

IMAM and WILAYAT

To those who have acquaintance (even though a little) with the invaluable treasure of Shiite traditions and the precious heritage of the immaculate Imams (A.S.), the importance of "Imamah" (leadership) and "Wilayah" (vicegerency) amongst the various discussions in this treasure and heritage is not concealed. If we superficially glance over the whole set of traditions we will come across such chapters as:

(chapter concerning the need of a Hujjah)

(chapter concerning the necessity of possessing knowledge of Imam

(chapter concerning non-acceptance of deeds except by means of Wilayah) and therein, we see and read at times the Imams saying:

"If the earth remains without a leader (even) for an hour it will perish.¹"

"The one who dies while he has not recognized his time has died the death of ignorance."²

1. Biharul Anwar 23 page 21, number 20.

2. Same reference page 78, number

"Islam has been established on five pillars: Salat (prayers), Zakat (alms-tax), Saum (fasting), Haj (pilgrimage) and Wilayah (vicegerency). Amongst these, none has been invited the way Wilayah has been invited) About the questioning on the Day of Retribution, they have said:

"When a slave appears before his Lord, Exalted be He, the first matter which he will be questioned about is the obligatory , prayers, the obligatory alms-tax, the obligatory fasting, the obligatory pilgrimage and our Wilayah. If he has confessed to our Wilayah and dies, his prayers, alms-tax, fasting and pilgrimage will be accepted. If he fails to confess to our Wilayah and friendship before Allah, Exalted be He, all his deeds will be rejected."²

In hadith Qudsi (divine saying), it has come down that the trustworthy Gabriel addressed the holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) as such: 'O Muhammad! Allah sends His greetings upon you and says: I have created the seven skies and whatever is over them and the seven earths and whatever is in them and I have not created any place better than the place of 'Rukn' and "Maqam" (position of Abraham). If a slave worships Me in this very place from the time I created the heavens

and the earths and then comes to Me denying the Wilayah of Ali, I shall cast him in the Fire.¹

Although each of these traditions is a specimen of tens of other

similar traditions, yet each on its own, is sufficient to drive every Muslim to contemplation and reflection and encourage him to strive in perceiving (the Wilayah) more and more since, he sees that a divine holy life in this world and the Hereafter is linked to it. And this brief discussion has been prepared for the purpose of assisting the researchers in achieving their aim. May it be beneficial even though a little and acceptable to his holy presence, the master of Wilayah, Hazrat Baqiyatullah, Imam-e-Zaman (A.S.).

THE NEED FOR DIVINE LEADERS:

EXPOSITION:

The Almighty God has created man out of His Beneficence¹ so that man tastes His Mercy² If He has created and bestowed life, it is the manifestation of His Mercy and not that man is deserving it or that it becomes his right just after he comes into existence. If at all he has brought faith, embarked on worshipping (God) and trained himself, it was his duty and responsibility. It is obvious that a person with some duty never really Deserves a reward just because he has fulfilled his duty. Rather, if he does not fulfill his duty he will be liable to punishment. Thus, the reward which accrues to man is out of God's Mercy.

The Unique God has created man; bestowed honor upon him, favored him with His generosity and has said:

"And surely We have honored the children of Adam"

Thereafter, He has introduced piety as the highest generosity:

"Surely the most honorable of you before Allah is the one among you who is most careful (of his duty)." ² As such. He (also) shows him the path of piety and says:

"And certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and (We enjoin) you too that you should be careful of (your duty to) Allah" ³

It is obvious that deviation and crookedness is meaningful only when the path of piety has been made clear and apparent.

"It is not (attributable to) Allah that He should lead a people astray after He has guided them; He even makes clear to them what they should guard against."

REMINDER:

man truly proves applicable to its very "name" where every "name" is the sign of its own justification and he is (man): forgetful². However, the necessary

condition for achieving any aim is firstly to remember it and not to forget it. Thus, by possessing such a quality, man is constantly in need of a "reminder". For this very reason, "reminding" has been one of the most vital role of the divine leaders:

Bani-Israil / 70. Hujjrat / 13. Nisay 131.

"Therefore do remind, for you are only a reminder"

On the same basis, even the glorious Quran is revealed as a "reminder":

"What! do you wonder that a reminder has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you that he might warn you?"²
And Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) too is named by this very characteristic:

"Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder, An Apostle who recites to you the clear communications of Allah."³

INVITATION:

A person who becomes alert as a result of the "reminding" of the divine leaders as well as fearful from the possible harm and loss which he might have to face in case of shortcomings and faults on his side, (still) requires a summons others towards Allah) as demanded by his very negligence and ignorance; a caller who calls him to the path and destination which is most desired; so that the one who has awoken and found a desire to move does not tread on the deviated path nor gets into the fire nor sinks into a whirlpool. Thus, the divine leaders are assigned with the duty of inviting (the people); inviting them to the divine path and God:

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation."]

"Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain."²

"Say: I am only commanded that I should serve Allah and not associate anything with Him, to Him do I invite (you) and to Him is my return."³

on the other hand, the people too have been to obey:

"O you who believe! answer (the call of) Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life."

TRAINING:

One should know that inclination and avidity towards the true path is not adequate for a wayfarer. Rather, one should recognize this path by possessing knowledge of the deviated path (too). In proportion to man's ignorance, man is in need of a teacher who can impart him the knowledge

of the origin and the end and show him the appropriate path between the two. In other words, he gives them training in connection with the manner of living which is commensurate with his origin and end.

Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and

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wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error."

CONVEYING:

The main role of the divine leaders is conveying the illuminating divine message to the people:

"And nothing is incumbent on the Apostle but a plain delivering (of the message)."²

This is so that the right way is distinguished from the error.

"Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error."³ And then, anyone can choose whichever he desires:

"Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful."⁴

And for the one who forsakes the "truth" and the guidance" and inevitably Jags behind in achieving the desired goal, there remains no excuse and finalization of argument before God.

"Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishamel and Issac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Soloman and We gave to David the Psalms.

And (We sent) apostles We have mentioned to you before and apostles We have not mentioned to you; and to Moses, Allah addressed His Word, speaking (to him): (We sent) apostles as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against Allah after the (coming of) apostles; and Allah is Mighty. Wise."

It is for this very reason that conclusive finalization or argument, audible guidance and decisive reasoning has always come from God's side and its continuity is appropriate with the Divine Wisdom:

"Say: Then Allah's is the conclusive argument."

Thus for the one who chooses the straight path and selects the divine guidance, there exists a guide:

^You are only a warner and (there is) a guide for every people."²

"And of those whom We have created are a people who guide with the truth and thereby they do justice."³

And this guide will lead him to the (straight) path:

"Guiding to the right way, so we believe in it"⁴ As such. The Almighty God says:

"And whomsoever He causes to err, you shall not find for him any friend to lead (him) aright." * * *

Whatever has been said has also come down in lucid terms in the traditions narrated from the Aimmas (A.S.). Hereunder, we set forth two such traditions as examples:

1. Abu-Abdullah (A.S.) says: Verily, Gabriel descended upon Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and conveyed to him this message from God: 'O.Muhammad! I shall not let loose the earth but that there should exist in it a learned man who recognizes My submissiveness and guidance. He shall be the savior from the time a prophet passes away until the time the next prophet is appointed. I shall not set free the Satan to deviate the people while the earth is devoid of a Proof and a caller towards Me; a guide to My path and a gnostic aware of My commands. Verily, I have fixed a guide for every group by means of which I show the path to the prosperous ones. He shall be My Proof over the deviated ones²

2. Hisham-ibn-Hakam narrates that one of the apostates once had a

discussion with Imam Sadiq (A.S.) and asked Imam a few questions. Amongst the questions he asked was this: How do you prove the necessity of the

appointment of Prophets? Imam replied:

when it is proved that there exists a Creator and designer Who is far above us and also far above all that He has created, and this Creator is All-Wise and Exalted and ^ One Who cannot possibly be seen nor sensed by His creatures so that there could be any direct relationship between Him and His creatures or His creatures and Him, d so that He could argue with His creatures (to convince them) and His creatures could argue with Him (in their turn) it is therefore proved that there are envoys to establish a relation between Him and His creatures, to explain His purpose to His creatures and slaves, and to guide them towards what is good and profitable for them, and also towards that which preserves their existence and which, when abandoned, brings annihilation. In this manner, it is established that there are those among His creatures who command and forbid on behalf of the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, and who speak on behalf of Him, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty. They are the Prophets (A. S.) and the chosen ones amongst His creatures. They are the sages who have been refined with wisdom and have been sent with wisdom. They are never similar to the people in any of the affairs even though they are on par with them in creation. They have been aided with wisdom by the All-Wise, the All-Knowing. Thereafter, this matter has been proved and established for all eras and all times, according to the evidence and proofs which the Prophets and Messengers have brought with them, so that the earth of Allah should not remain devoid a Proof who possesses the evidence for the truth of what he says and (who requires) obedience to his commands."1

ELIMINATION OF DIFFERENCES:

Every path possesses its own specific pits. Thus a guide should possess knowledge of every nook and corner of that path so that he succeeds in causing every wayfarer reach his destination in a safe manner. The enemies have vowed to create doubts and skepticisms in the minds of the wayfarers on the path of God by means of internal and external whisperings. Moreover, contact and association with corrupt and non-divine beliefs causes differences in beliefs as well as disharmony and discord amongst the believers. On this basis, man is consistently in need of a "Eliminator of differences" and Repulse of doubts and skepticisms".

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the apostle and those in authority from among you, then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day, this is better and very good in the end.2 As such, the Satans of jinn and men (who cry loud their envy and express their rage at the descension of divine envy and its implementation) are consistently lying in wait in order to destroy this great barrier lying on their path

^debasement and ruin the firm stronghold and the divine security
Thus, this elevated divine structure requires a
"guard"* Jafar-ibn-Muhammad (A.S.) narrates from his great fathers
that the holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said: In every generation of my
"Ummah" (nation), there is a righteous one from my progeny who
will keep this religion safe from the extremists alteration; and from
the invalidators attributing the religion to themselves and from the
interpretation of the fools '

In the beautiful and prolific speech of Ali-ibn-Musa Ridha (A.S.), the
term "Imam" has been described as follows: Imam defends the
religion of Allah and calls (the people) towards the divine path by
means of wisdom, good counsel and eloquent arguments. Imam is
like the shining sun which has covered the world with its light and
has fixed its place in the sky such that the eye and the hand cannot
have access to it, Imam is the proof of guidance and the deliverer
from destruction Imam is Allah's custodian over His creatures; His
plea over His slaves and His representative in the lands. He is the
caller towards Allah and the defender of His bounds.....He is an
exhort Allah's slaves and a guard of His religion.

