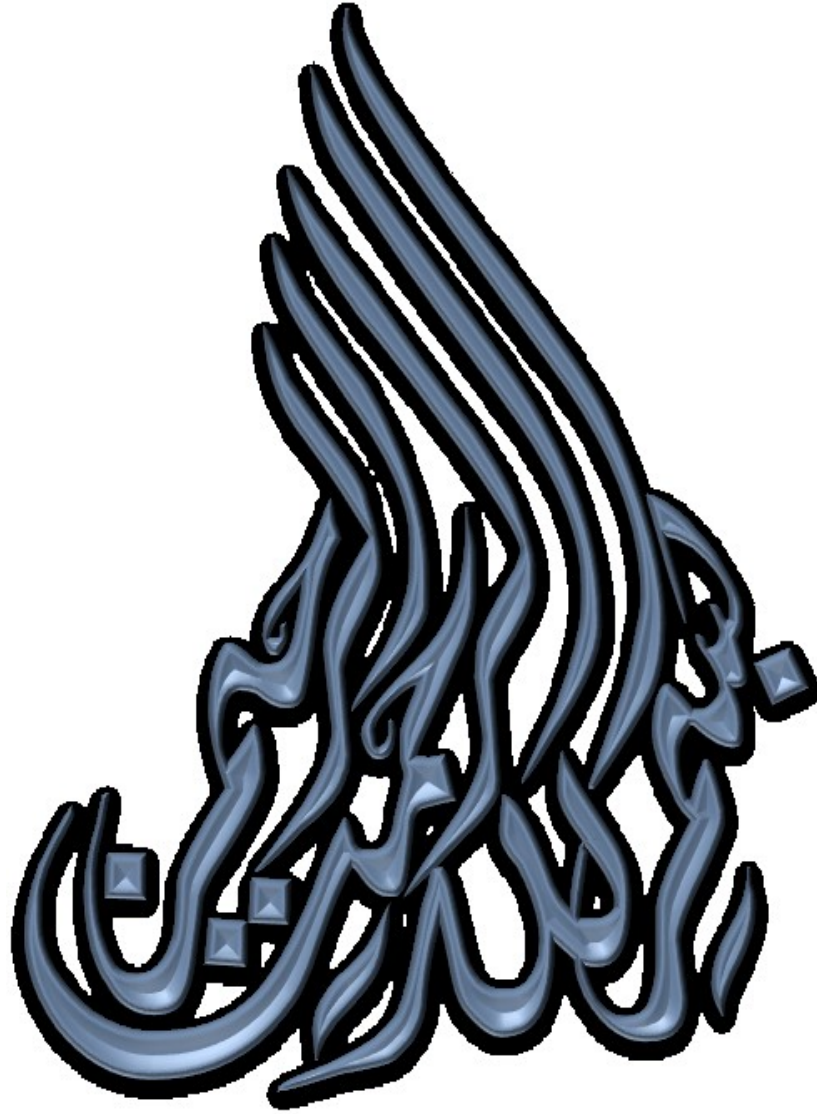


IMAMMATE



GRAND AYATOLLAH HOSSEINI NASSAB



In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

The necessity of the Imamate

The learned of both Islamic sects have presented various reasons, extracted from the holy Quran and the Prophet's traditions, on the exigency of the leadership and the management of the society affairs.

For instance, in his book 'Ahkam Soltanieh', **Abul Hassan Mavardi** writes:

الامامة موضوعة لخلافه النبوة في حراسة الدين و سياسة الدنيا، و
عقدها لمن يقوم بها في الامة واجبٌ بالاجماع⁴

(The Imamate and government have been appointed as substitutes for the prophethood in

4- Ibid, Section 1, P.5, 1st edition, Egypt

order to safeguard the religion, politics, and the management of the worldly affairs, and the establishment of the government for those who administer it is obligatory through the Muslims' consensus of opinions.)

