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## The Ahlul Bayt are the Natural Continuity of the Mission of their Grandfather

When we say ‘the Ahlul Bayt’, we mean the twelve Imams of the immaculate progeny of the Prophet (S) whom we have studied in full in the previous books. The Shia and the Sunni have agreed that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*The Imams after me are twelve; all of them are from (the tribe of) Quraysh.* [1](#)

The tradition mentioned in the Sahih al-Bukhari reads:

*This matter (caliphate) shall remain in Quraysh even if (only) two people remain alive.* [2](#)

We know necessarily that Allah the Almighty has chosen Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran and preferred them – a progeny of one from the other – to the rest of mankind. The Prophet Muhammad (S) has taught and declared to us that Allah the Almighty chose him from among all the Hashimites, who were the choicest of choices. In the Sahih of Muslim – the book of ‘Virtues’, chapter of ‘The preferring of our Prophet to all Creation’ – it is mentioned that the Prophet (S) has said:

*Allah has chosen Kinanah from the children of Ishmael, the Quraysh from Kinanah, the Hashimites from Quraysh and me (the Prophet) from the Hashimites.* [3](#)

The meaning of this tradition, as understood by every reasonable person, is that the Hashimites were a family that had been chosen and preferred among all mankind. Allah chose Muhammad (S) from the Hashimites to be the best of all mankind. This shows that the Hashimites came second after the Prophet Muhammad (S) in preference with no separation.

Likewise the Prophet Muhammad (S) chose Ali and his progeny from all of the Hashimites [4](#) to be his successors by the command of the Revelation, and made it obligatory on all Muslims to pray to Allah to send His blessings on them. We have found that the most *tafsirs* (commentaries) mention their names and confirm that it is they who are referred to in the Qur’anic verses of ‘**Purification 33:33**’; ‘**Love,**

***mawaddah 42:23***; ***Guardianship, wilayah 5:55***; ***Choosing and bequeathing of the Book 35:32***; ***The people of remembrance 16:43***; ***Who are firmly rooted in knowledge 3:7*** and the ***Surah of al-Insan (or 'hal ata') 76.5***

As for the Prophet's traditions that have been agreed upon as true traditions by all Muslims and in which the Prophet (S) has referred to the Ahlul Bayt (as) with preference and virtues saying that they were the Imams of guidance, are too many. So, here we mention just two of them.

The first tradition was mentioned by Muslim in his Sahih, the book of *Virtues*, chapter of *The Virtues of Ali ibn Abi Talib*. The Prophet (S) said:

*O people, I am but a human being. The messenger of my Lord (Death) is about to come and I shall respond. I am leaving among you two weighty things – the first of them is the Book of Allah in which there is guidance and light. So follow the Book of Allah and keep to it. The second is my Household. I remind you to obey Allah by being dutiful to my progeny (Ahlul Bayt), I remind you by Allah not to forget my progeny, I remind you by Allah to remember my progeny.*[6](#)

The second tradition was mentioned by Muslim in the same book narrated by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas from his father, that the Messenger of Allah (S) had said to Ali:

*You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there shall be no prophet after me.*[7](#)

For brevity, these two traditions are enough to prove that Imam Ali (as) was the chief of the Prophet's progeny and he protected the Messenger of Allah (S) and continued on his way. The Messenger of Allah (S) for emphasizing the same point said:

*I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate*

Surely, this saying alone is enough to show that the whole of nation cannot enter this city of Muhammad's knowledge except when entering through the gate of Ali (as), because Allah the Almighty has ordered His people to enter houses through their doors.

Here, we must point out that Imam Ali (as) had acquired his knowledge from the Prophet (S) who had brought him up since childhood. He accompanied the Prophet (S) all through his life. The Prophet (S) taught Imam Ali (as) the knowledge of the past and the future where he said:

*Gabriel did not pour anything into my chest except that which I poured it into the chest of Ali.*

Imam Ali (as) said about that:

*If the rug was folded to me (to sit on),[8](#) I would judge among the people of the Torah according to their Torah, among the people of the Gospel according to their Gospel and the people of the Qur'an according to their Qur'an.*[9](#)

He often said:

*Ask me before you shall miss me. [10](#)*

All the companions and all Muslims throughout history witness that Imam Ali (as) was the most knowledgeable of all people in the affairs of religion and the world, and that he was the most pious, most abstinent, most patient with calamities, the bravest in wars and the most forgiving.

