

The Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) Endeavors in Introducing Imamat

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Some people have this absurd and obstinate passion of viewing all Islamic teachings from the microscope of the so called 'modern thinking'. Usually, these people are of the opinion that "what is the point in discussing as to who was the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s successor, a controversy that existed fourteen hundred years ago?

. Let bygones be bygones. Today by debates and discussions, we can neither raise Hazrat Ali (a.s.) to the seat of Caliphate nor deprive others of it? Also these discussions are a great obstacle in the path of Muslim unity."

Those who indulge in such talks and take pride in calling themselves as 'modern thinkers', are in fact, miles away from the profound depth of the discussion and have formed the habit of viewing everything with a superficial vision. This discussion is not restricted to roam in the .lanes and bylanes of history but has much more to it

THE NECESSITY OF DISCUSSION:

There's no doubt about the fact that we are Muslims and for our success and prosperity, we have to shoulder some responsibilities ordered by Allah. It is compulsory for us to fulfill these responsibilities and which cannot be fulfilled unless and until we do it in exactly the way that Allah wishes.

This is because fulfilling a task in a way which we desire will not relieve us of that responsibility. An obligation is fulfilled only when it conforms to the satisfaction of Allah. And this is possible only when we are sure that the task performed by us is the same as .commanded by the Almighty

DIFFERENCES OF VIEW:

Keeping this view in mind, when we read different books of scholars belonging to different sects, we see a wide range of differences and contradictions between them. For example, let us take Namaz, all the Islamic sects are not united even on this fundamental branch. They all accept that Namaz is compulsory and has to be performed five times in a day. But the vital question is: "How should one perform this obligatory task?" Which is the correct method that can help man fulfill his obligation? Since, out of so many different ways of reciting .Namaz, only one of them has been made compulsory by Allah

WHOM TO FOLLOW?

Now the most important query is that whom should we refer to? Whom should we accept in order to be relieved of our responsibilities and stand contently in God's domain

PATH OF SALVATION:

On reaching this juncture, we see two paths. One that of the companions and caliphs and second that of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Now, which of these two paths should we adopt to fulfill our duties correctly, execute our obligations rightly and obtain the satisfaction of Allah? Now, you can realize the importance of this love (of Ahle Bait) which is not confined only to history.

It is a matter of selecting the path for our lives. The discussion is not restricted as to who was, or who was not the Caliph? But the point is that whose path can guarantee our salvation in the hereafter? Who can lead us to the fountain of Kausar in paradise? Therefore the point is that whom should we follow in fulfilling our religious duties

UNIVERSAL RELIGION:

Another important aspect of this discussion is this that when we analyze the life and works of the Prophet of Islam(s.a.w.a.), it is quite evident that the religion brought by him (s.a.w.a.) was a universal one which had come to stay till the Day of Judgement. It had to solve all the problems that it faced in the various eras and passing centuries. Astounding novel questions had to be answered and unimaginably difficult queries were to be replied.

The difficult conditions that prevailed at the advent of Islam and the unending series of obstacles in different stages of his life, did not give the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) the opportunity of explaining the details of the innumerable queries that one would face till Qiyamat. And even if he (s.a.w.a.) had the time to do so, the people of that period were unable to understand and grasp the concepts and pass it on to the next generations.

Because, we find in books that the companion of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) were very cautious in asking him anything. They always waited for a Bedouin Arab to come and put a poser, so that when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replies his question, they too would know something.

When such was the attitude with regard to their day to day problems, how can one expect them to grasp the queries which would arise in the future? Since the people paid little attention to the legislative aspect of Islam, the traditions in this regard, from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are .very limited

REFUGE OF KNOWLEDGE :

Now if we ponder over what was discussed, we will see that after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the matter was not that of government only. It was of the centre of knowledge.

In fact for establishing a government, it is sufficient to have either a disciplined military power or at least an emergency, where as it is not possible for everyone to possess so much knowledge that he becomes the centre of knowledge.

After the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) a centre of knowledge was the utmost necessity of the time because the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was first a teacher and then a ruler. Now we will see that whether the Prophet had made any arrangements for fulfilling this necessity or he had left ?it to his nation

WAS THERE ANY ARRANGEMENT?

Not to have made any arrangement for a successor, after his demise seems a remote and distant possibility from the beneficent personality of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). Was it possible for the prophet who possessed the knowledge of the Unseen and who prophesized about Qaysar and Kasra, to remain unaware of the problems of the immediate future? While the Qur'an itself has mentioned time and again the deviation of the previous nations. When Abu Bakr could understand the significance of appointing a successor in his lifetime, it is unimaginable that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not pay due heed to it. It seems highly .illogical

WAS THE CHOICE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE?

Likelihood is that he must have left this matter at the Islamic community's expedience or in the literal sense handed over the matter to the experts or in other words, left it in the hands of the Consultative Assembly.

This argument is senseless due to the simple reason that never before in the history of Prophethood, has any Prophet left the matter of selection of his successor in the hands of a

Consultative Assembly nor had any nation been given the right to elect its own Caliph. Anyway, even if we accept this theory for the sake of argument, then how come the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) did not go into the details of this all important matter while he was giving explanations for other trifle ones? He should have mentioned the desired qualities and characteristics of a caliph or described the constitution of the Consultative Assembly, its limitations and jurisdiction. Or if the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had appointed a Consultative Assembly why did the first caliph oppose it? And why in the selection of his successor, he used

his personal views only?

And while writing the name of his successor why the second caliph did not say those ugly words which he had said when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had asked for some ink and pen? Moreover, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had not even gone into a state of unconsciousness while the first caliph used to loose his senses time and again.

Also, when the second caliph was on his death bed, why did he say that if Abu Obaidah Jarrah or Saalim, the freed slave of Abu Huzaifah were present, he would never have appointed a Consultative Assembly? It means that the Consultative Assembly was on compulsion and not a free choice. These contrasting differences prove that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) had not left the reins of leadership in the hands of the Islamic Community

PROPHET (s. a. w.a.) HIMSELF APPOINTED A SUCCESSOR:

The third possibility is that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) neither ignored the matter of successorship nor did he leave it for the community but he appointed his successor during his very lifetime and he personally introduced him to the Muslim nation. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had made preparation for the appointment of his successor right at the advent of Islam. To prove this point, we would like to relate a few important events from the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) life which will make it clear as to how dear this matter was to him (s.a.w.a.) and how much concern did he show for it. Never was he negligent about successorship during his entire lifetime

DHUL ASHEERAH:

The mission of Prophethood had just commenced. The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) was propagating the divine message in secret and had not proclaimed his mission. Even many of his near and dear ones were unaware of his mission when this verse was revealed: "And warn your nearest relations, and be kind to him who follows you of the believers. But if they disobey you then say: Surely I am clear of what you do? (Shuara, 26 : 216 - 218) All the interpreters of Qur'an and historians have said the following while explaining this verse

INVITATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUCCESSORSHIP:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked Hazrat Ali (a.s.) to invite 40-45 leading personalities of Bani Hashim and prepare food for them. All the invitees were there on time. After the dinner Abu Lahab uttered such shameful words that the situation became inappropriate for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to utter even one word. On the second day, a similar gathering was organized and once again all the arrangements were made by Ali (a.s.).

After the dinner, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) commenced his speech thus: "A nations' leader never lies to them. There is no God except Allah and I have been sent by Him for you and all the other people of the world. Beware! One day death will overtake you just as sleep overtakes you. And just as you get up from your sleep, similarly you will be raised on the Day of Judgement.

The good will be rewarded and the evil punished. Heaven will be a permanent place of residence for the good while Hell will be the abode of the evil. I have brought for you the goodness of both the worlds, this (material) world as well as the hereafter. Allah the Almighty, has ordered me to invite you towards His Divinity and my messengership. Who amongst you will help me in my mission? Whoever does so, will be my brother, my successor, my heir and my representative?"

Then, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was quiet for sometime to see who answers his call. All the invitees hung their head and there was absolute silence. They were in some deep ponderance when all of a sudden Hazrat Ali (a.s.) stood up, breaking the prevalent silence, saying: "O Messenger of God, I will help you." Then he (a.s.) stretched his hand towards the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in order to confirm the agreement.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gently asked Hazrat Ali (a.s.) to sit down and repeated his call. Once again, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was the only one to answer him and like before, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked him to sit down. For the third time, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) repeated his call and none responded except Hazrat Ali (AS). Hazrat Ali (a.s.) made his intentions of assistance and sacrifice very clearly in-front of all those present. Now, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gave his hand in Ali (a.s.)'s hand and made a historic .proclamation in that esteemed gathering

PROCLAMATION OF SUCCESSORSHIP:

"My kith and kin, know you all, Ali is my brother, successor and heir amongst you." According to the book Seerah-e- Halabi, he (s.a.w.a.) also said : "He is also my minister and inheritor (after me)." This historical incident can be referred to in the following books : Tarikhe Tabari, Vol. 2, page 216, Tafseer Tabari, Vol. 9, page 74, Kaamile Ibn Atheer, Vol. 2, page 24, Seerah Halabi, Vol, I, page 221. For details refer 'Al-Muraje-aat1 or 'The Right Path1, Letter No. 20, dated 9th Zilhajj 1329 A.H.

So, it is quite evident from this incident that when the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) declared his mission to the world, he also announced his successor. Or in other words the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) commenced his propagation by the announcement of Hazrat Ali (a.s.)'s successorship. It is said that these were the talks of the initial days of Islam but as Islam

.spread its roots far and wide, these talks were nullified and became void

TRUTHFUL MESSENGER:

These accusations can be alleged by only those who do not hold the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as "Truthful" and Trustworthy", because if the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), God forbid, did not fulfill his first promise, where is the guarantee for him keeping his remaining promises? Secondly, none of the books claim the cancellation of this oath by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). On the contrary, we find many incidents in the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s lifetime when he had time and again announced

H. Ali (a.s.) as his successor.

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) completed his proclamation about Hazrat Ali (a.s.), Abu Talib was told by those present, "You are commanded to listen and obey to your son's orders." This taunt also proves that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had promulgated the mastership and caliphate of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). If it would have been otherwise, the people would never have passed such .sarcastic comments at Abu Talib because brotherhood does not involve obedience of others

THE CLAN OF BANI AMMIR:

Immediately after the Dhul Asheera invitation, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) propagated Islam openly while the polytheists of Mecca were hell bent on opposing him. To propagate in such an environment and to strike a fountain of belief in such a rough land of polytheism was only possible by a great Ulul-ul-Azm Prophet like Hazrat Mohammad (s.a.w.a.).

Hardships only increased along with time and there was no let down except for the months of Rajab Zeeqad, Zilhajj and Moharram in which the Arabs did not fight because they regarded these as the forbidden months. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) took full advantage of these months. He went to different clans and met the incoming clans to Mecca inviting them to accept Islam.

During these days, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) invited the clan of Bani Aamir to embrace Islam. A person by the name of Baihara Ibn Foraas thought unto himself that if he could take the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) from the Quraysh, he could conquer the entire Arabia. Therefore, he asked the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.),

"If we follow you then will you allow us to become your successor after you have gained victory with divine help?" He (s.a.w.a.) answered, "This affair is a divine responsibility. He will appoint whom so ever He pleases." Baihara retorted: "We help you against the Arabs, lay out lives and when you succeed with divine help, then you give the authority to others? We do not accept such invitations."

(Seeratun Nabi, vol. 2, page 33,34, Tareekh Tabari, vo. 2, page 84, Tareekh--e-Payambar-e-

This incident proves that many Arabs longed to grab the successorship of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Some expressed it while others did not. Another thing, which becomes quite evident from it, is that even the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not possess the right to nominate his successor. This was only the Almighty's prerogative. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s job was just to introduce his successor to the people. Therefore when even the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) does not hold the right in a particular affair, the question of the people electing the successor does not arise at all

HADEES-E-MANZELAT:

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was leaving Medina for the 'Tabook' war, the hypocrites were very active in the city and were on the look out for opportunities to attack Islam. On the other hand, the disbelievers were also waiting for a chance to attack Medina. Dangerous planning of hypocrites, and disbelievers on one side and the necessity of presence of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in war front on the other side created such a vexed problem that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had to say to Ali (a.s.): "It is necessary for either me or you to stay here (in Medina)."

