

**Dialogue Between**

**Hazrat Ali (a.s)**

**And**

**Archbishop**

**(During the administrative  
period of First Caliph)**

**Abstract from**

**Jasaleeq**

**Salman e Farsi (Mohammadi)**

**English Translation**

**by**

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*In the name of Allah the most Beneficent, the most Merciful*

## **Dialogue between Hazrat Ali (a.s) And Archbishop**

(During the administrative period of first Caliph)

Had not Amir ul Mo'mineen Hazrat Ali (a.s) been defended Islam on that day, with his infinite knowledge Islam would have been extinct. –Salman e Farsi (r.a)

One of the most widespread scholarly masterpieces of Salman e Mohammadi (Salman e Farsi, r.a) accessible among us today is his book "Jasaleeq". Jasaleeq is a Roman word, means the Archbishop. The book "Jasaleeq" is a compilation of historic debate & conversations between Amir ul Mo'mineen Hazrat Ali (a.s) and the Roman Christian Archbishop during the administrative period of first Caliph- Abu Bakr. Following is the abstract of that historical incident.

The most detrimental incident befell on Islam right after succeeding the demise of prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s) from this world, when two hundred spiritual intellectuals of Christianity and Judaism approached the First Caliph, Abu Bakr and started questioning him about the authenticity of religion of Islam.

Salman e Farsi, (r.a) wrote in this book, on that day, had not Hazrat Ali (a.s) been defended the religion of Islam, with his infinite knowledge, it would have been totally extinct.

That detrimental incident happened when the news reached the emperor of Rome, Caesar, about the demise of prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s) and the dispute among the Muslims for choosing prophet's successor in the city of Medina. The emperor Caesar, thought, if Mohammad (s.w.a.s) were among authentic prophets, he would have appointed his successor in his epoch and not leaves upon people to choose one, like all the preceding true prophets did. Therefore, he questioned the authenticity of prophet hood of Mohammad (s.w.a.s) and suspected in the truthfulness of religion of Islam.

Therefore, he called in, religious scholars and intellectuals and up -dated them about the turmoil that was going on in the city of Medina after the passing away of the prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s). He then chosen a group of one hundred well-informed religious scholars expressed his suspicious thoughts to them about prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s) and Islam. Caesar advised them to go to Medina under the guidance of an Archbishop to prove Christianity is the true religion with debate, discussion and conversations.

According to other sources, this group, on its way to Medina, stopped at *Bayt ul Maqdas* and informed Jewish religious scholars the reason of their journey to Medina and about its going on turmoil in the city of Medina. As a result of it, additional one hundred Jewish scholars and intellectuals accompanied with this group to find out the

truth about Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s.) and religion of Islam.

Salman e Farsi (r.a) was present in the prophet's mosque, on that Friday, when this group of two hundred religious scholars of Christianity and Judaism entered the mosque in search of the successor of prophet Mohammed (s.w.a.s). It was a great display of visitors into the city and the mosque but at the same time very worrisome. The leader, an Archbishop, spoke to the Muslims and asked them to guide him towards the Successor of prophet Mohammed (s.w.a.s) since he needs to get some questions answered. He also declared their inclination of acceptance of Islam if convinced to be a true religion by debates, discussions and dialogues.

Omar bin Khattab, was sitting adjacent to Abu Bakr. Upon asking who is the successor of the prophet, Omar bin Khattab pointed Abu Bakr as the leader and master after the death of Prophet (s.a.w.s).

Archbishop turned towards Abu Bakr and asked "are you the successor of the Prophet?"

Abu Bakr said "no, I am not".

Archbishop asked "who are you?"

Before Abu Bakr could reply, Omar bin Khattab said "He is the Caliph of *Rasoolullah (s.a.w.s)*."

Archbishop asked Abu Bakr, is he the knowledgeable one, who could satisfy the needs of people by answering the questions without the help of others?

Abu Bakr said "no, I am not that Caliph"

Archbishop asked “what is this position you are holding to it and consider yourself the Caliph of Prophet? We have read in our books this post and title is strictly for prophets and their divine successors. The Almighty God nominated Adam (pbuh) as His Caliph on the earth and told David (pbuh) that “I have nominated you as my Caliph on earth”, has Mohammad (s.a.w.s) given you this title?

Abu Bakr replied: No, but his companions selected me as the successor.

