

Chapter 17: The Narrative Reasons For The Leadership Of Imam Ali (as)

The previous discussions explicitly confirm that the selection of an Imam by God is completely distinct from the issue of dictatorship. The person appointed by Allah to govern and judge among people is the most righteous on earth.

This is because, in this kind of government the governor is appointed by Allah who, using His sublime wisdom would select the best person for the leadership of Muslims; there is no room for illogical determination with Allah.

Allah is a genuine anthropologist who recognizes the needs of His creatures better than the creatures themselves. In the same way that the divine laws and commands are unique, so is the leader who is selected by Him. We could never compare a governor whose government involves a series of serious errors and a governor selected by Allah.

The previous discussions also proved that the innocent and infallible Imam, who is well aware of the divine laws, is a good and reliable resort for the Ummah. Muslims constantly need such an individual. As a general rule, when the great prophet of Islam passed away, the Islamic Ummah had not reached a complete thinking pattern to be able to rely on themselves in the absence of such a divine leader.

Now it is time for us to find out who was elected by the Prophet to rule over the Muslim community.

Here we have to resort to narrative reasoning: the documents issued by the Prophet of Islam have been reported most frequently, those documents are far from being artificial or fake. Furthermore, these documents clearly indicate the appointment of specific individuals for leadership; no sensible person would ever doubt the authenticity of such documents.

For this reason, we will present here some of these narrative documents which are definitely issued by the Prophet. Since both the pages of this book and the readers time are limited, we have to select only a

few of such documents concerning Imam Ali's appointment as the leader of Muslims by the great Prophet.

The Narration of Endearment

The trade caravan entering Hijaz from Syria informed the Prophet of the readiness of the Roman soldiers to attack Medina. As a rule, prevention is always better than cure.

So, the Prophet announced a general mobilization in Medina and its suburbs; an army of thirty thousand troops, in the severe heat which was fit for the ripening of fruits, announced their readiness to take part in this huge Islamic war.

Some reporters gave the Prophet the news that the hypocrites of Medina were determined to kill innocent people in his absence. To stop any probable incident, the Prophet appointed Imam Ali (as) as his substitute in Medina.

Realizing the fact that their plan had been betrayed (by the Imam staying in Medina) they decided to employ a plot to make Imam leave Medina. For this reason, they spread a rumor that there were disagreements between Imam and the Prophet causing the Imam to be the side lines to the Prophet's affection. The reason they presented for this rumor was the claim that Ali (as) was not permitted to take part in that religious war.

This rumor worried Imam Ali and his associates, who had always been loved by the Prophet. To falsify this statement, he approached the Prophet, who was not very far away from Medina, informing him of the story. To show his utmost love and care for Imam Ali (as), the Prophet delivered the following historical message:

“Are you not willing to remain for me as Harun was for Musa? With the difference that there would be no prophet after me. It is not proper for me to pass away without having appointed you as my successor.

This narration, which is called the narration of Endearment by the Islamic reporters, is one of the most frequent and definitive narrations of Islam.

The narrator Buhrani, in his book called “Qayatul Maram” has mentioned the names of those authors who have reported this event in their books, showing that the Muslim narrators have reported this event in one hundred and seventy different ways, one hundred ways of which belong to the Sunnite scholars and narrators.^{[1](#)}

Sharaf Al-din Ameli, in his book “Al-Morajeat” has reported the documents of this narration. Reports by the Sunnite writers, state that it is narrated in ten books of theirs.^{[2](#)}

On the authenticity of this narration it is enough for us to observe that the writers of **Sahih** (correct)

books by the Sunnites, Bokhari and Muslim have reported this narration as the “right narration” in their books.³ In the firmness of these reports, it is sufficient to know that Saad Waqqas, Imam Ali’s (as) bitter enemy, considered this event as one of the three bright points in Imam Ali’s life.

When Muawiyah entered Mecca to receive people’s allegiance for his son, Yazid, he convened an assembly in “Al-Nadut” in which some dignitaries of the Prophet’s close friends had taken part. He started his statement with cursing Ali (as) and expected Saad to join him in this condemnation, but addressing Muawiyah, Saad replied: whenever I remember Ali’s three virtues, I wish I could have those three virtues. Those virtues being:

1. The day when the Prophet told Ali that Ali was to him as Harun was to Musa;
2. During the Khaybar Holy war, the Prophet said: Tomorrow I will give the flag to an individual who is loved by Allah and by His Apostle. He would be the conqueror of Khaybar and would not flee the enemy, (and then he gave Ali the flag).
3. On the day of Mubahilah (cursing) with the Christians of Najran, the Prophet gathered Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain, saying: O God, these are my Household.⁴

Therefore, we should not ever doubt the validity and authenticity of this document; rather we should step forward and try to think over the content of this narration.

Firstly, we should stress on the expression **الآ انه لا نبي بعدي** except for the fact that there would be no prophet after me.

In this narration, the Prophet likens his relation to Ali’s to the relation of Harun and Musa. However, this narration takes away the position of prophethood from Ali (as) despite the fact that Harun was a prophet. This is related to the command used in the title **وخاتم النبيين** “the last of the Prophets” and so Ali (as) would never attain such a position.

Now let us see what kind of positions and titles Harun possessed in accordance with the Holy Quran; Ali (as) possessed all these positions except for the position of prophethood.

