

## Theology - [al-m.ca/theology](http://al-m.ca/theology)

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Sharhu Babi 'l-Hādi 'Ashar

11 Jumadi II 1442 / 25 Jan 2021

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### Imamate (Al-Imāmah)

- Section VI of *Sharh Bābi 'l-Hādi 'Ashar* deals with al-Imāmah (الإمامة), the leadership [after the Prophet], vicegerency, succession.
- There five issues discussed under al-Imāmah:
  1. Definition of an Imām. ✓
  2. Infallibility of the Imām. ✓
  3. Appointment of the Imām.
  4. The Imām should be “*Afdhal*, the Best.”
  5. Who are the Imāms?

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### 4. Appointment of the Imām

- Since infallibility is necessary for the Imam, it is an issue which cannot be known except by Allah or His Messenger.
- Or he must be able to show a miracle which will be the proof of the truth of his claim of Imamate.
  - It means that the Imam must be appointed by Allah, not by the people.
- In essence, it is our belief that the Imam must be appointed by Allah and His Prophet, or by a previous Imam. This appointment is known as *nass* (النص). An Imam appointed in this way is known as *mansūs* (المنصوص).

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**4. Appointment of the Imām (2)**

- The Sunnis: Whenever people acknowledge a person as their leader and are convinced of his ability, and his power increases in the regions of Islam, he becomes the Imam.
- The Zaydiyyah: Any descendant of Fatima (a) who is an 'alim, righteous and raises his sword can be an Imam.
- This is unacceptable for two reasons:
  1. Imamate means representation of Allah and His Messenger, and this can't happen except by their words.
  2. Imamate based on bay'at of people would lead to chaos as each group will choose its own leader; similarly, when a Fatimide scholar claims imamate, it will also create conflict.

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**4. Appointment of the Imām (3)**

- Last week, we looked at the assessment of a Western scholar, Wilfred Madelung, that according to the Qur'an, the appointment of the successors of the prophets was never left to their ummah.
- This is what our theologians have been saying from the early days that the issue of Imāmate and Khilāfat is Allah's prerogative, and there is not a single incident in the history of religions in the Qur'an that any ummah had taken upon itself to appoint the successor of its prophet.

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**4. Appointment of the Imām (3)**

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- This is what our theologians have been saying from the early days that the issue of Imāmate and Khilāfat is Allah's prerogative, and there is not a single incident in the history of religions in the Qur'an that any ummah had taken upon itself to appoint the successor of its prophet.
- See the slide of "Islamic Theology 11 (1 Feb 2016)"

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Extra Notes on this theme:

**Is there precedence in past revealed religions?**

- Prof. W. Madelung looks at past prophets in the Qur'an: 3:33-34, 19:58, 6:84-89. Nuh, Lut, Abraham + his du'a for his descendants + Musa's du'a.
- "The eminent position of the families & the descendants of the past prophets and the parallelism often observed between the history of the former prophets in the Qu'an and that of Muhammad must raise expectations of a distinguished place reserved for his family." (p. 12)

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- Prof. W. Madelung, after looking at various verses about the Prophet's family and the special laws regarding them (e.g. in khums and sadaqat), he concludes:

- "The Qur'an thus accorded the *ahl al-bayt* of Muhammad an elevated position above the rest of the faithful, similar to the position of the families of the earlier prophets. God desired to purify them from all defilement." p. 16

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- "Insofar as the Qur'an expresses the thoughts of Muhammad, it is evident that he could not have considered Abu Bakr his natural successor or have been pleased by his succession.
- "The Qur'an certainly does not fully reflect Muhammad's views about the men and women surrounding him and his attitude towards them. Yet he could not have seen his succession essentially other than in the light of the narrations of the Qur'an about the succession of the earlier prophets, just as he saw his own mission as a prophet, the resistance of his people with which he met, and his ultimate success by divine grace in the light of the experience of the former prophets as related in the Qur'an.
- "These earlier prophets considered it a supreme divine favour to be succeeded by their offspring or close kin for which they implored their Lord." p. 16-17

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **The precedence of Qur’anic history leads Prof. W. Madelung to believe in Divine choice of a successor from the Prophet’s own family.**
- **Sunnis reject this precedence by saying that the Prophet was the Last one and, therefore, was not to be succeeded by any of his family according to God’s plan. And so he did not appoint a successor, since he wished to leave the succession to be settled by the Muslims on basis of Qur’anic principle of consultation (shura). P. 17**

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **Prof. W. Madelung’s response:**
- **“The argument rests, however, on a fancifully wide interpretation of the term ‘Seal of the Prophets’. For even if its meaning in the Qur’an is accepted to be the ‘last of the prophets’,...there is no reason why it should imply that Muhammad as the spiritual and worldly leader of the Muslim Community, aside from his prophethood, should not be succeeded by his family.**
- **“In the Qur’an, the descendants and close kin of the prophets are their heirs also in respect to kingship (*mulk*), rule (*hukm*), wisdom (*hikma*), the book and the imamate.”**

