



REVEALING THE TRUTH

The Khalifatullah in Shia'a belief

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1. The Khalifatullah in Shia'a belief

"Does Man Think He is To Be Left Aimless" Quran, Surah 75, Verse 36

The Khalifatullah is Allah's representative on Earth. His existence is a consequence of the Mercy of Allah to mankind. It is a component of the Shia creed to believe in the Justice of Allah. Thus Allah acts with justice, and in this capacity He who is most Just and has commanded mankind to address Him as the Most Merciful has ordained that man will be guided by His rightful authority on Earth, the Khalifatullah appointed by Allah for else man would deviate from the right path. He who is most Beneficent states in Sura 75, verse 36:

"Does man think that he is to be left aimless."

The context of this ayat and its grammatical sense render the above translation as the most appropriate.

In man's examination in this world, and in his quest for seeking closeness to the Reality of Allah, it is the Khalifatullah who guides man to Allah. Though Allah is closer to his slave than his jugular vein and the relationship between Allah and his creations is also direct, the Khalifatullah can bring the slave closer to Allah and to the path ordained by Allah, both as a guide as well as an intercessor. The Khalifatullah thus represents Allah's authority on Earth and guides man to the straight path, the sirat al-mustaqim of Sura al Hamdh, the only Sura compulsorily recited in the obligatory prayer. He is the Imam, another word that also denotes a man of authority among men, a title that as used by the Shia incorporates the role of the Khalifatullah. This authority is comprehensive, for Allah has authority over all aspects of our lives. The existence of the Khalifatullah or the Imam is thus rational for those who believe that Allah is Just and is Merciful. His existence can be sensed from the intellectual reasoning of even those opposed to the Shia path and who do not believe that Allah appoints the Khalifa, Abul A'la Mawdoodi writing that **"Khalifa, vicegerent, is one who exercises the delegated powers on behalf of the supreme authority..."**

The doctrine of the Khalifatullah or the Imam may also be arrived at from a study of the Qur'an and the authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet (saws). These commands are very clear and the Ithna Ashari Shia, one of the major schools of Islam, are the only major school of thought in Islam to incorporate the doctrine of the Khalifatullah as one of its beliefs. It is a great shame that so many of our fellow muslims do not ponder over the implications of these very direct commands from Allah and His Prophet (saws) to mankind. Since the number of these commands are very many, not all can be quoted in this short discussion, and instead certain key commands shall be mentioned in order to show how throughout the history of mankind Allah has been Merciful and has blessed every living creation with the existence of His sign and the divinely appointed guide to the straight path, the Khalifatullah.

The Qur'an states very directly that the Khalifa is appointed by Allah and not by man, for Allah states Himself in Sura Noor, verse 55, that:

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly appoint them Khalifas as he appointed Khalifas those before him."

Many copies of the Qur'an compiled in English by translators who do not follow the Khalifas appointed by Allah will specifically use an alternative word to describe the word Khalifa in this context, when there is no grammatical justification for this, for the Arabic states Khalifa and this word is readily translated into English as khalifa or caliph, an English word.

Thus the enquirer should first read the original Arabic that Allah addresses mankind with when

He issues His binding commands in all such examples. Those who wish to detract from the concept that it is Allah who appoints the Khalifa, which is a concept of the Shia, may also say that the Khalifatullah here means all men.

However it refers to specific individuals, and not even to most of the friends of Allah as is then argued by some, for there are many such men who have not been specifically appointed to the position of authority that the Khalifa holds, for Allah in this ayat appoints certain men to the position of authority of the Khalifa of Allah.

Further, the ordinary friends of Allah have on the whole instead gained spiritual closeness to Allah by comprehending His Reality, with no authority or directive from Allah to command others, so it cannot be any but a very special group of men that is being referred to as the Khalifas appointed by Allah. Additionally, when Allah mentions examples of these Khalifatullahs in the Qur'an he refers by name to those individuals who the Shia hold to be Imams who preceded the Holy Prophet (saws), as we shall see.

