

## Questions on Kingship

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Thank you for the questions which were posted in relation to a discussion upon kingship, or to be more precise: a discussion in relation to what the Islamic texts mention concerning monarchy / hereditary kindship. In total, five-questions were submitted, or as you have stated, “*pieces of evidence it is claimed purport to show that the Islamic texts support or specifically mandate this form of rule.*” For the sake of completeness, the questions are grouped together as follows:

1. *Allah mentions kings and kingship in the Qur’an in a positive way, saying it is a Ni’mah or a divine favour [5: 20]*
2. *In reply to your argument that Allah is the only king, we know from the Qur’an that Allah made kings [5: 20] including mentioning a specific king, Taalut [2: 247]*
3. *I quoted a hadith in which the Prophet (alayhis salaam) says: “Khilaafah shall remain for thirty years, after that Allah will give Kingship to whoever he wishes [Sunan Abu Dawud]*
4. *The Prophet (alayhis salaam) wrote the letter to Caesar inviting him to Islam, writing Aslim Taslam meaning convert to Islam and you will be safe. This means had Caesar converted to Islam he would have remained secure upon his throne.*
5. *The king of Ethiopia, the Negus, converted to Islam in the lifetime of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) who never instructed him to abdicate his throne. The Negus remains kind of Ethiopia until his died, whereupon the Prophet (alayhis salaam) offered funeral prayers for him in absentia.*

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The intention here is provide as detailed an answer as is practically possible, with the grace and mercy of Allah, to each of these questions. To begin:

1. Allah mentions kings and kingship in the Qur'an in a positive way, saying it is a Ni'mah or a divine favour [5: 20]

It may be of assistance to begin the answer to this question with reference to the meaning of the words 'mulk', 'malik' and 'muluk' [مُلْكٌ \ مَلِكٌ \ مُلُوكٌ]. Broadly speaking, the first meaning relates to *sulṭān* (authority) in general. As is found in relation to what Allah said in *Surah Yusuf*:

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا  
وَالْحَقِّي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

*My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom / dominion and taught me of the interpretation of sayings: Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter; make me die a Muslim and join me with the good.*<sup>1</sup>

By necessity we know that this was 'authority' or dominion as referred to in the verse is in a broad sense, regardless of how it was arrived at or exercised in practise. Yusuf (peace be upon him) was not the king of Egypt, this position was already occupied by a hereditary monarch. It is this monarch which conferred upon Yusuf the position of being a chief minister.

The second meaning relates to the technical meaning which specifically relates to the current matter under discussion - namely as the head of state (*ra'is ad-dawla*) which is inherited - usually by father to son - and situated as head of state. A third meaning can be elicited as relating to the free man and that of his possessions in terms of wealth and estate. It is in this context that the verse you have cited appears and not – as can be seen from the discussion below – as construing that Allah has favoured or legislated monarchy / hereditary kingship. The verse as it appears in *Surah al-Mā'idah* in full is as follows:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ أذكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَآتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 12: 101

*And when Musa said to his people: O my people! Remember the favour of Allah upon you when He raised Prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He had not given to any other among the nations.*<sup>2</sup>

When read in full it doesn't appear that the verse purports to show Allah talking about kingship, or to be more precise hereditary monarchy or the monarchical system of governance as being blessed. This is not actually correct as the full verse demonstrates. Moreover, the wording in the verse is significant – [وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا]; the verb [جَعَلَ] being attached to the [كُمْ] which is the second person pronoun 'you/your' in plural form. Hence the verse reads in full, when taking account of the grammatical point - *made all of you kings*. Again, that is a far cry from any assertion that Allah is speaking in this verse as being in favour of a monarchical system of governance. To further exemplify this point and the meaning intended by the verse, it is important to consider the various commentaries upon this which have reached us by the classical exegetes. Writing in his acclaimed *Tafsir* Imām at-Ṭabari presents a large number of narratives, a selection of which is presented in full here with the quoted *isnād's*, concerning the portion of the verse where it says *and made you kings*:

حدثنا بشر قال: حدثنا يزيد قال: حدثنا سعيد عن قتادة قوله وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا قَالَ: كنا نحدث أنهم أول من سخر لهم الخدم من بني آدم وملكوا وقال آخرون: كل من ملك بيتا وخداما وامرأة فهو "ملك" كائنا من كان من الناس

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa'eed narrated to us from Qatāda regarding his statement - *And when Musa said to his people: O my people! Remember the favour of Allah upon you when He raised Prophets among you and made you kings* – he said - We were the first to make them jeer as they were servants of the sons of Adam and kings. And others said – all from Kings (with) a house, servant and a woman. Thus he is a king, whoever he was from the people.