To Justify this fact, this Islamic scholar, who is a well-known Sunnite scholar, takes a stand on two reasons:

1- Logical reason

2- Legal reason

With regard to the logical reason, he writes:

لما في طباع العقلاء، من التسليم لزعيم يمنعهم من التظالم، و يفصل بينهم في التنازع و التخاصم، ولولا الولاية لكانوا فوضي مهملين و

همجا مضاعين⁵

5- Ibid.

(To follow the leader is in the nature of the wise men, because it can prevent them from oppressing one another and settle the disputes among them. If there was no leader, the people would be disunited and would lose their competence.)

And regarding the legal reason, he cites:

ولكن جاء الشرع بتفويض الامور الي وليه في الدين ، قال الله عزوجل : يا ايها الذين آمنوا اطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرسول و اولي الامر منكم. ففرض علينا طاعة اولي الامر فينا و هم الائمة المتامرون علينا⁶

(The legal reason for entrusting the affairs to the guardians in religion is what Allah, the Almighty, asserts: “O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey

6- Ibid.

the Prophet and the guardians”. Therefore, Allah has made the obedience from the guardians mandatory and has assigned them as our leaders.)

“Sheikh Saduq” narrated a lengthy tradition from Fazl Ibn Shazan as he narrated it from Imam Ali Ibn Musa Al-Reza (a.s), in which the exigency of establishing government is discussed.

This is an excerpt:

انا لا نجد فرقة من الفرق و لاملة من الملل بقوا و عاشوا الا بقيم و
رئيس لما لابد لهم منه من امر الدين و الدنيا فلم يجز في حكمة
الحكيم ان يترك الخلق لما يعلم انه لابد لهم منه و لا قوام لهم الا به
فيقاتلون به عدوهم و يقسمون به فيئهم و يقيمون به جمعهم و
جماعتهم و يمنع ظالمهم من مظلومهم⁷

7- Elalul-Sharae', section 182, hadith no. 9,p. 253

(We never find a group or nation that can live on with no ruler; a ruler who can provide the worldly and religious affairs of the people. Therefore, it is far from the Divine wisdom to deprive the people from what they really need and cannot stand on their feet without them. The People fight their enemies at the behest of their ruler and divide the war spoils according to his decree. They also hold the congregational and Friday prayers, and it is he, who administers justice in the society, of course.)

It is beyond the bounds of possibility to analyze the whole traditions and statements of the Islamic jurists in this brief, but when studying the Islamic jurisprudence comprehensively, it is

clarified that the greater volume of the Islamic jurisprudence is not fulfilled without the establishment of a strong leadership.

Islam invites us to defense, administration of justice, the execution of legal law and Islamic jurisprudence, enjoining to good and forbidding from evil, the settlement of a codified financial system, and the protection of unity in the Islamic society, and, no doubt, the achievement of the stated goals without the enjoyment of a capable system and leadership sounds impossible; because the defense of the Islamic jurisprudence requires a strong system, and the establishment of the strong system necessitates the establishment of a powerful management based on the Islamic values.

Moreover, the execution of the Islamic law, which has been set for preventing the people from committing the sin and administrating the rights of the oppressed, etc. is not practical without the existence of an organized system and may result in chaos.

Although the reasons presented for the establishment of the government in Islam are not limited to what was stated here, it is concluded that the establishment of the Islamic administration based on the Islamic jurisprudent system is an exigency and the main duty of the Islamic communities throughout the world.

Imamate

according to Shiism

Belief in the principle of imamate is one of the foundations for Shia belief.

Definition of Shia

Shia in Arabic means “follower.” The Quran says:

«وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِأَبْرَاهِيمَ»

“And lo! Of his persuasion verily was Abraham” (Q 37:83)

However, in Islamic terminology Shia refers to the group of Muslims that believe that before his passing away, the Prophet Muhammad appointed a successor and caliph for the Muslims on many occasions during his life, including on the 18th of the Dhu al-Hajja month of the 10th Hijri year on the famous day of “Ghadeer” to a great assembly where he appointed Ali as his political, scholarly, and religious successor of the Muslim community.