AID:

Besides, knowledge and acquaintance (alone) are sufficient for
reaching the extreme end. Rather, a power commensurate with all
these is necessary too. As per Unique God's explanation, man has
been created weak. Thus, a competent scholar should, under the
auspices of the knowledge and ability and on the basis of his love and
sympathy make the human-beings stand upright and walk, That is to
say, there should exist guidance as well a. ^uide to accompany man
so long as man remains in the state of anxiety.

in other words, the "Wilayah" (mastership) develops him makes him
achieve the level of perfection and trains h; very moment. That is to
say, it is his trainer: Imam is an affectionate companion, the
sympathetic father the blood-brother and mother who is tender to
her small child 2

Thus Imam Baqir (A.S.) says: "Trough us, Allah can be worshipped
and by our means Allah can be recognized. (Moreover), due to us the
Oneness of Allah can be firmly established."

Fmam Sadiq (A.S.) says: ^ an intermediate between you and Allah."1

Yet another tradition. Imam Baqir (A.S.) says The religion of Is'am
established on five pillars: Salat, Zakat (alms tax), Haj (pilgrimage to
Mecca, fasting and Wilayah (mastership). Zarrareh says: 1 asked:
Among the five, which is most superior Imam replied: Wilayah is
more superior because Wilayah is the key to all others and the Waali
(custodian) is the guide to all of them.

Considering this very weakness and man's need of a voucher. God
commands man to seek a channel: -

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means
of nearness to Him."

In explanation of the term "wasela" the holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) says: "The leaders are from the offspring of Hussein (A.S.). Anyone who obeys them has obeyed Allah and anyone who disobeys them has disobeyed Allah. It is they who are the firm rope (covenant) and the channel towards the Almighty God"¹

In order to remain safe from descending and getting destroyed, one requires a strong and reliable rope to cling on. Thus, a believer who has been placed under the care of the divine Wilayah is introduced by the Almighty God as:

i.e. one who holds by the strong rope. Moreover, He says:

"Therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Satan and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest rope which shall not break off."²

Moreover, He has commanded all to hold fast by this untearable rope: "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited."

In explanation of this verse. Imam Baqir (A.S.) has said: "The divine rope which Allah has mentioned (And hold fast by covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited) refer to us, Verily, the Almighty Allah was All-Aware that they would separate from each other and disputes would arise between them. Thus, He has forbidden them from separating from each other just as He had forbidden the past generation. As such. He has commanded them to hold fast by the "Wilayah" of the Prophet's household and the "Salat" and not to disunite."

On this basis, it is only the believers who can come out of the darkness and step into the light since the message of a "Wall" (master) and the divine leaders is this very one and nothing else.

"Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder, An Apostle who recites to you the clear communications of Allah so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darkness into light."²

And the meaning and aim of "Tawasul" (which holds great importance in the Shiite culture) is nothing but what has come down in the afore-said verses: "Seeking the means wasela and holding fast by it. It is on this basis that worship, (no matter to what extent one may worship and no matter how humble one may be in his worship) without the acceptance of the divine Wilayah is unacceptable before God. In other words, such a worship does not possess merit and cannot be regarded as correct. Thus, the basic condition of a true worship is to pay devotion to the threshold of divine Wilayah.

PROTECTION OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM:

Aside from man's personal need of an Imam and the necessity of abiding by the divine Wilayah, he is inevitably bound to live collectively with others in his journey on the divine path. And it is quite obvious that in a collective living, it is necessary to have a ruler, leader, judge and supervisor.

Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) says: "Verily, the people are helpless but to

have a ruler -whether good or bad- so that a believer is preoccupied in his deeds under his rule and a disbeliever (too) derives benefit... and through him, 'the spoils are collected, the enemies are confronted and the paths are made secure. By his means, the right of the weak is taken from the strong until the virtuous one gains comfort and is relieved from the evil one" As per Imam Ridha (A.S.) saying, if it is asked: Why "people vested with authority" have been appointed and why others have been commanded to obey them? then, they should be replied as such: For numerous reasons.

Amongst them are: At the time when the people become aware of the prescribed limits and they are commanded not to exceed those limits or else they would have to face destruction

this perseverant will not come into force unless in this regard they are given a trustee who will safeguard them in whatever has been prescribed for them and refrain them from aggression and all that which has been prohibited for them. This is because if such a trustee is not amongst them, then verily someone will emerge who will violate other's rights in order to fulfill his personal desires and gains. Thus, a guardian is appointed for preventing them from corruption and in establishing the limits and commandments among them.

Amongst the other reasons, we may say: We cannot find any group among all the groups or any nation among all the nations which have survived except that they had a leader and guardian amongst them. Since a leader and guardian is necessarily required in their spiritual and material affairs, it is against the divine Wisdom to forsake the people in that which is necessary for them and which He is Aware of. They fight the enemies by his help and he distributes the spoils of war amongst them and establishes the Friday congregational prayers for them. He prevents the criminals amongst them from oppressing the innocent ones.