حدثنا يونس بن عبد الأعلى قال: أخبرنا ابن وهب قال: أخبرنا أبو هانئ: أنه سمع أبا عبد الرحمن الحبلي يقول: سمعت عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص وسأله رجل فقال: ألسنا من فقراء المهاجرين؟ فقال له عبد

<sup>2</sup> *Qur'ān*, 5: 20

الله: ألك امرأة تأوي إليها؟ قال: نعم! قال: ألك مسكن تسكنه؟ قال: نعم! قال فأنت من الأغنياء! فقال: إن لي خادما. قال: فأنت من الملوك

Yunus bin Abdal-‘Ala narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Abu Hāni reported to us that he heard Abu Abdar-Raḥman al-Ḥubuli he said: I heard that a person asked Abdallah bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Aās - Are we not amongst the destitute of the emigrants? Abdallah said to him: Have you a spouse with whom you live? He said: Yes. Abdallah asked: Do you not have a home in which you reside? The man replied yes. Abdallah said: Then you are amongst the rich. He said: I have a servant also. Thereupon he (bin Amr bin al-‘Aās) said: Then you are amongst the kings

حدثنا الزبير بن بكار قال: حدثنا أبو ضمرة أنس بن عياض قال: سمعت زيد بن أسلم يقول: "وجعلكم ملوكا" فلا أعلم إلا أنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من كان له بيت وخادم فهو ملك

Az-Zubayr bin Bakkār narrated to us he said Abu Ḍamra Anas bin ‘Ayyāḍ narrated to us he said I heard Zayd bin Aslam he said – *‘and made you kings’* – I am unawares except that he said the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) said – *whoever was in possession of a house and a servant he is thus a king*

حدثنا سفيان بن وكيع قال: حدثنا العلاء بن عبد الجبار عن حماد بن سلمة عن حميد عن الحسن: أنه تلا هذه الآية: "وجعلكم ملوكا" فقال: وهل الملك إلا مركب وخادم ودار؟ فقال قائلو هذه المقالة: إنما قال لهم موسى ذلك لأنهم كانوا يملكون الدور والخدم ولهم نساء وأزواج

Sufyān bin Waki narrated to us he said al-‘Alā bin Abdal-Jabbār narrated to us from Ḥammād bin Salama from Ḥumayd from al-Ḥasan that he commented upon this verse – *‘and made you kings’* – by saying – and isn’t a king but the one who has a house and servant? He said - but it is said of this that Musa said this to them because they all had houses, servants, women and partners.

حدثنا سفيان بن وكيع وابن حميد قالوا: حدثنا جرير عن منصور قال أراه عن الحكم - {وجعلكم ملوكا} قال: كانت بنو إسرائيل إذا كان للرجل منهم بيت وامرأة وخادم عد ملكا

Sufyān bin Waki and Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us they said Jarir narrated to us from Maṣūr he said I saw from al-Ḥakam – *and made you kings* – he said: for the children of Israel if a man had a house, a woman and a servant, he was regarded as a king.

حدثنا هناد قال حدثنا وكيع عن سفيان ح وحدثنا سفيان قال: حدثنا أبي عن سفيان عن منصور عن الحكم:  
"وجعلكم ملوكا" قال: الدار والمرأة والخادم قال سفيان: أو اثنتين من الثلاثة

Hannād narrated to us he said Waki narrated to us from Sufyān (*ḥawala*) and Sufyān narrated to us he said my father narrated to us from Sufyān from Maṣūr from al-Ḥakam (concerning) – *and made you kings* – he said: a house, a woman and a servant. Sufyān said or two of the three.

