Why Imam Ali (AS) is called "The Differentiator between the Hellfire and the Heaven"?

Answer:

This phrase has been used in many narrations by the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) regarding the status of Imam Ali (AS).

The original narration from Shia references:

عن عبد الله بن عباس قال : قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) : ... معاشر الناس ، إن عليا قسيم النـار ، لا يـدخل النـار ولي له ، ولا ينجو منها عدو له ، إنه قسيم الجنة ، لا يدخلها عدو له ، ولا يزحزح عنها ولي له .

امالي شيخ صدوق ص 83 ، به سند ديگر خصال ، شيخ صدوق ، ص 496

It is narrated from Abdullah Ibn Abbas that he said: the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: ... Oh people! Truly Ali is the differentiator of the Hellfire. Whoever is his friend and helper will not enter the Hellfire and whoever is his enemy will not be saved from it. Verily he is the differentiator of the Heaven, his enemy will not enter it and his friend will not be denied from it.

(Amali; Sheikh Saduq, page 83. With different source in Khisal of Sheikh Saduq, page 496)

قال(علي ابن موسي الرضا) قال رسول الله " ص " يا علي انك قسيم الجنة والنار عيون اخبار الرضاج 1 ص 30

Imam Ali Ibn Mousa Al-Ridha (AS) said: the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) said:

Oh Ali! Truly you are the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire.

(Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha [AS]; Volume 1, page 30)

عن سليمان بن خالد ، عن أبي عبد الله جعفر بن محمد الصادق ، عن آبائه عليهم السلام قال : قال رسـول الله صـلى الله عليه وآله لعلي عليه السـلام : ... يا علي أنت قسيم الجنة والنار ، لا يدخل الجنة إلا من عرفك وعرفته ، ولا يدخل النار إلا من أنكرك وأنكرته .

مالي شيخ مفيد ص 213

Sulaiman Ibn Khalid narrated from Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (AS) who narrated from his ancestors (AS) that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) said to Imam Ali (AS): ... Oh Ali! You are the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire. Nobody will enter the Heaven unless he/she knows you and you know them and nobody will enter the Hellfire but the one who denies your status and you disown them.

(Amali; Sheikh Mofid, page 213)

In the following references this narration has been mentioned with different phrasing such as "The differentiator between the Hellfire and the Heaven", "The differentiator of the Hellfire", "The differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire", "Peace be upon you Oh The differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire.

(Al-Kafi; Kulaini volume 4 page 570, Ma'ani Al-Akhbar; Sheikh Saduq, page 206, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam; Sheikh Toosi volume 6, page 29, Rowzatul Wa'ezeen; Fattal

Neishaboori page 100 and 118, Al-Mustarshid; Tabari Shi'ei page 264, Amali; Sheikh Mofid page 213, Amali; Sheikh Toosi page 305 and 629, Ihtijaj; Tabrasi volume 1 page 209 and 341, Manaqib; Ibn Shahr Ashoob volume 2 page 8 and volume 3 page 28, Al-Taraif; Sayed Ibn Tawoos page 76, Madinah Al-Mo'ajiz volume 1 page 280)

الكافي كليني ج 4 ص 570، معاني الاخبار شيخ صدوق ص 206، تهذيب الاحكام شيخ طوسـي ج 6 ص 29، روضه الـواعظين فتـال نيشـابوري ص 100و 118، المسترشـد طبري شيعي ص 264، امالي شيخ مفيد ص 213، امالي شيخ طوسـي ص 305 و 629، احتجـاج طبرسـي ج 1 ص 209و 341،مناقـب ابـن شــهر آشوب ج 2 ص 8 و ج 3 ص 28، الطرائف سيد بن طاووس ص 76، مدينه المعاجز ج 1 ص 280

The narration in Sunni references:

This tradition has been mentioned in numerous Sunni references even though many biased and prejudiced people tried to argue about the references of this narration and claim the weakness of its sources. However, the narration has entered even the literature books and quoted in the most authentic Sunni references and has left no excuse for the intractable people.

Now we refer to some of these quotes from the Sunni references:

عن علي رضي الله تعالى عنه أنا قسيم النار الفايق في غريب الحديث جارالله زمخشري ج 3 ص 97

Imam Ali (AS) said: I am the differentiator of the Hellfire.

(Al-Faiq Fi Qarib Al-Hadith; Jarollah Zamakhshari, volume 3 page 97)

وروى أيضا عن الأعمش عن موسى بن طريف ، عن عباية ، قال سمعت عليا (ع) ، وهو يقول : أنا قسيم النار . شرح نهج البلاغه ابن ابي الحديد ج 2 ص 260 و ج 19 ص 140.

Also, it is narrated from Al-A'mash who narrated from Mousa Ibn Tareef, from Abayah who said: I heard Ali (AS) saying: I am the differentiator of the Hellfire.

(Sharho NahjulBalaqah; Ibn Abi Al-Hadeed, volume 2 page 260 and volume 19 page 140)

عن عباية عن علي قال : أنا قسيم النار ، إذا كان يوم القيامة قلت هذا لك وهذا لي . البدايه و النهايه ج 7 ص 392

Imam Ali (AS) said: On the day of judgment I am the differentiator of the Hellfire, I will say (to the Hellfire) this person is for you and this one is for me.

