

An analysis of Allamah Amini's thoughts based on Al-Ghadir

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Abstract: The two words "Amini" and "al-Ghadir" are interwoven in cultural and literary discussions in Iran and other Islamic countries. However, many social classes, even educated classes and religious center, either are unfamiliar with or only have a general knowledge of, this unique scholar and his great work "al-Ghadir". To analyze the thoughts of Allamah Amini, one must study his book al-Ghadir to identify the mission and message of this book and to know the thoughts of Allamah Amini. Allamah Amini was a deep and comprehensive thinker that had all good attributes of a top writer. It is not exaggerated to say that he was among the rare talents in the field of religious studies. Allamah Amini was favored with the power to convey the truths to educated and cultured classes; the truths that eliminate impurities and doubt. Although he encountered hundreds of blasphemous statements when studying thousands of pages of old and contemporary books, to which he used to refer with a sad tone, author of al-Ghadir always maintained calm and patient morale of a compassionate reformist in responding to such blasphemous criticisms, and never behaved contrary to prestige of a researcher and lover of science and research. He was like a high peak whose high and firm position is not bothered by small grains of sand hitting it, or like a big sea that is not affected by what is thrown in it.

Key words: *Allamah Amini; Al-Ghadir; Nazariyah Karimah; Criticism; Unity of Islam*

1. Introduction

It is very necessary to introduce the essence of Islam at this point of time that is characterized by scientific research, because return to the original Islam as introduced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is necessary for ensuring absolute well-being of human being. If Islam is globalized, and control of human rights and well-being and redemption, which is currently controlled by devils of contemporary era, is taken by Islam, a big contribution will be made to human community. Perhaps, this is aspiration of Shiite scholars in their laborious efforts. As far as introduction of Islam is concerned, is it possible to introduce the essence of Islam and educational principles of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) based on caliphate system? Is it right to introduce Islam based on Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, and opinions of that group of theologian and jurists who developed theology in a way to secure the interest of the said caliphate systems? (Al-Douri, 1950). The answer is absolutely no. Thus, we need to introduce the essence of Islam and the truth of Qur'anic government and leadership of infallible Imams (PBUTH), and this is the task that faithful scholars tried to perform. Scholars like Avicenna discussed philosophy of Ghadir in Shifa, chapter on Imamate and caliphate (Avicenna, 1993). The prominent Muslim scientist and philosopher, Khawjah Nasir al-Din Tusi proved immediate caliphate of Imam Ali

(PBUH) in succession to Prophet Muhammad (Tousi, 1986). Also, the great scientific leader of Baghdad in 5th century A.H. (11th A.D.), Sheikh Mufid (Sheikh Mufi), Sheikh Saduq (Sheikh Saduq, 1993), and Sheikh Tusi (Sheikh Tusi, 1990) did great works in this field. However, in contemporary period, a perfect instance of such contribution to Islamic science and defense of the legitimacy of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) is the masterpiece of Allamah Amini, that is, al-Ghadir (Allamah Amini, 1981).

Now, we proceed to discussion of the magnificence of the thoughts of Allamah Amini, and his work, al-Ghadir.

2. Islamic unity from perspective of Allamah Amini

Allamah Amini was among thinkers and reformists who based his works on the idea of unified Islamic nation, to the extent that the whole of his book "al-Ghadir" reflects this idea.