For better understanding, we have to read what Imam Ali (as) said about the relation between the Prophet (S) and his progeny. He said:

*They are the place of his secret, the recourse in his affairs, the sack of his knowledge, the resort for his wisdom, the den of his books, and the mountains of his religion. By them he has made erect the bending of his back and driven away his fear. [11](#)*

He said:

*By Allah, I have been taught the knowledge about missions, carrying out of promises, and all words and there are doors of wisdom and light of all affairs with us the Ahlul Bayt ... [12](#)*

He said:

*...where are those who claim that they are deep-rooted in knowledge other than us – claiming falsely and oppressively against us. Allah has exalted us and lowered them, given us and deprived them, included us and excluded them. Guidance is looked forward to through us and thereby blindness is recovered...the Imams from Quraysh have been sowed in this set of Hashim so that imamate does not fit other than them and chiefs from other than them shall not be fit. [13](#)*

He said:

*...surely the example of the progeny of Muhammad, may Allah have blessing and peace on them, are like the stars of the sky – when one star sets, another star shines. As if the virtues from Allah have been perfected in you (the Ahlul Bayt) and He has given you what you hoped for. [14](#)*

He said:

*...no one from this nation can be compared to the progeny of Muhammad, may Allah have mercy on him and his progeny and no one on whom their favor has been bestowed can be equaled to them at all. They are the foundation of religion and the pillar of certainty. The oppressed resort to them and followers join them. The specialties of the right of guardianship are for them and among them is custodianship and inheritance... [15](#)*

He said:

*...and surely I am on the clear way that I picked up, picking it from between the ways of deviation and confusion. Observe the progeny of your prophet, cling to their way and follow trace of their footsteps for they will not take you away from guidance, nor will they take you back to be perished. If they keep silent, you have to keep silent and if they rise, you have to rise. Do not precede them lest you go astray and do not lag behind them lest you perish...[16](#)*

He said:

*They are the life of knowledge and death of ignorance. Their discernment informs you of their knowledge and their silence tells of the wisdom of their logic. They do not contradict the truth, nor do they disagree on it. They are the pillars of Islam and the associates of those who resort to them. Through them, the truth has come back to its rightful place and falsehood has been kept away from its position and its tongue has been severed from its root. They have understood the religion with reason and care, not with the understanding of hearing and narration because the narrators of knowledge are too many, but its caretakers are few.[17](#)*

These passages quoted from *Nahjul Balaghah* and said by Imam Ali (as) give us a real picture about the firm relation between the Prophet (S) and his progeny and make them the only continuity of his mission, and that they are the only ones who can inform of what he has announced for all mankind throughout ages and for all nations and cultures.

Imam Ali (as) was not satisfied with showing of the high rank of the immaculate progeny and their position to Muslims only. He showed that he himself was the axis of the quern and chief of the immaculate progeny. He showed his role – that which he had been entrusted with by Allah and His messenger to manage people and not to let them go astray. He said:

*...whereto do you go and how are you diverted while the banners are being raised, signs are clear and the light stands are set up? So to where do you go astray, or how are you blind when amongst you there are the progeny of your Prophet (S) who are the reins of truth, leaders of the religion, and the tongue of truthfulness? So observe them in the best positions of the Qur'an, and hasten to them as the hastening of extremely thirsty ones (to the drinking fountain).*

*O people take it from the Messenger of Allah (S), may Allah have blessing and peace on him and his progeny, he said that: 'One of us dies, but he is not dead, and one of us is decomposing, but he is not decomposed.' So, do not speak of what you do not know because most of the truth is in what you deny and excuse the one against whom you have no argument, and that person is me.*

*Did I not act among you according to the Major weighty thing (the Qur'an) and I left among you (after me) the Minor weighty thing (the Ahlul Bayt – at that time Imam al-Hasan and al-Husayn)? I fixed among you the banner of faith, showed you clearly the limits of the lawful and the unlawful, dressed you with soundness of my justice and spread to you the favor of my saying and doing. I showed to you the noblest of morals from myself. Therefore, do not use (your own) opinion in that whose insides cannot be*

*perceived by the sight, nor can be penetrated by thinking.* [18](#)

If you, dear reader, ponder on the saying of Imam Ali (as), you shall find in it the interpretation of the tradition of *Thaqalayn* (the two weighty things) that has been narrated by the Sunni from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

*I have left among you the two weighty things – the Book of Allah and my progeny. If you keep to them, you shall never go astray after me at all.*

Imam Ali (as) also said:

*Did I not act among you according to the Major weighty thing (the Qur'an) and I left among you the Minor weighty thing (the Ahlul Bayt)?*

This saying of Imam Ali (as) is a clear proof that Imam Ali (as) managed people according to the rulings of the Holy Qur'an, whose reality no one could understand except him. Also he left among them the Minor Weighty things, who were the infallible Imams from his progeny so that each one of them would carry out the same role that the Prophet (S) carried out in his nation.

If we ponder on the saying of the Prophet (S): “*I am leaving among you the two weighty things*” and the saying of Imam Ali (as): “*did I not act among you according to the Major weighty thing*” – we understand that the role of the immaculate progeny is to explain and declare the Book of Allah to the nation lest they disagreed after the death of the Prophet (S).

