

7. 'Ali's Role in Building the Islamic State

Self-determination is an inalienable right of every nation and every nation therefore has the right to establish a state and institute a national government.

Such a state has the right to unite all its people under one banner unless legitimate governments for sections of one nation had been already established. These rights are natural and no power has the right to prevent a nation or a people of a country from exercising them.

The Arab nation at the time of the Messenger was no exception. It had the right to establish a state and institute a government. This was not only a right but also the duty of the Arab nation. Yet due to unusual circumstances the Arab people in Hijaz Najd and Tuhama were living without government of any kind. There was no power to stop a public offender and enable people to live in peace and security for their wealth lives and honors.

The Arab tribes were reciprocating hostilities. No honor blood or property of a tribe was sacred to other tribes. Anarchy to them was a matter of course and no change was necessary; and if anyone thought of a change he did not have the means to realize it.

The rest of the Arab people in Yemen Syria and Iraq were ruled by foreign powers who did not have the right to rule them.

It was a duty of any new government to try to liberate these people from foreign domination and unite them with the rest of the Arabs regardless of any religious principles.

But there was no one to fulfill this duty or exercise these rights.

The Almighty wanted to deliver the Arabs and other nations and liberate them from their social political and religious anarchies. He sent Muhammad to lead mankind to the right road and wanted the Arab nation to be the starting point. Probably the Arabs were the most needy for such a guidance and should they be guided by a heavenly leader they would be well qualified to carry His message to other nations.

The Messenger tried to deliver His message and to establish a state. The forces of anarchy from pagans and non-pagans tried with all their means to prevent him from fulfilling his mission waging against him a relentless war.

It was impossible for him to fulfill his mission without accepting their challenge and meeting them at the battle field and defeating them completely.

It was the right as well as the duty of the Holy Prophet to defeat the adversary forces in order to establish a new state from a new and ideal kind.

The Islamic State which he was trying to establish was not a subduing force which ruled people against their own will and imposed itself above them. The Messenger wanted to found a state and a government in which the ruler and the ruled are equal and brothers to each other.

A strong individual or group in this state would not be respected for strength nor would the weak be deprived of his right because of his weakness. The government the Prophet wanted to establish was projected to direct mankind to the Creator of the Universe and make the nations as well as the individuals realize that He is their True Ruler.

Thus they would obey His command and obtain the projected worldly and spiritual happiness in His obedience. The Projected government would develop as a spontaneous outcome of their adherence to a set of principles which elevated people to make them live spiritually above their own human level.

Thesis Versus Antithesis

The anarchic and evil forces of Mecca and other Arab communities did not only deny Muhammad the right to establish a state and a government but also tried to prevent him and his followers from exercising their religious devotion. They denied him and his followers the right to live as long as they believed in One God.

These forces drove Muhammad and his followers out of their homes and properties. They wanted to shed his blood and the blood of his followers. Had these forces done nothing other than preventing him from establishing a state he would have had the right to combat them and defeat them for the continuation of their power meant the continuation of injustice towards the weak and the absence of security in society; above all that the Almighty would not be worshiped and His Oneness would not be acknowledged.

The adverse elements were the opposite barriers the removal of which was a necessary requirement for establishing the projected state. It was impossible to bring such a state into existence without destroying its opposite.

Thus the Heavenly state was destined to be born on the battlefield when the founder of the state and his

followers were accepting the challenges of the evil forces one after another. Had these forces been able to prevail on the battlefield the Islamic state could not have been born or continued to exist.

Quality Versus Quantity

Muslims at the beginning of the Hijrah were a very small minority compared to the rest of the Arab forces which stood against them. They were overwhelmingly outnumbered and poorly equipped.

For the Faith of Islam to triumph and establish a state it had to have one of the two following methods:

1. A Divine intervention through which the evil forces would be miraculously destroyed. God is able to do that and nothing is beyond His power. Whenever He wants to do anything He only says: "Be and it is." However it is evident that this was not to happen.

The Almighty runs the events of the world through the natural courses. He tests the believers and they do not pass the test unless they try to fulfill what He commands them to do offering in His way what they possess of resourcefulness and power.

2. The other way by which the small Islamic minority could obtain victory was to have a superior quality which enabled it to prevail against opponents with quantitative superiority. This is what took place.

The Unique Hero

Here we find 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib next to the Messenger.

He proved to be a unique hero and a giant; mankind had never witnessed his equal in the history of "Jihad." The reader may remember that the Messenger of God gathered his close relatives after the commencement of his Prophethood seeking from among them a minister to assist him in his difficult mission.

None of the Hashimites other than 'Ali responded to his call. "Prophet of God " he said "I shall be your minister." The Prophet upon hearing this told the Hashimites: "This ('Ali) is my brother executor and successor."

This event took place ten years before the Hijrah when 'Ali was thirteen years old. During the ten years which followed the event 'Ali's manhood reached its unequalled strength. This became crystal clear at the night of Hijrah when he lay on the bed of the Messenger giving the highest example in the history of Islamic redemption.

This manhood was destined to be transformed into a unique heroism when the Messenger and his followers accepted the challenge of their enemies and went on defending their sacred freedom trying to bring about the birth of the Islamic State which was conceived to carry the torch of guidance for

mankind.

No one other than the Messenger expected the word "Wazeeruk" (your minister) which 'Ali uttered at the historical conference to be so full of its meaning and flowing with so much of heroism. The Messenger was the only one who expected from 'Ali all his future record.

The Messenger was the architect and the founder of the Islamic State. His minister 'Ali was the eliminator of the obstructive forces which stood in the way of its establishment for he was the hero and the bearer of the banner of the Messenger in every decisive battle.¹

The Messenger made him the commander-in-chief of every expedition he attended. He never placed him under any command other than his. Whenever he carried the banner of the Messenger he came back with an impressive victory and history. His leadership was unique in style. He was not a commander who was defended by his soldiers.

He was rather the leader who stood in the front line literally leading his soldiers. On more than one occasion his soldiers took refuge in him and he was their protector at more than one battle. On occasions the bulk of the companions ran away leaving the Messenger alone and 'Ali stood along with him compensating him through his heroic performance for what the Prophet missed of their defensive actions.

'Ali attended eighteen battles with the Messenger. In addition he led numerous expeditions. It suffices to mention briefly his indispensable contributions in four decisive battles: Badr Uhud the Moat and Kheibar. These four battles were truly the battles of destiny for Islam and Muslims. The future of Islam was dependent upon their outcomes.

¹. Ibn Sa'd in his Al-Tabaqat Part 3 p. 25.

Al-Hakim also reported that in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p.111.

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