

A Khalifa Cannot be Removed from His Divine office

(Yasin Butt)

Since times immemorial God has been raising prophets to effect reforms and to bring about a moral and spiritual revolution in the world. As the earthly life of a prophet cannot last for ever. God, through His special dispensation, raises a Khalifa (successor) after the death of a prophet to:

- a) Enable the bereaved followers to parry the terrible blow of the death of their prophet.
- b) Ensure their unity and solidarity.
- c) And to ensure continuation and completion of the prophet's mission.

Therefore, the dispensation of Khilafat stems from the dispensation of prophethood. God says:

وعد الله الذين امنوا منكم وعملوا الصالحات ليستخلفنهم فى الارض كما استخلف الذين من قبلهم

i.e. "Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them successors in the earth, as He made successors from among those who were before them." (Al-Nur:56)

It is borne out by the above Quranic verse that it is God Himself Who establishes the system of Khilafat in the world.

The Messenger of God (on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah) is reported to have said:

اقتدوا من بعدى ابي بكر و عمر فانهما حبل الله الممدود فمن تمسك لهما فقد تمسك بالعروة الوثقى لانقسام لهما

i.e. "After me follow Abu Bakr and Umar. They are the Divine rope. Whose aligns himself with them will grasp a strong handle which knows no breaking."

The prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah) said:

"I had a mind to leave the will that after my death Abu Bakr should take over as my successor. Then I gave up the idea considering that neither the believers nor even the Divine decree will allow any other person to be elected as my successor except Abu Bakr."

These traditions constitute a strong argument to support the views that Khilafat is a Divine office and a Khalifa is appointed by God. Those Who do not reflect dispassionately on the reality of Khilafat raise the objection that a Khalifa is elected by the believers in accordance with the ordinary rules of democracy. That is true but the opinion of the believers reflects, or rather is directed by, the Divine will. A person cannot be elected without the Divine blessings. This precludes all chances of one's becoming a Khalifa through one's own efforts. Thus Khilafat

cannot be acquired; nor can it be inherited but it is conferred upon the most suitable person of the age by the Divine Being.

Now, when it has been proved that Khilafat is a Divine office, the very idea, that a Khalifa can be divested of his office, becomes destitute of foundation. The Holy Prophet (sa) of Islam (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Hadrat Usman:

“God will give you a shirt. The disaffected will force you to remove it but you should not do so.”

This metaphorical expression purported to say that God would appoint Hadrat Usman as a Khalifa and the hypocrites would raise a storm of opposition against him.

When the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) passed away, God, in accordance with His time-honoured practice, established the system of Khilafat in the Ahmadiyya Community. On May 27, 1908 Hadrat Maulana Noor-ud-Din was unanimously elected as the first successor. Later on a few disloyal persons voiced the opinion that a Khalifa could be deposed. However, all the reasoning, which their warped minds could invent in support of their contention, wilted in the strong light of the great Noor-ud-Din’s analysis of the situation. He said:

“You may inpute a thousand and one faults to me. These will not be attributed to me but to God, who has commissioned me as a Khalifa. These people are like the Shiites, who sling mud on Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar (May God be pleased with them) Although on account of my illness it is painful for me even to stand, I bring home to you that.... Your efforts will prove fruitless. Nobody will ever make you Khalifa; nor even any person can become Khalifa during my life time. After my death God Himself will commission a person of His own choice. No earthly power can remove me.” (**Badar** July 4, 1912)

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I (May God be pleased with him) again said:

“It is God Who, in His infinite wisdom, has made me Khalifa. No power on earth can remove a Divinely-appointed Khalifa from his office. If God wills me to be removed, He will cause me to die. You leave this matter to God. You are not invested with the authority to remove me.” (**Al-Hakam** January 20, 1914)

The foregoing statements set out in the clearest terms that the question of removing a Khalifa from his Divine office does not arise.

It will not be out of keeping with the theme of this essay to give our Ahmadi brethren a word of caution here, I therefore quote a very illuminating and eye opening passage from the speech of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II referring to the Quranic verse **لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ** He will surely make them Successor (24:56). He said:

“Do not lose sight of this Divine promise. Endeavour constantly to strengthen and fortify the institution of Khilafat. You are young. Your aims and aspirations should be high. You should be mentally sharp and have plenty of fortitude so that you

may save this boat from capsizing. Do not become like a rock that diverts course of a river. It is your duty to become like a channel through which water flows easily.

You are a tunnel through which is to course down the beneficence of Allah conveyed to us by the Noble Messenger (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you achieve this aim, you as a community, will know no decadence. And remember that you will knell the downfall of your Community if, like an obstacle, you obstruct the flow of Divine beneficence and in pursuance of your desires you wish to confine the office of Khilafat to your friends, relatives and near ones. If you do so the life of your community will never be prolonged. It will be shortened. Other communities have perished before you. You will meet the same fate. But the Holy Qur'an reveals that the door of your national progress is still open. It is true that a man cannot live in this world for ever but the communities can live. Therefore, whoso moves onwards will get the reward and whoso lingers behind will spell his own doom. And none can save a person who takes his own life.”

(An extract from the lecture delivered at Rabwah on October 25, 1953)