

Core Curriculum

4 Prophethood in Islam

4.7 **Ghadīr and Arafah: The Two Last Sermons of the Prophet**

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! So you’ve been introduced to the subject of hadiths. Now is the time to take a look at some examples of hadiths. In this lesson, we’re going to take a look at two of the most important hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (s). These two hadiths are the hadith of Ghadīr and the other the sermon at Arafa.

BODY OF TEXT

O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (Chapter 5, verse 67 of the Holy Qur’an)

The two most important sermons that the Prophet Muhammad (s) delivered to the Muslim Ummah or Islamic community are the sermons at Ghadīr and Arafa. These sermons were given at the end of his life. The sermon of Ghadīr was the last. These two sermons were significant as they dealt with the two major elements of human life, 1) human salvation and guidance (which is what Ghadīr was about) and 2) the crisis of human relationships.

Let us begin with the sermon at Arafah. The sermon of Arafah took place

in the last year of the Prophet's life in 10 AH or 632 CE. The Prophet (s) knew he was departing and he foresaw the crisis that humanity was to face in the future. The sermon is long so we won't burden you with the whole passage. But here are some key points from it:

"I enjoin good treatment of women, for they are prisoners with you, and you have no right to treat them otherwise, unless they commit clear adultery"

In another passage from the sermon, he said: "O people! Indeed, your Lord is one and your father is one. Indeed, there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by taqwa."

As you can see, with these two passages, the Prophet foresaw two major crises that humanity was to face until the Day of Judgment. First, it was the abuse and ill-treatment of women. He severely discouraged and banned Muslims from mistreating women for that was a sin and a great injustice. Mistreating women of course is not just in the form of physical abuse.

The majority of the poor in the world are actually women. Furthermore, in most work spaces, women are paid less for the same kind of work than men are. This itself is also a form of injustice and ill treatment of women. A good and God fearing Muslim is one who treats women with dignity and fairness.

The second crisis in humanity that the Prophet foresaw was that of racism. Much of the injustices that have taken place have been done on the basis of racism. Think of the extermination of Native Americans in the Americas, or the Holocaust during World War II, or centuries of black slavery. But it hasn't ended yet. Today we have people who are jailed, profiled and discriminated against based on their race and skin color in many countries around the world.

The Prophet Muhammad on the other hand was teaching us that everyone is equal and that race does not matter. The only thing that

established the superiority of a person was his or her taqwa or piety, consciousness and fear of God.

The sermon of Ghadīr took place in the same year. Ghadīr was a pond (the name of the pond was Khumm, and hence Ghadīr Khumm or the Pond of Khumm). At this pond, the Prophet delivered his last sermon at his farewell pilgrimage of Hajj. Preceding this sermon was the last verse delivered to the Messenger of Allah (s). In that verse, God said: O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (Chapter 5, verse 67 of the Holy Qur'an)

The sermon of Ghadīr was the greatest sermon the Prophet ever offered for it was delivered in front of an audience that was over 100 000 in number. This shows the significance of the sermon for the Ummah.

Here are key parts of the sermon:

"It seems the time approached when I shall be called away (by Allah) and I shall answer that call. I am leaving for you two precious things and if you adhere to them both, you will never go astray after me. They are the Book of Allah and my Progeny, that is my Ahlul Bayt. The two shall never separate from each other until they come to me by the Pool (of Paradise)."

Then the Messenger of Allah continued:

"Do I not have more right over the believers than what they have over themselves?" People cried and answered: "Yes, O' Messenger of God."

Then followed the key passage where the Prophet appointed Imam Ali as his successor and leader of the Muslim ummah.

The Prophet (s) held up the hand of 'Ali and said: "For whoever I am his Leader (mawla), 'Ali is his Leader (mawla)."

The Prophet (s) continued: "O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him."

Immediately after the Prophet (s) finished his speech, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

"Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favour upon you, and I was satisfied that Islam be your religion." (Chapter 5, verse 3 of the Holy Qur'an)

The sermon of Ghadīr was a pivotal part of history. What it did was guarantee a line of divine leadership and guidance after the death of the Prophet (s). The sermon clearly established that guidance and authority in Islam comes from two sources, namely the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (as). The first among the Ahl al-Bayt (as) to guide and take up the mantle of religious leadership was Imām Alī (as) who was to be the mawla or master of Muslims.

If one were to follow Imam Ali (as) and the rest of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, who were to number 12 in total, both sincerely, obediently and whole-heartedly, one would find oneself in the Prophet's pond in the Hereafter.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh