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## 13.'Ali's Place from the Prophet in the Qur'an

During the ninth year after the Hijrah a Christian delegation from Nijran Yemen came to Medina to inquire about Islam and debate with the Prophet about religion.

There was a dialogue between the Messenger and the delegation in which the Messenger stated the positive position of Islam towards the teachings of the Messiah. The delegation chose to stay on their negative position towards Islam. A revelation came to the Prophet commanding him to invite the delegation to a prayer to be offered by both sides asking the Almighty to bring down His punishment on the wrong side of the two parties.

From the Holy Qur'an:

"And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which has come unto thee say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves. Then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) invoking the curse from God upon those who lie." The Holy Quran Chapter 3 verse 62.

The Messenger in compliance with the revealed command invited the Christian delegation for the prayer. Al-Nisayburi in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an entitled: "Ghara-ib Bul-Qur'an and Aja-Ibul-Furqan" recorded the following:

"The Messenger told the Christian delegation: God has commanded me to call upon you to share with me a prayer for punishment. They said "Abu Al-Qasim" (the Prophet's code name) we shall think of the matter then we will come to you."

They had a conference headed by their counselor Al-Aquib. When they asked him his advice he said: "By God you have known that Muhammad is a Messenger of God. He told you the exact truth about your man the Messiah. By God whenever people challenge a prophet and share with him a prayer for punishment their grown-ups will not last and their small ones will not grow. It will be your annihilation if you accept his challenge. If you insist on keeping your religion make peace between you and the man

and go back to your country.

"When the Christian delegation came back to the Messenger they found him on his way to the proposed prayer wearing a garment made of black hair carrying Al-Hussein on his arm and leading Al-Hassan by his hand with Fatima walking behind him and 'Ali walking behind her.

The Prophet said to the four members of his family: "When I pray say: 'Amen." Looking at the Prophet and his family the priest of the delegation said to his group: "Christians I see faces whose prayer will be answered even for removal of a mountain.

Accept not their challenge. If you do you will perish and the Christians will not live on this earth." The delegation heeded the warning of their priest and said to the Prophet: "Abu Al-Qasim." we have decided not to make prayer of "Mubahalah" with you. 1

Al-Tabari in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an reported many hadiths through various channels that the Messenger accompanied 'Ali Fatima Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein in the event of "Mubahalah"2

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Saad Ibn Abu Waqass reported that after the revelation of the following verse: "And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which had come to thee say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves...." The Messenger of God invited 'Ali Fatima Hassan and Hussein then he said: "God these are the members of my family."3

## Why was all included?

The Almighty commanded His Messenger to say to the delegation of Najran: "Come! We will summon our sons and your sons our women and your women; and ourselves and yourselves...." In compliance with this command the Prophet brought with him Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein because they were the sons of his daughter Fatima and for this they are his sons. He brought Fatima with him because she represents the women from the members of his House.

But why did he bring with him 'Ali who was neither from the sons nor from the women? 'Ali has no place in the verse unless he is included in the word "ourselves." Bringing 'Ali with him indicates that the Messenger of God considered 'Ali an extension of his personality. By considering him so he elevated him above all the Muslims.

The Messenger said on many occasions: "'Ali is from me and I am from him."

Hubshi Ibn Janadah reported that he heard the Messenger of God saying: "'Ali is from me and I am from him and no one represents me but 'Ali."4

A dialogue between the Imam 'Ali Al-Ridha and Al-Ma-Moon (a prominent Abbaside caliph) went as

follows: Al-Ma-Moon: "What is the evidence on the caliphate of your grandfather ('Ali)?".

The Imam Al-Ridha: The evidence is the word of God "and ourselves and yourselves." The Imam meant that by bringing the Imam with him in the event of "Mubahalah" the Messenger made him an extension of himself; and whoever is an extension of the personality of the Messenger would be the Imam of the Muslims.

Al-Ma-Moon: This would be true if there is not "our women and your women.".

Al-Ma-Moon meant that it is possible that there were among the Muslims other men who were like 'Ali in being an extension of the personality of the Holy Prophet but he did not want to bring all of them. He chose to bring one of them 'Ali as a representative of his equals.

The evidence of this is the word "Our women" since this word includes all women who are related to the Holy Prophet by birth or marriage. But the Messenger brought only one of them Fatima who is related to him by birth as a representative of the women who are related to him.

The Imam Al-Ridah: This would be true if there were not the words: "And our sons and your sons." He meant that Fatima was brought as the unequaled woman rather than a representative of her equals in the family of the Prophet. Had other women been equal to Fatima the Holy Prophet would have brought them with her.

For he brought Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein together because they were equal to each other and did not bring one of them as a representative of his sons. Therefore presenting 'Ali on this occasion is an evidence that 'Ali is the only one whom the Prophet considered to be an extension of his personality.

It is reported that Amr Ibn Al-Aws asked the Prophet: "Who is the most beloved to you from men?" The Messen ger said: Abu Bakr. Then he asked him: "Who is next?"

And the Messenger said: 'Umar. Ibn Al-Aws said: "Then where is the place of 'Ali?" The Prophet turned his face to the people around him saying: "This man is asking about the self."5

I have mentioned in the last chapter that the Messenger's declaration after the Hijrah was not a fulfillment of a promise he made to 'Ali before the Hijrah for he fulfilled his promise to 'Ali by "brothering" him on the day of the conference which took place at his house. Furthermore he did not promise 'Ali with such a declaration to be made in the future.

The Holy Prophet announced that to the Muslims voluntarily because 'Ali deserved the unique honor and because its announcement might prepare the Muslims psychologically for the leadership of 'Ali in the future. He wanted to show the nation the guiding Minaret which the nation would need after the Prophet.

As the Messenger announced to the Muslims the unique honor which he bestowed upon 'Ali by "brothering" him he was expected to announce publicly the other two high honors which he conferred on

him: of being his executor and successor.

For what the nation needed more than anything else was the good leadership to which it might resort after the Messenger. Such a leadership is what could secure the continuity of the Islamic Message in its purity.

It could also secure the nation against deviation from the right road in its long future.

The Messenger chose to announce this leadership during the tenth year after the Hijrah when he was performing his valedictory pilgrimage. He declared to the thousands of pilgrims that 'Ali had the right to administer the affairs of the Muslims as much as the Prophet had. This meant that the Prophet had declared that 'Ali was to be his successor.

It also implied executorship for whomever the Prophet appointed to administer the affairs of the Muslims would be his executor also.

- 1. You find it in Al-Nisaboori's Commentaries on the Qur'an printed on the margin of Al-Tabari's Commentaries Part 2 pp. 192–193.
- 2. Al-Tabari in his Commentaries on the Qur'an Part 2 pp. 192- 193.
- 3. Muslim in his Sahih Part 15 p. 176.
- 4. Ibn Majah in his Sahih (hadith No. 143)
- 5. Almuttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanzul-Ummal, Part 15 (virtues of 'Ali), p. 125 (hadith No. 361)

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