In his opinion, the factors leading to Islamic unity include:

2.1 Resorting to the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt:

The most important thing that can unit Muslims, lead to Muslims' well-being is resorting to the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt; as these two are the guide of Muslims in reaching well-being and perfection. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "I will reach the Heaven at the Pool of Kawthar before you, you will

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us join me at the same pool later, the pool that is as long as Sana'a (capital of Yemen) and as wide as Basra (a city in the vicinity of Damascus), where there are as many silver jars as there are stars; Beware of how you behave (with) them when I am gone from amongst you" (Allamah Majlisi, 1982); a person said, "O, Rasul Allah, what are these two weighty things (thaqalayn)?" And, Prophet Muhammad said, "The major one is the book of Allah, one end of which is held by the God and other by you, and the minor one is my progeny, and the God has informed that these two will not separate until I reach the pool of Kawthar. So, beware not to abandon them and abide by them or you will be ruined (ibid). The history has shown that people who abandoned Ahl al-Bayt and tried to reach well-being by following the Qur'an alone failed and were suffered much deviation and trouble. Simultaneously with the large deviation from original Islam after death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), another sad event also occurred in Islamic world, whose adverse effects long affected Islamic world. This was prevention of narration and transcription of hadith. Although hadith and words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were the second most important after the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is more important than them, but these two sources are not separable. The first and second caliphs were against narration and compilation of hadith, and driven by political motives, strongly prevented narration and transcription of hadith.

Abu Bakr said, "No words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) must be narrated, and if you were asked a question, you should that the book of God (the Qur'an) is sufficient for you, and you do as the Qur'an says (Zahabi, 1954). In a directive sent to all Islamic territories, Abu Bakr said, "All transcriptions of the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) must be destroyed" (Abu Rayyah). He not only issued this directive, but also strictly warned all companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and hadith recorders against narration and transcription of hadith (Ibn Yazid Qazvini).

Any reasonable and just person who thinks about the ways al-Ghadir provides for Islamic unity impartially will find it beneficial and even necessary for the Islamic nation, and will accept it as a sound basis for realization of Islamic unity, as a large group of Sunni scholars endorsed Allamah Amini after having learned about al-Ghadir. For example, Muhammad Abd al-Qani Hassan Misri wrote in a plaque of honor forwarded to Allamah Amini, "God willing, your clear water pool will serve as the cause of establishment of peace and friendship between Shiite and Sunni brothers, so that they would unite to found the united Islamic nation (Hakimi, 1998). Also, Adil Qazban, manager of Egyptian journal, al-Kitab, said, "The book "al-Ghadir" clarifies rationale behind Shiism; so Sunnis can use it to obtain an accurate knowledge of Shiism. Such accurate knowledge of Shiism can cause proximity between opinions of Shiites and Sunni so that Shiites and Sunnis could form a united front" (Allamah Amini).

On the occasion of one of plaque of honors he received from Egypt for his book al-Ghadir, Allamah Amini clearly explained his opinion under the heading of "Nazariyah Karimah", "People are free to express views and ideas on religion. These (views and ideas) will never tear apart the bond of Islamic brotherhood to which the holy Qur'an has referred by stating that "surely the believers are brethren"; even though academic discussion and theological and religious debates reach a peak. Notwithstanding all the differences that we have in the primary and secondary principles, we, the compilers and writers in nooks and corners of the world of Islam, share a common point and that is belief in the Almighty and His Prophet. A single spirit and one (form of) sentiment exists in all our bodies, and that is the spirit of Islam and the term sincerity. We, the Muslim compilers, all live under the banner of truth and carry out our duties under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Mission of the Holy Prophet (s). The message of all of us is "Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam ... (3:18)" and the slogan of all of us is "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger." Indeed, we are (the members of) the party of Allah and the supporters of his religion" (ibid, preface, vol. 5).

3. Allamah Amini and al-Ghadir: Teacher of Criticism and School of Criticism

The late Allamah Amini wrote the book al-Ghadir to prove one of the most fundamental ideological and political principles of Shiism, "Imamate and authority". He wrote this book based on sources acceptable to Sunnis, and fulfilled this task so carefully and wisely that his work surprises every reader. Criticism has an important role in al-Ghadir, and it can be said that that this book is founded on criticism. Criticism can be divided into several areas from perspective of Allamah Amini: 1- negative destructive disuniting criticism; 2- criticism of negative figures; 3- criticism of incorrect theories; 4- brief criticism; and, 5- detailed criticism, which have been best applied in al-Ghadir.

