

Imam Hasan and Allegiance

Although there is difference of opinion among the Muslims about the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet (saws), or in other words, about who should have been the caliph of Muslims after the death of the Holy Prophet (saws), Shi'a believe that the caliph should have been appointed by the Holy Prophet (saw) as had always been the practice in accordance with the commands of Almighty God, while Ahlul Sunnat believe that the Holy Prophet (saws) had left the method of selection of the caliph to the discretion of the people.

According to them, if people pay allegiance to a person, then he is a caliph, otherwise not. If for a moment this criterion is accepted, then there will be left no choice but to accept that only Hazrat 'Ali (as) and the first caliph are caliphs, as the common Muslims had only paid allegiance to these two persons. As against this, the second caliph was nominated while the third caliph was selected through a committee of six persons.

Therefore, it becomes clear that the allegiance by the people alone is not enough for a person to be declared Imam or caliph. On the other hand, it is known that there has always been a difference of opinion among the Muslims about the caliphate and the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet (saws).

To be just and fair, after the Holy Prophet (saws) it was only Imam Hasan (as)'s eminent and undisputed personality about whom no difference of opinion was witnessed in the Islamic society regarding his caliphate.

Whether the Holy Prophet (saw)'s hadith, or the nomination of the next caliph by the earlier caliph, or the people's allegiance, or the learned and eminent personality of Imam Hasan (as) is taken as the criterion for the true Islamic caliphate or Imamatus, Imam Hasan (as) emerges as the most suitable person among the Muslims of the time for the high rank of Islamic caliphate.

That is why all the Muslim states of that period had acknowledged him as the caliph. The only exception was a group of insurgents who did not pay allegiance and vowed to fight against him.

The Holy Prophet (saws), as extensively quoted by the Shi'a and Sunni Hadith narrators, had stated that

there would be twelve caliphs after him and emphatically said that all of these would be from among the Quraish. There is no doubt that the second name among these is that of Imam Hasan Al-Mujtaba (as). [1](#)

Apart from this, the Holy Prophet (saws) had specifically mentioned the Imamate of Imam Hasan (as) and his brother Imam Husayn (as) in many of his Hadith. For example: "These two [Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (as)] are Imam, whether they take a firm stand against an issue or observe peace." [2](#)

Although the above Hadith of the Holy Prophet (saws) has a deep rooted meaning and many other points to reflect upon, here the Holy Prophet (saws) is emphasizing that the Imamate and the caliphate of these two brothers is so sound that any decision of theirs regarding peace or war would be correct and would not adversely affect their status.

There is no doubt that some Muslims of the time had raised some objections against the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as) and the revolutionary strategy of Imam Husayn (as), but the Holy Prophet (saws) had already replied to these objections in advance and had instructed the Muslims to follow them in all conditions, whether in peace or war, and to treat them as their Imam.

Similarly there is the following Hadith of the Holy Prophet (saws) which has been quoted repetitively by the historians: "This son of mine is the leader and Almighty God will arrange peace between two groups through him." [3](#)

(If this hadith is true), then it is clear that Imam Hasan (as) had the eminent status due to which the two groups acknowledged him as their leader and guide, followed him and accepted the peace arranged by him. There is no doubt that caliphate is another name of such an eminent position and undisputed personality.

Similarly, if the nomination of a caliph is taken as the criterion of caliphate, then history records that Hazrat 'Ali (as) had assigned many responsibilities to Imam Hasan (as) on different occasions and had directed him to lead the prayers in his place just before his martyrdom. Imam Hasan (as) was his vicegerent about treating Ibn. Muljim, the assassin of Imam 'Ali (as), and about other issues.

According to Shi'a narrations, Amirul Muminin Hazrat 'Ali (as) had made the following will in favour of him just before his martyrdom:

"O my son, you are the caliph after me and you are the vicegerent after me regarding my assassin."

Regarding the above will, he had taken as witness not only Imam Husayn (as), Muhammad b. Hanafiah, his other sons, but a number of prominent Shi'as well. Afterwards he gave his copy of the Holy Qur'an and his armament to him and said that these had been given to him by the Holy Prophet (saws) who had directed that he should hand over these to him, declaring him (Imam Hasan (as)) as his heir. [4](#)

As against this, some historical records show that when Imam 'Ali (as) was asked as to whom he was nominating the caliph, he had declined to name anyone and had left it to the choice of Muslims.

