

Preface

There are two main viewpoints concerning the issue of Imamate, The first is that of the Sunnis, who hold that the Prophet(saws), may God's peace and blessing be on him and his descendants, did not introduce any successor and say that the community had to choose the Prophet's successor and leader of the Muslims.

The second viewpoint is that of the Imamiyyah Shi'ites, who consider Imamate as a divinely ordained position and as a continuation of prophet hood and say that God designates an Imam just as He appoints a prophet.

The Imamiyyah Shi'ites possesses a large number of solid proofs confirmed by intellect, and evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, included in theological, exegetic and *hadith* sources.

The present preface explicates the Shi'ites' intellectual viewpoint on the aforementioned issue (of succession) explores the following points about man's nature and inclinations.

1. We know that Islam is an everlasting religion sent for all people of all times.
2. The holy Prophet (saws) made every effort for the propagation and advancement of the divine religion of Islam, made use of every opportunity, worked hard and gladly throughout his life, made extraordinary sacrifices and was ready to die for strengthening people's faith. This is confirmed by the following Qur'anic verses:

"Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe" (26:3) also,

"Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement" (18:6)

3. A large number of his best and the worthiest men were martyred in the cause of Allah.
4. He made clear to people all that brought to them prosperity in various aspects. Secondary points of *fiqh* and traditions recorded in the sources of *hadith* and Islamic jurisprudence of both Shi'ite and Sunni

schools testify to this statement.

5. The holy Prophet of Islam (saws) passed away at a time when Islam had not yet extended to all the parts of Arabia let alone worldwide.

6. Certain powers of the time posed threats to Islam and to its spread and continuity especially those who refused to embrace Islam. Some showed unbecoming reactions and behaved rudely when they were invited by the Prophet to embrace Islam. Iran's emperor, for example, tore the Prophet's letter.

7. The Muslims felt they were in need of authority and strong leadership in order to confront and suppress such opposing powers after the Prophet's demise.

8. The love for leadership and yearning for social rank in man was something from which the companions of the Prophet (saws) were not exempted. Perhaps Islam had not fully filled the hearts of most of those who were in the company of the Prophet (saws) although they loved him greatly.

They remained under the influence of the last remnants of the moralities of the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyya*) and tribal prejudices so that they were ready to compete with one another after the demise of the Prophet craving for caliphate. The holy Prophet has been quoted as saying, "I do not fear that you will become polytheists after me, but I fear that you will fight with one another over this world".¹

9. There were hypocrites who constantly plotted against Islam and Muslims and exploited every moment for their own advantage. There was fear of their infiltrating into the Islamic government after the Prophet. Perhaps a group of them entered Islam from the very beginning of the Prophet's call, craving for authority.

10. History tell us that some of the chiefs of tribes, who had been invited by the Prophet (saws) to embrace Islam, agreed to enter Islam on condition that they would take part in the future Islamic government. In his *Sirah*, ibn Hisham says, "When the Prophet (saws) came to Bani ʿAdmir clan, he introduced himself to them and invited them to worship Allah, the All-mighty, the High.

One of the men said 'If we give our allegiance to you, will we manage the affairs (of the state) after you if you prevail over your opponents?' The Prophet answered, 'The affair is with Allah. He appoints whoever He wishes'.²

11. Definitely it is central and instinctive for the person who rules over a group not to leave them without appointing someone as a successor even if the group were sheep.

12. When the second caliph was dying, Abdullah ibn Umar said to him, "people say that you do not intend to appoint a successor. If the shepherd, who looks after your camels or sheep, leaves them without a guard, you will blame him. It is evident that guardianship of the people is more important than looking after camels or sheep. What will you tell God when you meet Him if you do not appoint someone to succeed you?"³

‘A’ishah refers to the same point and says to ibn Umar, “Convey my greetings to Umar and say to him, ‘Don’t leave the *umma* (the community) of the Prophet (saws) without leader, and don’t leave them to their chances after you lest sedition should befall them”.[4](#)

It is also reported that Abdullah ibn Umar has said to his father, “I wish you had designated someone to succeed you. When you send someone who manages the affairs of the people, do you not like him to appoint someone to replace him?”

“Yes, I do”. Umar said. His son added: “If you employ someone to look after your sheep, do you not like to see him appoint someone to replace him?”[5](#)

When Mu’awiyah wanted to appoint Yazid as his successor, he referred to the same point, and said, “I fear to leave the Ummah of Mohammad with no one to look after them like a flock of sheep without a shepherd”.[6](#)

Whenever he decided to go on a trip, the holy Prophet (saws) appointed a deputy, and he never left Medina without appointing someone to take care of things. The *Sira* and history books have made a note of this and mentioned the names of those whom the Prophet had chosen to represent him (while he was away).

For Example, in ibn –Hisham’s *Sira*, which includes the Prophet’s military expeditions, the names of those the Prophet (saws) had chosen to represent him in Medina (during the Prophet’s absence) have been listed as follows:

1. Bawat expedition: Sa’ib ibn Uthman ibn Madh’un[7](#)
2. Ashirah expedition: Aba Selemah ibn ‘Abdul Asad[8](#)
3. The expedition of Safwan, Badr the first: Zayd ibn Haritheh[9](#)
4. Badr al Kubra expedition: Aba Lubabeh[10](#)
5. Bani Saleem expedition: Seba’ ibn ‘Arfatah[11](#)
6. Sowaiq expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul–Mundhar (Abu Lubabeh)[12](#)
7. Zi–Amr expedition: Uthman ibn Affan[13](#)
8. Far’ expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom[14](#)
9. Bani Qayniqa’ expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul Mundhir[15](#)
10. Uhud expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom[16](#)
11. Bani al–Nazeer expedition: ibn Umma Maktoom[17](#)

