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RESEARCH ARTICLE

GUARDIANSHIP UNDER SAYYIDINA ALI'S رضى الله عنه TIMES.

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Abstract

Responsibility and care of people holds a significant place in the teachings of Islam. After the Prophet ﷺ, his noble khulafa or vicegerents established a worthy system of application of these teachings. The present article analyzes in detail the application of these very rules in the time of the fourth of these righteous Caliphs, Sayyidina Ali رضى الله عنه. During the time of this fourth Caliph of Islam, Muslims and non-Muslims were given their right in a unique fashion, where the ruler prioritized the needs of his people over his own. This style of rule and the detailed application thereof, is very relevant even in the present-day world.

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Introduction:-

He was Ali Ibn Abu Talib whose name was Abd Munaf Ibn Abdul Matalib, who was Shaybah Ibn Hashim, who was Umar Ibn Abd Munaf, who was Mughirah Ibn Qussay, who was Zayd Ibn Kilab Murrah Ibn Kab Ibn Luway Ibn Ghalib Ibn Fahr Ibn Maalik Ibn Nazar Ibn Kinanah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had given him the kunyah Abu al-Hasan and Abu Turab. His Mother was Fatimah bint Asad Ibn Hash'n. This was the first woman who gave birth to a great Hashmi. He was one among those who were given the glad tidings of paradise in this life. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had married him to Sayyidah Fatimah رضى الله عنها, his daughter, the chief of women in paradise. (1)

Sayyidina Ali رضى الله عنه under Prophet's ﷺ care

Once when Makkah was in the grip of famine, the Prophet ﷺ said to his uncle, Sayyidna Abbas رضى الله عنه "Abu Talib has a large family, so we must help him out during these times of famine." They went to Abu Talib and it was decided that the Prophet ﷺ should take Sayyidina Ali رضى الله عنه as his ward and Sayyidina Abbas رضى الله عنه should take Ja'far رضى الله عنه as his word. He became a Believer when he was ten years old and offered salah with the Prophet ﷺ, the next day after His Prophethood.

Merits

He was the favorite son-in-law of the Prophet ﷺ. He gave him glad tidings of worldly honor:

انت بمنزلة هارون من موسى-

"You are to me of the same rank as Haroon was to Musa (for die cooperation be extended)." (2)

He also said at Ghadir Khaum:

من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه اللهم وال من والاه.

"He whose patron I am, Ali is also his patron. O Allah, befriend him whom Ali befriends." (3)

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Ali's رضی اللہ عنہ invitation to meal

"When Allah commanded the Prophet ﷺ to preach to his close relatives and instill in them the fear of Allah, he was a little hesitant", said Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ "So Jibreel عليه السلام told him clearly that if he did not do it then Allah's punishment would descend on him."

The Prophet ﷺ then instructed Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ to prepare a meal of goat's meat and he invited his relative to the meal. There were forty people including the Prophet's four uncles, Abu Talib, Hamzah رضی اللہ عنہ, Abbas رضی اللہ عنہ and Abu Lahab. The food was served and when they had eaten it, the Prophet ﷺ wished to broach the subject, but Abu Lahab quickly put in his words:

لقد سحركم صاحبكم.

"Indeed, your host has cast a spell over you." So everyone dispersed preventing them from spiking.

The meal was prepared by Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ the next day also. All were invited again. When the guests arrived, the Prophet ﷺ invited them to Islam and asked who would help me in this mission as my minister. Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ volunteered himself. The Prophet ﷺ held him by the neck and said:

ان هذا اخي ووصي وخليفتي فيكم فاسمعوا له واطيعوا.

The guests stood up and laughed saying to Abu Talib, "You are also asked to pay heed to Ali and obey him!"(4)

Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ was of a very young age then and the people regarded him no more than a child. However, the rank he got then in the sight of Allah earned him the envy of even the angels.

As Khalifah

Ibn Sa'd said that the day after the martyrdom of Sayyidina Uthman رضی اللہ عنہ all the Sahabah رضی اللہ عنہم swore allegiance to Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ willingly. But, Sayyidina Talhah رضی اللہ عنہ and Sayyidina Zubayr did it out of compulsion. (5)

Method of support

Sayyidina Ali's رضی اللہ عنہ person was mercy for his subjects. The doors of the state treasury were open always for the poor and needy and whatever was deposited therein was given to the deserving liberally. He was very compassionate to the zimmi too. (6) However, many conspiracies were hatched in his time but he always dealt with them kindly so that the people compared him to Nushirwan.

An edict on distribution of wealth

Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ had issued a religious fatwa (edict) calling upon the affluent to support poor of their society as a necessary duty.

ان الله تعالى فرض على الاغنياء في اقواتهم بقدر ما يكفي فقرائهم فان جاعوا وعروا وجهدوا فيمنع الاغنياء وحق الله تعالى ان يحاسبهم يوم القيامة ويعذبهم عليه.