We feel that such narrations are far from the truth and have been concocted by those who were bent upon declaring allegiance or consultation ('*shura*') as the basis for caliphate, because the views of Hazrat 'Ali (as), as reflected in *Nahjul Balaghah* and other historical books, are quite different.

He considered only the Ahlul Bayt (as) and members of the household of the Holy Prophet (saws) as fit for caliphate and in the presence of Imam Hasan (as), he would normally have appointed him as the caliph. Again, if the conditions prevailing at the time are taken into account, the caliphate and the government of Hazrat 'Ali (as) was facing a crisis situation.

Nearly all historical narrations record that at the time Hazrat 'Ali (as) was preparing for a decisive battle against Muawiya and forty thousand soldiers had vowed to fight along with him till death. In that situation, for sure he was likely to appoint as his heir and next in command a person who would truly guide a large army and uproot the rebellious group in an appropriate manner. Not doing so would have endangered the center of Islamic caliphate! [5](#)

Not only is it that no objection against the caliphate of Imam Hasan Al-Mujtaba (as) was raised by the Muslims of the time, but rather the whole Muslim history records that Muslims up to the current period regard him as their Imam and caliph.

Despite so many other differences among them, 'Ahlul Sunnat wal Jama'at' consider him as the orthodox caliph and claim that the Islamic caliphate ended for ever after Imam Hasan (as) and the monarchical system commenced. They further quote that his grand father, the Holy Prophet (saws), had earlier prophesied the same in the following words:

"The caliphate will last thirty years after me. After that, it will be monarchy." [6](#)

According to the historians, the thirty years were completed when Imam Hasan (as) agreed for peace with Muawiya and handed over the outwardly power to him. The above hadith is not only well known but the learned and the old nobles among Ahlul Sunnat treat Imam Hasan (as) as the true Islamic caliph.

On this basis an objection can be raised against those scholars who, writing about caliphate and monarchy, have mentioned only four orthodox caliphs of Islam and have thus ignored Imam Hasan (as), while there is no doubt that monarchy commenced with Muawiya and there is a gap of six to eight months between the same and the martyrdom of Hazrat 'Ali (as), which is the period of the orthodox caliphate of Imam Hasan (as).

Though a lot can be written on the issue, let us see what details history has recorded about the allegiance to Imam Hasan (as). It was a little before dawn on the 21st Ramadhan and the people in the city of Kufa were mourning the martyrdom of Amirul Muminin Hazrat 'Ali (as).

Apart from Kufa, the sorrow and shock of the martyrdom of Hazrat 'Ali (as) was being felt by Muslims in all other cities as well. According to the will of Hazrat 'Ali (as), Imam Hasan (as) had performed his burial

rites along with a group of Imam 'Ali (as)'s followers. At the same time a large number of Muslims were awaiting him in the mosque of Kufa.

These included not only the residents of Kufa and those who had come from the nearby areas, but also well-known personalities among the Muhajireen and Ansar and the sincere and trusted companions of his father Hazrat 'Ali (as). All of them performed their morning prayers under the leadership of Imam Hasan (as), who gave a long sermon on this occasion of grief.

In the sermon he paid tribute to the leader of the pious ones in a manner most appropriate to the unique and unparalleled personality of the late Imam (as). All the historians have quoted this sermon, with very little variation. After duly praising Almighty God for His beneficence and mercy and invoking God's blessings on the Holy Prophet (saws) and his progeny, he said:

"This night has gone beyond this transitory world a person whom no one had surpassed earlier and none would be his equal in future. There is no doubt that he was with the Holy Prophet (saws) in the religious wars and used to protect him even to the extent of putting his own life at risk.

On any mission that he was assigned by the Holy Prophet (saws) to lead, Gabriel used to be on his right and Michael on his left, and he would not return until Almighty God had granted him success.

He has been martyred in the same night in which Prophet Moses b. Imran had died, Prophet Jesus Christ was elevated to the sky and the Holy Qur'an was revealed.

He has not left any worldly wealth except seven hundred Dirham, which were left over from his distribution as he wanted to make arrangement for a servant for his household and these too he has instructed me to return to Bait ul Maal." After the above words, tears welled up in his eyes and seeing him in such grief about his father, the whole gathering wept and cried.

