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Home > The Brother of the Prophet Muhammad: Imam 'Ali > Part 4: The Caliphate in The Islamic Law > 35. The Hadith of the Analogy "You Are to Me Like Aaron to Moses" > Unlimited Deputization

35. The Hadith of the Analogy "You Are to Me Like Aaron to Moses"

We have mentioned in the previous pages that the Messenger declared on the day of his conference with his close relatives in front of thirty or forty men from the children of Abdul–Muttalib and the Muttalibites that he "brothered" 'Ali and appointed him his successor and executor. This was a Divine reward to 'Ali for his genuine promise to the Messenger to be his minister in his mission.

This event took place three years after the commencement of the prophethood of Muhammad and ten years before the Hijrah.

It was made clear in the fifth chapter that the Messenger at his conference with the members of his clan wanted to follow the method of Moses of which the Holy Qur'an informs us that when the Almighty commanded Moses to go to Fera Moses prayed to the Lord saying:

"And give me a minister from my family: Aaron my brother. Add to my strength through him and make him share my task that we may celebrate Thy praise without stint..." The Holy Qur'an chapter 20 verses 25–31.

The Holy Prophet made his first declaration about 'Ali at the First Islamic Conference in front of thirty or forty men from the Hashimites. After nineteen years from the day of the conference the Holy Prophet made a similar declaration in front of thousands of Muslims when he was heading the Islamic army to Tabook (on the borders of Jordan)

During the month of Rajab of the ninth lunar year after the Hijrah the Holy Prophet departed from Medina heading an army of twenty–five thousands of his followers aiming at the borders of Jordan leaving 'Ali to take his place in Medina.

This saddened 'Ali because he did not want to be away from the Messenger. It is reported also that some hypocrites circulated a rumor that the Messenger left him behind because he did not like to

accompany him.

Whatever was the reason 'Ali followed the Messenger and reached him while he was still near Medina. A dialogue between the Prophet and 'Ali took place. The Prophet concluded the dialogue with a very important declaration which was recorded in the most authentic and highly considered books of hadith and history. Al-Bukhari recorded that Saad Ibn Abu Waqas reported the following:

"The Messenger of God took a journey to Tabook and he appointed 'Ali to succeed him in Medina. 'Ali said to the Prophet: 'Do you leave me with the children and the women?' The Messenger replied: 'Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me?" 1

Al-Bukhari also reported that Saad said: "The Prophet said to 'Ali: Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses?"2

Imam Ahmad in his Musnad3 and Al-Hakim in his Al- Mustadrak4 recorded that Ibn Abbas said in a hadith the following: "The Messenger and the people departed for military operations in Tabook. 'Ali said to him: I will depart with you. The Prdphet said to him: No. 'Ali became sad. The Messenger said to him: Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that you are not a prophet? It would not be proper that I leave unless you are my successor.".

Muhammad Ibn Saad in his book Al-Tabaqat recorded that Zayd Ibn Arqam and Al-Bura Ibn Azib reported concerning the military journey of Tabook the following: "The Messenger said to 'Ali: It would be necessary that I stay or you stay (in Medina). So he left him in Medina.

When the Messenger departed some people said: He left 'Ali behind him only for something he hated about him.

When this word reached 'Ali he followed the Messenger (and informed the Messenger about what people were saying). The Messenger laughed and said: 'Ali are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron was to Moses except that you are not a prophet? 'Ali said: Yes Messenger of God.

The Messenger said: It is as I told you."5

"Ibn Hisham recorded in his Biography of the Prophet that the Prophet said to 'Ali on that day:

"'Ali are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron was to Moses except that there shall be no prophet after me?"6

Muslim in his Sahih through channels to Saad Ibn Abu Waqas recorded that the Messenger said to 'Ali on that day: "Are you not satisfied that you are to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no prophethood after me?"7

Imam Ahmad reported this hadith through four channels to Saad Ibn Abu Wagas.8

Muhammad Ibn Majah in his Sunan reported the hadith of Saad.9

Al-Tirmidhi also reported it in his Sunan. 10

Imam Ahmad recorded that this hadith also was reported by Asma Bint (daughter of) Omeis. 11

Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak recorded the hadith of Saad. 12

Ibn Abd-Al-Barr in his book "Al-Istee-ab" recorded the following: "And the Prophet said to 'Ali: "You are to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me." The saying of the Prophet to 'Ali: You are to me like Aaron to Moses was reported by many companions and it is one of the best hadiths and most authentic. It was reported by Saad Ibn Abu Waqas... Also it was reported by Ibn Abbas Abu Sa-eed Al-Khidri Om Selemah (wife of the Prophet) Asma Bint Omeis Jabir Ibn Abdullah and numerous others."13

If there is anyone that argues about the authenticity of the hadith of the conference of the Prophet with the members of his clan I do not know of anyone from the Muslim scholars who argues about the authenticity of this Hadith of Analogy between 'Ali and Aaron. The authenticity of this hadith supports the authenticity of the Hadith of the Conference because the two hadiths accord with each other and express the same meaning.