"Indeed Allah the Exalted has made it a (moral) duty on the wealthy people to expend so much of their wealth as is enough to support the needy people. So, if people are hungry, naked and in severe distress then the basic reason for that is neglect by the rich of the rights of the poor. Now, it is the right of Allah to question these rich people on the Day of Resurrection and to punish them."(7)

A similar report is also found in Kanz ul-Ummal:

"Sayyidina Ali رضی اللہ عنہ said that he heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say: Allah has apportioned for the poor so much wealth in the riches of the affluent as would be enough for them. So, if the affluent prevent that amount from them so that they are hungry and naked and in severe distress then Allah will take a stern account from the affluent and punish them severely."(8)

In view of these sayings, Ibn Hazm has written: It is the duty of the rich in every locality to support the poor. If they cannot be supported through the takings of fa'i then the king can compel the rich to look after them. They must be provided food, clothing for the season and a house to provide shelter from rain, heat, flood, etc.(9)

A misunderstanding removed

Some people have wrongly interpreted these quotations and imagined that Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه suggested an enhancement in the application of zakah or that the rate of zakah will increase or decrease depending on the need of the poor. However, such reports certainly do not refer to increase or decrease of zakah, but, he has declared voluntary sadaqah (charities) as a moral duty to remove the distress of the poor. In other words, Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه has said, that zakah should be paid regularly and to the deserving poor and needy. Poverty cannot end by that alone; hence, the rich must expend that much more which will remove poverty to a large extent. If they do not pay the obligatory zakah, or if after paying it they do not resolve the lawful needs of people by spending on them then Allah Will punish them severely and call for a reckoning. Thus, this Hadith does not suggest an enhancement in zakah but it encourages spending. It is wrong, in fact it amounts to accusing him, that Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه was observing another kind or rate of zakah. (10)

Financial policies

He took a monthly salary (of five thousand dirham) from the state treasury. (11) He followed Sayyidina Abu Bakr's رضي الله عنه policy on the disbursement of fai.(12) Once, he entered the exchequer's office and regarding with disdain said, "Before it is evening, I will not leave even a dirham with you."

Then he commanded a man of Banu Asad to distribute the assets and, he did it by evening. Someone said to him, "O Ameer ul-Mu'mineen, how would it be if you reimburse this man?" He said, "It depends on him though it is unlawful."(13)

Support allowance for newborn

Some reported to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه the birth of his son and he recorded his name in the list of those getting a hundred dirhams.

Tameem Ibn Maseeh said that he took a child lying on a thorough fare to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه and he recorded him in the list of recipients of a hundred dirhams.(14)

He had outlined his financial policy in his speech after people had sworn allegiance to him. He had said, "O people, I am one of you. I have the same rights as you and the same possibilities as you. I will lead you on the path of your Prophet ﷺ. Listen! Whatever Uthman RA has given of property and wealth from Allah's bounties to people by way of bestowal will be taken back to the state treasury because nothing can alter facts. If I find that this wealth has been used already in marrying women or buying female slaves or invested in different properties even then I will get it back because there is much scope in justice. If truth is hard on someone then oppression and compulsion are harder on him"

"O People! Beware. Those are there to whom the world is everything and have become owners of properties, channeled rivers, rode horses, bought slaves! If I deprive them of luxury and bring them back to their original status then let them not say that Ibn Abu Ta'lib has deprived us of our rights."

"Listen! If any of the sahabah of Allah's Messenger ﷺ imagines that he has excellence over others because of the Prophet's ﷺ company then this company will be of no use to him tomorrow before Allah and only He will reward him."

"Know that he who heeds to the call of Allah and his Messenger, confirms our creed, enters our religion, turns to our qiblah is entitled to the rights given by Islam and bound by its limits: You are all Allah's slaves, and this wealth is Allah's. It will be distributed among you equally. In this case, no one has excellence over anyone. For the righteous, there is excellent reward with Allah."(15)

Distribution of wealth

Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه gave practical shape to his words. He meant that it was not the aim to fill state coffers alone, but wealth should be distributed equally among people. The state treasury is common property of all Muslims, so everyone should get a generous share from it. There should be no disparity in distribution only because of religious distinction, and he put his mind to this practice.

Abu Hakeem reported on the authority of his father that Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه bestowed grants three times in a year, then he received wealth from Isphahan the same year, so he said, "O people! Come in the morning for the fourth share. I have no right to amass your wealth with me."

Accordingly, he gave away even the ropes. Some people took them, others returned them. (16)

His self-denial

Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه gave generously to his subjects. It gave him pleasure to see them happy. But, Nazar Ibn Mansoor has reported on the authority of Qubah Ibn Alqamah that he found before Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه sour milk whose stench was repulsive and stale loaf of bread. He asked, "O Ameer ul-Mu'mineen! Do you eat these things?" He replied, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ had meagre to eat and coarser clothes to wear. If I do not follow his example then I might not get his company."

Haroon Ibn Antarah has reported on the authority of his father that later he went to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه in Khawarnaq. Although it was winter, he only had an old worn out velvet dress on his body. He was shivering in that. He said, "O Ameer ul-Mu'mineen! Allah has given you and your family a right in this wealth but you treat yourself in this way." He said, "By Allah, I will not harm you. This is the same Qatifah (velvet) that I had brought from Madinah."