Amongst other reasons, we may also say: If a reliable, protective and trustworthy leader is not appointed for them, then the sacred laws will turn stale, the religion will get ruined and the commandments will undergo a change. Moreover, the heretics will add something to it while the atheists will delete something from it and religion will be rendered dubious for the Muslims. This is because we have found man to be defective, needful and imperfect with all the difference that exists between themselves as well as the differences in their carnal desires and their various goals. Thus, if a protective guardian (the same which the Prophet has introduced) remains absent amongst them then due to the afore-mentioned reasons, they shall be destroyed and the sacred laws, sunnah (practice of the Prophet), commandments and faith will undergo alteration Under such circumstances, the creatures will be dragged towards corruption and get destroyed \

It is in consideration of these points that in a part of Imam's elegant and precious speech, Imam(A.S.) divulges the social message of an

Imam and the role of Imam in the leadership of a society as such: An Imam makes lawful the lawful things of God and makes unlawful the unlawful things of God and establishes God's bounds. The Imam is the state of order of the religion, the might of the muslims, the one who enrages the hypocrites and the destroyer of the infidels. Imam is wise in civility, his obedience necessary. He is one who rises for the affairs of the Almighty Allah, an adviser to Allah's slaves and the protector of Allah's religion²

And perhaps we can reckon all these to be an interpreter of God's words in the Quran which says:

"Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity, and We have made the iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men.

Besides these, we have to add this point too: Islam has promised man the rise of a society with the following specialties:

The holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said: When I ascended the seventh sky and from there, reached the farthest lote-tree and stepped into the veil of light, the Almighty Allah addressed me as such:

'O Muhammad! you are My slave and I am your Lord. So be humble before Me and worship Me only. Have trust on Me only. Verily, I am satisfied with your servitude, friendship and prophethood as well as with the successorship of Ali, your brother. Thus, he is the proof over My slaves and the leader of My creatures. It is through him that My friends will be distinguished from My enemies and the Satan's party will be separated from My party. By his means, My religion will be established; the commandments implemented and the limits protected. I shall shower My Mercy on My slaves and maid-slaves for the sake of you and Ali and the leaders from his progeny. Through your Qaem, (the Savior) I shall make the land to flourish by means of My glorification, praise, sanctification and commendation.

Through him, I shall cleanse the earth of My enemies and will make My friends to inherit the earth. Through him, I shall degrade the creed of the infidels and elevate My own creed. Through him, I shall enliven My slaves and My cities. Through him, I shall manifest the riches and the buried treasure and shall reveal to him the secrets and the hidden (facts). I shall assist him in implementing My commands and proclaiming My religion. Verily, he is My Wall and the Mahdi of My slaves.'

With regards to Mahdi's rule. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) says in a part of his speech to one of his companions as such: "Glory be to Allah! Don't you wish that Allah Exalted be He, establishes the truth and justice in the cities and sets good the state of all the people?! And makes all the creeds into a single creed, associates the diverse hearts and eliminates disobedience on the earth?! And that Allah's bounds gets enforced amongst the creatures and Allah restores back the right to its owner and He manifests this in such manner that nothing remains

concealed due to someone's fear from the creatures "2

It is in such a society that moral soundness with all its internal, external, individual and social dimensions will replace immorality. This is because moral soundness is the guarantee for getting deliverance from the existing condition and achieving the ultimate goal. The holy Quran says:

"But as to him who repents and believes and does good, maybe he will be among the successful."

"Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer. We will most certainly make him live a happy life.

"Therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds.

"And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow and in them, they shall abide"

REFORM OF SOCIETY:

The divine leaders have all been from the virtuous ones² and their goals has been to rectify. As Hazrat Shuaib (A.S.) has said: " I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able."

The endurance of leadership and the selection of a successor too has been accepted on these very lines. The holy Quran narrates Aaron's succession on the part of Moses (A.S.) as such:

"And Moses said to his brother Aaron: Take my place among my people, and act well and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers."4

Thus whatever divine bounties and gifts have been created . ^g world of existence are all for the virtuous ones indeed.

"On those who believe and do good there is no blame for what they-eat, when they are carefull their duty) and believe and do good deeds, then they are careful (of their duty) and believe, then they are careful (of their duty) and do good (to others), and Allah loves those who do good (to others)."

There by, they shall eventually inherit the earth and for them shall be the Caliphate (too).

"Allah has promised to those of you who relieve and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them,, arid that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchanger they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors."

Thus, under the auspices of the divine leaders guidance, the earth and its inhabitants welcome reform. In explanation and interpretation of the verse:

Imam Baqir (A.S.) points out as such: "Verily, there was mischief on the earth and Allah rectified it through His prophet and then said: Do not make mischief in the land after you have brought faith in the

Messenger of Allah and Amir-ul-Muminin. And when they abandoned Amir-ul-Muminin (A.S.), they indeed created mischief in the land.'[^]

IMMACULATENESS OF THE DIVINE LEADERS:

From what was explained, it becomes obvious that the one possessing such characteristics and bearing such responsibilities should be pure from any offence and immune from any sins. Since, according to the sayings of Amir-ul-Muminin (A.S.), the foundation of obedience and submissiveness towards the divine leaders is this very immaculateness: Verily, obedience is for Allah, His prophet and those vested with divine authority. Verily, obedience of the "Wali (s)" (master) has been ordered since they are sinless and pure and they never call for the disobedience of Allah'

In reply to Hazrat Ibrahim's request to allow the Imamate to continue in his own progeny, the Exalted Allah replies:

"My covenant does not include the unjust"²

Why shouldn't it be so?! As a matter of fact, isn't license to obey a sinful person nothing but a license to commit sin?

whereas. God never allows sin and falsehood.