After a while, when quietness had returned to the mosque at Kufa, Imam Hasan (as), continuing his sermon, said: "O men! Apart from those who know me, those who don't, should be aware that I am Hasan, son of 'Ali (as), I am the son of the Holy Prophet (saws) and the son of his heir.

I am the son of one who has been called the lamp resplendent, I am one of the Ahlul Bayt to whom Gabriel used to come and fly back from them, I am from the family of the Holy Prophet (saws) which has been kept away from every kind of uncleanness by Allah and He has purified us with a thorough purification.

Our love and respect has been made obligatory by Allah on every Muslim (man and woman). In the Holy Qur'an Allah has commanded:

***'Say (O Muhammad) "I do not ask of you any recompense for it (the toils of the prophet ship) save love of (my) relatives" and whoever earns good, We increase for him (more and more) good therein.'* (42:23)**

So, earning good really is our love."

The learned scholar Sheikh Razi Aale Yasin, explaining the above sermon, writes:

"While paying tribute to his father, Imam Al-Mujtaba (as) adopted a unique style which is unparalleled. Neither he referred to the respectable life and great achievements of his illustrious father, nor his learning, modesty, eloquence, bravery, high status, noble genealogy was narrated, as is the normal practice.

He adopted such a unique approach which cannot be traced in any other historical record. Imam Hasan (as) viewed Hazrat 'Ali (as) from a moral and religious angle. It is clear that really one Imam is focusing his attention on the one who is another Imam. Thus, the one leaving this transitory world was such a unique personality that his life, viewed from any angle, was unmatched even by the trusted angels, holy men or the pious persons.

He is a human being yet such a being that neither any person earlier than him nor later could equal him. He is a human being but surrounded by Gabriel and Michael, isn't he an angel-like person?

"He leaves the earthly life on the same day that Prophet Jesus Christ was elevated to the sky, he was martyred the same day that Prophet Moses had died, he is lowered in the grave the same night that the Holy Qur'an is being revealed." These are the levels of high status that are attained by the trusted angels, 'ulul azm' prophets (possessors of determination) and the holy books.

"He was such a person who used to fight along with the Holy Prophet (saws) and would protect him even putting his own life at risk. When he was worthy of such high rewards in the hereafter, then one can imagine what his worldly qualities and achievements would be!!" [7](#)

As mentioned by the learned scholar, Imam Hasan (as) adopted a unique style while describing the life of the leader of the pious ones. Similarly, his manner of introducing himself was also unique. He not only explained his close relationship with the household of the Holy Prophet (saws), indicating his own very close lineage.

But also referred to the relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an which proved that he was one of the five persons who had been kept away from every kind of uncleanness by Allah and He had purified them with a thorough purification. This means that he had an ideal character and belonged to that illustrious family of piety and chastity whose love had been made obligatory on all Muslim men and women by Almighty God.

A question arises as to who can be more fit for caliphate and to be a candidate for the leadership (Imam) of the Muslims than the one who belonged to such a distinguished and pious family, whose character was an ideal one where there was no chance of error, and whose love has been made obligatory on every Muslim man and woman?

That was the reason that as soon as he had finished his sermon, his uncle and the governor of Hazrat 'Ali (as) in Yemen, Ubaidullah b. Abbas, got up and invited the people to pay allegiance to Imam Hasan (as), and said: "O men! He is the son of the Holy Prophet (saws) and the heir to your Imam. So, pay allegiance to him." [8](#)

People welcomed the offer of allegiance and soon became the followers of such a respected leader through the allegiance. They showed the love and respect that they had for the son of the Holy Prophet (saw), indicated the right that he had over them, and the fact that none had a greater right to caliphate and allegiance than him!

Perhaps it was for the first time that a city like Kufa, despite all sorts of differences, disunity and being a hot bed of intrigue, had shown such unity while taking such a major decision. The first person who came forward to offer allegiance to Imam Al-Mujtaba (as) was Qais, the son of S'ad b. 'Abadah Ansari. Qais was a close follower of Hazrat 'Ali (as) and had been his representative in Azerbaijan during the caliphate of Hazrat 'Ali (as).

While Hazrat 'Ali (as) was planning for a decisive war against Muawiya before his martyrdom, he was commanding a very important regiment called 'the Thursday soldiers' ('Shurtah al Khamis'), which was similar to the Elite Commandos of today. Anyway, Qais came forward and said to the Imam (as): "Kindly extend your hand so that I may pay allegiance to you in accordance with the commands of the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (saws) and to fight against those who declare lawful what has been forbidden by Almighty Allah."

