Wilayat of Ali (A.S.) is a Strong Fort of Allah Almighty

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When the people objected to Imam Ali's equitable distribution of wealth he replied:

(i) If the wealth had belonged to me even then I would have distributed it equally among the people but this wealth belongs to Allah and is meant for distribution among the people and therefore everybody has his right in it.

(ii) To distribute wealth among those who do not deserve it amounts to squandering the wealth. The Holy Qur'an also says. Do not squander your wealth wastefully. The squanderers are indeed Satan's brothers and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:27)

(iii) The inequitable and unjust distribution of wealth results in the formation of a group of greedy persons who surround the people and extract money from them through flattery and undue praise and thus makes them ashamed in the eyes of the law of Divine Justice.

Furthermore, Imam Ali says: "Unjustifiable and undeserving donations may enhance the status of a man among his worldly surroundings but he is sadly humiliated in the eyes of Allah. One who spends his wealth in evil ways and on wrong persons, is deprived, by the Lord, of the gratitude of those over whom he had spent; these undeserving beneficiaries usually turn against him and at the time of distress and need he finds them as his worst enemies, censuring his actions and blaming him for his lavish grants". (Sermon - 129, p. 322, Peak of (Eloquence

Confiscation of Property

As and when the days passed by after the time of the Holy Prophet, people started drifting away from Islamic social justice to the extent that Caliph Uthman lavishly gave his kith and kin wealth from the public property. It was this discrimination and favourtism that aroused the anger of the people who put him to death, and thereafter swore allegiance to Imam Ali.

When the regime of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali commenced, he revolutionized the entire system, eradicated all irregularities so as to bring the affairs of the State on an even keel. As such the properties unlawfully acquired were confiscated and unjust appointments and dismissals were cancelled. Imam Ali declared: "By Allah! If I had known of this sort of public weal h, even if it was spent in paying the dower of the women or for purchasing slave girls, I (would have confiscated it too". (Vide: Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984

No Distinction between an Arab and a Non-Arab

Two women came to take their shares from Baytul Mal (Public Treasury). One of them was an Arab and the other one was a non-Arab. Imam Ali gave them equal share as usual. Those people who had not as yet comprehended the essence of Islam did not tolerate this justice and raised an objection against the Imam's action. They complained of treating an Arab and a non-Arab on equal footing. At this the Holy Imam said: "I did not find any difference between the two". (Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XI, p. 81)

Owing to his strict observance of equity and his treatment of people of various classes of society without any distinction, selfish people and transgressors became critical of the policies and the administration of justice initiated by Imam Ali but all their crooked tactics and criticisms could not deviate him from the path of monotheism and Divine Justice. He was one of those few blessed souls who did not mind in the last such baseless criticisms. The Holy Qur'an says:

Believers, any one of you turns back on his faith (should remember) that Allah could verily bring (in your place) another people whom He would love as they would love Him, gentle with believers, unbending with infidels, who would strive in the way of Allah unafraid of blame by (any slanderer. (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:54

Counting the Dead

In the Age of Ignorance the larger the tribe was the greater was its dignity among the people. Once a dispute on the counting of the members of a tribe became so serious that they insisted on counting their dead ones also so that they could prove the largeness of their tribe. Hence, the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed.

The avarice o f plenitude keeps you occupied till you reach the grave. (Surah at-Takathur, 102-1 - 2) From this it is meant that the abundance of wealth and manpower has blinded you to the extent that you are going to count the dead ones by going to their graves and are feeling proud of it.

Imam Ali after reciting the above surah condemned that sort of attitude. (See: Sermon - 225, Peak of Eloquence)

In another similar gathering where every one was bragging of his own tribe, race and pedigree, the turn of Salman Farsi came. People thought that since he had not come from a noteworthy tribe he would feel some humiliation but Salman Farsi had received the training from the Holy Prophet of Islam. Without undergoing any feeling of inferiority he boldly declared "You people should have no concern with my family background. What I know about myself is that I was far

away from the right guidance, but under the auspices of the Holy Prophet I sought guidance and this is the only praiseworthy thing for me and nothing else". (Safinatul Bihar, vol. II, p. 348). By giving this ideological reply he quitened them and proved to them that according to Islamic ideology and in the eyes of Allah all are equal and such boastful claims have no worth.

Advice to Buy the People for Gaining Their Favour

Some well-wishers of Imam Ali approached him and suggested to him to show special favours to the leading heads of the tribe of Quraysh and other influential people by granting them higher share for unless he gave preferential treatment to them as against the slaves and the non-Arabs he would not be able to gain their support and they would rebel against him and would go towards Mu'awiya's side.