What confirms this fact is this saying of the Prophet (S):

*In every generation of my nation there are just men from my progeny who protect this religion from distortion of deviants, fabrication of liars, and misinterpretation of the ignorant. Surely, your Imams are your delegation to Allah, so be careful to whom you delegate.* [19](#)

He also said:

*Stars are security for the people of the earth from drowning and the people of my house are security for my nation from disagreement. If a tribe from the Arabs disagree with them (the Ahlul Bayt), they shall disagree among themselves and become the party of Iblis.* [20](#)

He also said:

*Surely, the example of my progeny among you is like the Ark of Noah; whoever rode on it would be rescued and whoever lagged behind it would drown.* [21](#)

Through this brief study, the guidance becomes clearly distinguished from error to us, and we can say that the Twelver Shia is the true sect, because it is the only sect that has kept to the two weighty things, boarded the Ship of Rescue and clung to the Rope of Allah. The Shia neither precede the Ahlul Bayt

(as) nor do they turn away from them, but they follow and imitate them. Therefore, they are guided by their guidance and they follow their path.

*“Here is the Qur’an that you can ask to speak out, and it shall not speak out but what I tell you about. It has the knowledge of what shall come; it speaks about the past, the healing of your ailments, and the managing of you.”[22](#)*

*Keep to the Book of Allah, for it is a firm rope, clear light, advantageous cure, satiating drink, a resort for those who seek and a rescue for those who cling. It never bends to be set right, nor does it err to be blamed. The much reciting and listening to it do not make it old. Whoever speaks with it is truthful, and whoever acts according to it wins.”[23](#)*

*Prophet (S) left to you what other prophets had left for their nations so that they did not leave them to go astray without showing clear way or a raised banner.*

*The Book of your Lord is among you showing His lawful and unlawful things, obligations and favors, abrogating and abrogated things, permissions and necessities, special and general rulings, lessons and examples, absolutes and finites, clear and ambiguous things, interpreting its statements and explaining its obscurities.*

*There are some verses in Quran whose knowledge is obligatory and others whose ignorance by people is not forgivable. And there is that which is fixed as obligatory in the book, but its abrogation is known in the Prophet’s Sunnah, or there are those which appear obligatory in the Sunnah, but in the Book it is permitted to be given up.*

*And, there are other verses which were obligatory in its time but not so in future (with passing of its time). There are verses of His different prohibitions for major sins – for which He has threatened of His Fires, or minor – for which He has promised forgiveness, and there are those verses which are accepted in small portion (in reciting of the Qur’an) and permitted for leaving its big portion.”[24](#)*

[1.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari vol.9, p. 78, vol.4, p. 218, Book of Rulings (Ahkam), Chapter of ‘The Emirs from Quraysh’; Sahih Muslim vol.3, p. 1451, hadith no. 1818 and 1822, Book of Emirate, Chapter of ‘People are Followers of Quraysh and the Caliphate is in Quraysh’.

[2.](#) Ibid.

[3.](#) Sahih Muslim vol.4, p. 1782, hadith no. 2276

[4.](#) The Prophet (S) meant a specific group of people from the Ahlul Bayt (as). The Qur’anic verses and prophet’s traditions on different occasions confirm this fact. Otherwise could the Prophet (S) mean some people whom the nation did not know or could not be led to? Could the nation get to these people who were not known – whether in names, description, or place? The Hashimites were too many and they had spread everywhere in the land so that no country or town was empty of them.

So, those whom the Prophet (S) meant were the nine imams after Ali, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn (peace be on them) – they were the Ahlul Bayt (ss) only on the basis of traditional and intellectual proofs. He declared them as the second weighty (important) thing beside the Qur’an, so that the nation would not miss a match to him in any age, and that the nation would not miss a guide with whom if they adhered, they would not go astray...

[5.](#) We have mentioned in brief some Qur'anic verses which the Sunni scholars acknowledge that they were revealed concerning the Ahlul Bayt (as), whereas ibn Abbas said that one third of the Qur'an had been revealed to talk about their virtues.

[6.](#) Sahih Muslim vol.4, p. 1873, hadith no. 2408

Sahih Muslim vol.4, p. 1873, hadith no. 2404. It has also been mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhari, the book of Maghazi (battles), the Battle of Tabuk.

[7.](#)

[8.](#) If I was allowed to judge among people...

[9.](#) Al-Manaqib, by Khawarizmi, p. 47

[10.](#) Ibid.

[11.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 2.

[12.](#) Ibid., sermon 11.

[13.](#) Ibid., sermon 142.

[14.](#) Ibid., sermon 99.

[15.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 2.

[16.](#) Ibid., sermon 96.

[17.](#) Ibid., sermon 236.

[18.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 86.

[19.](#) As-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar Al-Shafi'i, p. 90, 148.

[20.](#) Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol. 3 p. 149.

[21.](#) Ibid., vol. 3 p. 151, as-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar Al-Shafi'i, p. 184.

[22.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 156.

[23.](#) Ibid., sermon 154.

[24.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 1.

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