Antarah said that he went to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه on new vein's day or the autumnal festival (in September). The land owners were present there and gifts were placed before him. The Qanbar came there and holding Sayyidina Ali's رضي الله عنه hand said, "O Ameer ul-Mu'mineen! Wealth does not remain with you (because of your large heartedness) although your family has a share in it. I have kept something aside for you quietly." He asked, "What is that?" He said, "Come, See!" He took him in a house where there was a bag full of gold and gold plated silver utensils. Seeing that Ali رضي الله عنه said, "May your mother weep for you! You wish to bring a large fire in my house." He then had it weighed and distributed it among the tribes through their chiefs. And, he said:

هذا جنای وخیارہ فیہ وکل جان یدہا لی فیہ۔

"These are the fruit selected by me. These are excellent fruit among them though the hands of other selectors go to their mouths."

(He meant that those people cheated and saved the finer things of other people for themselves but he wished to keep himself safe from treachery and wished to honor every trust.)

He then said, "O wealth of the world! I will not come in your net. You may cheat others." Ja'far's father, Muhammad, said that when valuables were brought to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه he summoned those who weigh and grade and made them sit before him. Then he placed heaps of gold and silver and said, "O red and white (gold, silver, wealth)! Whether you are red or white, you cannot cheat me. You might cheat others." He then recited:

هذا جنای وخیارہ فیہ وکل جان یدہا لی فیہ۔

The second stanza is reported thus:

اذ کل جان یدہا لی فیہ۔

When the hand of every selector is towards his mouth. (17)

Analysis

Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه did not conduct himself in this way out of an unawareness of those things. He knew that a ruler is an example for others and doubts about his conduct do arise often. He is an example of care and righteousness for his subjects. He bound himself to the resolute conduct of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه and Umar رضي الله عنه. Indeed, the high standard was most suitable for them who were placed as the Prophet's ﷺ deputy in Allah's religion. (18)

Economic justice

In contrast, our rulers are given to bestow grants to relatives and stooges. Those who shower false praise are favored but opponents are punished. However, here is an example the conduct of our righteous predecessor rulers:

Kathir Ibn Namr reported that someone complained to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه about a man of the kharaji sect, saying, "I have heard him abuse you." So, Ali رضي الله عنه said to him, "You abuse him as he has abused me." Then he said, "But he was threatening you too." So, Ali رضي الله عنه said, "He who has not killed me, I will not kill him." He added, "They have three rights over us. we must not prevent them from making zikr in masjid, and as long as they

side with us we must not deprive them of fa'i, and unless they fight war with us we must not wage war against them."(19)

Analysis (II)

It is worth observing that Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه recognized the right of the khawarij as long as they did not rebel and violate the law though he knew that they abused him and created difficulties for him. On their part, the khawarij associated themselves with the Muslims and lived with them though later on, they did rebel.

In short, the foregoing shows that the stipends and allowances are for those citizens who protect and defend Islam. As for the others, they get their rights when they face difficulties and trials. (20)

Death

Sayyidana Ali رضي الله عنه was attacked on Friday at time of Fajr. Ibn Miljam Ash'ath Ibn Qays Kindi took another khariji Shubayb Ibn Bajr as his aid and the two sat down by the door from which the Ameer ul-Mu'mineen came out. That night Sayyidina Hassan رضي الله عنه said that at dawn he told him that sleep had evaded him all night till a little before dawn when he got a wink of sleep while sitting down and saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream. He complained to him, "O Messenger ﷺ of Allah, I have been much troubled by your ummah", and he said, "Pray to Allah to deliver you from them." So he prayed, "O Allah, grant me companions better than them and grant them a companion worse than me."(21) Sayyidina Hasan رضي الله عنه said, that the Mu'azzin, Ibn al-Bannah, came and called out, "O people salah!" Hasan رضي الله عنه said, "I held his hand and he got up. Ibn al-Bannah was ahead and I was the last one. Outside the door, father called out, 'O people, salah'. He did that everyday waking people for salah."

According to another version, he did not wake up when the mu'azzin called out but kept lying down. The mu'azzin came a second time but he did not arise. When he called a third time he got up with difficulty and walked towards the masjid reciting these verses:

اشدد حياز يمك للموت فان الموت آتيك
ولا تجزع الموت اذا حل بواديك

(Be prepared for death because you will meet it surely. Fear it not it comes to you.)(22)

As he moved forward, two glittering swords were seen and a voice called out, "Kingdom belongs to Allah. Not to you, O Ali!" Shubayb hit off the mark, but Ibn Miljam's sword pierced his skull.(23) Spontaneously, Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه cried: فزت ورب الكعبة (By the Lord of the Ka'bah, I have succeeded!)

He also shouted! "Don't let the murderers flee!" People ran from all sides. Shubayb escaped and the main culprit made his way out brandishing his sword and would have escaped but for Mughirah Ibn Nawfal Ibn Harith Ibn Abdul Muttalib who was a wrestler. He ran after him and threw a heavy cloth over him and flung him down on the floor. The Ameer ul- Mu'mineen was brought home wounded. He had some words with the murderer.

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