Imam Ali said: "Should I spend the wealth and property of the Public Treasury in bribing the people in return for gaining their support? The fact is that if I gain the support of someone through money he will turn against me if he is offered a higher amount from the other party. Therefore, we should always safeguard the principle of justice and never think of attracting the people either through money or intimidation and threats. I shall never do that no matter if someone remains with me or goes against me". This was the method adopted by the Holy Imam. He was not prepared to gain the favor of the people by doing the least injustice. (Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, p. 108)139

Even a Single Loaf is Equally Distributed

"Some commodities were brought before Imam Ali and people came to take their share. In order that people should maintain discipline he kept the people at a distance by means of ropes and himself distributed the whole of it to the representatives of the various tribes. Afterwards, he found one loaf that was left in a container. He then ordered it to be divided into seven equal parts and like the other property gave one piece to each of the tribes". (Biharul Anwar, vol. XLI, p. 136)

When the Guest is Removed

A man happened to be the guest of Imam Ali. After a time he put before the Holy Imam the ease of his dispute with another person. The Holy Imam told the man, "Up till now you were my guest, but since you have become a party in a dispute with another man you should leave this

place, because the Holy Prophet advised me not to make any one of the disputants as your guest unless the other one is also with you because hospitality is one thing and making a just and impartial decision is another thing. Hospitality is based on sympathy and decision of a case is based on Divine law. "

Therefore, in principle one should not involve himself in sentimental and psychological matters so that there may not be the least doubt that he would be influenced by them in the administration of justice. (Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XVIII, p. 158) Imam Ali used to instruct the tax-collector thus: "In whatever zone you go, you should arrange your stay near the bank of a river but do not stay with anyone in any event because your becoming his guest will influence (your official duty to collect the tax". (See. Letter - 25, Peak of Eloquence, ISP 1984

Another Example of Imam Ali's Justice

'Aqil, the brother of Imam Ali, with his children came to the Imam. Their faces were pale due to starvation. He, therefore, demanded a larger share for him from the Public Treasury. It is a natural thing that a man gets affected by seeing the plight of his brother's children. But Imam Ali rejected his brother's request and by bringing a red-hot iron near him said: "Just as you are afraid of the torment of this hot iron, similarly I am afraid of the torment of the Day of Judgement". (Sermon - 221, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)148

Nobody Does That Sort of Thing

Normally the well-known people themselves go to buy their requirement from the market or send somebody else to buy for them. Such a person tells the shopkeeper that the thing is required for a man of distinction so that he may give him a better quality goods at a lower price. It is just possible that bribe is given or wrong advantage of one's official position is taken in this regard. By this a situation is created that all well to-do people take the best of stuff from the market at a cheaper rate and leave a low quality goods for the common people to buy at a higher price. It was only Imam Ali who took care to buy his requirements from a shopkeeper who did not know him or if he sent somebody else to make purchases nobody knew for whom .the goods were being purchased

Another Example of Taking Precaution

Once Imam Ali was distributing shares from the Public Treasury when his grandson happened

to come and took away a thing. On such an occasion a father would normally ignore such a thing but it was Imam Ali who got perturbed and chased the child and took back the thing from him. The people told him that after all the child also had his share in it. At this the Holy Imam replied, "No, not his, only his father's share is there and that too equal to that of any other man. It is up to him to give his son whatever share he deemed fit to give". (Hayat Imam Hasan, Baqir Sharif Qarashi, vol. I. p. 388)

Surely such a strict precaution was concerned with the Public Treasury only, but the Holy Imam was so generous in giving away his personal wealth that even Mu'awiya once said that if Ali had two rooms, one full of haystack and the other of gold it makes no difference to him to give .away any of the two

Undue Criticism against Imam Ali

Talha and Zubayr believed in giving special treatment to the companions of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, they used to criticize Imam Ali for his dealing with the Public Treasury as well as other matters. Once they objected to the Holy Imam saying: "Why do you not consult us? ' Imam Ali after telling his promptness, ability, justice and modus operandi said: "By Allah, I never craved for rulership or caliphate for its sake only. All of you invited me to accept it and I accepted. And when I accepted it and became a ruler I started to rule according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions) of the Holy Prophet. In following the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, I never needed either your help nor that of anybody's else. If I feel ever in need of advice, I shall most certainly consult you as well as other Muslim brethren.

So far as your complaints about equal distribution of wealth are concerned, I want to tell you that here too I am strictly following the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. This theory of equal distribution of the wealth was revealed to the Holy Prophet by the Merciful Allah and he had taught us, you know this and so do I. So, what Allah had commanded should be accepted by you and as well as by me. Therefore, you and your friends are not justified in blaming me for this". (Sermon – 210, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)149

Using the Paper Economically

Imam Ali in one of his circulars to his officials wrote as follows: "Sharpen the tip of your pen. Do not leave much space between the lines. Avoid writing in an ornamental style and observe brevity so as to save paper. The paper belongs to the Public Treasury and the Public Treasury

cannot afford any wasteful expenditure". (Biharul Anwar, vol. XLI, p. 105)

The pronouncement of Imam Ali on the importance of administering justice and of avoiding oppressive actions is very interesting. (Vide. Sermon – 228, Peak of Eloquence). In this very sermon the Holy Imam further says. "I bear Allah as my witness that I prefer to pass sleepless nights over the sharp thorns of prickly plants or to suffer from the worst form of injury and insult than to meet my Lord and the Holy Prophet on the Day of Judgement as a tyrant who has persecuted any person or as a usurper who has wrongfully seized the property of somebody else. Why should I tyrannize or exploit somebody to provide comfort and ease for my body which will shortly be destroyed and decayed and which will lie in the grave for a long period. By Allah, if all the seven continents with all that they contain are offered to me as a remuneration or bribe for depriving an ant of the husk of a grain of barley carried by it, I will never do it. This world to me is even more worthless than the small bit of a leaf chewed by a locust.

Ali has no interest with mortal luxuries, wealth, ease and comforts of this world. I seek His ."Protection and Help from negligence of my duty and from being wicked and vicious