The important point to note is that such criticisms were not made out of hostility, but rather were posed sincerely and peacefully with aim of uniting different groups of Muslims.

Characteristics of criticism posed by Allamah Amini in al-Ghadir

Allamah Amini followed specific principles and rules in criticizing the negative works, figures, and opinions, some of which are as follows:

3.1. Fidelity in quoting materials

Among the initiatives Allamah Amini took throughout al-Ghadir was to invoke thousands of Shiite and Sunni sources, and especially, the works of credible Sunni authors, in support of his arguments. He first quoted the original text from Sunni sources with fidelity, and without any alteration, and then, having provided the statement of problem, used such

quotations for the purpose of his arguments. The accuracy and fidelity with which he quoted the sources was so much that he was titled "Amin Naql" (trustable in quotation) (Hakimi, 1998). For instance, in proving authority of Imam Ali (PBUH), Allamah used Sunni sources; for example, Umar Ibn Khattab said, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed Ali (PBUH) as the sign and guide" (Qonduz Hanafi). Also, Allamah Amini quoted Sunni scholars who had narrated through trustable chain of narration that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Indeed, Ali is from me and I am from him, and he is the authority for every believer after me" (ibid, p. 19).

3.2 Thorough refutation of criticisms

Allamah Amini frustrates critics. The advantage of such approach is that the reader of al-Ghadir is fully convinced that the criticism in question is false, and comes to believe beyond any doubt that the arguments provided by the author of al-Ghadir in support of Shiism are true. Allamah Amini wisely wrote al-Ghadir in a way that all possible criticisms about this book are already responded to in the same book, so that if an argument presented in al-Ghadir is criticized, the answer to that criticism will be found in al-Ghadir, and therefore, there would be no need for any further attempt to respond to criticisms raised regarding arguments of this book. One of the reasons why al-Ghadir has not been criticized since its first volumes were published half a century ago is that Allamah Amini tried to put his arguments beyond any question. For this purpose, he took measures including:

First: Where a hadith was invoked, Allamah Amini invoked provided proof of the authenticity of hadith and chain of narrators, and also, had it approved by a number of Sunni scholars, because he saw the likelihood that somebody may say that the invoked hadith is not authentic or the chain of narrators of that hadith is not authentic (Allamah Amini, 1982).

Second: He narrated a hadith from different chain of narrators so that no doubt remained about its authenticity (ibid).

Third: He provided many pieces of evidence from different views in substantiation of his claims each. An example is found in case of the chain of liars and hadith fabricators who were 700 in number (ibid.).

Fourth: He provided many Sunni sources in support of his arguments. The reader who carefully reads the book thus comes to believe that its arguments are true. For example, in assessment of chain of narrators of Hadith al-Ghadir, having mentioned 110 grand companions (people who have visited Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who had narrated Hadith al-Ghadir, he said, "Naturally, the number of narrators of this hadith must be several times as many as 110, because the number of companions who heard and recorded this hadith and narrated it to others after returning back home must have been hundreds of thousands, because

passengers usually narrate to others the big events they have witnessed during their journey (Allamah Amini, 1982).

In al-Ghadir, name of 84 of tab'iin (people who didn't visit Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) but visited companions), who narrated Hadith al-Ghadir, were mentioned (ibid, Pp. 145-166), and also, mentioned 360 scholars from 2nd-4th centuries A.H. (8th-10th centuries) who had quoted Hadith al-Ghadir with various chains of narrators (ibid). Allamah Amini was so concerned about this hadith that not only referred to chain of narrators of this hadith in his book, but also referred to people who had referred to chains of narrators of this hadith in their books. In al-Ghadir, Allamah Amini referred to 36 persons who had written about chain of narrators of this hadith (ibid, p. 183). He said that there were books about the event of Pond of Khum that are mentioned in the part on the Prayer of Ghadir (ibid). Allamah Amini said, "I have mentioned the names of tens of Sunni scholars and hadith scholars who all have testified that Hadith al-Ghadir is mutawatir and maqtu'. For example, Shams al-Din Zahabi Shafi'i said, "This hadith is mutawatir and I am sure that hadith "Of whomsoever I had been Master (Mawla), Ali here is to be his Master" is the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