Then the Archbishop said to Abu Bakr that he was not the successor of prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s), but a successor of the companions. You are accepting that Prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s) did not choose you; of course, it is against the Prophets’ divine tradition. No prophet ever passed away without appointing his successor. It seems you have voided prophet-hood of Mohammad (s.w.a.s) and also turned away from the traditions of all prophets of God.

Salman e Farsi (r.a) was listening the conversation with full attention. At this moment, the Archbishop turned to his companions and said: It seems that Mohammad (s.w.a.s) was not a true divine prophet from God but he was a worldly administrator who ruled these Arabs by power of sword. Had he a true prophet-hood from God, he would have definitely nominated someone to succeed him, in the same way as all other God’s true divine prophets have done.

Salman e Farsi (r.a) narrates that archbishop got extremely furious, irritated and addressed angrily to Abu Bakr: Shaikh! You have confessed that the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s)

hasn't nominated you as his successor instead you have been chosen by people. Now I am asking you if God wants us to follow according to people's opinion then why He sent so many prophets at all?

You have actually denied the mission of all the prophets by your actions and you have affirmed that you do not need any divine prophet thus you have falsified God and accused your own Prophet (s.a.w.s). Therefore I find it necessary to talk to you to know whether you have done this on basis of faith and truth or due to ignorance, infidelity and lewd aspirations!

Archbishop's views worried caliph, signs of helplessness and distress were exhibited on his face. Archbishop was excited with the joy and finding himself victorious, frequently shouted, O' Shaikh, answer my question. There was a pin drop silence both the Caliph and the Muslims in the mosque. Abu Bakr was unable to answer and Muslims also were dumb founded.

Archbishop announced to his own companions, that the religion of these Muslims is not based on truth; to which everyone from his group agreed. Archbishop then turned to Abu Bakr and asked will he answer few more questions to which Abu Bakr replied, yes.

Archbishop asked: Tell me who am I and what is my position in God's view.? And who you are and what is your position in God's view?

Abu Bakr said: “I consider myself a believer, but I don’t know my position in God’s view and in my view you are an infidel, but I don’t know your position in God’s view”.

Archbishop said: “In my opinion you have ruined your faith with infidelity and now you are unable to decide whether you are on the path of truth or falsehood? On the other hand, I believe in God after my initial denial and I am completely satisfied about my position in my God’s view. You have testified yourself about my salvation and your own falsehood”.

Then the Archbishop turned to his companions again and said: “My friends! be delighted, because this Shaikh has testified your salvation”.

Then again turning towards Abu Bakr said: “O Shaikh! Tell me if you are a true believer and I am an infidel, where is your place in Heaven and where is my place in Hell?”

Abu Bakr, in search for answer, looked for the help from people sitting nearby, but none could say a word to rescue him out. Finally, after a long pause, in a trembling, weak and frightened voice, replied: “I don’t know a place about mine and yours in Heaven or Hell.”

Archbishop said: How dare you consider yourself successor of Prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s) when you have no knowledge to answer people’s questions, instead, you



depend on others knowledge. Don't you have anyone more learned and knowledgeable among you Muslims? If God, has chosen your Prophet, as you Muslims believe, then he wouldn't have ruined his promise with the Almighty God. He would have definitely not avoided to nominate his successor. If anyone among you is wiser and more knowledgeable with prophetic signs, then your religion is true; otherwise you have cheated these people because the ignorant has no right to lead.

### **Salman realized Islam was in grave danger**

Salman wrote, in his book "Jasaleeq" that, when I saw this painful scene I felt Islam is in grave danger. I stood up immediately and rushed towards the house of Moula Ali (a.s) with the lightning speed, knocked his door. Requested him to rush out. When Moula Ali (a.s) came out and saw my worrisome face, enquired me why I am so worried. I asked him (s.a), why he is at home? Islam of Prophet Mohammad is totally ruined. After Prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s) Islam got damaged. Muslims have lost their dignity. I described him all what was happening in the mosque. I requested Moula Ali (a.s) to rush and rescue Islam.

Moula Ali (a.s) who is the trust of Islam, a great rescuer, a problem solver, swiftly went to the mosque and sat next to the prophet's grave on the floor, addressing the Christians said "ask me whatever questions you have. I have answers for all your question".

Archbishop explained the primary reason of their visit and his sorry experience with the knowledge of Abu Bakr. He said Muslims have introduced this man (pointing to Abu Bakr) as the prophet's successor but we unfortunately found him quite ignorant, so we are doubtful about the truthfulness of the religion of Islam.

