

Effect of Husayn's Martyrdom on the Principle of Caliphate

In the past nations the appointment of the prophet's caliph depended on divine will conveyed through divine text. At least this is what is proved from the stories and incidents of the Qur'an and other ancient books. Basically the same method should have been applicable for this nation also.

...the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation... 1

And it is a fact. Thus the announcement:

Allah creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter...2

It limits the responsibilities of creation and selection to the Being of the Almighty. And as for the firm text:

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; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle, he surely strays off a manifest straying.3

It does not even permit the intellectuals to say anything about caliphate.

On the basis of this alone the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) in Ghadeer Khumm acting upon the command of:

O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord...4

Appointed Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) as his successor before thousands of people. And the unambiguous statement of: 'Of whomsoever I am the master, this 'Ali is also his master' did not have any scope for doubt and uncertainty. Even those who had some ulterior plans for the future were compelled to say: "Congratulations to you, O 'Ali, today you have become my master and the master of all the believing men and women."

However, this expression of faith and confession during the lifetime of the Prophet very soon after his departure from the world was sacrificed at the altar of selfish motives. The time arrived to snatch the

reins of power from the hands of the legatees of the Prophet so that their evil wishes may be fulfilled. On the other hand 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) was busy in the funeral arrangements while some people with vested interests assembled in Saqifah Bani Sa'dah to fight over the caliphate. After numerous bitter arguments and fights, the high handedness of Umar at last placed the crown of caliphate on the head of Abu Bakr. And in this way, in place of the ancient principle of "divine appointment" the self-made principle of "consensus" was forced upon the community.

Now the time of Abu Bakr's demise approached. In consonance with the principle of:

Is the reward of goodness aught but goodness?⁵

Abu Bakr wanted to see Umar occupying his place after him. But...someone should not consider "divine appointment" and "testament of the previous caliph" as synonymous. Because the one who becomes a caliph on the basis of the testament of the previous caliph, his caliphate depends only on this testament. The previous caliph only by his command compels the community to submit before the caliph of his choice and in this way all the responsibility of appointing the caliph and all the choice come together in the being of the former caliph. God and His Prophet have no connection with it. On the contrary, even though the revealing of "divine appointment" is based on the statement of the Prophet or the previous Imam, the actual choices of appointment and actual responsibilities are confined to the Being of the Almighty, and the Prophet or the previous Imam is only having a position of mouthpiece or informant in this matter and this difference is sufficient for the superiority of these two.

*The circumstances were such that nothing could be done about it.*⁶

The problem was that due to the negative reputation of Umar it was very unlikely that the method of "consensus" would help him in obtaining caliphate. Therefore, after two years and some months, ignoring the same principle of "consensus", the former caliph appointed Umar as his successor through bequest.

And now it began to be said that along with consensus, the testament of the previous caliph is also an acceptable and valid method of caliphate.

In any case, some time passed in this way. Until the time Umar was wounded and felt his death approaching fast. Like before, this time too the staging of consensus was not risk-free. Umar's statement that: 'Now, the allegiance of Abu Bakr was an accident and Allah saved the people from its mischief,' conveys this same precaution. It should not happen that the claimant appointed by the Prophet should succeed. There were other contingencies also that only Umar understood, that he did not want to himself make a bequest for anyone in particular. That is why, "This time the caliphate took up a new form and a committee of six persons was formed. Though apparently 'Ali was also included in it, the rulers were such that only the one who was having the same opinions as Umar, had any chance to succeed."

This incident on one hand bestowed caliphate to Uthman and on the other provided the community with yet another principle of caliphal appointment. Now along with consensus and testament, the 'Shura' also became a valid method of appointing a caliph.

Since at the end of the third period, the Islamic community has thrown aside from its neck every illegal compulsion and influence and the slain caliph had not been able to make arrangement for the next caliph after him according to his wishes, all the Muslims unanimously submitted to the original caliph selected by the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w). However, in this long period, moods had changed and a caliphate based on justice and truth was problematic to people inclined towards falsehood, therefore, first of all Talha and Zubair instigated Ayesha to participate in the Battle of Jamal so that this caliphate may be exterminated. After that Muawiyah began to enact bloody dramas on the plains of Siffeen.