حدثنا محمد بن عمرو قال حدثنا أبو عاصم قال حدثنا عيسى عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد في قول الله:  
"وجعلكم ملوكا" قال: جعل لكم أزواجا وخداما وبيوتا

Muḥammad bin ‘Amr narrated to us he said Abu ‘Aāṣim narrated to us he said Esa narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid in relation to the statement of Allah – *and made you kings* – he said – he made for you all a partner, servant and house.

حدثنا المثنى قال: حدثنا علي بن محمد الطنافسي قال: حدثنا أبو معاوية عن حجاج بن تميم ، عن ميمون بن مهران عن ابن عباس في قول الله: " وجعلكم ملوكا " قال : كان الرجل من بني إسرائيل إذا كانت له الزوجة والخدام والدار يسمى ملكا

al-Muthanna narrated to us he said Ali bin Muḥammad at-Ṭanāfisi he said Abu Mu’āwiya narrated to us from Ḥajjāj bin Tamim from Maymoon bin Mehrān from Ibn A’bbās in relation to the statement of Allah – *and made you kings* – he said a man from the children of Israel was called a king if he had a wife, a servant and a property.

حدثنا الحسن بن يحيى قال: أخبرنا عبد الرزاق قال: أخبرنا معمر عن قتادة في قوله "وجعلكم ملوكا" قال:  
ملكهم الخدم قال قتادة: كانوا أول من ملك الخدم

Al-Ḥasan bin Yahya narrated to us he said Abdar-Razzāq reported to us he said Ma'mar reported to us from Qatāda regarding his saying – *and made you kings* – he said they (were) kings, the servants. Qatāda said they were the first king of servants.

حدثني الحارث بن محمد قال: حدثنا عبد العزيز بن أبان قال: حدثنا سفيان عن الأعمش عن مجاهد: وجعلكم ملوكا " قال: جعل لكم أزواجا وخداما وبيوتا

Al-Ḥārith bin Muḥammad narrated to me he said Abdal-Aziz bin Abān narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from al-'Amash from Mujāhid – *and made you kings* – he said he made for you all a partner, a servant and houses.

حدثني موسى بن هارون قال: حدثنا عمرو بن حماد قال: حدثنا أسباط عن السدي: "وجعلكم ملوكا" يملك الرجل منكم نفسه وأهله وماله

Musa bin Hāroon narrated to me he said Amr bin Ḥammād narrated to us he said Asbāt narrated to us from as-Suddī – *and made you kings* – a man is a king from amongst them, himself, his family and his wealth

None of the narratives as presented above have reported the meaning that the portion of the verse – *and made you kings* – purports to mean that Allah has said or implied that monarchy as a ruling system is divinely sanctioned or prescribed. In the *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir, again concerning the same portion of the verse in 5: 20, he writes:

And his statement – *and made you kings* – Abdar-Razzāq said from ath-Thawri from Maṣūr from al-Ḥakam or other than him from Ibn 'Abbās in relation to his statement (in the ayah) – *and made you kings* – he said, a servant, a wife and a house. It is also narrated by Al-Ḥākīm in his *Mustadarak* from the *ḥadith* of Thawri also from al-'Amash from Mujāhid from Ibn 'Abbās he said: a wife and a servant *and gave you what He had not given to any other among creation* during their time. Thereafter Al-Ḥākīm said: It is *Ṣāḥīḥ* according to the two-Shaykh's but they did not record it. And Maymoon bin Mehrān from Ibn 'Abbās he said a man from the children of Israel was called a king if he had a wife, a servant and a property.

Ibn Jarir said: Yunus bin Abdal-‘Alā narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb reported (from) Abu Hāni reported that he heard Abu Abdar-Raḥman al-Ḥubuli he said: I heard that a person asked Abdallah bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Aāṣ - Are we not amongst the destitute of the emigrants? Abdallah said to him: Have you a spouse with whom you live? He said: Yes. Abdallah asked: Do you not have a home in which you reside? The man replied yes. Abdallah said: Then you are amongst the rich. He said: I have a servant also. Thereupon he (bin Amr bin al-‘Aāṣ) said: Then you are amongst the kings.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri said: Isn’t a king but the one who has a mount, a servant and a house?