Moula Ali (a.s) addressing the Archbishop and his companions said: I am the true successor of the prophet of Islam and the interpreter of Holy book Qur'an. I know Islam thoroughly in & out and I know its firm and ambiguous verses, also its superseding and superseded verses. I do have all the knowledge that is beneficial and guidance for the entire humanity. Now ask me whatever you wish to know about the past, present and future till the doom's day. O the great Christian scholar! I have entire knowledge of Bible and Torah apart from the knowledge of Qur'an. The holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) has enlightened and familiarized me with all branches of existing knowledge. I am the Prophet's brother, cousin and son-in-law. My descendants and me are the inheritors of his knowledge. We are the Ark of salvation for the entire universe. We are like Noah's Ark, whoever boards on it has survived and whoever denies to board in, has carried away by the violent waves and perished.

My descendants and me are like the "Hitta" entrance for the Israelis. To our prophet (s.a.w.s) I am like Aaron to Moses with the difference that after him no other prophet will be sent. O Christian scholar whoever loves me is the believer and whoever hates me is the infidel.

Hearing these wise words, the archbishop was delighted and turned to his companions and said: I swear by God! This is the Individual who speaks with knowledge. I hope we will achieve our goal and will find the real religion for which we set out together.

Then he turned to Moula Ali (a.s) and asked: O the learned scholar, tell me who am I and what is my position in God's view? And who are you and what is your position in God's view? Moula Ali (a.s) replied: I consider myself and in God's view a believer due to His blessings and grace, but you are an infidel because you have violated your pledge with Him.

Archbishop asked: Where is your place in the Heaven and mine in the Hell?

Moula Ali (a.s) said: I haven't entered Heaven or Hell to know mine or your place but as mentioned in the Qur'an, concerning the good or bad people's place in the hereafter; Almighty has discussed with His Messenger (s.a.w.s) about the distinct ranks and podiums in Heaven and regarding infidels and sinful criminals. They will be sent to Hell, which has, seven entrances specified each entrance for a type of criminal or infidel.

Archbishop told his companions: Friends, our wish is achieved and we have found what we were in search for.

O great intellectual! Tell me whether the Throne (Arsh) carries Almighty or Almighty carries the Throne?

Moula Ali (a.s) asked him: If you hear the correct answer will you embrace Islam?

Archbishop promised: Yes, I swear by God! if you answer our question accurately, all my companions and myself will embrace Islam.

Moula Ali (a.s) said: Almighty carries the Throne and the skies. He has stated in the Quran that Almighty prevents the skies and the earth from clashing against each other.

Archbishop asked: O the learned scholar! Tell me where is God?

Moula Ali (a.s) said: Above and beneath, in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west and He is dominant over all creations. Encompasses everyone everywhere. This verse of Quran is a witness to my words. There is no secret talk among three but God is their fourth, nor among five but He is their sixth. God is with them even if less than that or more and wherever they may be. Then on the day of Judgement He will inform them about what they have done. (Mujadeleh: 7)

Archbishop said: I swear by God! This scholar speaks the truth with Divine grace and blessing exactly like Jesus (a.s), other prophets and their successors who used to speak with Divine grace.

O the wise intellectual! Let me know whether Heaven is in this world or in the Hereafter and where these two, exist.?

Moula Ali (a.s) answered: The world is situated in the Hereafter and the Hereafter has circumambience over the world. The Hereafter is the place of rest for life. It is as if the person is sleeping and its soul is roaming. Our body dies but our soul is eternally alive. Almighty said: The Hereafter is the relaxing place of the life, if you comprehend. (Ankabout: 62)

Heaven and Hell are in this world. Dead person is buried and lives therein. It may be either a garden- from the heaven or may be a ditch from the ditches of Hell fire.

Then the Archbishop asked: O the great intellectual! Qur'an states that The entire earth will be in His fist on the Day of Resurrection and skies will be folded or scrolled in His right hand (Zumar : 67). When such a thing will happen, where would Heaven and Hell be located? Since they are under the same earth and skies.

Moula Ali (a.s) asked for a piece of paper and pen. He wrote "Heaven" and "Hell" on the paper and scrolled it and gave it to Archbishop and asked to in scrolled it. He did.

Moula Ali (a.s) asked: Has the writing disappeared or vanished?

Archbishop replied: No, it is, as it was.

Moula Ali (a.s) said: As the writings of Heaven & Hell did not move, or relocated or vanished from the paper by scrolling the paper, similarly Heaven and Hell won't disappear by on folding or scrolling of the skies.

