What is your view?"

"Cleave to the Book and `All b. Abi Talib," he replied, "then bear witness to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, who said: "`All was the first to believe in me and will be the first to shake my hand in greetings on the Day of Resurrection. He is the greatest testifier of the truth (sicldiq) and discerner of truth and falsehood. He is the chief of the believers and money is the chief cause of wrong-doing.' -

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God be pleased with him, comments: The reports with this meaning are numerous as testimonies (of it) are bulky.

[Among such are the words of Khuzayma b. Thabit al-Ansari, the man who gave two testimonies, in what was reported to me by Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad b. `Imran al-Marzubani on the authority of Muhammad b. al-`Abbas who said:]

Muhammad b. Yazid al-Nahwi recited to us on the authority of Ibn `A'isha (the words) of Khuzayma b. Thabit al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him:

I never thought that this affair would leave the clan of Hashim, and then within it (that) it would leave Abu Hasan (i.e. 'Ali).

Was he not the first to pray with their (i.e. the Muslims') gibla (direction of prayer), and the most knowledgeable man in traditions and practice?

(Was he not) the last of men with whom the Prophet made a covenant (ahd), and the one whose helper was Gabriel in washing and shrouding (the body of the Prophet)?

He it is in whom there is what others are not distinguished by. There is not among the people the good which is in him.

What is it which makes you reject him, for we know him? Yet your pledge of allegiance is made .through the greatest cheating