After the Prophet Muhammad’s death, the Muhajir and Ansar broke into two groups:

- 1) A group believed that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not disregard caliphate, and had indeed appointed his successor who was

Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first person that had believed in the Prophet Muhammad.

This group was called the Shia of Ali and it consisted of both the Muhajirs and Ansar, including people of the Bani Hashim and some of the great companions of the Prophet, namely Salman, Abu Zar, Miqdad, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, and others.

Moreover, the Prophet had named this group of the followers of Ali as the Shia while he was alive. The Prophet said:

«والَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، إِنَّ هَذَا وَشِيعَتَهُ لَهُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ».

(جلال الدين سيوطي، در المنثور، ج 6).

“I swear to the One Who has my life in his hand, He (Ali) and his followers are the prosperous ones on the Day of Resurrection.” (Jalal al-Din al-

Suyuti, *Durr al-manthur*, Vol. 6, in his interpretation of the verse, “(And) lo! Those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings.” (Q 98:7))

Therefore, Shia is defined as the group of early Muslims who because of belief in following the Prophet’s designation of *wilaya*, were named as such. Ever since, this group has remained faithful to the line of *wilaya* and following the *ahl al-bayt*. The position of Shia comes from such a defined path. Therefore, the ignorant forgers who claim that Shia was born in later times are deemed baseless. To study the history of Shia further, refer to *Asl al-Shia wa usuluha*, *al-Muraja’at*, and *A’yan al-Shia*.

2) The other group believed that the caliphate is elected; therefore, they pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr and were later called the Sunnis.

Hence, it becomes clear that these two Islamic sects, despite their many common principles, disagree on the issue of caliphate and succession of the Prophet Muhammad.

The core of both sects consist in their early stages were the Muhajirs and the Ansars.

The Qualities of the Imam

From the Shia perspective, the Imam and successor of the Prophet should have the following qualities:

- 1) Infallibility
- 2) Being appointed by the Prophet in his speech
- 3) Being the most knowledgeable of his time

The reason for the infallibility of the Imam is the same as we described in chapter three with regards to the infallibility of the prophets.

With regards to the Imam being appointed through the Prophet's speech, no one but God and the Prophet knows of the position of infallibility; therefore, no one can appoint the successor but the Prophet.

With regards to the quality of being the most knowledgeable of his time, the Imam is the successor of the Prophet at any era, and he is the leader of the community in guidance towards salvation and happiness. Therefore, he must be more knowledgeable than anyone in the religion of Islam and the path to happiness and perfection.

Thus, the Shia believes in the imamate and caliphate of the Imams based on the above mentioned qualities.

To prove the imamate of those great leaders and successors of the Prophet, let us examine the following:

The Proof for the Imamate of Imam Ali

As we discussed above, the Shia believe that the Imam was appointed directly through the Prophet's speech. The biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) shows this principle because he spoke of Ali as his caliph on numerous occasions, three of which we shall mention here:

1) At the beginning of his prophethood, when the Prophet was given the divine mission to call his relatives to Islam:

«وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ»

“And warn thy tribe of near kindred” (Q 26:214)

On this occasion, the Prophet said: “Whoever helps me in this path, he is my successor, vizier, and inheritor.” He said the following:

«فَأَيُّكُمْ يُوَاظِرُنِي فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ أَخِي وَوَزِيرِي وَخَلِيفَتِي وَوَصِيِّي فِيكُمْ».

“Which one of you will help me in this matter so that he be my brother, vizier, inheritor, and successor among you?”

The only person who responded positively to this divine calling was Ali ibn Abi Talib. At that time, the Prophet told his relatives:

«إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي وَوَصِيِّي وَخَلِيفَتِي فَيَكْم فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَ أَطِيعُوهُ».

