

IMAMATE AND INFALIBILITY OF IMAMS IN THE QUR'AN

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قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.

(Surat al-Ahzab 33:33)

Prophetic traditions, mentioned in both Sunni and Shiite most reliable reference books of *Hadith* and *Tafsir* (Qur'anic Exegesis), have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively involve the five pure people of the Cloak *Ashab al-Kisa*; namely, Mohammad, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), to whom the term '*Ahl al-Bayt*' (People of the House) is solely dedicated.

For instance, refer to the following reference books:

(1) Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:331; 4:107; 6:292, 304. (2) *Sahih Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130. (3) Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al. (4) Al-Dulabi (d. 310 AH), *al-Dhurriyyah al-Tahirah al-Nabawiyyah*, pp. 108. (5) Al-Nassa'i (d. 303 AH), *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 5:P108, 113. (6) al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405 AH), *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146, 147. (7) al-Zarkashi (d. 794 AH), *al-Burhan*, pp. 197. (8) ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852), *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:104. (9) Al-Kulayni (d. 328 AH), *Usul al-Kafi*, 1:287. (10) ibn Babiwayh (d. 329 AH), *al-Imamah wa'l-Tabsirah*, pp. 47, H. 29. (11) Al-Maghribi (d. 363 AH), *Da'aa'im al-Islam*, pp. 35, 37. (12) Al-Saduq (d. 381 AH), *al-Khisal*, pp. 403, 550. (13) Al-Tusi (d. 460 AH), *al-Amaali*, H. 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsir*: (1) Al-Tabari (d. 310 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (2) Al-Jassas (d. 370 AH), *Ahkam al-Qur'an*. (3) Al-Wahidi (d. 468 AH), *Ashaab al-Nuzoul*. (4) ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 AH), *Zand al-Museer*. (5) Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH), *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*. (6) ibn Katheer (d. 774 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (7) Al-Tha'aalibi (d. 825 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (8) Al-Suyouti (d. 911 AH), *al-Durr al-Manthour*. (9) Al-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH), *Fath al-Ghadir*. (10) Al-Ayyashi (d. 320 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (11) Al-Qommi (d. 329 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (12) Furt al-Kufi (d. 352 AH), *Book of Tafsir*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse 4:59. (13) Al-Tabrisi (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayan*, as well as many other reference books of *Hadith* and *Tafsir*.

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Publisher's Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), stored in their school of thought and preserved by their followers, is comprehensive and embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has been able to produce brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has presented to the Muslim *ummah* many scholars who, following in the footsteps of Imams who belong to the Prophet's Household (Peace be upon them), have provided convincing answers to the questions and doubts raised by various schools and intellectual friends within and outside the Muslim nation. Throughout the past centuries, these scholars have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications to these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly (ABWA) has undertaken to defend the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the followers of various sects and by the proponents of the trends which show hostility to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.b.u.th) and the followers of their rightly guided school of thought which has been ready to confront these challenges and be in the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.b.u.th) are of unique significance because they are based on genuine knowledge, appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these rich arguments

through the studies and translations of contemporary Shī'ah writers and of those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in the edition and publication of the valuable works of the leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth to discover the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (P.b.u.th) has offered to the entire world.

The *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly looks forward to benefiting from the opinions suggestions and constructive criticism of the readers in this area.

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Mr. Rida Kardan the author of the present book, and Sayyid Iraj Razzaqi, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department
The *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.b.u.th) World Assembly

Introduction

From the beginning of time, there has been an ongoing battle and dispute between truth and falsehood. Truth has always been a thorn in the side of falsehood so falsehood has constantly strived to undermine and destroy the truth. However, truth has continued to invite followers of falsehood towards righteousness at every moment. At times falsehood has tried to suppress the truth by shedding the blood of the virtuous and often attempts, unavailingly, to weaken truth with unjust criticisms.

Sometimes falsehood uses deceptive and deceitful slogans and baseless accusations to frighten followers of the truth, but the righteousness have Allah's promise in sight where He says, "And do not lose heart and do not despair, for you shall gain the upper hand if you are true believers." (The Holy Quran 3:139)

The strong foundations of truth continue to be attacked from all sides, and relentless attempts to snatch this precious legacy from the Muslims are being made either by the pen or through so-called cultural values. Often it is through sowing discord and sectarianism, or the invitation to conform to the norm. At times, the words of Quran are twisted out of context and at times criticism is directed at the life of our Holy Prophet (pbuh).

However, it is the grace of Allah that He has blessed us with such organisations and individuals, who embody the

verses of Quran, and "invite to good, enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong" (3:104). They are upholding the banner of defending Islam, clarifying for us the commands of Allah, and lifting a veil from that deceptively sweet face of falsehood. In doing so they have uncovered before us, true Islam in its uncorrupted form. Their mission is to remind the world of Allah's promise, that "surely falsehood is a vanishing thing" (17:81) and through their sincerity, to create a path for the completion of Allah's pledge that "He may make it (Islam) prevail over all religions" (48:28). They await the appearance of the Saviour of Islam and prepare the masses to welcome him.

One of these renowned organisations is the Ahl-ul-bayt (a.s) World Assembly, which aims to protect our pearls of knowledge and to distribute the teachings of the Ahlulbayt (a.s.) amongst the public, through publishing the works of prominent scholars in various languages. Islamic Thought too holds these missions, and is grateful to the Ahl-ul-bayt World Assembly for the opportunity to participate in the publication of this book and thus serve this great cause.