Furthermore, Allah states in the above Sura that He will appoint those who have faith and do good deeds to the position of the Khalifatullah, the hallmark of faith being patience, as shall be proved later, and these virtues are exemplified by the Twelve Imams of the Shia to the extent that they alone fulfilled the requirements to be the Khalifas of Allah from all men of their age. This view is supported by Sura 32, Ayat 20:

"And We made of them Imams to guide Our command when they were patient, and they were certain of Our communications."

The role of the Khalifatullah is guidance to the sirat al mustaqim, and in every age, for every moment of time, there exists the divine guide, for Allah states in Sura 13, verse 7 that:

"And there is a guide for every people."

This guidance is different to Prophethood, for the Prophethood has ended, and the ayat specifies that the guide is living, guiding to the way of the Prophets, whereas with Prophethood Allah uses the past tense which is not the case with the guide, as in Sura 35, verse 24, where the Prophets are spoken of,

"There is not a nation but a warner has passed among them."

And Allah reinforces that every person will be gathered before his Imam in Sura Bani Israil, verse 71:

"Remember the Day when we will summon every people with their Imam."

The Imam is thus living, and the people of that time will be summoned before him in the hereafter. Since the death of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saws) there have been no prophets nor shall there be any. Yet Imamatus continues, as it has continued since Adam (as) the first Imam such that should there be left two men on Earth one would be the Imam, such is the powerful Justice and Mercy of Allah. At this point it is possible to become confused, so there is need for some clarification of what it is that we will speak of.

Imamat and Prophethood are 2 offices. Both can be held by the same individual. Mohammad (saws) was a Prophet and an Imam, for he combined the power of revelation linked to Prophethood with the attribute of authority over mankind as its guide linked, which was that aspect of his role that was closely linked to Imamatus. Indeed all of the handful of prophets who came with Books, the Rasools, who thus held authority over all mankind and not only a family, tribe or nation as many Prophets did, were also by definition Imams. Mohammad (saws) was in fact the Seal of Prophets, and also the greatest Imam. Thus when we speak of Twelve Imams it is out of regard for the Seal of Prophets (saws) that we speak of the Twelve Imams who

succeeded him as the Khalifatullahs, guiding to his purified and exalted way. The fact that Prophethood and Imamate are two different offices that can be merged into one shall be proved shortly with the example of Ibrahim Khalilullah (as).

The next question that must be asked is where the Khalifatullahs are found. Allah himself provides the answer most directly. Since Imamate is a consequence of Allah's Mercy and Justice, it is obvious that the first Khalifatullah would be the first man in material Creation, just as the last Khalifatullah would be the last man living in material Creation, which is also a belief of the Shia. Thus we read in Sura 2, verse 30, that after creating Adam (as), Allah told his angels

"Verily I intend to appoint a Khalifa in the earth."

It is the belief of the Shia, and one that is referred to in various Sunni accounts including the history of Masudi, that this authority over mankind as the Khalifa of Allah or the Imam passed in a specific lineage down through purified sons of Adam (as) beginning with Seth (as) to Noah (as).

There is not space in this discussion to list all these Imams, save those noted in the Qur'an by the title of Khalifa. From Noah (as), it passed through his descendants, the best in each age according to the criteria of Sura Noor, verse 55, being the Imam of that age or the Khalifatullah, thus reaching Ibrahim Khalilullah (as). These divine guides throughout all these ages illuminated the people of their time for Allah is Just and would not let his creation who was born innocent wander aimlessly, as is testified to by the Qur'anic verse quoted in the title of this article. Many of these Khalifatullahs were also wronged greatly by the people, an action that greatly angered Allah and for which Allah would punish them by removing the Imam from them and giving His favour to another people. And it is here, with Ibrahim Khalilullah (as) that a great juncture is arrived at in the history of the Khalifatullah.

In Sura Al Baqara, verse 124, Allah says that after He tested Ibrahim Khalilullah (as), ultimately with the offering of his own son Ishmael (as) as a sacrifice,

"I appoint you the Imam of mankind. Ibrahim requested that the leadership be inherited by his descendants. Allah replied, "I do not promise leadership to those (of them) who are arrogant, hardhearted, unjust and greedy."