(تاريخ طبري، ج 2، ص 62 - 63. و تاريخ كامل، ج 2، ص 40 -

41. و مسند احمد، ج 1، ص 111 و شرح نهج البلاغه (ابن ابي

الحديد)، ج 13، ص 210 - 212).

“He (Ali) is my brother, inheritor, and successor among you. Listen to him and obey him.”

(*Tarikh Tabari*, Vol. 2, pp. 62-23. *Tarikh kamil*,

Vol. 2, pp. 40-41. *Musnad Ahmad*, Vol. 1, p. 111,

Sharh nahj al-balagha (Ibn Abi al-Hadid), Vol. 13,

pp. 210-212)

2) In the Expedition to Tabouk, the Prophet (PBUH) said to Ali:

«أما ترضى أن تكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه

لأنبيى بعدي» (سيره ابن هشام، ج 2، ص 520. و «الصواعق

المحرقة» (ابن حجر)، طبع دوّم در مصر، باب 9، فصل 2، ص
 .(121)

“Do you not feel happy to be to me as Aaron was to Moses, other than there was no prophet after Moses?” (*Sirah ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 520. *Al-sawa‘iq al-muhriqah* (Ibn Hajar), 2nd ed., Egypt, chapter 9, section 2, p. 121)

This means that you will be my caliph and successor like Aaron was the direct inheritor and successor to Moses.

3) On the tenth year of the Hijri calendar, the Prophet (PBUH) when returning from his final pilgrimage of Hajj, introduced Ali to a great number of his followers and believers in a location called Ghadir Khum. He said:

«مَنْ كُنْتُ مُؤَلَّاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مُؤَلَّاهُ».

“Whoever I am his master (*mawla*), from now Ali is his master (*mawla*).”

It is noteworthy that in the beginning of his speech, the Prophet said “Am I not prior to you than yourselves?” The Muslims all acknowledged yes. Therefore, we should state that what the Prophet meant by the word *mawla* was the position of being prior to the Muslims, and their leader and the absolute authority.

We can also conclude that the same priority position that the Prophet had, was shown for Ali.

The Hadith of Ghadir is one of the valid hadiths that not only Shi'i scholars but approximately 360 Sunni scholars have also narrated it. The proof is linked to 110 of the companions, and 26 of the great Muslim scholars have written books on this hadith.

Abu Ja'far Tabari, the famous Muslim historian, has collected the documents and narrations of this hadith in a two volume book. Refer to the book, *al-Ghadir* for more details (also see *al-Sawa'iq al-muhriqa* (Ibn Hajar), 2nd ed., Egypt, chapter 9, section 2, p. 122).

In addition to these valid narrations, some verses of the Quran also show this truth. Here we shall review the following example:

«إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ
يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ»

“Your guardian can be only Allah; and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor due, and bow down (in prayer)” (Q 5:55)

Narrations from Sunni *Sahih* and *Musnad* books explain that this verse was revealed in honour of Imam Ali, when he donated his ring while he was in bowing down in prayer. We shall only mention a few of the documents of this narration below:

- 1) *Tafsir Tabari*, Vol. 6, p. 186.
- 2) *Ahkam al-Qur'an (Tafsir al-Jussas)*, Vol. 2, p. 542.

3) *Tafsir Baydawi*, Vol. 1, p. 345.

4) *al-Durr al-manthur*, Vol. 2, p. 293.

When this verse was revealed for Ali, Hassan ibn Thabit wrote the following poem in honour of the occasion:

فَأَنْتَ الَّذِي أُعْطِيتَ إِذْ أَنْتَ رَاكِعٌ

فَدَتْكَ نَفُوسُ الْقَوْمِ يَا خَيْرَ رَاكِعٍ

فَأَنْزَلَ فِيكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرَ وِلَايَةٍ

وَبَيْنَهَا فِي مُحْكَمَاتِ الشَّرَايِعِ

*“You are the one who gave while bowing
down*

*May our souls be sacrificed for you, oh the
best of worshipers*

God sent the best of authority (wilaya) for you

*And He placed it among the unswerving
sharia”*

The Twelve Imams

The Prophet of Islam declared during his life:
 After him there will be 12 successors, all of whom
 are from the Quraysh tribe; and the dignity of Islam
 will be from their caliphate.