May Allah bless and multiply the endeavours of the members of both the Ahl-ul-bayt World Assembly and Islamic Thought, as well as all those who have cooperated with us.

Maulana Maqbool Hussain Alavi

Chairman, Islamic Thought UK

Preface

There are two main viewpoints concerning the issue of Imamate: the first is that of the Sunnis, who hold that the Prophet, 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 possess 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 (S.A.W.) 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*".¹ Also, "*Then maybe you*

1— Surah 26, verse 3.

*will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement”.*¹

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 (S.A.W.) 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 (S.A.W.) were not exempted. Perhaps Islam had not fully filled the hearts of most of those who were in the company of the Prophet (S.A.W.) 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

1— Surah 18, verse 6.

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.

History tell us that some of the chiefs of tribes, who had been invited by the Prophet (S.A.W.) 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 (S.A.W.) came to Bani Āmir 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

10. 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.

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

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.

camels or sheep. What will you tell God when you meet Him if you do not appoint someone to succeed you?"¹

'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 (S.A.W.) without leader, and don't leave them to their chances after you lest sedition should befall them'.² 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?"³

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".⁴

11. Whenever he decided to go on a trip, the holy Prophet (S.A.W.) 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

1- *Al-Riadhul-Nazirah*, vol. 2, p. 353, Dar al-Nadwah al-Jadidah, Beirut; *Sunan of Beithaqi*, vol. 8, p.149, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, vol. 1, p. 44, Dar al-Fikr.

2- "*Al-Imamah wal Siyasa*", vol.1, p.23.

3- *Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat*, vol. 3, p. 343, Dar Beirut lil-Taba'wa Nashr.

4- *Al-Tabari's History*, vol.3 part 5, p.154; *Al-Imamah wal-Siyasa*, vol.1, p.184.

Prophet (S.A.W.) 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'un¹
2. Ashirah expedition: Aba Selemah ibn 'Abdul Asad²
3. The expedition of Safwan, Badr the first: Zayd ibn Haritheh³
4. Badr al Kubra expedition: Aba Lubabeh⁴
5. Bani Saleem expedition: Seba' ibn 'Arfatah⁵
6. Sowaiq expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul-Mundhar (Abu Lubabeh)⁶
7. Zi-Amr expedition: Uthman ibn Affan⁷
8. Far' expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom⁸
9. Bani Qayniqa' expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul Mundhir⁹
10. Uhud expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom¹⁰
11. Bani al-Nazeer expedition: ibn Umma Maktoom¹¹
12. Dhat al-Riqā' expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari or Uthman ibn Affan¹²

1- Ibn Hisham's *Sira*, vol. 2, p.248.

2- Ibid.

3- Ibid, p. 251.

4- Ibid, vol. 2, pp 263-4.

5- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.

6- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.

7- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.

8- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.

9- Ibid, vol. 3, p.52.

10- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 68.

11- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 200.

12- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 214.

13. The second Badr expedition: Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Scilul al-Ansari¹
14. Dawmat al-Jandal expedition: Seba' ibn 'Arfatah²
15. Al-Khandak expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom³
16. Bani Kurayza expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom⁴
17. Bani Lahyan expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom⁵
18. Dhi Qurrah expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom⁶
19. Bani al-Mustalak expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari⁷
20. Al-Hudaybiyya expedition: Noma'lat ibn Abdilllah al-Laythi⁸
21. Khaybar expedition: Noma'lat ibn Abdilllah al-Laythi⁹
22. Mecca Conquest: Kalthum ibn Hoseyn¹⁰
23. Hunayn expedition: 'Utab ibn Aseed¹¹
24. Tabuk expedition: Mohammad ibn Muslimat al-Ansari, or Siba' ibn 'Arfatah¹²

According to a correct, and well-known tradition when he wanted to leave Medina for Tabuk, the noble Prophet of Islam

1- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 220.

2- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 224.

3- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 231.

4- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 245.

5- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 292.

6- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.

7- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 302.

8- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.

9- Ibid, vol. 3, p. 342.

10- Ibid, vol. 4, p. 42.

11- Ibid, vol. 4, p. 83.

12- Ibid, vol. 4, p. 162

(S.A.W.) appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib, 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'ibn ibn 'Arfatah.¹

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.²

When he sent a group of forty men to B'ir Ma'unah, the Prophet (S.A.W.) appointed Abdul Mundhir ibn Umar as their leader³, and for the six-man group sent to Rajee' to teach *fiqh*, the Prophet appointed Marthad ibn Abi Marthad 'Anawi as a leader.⁴

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 (S.A.W.) has not thought of appointing someone to

1- Ibid, vol. 4, p. 248.

2- Ibid, vol. 4, p. 5.

3- Ibn Hisham's *Sirah*, v. 3, p. 194.

4- Ibid, v.3, p.183.

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 (S.A.W.) 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*"¹, 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 (S.A.W.) 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: *Ibtila*, *Mubahaleh*, *Aulu al-Amr*, *Wilayah*, *Sadiqeen*, *Tatheer*, and *Im 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...

Rida Kardan

1- Surah 9, verse 128.