Thus the Khalifatullah must be, as testified to in Sura Noor, 55, a man of faith and good actions, and not any from amongst the descendants of Ibrahim (as)'s 2 sons Ishmael (as) and Ishaq (as), only those who fulfilled these qualities.

In Sura Nahl, verses 120-121, Allah affirms the Imamate of Ibrahim Khalilullah again,

"Verily Ibrahim was an Imam... He (Allah) chose him and He guided him towards the right path."

And Allah states that He saved the offering of Ishmael (as), replacing him with an animal, for the greatest sacrifice, which was that of the greatest Imam, Mohammad (saws) in his giving his family, ultimately on the battlefield of Karbala.

Referring to one of the most powerful of the Khalifatullahs from the lineage of Ishaq (as), Allah states in Sura 38, verse 26,

"O Dawud, verily we have you a Khalifa in the Earth."

And with the great Khalifatullah Musa (as), also from the lineage of Ishaq (as), Allah states in Sura 7, verse 142,

"...and Musa said to his brother Haroon: take my place (as Khalifa - ukhlufni) among

the people."

But the Bani Israil, the lineage of Ibrahim (as) via Ishaq (as), despite many warnings from their Lord, swerved from the sirat al mustaqim despite the blessings of so many Imams among them. For example, no sooner had Musa (as) left his people than they started worshipping idols as they had done so before, and reverted to their former ways. Then after many Khalifatullahs Allah sent Isa Ibn Mariam (as), whose teachings were briefly maintained in a pure form by men such as his loyal disciple Simon (as) who was also his inheritor. Then when the people deviated from the sirat al mustaqim once again, after having received the blessing of Isa ibn Mariam (as), Allah withdrew his support of the Bani Israel and the Christians, and took the lineage of Imamah from them and gave it to the lineage from Ibrahim Khalilullah's son Ishmael, the father of the Arabs.

The Holy Prophet Mohammad (saws) was born from the lineage of Ishmael from pure ancestors. His father's name was Abdullah (as), meaning slave of Allah, and he was of the tribe of Hashim, who were noble people from the Quraysh. It was into this lineage that Allah affirmed the covenant of Imamah, though gave it to the good among them, as in Al Baqara, verse 124. It was here that the Holy Prophet (saws)'s noble uncle Abu Talib (as) had a son called Ali (as) who was, like his cousin Mohammad (saws), also of this lineage, and who would be the inheritor of the Holy Prophet (saws) and of the covenant of Imamah, which would fuse through the marriage of Ali (as) to Fatima (sa) the only daughter of Mohammad (saws) to produce a lineage of 12 Holy Imams with Ali (as) the first and the rest the descendants of the Holy Prophet (saws) and Imam Ali (as). The Shia are those who follow these Khalifas of Allah and are guided to the way of the Seal of Prophets through them.

As for the Imamah of the Holy Prophet (saws), it permeates the substance of the Qur'an. Specifically, in Sura al Ahzab, verse 6 it is stated

"The Prophet has authority (awla) over you more than your own selves."

And it is authority over men that is the role of the Khalifatullah, the Imam. It was only those Prophets who were also exalted to the level of Imamah that brought Books with authority over mankind and with messages that were not only for their own family, tribe or nation like the messages of many prophets, but came additionally with the authority of the Khalifatullah that made them the leaders of mankind with authority over mankind.

Those that came for the world were by definition Imams and the Khalifas of Allah. And they were all of this lineage. This is why the Qur'an speaks directly of the prophets of Banu Israel and not of those of China or India, for it was these prophets, many of them, that were also the Imams of their time and were thus of significance to humanity as a whole. Thus the Qur'an, which is a guidance to all mankind and has authority over all mankind, notes them.

Why Allah chose this lineage was because they produced men that were capable of fulfilling the requirements of the covenant of Imamah, faith and good actions. It is also seen that this lineage comes from the place from where all the races of mankind originated from - the Middle East - where lie buried so many of these Khalifas of Allah, from the first Adam (as) to Imam Hasan Al Askari (as), the Eleventh Imam of the Shia and the father of the present Imam (as).