As for Hadith al-Ghadir being Mutawatir, Allamah Ziya' al-Din Muqbili also wrote, "If Hadith al-Ghadir is not indisputable, then nothing about Islam would be indisputable". Even some Sunni scholars wrote books about Hadith al-Ghadir being mutawatir; for example, Shams al-Din Shafi'i wrote a book titled "Asna al-Matalib", in which he demonstrated that Hadith al-Ghadir was mutawatir by invoking eighty chains of narrators for this hadith (ibid).

3.3. Invocation of sources acceptable to Sunnis as the main support of Allamah Amini's argument in al-Ghadir

Allamah Amini founded al-Ghadir on Sunni sources and works, and made best of them. Having chosen a reasonable and proper method, he left Sunnis, as the main audience of al-Ghadir, with no excuse to criticize it. He used Shiite sources only in specific cases where use of them was necessary. Allamah Amini believed that Sunni sources must be used to prove righteousness of Ahl al-Bayt, especially Imam Ali (PBUH), and always remained faithful to such belief in practice. For this purpose, he employed about 20 thousands credible Sunni books from early Islamic centuries through the present century; thus, all sources and authorities invoked in al-Ghadir are Sunni ones (ibid).

Allamah Amini said, "Al-Ghadir covers Islamic discussions, rather than specifically Shiite discussions, thus, the sources invoked in this book are acceptable to all branches of Islam, rather than being only acceptable to Shiites. He also added, "Shiites invoke Sunni hadiths when debating with Sunnis, because Sunni hadiths are more acceptable to Sunnis (cited in Aliabadi, 2010).

Allamah Amini used Sunni trustable chains of narrators of Hadith al-Ghadir and mentioned about 43 Sunni scholars who endorsed Hadith al-Ghadir as being mutawatir (Hakimi, 1998; Allamah Amini, 1982). Thus, the audience of al-Ghadir is not limited to Shiites, because the sources invoked in this book are trustable Sunnisources, covering a wide range of issues from prayer and fasting to burial of the death (Hakimi, 1998).

3.4. Al-Ghadir: an international Islamic work

Allamah Amini created a global and international work, beyond any particular ethnicity and nationality, which belongs to the whole Islamic community. This book belongs to those who seek well-being in both worlds by following the teachings of the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt, and divine thoughts. For example, western Christian scholars like Yusuf As'ad Daqir and Boulos Salameh, paid attention to al-Ghadir, and forwarded plaque of honor to Allamah Amini for writing this book (Allamah Amini, 1982).

Allamah Amini intended to reduce differences between branches of Islam, and show the right way, as he said, "Like I my Muslim, I find myself obliged to reduce differences, hostility and hatred; however, one must figure out how this task can be accomplished. Many differences between Muslims results from the fact that they don't an accurate of the beliefs of one another. During the past centuries, and even in this century, many false things have been written about Shiites, which have been used as a basis to judge Shiites. However, the question rises if the difference will be resolved, and unity between Muslims will be strengthen if such disuniting statements are refuted? Which one leads to proximity between Shiite and Sunnis: If Sunnis know that Shiites also believe in the legitimacy of the Qur'an and that Shiite beliefs originate from the clearest springs, Ahl al-Bayt, and that Shiite beliefs are firmly based on the Qur'an and hadith, or if they believe that disbelievers and polytheists? For example, Abdullah Qasimi has a book on the battle between Islam and paganism, in which Shiites are called pagans, and on this basis, Shiites are criticized. Is union between Shiites and Sunnis is possible in presence of such false books? (Cited in Hakimi, 1998, cited in Heydari Abhari, With Ghadir and al-Ghadir, in form of a dialogue with Allamah Amini).