The grandson of the Holy Prophet (saws) looked at S'ad with kindness and love and said: "the allegiance in accordance with the Holy Book revealed by the Gracious God and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet includes all that is right and excludes any other unnecessary condition."

As prayers, fasting, zakat (the religious tax) and other obligations have been made compulsory according to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, similarly to fight against those creating disturbance, the traitors and those declaring lawful what has been forbidden by Almighty God, has been made obligatory by Him.

Imam Al-Mujtaba (as) further stated: "I can accept your allegiance on the condition that you will fight with one with whom I fight and will observe peace with one with whom I make peace." [9](#)

Some historical records show that after hearing these words from the Imam (as), some persons started doubting his willingness to wage war while those who were favouring peace and understanding, felt that he would fight just like his illustrious father. We will discuss these points in detail in subsequent chapters.

After the Imam (as) had expressed the above words, Qais b. S'ad paid allegiance to him and the masses in large numbers vowed to follow him and immediately started to pay allegiance to him as the true Islamic caliph. Apart from Kufa, Basra, Hijaz, Yemen, Persia and all other areas that were in the caliphate of his illustrious father also accepted him as the true Islamic caliph and came under his rule.

No city, not even the holy cities of Makkah and Madina, raised any voice of dissent or opposition. Only the group of traitors, who had not accepted the caliphate of Imam 'Ali (as), considered this allegiance as a threat to them and started their nefarious activities.

Commenting on the above event, Dr. Husayn Muhammad Jafri in his book '*Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*,' writes: "The election of Imam Hasan (as) as the caliph, without any opposition or objection from Kufa, Hijaz or any other area, is a clear evidence of his capabilities, nobility and high status. Qais b. S'ad b. 'Abadah, the sincere companion and loyal general of Hazrat 'Ali (as) was the first person to pay allegiance to Imam Hasan (as).

The forty thousand soldiers, who had vowed with Hazrat 'Ali (as) to fight against Muawiya till death, congratulated him on being elected the caliph. Outwardly expressing his own feelings and those of the Iraqi army, Qais tried to include, along with following the Holy Book and Sunnah, war against 'Muhilleen', i.e. those who had considered permissible what Allah had forbidden, as one of the basis of allegiance.

However, Imam Hasan (as), explaining that it was included in the first two conditions, convinced him to delete this condition. The Iraqi soldiers, who were inclined to fight against Muawiya, did not want to delete this third condition, yet they all paid allegiance to him despite the same. Later events show that perhaps Imam Hasan (as) was apprehensive that Iraqis would run away from war at an hour of trial.

Therefore, he did not want to bind himself under an emotional decision which might result in the total destruction of persons. Despite all that, according to the majority narrations, all those who were present on the occasion, paid allegiance on the specific condition that they will fight one who wages war against Imam Hasan (as) and would make peace with whom the Imam (as) made peace."

He further writes that the declaration of the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as) from Iraq and its support from Hijaz, Yemen, Faras and other areas, meant a great danger to Muawiya, who had started his scheme to capture power soon after the death of Uthman. [10](#)

After the allegiance, the Imam (as) got down from the pulpit and got busy in earnest in performing the responsibilities of caliphate. The appointment of the governors, other responsible office bearers of the vast territories and the solution of many other issues was taken in hand in earnest by the noble Imam (as).

[1.](#) Hashim al Maruf – 'Sirat al A'imma al Ithna Ashar', Beirut, Dar ul T'aruf Dar ul Qalam, 1977, vol. 1, p.38.

[2.](#) Baqar Qarshi, 'Hayat al Imam al Hasan bin 'Ali', Najaf, Matba' al Adaab, 1973, vol. 1, p. 103; Taufiq ul ulm –Ahlul Bait, Cairo, Maktaba la Anjalo al Misriyah, 1970, p.307; Hashim al Maruf – Sirat al A'imma al Ithna Ashar', Beirut, Dar ul T'aruf Dar ul Qalam, 1977, vol. 1, p.544; Razi Ale Yasin – 'Sulh-ul Hasan', Qum; Munshoorat al Razi, 1373 A.H.. p.52.

[3.](#) This hadith has been quoted by nearly all reliable historians. Majlisi – Bihar al-Anwar, Beirut, Muassah al Wafa, 1983.