And it was using the example of one of these prophets who was also an Imam that Mohammad (saws) said many times in his life, as recorded in the Sahih of Bukhari as the last Hadith listed under the section on the virtues of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (as),

"Ali is to me like Haroon was to Musa."

Haroon (as) was Musa (as)'s Brother (19:53), Vizier (20:29-36) and in his absence the Khalifa (7:142). And thus so was Ali (as).

It was on the day of Ghadhir, shortly before his own departure from this world, that the Holy Prophet drew on the words denoting his own authority as the Khalifa of Allah mentioned above in Sura Al Ahzab, verse 6, in the form of asking the believers "Do I have more right over the believers than they have over themselves?, and when the people cried "Yes O Messenger of Allah" he transferred that authority to Ali (as), with the words

"Of whomsoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla (master)."

Of which there are numerous references, for example Sahih Tirmidhi, Vol. 2, page 298. Allah speaks only of Himself, Mohammad (saws) and Ali (as), the believer who offered his ring in charity while he was in prayer, in [5:55](#),

"Only Allah is your Wali and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor rate while they bow down."

It was Ali (as) who was by the command of Allah in [Sura Al Insheraah \(94\), verses 7-8](#), appointed to the khilafat, "*When you finish appoint and return to your Lord.*" Note that the word rendered as appoint is one of two meanings of the word funsub, the other, which means to work harder, being irreconcilable with the sense of this verse which at that point in the command deals with what to do after finishing all work and effort (as denoted by the word faraghtha in the Arabic). Here Allah appoints Ali (as) as the Khalifatullah.

There is no mention of men being given the authority to appoint the Khalifa in the Qur'an, only abundant, clear and direct evidence for it being Allah, and this position was given to Ali (as). This fact in itself negates the lawfulness of the khilafat of Hadrath Abu Bakr, even taking aside the historical, rational and traditional context which is similarly opposed to his position.

And after Ali (as), Al Hasan (as) and Al Husain (as), the products of the union of the line of Mohammad (saws) with Ali (as), both themselves in the line of Ishmael (as), who would transfer the Mercy of their grandfather the Holy Prophet (saws) to mankind in their noble sacrifices, are thus extolled as the twofold blessing in [Sura Al Hadid, Verse 28](#), another verse that when translated in its proper grammatical sense reads:

"O believers, fear Allah and have faith in His Prophet. And you will receive a twofold blessing, and a light (noor) will be appointed for you which will guide you and by which you shall receive blessings."

It is here in the Ahl-ul-Bait, the purified and specified members of the family of the Holy Prophet, that the lineage of the Khalifatullah continues. Of the Ahl-ul-Bait Allah says in [Surah 42, verse 23](#),

"Say (O Mohammad): I do not ask of you a wage for this except love of my kinsfolk."

It is of them that the Holy Prophet (saws) said, drawing an analogy with a Khalifatullah of a previous age, "The example of my Ahl-ul-Bait among you is like the example of Noah's ark. Whoever boards it will attain salvation, whoever fails to do so will drown", as recounted in Mustadrak al Hakim, volume 3, page 151.

It is this guidance that is the light of Imamah for the believer, who becomes locked in the bond of wilayat to the Imam of his time who guides him to the sirat al mustaqim. In the obligatory prayer, the centre of daily worship, the believer who submits himself before Allah must compulsorily recite Sura Al Hamdh, wherein the slave beseeches Allah to guide him to the sirat al mustaqim. The believer's prayer is not accepted unless he invokes blessings on the Holy Prophet and his Ahl-ul-Bait in more than one place in the daily salat.

And in one of the most commonly recited Suras in daily prayer, that of Al Kauthar, the lineage of the Holy Prophet is extolled by Allah and compared in its constancy with the fountain of Al

Kauthar in Paradise. This verse was revealed in condemnation of a man who had taunted the Holy Prophet (saws) saying that as Mohammad (saws) had no son who survived him, and only his daughter Fatima (sa), his lineage would end.

Thus Allah elevated the lineage of the Holy Prophet through his daughter Fatima (sa) in this Sura, stating that it is as long-lasting as Al Kauthar, and condemned the critic's beliefs. This is the depth of love and dedication to the lineage of Imamat that Allah commands man to glorify Him with through their existence in the daily prayer.