3.5. Unveiling the truth and elimination of heresy: concerns of Allamah Amini

Allamah Amini was concerned with oppressions and injustices imposed on Ahl al-Bayt (PBUTH) and their followers in the history, and such injustice caused him to defend the truth Ahl al-Bayt (PBUTH) in third volume of al-Ghadir.

"Ibn Taymiyyah was among those who made false accusations against Ahl al-Bayt (PBUTH) and their followers. The most important work of Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj al-Sunnah makes impolite statements about Shiites. One of characteristics of

Ibn Taymiyyah was to defame Ahl al-Bayt (PBUTH), especially Imam Ali (PBUH), with hostility and hatred. Despite Qur'anic verses and hadiths supporting top rank of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUTH) and their virtues (Āli Imrān and Al-Ahzab), and also many Qur'anic verses and hadiths covering orders Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made with regard to respecting his progeny, for example, hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "I want nothing from you but to love my family and be their friends" (Ash-Shūraá), Ibn Taymiyyah considered respect for Ahl al-Bayt to be rooted in ignorant thought, according to which the head of a tribe were prior to others. Elsewhere he ascribed such thought to Judaism, saying, "Shiites believe that only the posterity of Ali (PBUH) deserves to hold imamate. Judaists also believe that only posterity of David deserves to hold government (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1904, vol. 27, p. 269, vol. 28, p. 6), while Shiite thought is rooted in the Qur'an, and the God has legitimized the issue of progeny (An-Nisā'and Ankabut). However, Ibn Taymiyyah never criticized Āli Abu Sefian and Āli Marwan, which were hereditary caliphates, and considered them as legitimate Islamic caliphs, but when it came to progeny of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he attribute hereditary caliph to Judaist and ignorant thought, and considered them as not being entitled to caliphate.

One of the biggest faults of Ibn Taymiyyah was his view of Imam Ali (PBUH). He was so hostile to Shiites that defamed Imam Ali (PBUH), denying his virtues and Qur'anic verses and hadiths indicating his high rank (Tarmadhi; Baqawi, 2008).

In third volume of al-Ghadir, Allamah Amini wrote, "Minhaj al-Sunnah is a book abundant in deviation, lies, groundless claims, denial of the indisputable facts of Islam, advocacy of heretics and hostility with Ahl al-Bayt. The content of this book is just the opposite of its title; it must have been titled Minhaj al-bid'ah instead of minhaj al-sunnah. This book contains nothing but utter lies and falsification". In the following, some examples of such defamations and false accusations along with defenses provided by Allamah Amini are presented.

1- Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Some liars have fabricated a hadith stating that the verse on authority (Al-Mā'idah: 55), "Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers, - those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship)", refers to Imam Ali (PBUH) who gave his ring as alms. Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Scholars have consensus that this hadith is a lie", and then argues how it is a lie" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1904). Allamah Amini said in response, "It is surprising how ignorant fanaticism can make a person deny the truth. This man claims that a hadith is held to be false by consensus, while it has been narrated by the most prominent hadith narrators, including Ibn Abbas, Abudhar, Ammar and Jabir Ansari, who all were companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Clearly, such consensus has not validity. Scholars have consensus that this hadith