The Hadith of the Analogy between 'Ali and Aaron gives 'Ali all the offices of Aaron except the prophethood.

Aaron was a brother of Moses and his minister. The Holy Qur'an states that Moses prayed to the Almighty saying:

"And give me a minister from my family: Aaron my brother. Add to my strength through him." The Holy Qur'an chapter 20 verses 24–31.

Aaron was a deputy of Moses and the one who used to take his place and the Holy Qur'an testifies to that:

"And We appointed for Moses thirty nights and completed (the period) with ten (more): Thus the term of communion was completed with his Lord forty nights. And Moses had charged his brother Aaron before he went up: "Succeed me amongst my people; do right and follow not the way of those who do mischief." The Holy Qur'an chapter 7 verse 142.

Aaron like Moses was a leader of all the Israelites and was given from God an authority similar to that of Moses and the Holy Qur'an declares that:

God said to Moses: "We will certainly strengthen thy arm through thy brother and invest you both with authority so they shall not be able to touch you; with Our evidence shall ye triumph both of

you as well as those who follow you." The Holy Qur'an chapter 28 verse 35.

The phrase "with Our evidence shall ye triumph both of you as well as those who follow you " indicates clearly that all those who believed in Moses were followers of Aaron as they were followers of Moses.

The verse also declares that God has given both of them authority and immunity so the unbelievers cannot harm them and that Moses and Aaron along with their followers were destined to triumph over their opponents.

'Ali according to the statement of the Holy Prophet has all these offices. He is the brother of the Messenger and God has strengthened the Messenger Muhammad through him though there is a difference between the brotherhood of Aaron to Moses and the brotherhood of 'Ali to Muhammad.

The brotherhood between Aaron and Moses was through birth and was not earned through any effort on the part of either one. The brotherhood between Muhammad and 'Ali is more significant because it did not come to 'Ali through birth.

It was bestowed upon 'Ali as a reward to him for his great endeavor. He was also his minister. He was also the deputy of the Messenger to represent and succeed him. He was like the Messenger leader of all the Muslims. What does the caliphate mean more than that?

Thus the Messenger through this far-reaching statement has actually declared that his minister and deputy and the one who like the Holy Prophet is supposed to be followed and obeyed by all the Muslims was only 'Ali son of Abu Talib. All these ranks which are implied in the Hadith of Analogy between 'Ali and Aaron were clearly mentioned in the declaration of the conference where the Holy Prophet said: "This is my brother executor and successor. Listen to him and obey him."

I would like to go back to the verse which declared that God had given Moses and Aaron authority and immunity that the unbelievers cannot harm them that they and those who followed them are the triumphant. The similarity in this aspect between Moses and Aaron on one hand and between Muhammad and 'Ali on the other hand is obvious. The Almighty strengthened Muhammad through 'Ali. 'Ali's bravery was the wonder of the ages. Muhammad and 'Ali were given from God authority aud immunity against the enemies of Islam.

Thus the unbelievers in spite of their overwhelming numbers compared to the small number of the Muslims in those days were unable to reach the Messenger or 'Ali with any serious harm. The Messenger and 'Ali and those who followed them were triumphant.

The Messenger was faced with situations in which the Muslims were outnumbered and many of them thought that defeat is the destiny of the camp of the Oneness of God. Yet through the firmness of the Messenger and the heroism of 'Ali the Islamic camp was triumphant.

The Muslims in more than one battle were defeated but the Messenger and 'Ali remained at the

battlefield alone. God protected them and they prevailed against the opposing forces. The Messenger and his deputy 'Ali had lived while surrounded by dangers for twenty-three years but the enemies of Islam were not able to harm them.

Unlimited Deputization

It may be said that the Hadith of Analogy between 'Ali and Aaron came on a specific occasion namely: The deputization of 'Ali by the Messenger to replace him during his journey to Tabook. Aaron also was deputized by Moses during his absence when he went for the appointed time with the Lord. This means that the hadith does not indicate that 'Ali was the permanent deputy of the Messenger. Of course a person with a sole objective of disproving the Prophet's permanent deputization of 'Ali can say that.

