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Is Ali Inferior To Abu Bakr And Umar Even From The Lineage Point Of View?

This is a question posed by some people. The reply to this is that it is proved from the books of Ahlul Sunnat that Ali (a.s.) is not inferior to the two Caliphs from any aspect. The few merits of Ali (a.s.) that the writer has mentioned so far are sufficient to make Ali (a.s.) the best of the human beings. If the bigots do not believe it, it is another matter. The fact is that Ali (a.s.) is superior to everyone of the Muslim nation. Now, as far as the question of his superior lineage is concerned, the readers are invited to read on.

We all know that Bani Hashim was a well-known clan, even during the pre-Islamic age. Its members were famous for their leadership and good character even beyond their country. Their fame had spread as far as Shaam and even today, they are very famous. The greatest proof of this fame is their greatness. On the other hand, the Teem and Adi tribes were neither famous in the pre-Islamic age nor during the time of the Holy Prophet (S); and even today they have no fame to their credit. They are so obscure that only the well-informed people have heard of them. The average educated people have not even heard of the Teem and Adi clans. Thus, to compare the lineage of Ali (a.s.) with those of the two Caliphs, is useless.

Just as in other aspects they are not superior to Ali (a.s.), in the matter of lineage also, they have no standing before the brother of the Holy Prophet (S). It is sufficient to say regarding Abu Bakr that he was from a good family. No one can say anything about the character of this family. Regarding the family of Umar, I cannot say for sure whether they have the blood of Hashim bin Abde Manaf.

The book, Kitab Masalik shows that the grandfather of Umar, Nufayl was born of an Ethiopian slave girl. Her name was Zahaka. She was the slave girl of Hashim bin Abde Manaf who later entered into the service of Naufal bin Hashim and Abdul Uzza bin Ribah. This book does not say whether Nufayl was the son of Naufal bin Hashim or Abdul Uzza. Anyway, Nufayl in his time, married a woman of Fahem tribe and a son Khattab was born.¹ This woman also seems to be the slave girl of Fahem tribe, because by

the principle of 'slave mother' (Ummul Walad), at last she came into the possession Amr bin Nufayl. Allah knows best.

We should know that Kitabe Masalik is the work of Hisham Ibn Sayabal Kalbi, who was one of the great Sunni scholars and of such caliber that Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi consider him their teacher and a researcher like Baghawi has also extensively used his traditions for his Quranic commentary, Maalimut Tanzil. Ibn Taymiyyah considers him the greatest authority of genealogy.

Sibte Ibn Jauzi and Ibn Khallikan also have gained a lot from him. This shows the status of the writer of Kitabe Masalik. Now there remains no need to express any view on lineage of Umar. Thus, the proposal of Umar for Umme Kulthum, the daughter of Fatima, was detestable. However, that is actually with regard to some other Umme Kulthum; it has no connection with Umme Kulthum binte Fatima.

1. Ref. Ma'rif of Ibn Qutaibah.

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