Those who considered Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) as the Prophet's successor according to "divine appointment", for them everyone who forsook the legitimate caliph deserved the death penalty. But those who considered consensus as the basis of this caliphate, for them these battles were very patience-testing. Because it was harming their self-conceited beliefs of "all companions are just" and "My companions are like stars, you follow anyone and you shall achieve guidance." Therefore in order to give legitimacy to this method, a supposed prophetic tradition was obtained that: "If allegiance is given to two claimants of caliphate at the same time, then war must be waged against the one whose allegiance is later."⁷

Note this! Those battles provided yet another criterion of caliphate.

After the martyrdom of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), Imam Hasan (a.s) reached the position of Imamate according to "divine appointment." The intrigues of Muawiyah compelled the military officials of Imam Hasan (a.s) to act as his agents and Imam Hasan (a.s) could not have any choice but sign the treaty with Muawiyah and abdicate. According to the rule of: "whatever happened is appropriate and legal", Muawiyah who had become eligible for death penalty due to the rule of: "When two persons reach caliphate...", now was the rightful caliph. In order to accord legitimacy to his caliphate, which was achieved through fraud and deceit, the fourth principle of "force and power" was added to the legal methods of attaining caliphate.

(2) The most significant aspect of the British Constitution is that there are many things in it such that no details are written about them. Whatever tradition has continued from the past governments has become a precedent for the future governments. So much so that there is no explanation even about the post of the Prime Minister and his duties and rights and the axis of the British kingdom rests only on tradition. That is why it is called the unwritten constitution and the scholars of civilization consider it a unique example of its kind. However, probably they do not know that 1300 years ago the Muslim majority also, in designing the principle of caliphate had presented such an example of not only "unwritten constitution", but also an unsettled constitution that its equal has not been seen yet.

After getting deviated from the straight path the further you go the further you shall become from destination. From 11 A.H. to 41 A.H. the Muslim majority continued to wander like the Bani Israel of the valley of Tiyah, and remained ignorant of the path of salvation. People of a discerning mind would have noted that the events did not conform to principles, rather the principles were made to conform to the events. In this brief time period, from testament to consensus and until force and power, no principle remained but that it was put into practice and taken advantage of depending upon the existing circumstances and contingencies. In the present laws of governance, I also do not know of any method, which is beyond those principles. Consequently, today every Muslim ruler is eligible to call himself “caliph of the Prophet” and no acceptable reason could be presented to expel him from this circle. The result of this all-embracing nature of the principle of caliphate was that Yazid also became the “caliph of the Muslims” and he, in fact, has conformed most to the principles of caliphate.⁸

Of the four elements of caliphate, Muawiyah, under the pretext of Hajj undertook a journey to Hijaz and he deceived the people there with his golden diplomacy to fulfill the condition of consensus. “Testament” was something that is for the time of death. That was also fulfilled at the deathbed. Also in a prolonged struggle Yazid achieved such power and force that the Islamic history fails to show anything equal to it.

In this connection, the following statements of Muawiyah are worth noting:

“O my son! I have made the stiff necks to humble for you. I have made the towns firm on your caliphate, and this kingdom and whatever it contains, is made into a tasty morsel for you.”⁹

In brief, it could be said that the child of Saqifah consensus was bred in the lap of “Shura” with the support of Muawiyah’s bequest and reached the highest stages of “force and domination.” And in this way his person was a synthesis of all the ‘principles of caliphate’.

(3) All the caliphs that preceded Yazid could fulfill only one of the principles of caliphate. Abu Bakr hid behind “consensus”, Umar was made the caliph by testament, Uthman reached the venerable position with the help of “Shura” (consultative committee) and Muawiyah obtained caliphate through force and domination.