When we refer to the Holy Quran, we observe that Musa (Musa) had asked God to bestow upon Harun the following positions:

1. The position of minister: Musa Ibn Omran had asked Allah to appoint Harun as his minister: “And give me a helper from my family, Harun, my brother”⁵.
2. Strength and confirmation: Musa asked Allah to confirm him through his brother Harun: “Strengthen my back through him “.
3. Prophethood: Musa Ibn Omran asked Allah to join Harun in the affair of prophethood: “And associate

him with me in my affair”[6](#).

The Holy Quran mentions that Allah accepted all Musa's request and bestowed upon Harun all those positions He said: you are indeed granted your petition, O Musa.[7](#)

Furthermore, while Musa was absent, Harun was his successor among Bani Israel: “Musa told Harun: be my caliph and successor among my tribe”[8](#).

A reference to the above verses clarifies all of Harun's positions and in accordance with the narration of endearment all these positions (except for prophethood) belong to Imam Ali (as).

Due to these valid reasons, Imam Ali (as) was the Prophet's cleric, associate and caliph among people and should have been the leader of the Ummah in the absence of the great prophet.

An Answer to a Question

It might be said that Ali (as) was the Prophet's successor only during days when the Prophet had left Medina. This is different from being an absolute and life-time successor of the Prophet after his death.[9](#)

But a brief look at the Prophet's life will provide an answer to such a question:

Firstly: Ali (as) was not the only person who was appointed as the Prophet's successor in Medina in the Prophet's absence. Rather, during his ten year stay in Medina the Prophet never left the Islamic center (Medina) without having appointed a successor. If by the statement expressed by the Prophet is meant only “a temporary successor” why didn't he use this expression for other successors of his time, they, too were appointed, on a temporary basis, the transitory substitute for the Prophet while he had left Medina for Mecca or during the Holy wars? Then why didn't the Prophet use this distinction for his other substitutes?

Secondly, if the given position was temporary, the Prophet did not have to express such a statement and then subtract prophethood from the position he offered Ali.

Besides, such a temporary position could not be given a high value rather it should have been a permanent position because years later Saad Waqqas wished for such a position and was ready to pay a hundred red-haired camels for such a position. He considered this position among Ali's significant virtues (Ali as the victor of Khaybar and his role in Mubahilah with the Najran Jews).

Thirdly: if the Prophet had expressed such a statement only on the occasion of his departure towards Tabuk, the critics could have been right. But the Prophet expresses such a statement at other times. The books on narration are witness to this event.

Here, we shall refer to two cases.[10](#)

1. Once Abu Bakr, Omar and Abu Obaydah Ibn Jarrah were in the Prophet's presence when the Prophet, putting his hand over Ali's shoulder, said:

“ يا عليُّ أنت أولُ المؤمنين ايماناً وأولهم إسلاماً، و أنت منِّي بمنزلةِ هارونَ من موسى ”

“O Ali! You were the first to believe in me and to accept Islam. You are to me, what Harun was to Musa”.¹¹

2. In the early days of Hijrat, the Prophet gathered Muhajir and Ansar around himself, calling every two of them, brothers. Ali (as) was the only one who did not get a brother. While weeping, Imam Ali (as) asks the Prophet: O Apostle of Allah! I have not done anything wrong.

How come you did not appoint a brother to me? Once more the Prophet repeated the previous statement in front of a group of his closest followers:

“

والَّذى بعثني بالحقّ ما أحرثك إلا لنفسى و أنت منِّي بمنزلةِ هارونَ من موسى غير أنّه لا نبيّ بعدي و أنت أخي و وارثي

“

“I swear to Allah who has rightly appointed me as His Apostle, I did not appoint any brother for you because I myself wanted to be your brother. You are to me what Harun was to Musa except for the fact that there would not be any prophet after me. You are my heir”¹².

Another reason for the fact that Imam Ali (as) possessed Harun's status was the Prophet's endeavor to let people realize that what Harun was to Musa was like the position of Ali relative to the Prophet, except for the fact that he did not possess the position of prophethood.

When the Prophet's dearest daughter (Fatimah) gave birth to two sons, the Prophet ordered Ali (as) to call them Hasan and Husain on the basis of Harun's sons Shabbar and Shabayr in Hebrew.

A research on the lives of these two will lead us to more similarities between them with which we shall not deal here. Sharaf Al-din, in the book “Al-murajeat” has thoroughly dealt with the similarities.¹³

¹ . Ghayat Al-Maram, pp. 107–152.

² . Al-Morajeat, pp. 131–132.

³ . Sahih Bokhari, t.3, p.58 Sahih Muslim, vol.2, p.323.

⁴ . Sahih Muslim, vol. 7, p. 120.

⁵ . Quran 20: 29–30.

[6.](#) . Quran 20:31.

[7.](#) . Quran 20: 36 besides this, in one verse, the Holy Quran confirms Harun's prophethood "We gave to him out of Our mercy his brother Harun a prophet" (Quran 19:53).

[8.](#) . Quran 7:142.

[9.](#) . This question was raised by the Sunnite scholar "Amedi".

[10.](#) . The Great prophet has expressed this sentence eleven times; however we shall refer to only two such cases here.

[11.](#) . Kanzul 'Ammal, vol. 6, p. 395, narration no 6032.

[12.](#) . A selection of Kanzul 'Ammal (in the margin of musnad), vol. 5, p. 31.

[13.](#) . Al-Murajeat, pp. 141-147.

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