Yet a neutral minded person can see in the hadith a clear indication that the Prophet had given 'Ali an unlimited deputization. Had the Holy Prophet meant only to deputize 'Ali at a particular occasion his deputization would be like that of any other companion whom the Prophet appointed as temporary successor when he used to leave Medina. But the Prophet never likened any of them to Aaron.

The scholars who take this attitude have forgotten that the Messenger appointed temporary successors during the following campaigns:

Abu Lubabah to succeed him in Medina when he left to the Battle of Badr.

Ibn Arfatah when the Prophet left to Doumat Al-Jandal.

Ibn Om Maktoum during the military operations against Banu Quraidah and Banu Lihyanand Thee Qirad.

Abu Dharr when he left to Banu Al-Mustalaq.

Numeila during the time of Khaibar.

Ibn Al-Adbat during Omrat Al-Qada.

Abu Raham during the time of his military journey to Mecca.

Abu Dujanah during the Valedictory Pilgrimage. 14

The Holy Prophet never said to any one of these temporary deputies what he said to 'Ali: "You are to me like Aaron to Moses... "He said that only to 'Ali because he was not a temporary successor like these companions.

Furthermore by excluding only the prophethood in the Hadith of Anology the Prophet had clearly indicated that all the ranks of Aaron are bestowed on 'Ali. And none of Aaron's ranks (the ministry the leadership the prophethood–or the brotherhood) was temporary. Thus the deputization and

successorship were permanent and not occasional.

The fact is that the Messenger used that occasion as a pulpit to declare the distinction of 'Ali his leadership of the nation his general deputization of him and that he was his only deputy.

The exception of the prophethood clearly indicates that 'Ali to the Holy Prophet is like Aaron to Moses in everything except the prophethood. The Holy Prophet in fact was saying to 'Ali that his position from him is like the position of Aaron to Moses in brotherhood ministry successorship his leadership of the nation and every rank other than the prophethood.

By saying "Except that there shall be no prophethood after me" the Prophet actually had informed the Muslims that 'Ali was deprived of the prophethood not because he was not qualified for it but only because Muhammad is the Final of the Prophets. Had the Prophet not been the Final of all the Prophets 'Ali would have been a Prophet like Aaron.

The Imam 'Ali in one of his sermons reported that the Holy Prophet told him during the period of the commencement of his prophethood: "'Ali you hear what I hear and you see what I see but you are not a prophet and you are on the right path.".

The successorship of Aaron to his brother Moses when Moses went to the appointed time with his Lord never was a temporary mission. He succeeded Moses when he went to the mountain for forty nights only because of his superior position among the Israelites as Moses' permanent deputy. And when the head of a nation is absent his deputy takes his place as a matter of course and as an exercise of his general function.

We have already advanced that the Holy Qur'an declares that Aaron was like Moses a leader of all the Israelites. God said to Moses: "We shall strengthen you through your brother and give you both authority that they will not reach you. With our evidence both of you along with those who follow you shall triumph."

Since 'Ali's position was similar to that of Aaron he would be like the Prophet Muhammad a leader of all the Muslims. His deputization from the Prophet at the time of his absence would be a matter of course and an exercise of his general function because he is the deputy of the head of the State.

This is some of what the Holy Messenger meant in his declaration. You have already read in the hadith of Ibn Abbas which was reported by Al-Hakim and Imam Ahmad that the Prophet told 'Ali: "Are you not satisfied that you are to me like Aaron to Moses except that you are not a prophet? It would be improper that I leave unless you are my successor.".

The reader may wonder why many Muslim scholars did not understand from the Hadith of Analogy with its clear indication that the Prophet was trying to inform the Muslims that 'Ali is his successor.

The negative attitude of these scholars is due to the fact that they lived in societies predominantly

subscribing to the theory that the Messenger of God died without appointing a successor after him. As they took this theory for granted it was necessary for them to overlook the indication of any hadith that the Prophet had appointed 'Ali as successor in order to save the no-appointment-by-the-Prophet theory.

Had Abu Bakr been the subject of this declaration instead of 'Ali the negative attitude of many scholars would have been reversed. Had the Messenger said to Abu Bakr:

"Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me "
the Muslim scholars of the majority would have found in the declaration a clear evidence that the
Messenger had appointed Abu Bakr as his successor. Had the Prophet said that I would have believed
that the Messenger had appointed Abu Bakr as his successor.