It is the 12 Imams who the Bible foretells will be men of authority from the lineage of Ishmael (as), and that traditions of Sunni Islam testify to in the numerous Hadith wherein the Holy Prophet (saws) spoke of the 12 Khalifas all from Quraysh who would succeed him till the affairs of the people would end. Thus The Bible reads,

"I have heard your prayer for Ishmael. I have blessed him and will make him fruitful. I will multiply his descendants; he shall be the father of twelve princes; and I will raise a great nation from him."

Genesis: 17,19-20, New English Bible

Neither are these 12 princes the 12 founders of the 12 tribes of Israel, for they were from Ishmael (as)'s brother Ishaq (as), nor were they the 12 Arabs mentioned later on in the Bible, for they were not men of authority in the way of princes. They are the 12 Khalifas of Allah that followed the Holy Prophet (saws), after whom the Ithna Ashari Shia, or Twelver Shia, are named, and whose names adorn the Mosque of their father the Holy Prophet (saws) in Madina to this day. Thus Sahih Muslim reads,

"The affairs of the people will continue to be conducted as long as they are governed by 12 men, he than added from Quraysh."

Sahih Muslim, Hadith number 4478, English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui

This tradition is also found in the Sahih of Bukhari. In Mishkat Al Masabih, Vol. 4, page 576, Hadith 5, the word Khalifa is used to describe these 12 men of authority from Quraysh, the group of tribes which included that of the Holy Prophet (as) and Imam Ali (as). Indeed the prominent Sunni mufti of Istanbul, Sheikh Sulayman Qundoozi, proved in his acclaimed work Yannabi al Muwaddat, that the Hadith refers to the 12 Imams of the Shia.

These are some of the commandments that exist regarding the Khalifatullah, and there are many more direct injunctions such as these. Others exist more subtly, even in the world around us. Allah states that the Sun and Moon are signs for mankind. The Imam is also a Sign of Allah, though in human form, the Hujjatullah.

In the light of the knowledge made popularly available from modern astronomy it is now known that the Sun, even after it sets, continues to illuminate those parts of the Earth on which it has set, for the light of the Sun is reflected by the Moon such that mankind is not left in darkness.

And thus the analogy with the Hujjatullahs becomes manifestly clear, for the Holy Prophet (saws) departed this earthly existence in the manner of the Sun setting, yet as Allah decrees mankind will not be left aimless and in the dark, guidance to the sirat al mustaqim continued in the form of the lineage of Twelve Imams, who function as the enduring Mercy of the Holy Prophet to mankind, reflecting his light as the Moon reflects the light of the Sun when it sets. And when one contemplates that in this lineage each Imam was succeeded by another, one discerns the obvious in the physical world around us, that which we knew all our lives as muslims, but did not ponder in more depth - the Moon's trajectory forms 12 lunar months, one signifying each Imam and Khalifatullah, each Sign of Allah. And on the Moon one will find the name of the First, the direct link to the Holy Prophet and the reliever of burdens, Ali (as), having his name carved on its surface, while the guidance of the Twelfth is vouchsafed for by the fact that the Moon continues to illuminate the Earth as Imam Mahdi (as) shines his light on

the Earth.

And when the Moon is hidden by a cloud, to quote a popular analogy, it still reflects the light of the Sun it trapped and guides mankind, as does the Twelfth Imam (as) in his concealment. When on the 14th of the lunar month the full moon is seen and the Moon is most brilliant, one realises that it is the 14 infallibles, Mohammad (saws), Fatima (sa) and the 12 Imams, in whose honour the full moon of the 14th night was created by Allah.

In the Hadith of Kisa, transmitted from Fatima Zahra (sa) through a chain involving Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, **Allah swears that He created the erected Sky, the expanse of the Earth, the illuminated Moon (illuminated by the brightness of the Sun), the bright Sun, the rotating Universe, the flowing seas and the sailing ships (the winds and the tides) for the love of the Mine of Prophethood and his household - his daughter Fatima (sa), her husband Ali (as) and her sons Hasan (as) and Husain (as).**

This Hadith was transmitted on the occasion of the revelation of the Verse of Purity, 33:33, which grammatically excludes the wives of the Holy Prophet,

"Verily Allah desires to remove all impurity (rijs) from you (O people of the Household), and purify you with a perfect purification."

