

Series of Questions Addressed to Eminent Scholar Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah  
Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir through his Facebook "Fiqh" Page

**Answer to Question**

**Hadiths Mentioning Ar-Raya (the Banner) and Al-Liwa' (the Flag)**

To: Mafaheem Islamiyah  
(Translated)

**Question:**

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh, Our Sheikh. How are you?

Our Sheikh, I have a question:

How many Hadiths speak about Ar-Raya (the banner) of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and how authentic are they?

And with your permission, if you narrate a Hadith, please mention the authenticity of its Sanad (chain of transmission).

**Answer:**

Wa Alaikum Assalam Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh:

Regarding the Liwa' (flag) and Raya (banner) and flag and what is written on them, the following is stated in our books, especially (the book "Ajhiza" [The Institutions of State in the Khilafah (In Ruling and Administration)], p.200 Arabic edition / p.163 English edition):

[The State has flags (Alwiyah) and banners (Rayat) as deduced from the flags and banners of the first Islamic State, which the Messenger of Allah (saw) established in al-Medina al-Munawwarah. These will be as follows:

1- Flag and banner, are linguistically called alam. Al-Qamus al-Muhit mentions under the root (r/w/y) that al-rayah is 'al-alam, plural being rayaat. It mentions under the root (l/w/y) that al-liwa' is al-'alam, plural alwiyah.

**Besides; The Law designated each one of these terms a shar'i meaning as follows:**

The flag (liwaa') is white, on which it is written 'la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah' with black script. It is tied to the amir of the army or the leader of the army. It is used as a sign of his location, and it goes along with this location.

The evidence to tying the flag to the amir of the army is that "the Prophet (saw) entered Makkah on the day of its conquest while raising a white flag." This was narrated by Ibn Majah through Jabir. An-Nasa'i also narrated through Anas that when the Prophet (saw) appointed Usama ibn Zayd as amir to the army for invading the Romans, he tied his flag with his own hands.

- The banner (rayah) is black, on which it is written 'la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah' with white script. It is carried by the leaders of the army divisions

(regiments, detachments, and other army units). The evidence is that the Messenger (saw) while being the leader of the army in Khaybar, he said: "I will give the Raya tomorrow to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His messenger love him; and he gave it to 'Ali". This hadith is agreed upon. 'Ali (ra) was considered then the leader of a division or a regiment in the army. Al-Harith b. Hassan b. Al-Bakri also said in the hadith, "We came to Medina and we saw the Prophet (saw) the Mimbar, with Bilal standing in front of him wearing his sword. There were black banners in front of the Messenger (saw) I asked 'what are these banners?' They said: 'it is Amr b. al-'As who has just arrived from an expedition'". "And there were black banners (rayaat)" this means there were many banners carried by the army though its amir was one, which was Amru ibn Al-Ass. This indicates there is one flag (liwaa') in the same army, but the banners (rayaat) are many in each army. Thus, the flag (liwaa') is a sign ('alam) to the amir of the army only, while the banners (rayaat) are signs (a'lam) carried by the soldiers...]

2- In addition to what has been mentioned previously, I add a Hadith narrated by al-Tabarani in al-Mu'jam al-Awsat (223/1):

[224 - Ahmad ibn Rushdin narrated to us, saying: 'Abd al-Ghaffar ibn Dawud Abu Salih al-Harrani narrated to us, saying: Hayyan ibn 'Ubayd Allah narrated to us, saying: Abu Majlaz Laheq ibn Humayd narrated to us, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, who said: ﴿كَانَتْ رَأْيَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ سَوْدَاءً وَلَوْاً وَأَبْيَضُ، مَكْتُوبٌ عَلَيْهِ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ﴾ "The Raya (banner) of the Messenger of Allah (saw) was black, and his Liwa' (flag) was white, on which was written: There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." This Hadith is not narrated from Ibn 'Abbas except through this chain of narration, and it is unique to Hayyan ibn 'Ubayd Allah. Ibn Hibban mentioned Hayyan in al-Thiqat (6/230), and Abu Hatim said about him in al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil (3/246): "He is truthful."]

The issue of the Raya (banner) and Liwa' (flag) is well-known, and the Raya (banner) was raised for Muslims in the early days of Islam, requiring no further explanation.

I hope this is sufficient. And Allah Knows Best and is Most Wise.

Wa Assalam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh

**Your Brother,**

**Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah**

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**The Link to the Answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/AtaAboAlrashtah/posts/122123678973129051>