Ibn Jarir further narrates from Maṣṣūr, al-Ḥakam, Mujaḥid and Sufyān ath-Thawri in relation to this and similar to (that from) Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Maymoon bin Mehrān. Qatāda said – they were the first people to take servants. Ibn Abi Ḥātim said it was mentioned from Ibn Lahiya from Darrāj from Abu Haytham from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudari from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: *If someone from the children of Israel had a servant, a (riding) animal and a wife, he was dubbed a king.*

This *ḥadith* is considered as strange (*ghareeb*) from this particular channel.

Similar has also been reported in the *Tafsir* of Imām Qurtubi and others. Furthermore, and in addition to the above, Imām Muslim recorded the following narration in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الطَّاهِرِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَمْرٍو بْنِ سَرْحٍ أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو هَانِيٍّ سَمِعَ أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الْحُبُلِيِّ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ وَسَأَلَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ أَلَسْنَا مِنْ فُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ فَقَالَ لَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَلَاكَ امْرَأَةٌ تَأْوِي إِلَيْهَا قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ أَلَاكَ مَسْكَنٌ تَسْكُنُهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْأَعْنِيَاءِ قَالَ فَإِنَّ لِي خَادِمًا قَالَ فَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُلُوكِ

Abul-Ṭāhir Aḥmad bin ‘Amr bin Sarḥ narrated to me Ibn Wahb reported to us Abu Hāni reported to me (that) he heard Abu Abdar-Raḥman al-Ḥubuli he said: I heard that a person asked Abdallah bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Aāṣ and heard him saying: Are we not amongst the destitute of the emigrants? Abdallah said to him: Have you a spouse with whom you live? He said: Yes. Abdallah asked: Do you not have a home in which you reside? The man replied yes. Abdallah said: Then you are amongst the rich. He said: I have a servant also. Thereupon he (bin ‘Amr bin al-‘Aāṣ) said: Then you are amongst the kings.

Taken in the round, we would submit that the aforementioned citations provide more than adequate evidence to show that the meaning of the Qur’ānic verse under consideration, namely 5: 20, is not an evidence to demonstrate that Allah was talking about kingship / monarchy in general, or that he praised hereditary monarchy as a system of governance nor for that matter regarded it as being blessed.

Secondly, the authentic *aḥādith* from the Prophet (peace be upon him) which say – *there is no king but Allah* - (as recorded by Muslim, al-Ḥākim and others) can be seen as setting out the prescriptive rule of what ought to be. It is known by necessity that there are kings all over the earth – from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) up until now. So his (peace be upon him) statement - *there is no king but Allah* – is not a descriptive statement of fact. Rather, it is a legal ruling overriding the idea of kingship and hereditary monarchy. To further exemplify the point, what did the Prophet (peace be upon him) say regarding ruling after he leaves this mortal world? As recorded in the famous *ḥadith* found in Bukhārī:

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ عَنْ فُرَاتِ الْقَرَّازِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا حَازِمٍ، قَالَ قَاعَدْتُ  
أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ خَمْسَ سِنِينَ، فَسَمِعْتُهُ يُحَدِّثُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ،  
كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي، وَسَيَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْتُمُونَ. قَالُوا فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا قَالَ فُوا بِبَيْعَةِ الْأَوَّلِ  
فَالْأَوَّلِ، أَعْطَوْهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَأَلَهُمْ عَمَّا اسْتَرَّ عَاهُمْ

Muḥammad bin Bashār narrated to me Muḥammad bin Ja’far narrated to us Shu’ba narrated to us from Furāt al-Qazāz he said I heard Abu Ḥāzim say I sat in the company of Abu Hurayrah for five-years, I heard him report from the Prophet (peace be upon him) (who) said: *Israel was ruled and guided by their Prophets - whenever a prophet died, another would take over his place. There will be no Prophet after me, but there will be Khulafā’ who will increase in number. The people asked, what do you order us (to do)? He said - Obey the one who will be given the pledge of allegiance first. Fulfil their rights, for Allah will ask them about (any shortcoming) in ruling those Allah has put under their guardianship.*

Political ruling in Islam is based upon consent and the pledge of allegiance (*bay’ah*) to a ruler to enact and adhere to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah*. The companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) – may Allah be pleased with them all – understood this point in a profound



manner. Again, as cited in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Bukhāri we find the following comments from Umar, albeit in excerpt form, as being particularly instructive:

Abdal-Aziz bin Abdallah narrated to us Ibrāhim bin Sa'd narrated to me from Ṣāliḥ from Ibn Shihāb from Ubaidallah bin Abdallah bin 'Utba bin Mas'ud from Ibn 'Abbās he said:

I used to teach (the Qur'ān) to some people of the emigrants, among whom there was Abdur-Raḥman bin 'Auf. While I was in his house at Mina and he was with Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb during his last Ḥajj, Abdur-Raḥman came to me and said – 'Would that you had seen the man who came today to the Chief of the Believers (Umar), saying, O Chief of the Believers! What do you think about so-and-so who says, If Umar should die, I will give the pledge of allegiance to such-and-such person, as by Allah, the pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr was a misfire which got established afterwards.' Umar became angry and then said, 'Allah willing, I will stand before the people tonight and warn them against those people who want to deprive the others of their rights (the question of rulership).

'By Allah, if Umar should die I will give the pledge of allegiance to such-and-such person.' One should not deceive oneself by saying that the pledge of allegiance given to Abu Bakr was given suddenly and it was successful. No doubt, it was like that, but Allah saved (the people) from its evil, and there is none among you who has the qualities of Abu Bakr. Remember that whoever gives the pledge of allegiance to anybody among you without consulting the other Muslims, neither that person, nor the person to whom the pledge of allegiance was given, are to be supported, lest they both should be killed

Umar added, 'By Allah, apart from the great tragedy that had happened to us (i.e. the death of the Prophet), there was no greater problem than the allegiance pledged to Abu Bakr because we were afraid that if we left the people, they might give the Pledge of allegiance after us to one of their men, in which case we would have given them our consent for something against our real wish, or would have opposed them and caused great trouble. So if any person gives the Pledge of allegiance to somebody (to become a *Khalif*) without consulting the other Muslims, then the one he has selected should not be granted allegiance, lest both of them should be killed.'

If we delve into Islamic history and jurisprudence, taking in all groups and sects, it is not possible to find any thinker or jurist advancing a theory of government based upon kingship,

monarchy or hereditary monarchy. In fact, there are only two viewpoints that have ever been advanced: that a Muslim ruler is appointed by *bay'ah* or that he is divinely appointed by Allah, which is the view of the *Shia*. One would need to step outside Islamic scholarship to find theories which argue *for* hereditary monarchy. During the middle-ages, this viewpoint was common in Europe. For example, William Tyndale who was the first person to translate the Bible into English argued in 1528:

He that judgeth the king judgeth God; and he that resisteth the king resisteth God and damneth God's law and ordinance...The king is, in this world, without law, and may at his lust do right or wrong and shall give accounts but to God only.<sup>3</sup>

Theories purporting to show the 'divine right' of kings and that monarchy was not simply the natural state of political affairs, but was ordained by God, was a particular feature of English political writings during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. James VI of Scotland, but also known as James I of England, famously sought to lay out not only the duties that the English subject bore to their king, but also that this was divinely sanctioned. Writing in 1598 he said:

And it is here likewise to be noted that the duty and allegiance which the people swears to their prince is not bound to themselves, but likewise to their lawful heirs and posterity, the lineal succession of crowns being begun among the people of God and happily continued in divers Christian commonwealths.<sup>4</sup>

And in his speech to the assembled Houses of Parliament – the Commons and the Lords in 1610 he said:

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth. For kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himselfe they are called

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<sup>3</sup> Cited in J. W. Allen (1964), *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Barnes & Noble) UP No. 4 (university paperbacks), p. 128. Together with the other quotations, they are left as far as possible in the old English.

<sup>4</sup> *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, 1598

gods....In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the divine power.<sup>5</sup>

Arguably one of the most famous expositions of hereditary monarchy, justified through both Christian scripture and an appeal to reason, was the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes, published in 1651. The quotes presented below are taken from chapters 17 and 20:

This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS. This is the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence. For by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Common-Wealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is inabled to conforme the wills of them all, to Peace at home, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad. And in him consisteth the Essence of the Commonwealth; which (to define it,)is *One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength ad means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence.*

It belongeth therefore to the Sovereigne to bee *Judge* and to praescribe, the Rules of *discerning Good and Evil*; which Rules are Lawes; and therefore in him is the Legislative Power.