PERPETUATION OF DIVINE LEADERS:

Thus, the Mercy of the All-Merciful and the All Compassionate and the divine Wisdom necessarily requires that right from the time of creation of the earth and its inhabitants, the divine Mercy' and Wisdom² should

embrace them. Moreover, the means of guidance and progress and the results derived from them (i.e. advisability and reform) should be kept within their reach. Considering man's qualities and the wide spectrum which he can traverse from unlimited negative ness to unlimited positiveness, he is helpless but to taste the leadership of those endowed with lofty position .and perfection. Thus, God has appointed a few amongst mankind (chosenones) and acquainted them with the realities of Origin.

and (eschatology) and the path between this beginning and end (i.e. Prophethood). A group amongst them have been charged with the duty of transmitting these messages (Messenger ship) and the people too have been commanded to obey them. Moreover, He has given yet another group the responsibility of guiding, supervising and assisting the human-beings in all aspects (Imamah and Wilayah)'

Here are some examples from the sayings of the Immaculate Imams (AS.): Abu-Abdullah (A.S.) says:

"The earth shall not last but with the existence of a learned man who shall reform it and the people (themselves) shall not be reformed but with his presence."²

Again, he says: "People will not reform save with the help of a leader. The earth too shall not be reformed but through him."³

Abu-Jafar (A. S.) said:

"I swear by Allah that since the time the earth \v^g inherited by Adam (A.S.) it has never been delivered except when it shall be

inherited by a leader through whom it shall be guided towards Allah and he shall be Allah's plea over His creatures. And the earth shall not last without Allah's plea over His creatures."1

One of Imam Sadiq's followers said: I heard Hazrat saying: "If there does not remain on the earth but two persons then surely one of them shall be the "HuJJah" (proof)."2

Muhammad-ibn-Muslim has narrated from Imam Baqir (A.S.) who said: "The earth shall not endure without a leader " (whether apparent or concealed)3

Since, under such circumstances, the earth will not remain fit and life in it will be suitable but for a while as both of these will have then given away the medium for divine bounties as well as the wise objective of remaining firm in position.

Thus a "Messenger" should possess the knowledge of a "Prophet" and a "Leader" (and "Master" (jj) should possess (either directly or indirectly) the knowledge of a "Messenger" By direct, we may cite the case of an Imam who is also a Prophet and a Messenger. By indirect, is meant an Imam who is the Messenger's successor. Just as the people have no choice in the selection of a Prophet and Messenger in the same manner, they have no choice in the appointment of an "Imam" and "Wali":

"And your Lord creates and chooses whom He pleases; to choose is not theirs."2

"And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter."3

T^ it has come down that one cannot become a leader without an explicit designation and it is necessary for an Imam to explicitly stipulate the Imam who is to follow him'

Verily, is it possible for a legatee to be appointed by someone other than a legator Verily, the hierarchy of divine leaders began from Hazrat Adam (A.S.) and continued in the progeny of Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S.) and finally continues to last in the pure progeny of Amir-ul-Mumineen and Fatemah (A.S.). Imam Sadiq (A.S.) said: The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.A.) said: "I am the chief of all the Prophets. My legatee is the chief of all the legatees and my legatees are the chief of all (other) legatees. Verily, Adam (A.S.) requested Almighty Allah to appoint a worthy legatee for himself. Then Allah revealed to him as such: 'Verily, I honored the prophets with prophethood. Then, 1 appointed the legatees amongst the best of My creatures.' Thereafter, Allah revealed to him as such: 'O Adam, appoint Shais as your legatee.' He appointed Shais as his legatee and Shais was Adam's son. Shais appointed his son Shabban as his legatee. He was the son of Nazlah Hura who was sent from the Paradise by Allah for Adam and Adam had given her hand in marriage to his son, Shais.

Shabban appointed Muhlas as his legatee and Muhlas in turn

appointed Muhwaq as his legatee. Muhwaq too appointed Amisha as his legatee and Amisha appointed j Okhnukh (Prophet Idris) as his legatee. Idris appointed |"iNahur and Nahur entrusted the executorship to Prophet |f<oah. j|jj|ifoah appointed Saam as his legatee and Saam handed over <he executorship to Athamer. Ethasha, Yafeth, Bareh, ; Jafiseh and Imran followed Athamer in sequence. I ilniran entrusted the executorship to Ibrahim who was later succeeded by his son Ismail. Thereafter, Ishaaq, Ya'qub, 'usuf, Yathriya and Shuaib followed in order. Shuaib trusted the executorship to Musa-ibn-imran who in turn ^pointed Yushah-ibn-Nun as his legatee. Thereafter, the (editorship was entrusted to Sulaiman, Asif-ibn-Barkhiya id Zakaria in order. ikaria entrusted the executorship to Isa-ibn-Maryam who otrusted to Sham'un-ibn-Hamun as-Safa. Yahya-ibn-ikaria^-Miiny.ar, Sulaimah and Bardah followed Sha.'mun sequence.

