

The Successor Of The Prophet

Different Proofs

All the previous Prophets had successors. Seth succeeded Adam, Ishmael succeeded Abraham, Joseph succeeded Jacob, Aaron and then Joshua succeeded Moses. Simon succeeded Jesus. Who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad (S) in the matter of leading and guiding the *Ummah* after him?

Surely, he did appoint a successor and he was none other than Ali (peace be upon him). The *Shia* provides three different proofs for this belief:

A. The Holy Qur'an

There are a number of verses in the Qur'an, which prove the doctrine of Imamate as a divine selection:

A/1. ***"Verily, your guardian is (none else but) Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish Prayers and pay the charity while they be (even) bowing down (in Prayers)." (Qur'an; 5:55)***

The commentators of the Qur'an unanimously agreed that the verse was revealed to the Prophet regarding Ali, that whilst he was in Prayers, he offered his ring to a beggar.

A/2. ***"O Messenger! Proclaim what has been sent to you from your Lord, and if you did not, then (it will be as if) you would not have fulfilled His message." (Qur'an; 5:67)***

The verse under consideration is one of the most powerful verses proving the Imamate of Ali as the successor of the Prophet, and hence, I would like to draw your attention to the following main notes:

- a) Chapter five of the Qur'an is the last chapter revealed to the Prophet. Therefore, its rules are not subject to any changing.
- b) The verse seems to be regarding the most important issue in Islam that, if it is not delivered to the people, the whole message of Islam is not delivered.

c) *Al-Ghadir*, written by the Late Amini, is a masterpiece in 11 volumes, which deals thoroughly with the above verse. The author has collected the quotation of more than 100 companions of the Prophet, that the Verse had been revealed on the (occasion of) *Ghadir* in which the Prophet appointed Ali as his Successor.

B. The Hadith

Hadith, or the words of the Prophet, is the second proof that Imamate is a divine appointment and not an election. The leadership of Ali as appointed by the Prophet can be proven from so many Hadiths. The following are a few of many:

B/1. Hadith of *Welayat*:

Abu-Es-Haq in his Commentary of the Qur'an quoted from Abu-Dhar that: "One day a poor person came to the Mosque asking for help. Nobody helped him except Ali Ibn Abi-Talib. Although he was praying, he did not hesitate to help the poor person. He pointed at his ring offering it to the poor man. The man accepted the ring and pulled off it of Ali's finger. Upon that, the Prophet rose up his hands and said, "O my Lord! Increase my tolerance, ease my task for me... and give me a Minister from my family, Ali, my brother."

As soon as the Prophet finished his supplication, the angel Gabriel descended to the Prophet with Verse 55 of Chapter 5 of the Qur'an as mentioned above.

B/2. Hadith of *Ghadir*:

The Hadith is related to the second verse mentioned in the last meeting. The verse was revealed on the 18th of *Thil-Hajjah* in a place, known as *Ghadir of Khom*. The Prophet performed his pilgrimage to Hajj, which happened to be his final Hajj performance in the year 9 AH. On the way back from Mecca, whilst being followed by hundreds of Muslim pilgrims, Gabriel came to him with Verse 67 of Chapter 5. Upon the revelation, the Prophet ordered the caravans to stop around a pool named *Ghadir of Khom*. It was announced that the Prophet had a very important message to deliver.

The crowd surrounded the Prophet getting prepared to listen to his sermon. The Messenger of Allah delivered a sermon pointing out many important issues. When the sermon was nearly over, he asked people if the Prophet's guardianship on them is more than that of themselves? "Of course", cried the crowd. Then the Prophet rose up the hand of Ali Ibn Abi-Talib saying, "Whoever I am his/her master, this Ali is his/her master. O Allah! Love and support those who love and support him, and have enmity on those who have enmity on him. Help those who will help him and leave alone those who will leave him alone."

After the sermon was over, the Prophet asked people to come and greet Imam Ali as 'The Commander of the Believers'. Abu-Bakr and Umar were among the first who came to Ali and greeted him saying,

“Congratulations Ali! You have become our Master and the Master of the Believers.”^{[1](#)}

B/3. Hadith of *Manzelat*:

It is quoted from the Holy Prophet on a number of occasions to have said about Ali: “You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except there is no Prophet after me.”^{[2](#)}

As it was mentioned, the Qur’an is introducing Aaron to us as the Successor of Moses and the Messenger after him. The Prophet has omitted the second type of relation, i.e. the Prophet-hood and confirmed the Succession.

The Unique Qualifications Of The Successor Of The Prophet

Surely, when Allah selects one of His devotees as a Prophet or the successor of a Prophet, He only chooses because of their unique qualifications. Allah says, “***My Covenant includes not the unjust (Zalimeen).***” (Qur’an; 2: 124) No one in the world could be compared with the unique qualifications that Almighty Allah bestowed upon the pure Family of the Prophet (peace be upon them). The following are some examples of the preference of Imam Ali over all other companions of the Prophet:

A. Faith

“***Is then he who is a believer like him who is a disbeliever (Fasiq)? They are not equal.***” (Qur’an; 32: 18)

Ali never prostrated before any idol during his life.

B. Knowledge

“***Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?***” (Qur’an; 39:9)

As the Prophet said, Ali was the Gate of the City of the Prophetic knowledge.

C. Jihad

“***Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit.***” (Qur’an; 4:95)

Indisputably again Ali was the bravest knight of Islam in all the battles. Ali was the one “***who would sell his life seeking the Pleasure of Allah***” (Qur’an; 2:207) by sleeping in the bed of the Prophet. During the battle of *Uhud*, Ali was among a very few people who stood fast around the Prophet whilst many others had fled the battle. The successful combat of Ali against Amr in the battle of *Ahzab* was equal to the worshiping of humankind and the jinn, and the list goes on.

Caliphate After The Prophet

According to some Islamic scholars' opinion, the imamate (caliphate after the Prophet) is a divine rank and as the prophets were chosen among the best and wisest people, the Imam should be chosen in the same way among the innocent and pious men.

The caliph must be able to clarify the vague problems and could answer the scientific questions of religion, which were brought forth for discussion, without falling into error because the caliphate was indeed an integral part of the prophet hood.

Therefore Allah knew better, which one was well- qualified to the task.

1. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Mosnad; 4:372.

2. Muslim. Sahih, 7: 120; Bokhari. Sahih, Book of Virtues of Ali.

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