Surely a Muslim must be conscious of these key political facts. Notwithstanding this, the words as revealed upon the tongue of the noble Prophet and final messenger to mankind, Muḥammad (peace be upon him) clearly ring true:

حدثنا سعيد بن أبي مریم حدثنا أبو غسان قال حدثني زيد بن أسلم عن عطاء بن يسار عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لتتبعن سنن من قبلكم شبرا بشبر وذراعا بذراع حتى لو سلكوا جحر ضب لسلكتموه قلنا يا رسول الله اليهود والنصارى قال فمن

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<sup>5</sup> Speech to the Lords and Commons of Parliament, 1610

Sa'eed bin Abi Maryam narrated to us Abu Ghassān narrated to us he said Zayd bin Aslam narrated to me from 'Aḫā bin Yassār from Abu Sa'eed may Allah be pleased with him that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *You will follow the wrong ways, of your predecessors so completely and literally that if they should go into the hole of a lizard you too will go there.* We said - O Allah's Messenger! Do you mean the Jews and the Christians? He replied – *who else?*



**2. In reply to your argument that Allah is the only king, we know from the Qur'an that Allah made kings [5: 20] including mentioning a specific king, Taalut [2: 247]**

The answer to this already been elucidated in the document which I understand was previously sent, entitled – *There is no king but Allah.* For the sake of brevity, it is worth pointing out the verses in full as they appear in *Surah Baqara* to understand the specific context:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ لَّهُمْ اأْبْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَيكُمْ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَانِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

*Have you not considered the chiefs of the children of Israel after Musa, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: Raise up for us a king, (that) we may fight in the way of Allah. He said: May it not be that you would not fight if fighting is ordained for you? They said: And what reason have we that we should not fight in the way of Allah, and we have indeed been compelled to abandon our homes and our children. But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them, and Allah knows the unjust.*

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكُهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*And their Prophet said to them: Surely Allah has raised Tālut to be a king over you. They said: How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth? He said: Surely Allah has chosen him in preference to you, and He*

has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and Allah grants His kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.<sup>6</sup>

A useful summary and background to these verses is available in the English version of *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* Vol. 1 pp. 686/691. He cites some narratives from the *Tabi'een* to indicate that the Prophet referred to was Samuel (peace be upon him). What is noteworthy though from this, the aforementioned verses, and what is contained in the Old Testament in the Book of Samuel (verses 1 to 22), is that the monarchical system of government was not prescribed by Allah for Israel. Rather, Israel *requested that this be inaugurated for them* – despite the warnings of their Prophet against this. Is it therefore any wonder that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) stressed in several authentic narrations the following:

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ عَنْ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ عَنِ الْأَعْرَجِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ  
دَعُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُمْ، إِنَّمَا هَلَاكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ، فَإِذَا نَهَيْتُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ،  
وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ

Ismā'il narrated to us Mālik narrated to me from Abi Zinād from al-'Araj from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: *Leave me as I leave you for the people who were before you were ruined because of their questions and their differences over their Prophets. So, if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can.*



3. *I quoted a hadith in which the Prophet (alayhis salaam) says: “Khilaafah shall remain for thirty years, after that Allah will give Kingship to whoever he wishes [Sunan Abu Dawud]*

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 246/247

Again this point is explicitly covered in the chapter, where more than a dozen *ahadith* on this subject are cited and explained. Taking all these narrations in the round, it would seem incredulous to argue that all of these narrations seek to establish that monarchy or hereditary monarchy is a prescribed or praised system of ruling. After the period of *Khilafah Rashida* they describe government that has rulers which are tyrannical, delaying the prayer, corrupting the people and permitting that which is forbidden. All of this will occur before *Khilafah* returns and that will be based upon correct right guidance. Suffice is to again reiterate the *hadith* as reported in the *Sunan* of Abu Dāwud upon the authority of Safinah, may Allah be pleased with him:

حَدَّثَنَا سَوَّارُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَارِثِ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُمَهَانَ، عَنْ سَفِينَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خِلَافَةُ النَّبِيِّ ثَلَاثُونَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ - أَوْ مُلْكَهُ - مَنْ يَشَاءُ قَالَ سَعِيدٌ قَالَ لِي سَفِينَةُ أُمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ أَبَا بَكْرٍ سَنَتَيْنِ وَعُمَرَ عَشْرًا وَعُثْمَانَ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ وَعَلِيَّ كَذَا . قَالَ سَعِيدٌ قُلْتُ لِسَفِينَةَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَمْ يَكُنْ بِخَلِيفَةٍ . قَالَ كَذَبَتْ أَسْنَاهُ بَنِي الرَّزْقَاءِ بَعْنِي بَنِي مَرْوَانَ

Sawwār bin Abdallah narrated to us Abdal-Wārith bin Sa'eed narrated to us from Sa'eed bin Jumhān from Safinah he said the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: *The Caliphate of Prophecy will last thirty years; then Allah will give the authority or dominion to anyone He wills.* Sa'eed said that Safinah said to him: Calculate Abu Bakr's caliphate as two years, 'Umar's as ten, Uthmān's as twelve and 'Ali so and so. Sa'eed said – I said to Safinah: They conceive that 'Ali was not a Caliph. He replied: The buttocks of Bani Zarqa, that is to say, Bani Marwan have told a lie.



4. *The Prophet (alayhis salaam) wrote the letter to Caesar inviting him to Islam, writing Aslim Taslam meaning convert to Islam and you will be safe. This means had Caesar converted to Islam he would have remained secure upon his throne.*

Once more, the answer to this question is covered in the chapter. For the sake of brevity, the *ahādith* do not state that had Caesar converted, his throne would have been secure. Any ruler who accepted the message and converted, was promised a great reward. But it should be

remembered that they would have been placed under Islamic suzerainty. While they may have retained their position as a ruler if they accepted Islam, they would not be able to confer that title of ruling upon their children as would happen in a hereditary monarchy. Furthermore, he (peace be upon him) did not address them as kings, the word used in the narrations which have reached us is distinct, as cited from the tradition found in Bukhāri and mentioned.



- 5. The king of Ethiopia, the Negus, converted to Islam in the lifetime of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) who never instructed him to abdicate his throne. The Negus remains kind of Ethiopia until his died, whereupon the Prophet (alayhis salaam) offered funeral prayers for him in absentia.*

For the sake of brevity, a summary for this point can only be given. If Allah wills, perhaps one day we will be able to detail the full picture of the Najāshi together with all requisite channels and references.

During the era of Prophet (peace be upon him), he commented upon the ruler in the Kingdom of Ethiopia by saying that within that polity is a king who doesn't oppress anyone. The Najāshi was sympathetic to Islam in the first instance with the Muslims who had come to seek his protection. He spoke with words that indicated as such as can be found in the narrations from *Musnad Aḥmad* and others, with chains which are sound from Zubayr bin A'wām, who was a witness to these events in Abyssinia. However drawing out general rulings from the position which Najāshi – or to use his name - Aṣḥama (may Allah be pleased with him) was in, is not really possible. Firstly, although he accepted Islam whilst being in a position of ruling, from the narratives it doesn't appear that he could publicly state his Islam or actively be recognised as a Muslim given the particular circumstances which existed in Abyssinia at the time. Nor was he able to migrate to be with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Those which did try from amongst his relatives were martyred when their boat sank on route. With the vantage of hindsight we can speculate that his role was only to protect the Muslims who had sought refuge there. The Muslims who were residing therein were doing so under his

prerogative following a command from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It wasn't permitted for them to travel back to the city of Medina until after the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah had been concluded.

Significantly Aṣḥama (may Allah be pleased with him) also died before the completion of the religion, missing the Qur'ānic chapters of *Mā'idah*, *Tawbah*, *Nur* and what came after that. What is clear from this episode is that the residing of Ja'far and his companions in Abyssinia was by the explicit order of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was done to establish a secondary contingency; a base in another land if it was that the Muslims were unable to remain in Arabia then they would be able to still exist albeit in Medina, they could then come to Abyssinia. However after of Ḥudaybiyah and the revelation of a clear victory in Surah *Fath* and the ascendancy of this *Deen*, the need for this secondary base was obviated. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then ordered Ja'far and his companions to return, placing upon them the ruling of *hijrah*. Aṣḥama (may Allah be pleased with him) didn't live to see that, having passed away before this.

And with Allah is all success and the supreme attainment.