What Allah desires surely happens. The great Sunni commentator Al-Suyuti, quoting Sahih Al Tirmidhi, in Tafsir Al-Durr Al-Manthur, Vol.5 pages 605-606, under the commentary of this Verse, writes that then the Messenger of Allah said "Thus me and my Ahl-ul-Bait are clear from sins." This purity makes Ahl-ul-Bait fit for the honour of Imamate, to be Allah's Khalifas on Earth, promised only to those who, being pure, believe and do good actions as stated in Sura Noor, verse 55.

It is of Ahl-ul-Bait that Allah says in 4:59,

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority from among you."

The renowned Sunni commentator Fakhr-ud-Din Razi concludes in Tafsiru'l Kabir, Vol. 10, page 144, that those in authority in this verse must be ma'sum or infallible. The verse of purity makes Ahl-ul-Bait infallible. They are the Khalifas of Allah, as testified by the Holy Prophet (saws)

" I am leaving among you two khalifas, the Qur'an and my Ahl-ul-bait, they will never become separate until they meet me at the pool."

Hadith-e-Thaqalayn, the Two Weighty Things, as recorded by Al Suyuti in Tafsir Durre Manthur, Vol. 2, page 60.

Even the distorting magnifying glass of the most bigoted Sunni traditionists have deemed that the reference to the Qur'an and Ahl-ul-Bait as the sources of guidance after the Holy Prophet (saws) and proclaimed as such by him is mutawattir or undeniable by the Sunni schools, as is the Hadith of Ghadhir wherein Ali (as) was declared the Mawla of the believers by the Holy Prophet. Thus even by the rules of the toughest muhadhithin, amongst the stingy number of just over 30 Hadith that they classify as mutawattir, two refer to Ahl-ul-Bait in a capacity of extreme love and as sources of guidance, despite the fact that these muhadhithin are not those who take their traditions from Ahl-ul-Bait to any great extent and follow instead the khalifas appointed by man.

Yet it was a repeating tragedy in the lives of many Khalifas of Allah, and even the Holy Prophet and his wasi Imam Ali (as), that they were betrayed and persecuted. Their patience in the face of injustice is marvelled at, and it is patience with which Allah tests the best of his slaves with,

and makes them His Khalifas on Earth, His Imams and His Guides. As quoted earlier on, in 32:20 Allah states that patience is a requirement for the covenant of Imamah. And here in Al Baqara, verses 155-156 we learn that those who show great patience are the Guides,

"I will certainly test you with fear of enemies, deprivation of food and water, loss of possessions, loss of your life, and loss of your children. O prophet give good tidings to those who have (such) patience. They are those who say (when afflicted as such) from Allah we come and to Allah we return. And they have blessings from their Lord, and His Mercy upon them, and these are the guides."

There is no doubt that these criteria for the testing of a man's patience were met on the battlefield of Karbala when Imam Husain (as), starved of water and material possessions, offered his sons in sacrifice before Allah. Thus there are some who reject the Khalifas of Allah who will therefore translate the last sentence of this ayat to make it appear that Allah is saying those who have been tested thus will then be guided to the right path, when of course the fact is that the ayat makes it clear they were on the right path already for they turned to Allah in their patience, and were thus rewarded by being made the guides, the Imams, the Khalifas of Allah, to guide others.

This was the sacrifice of Ibrahim (as) in offering his son Ishmael (as) and whereby according to whence he became the Imam of his Time according to Al Baqara, verse 124, and the Khalifatullah and ruler of mankind. This was the patience of Imam Ali (as), and of Fatima (sa) in their suffering from the usurpation of their rights by the early khalifas of men.