Saying this, he appointed Ali (a.s.) as his successor.

(Ref: Tabaqat-e-Ibn Saad, Majma-uz-Zawaaed of Haithami).

Then, he (s.a.w.a.) left for war along with the army. The hypocrites tried to gain undue advantage of this occasion by spreading rumors that because the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not happy with Hazrat Ali (a.s.), hence he (s.a.w.a.) did not take him along to the battle field. Things reached to such limits that Hazrat Ali (a.s.) had to go to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and explain to him the whole situation. On this occasion, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said the Hadees-e-

Manzelat on which both, Shia and Sunnis, agree. The tradition is as follows:

"You are unto me like Aaron was unto Moses except that there is no Prophet after me."

.There are a few things which attract attention in this tradition

ALLAH APPOINTED: .1

Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) did not appoint Hazrat Haroon (a.s.) as per his own desire. But, he had asked the Almighty to do so. To which Allah responded and appointed Haroon (a.s.) as Moosa (a.s.)'s successor. "And make one from my progeny my minister, my brother Haroon. Make my back stronger by his help and make him my partner in my affair." (Surah Ta Ha, 20 : 29-32).

Moosa (a.s.)'s prayers were accepted thus:-"He said: O Moosa, Your prayers are answered." (Surah Ta Ha, 20: 36). Then Hazrat. Moosa (a.s.) said to Haroon (a.s.) "And Moosa said to his brother Haroon. You fulfill my duties in our nation as my successor. Reform and guide them.

.(Do not follow the path of the corrupt." (Surah Araf, 7:142

A SUCCESSOR WITHOUT DOUBT: .2

On pondering over the above two verses we see that in the first verse, the word 'minister' has been used, while in the second verse the word "Caliph" and "Successor" is utilized. That is to say that Hazrat Haroon (a.s.) was Hazrat Moosa (a.s.)'s minister as well as Caliph. Nobody had the right to minister ship of caliphate in the presence of Hazrat Haroon (a.s.). The same rule applies for Ali (a.s.) too. He (a.s.) also was the successor and minister of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), without doubt

PEOPLE'S DISOBEDIENCE : .3

Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) asked and his prayers were answered. But did the people follow or obey Hazrat Moosa (a.s.)'s successor and submit to his commands? The Holy Qur'an narrates thus : "And when Moosa (a.s.) returned to his people, wrathful and in violent grief, he said: "Evil is it that you have done after me.

Did you turn away from the bidding of your Lord? And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards himself. He said : "O son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and had well nigh slain me. Therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over me and count me not among the unjust people." (Surah Araf, 7:150).

Without any analysis or explanation, we shall present before you a few lines from the sermon of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) which will bring to clear light the similarities between Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and Hazrat Haroon (a.s.). [Although above verses exactly suit to the conditions after the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s demise]. "When I saw that people have forcefully worn the cloak of Caliphate, I turned my face away from it and wondered whether I should attack without hands and legs (friends and supporters) and get back my right or should be patient on the darkness of blissful ignorance?

Darkness, that would make old people senile, young men, old and the believer dead due to unbearable oppression (in his fight against corruption). I observed that patience is better (than the other approach). So there was a thorn in my eyes and a bone in my throat. I was seeing my inheritance and my right (caliphate) being frittered away."