[4.](#) Baqar vol. 43, p.322 ('Tarikh al Hasan al Zaki' – extract from "Kafi").

[5.](#) Ibn. Athir – 'Al Kamil fi al Tarikh', Beirut: Dar Ahya al Turas, 1989, vol. 2 p. 445; Tabari – 'Tarikh al Tabari', Beirut: Darul Kutub al Ilmiah 1988, vol 3, p. 164; Husayn Dayar Bakari – 'Tarikh al-Khamis', Beirut, Muassah Shabaan, vol. 2, p.389; Ibn. Khaldoon, 'Tarikhe Ibn. Khaldun', Beirut, Muassah A'la mi, lil Matboo'at 1971, vol. 2, p. 186; Ibn. Kathir – 'Al bidayah wal

Nihaya', Beirut, Maktaba al M'arif 1974, vol. 8 p. 14; Muhib al Tabari – 'Dhakair al Uqba, Cairo, Maktaba al Qudsi, 1356 A.H., p. 139; Dr. Hasan Ibrahim – 'Tarikh al Islam', Beirut, Dar Ahya al Turas al Arabi, 1964, vol. 1, p.274; Carl Brockelmann – 'Tarikh al Sh'ub al Islamiah, Beirut, Darul Ilm lil- Mabain, 1965, 4th edition, p. 120.

[6.](#) . Ibn. Sabbagh al Maliki – 'al Fusul al Muhimmah, Najaf, Darul Kutub, p. 146; Ibn. Khallakan – 'Wafayat al-'ayan', Qum, Manshurat al Razi, 1985, vol. 2, p.66; Ibn. Kathir – 'Al bidayah wal Nihaya', Beirut, Maktaba al M'arif, 1974, 2nd edition, vol. 8 p. 16, and vol. 6 p.220 (the book 'D alail al-Nubuah'); Abdul Qadir Badran, 'Tahzabe Tarikhe Damishq', Beirut, Darul Ahya al-Turas 1987, 3rd edition, vol. 4, p.22; Ibn. Asakir – 'Tarikh Madinate Damishq, Tarjuma al Imam al Hasan' (Al Mahmudi research) Beirut, Muassah al-Mahmudi, 1980, p. 171, tradition No. 289; Masudi – 'Murawwij al Zahab', Beirut, Dar ul Fikr, 1989, vol. 3, p.7.

[7.](#) Sheikh Razi Ale Yasin – 'Sulh-ul Hasan', Qum; Munshoorat al Razi, 1373 A.H. pp.56–57.

[8.](#) Razi Ale Yasin – 'Sulh-ul Hasan', p.58; Abul Faraj, 'Maqatil al Talibin, Najaf, Maktaba al Haidariyah, 1965, vol. 1, p.33; Tabari – 'Tarikh al Tabari', Beirut: Darul Kutub al Ilmiah 1988, vol 3, p. 166; Baladhuri – 'Ansab al Ashraf', Beirut, Dar al Ta'ruf lil Matbu'at, 1977, vol. 3, p.28; Hashim al Maruf – 'Sirat al A'imma al Ithna Ashar', vol.2, p.501

[9.](#) Baladhuri – 'Ansab al Ashraf', Beirut, Dar al Ta'ruf lil Matbu'at, 1977, vol. 3, p.29; Ibn. Kathir – 'Al bidayah wal Nihaya', Beirut, Maktaba al M'arif. 1974, vol. 8 p.17; Ibn. Athir – 'Al Kamil fi al Tarikh', vol. 2 p. 443; Ibn. A'sam – 'Al Futuh, Hyderabad: Daira al Ma'arif al Usmania, 1971, vol. 4, p.148; Abdul Qadir Badran, 'Tahzib Tarikhe Damishq', Beirut, Darul Ahya al-Turas al Arabi, 1987, vol. 4, p.223; Ibn. Asakir – 'Tarikh Madinate Damishq, Tarjuma al Imam al Hasan', Beirut p. 174; Tabari – 'Tarikh al Tabari', vol 3, p. 167.

[10.](#) Dr. Husayn Muhammad Jafri, 'The Origin & Early Development of Shia Islam', (Persian translation) Dr. Ayet Ilahi, Tashay'o dar Tarikh, Tehran, Islamic Cultural Publishing Centre, 1993, pp. 158–161.

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