refers to Ali (PBUH), and people who have narrated and held it to be valid include: 1- Qazi Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Umar; 2- Hafiz Abu Bakr Abd al-Razaq; 3- Abu al-Hassan Uthmani; 4- Abu Ja'far Iskafi Mu'tazili; 5- Abdullah Ibn Hamid Kashi; 6- Abu Sa'id Ashaj; 7- Abu Abd al-Rahman Nisa'i; 8- Ibn Jarir Tabari; 9- Ibn Abi Hatam Razi; 10- Abu al-Qasim Tabarani; 11- Abu Abdullah Ansari; 12- Abu Bakr Jassas Razi; 13- Abu al-Hassan Ali Ibn Isa Raman; 14- Hakim Neishaburi; 15- Abu Bakr Shirazi; and, 16- Abu Bakr Marduyah. Allamah Amini mentioned up to 66 narrators, whose names are spared here for brevity. However, he then added, "There is no doubt about the referent of this hadith, and no unbiased native Arabic speaker may interpret the hadith to have a different referent. The text of hadith is as follows: Anas Ibn Malik narrated that a man came to the mosque and said, "Who would give loan to a wealthy and faithful person". Imam was in a state of kneeling in the prayer. He pointed out his ring to the man, directing him to remove the ring from his finger. Thereupon, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said to Umar: "O, It became necessary", Umar said, "O, Messenger of Allah, What did become necessary?" Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "It became necessary for Ali (PBUH) to rest to Heaven" Musa! All your requests have been granted.' O Allah! I am your slave and your prophet. Delight my heart and make my task easy and appoint from among my kinsmen 'Ali as my vizier and strengthen my back with him." And before Ali (PBUH) has removed the ring and before anybody has exited the mosque, the following verse was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), (Allamah Amini, 1982, vol. 3, p. 220), "Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,- those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship)" (Al-Ma'idah: 55).

4. Denial of hadith "Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali"

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "The hadith stating, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali, and wherever Ali is, the truth will turn to that direction until, and Ali and the truth are inseparable until he joined me at the pool of Kawthar" is one of biggest lies, because nobody has narrated Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as having said such words, whether through authentic or inauthentic chain of narrators. However, it has said that this hadith has been narrated by some credible narrators, but the truth is that this hadith is fabricated, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never said such words (ibid). In response, Allamah Amini said, "This hadith has been narrated by a group of prominent Sunnis; for example, Khatib Baghdadi (Khatib Baghdadi) narrated on the authority of Yusuf Ibn Muhammad al-Mua'ddab, "Hassan Ibn Ahmad Ibn Sulaiman Siraj narrated from Abd al-Salam Ibn Salih from Ali Ibn Hashim Ibn Yazid from Ibn Sa'id Tamimi from Abu Thabit Mawla Abuzar, "I went to Umm Salmah and found her crying in the memory of

Ali (PBUH), and saying, "I heard Prophet Muhammad saying, "Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali, and wherever Ali is, the truth will turn to that direction until, and Ali and the truth are inseparable until he joined me at the pool of Kawthar". Despite Umm al-Mu'minin, Umm Salmah, has had a very high rank, Ibn Taymiyyah said, "None of companions has narrated this hadith". His words can be true only if Khatif Baghdadi is not considered as an authentic scholar, or deny Umm al-Mu'minin, Umm Salmah, is not considered as a trustable person. It is not surprising that Ibn Taymiyyah didn't consider Umm Salmah as one of companions, because she was Alawid, and had Alawid emotions, spirit and faith. And, Umm Salmah heard received the hadith "Ali with the truth and the truth is with Ali" from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in her house. Sa'd Ibn Waqas sent a man to Umm Salmah to ask her about the hadith, and Umm Salmah said in response, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said this hadith in my house". Then, the man went back to Sa'd Ibn Waqas, and said to him, "You have never been so inferior in my eyes". Sa'd Ibn Waqas said to him, "Why?" The man said, "If I had heard Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) say this hadith, I would have served Hazrat Ali (PBUH) for the rest of my life" (Allamah Amini, 1982).

5. Conclusion

Overall, al-Ghadir by Allamah Amini is the best book ever written in over 14-century history of Islam and Shiism in defense of shiism and school of Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Ghadir, which presents the thoughts and arguments of Allamah Amini in defense of Islam, is the best among thousands of books written on the life of Imam Ali (PBUH), so that every scholar who has read this weighty book carefully admires this great book and its knowledgeable author.

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