It is worthy to mention that the Messenger uttered the statement of analogy between 'Ali and Aaron on occasions other than the occasion of Tabook. Om Saleem wife of Abu Ayyoub Al-Ansari whom the Holy Prophet used to respect and visit reported that the Messenger told her: "Om Saleem the flesh of 'Ali is from my flesh and his blood is from my blood and he is to me like Aaron to Moses." 15

Al-Tabari recorded that Ibn Abbas reported that the Messenger said to 'Ali on the day of brotherhood (this was eight years before the occasion of Tabook):

"... 'Ali were you angry with me (showing his love to 'Ali as a brother shows his love to his brother) when I made brotherhoods between the Meccans and the Medinites and I did not make a brotherhood between you and any of them? Are you not satisfied to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me?"16

Asma Bint Omais (wife of Jaafar Al-Tayyar) said: "I heard the Messenger of God saying to 'Ali: You are to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no Prophet after me." 17 Of course Asma was not in the army of Tabook. So she heard the statement from the Messenger on a different occasion.

The Imam Al-Nisa-i in his Al-Khassa-iss Al-Alaweyah (the distinctions of 'Ali) reported that when Jaafar Ibn Abu Talib and Zayd Ibn Haritha and Imam 'Ali disputed each other about the guardianship of the orphan of Hamzah the Prince of Martyrs the Messenger said: "'Ali you are to me like Aaron to Moses..." 18

Al-Hassan Ibn Badr Al-Hakim in his book Al-Kuna Al-Shirazi in Al-Alqab and Ibn Al-Najjar reported that the Messenger said to 'Ali while Abu Bakr 'Umar and Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah were with the Prophet:

"'Ali you are the first of the believers in belief and their first in Islam and you are to me like Aaron to Moses..."19

It is reported by Zayd Ibn Oufa that the Messenger of God said to 'Ali on the day of brotherhood (in the

first year after the Hijra): "By the One Who sent me with the truth I only preserved you for myself. You are to me like Aaron to Moses except that there shall be no prophet after me and you are my brother and my heir..."20

These hadiths and others which I did not mention indicate clearly that 'Ali was to the Holy Prophet like Aaron to Moses and that he had all offices of Aaron except the prophethood. He was his permanent deputy and he was like the Prophet leader of all Muslims and the one whom they should follow.

This leadership which was given to him was only by the revelation from God to His great Messenger. The Messenger spoke of the analogy between the position of 'Ali and Aaron several times and on several occasions. The last occasion was during his journey to Tabook during the month of Rajab of the ninth year after the Hijrah.

A few months after that event the Holy Messenger took a public stand similar to this when he sent Abu Bakr to read to the pilgrims the declaration of the chapter of Bara-ah. Let us see what happened at that time.

- 1. Al-Bukhari in his Sahih part 6 p. 3.
- 2. Al-Bukhari his Sahih part 5 p. 24.
- 3. Imam Ahmad Al-Musnad part 1 p. 131
- 4. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak part 3 p. 133.
- 5. Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat part 15 p. 176.
- 6. Ibn Hisham Al-Seerat Al-Nabaweyah part 2 p. 172.
- 7. Muslim his Sahih part 15 p. 176.
- 8. Imam Ahmad Al-Musnad part 1 pp. 175-177-179-182.
- 9. Ibn Majah his authentic Sunan part 1 p. 45.
- 10. Al-Tirmidhi his authentic Sunan part 5 p. 302.
- 11. Imam Ahmad Al-Musnad part 6 p. 3-23.
- 12. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak part p.
- 13. Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Barr Al-Islee-ab part 3 p. 1 097.
- 14. Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet. Look at the record of the journeys of the Prophet.
- 15. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi Mukhtasar Kanz Al-Ummal (printed on the margin of Musnad part 5 pp. 31–32)
- 16. Conveyed by Sayed Sharaful-Deen Al-Murajaat p. 179.
- 17. Ibn Ahd Al-Barr Al-Istee-ab part 3 p. 1 098.
- 18. Al-Nisa-I The Distinctions of 'Ali p. 19 (conveyed by Al-Fairouzabadi Fadha-II Al-Khamsah part 1 p. 307)
- 19. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi Kanz Al- Ummal part 6 p. 395 (conveyed by Al-Fairouzabadi Fadha-II Al-Khamsah part 1 p. 312)
- 20. Al-Muttagi Al-Hindi Kanz Al-Ummal part 5 p. 40 (Al-Fairouzabadi Fadha-II Al-Khamsah part 1 p. 311.

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