(Nahjul Balagha : Sermon 3)

Neither Hazrat Haroon (a.s.) was obeyed by the Israelites nor was Hazrat Ali (a.s.) by the Muslims. The only difference was that Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) returned to the Israelies while we can meet our Prophet (s.a.w.a.) only on the day of judgement. And he (s.a.w.a.) would be ".saying only this to the Muslims "You have treated (my progeny) very badly after me

SIMILARITIES : .4

In Hadees-e-Manzelat, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said "You are unto me..." Such words are also found in other traditions too. In another place, he (s.a.w.a.) says "Surely Ali is from me." These words reflect the intimacy and proximity between the two, showing that there is no difference or gap whatsoever between them. Ali (a.s.) shared the work-load of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s prophethood. In fact, it was Hazrat Moosa (a.s.)'s prayer to make Hazrat Haroon (a.s.) his partner in Prophethood. If Hazrat Haroon (a.s.) can be Hazrat Moosa (a.s.)'s partner in messengership and if this belief leads to "association in Prophethood", then let it be because it has been endorsed by Qur'an and that which is supported by Qur'an cannot be wrong. The word "from me" not only reflects the intimacy and proximity between the two but is also an indicator of Hazrat Ali (a.s.)'s greatness. For, it shows that except for prophethood, he was the Prophet's equal in everything like infallibility, greatness, leadership, intercession, obedience, superiority, love, rights, etc. And why not after all both of them were created from one light. It's not appropriate to further lengthen the discussion. Otherwise the article would take the shape of a book. Before ending the discussion, let us hint towards a few important points

HADEES-E-SAQLAIN:

A leader is he who is referred to by the people. They look upto him to solve their problems. To prevent from straying off, they hold him tightly. In Islamic terminology, a leader is he who saves mankind from going astray. Thus, leadership is not mere ostentation. Now, let us see what the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has advised us in order to save ourselves from going to the wrong path. Whom should we catch hold of? The one who has been ordered to catch hold of is the true successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Now, we analyze Hadees-e-Saqlain with this background. Yes, it should be known that this tradition is very authentic and holds no place for any doubt whatsoever. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has quoted this tradition innumerable times. In Sahih Tirmidhi, the tradition is found as: "I am leaving behind amongst you such things that if you catch hold of them, you will never go astray. One of them is greater than the other. The book of Allah, it is the divine rope which is suspended from the sky till the earth. The other is my progeny. These two will never separate from each other till they meet me at fountain of Kauthar. Be careful of how you treat them after".me

AHLE-BAIT ARE THE LEADERS:

The word "Ahle-Bait" is used in the tradition which proves that leadership will always be their right. Another fact which comes to light from this tradition is that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

did not announce his successor only for his immediate future but till the day of judgement. That means we have to follow them (the Ahle-Bait), tread their path and always be with them. Those who are ordered to be clung unto are more worthy of caliphate and leadership. .Therefore the Ahle-Bait should be followed by Ummat

THE LAST MOMENTS AND THE INCIDENT OF PEN AND INK:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was worried about the people's security even on his death bed. He said: "Give me a paper. Let me write down something by which you can never go astray." On this, the second caliph remarked, "He is speaking in state of instability (of mind), (i.e.) He does not know what he is saying). You have the book of Allah and the book of Allah shall suffice for us."

These words lead to a heated argument among those present. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had arranged for his successorship even while breathing his last few breaths, but the Muslims did not care nor did they accept. Well, its an entirely different story that when the first caliph was jotting down his will while in a state of overwhelming, none dared to say that he was writing in a state of instability (of mind) and that the book of Allah is sufficient for us. From these discussions, this fact is revealed that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), from Dhul Asheera to death bed, i.e. from the beginning to the end of his prophethood, had made all the possible arrangements for his successorship and left no stone unturned to make this matter clear.

Now, to say that because the Quraysh were against Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) caliphate and because of the fear of this opposition, he was not given caliphate is sheer stupidity. One should not turn away from the truth just because some people detect it. Just as those who did not like the concept of paying Zakat (Alms) were forced to do so, similarly the Quraysh should have been forced to accept Hazrat Ali (a.s.)'s caliphate.

If fear of opposition is the criterion, then today we should turn away from Islam because the disbelievers are opposing 'it. And finally as we had sufficient discussion on Ghadeer, we .thought it advisable not to discuss it over here