Then, the holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said: And Bardah entrusted the executorship to me. From my side, I shall and over this executorship to you O Ali. You in turn entrust it to your legatee. Your legatee too shall entrust it , your legatees one after the other and they shall be from your progeny until it shall be handed over to the best creature on the earth after you. Verily," people will turn atheist after your departure and a great dispute will arise amongst them over you. The one who remains loyal to you who will reside next to me and the one who forsakes you will dwell in Hell; and the Hell is the abode of the disbeliveers

Jabir-ibn-Abdullah Ansari says: About the verse

"I asked the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.A.) as such: We know Allah and His Messenger but who are these (those vested with authority)? He replied: 'O Jabir! they are my successors and the leaders of the Muslims after me. They are Ali-ibn-Abi Talib and then Hassan, then Hussein, then Ali-ibn-Hussein, then Muhammad-ibn-Ali who has been mentioned as "Baqir" in the Torah. 'O Jabir, you shall see him and when you do so, convey my greetings to him. After him shall follow Jafar-ibn-Muhammad Sadiq, then Musa-ibn-Jafar.....Hassan-ibn-Ali. Then Allah's plea and the "spared one" amongst His creatures, the son of Hassan-ibn-Ali whose name and agnomen shall be the same as mine will come and Almighty Allah will relieve the earth from East to West by his hands. He is the same one who will be concealed from his followers for such a long that his followers will not remain firm in their belief (during occultation) save those whom Allah has tested their hearts with faith.'

HADITH -E- LUH:

In the glorious hadith-luh (the divine gift from God to the last of His prophets who in turn gifted it to his dear daughter Fatemah) the hierarchy of Imams has been -introduced: In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

This is a writ of command from the wise and mighty Allah to

Muhammad, His prophet. His light and Mighty Aliah, His sent one, His curtain and His guide The trustyworthy sprit has brought this down from Allah

O Muhammad! keep My Name Exalted, Be thankful to My bounties and do not bely them, except for Me there is no (other) Allah, I am the smasher of the oppressors; the Redresser of the Dominator of religion. Verily, I am Allah and besides Me there is no (other) Allah. So, anyone who trust other but not Me and fears but not from Me then I shall so torment him that would be unprecedented so, glorify Me only and have trust on Me only.

Verily, I have not appointed any Prophet nor perfected his life nor completed 'revelation upon him save that I have fixed for him a legatee. Verily I made you superior to all the prophets and granted superiority to your legatee more than all other legatees moreover, I honored you with your two grandsons, Hassan and Husain, I made Hassan the treasure-house of knowledge after his father I made Hussein the treasurer of my revelation and honored him with martyrdom-and brought his affair to a prosperous end. Thus he is the most superior of all the martyrs. I placed My absolute creed with him and entrusted My conclusive evidence with him. moreover, I shall give reward and punishment through his offspring. I made the first amongst them the leader of the adoreres and ornament of (My) saints. Therefore, his son who is similar to his great grandfather is splitter or My Knowledge and the mine of My wisdom. Soon it shall be when the doubters in Jafar will perish. Anyone who rejects him has indeed rejected Me.

My words are certain that verily I shall honor Jafar's abode and haven and shall make him glad amongst his followers, friends and companions. After him, Musa will encounter blind and severe seditions. But inspite of this, My precepts shall never be severed and My plea (Hujjah) shall never regain covered. Verily, My saints will be quenched from the overflowing cup. Anyone who denies any one of them has indeed denied My bounty and anyone who alters any verse has indeed attributed a lie to Me. Woe be to those who belong to the group of deniers and liars. After the termination of Musa's age shall come My slave, friend and appointed one Ali who is My friend, helper and the one upon whom I placed the prophethood for several times and tested his capability for it. A wicked and haughty person shall kill him and he will be buried next to the worst creature in a city which will be built by a worthy man.

Verily, I shall make him glad by appointing his son Muhammad to succeed him and Inherit his knowledge. He is the deposit of My Knowledge, the stronghold of My secrets and My plea over My creatures. None shall be inclined to him but that I shall make the Paradise his abode and I will accept his Intercession for seventy persons from his family members who otherwise would be worthy of the Fire. I shall bring the affairs of his son Ali to a prosperous end

and he shall be My friend, helper, a witness over My creatures and a trustworthy one over My revelation. And from him I will create the caller to My path and the treasurer My Knowledge. And I shall perfect the affairs through his son, who is a mercy for mankind. He possesses the perfection of Musa (Moses), the brightness of Isa (Jesus) and the patience of Ayub (Job). During his time. My friends will be despised and degraded and their heads will be presented as gifts just like the heads of Turks and Dylamites. Thus, they shall be killed and burnt and fear and terror will grip them. The land shall be colored with their blood. The crying, wailing and; recitation of elegy by their women shall become manifest. Verily, they are My friends by the truth. By their means, I shall eliminate every blind and dark sedition. And by their means, I shall put away the earthquakes and bury the fetters. My greetings and Mercy be upon them. And they are those who have found guidance."

Abdur-Rahman-ibn-Salem says: Abu-Baseer says: If you have not heard any hadith in your life time save this one suffice it will be for you. So keep it a secret save from its people.¹

It is in this manner that in the length of divine leadership, the "Prophethood" and "Messengership" ends in Hazrat Muhammad (S.A. W.A.) the last of the Prophets but the "Imamat" still continues. As such, it should be said that Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) is not the first Imam (even though he is reckoned to be the best of all the Prophet's legatees) and his Imamate is the continuation of the Imamate of other Imams.