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **Prof. W. Madelung continues:**
- **“The Sunnite concept of the true caliphate itself defines it as a succession of the Prophet in every respect except his prophethood. Why should Muhammad not be succeeded in it by any of his family like the earlier prophets? If God really wanted to indicate that he should not be succeeded by any of them, why did He not let his grandsons & other kin die like his sons? “There is thus good reason to doubt that Muhammad failed to appoint a successor because he realized that the divine design excluded hereditary succession of his family and that he wanted the Muslims to choose their head by shura. “The Qur’an advises the faithful to settle some matters by consultation, but not the succession to prophets. That, according to the Qur’an, is settled by divine election, and God usually chooses their successors, whether they become prophets or not, from their own kin.”**

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **What happened in Saqifa was in no way *shura'*– consultation:**

1<sup>st</sup> Not even all the Muslims of Medina knew what was happening.

2<sup>nd</sup> Even prospective candidates were unaware of what was happening at Saqifa.

3<sup>rd</sup> It was not even a selection by the elders since many 'elders' ('Ali, 'Abbas, 'Uthman, Talha, Zubayr, Salman, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar, etc) were never consulted or informed.

فإن كنت بالشورى ملكت أمورهم فكيف بهذا والمشرون غيب  
و إن كنت بالقرى حصمت خصيمهم فغرك أولى بالنبي و أقرب

For details, see: *Imamate: the Vicegerency of the Prophet* by SSA Rizvi

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **The Qur'an confirms Allah's prerogative...:**

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً  
(2:30)

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ آيَةً  
يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَ كَانُوا بآيَاتِنَا يُوَفِّتُونَ  
(32:24)

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا  
(2:124)

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ  
(38:26)

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Extra Notes on this theme:

- **Prophet Ibrahim's du'a & its implication:**

**Allah announced:**  
*"I indeed appoint you as Imam for the people."*  
 إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

**Ibrahim prayed:**  
*"And my descendants?"*  
 قَالَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي

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**5. The Imām Must be the Best of the People**

- The Imām must be *afdhal*, the best of the people. The same reasons given for the *afdhal* of the Prophet will apply here.

**6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Imām is 'Ali b. Abi Tālib**

- There are mutawātir nass from the Prophet on this.
- He is the *afdhal* of the ummah after the Prophet based on ayat of mubahala 3:54.
- Because the Imam must be ma'sum...
- He is the most learned: the saḥāba referred to him while he never referred to anyone. The Prophet (s), "The best judge among you is 'Ali."
- He is the most ascetic than anyone else...

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**6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Imām is 'Ali b. Abi Tālib (2)**

There are mutawātir nass from the Prophet on this.

- "سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ" – Greet him as the chief of believers."
- "أنت الخليفة من بعدي" – You are the successor after me."
- "أنت ولي كل مؤمن و مؤمنة بعدي" – You are the master of every believing man and woman after me."

'Ali is the *afdhal* of the ummah after the Prophet:

1. 'Ali is equal to the Prophet except in prophethood, based on the verse of mubahala: أنفسنا و أنفسكم – ourselves and yourselves. And this applies to 'Ali.
2. The Prophet needed 'Ali to be part of the du'a and no one else from the companions – so he is better than any of them.

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**6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Imām is 'Ali b. Abi Tālib (3)**

3. The Imam must be ma'sum.  
And no one from other claimants of khilafat (such as Abu Bakr) claimed to be ma'sum. But there must be a ma'sum Imām – and that ma'sum is 'Ali based on ayat of tathir.
4. 'Ali is the most learned among the ummah.
  - He was most the intelligent among them, and in the company of the Prophet more than anyone else.
  - The most learned among the saḥāba and their disciples referred to 'Ali and followed his verdicts.
  - All the masters of various sciences consider 'Ali as their master and leader:

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**6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Imām is 'Ali b. Abi Tālib (5)**

- Tafsir: ... 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas → Imam 'Ali.
- Theology:
  - Mu'tazilah: Abu 'Ali al-Juba'i → Abu Hashim bin Muhammad Hanafiyya → Imam 'Ali.
  - Ashā'irah: Abu Hasan Ash'ari → Abu 'Al al-Juba'i... Imam 'Ali.
  - Shi'as: it is obvious. = Nahjul Balagha is sufficient...
- Jurisprudence (fiqh): all the founders of the jurisprudential schools trace their masters back to Imam 'Ali...
- There are many proofs for all these to the extent that the author (Hilli) has written a book "كتاب الالفين - Two Thousand" referring to two thousand proofs for Imamate of Imam 'Ali.

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**6. The 1<sup>st</sup> Imām is 'Ali b. Abi Tālib (6)**

- 5:55  
 إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ  
 Your guardian is only Allāh, His Messenger and the believers who perform the prayer and pay the alms while bowing down *in prayer*
- Ghadir
- Hadith Manzilat
- 4:59  
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ  
 O you who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger and those who are vested with authority from among you (*ūlu 'l-amr*).

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