Jabir ibn Samarah says:

«سمعت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) يقول لا يزال الاسلام عزيزاً
 إلى اثني عشر خليفة ثم قال كلمة لم اسمعها فقلت لأبي ما قال؟ فقال:
 كلهم من قريش». (صحيح مسلم، ج 6، ص 2، ط مصر).

“I heard from the Prophet (PBUH) that said:
 Islam will be keep its dignity with 12 caliphs. Then
 he said something that I did not hear. I asked my

father there, and he said all [12] are from Quraysh.”

(*Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 6, p. 2 t, Egypt)

In the history of Islam, one cannot find 12 caliphs who were protectors of the Islam's dignity but the 12 Imams of Shia. Each one of the successors is subsequently introduced after the previous successor.

Now we can ask who these 12 individuals are? If we name the first four Caliphs, also known to the Sunnis as the *rashidun caliphs*, we cannot count the rest of the Caliphs as a source dignity for Islam. The history of the Umayyads and Abbasids is the witness to this fact. However, the 12 Imams of Shia, all of whom were manifestations of piety and

righteousness, are the protectors of the Prophet's tradition. The companions of the Prophet, the following generations, and historians bear witness to the 12 Imams' knowledge and credibility. These 12 Imams are:

- 1) Ali ibn Abi Talib
- 2) Hassan ibn Ali (Mujtaba)
- 3) Hussein ibn Ali
- 4) Ali ibn Hussein (Zayn al-Abedin)
- 5) Muhammad ibn Ali (Baqir)
- 6) Jafar ibn Muhammad (Sadiq)
- 7) Musa ibn Jafar (Kazim)
- 8) Ali ibn Musa (Rida)

9) Muhammad ibn Ali (Taqi)

10) Ali ibn Muhammad (Naqi)

11) Hassan ibn Ali (Askari)

12) Imam Mahdi (Qa'im)

To see the biography of these great Imams, whose names have been mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad, refer to the following books:

1) *Tadhkira al-khawas*

2) *Kifaya al-athar*

3) *Wafiyat al-a'yan*

4) *A'yan al-shi'a*

The Reason for the Infallibility

There are numerous reasons for the infallibility of the Imams. We shall mention only one as an example:

According to both Shia and Sunni scholars, the Prophet (PBUH) said the following in his last days:

«إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله و أهل بيتي و أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علىّ الحوض». (مستدرک حاکم، جزء سوم، ص 148. الصواعق المحرقة، باب 11، فصل اوّل، صفحہ 149. «کنز العمال»، جزء اوّل، باب الاعتصام بالکتاب و السنّه، ص 44. در مسند احمد، جزء پنجم، صفحہ 182 و 189).

“I have left two weighty things among you: the Book of God and my household (*ahl al-bayt*). The two will never separate from each other until

they come to me (on the day of Judgment) at the pool of Kawthar.” (*Mustadrak hakim*, Vol. 3, p. 148. *Al-Sawa‘iq al-muhriqa*, chapter 11, section 1, p. 149. *Kanz al-ummal*, Vol. 1, p. 44. *Musnad Ahmad*, Vol. 5, p. 182, 189)

While the Quran undoubtedly lacks any mistake or deviation, how can its delivery through the Prophet and divine revelation contain a mistake? Both the revelation and the Prophet, just like the Quran, are immune to any mistakes. Moreover, when the Quran is infallible, the *ahl al-bayt*, as the leaders of the community, are also infallible because in the above hadith the *ahl al-bayt* are in the same line as the Quran.