12. Dhat al-Riqa' expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari or Uthman ibn Affan [18](#)
13. The second Badr expedition: Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Sellul al-Ansari [19](#)
14. Dawmat al-Jandal expedition: Seba' ibn 'Arfatah [20](#)
15. Al-Khandak expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom [21](#)
16. Bani Kurayza expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom [22](#)
17. Bani Lahyan expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom [23](#)
18. Dhi Qurrah expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom [24](#)
19. Bani al-Mustalak expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari [25](#)
20. Al-Hudaybiyya expedition: Nomaylat ibn Abdillah al-Laythi [26](#)
21. Khaybar expedition: Nomaylat ibn Abdillah al-Laythi [27](#)
22. Mecca Conquest: Kalthum ibn Hoseyn [28](#)
23. Hunayn expedition: 'Utab ibn Aseed [29](#)
24. Tabuk expedition: Mohammad ibn Muslimat al-Ansari, or Siba' ibn 'Arfatah [30](#)

According to a correct, and well-known tradition when he wanted to leave Medina for Tabuk, the noble Prophet of Islam (saws) appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), may God bless him, as his successor. There are scores of other evidence in the books of *hadith* and history books which confirm this view.

25. The farewell pilgrim: Abu Dajani al-Ansari or S'iba' ibn 'Arfatah. [31](#)

The noble Prophet used to appoint a commander for each expedition in which he himself did not take part. Sometimes, he nominated more than one leader so that if the first was wounded, the second would take the lead instead.

For example, in Mu'tah Battle he appointed Zayd ibn Haritha to be succeeded by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and the latter by Abdullah ibn Rawaha in case the former commander was wounded. [32](#)

When he sent a group of forty men to *B'ir Ma'unah*, the Prophet (saws) appointed Abdul Mundhir ibn Umar as their leader [33](#) and for the six man group sent to Rajee' to teach *fiqh*, the Prophet appointed Marthad ibn Abi Marthad 'Anawi as a leader. [34](#)

Now, it is clear that the Prophet's aim was to teach the people, as stated by the Qur'anic:

"And purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom".

He never hesitated about appointing someone as his deputy whenever he decided to go on a long or short trip, he never sent a group without a leader, and he was aware of what would take place in the future after his demise.

Great traditionists of both Shi'ite and Sunni denominations have mentioned in their books of *hadith* that the Prophet was fully aware of the tribulations that would become of his religion after his death.

Given all this, can one claim that the Prophet (saws) has not thought of appointing someone to be his successor, an issue which is most awe-inspiring for the Islamic community or he has paid no attention to this matter?

Can anyone claim that God, the Most High, who has appointed the Prophet (saws) and praised him in the following words,

“Certainly an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful”(9: 128).

Has not appointed a successor to safeguard the divine message and preserve religious teachings, and to be an authority on all the teachings of *Shariah*. This is against the indisputable reasons presented by the Book of Allah and in the *Sunna*.

For this reason Imamiyyah Shi'ites believe that the holy Prophet (saws) has nominated his successor by divine decree. This question has been made clear in the Qur'an and the Sunna.

The present book cites some Qur'anic verses in order to examine the question of Imamate and characteristics of Imams. These verses are: *Ibtala, Mubahaleh, Aulu al-Amr, Wilayah, Sadiqeen, Tatheer, and IIm al-Kitab*.

First the Qur'anic verses are discussed, then relevant traditions are quoted to support the idea included in the stated verses. Since the present book concerns the Sunnis too, the view of their scholars and commentators are stated and the traditions they have reported are soundly investigated; finally the doubts raised about these traditions have been cleared up...

Riḳa Kardan

- [1.](#) – Sahih of Bukhari, vol. 4, the section on fil Hauz, p. 142, Dar al-Ma'rafat, Beirut.
- [2.](#) – Vol. 2, p. 425, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut; al-Rowz al-Unf, vol., 4, p. 38; al-Sirat Al-Nabawiyyah, by Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, vol. 1, p. 283, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.
- [3.](#) – Al-Riadhul-Nazirah, vol. 2, p. 353, Dar al-Nadwah al-Jadidah, Beirut; Sunan of Beihaqi, vol. 8, p. 149, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; Hilyat al-Awliya', vol. 1, p. 44, Dar al-Fikr.
- [4.](#) – “Al-Imamah wal Siyasaḥ”, vol. 1, p. 23.
- [5.](#) – Ibn Sa'ds Tabaqat, vol. 3, p. 343, Dar Beirut lil-Taba'wa Nashr.
- [6.](#) – Al-Tabari's History, vol. 3 part 5, p. 154; Al-Imamah wal-Siyasaḥ, vol. 1, p. 184.

- [7.](#) – Ibn Hisham’s Sira, vol. 2, p.248.
- [8.](#) – Ibid.
- [9.](#) – Ibid, p. 251.
- [10.](#) – Ibid, vol. 2, pp 263–4.
- [11.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.
- [12.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.
- [13.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.
- [14.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.
- [15.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p.52.
- [16.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 68.
- [17.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 200.
- [18.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 214.
- [19.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 220.
- [20.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 224.
- [21.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 231.
- [22.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 245.
- [23.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p.292.
- [24.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.
- [25.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 302.
- [26.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.
- [27.](#) – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 342.
- [28.](#) – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 42.
- [29.](#) – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 83.
- [30.](#) – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 162
- [31.](#) – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 248.
- [32.](#) – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 5.
- [33.](#) – Ibn Hisham’s Sirah, v. 3, p. 194.
- [34.](#) – Ibid, v.3, p.183.

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