If the appointed successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) had expressed his aloofness from these principles and in order to prove their falsity taken practical steps and armed struggle against the above caliphs there would have been only two possibilities, martyrdom or victory. And both these would have created some very dangerous misunderstandings.

If Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) or Imam Hasan (a.s) had confronted a particular caliph and got themselves martyred, people would have thought that these gentlemen only considered that particular principle illegitimate, through which that person had become a caliph. And they would have considered other methods valid and correct. What else could be concluded from their silence in other methods and opposing one method?

Also if each of them had opposed one caliph and as a result laid down their lives to martyrdom, in addition to other drawbacks it would have given birth to the accusation that these people, generation after generation have made it a habit to rise up for rulership and their practical protest would have been labeled as “family tradition”, reducing its significance and, by giving it a political color, destroyed its religious and divine status.

And if in both cases, instead of martyrdom, they had achieved victory, and if these gentlemen had succeeded in taking over the administration and control of this apparent caliphate this would have been, in fact, the greatest failure because in that case the public would have considered their caliphate to be based on force and domination. They would have forgotten that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) has mentioned their “divine appointment.” They would have only considered the immediate cause. In this way, if a false principle was aimed to be destroyed, another one would have come into existence at their own hands and it would have been a great catastrophe.

That is why, in order to remove all misconceptions about their acceptance, they continued to protest verbally but they did not pay attention to any practical or military step in this regard.

The method of divine will towards falsehood is that no haste is exercised in taking revenge. Rather opportunities are created, respite is given, and restraint is exercised. Until the time falsehood reaches its pinnacle and a stage when there is no possibility of its return to truth. At that time it is given such a kick that all its foundations are demolished and it is made a lesson for all those who seek it:

And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement. 10

The hidden wisdom is that, falsehood in its initial stages, resembles truth in such a way that a cursory glance cannot distinguish between the two. “Doubt is named doubt because it resembles truth.”¹¹ And during this period its uprooting will not create any beneficial results. Therefore, Providence waits for a time when falsehood reaches such a high stage that it seems to be superior to truth:

That Allah might separate the impure from the good, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell...¹²

According to:

And you do not please except that Allah please...¹³

The caliphs appointed by the Messenger also followed this method. Abu Bakr and Umar etc. used to call themselves followers of Islam and to some extent acted upon its apparent rituals. In that period, falsehood had not completely separated from truth and Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had to wait for that time when the deep veil is removed from the face of falsehood. Imam Hasan (a.s) also spent his life in truce, waiting for the same and Imam Husayn (a.s) also remained quiet for ten years due to the same reason.

Until the time after Muawiyah's death, when the seat of caliphate became soiled with the feet of Yazid. The time finally arrived for which the caliphs of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) had been waiting.

(4) If you glance at the battle of Karbala' from the angle of the principles of caliphate you will see that on one side is Yazid behind whose back is the ferocious wolf of "consensus", shielded by the excuse of "Shura", having the support of bequest and the facade of "force and domination."

On the other hand is Husayn (a.s) who is the claimant of Imamate but instead of being shielded by any self-concocted formula he has with him only the "appointment of the Messenger." His companions have the collar of his allegiance but this allegiance is not like the principles of 'consensus' based on the "previous allegiance" so that it be said that it was given after the allegiance of Yazid.

Now let us see the features of both the parties in the mirror of reality.

You will see that even though Husayn (a.s) was unarmed of all those supposed proofs, but according to the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) his reputed personality was deserving of honor and respect of all the Muslims without any exception. The verse of purification is witness on the purity of his actions.

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. 14

The verse of Malediction has certified that he is the son of the Messenger.

Come let us call our sons and your sons... 15

The verse of Devotion (Mawaddah) says that love and devotion towards him is obligatory on all.

Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives... 16

His expedients are expedients of the Messenger. "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn." He is a blossom (beloved) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w). "The two of them are blossoms." He is the leader of the youths of Paradise. "Hasan and Husayn are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise." And finally the following saying of the Prophet is a clear proof for his Imamate, "The two of them are Imams, be they sitting or standing." On the other hand Yazid, though he was a caliph of Muslims conforming to the laid down 'principles', his evil deeds were known to all. Among his black handiworks, apart from destroying the Prophet's family are numerous other deeds. Some of them are mentioned below for the readers: (1) He was a denier in the coming of angels and revelation. (2) He considered the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) as a pretext to obtaining temporal power and kingdom. (3) He imbibed wine openly. (4) He was an ardent fan of chess and music. (5) He loved dance and lute. (6) He committed incest. (7) He played with dogs and monkeys. (9) He dishonored the sanctified Mecca. (10) He showered the Holy Ka'ba with burning missiles and its curtain was burnt down and its building suffered serious damage. (11) He defiled the sanctity of the tomb of the Prophet. (12) He converted the Prophet's mosque into a

stable. (13) He martyred hundreds of companions. (14) After his forces attacked Medina, one thousand illegitimate children were born due to the rapes committed by them on Medinite ladies.

All the above atrocities are recorded in the pages of Islamic history.

Husayn (a.s), with his magnificent personality, arrayed himself to confront Yazid. By this step he removed the veils from the eyes of unaware Muslims. Though 'principles' demanded that Yazid should be accorded a greater status than the first three caliphs, the fact was that, leave alone calling him a caliph, it was hardly right to call him a human being.

There is a tradition of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) accepted as authentic by both the sects (Shia and Sunni) that:

“One who dies without recognizing the Imam of the time, dies the death of ignorance.” If Husayn (a.s) who confronted Yazid while claiming Imamate and even after being martyred not only became eligible for Paradise, but he himself is the Chief of the youths of Paradise, it clearly implied that Yazid was definitely not the Imam of his time. And since the claim of Imamate and caliphate was limited to Husayn and Yazid, its absence in Yazid necessarily proves the Imamate of Husayn (a.s).

But the problem is that this matter does not end here. The caliphate of Yazid, as I have mentioned time and again, was a collection of consensus, Shura, testament and force and domination. While Husayn (a.s) considered his Imamate to have divine sanction. Therefore the success of Husayn (a.s) could not be said to be the personal victory of Husayn (a.s) alone. In fact it was the victory of 'divine appointment'. Victory, against whom? Against 'consensus', against 'Shura', against 'nomination' and against 'force and domination'. On the day of Ashura the martyrdom of Husayn (a.s) by defeating all those false deities clarified the rightfulness of Qur'anic principle of 'divine appointment'.

The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing).¹⁷

The sycophants of Yazid's time were another matter, today all the Islamic world is unanimous that by his sacrifice, Husayn (a.s) made fresh blood to flow in the dead veins of Islam; although Yazid had, by his words and deeds, left no stone unturned to bury it alive. Today the word 'Yazid' is considered an abusive epithet and the name of Husayn (a.s) with all its magnificence has covered the whole humanity. And along with this, the world is also compelled to submit to the principles that were saved by the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s).

This essay is throughout 'scholastic'. Historical events are mentioned as backgrounds; therefore even the lengthiest narrations are condensed and presented in the briefest form. In this way the actual texts are disregarded. On the basis of historical popularity, most of the incidents are presented without providing references, however if anyone is interested he or she may refer to the books of history for complete details and they may also refer to the author's book, *Imamate*.

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1. Surah Rum 30:30
 2. Surah Aale Imran 3:47
 3. Surah Ahzab 33:36
 4. Surah Maidah 5:67
 5. Surah Rahman 55:60
 6. Urdu couplet
 7. Marratul Tahqeeq
 8. For details refer to books of Islamic History like, Tarikh Ibne Khaldun, Tarikh Asim Kufi and Tarikh Tabari etc.
 9. Amali, Saduq and all books of Islamic history
 10. Surah Aale Imran 3: 178
 11. Nahjul Balagha
 12. Surah Anfal 8:37
 13. Surah Insan 76:30
 14. Surah Ahzab 33:33
 15. Surah Aale Imran 3:61
 16. Surah Shura 42:23
 17. Surah Bani Israel 17:81

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