(Al-Bidayah WanNahayah, volume 7 page 392)

Also: (Qarib Al-Hadith, volume 1 page 377, Al-Nahayah Fi Qarib Al-Hadith, volume 4 page 61, Al-Managhib; Kharazmi page 41, Kanzul Amal; Mutaghi Hindi volume 13 page 152, Tarikh Madinah Damascus volume 42 page 298)

همچنين غريب الحديث ، ج 1 ، ص 377 ، النهايه في غريب الحـديث ، ج 4 ، ص 61 و المناقب ، خـوارزمي ، ص 41 و كنزالعمـال متقـي هنـدي ج 13 ص 152، تاريخ مدينه دمشق ج 42 ص 298.

The Reason for this Nomination:

A few of the narrations have explained the reason for nominating Imam Ali (AS) for this title. We just refer to two of them:

1 - حدثنا أحمد بن الحسن القطان قال: حدثنا أحمد بن يحيى بن زكريا أبو العباس القطان قال: حدثنا محمد بن إسماعيل البرمكي قال: حدثنا عبد الله بن داهر قال: حدثنا أبي ، عن محمد بن سنان عن المفضل بن عمر قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله جعفر بن محمد الصادق " ع " لم صار أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب قسيم الجنة والنار؟ قال: لان حبه إيمان وبغضه كفر ، وإنما خلقت الجنة لأهل الايمان ، وخلقت النار لأهل الكفر ، فهو عليه السلام قسيم الجنة والنار ، لهذه العلة فالجنة لا يدخلها إلا أهل محبته ، والنار لا يدخلها إلا أهل بغضه .

علل الشرايع ج 1 ص 162

It is narrated from Mofaddhal Ibn Umar that he asked Imam Sadiq (AS) what was the reason for calling Imam Ali (AS) the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire? Imam (AS) said: Because loving him (AS) is having faith (Eiman) and being his enemy is infidelity (Kufr) and truly the Heaven is created for people believers and the Hellfire is created for disbelievers. Therefore, Imam Ali (AS) is the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire. For the same reason nobody enters the Heaven but people who love him and nobody enters the Hellfire but people who have hatred for him (AS).

(Ilalusharae' volume 1 page 162)

Also in another narration Imam Ridha (AS) explains it:

30 - حدثنا تميم بن عبد الله بن تميم القرشي قال: حدثني أبي عن أحمد بن على الأنصاري عن أبي الصلت الهروي قال: قلد قال المأمون يوما للرضا عليه السلام يا أبا الحسن أخبرني عن جدك أمير المؤمنين بأي وجه هو قسيم الجنة والنار وبأي معنى فقد كثر فكري في ذلك ؟ فقال له الرضا عليه السلام: يا أمير المؤمنين ألم ترو عن أبيك عن آبائه عن عبد الله بن عباس أنه قال: سمعت رسول الله (ص) يقول: حب على إيمان وبغضه كفر؟ فقال: بلى فقال الرضا عليه السلام: فقسمة الجنة والنار إذا كانت على حبه وبغضه فهو قسيم الجنة والنار

عيون اخبار الرضاج 1 ص 92.

Aba Sallt Al-Hirawi narrates that one day Ma'moon told Imam Ridha (AS): Oh Abal-Hassan tell us why your father, the Commander of Faithful Believers, was called the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire and the meaning of this phrase as it has made my mind busy. So Imam Ridha (AS) said to him: Oh Ma'moon have you not heard from your father and him from his ancestors that Ibn Abbas said that he heard the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) saying: "Love of Ali (AS) is faith (Eiman) and animosity against him is infidelity (Kufr)? Ma'moon replied: Yes! Then Imam Ridha (AS) said: Therefore when the division of the Heaven and the Hellfire is based on loving him, he is the differentiator between the Heaven and the Hellfire.

(Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha [AS], Volume 1, page 92)

The Differentiator of the Heaven and the Hellfire in Poetry:

Many poets during centuries have used this narration in their poems such as:

قسيم النار ذو خير وخير يخلصنا الغداة من السعير فكان محمد في الدين شمسا على بعد كالبدر المنير خاتمه المستدرك ميرزاي نوري ج 3 ص 80،

Ali (AS), the differentiator between the Hellfire owns goodness and it is good that tomorrow (the Judgment day) he will save us from the hot fire. Thus, as Mohammad (PBUH&HF) is the sun in the religion Ali (AS) is the shining moon.

(Khatima Al-Mustadrak; Mirza Noori, volume 3 page 80)

قال البشنوي:

فمدينة العلم التي هو بابها أضحى قسيم النار يوم مآبه

فعدوه أشقى البرية في لضى ووليه المحبوب يوم حسابه

مناقب ابن شهر آشوب ج 1 ص 314،

Thus, it is obvious that the city of knowledge that he (AS) is the gate of it, on the day of resurrection he (AS) is the differentiator of the Hellfire. Thus, his enemy is the worst of people in hereafter and his friend is loved on the day of judgment.

(Manaqib; Ibn Shahr Ashoob, volume 1 page 314)

قال عمار بن تغلبة:

على حبه جنة قسيم النار والجنة

وصي المصطفى حقا إمام الانس والجنة .

مدينه المعاجز علامه بحراني ج 1 ص 260

Love of Ali (AS) is the protective shield, he is the differentiator of the Hellfire and the Heaven

He is rightly the successor of Al-Mustafa (the Prophet PBUH&HF) and he is the leader (Imam) of all people and the Jinn.

(Madina Al-Mo'ajiz; Allamah Buhrani, volume 1 page 260)