

## Sūrat al-Baqarah Verse 247– Part 1

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 مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

2:247 - Their Prophet said to them, ‘Allah has appointed Talut as king for you.’ They said, ‘How can he have kingship over us, when we have a greater right to kingship than him, as he has not been given a lot of wealth?’ He said, ‘Indeed Allah has chosen him over you, and increased him in knowledge and physique, and Allah gives His kingdom to whomever He wishes, and Allah is all-giving, all-knowing.

Note: The first part discusses the following part of the verse only:

Their Prophet said to them, ‘Allah has appointed Talut as king for you.’ They said, ‘How can he have kingship over us, when we have a greater right to kingship than him, as he has not been given a lot of wealth?’

### Questions for Reflection

- 1) The Prophet says; ‘Allah has appointed for you’ rather than ‘I have appointed’. What does this tell you about Divine leadership?
- 2) What do the words of the people reveal about their attitude towards God and their Prophet? Compare it to what they had told him in the previous verse.
- 3) What are the criteria for leadership according to the people here? What are criteria according to Islam? (Taqwa, knowledge, virtue ...)

### Commentary

The Prophet accepted the request of the people for a King and told them that Allah wanted Talut to be their King. Talut was a strong person both in his body and his soul. He was tall and physically strong. He was also a firm believer and had wisdom and piety. He was not very well known and lived with his father in a small village near the river. He worked on his father’s farm and often took the animals on the farm for grazing.

One day some of the animals wandered away and Talut went in search of them along with a friend. He reached near the town of ‘Sawf’. That was the place where the Prophet Shamul (also known as Ishmuil) lived so the two friends decided to visit him. Perhaps the Prophet would be able to tell them where the cattle were. They went to the Prophet. As soon as the Prophet and Talut saw each other there was an instant connection. The Prophet knew immediately that this was the man whom God had chosen to be the King of his people. That is why He had sent him to his town.

The Prophet told Talut that the cattle were on their way back to the farm and he should not be worried about them. 'I want to invite you towards a much bigger task' he told him. 'God wants you to be the King of the Banu Israel and lead them to victory'. Talut was amazed at this but was pleased that God had chosen him. He accepted the position.

The Prophet then told his people about the appointment of Talut as their King. He told them they should all obey him and prepare to go with him to face the enemy. The Banu Israel were surprised at the choice. They were of the impression that wealth and lineage were important criteria for leadership. Talut had neither. He was not from the tribe of Levi from whom their prophets had come. Nor was he from the tribe of Prophet Yusuf (a) from whom their past leaders had also come. Also, he was a poor farmer. They protested at the choice and said they themselves were more fit to be king than he was.

### Some Lessons

- 1) Divine leadership is only by the command of Allah. The people cannot choose a successor of the Prophet.
- 2) Do not be heedless of the potential of people, even those who do not have apparent power or position.
- 3) Criteria of people are often wrong. Do not be misled by them.

### Connecting verse

Divine leadership as commanded by Allah - 38:26

### Connecting Topics

- 1) Criteria for Divine leaders

<https://www.al-islam.org/bright-lights-guidance-muhammad-ali-khansary/chapter-6-divine-leadership>

- 2) Criteria of those who did not accept Imam Ali (a) as the successor of the Prophet (s)

- <https://www.al-islam.org/imamate-the-viceregency-of-the-prophet-sayyid-akhtar-rizvi/part-3-sunni-point-view>

- <https://www.al-islam.org/when-power-and-piety-collide-sayyid-moustafa-al-qazwini/chapter-4-political-policies-quraysh#selection-first-six-caliphs>

- <https://www.al-islam.org/when-power-and-piety-collide-sayyid-moustafa-al-qazwini/chapter-4-political-policies-quraysh#dialogue-between-abdullah-ibn-al-abbas-and-%E2%80%98umar-ibn-al-khattab>