This patience culminated on the battlefield of Karbala where Mohammad (saws), the greatest Imam offered his sons and his family, outdoing even Ibrahim Khalilullah (as) in his patience, his grandsons martyred and their sons martyred in a genocide of the Ahl-ul-Bait over years, that family of whom the Holy Prophet (saws) said that he asked of no wage for his efforts in guiding mankind to the sirat al mustaqim save love of them. Surely the Imams of the Shia all fulfilled the requirements of faith and good actions prescribed by Allah and shown in the purity of their submission to Him in their patience, for they are His Khalifas on Earth. Can humanity be rightfully governed by the khalifas appointed by men when there are those who are infallible among mankind. Indeed it was often the khalifas of men who murdered the Khalifas of Allah, the Imams of the Shia, and perpetrated their genocide.

This is the nature of the being entrusted with the covenant of Imamah. The Khalifas of Allah are those who Allah states above in Sura Noor, Verse 55, those who believe and do good deeds. They are not ordinary men as the commentaries of the majority state. They are such men who embody the pinnacle of belief in the conduct of their lives - thus combining faith with good actions - patience and thanks to Allah in the face of adversity, the requirement for Imamah in 32:20. On the Day of Karbala, lifting the bodies of his sons, Imam Husain thanked his Lord and said "From Allah we come and to Allah we return" in accordance with the criteria of great patience and submission to Allah in Al Baqara, 155-156. Imamah is a covenant between the Khalifa of Allah and Allah. Its test is patience, as proved by the mechanism whereby Ibrahim Khalilullah was given the Imamah.

This patience was shown by our Imams, all eleven who preceded the Imam of our Time being cruelly martyred, while the Twelfth Imam (as) himself has been in concealment for over 1,100 years. Yet there are those who have the audacity and lack of comprehension to state after considering the facts that the Imamah the Shia believe in is a monarchy. It is a covenant between Allah and man given to the best of men. It is no monarchy.

Rather, it was the system our opponents espouse that was monarchy, the khilafat of man, a system that ensnared men in an illegitimate ruling system which was for almost 1,000 years was drawn rank and file from members of the clans of the Quraysh, members of 4 tribes that were all originally related, all appointed by men and none democratically save Imam Ali and Imam Hasan whose popularity shone on account of their doing of good deeds and their faith.

The khilafat of man was monarchy. That is indisputable. Our opponents are not simply bigots, they are also hypocrites. They are bigots to the degree that when one reads so many of the ayats of the Qur'an quoted here, even where the word Imam or Khalifa is used by Allah, they shall seek to mistranslate it to another word, for they are scared of the truth. And they lead the well-meaning muslim majority along that pathway to the degree that when that system of man's khilafat ended in 1924 they wept and want to recreate it when it had no basis in Divine Law. And they do so while the real Imam, the Khalifatullah, he whose position is enshrined in the Divine Law, is amongst them in our dimension, guiding us to the sirat al mustaqim.

Despite this there are many muslims who believe that they are aimless and instead of seeking the Khalifa appointed by Allah wish to recreate the khilafat of man for they say they have no imam. We say Allah will not leave us aimless, for he has promised not to do so, as quoted in the title of this discussion. And He has commanded us to find our Imam, the one He has appointed, and we will be gathered behind him on the Day of Judgment, for as already noted Allah has sworn this. Who will those who followed the khalifa of man be gathered behind now that their system has ended?

The Mercy that Mohammad (saws) is still flows during the period of the ghaibat of the Twelfth Imam (as), who is the Imam of this Time. The long life of Imam Mohammad Mahdi (as), the present Khalifatullah, is in its totality for a reason known to Allah. However this pattern has been seen before in the history of the Khalifatullah and is thus not surprising to those who open their eyes. For example, the Khalifas of Allah, Noah (as) and Ibrahim (as) to name but two from many were given miraculously long lives, and it is within the Power of Allah to prevent ageing also, as with the companions of the cave and their dog mentioned in the Qur'an. And indeed, many Imams were relatively quiescent, such as the noble ancestors of the Holy Prophet (as), or even Musa (as) for many years of his life till Allah ordered him to rise and to destroy the kuffar system of Fir'on. And indeed even the greatest Imam and Khalifatullah, Mohammad (saws) himself, though manifest to many was latent to others who were also guided by him during his own lifetime and beyond through their association with his successor Ali (as).