Imam Abul-Hassan' ar-Ridha (A.S.) has expressed in beautiful and audible terms the position of Imamate, the specialities of an Imam. the necessity of Imam's appointment through designation, the continuity of Imamate right from the beginning till the end of this world and all other points related to this matter. Abdul Aziz-ibn*Muslim says' We were in Imam's presence at Marv. On Friday, which was the first day of our entry to this city, we gathered at the Friday mosque. The people involved themselves in the discussion of Imamate and the various differences that existed amongst the people in this matter. So I approached my master and informed him about the various things the people had said. He smiled and said; 'O Abdul Aziz! the people do not know and have been deceived in their opinion. Almighty Allah did not seize (the life of) His prophet but after having perfected the religion for him and having revealed the Quran upon him wherein one can find the clarification of every thing. In it. He has clarified the lawful and the unlawful acts, the restrictions and the commands and all that the people need. He to Whom belongs Might and Majesty says: 'We have neglected nothing in the Book.'¹ And in the farewell pilgrimage which took place at the end of the Prophet's life, Allah revealed this verse: Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam for your religion." And the matter of Imamate is

the means by which the religion has been brought to perfection; The holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) did not depart from the world until he clarified to his nation the guiding principles of their religion and the path to be pursued by them. And he appointed for them Ali (A.S.) as a sign and as an Imam. And he has not left out the clarification of any matter which is essential for the nation. So, whoever reckons that the Almighty Allah has not perfected His religion has indeed rejected the Book of Allah, and whoever rejects the Book of Allah is an unbeliever in it. Do they know the worth of Imamatus and Its position among the nation so that their selection could be decided by the people? Verily the Imamatus is too sublime among values, too great among ranks, too high among stations, too impenetrable on all sides, too profound among the depths for people to reach it with their intellects, or to grasp it with their opinions, or to establish an Imam by their choice. Verily, Allah granted Abraham (A.S.) the Imamatus in the third stage only after bestowing him the prophethood and His friendship. And it is a grace by which He has bestowed him with honor and raised his renown and said: 'Behold! I make you an Imam (leader) for this people.³ And Allah's friend joyfully said: 'And of my seed'? Allah, the Sublime said: 'My covenant shall not reach the evildoers'² Thus, this verse has nullified the leadership of all oppressors till

the Day of Resurrection and has set the Imamatus amongst the chosen ones only.

Then, Almighty Allah honored him by placing the Imamatus amongst the chosen and pure ones of his off springs and said:

'And We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub in superabundance, and everyone made We righteous and appointed them to be Imams guiding by Our commands, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms, and Us (alone) did they serve.'

So, this affair continued in his offspring, one inheriting from the other generation after generation till Allah, the Sublime, made the holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) inherit. And He the Majestic, the Sublime said: Surely, the nearest of people to Abraham are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe and Allah is the Master of the believers.

So, Imamatus belonged to him particularly, and hence he invested Ali (A.S.) with it by the command of Allah, the Sublime, in the way in which Allah had made obligatory. So it came to be in his (All's) selected seed, those to whom Allah has given knowledge and faith, as in the words of He Who is the Sublime:

'But those who have been given knowledge and faith shall say: Certainly, you have tarried according to Allah's Book till the Day of Resurrection.'

Therefore, Imamatus shall be only for All's offspring till the Day of Judgement since, there shall be no Prophet after Muhammad (S.A.W.

A.). Then, how can these foolish people have the right to select (their leader)?! Verily, Imam is the rank of the Prophets and the heritage of the successors. Verily, the Imam is the vicegerency (Khilafah) of Allah and the vicegerency of the Messenger, the station of Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) and the heritage of al-Hassan and al-Hussein (A.S.). Verily, Imam is the reins of the religion, the state of order of the muslims, the rectitude of the world and the might of the believers. Verily, Imam is Islam's growing root and its lofty branches. Through the Imam, the 'Salat' (prayer), 'Zakat' (alms), Saum (fasting), 'Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and 'Jihad' (holy war) are perfected, the general wealth and charity are augmented, the restrictions and precepts are put into practice and the frontiers and territories are protected. An Imam makes lawful what Allah has made lawful and prohibits what Allah has prohibited; he establishes the restrictions of Allah, he defends the religion of Allah and he calls the people towards His Lord with wisdom and good admonition and perfect and complete arguments. Imam is like the radiant sun which gives embellishment to the world with its light and it is (placed) on the highest point of the sky where no hand or eye can reach it. Imam is like the glaring moon; the glowing lamp; the luminous light and the brilliant stars which act as a guidance in the dark gloomy night and in the lands, deserts and oceans. Imam is a refreshing water for the thirsty people; a guide on the path of guidance and deliverer from the deviations. Imam is (like) the fire on the heights, and which warms those who seek the heat and an indicator in dangers. He who moves away from him will perish. Imam is (like) the pluvial cloud, the rainfall that covers everywhere, the shining sun, the shady sky, the smooth earth, the overflowing spring, the pool and the meadow. Imam is an affectionate associate; the sympathetic father; the blood-brother; the mother who is tender to her small child and a shelter for those in misfortunes. Imam is Allah's custodian over His creatures; His plea for His creatures. His vicegerency in His lands, a caller towards Allah and the defender of Allah's precincts. The Imam is the one who is immune from sins, free from all shortcomings, characterized by knowledge, distinguished by forbearance, the state of order of the religion, the might of the muslims, the one who enrages the hypocrites and the destroyer of the infidels. The Imam is the unique one of his time; no one is comparable to him; no scholar can approach his rank; no one can replace him nor anyone can be found who is similar to him. All the virtues can be found only in him without him seeking it or acquiring it. Rather, it has come upon him from the Bestower of virtues, the All-Giving. So, who is there who can arrive at the knowledge of Imam or have the ability to select him?! How far from the truth! Intellects have lost (themselves), imaginations have gone astray, minds have become perplexed, eyes have turned away, the great have been made small, the wise have confounded themselves, those who reflect