There is no point if fallible individuals are in contiguity with the Quran. The clearest proof for the infallibility of the Imams is the Prophet's expression from above:

«لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْخَوْضَ»

“The two will never separate (in guidance) from each other until they come to me (on the day of Judgment) at the pool of Kawthar.”

If the *ahl al-bayt* are not immune to mistakes and occasionally commit mistakes, they will separate from the Quran which is infallible. Therefore, the hadith shows that the Prophet denies the fallibility of the *ahl al-bayt*.

The meaning of *ahl al-bayt* as household does not refer to all those related to the Prophet because some may mistake.

Hence, only a special group from the Prophet's progeny had such a honourable position. And, they are the Imams from the *ahl al-bayt*, who have shown throughout history that they are the protectors of the religion and the Prophet's tradition.

Imam Mahdi

One of the common issues of the heavenly religions is the “global peacemaker” who will appear on the apocalypse. Not only the Muslim community, but also the Jewish and Christian communities are awaiting the arrival of this just leader. This matter is clear in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

On this matter the Prophet Muhammad says the following:

«لو لم يبق من الدهر إلا يوم لبعث الله رجلاً من أهل بيتي يملأها عدلاً كما ملئت جوراً».

(صحيح ابى داوود، طبع مصر، المطبعة التازيية، ج 2، ص 207 و
 ينابيع المودّة، ص 432 و نورالابصار، باب 2، ص 154).

“If there remains only one day to the end of the world, God will indeed call on a man from my progeny to fill the world with justice as it was filled with oppression” (*Sahih Abi Dawood*, ed. Egypt, al-Matba‘a al-taziyya, Vol. 2, p. 207. *Yanabi‘ al-mawadda*, p. 432. *Nur al-absar*, chapter 2, p. 154)

Therefore, as it has been shown, the belief in this just peacemaker is common among the followers of the heavenly religions. Moreover, there are many hadiths about Mahdi in Sunni hadith literature. Both Shia and Sunni theologians and researchers have written books on the Mahdi, such as *Kitab al-bayan fi akhbar Sahib Zaman* by

Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn al-Kanji Shafi'i, *Kitab al-burhan fi 'alamat Mahdi akhir zaman* by Ali ibn Hossam al-Din know as Muttaqi Hindi, and *Kitab al-mahdi wa al-mahdawiyya* by Ahmad Amin Misri.

On the other hand, Shia scholars have written numerous works on the subject, for example *al-Malahim wa al-fitan*.

These narrations designate certain qualities of the Mahdi, as they apply to the direct descendent of Imam Hassan Askari who was the 11th Shia Imam (*Yanabi' al-mawadda*, B 76, *Manaqib* by Jabir ibn Abdallah Ansari).

According to this narration, the Mahdi has the same name as the Prophet Muhammad (*Sahih Tirmidhi*, ed. Dehli, 1342, Vol. 2, p. 46. *Musnad Ahmad*, ed. Egypt, 1313, Vol. 1, p. 376).

And he is the 12th leader (*Yanabi' al-mawadda*, p. 443). He is from the progeny of Imam Hussein ibn Ali (*Yanabi' al-mawadda*, p. 432).

Mahdi was born in 255 Hijri and has ever since lived like the other people in this world. It is noteworthy that such a long lifespan is not incompatible with science nor the logic of revelation. The scientific world is now in search of a way to extend the human lifespan and believes that human beings can live much longer lives.

History has also named those who have lived long lives:

The Quran says about Prophet Noah:

«فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا»

“And he continued with them for a thousand years save fifty years” (Q 29:14)

The Holy Quran says about Prophet Jonah:

«فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ»

“And had he not been one of those who glorify (Allah) [143] He would have tarried in its belly till the day when they are raised” (Q 37:143-144)

Also, Prophet Khidr and Prophet Jesus are still
alive according to the Holy Quran.
