10136 - Ruling on singling out ‘Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) for the words “May Allaah honour his face”

the question

We often hear and read a phrase used in reference to the cousin of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with him), which is “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)”.
Is it correct to say this?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Ibn Katheer said in his Tafseer (3/517):

This phrase is used a great deal by scribes who are transcribing books in which the phrase “ ‘alayhi al-salaam (upon him be peace) is used in reference to ‘Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him), to the exclusion of other Sahaabah, or the words “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)” are used. Although the meaning is acceptable, we should respect all the Sahaabah equally in this way, because this is a kind of veneration and honouring, and the two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and ‘Umar] and Ameer al-Mu’mineen ‘Uthmaan are more deserving of that – may Allaah be pleased with them all.

The following question was submitted to the Standing Committee (3/289):

Why are the words “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)” said after mentioning the name of ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib?

They answered:

Saying the words “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)” after mentioning the name of ‘Ali and singling him out in this manner is one aspect of the way in which the Shi’ah

exaggerate about him. It was said that this is because he never looked at the ‘awrah of any person at all, or because he never prostrated to an idol. But this is not something that is unique to him, as other Sahaabah who were born in Islam also shared these characteristics.

Some of them said that the words “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)” are only said in reference to ‘Ali because he never prostrated to any idol.

I say: because the Raafidis, the enemies of ‘Ali and the enemies of the family of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) use this phrase, we should avoid imitating the people of bid’ah (innovation). And Allaah knows best.

They have reasons for doing that which do not justify singling out ‘Ali for this phrase, such as the fact that he never looked at the ‘awrah of another person, or that he never prostrated to any idol. But those Sahaabah who were born in Islam also share these chracateristics. It should also be noted that when giving any reason it is also essential to offer evidence and proof.

Note:

In Musnad Ahmad it is narrated that Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) took the banner and waved it, then said, ‘Who can take this and give it its due.’ So and so came and said, ‘I will,’ but he said to him, ‘Keep away.’ Then another man came and he said, Keep away.’ Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘By the One Who honoured the face of Muhammad, I shall certainly give it to a man who will never flee. Take it, O ‘Ali.”

In the text of some ahaadeeth, you will find their words – “karrama Allaahu wajhahu (may Allaah honour his face)” – when ‘Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) is mentioned, but we do not know of this in any marfoo’ report, and it is not known that any of the Sahaabah said these words in reference to ‘Ali, so these may be the words of the scribe.