forever fall short, orators falter, the intelligent become ignorant, poets become expressionless, prosodists turn incapable and the eloquent stammer in describing one of his aspects or one of his eminences. All of them have confessed their incapability and inadequacy. How can this totality be described and how can his inner essence be characterized? How can anything concerning him be understood? Who can be found who can replace him and give what he can give? Nay! how can it be possible? while he is like the position of a star where hands cannot reach it nor the adorers can eulogize. So, what a difference between this and selection! What a difference between this and the thoughts! And where can the like of him be found?! Do you imagine that this can be found somewhere other than the Prophet's household?! By Allah, they have lied to themselves, they have promised to themselves the impossible, they have climbed up to a difficult and dangerous height, (and) their feet will slip and fall to the bottom. They want to appoint an Imam with (their) confused, unproductive and defective minds, and (their) misguided opinions. Nothing accrued to them but remoteness from him. [May Allah assail them! How they are turned away!]

Surely, they have intended to engage in a difficult affair with the result that they have uttered the untruth and have gone astray into far error; they have put themselves into confusion, because they have knowingly abandoned the Imam. And the Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them and barred them from the way, though they saw clearly. They turned their backs on the choice of Allah, the choice of the Messenger of Allah and his Ahlu'1-bayt, and instead turned to their own choice whereas the Quran has called out to them: " Thy Lord creates whatsoever He pleases and He chooses; they have not the choice. Glory be to Allah! Exalted be He above what they associate." 1

And He to Whom belongs Might and Majesty says: "And it behooves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter."2

And He says:

" What ails you then, how you judge? Or have you a Book wherein you study? Surely therein you shall have whatever you choose! Or have you oaths from Us, reaching to the Day of Resurrection? Surely you shall have whatever you judge! Ask them, which of them will guarantee that! Or do they have associates? Then let them bring their associates, if they speak truly ""

Yet in another verse, the Almighty and Exalted God says: "What, do they not ponder the Quran? Or is it that there are locks upon their hearts?4 or" Allah has set a seal upon their hearts, so they understand not." or " And be not like those who said. We hear, and they hear not. Surely the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are those that are deaf and dumb and do not

understand. If Allah had known of any good in them He would have made them hear and if He had made them hear, they would have turned away, swerving aside."2 or "They said: We have heard and we disobey. Rather, that is the Grace of Allah. He grants it to whomsoever He wishes and Allah is the Owner of Grace. So how can they have (the right) to choose an Imam? Since, the Imam is a man of knowledge in whom ignorance cannot penetrate, a shepherd who does not shirk (his duty), a mine of sanctity and purity, of piety and renunciation, of knowledge and worship. He is the one specifically mentioned in the supplication of the Messenger (S.A.W.A), and he is of the seed of the purified one, the chaste al-Batul, Fatemah (A.S.)]. Aspersion cannot be cast on him in relation to his parentage, no one can approach him in honourability, Verily, Allah accommodates the Prophets and the Imams, may Allah bless them; He bestows to them of His stored Knowledge and Wisdom, which He does not give to anyone else. Thus their knowledge is far above the knowledge of the people of their time, as He, the Sublime says: "Is He who guides to the truth, the worthier to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then ails you, how you Judge? In another verse. Almighty Allah says: "And who so is given the wisdom, has been given much good; 12

About Thalut (Saul), He says: Verily, Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him broadly in knowledge and body. Allah gives the kingship to whom He wills. And Allah is All-embracing, All-knowing; '1'

In His address to the Prophet, He says: " Allah has sent down on thee the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught thee that thou knowest not: Allah's bounty to thee is very great."4

About the Imams from His Pophefs Ahlu'1-bayt and progeny. He says: "Or are they jealous of the people for the bounty that Allah has given them? Yet We gave the progeny of Abraham the Book and the Wisdom, and We gave them a mighty kingdom. And some of them (i. e. those that were Jealous) there are that believe, and some of them that bar from it, Gehenna suffices for a Blaze!"

Verily, when Allah, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, selects a slave for the affairs of His creatures He expands his breast for it. He deposits in his heart the fountains of wisdom and profoundly inspires him with knowledge. So after this, he does not stammer in answers and he does not deviate from the truth. Thus, he is immaculate, supported (by Allah), he is accommodated (to the right path), his steps being firmly guided, he will be safe from errors, slips and stumbling. Allah distinguishes him by this, because he is His Proof over his slaves, and His witness over His creatures. That is the bounty of Allah, He gives it to whom He will, and Allah is of bounty abounding. So, do they have the power to do the like of this, so that they can choose him? Or can the one of their choice possess this

attribution so that they may prefer him? By "the House of Allah, they have transgressed against the truth, they have rejected the Book of Allah behind their backs as though they did not know, and in the Book of Allah there is guidance and cure. So they have rejected it, and they have followed their own desires. Thus, Allah has found fault with them, detested them and casted them down, as He, to Whom belongs Majesty and Sublimeness, has said: tt And who is further astray then he who follows his own caprice without guidance from Allah? Surely, Allah guides not the people of the evil-doers;" And He has said: tt And (as for) those who disbelieve, for them is destruction, and He has made their deeds ineffective; '2 And He has said: greatly hated it is by Allah and by those who believe. Thus does Allah set a seal over the heart of every proud, haughty one.'" And may Allah bless the Prophet, Muhammad and his progeny, and bestow peace upon them with much bestowing."2

Peace be upon Mahdi (a.j), the one regarding whom Allah has promised the people.

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