Archbishop said, O the great Scholar, it is mentioned in Qur'an "All things shall perish except the face of God." What does it mean and what is its evidence? Moula Ali (a.s) asked a nearby sitting Muslim to get some logs of wood. When logs of wood came, he lit the fire in them. When the logs were burning and flame was rising up in all directions, Moula Ali (a.s) asked the Archbishop to show him the "face" of the fire. The Archbishop said: I cannot specify, it could be all over.

Moula Ali (a.s) said: Fire is one of the creations of God and we are incapable to identify its face, so how could you label the face of the Almighty when no eye can see Him nor mind can comprehend Him. There is nothing like God and He is all hearing and forbearing as is written in Qur'an (Anam, 103).

### **The Roman Archbishop embraced Islam**

Archbishop was extremely fascinated by Moula Ali's (a.s) knowledge, explanation, discussion based on his convincing logic and said: O the rightful Successor of the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s), you have satisfactorily answered all my questions and I am guided to true path through you.

Then he recited the Kalma e shahadat.

He then turned to his companions and said: O my friends! We have finally found the person we were in search of and reached our goal. We should all obey him as our Amir and trust him to be blissful, in this world and in the hereafter.

Archbishop's confirmation and acceptance of Islam was of great significance according to Salman e Farsi (r.a), because Salman had the knowledge & experience of church and Christian teachings. He knew the status and importance of an Archbishop that holds in Christian world. Salman e Farsi very well knew the impact of embracing Islam by such a high status Christian scholar in the Christian world.

In short, the Archbishop and all his companions embrace Islam and they all believed Moula Ali (a.s) as the rightful successor of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s).

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This was the cheeriest moment for all the Muslims. They were all rejoicing the blissful occasion. Even the radiant face of Moula Ali (a.s) was further glistening with joy. He praised God Almighty for this blessed moment and triumph for Muslims.

Abu Bakr and his friends also exhibited their happiness, partly for protecting them from further discredit and embarrassment. They thanked Moula Ali (a.s) saying: Abul Hassan, may Almighty reward you.

Salman e Farsi (r.a), wrote in his scholarly masterpiece, that prior to leaving the city of Medina, these newly converted Roman Muslims went to the residence of Moula Ali to meet and say good-bye.

The leader of the group, Archbishop, now a converted Muslim, told Moula Ali (a.s) that these Muslims have chosen

a wrong person as the successor to the prophet. Their wrongful action is similar to the action of Israelis who destroyed themselves and deserve Hell.

He further straightforwardly offered Moula Ali (a.s), his help to stay in Medina and fight for his successor-hood position or would leave the city. They were willing to be at Moula Ali's disposal.

After long conversation Moula Ali (a.s) said: It's not the right time to fight. Prophet Mohammad (s.w.a.s) asked me to be patient. You can return home. I will let you know when such a time comes, whoever accompanies me then, will be rewarded and whoever dies prior to, will be considered an oppressed. They noticed, tears rolled down the cheeks of Moula Ali (a.s). They also started crying on the helpless situation of Moula Ali (a.s) prior to heading for their motherland.

This debate and dialogue, which is a section of Salman e Farsi (r.a) 's book "Jasaleeq "was authentically documented in their books by many nominated Islamic scholars such as Shaikh e Tusi in "Fehristh" , Shaikh e Najjashe in "Mosanafeen and Mosannafat" , Shaikh Mohammad Deylamie in "Irshad ul Quloob", Ibn Babeveh in "Al Tawheed" and Shaikh e Mufid in "Aamali" and Majlesi in "Bihar ul Anwar" .

Late Majlesi in "Bihar ul Anwar" regarding the authenticity of Salman's book writes: The contents of this book varies,



however the name of the book is “Jasaleeq and Amir ul Mo’mineen”. Salman e Farsi is the third person and the author who had documented the incident. Thus its incident’s authenticity is evident. Author of “Qaamoos ur Rijal” writes: A part of Salman’s book consists of this discussion, and hence Salman’s name is recorded among former authors of Islamic books. Ibn e Shahr Aashoob in his book “Ma’alem ul Ulama” writes:

The first person who has written on Islam and compiled the traditions was Amir-ul-Momineen Ali (a.s) then Salman e Farsi r.a, then Abouzar Ghaffari r.a, then Asbagh Ibn Nabateh r.a, then Abdullah bin Abi Ra’fay r.a and after them Imam Zain-ul-Abedeem (a.s) wrote “Sahefeh e Kamelah”.