Did ever Oways Kerni (ra) the famed contemporary of the Holy Prophet (saws) who punched his own teeth out when he heard of the news of the Holy Prophet losing a tooth in jihad ever see Mohammad (saws)? Yet he is acclaimed as a great companion and an exemplar of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saws). The Imam guides through inspiration and through directly influencing the great men of influence over the Ummah and when any sincere believer seeks him he hears and replies to their pleas. Can people not see that our Imams compiled and preserved the Qur'an, the Word of Allah, from the moment the Revelation by the Holy Prophet (saws) finished and Imam Ali set about this task. While the majority who followed the innovation of the khilafat of man did not have a Qur'an till the time of the 3rd khalifa of man.

Can they not see that in over 1,100 years of the ghaibat of the Twelfth Imam (as) his kindness and his power have influenced the Ithna Ashari Shia to practice a religion that is considerably less divided and is united on all core issues ranging from the concept of Allah to the concept of destiny while the majority who followed man's khalifas bicker amongst themselves on such substantive issues. Simple probability theory dictates that such steadfastness and single-mindedness could not have existed in Shia doctrine over 1,100 years without the presence of an infallible guide protecting and illuminating the religion, as the Sun illuminates the Earth from behind a cloud to cite a popularly quoted analogy.

It is the duty of the believers to make their intentions pure and their actions focussed in anticipation of the rise of the Imam (as), whether that occurs in their lifetime or not, they must behave as if it will, and if they do so they will be raised spiritually with the Imam (as) even if they are dead when he rises.

This action will bring the day of his glorious rising closer, for he will then have followers capable of receiving his guidance and acting as instruments for him in his Mission. One reason for the ghaibat of the Imam was the betrayal of the Khalifatullah by the muslims and in particular the

murder of the Eleven Khalifatullahs who preceded Imam Mahdi (as), in the same way that Allah removed Imamah from Bani Israil. However, in His Mercy Allah has not removed our Imam from us, and He has made it easy for men who strive to use their intellect, defined in its wider and Islamic terminology, to find him. And then the patient Imam will rise and accept the rule that all Imams have strived for with their patience. And may Allah hasten that day's coming.

As a final point in this discussion it is worth considering the marvellous nature of the lineage of the Khalifas of Allah and its situation in our time. We mentioned earlier how the Imamah that was conferred upon Ibrahim Khalilullah was monumental in the history of the Imamah, incepting the beginning of the divide between the Khalifatullahs descended from Ishaq (as) and later those from the lineage of Ishmael (as), the Arabs.

But this divide reforms in great synchrony, and with the pre-eminence being for the lineage from the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saws), himself descended from Ishmael (as). For the last Khalifatullah, the great Imam of the Time Imam Mahdi (as) fuses these two lineages that derive from Ibrahim Khalilullah (as). On his father's side Imam Mahdi (as) is descended from the line of Ishmael (as), and he is thus an Arab, and from his mother's side he alone is uniquely descended amongst the Twelve Imams from the line of Ishaq (as), for his blessed mother was a descendant of Simon (as) the loyal apostle of Isa (as) and the inheritor of Isa (as), for every Prophet has an inheritor, as Mohammad (saws) had Ali (as) and as Musa (as) had Haroon (as).

And it shall be Isa (as) the descendant of Ibrahim (as)'s son Ishaq (as) and Imam Mahdi (as) the descendant of Ibrahim Khalilullah's son Ishmael (as) who shall jointly under the Imamah of the Twelfth Imam (as) who is the Khalifatullah of this age, rise and destroy the Dajjal and the Sufyani, systems of kuffar and hypocrisy who will worship the Devil and man's ego. These systems are already amongst the people of the world, and the Imam's rising is coming rapidly closer, may Allah hasten that day. And thus the Khalifa of Allah will destroy the system of Shaitan, and victory will come to the righteous, and the blood of Imam Husain (as), the sacrifice of Mohammad (saws) who is the Seal of Prophets and the greatest Khalifatullah, will be avenged in this earthly abode by the last Khalifatullah, for as promised by the Almighty

"My righteous slaves will inherit the Earth."

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