

Imamate And Infallibility of Imams In The Qur'an

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This text presents an eye opening read on one of the most important yet controversial topics within Islam, that being the important subject of Imamate and infallibility of the Imams (as). This beautifully written book is compiled of solid, logical and reasonable proofs pertaining to the holy Quran and authentic hadith from both within Shia and Sunni sources that would leave the mind of any man of reason without doubt and leave his heart at ease. This is a must read for all truth seekers or skeptics alike who wish to know the truth and shed light on this very crucial topic within Islam.

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Publisher's Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (saws) stored in their school of thought and preserved by their followers, is comprehensive and embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has been able to produce brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource.

It has presented to the Muslim *ummah* many scholars who, following in the footsteps of Imams (as) who belong to the Prophet's Household (Peace be upon them), have provided convincing answers to the questions and doubts raised by various schools and intellectual friends within and outside the Muslim nation. Throughout the past centuries, these scholars have given well reasoned answers and clarifications to these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly (ABWA) has undertaken to defend the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the followers of various sects and by the proponents of the trends which show hostility to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and the followers of their rightly guided school of thought which has been ready to confront these challenges and be in the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) are of unique significance because they are based on genuine knowledge, appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly has endeavoured to present a new phase of these rich arguments through the studies and translations of contemporary Shia writers and of those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in the edition and publication of the valuable works of the leading Shia scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth to discover the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (P.b.u.th) has offered to the entire world.

The *Ahl al-Bayt* World Assembly looks forward to benefitting from the opinions suggestions and constructive criticism of the readers in this area.

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Mr. Rida Kardan the author of the present book, and Sayyid Iraj Razzaqi, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department

The Ahl al-Bayt (as) World Assembly

Preface

There are two main viewpoints concerning the issue of Imamate, The first is that of the Sunnis, who hold that the Prophet(saws), may God's peace and blessing be on him and his descendants, did not introduce any successor and say that the community had to choose the Prophet's successor and leader of the Muslims.

The second viewpoint is that of the Imamiyyah Shi'ites, who consider Imamate as a divinely ordained position and as a continuation of prophet hood and say that God designates an Imam just as He appoints a prophet.

The Imamiyyah Shi'ites possesses a large number of solid proofs confirmed by intellect, and evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, included in theological, exegetic and *hadith* sources.

The present preface explicates the Shi'ites' intellectual viewpoint on the aforementioned issue (of succession) explores the following points about man's nature and inclinations.

1. We know that Islam is an everlasting religion sent for all people of all times.
2. The holy Prophet (saws) made every effort for the propagation and advancement of the divine religion of Islam, made use of every opportunity, worked hard and gladly throughout his life, made extraordinary sacrifices and was ready to die for strengthening people's faith. This is confirmed by the following Qur'anic verses:

"Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe" (26:3) also,

"Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement" (18:6)

3. A large number of his best and the worthiest men were martyred in the cause of Allah.
4. He made clear to people all that brought to them prosperity in various aspects. Secondary points of *fiqh* and traditions recorded in the sources of *hadith* and Islamic jurisprudence of both Shi'ite and Sunni schools testify to this statement.
5. The holy Prophet of Islam (saws) passed away at a time when Islam had not yet extended to all the parts of Arabia let alone worldwide.
6. Certain powers of the time posed threats to Islam and to its spread and continuity especially those who refused to embrace Islam. Some showed unbecoming reactions and behaved rudely when they were invited by the Prophet to embrace Islam. Iran's emperor, for example, tore the Prophet's letter.
7. The Muslims felt they were in need of authority and strong leadership in order to confront and suppress such opposing powers after the Prophet's demise.
8. The love for leadership and yearning for social rank in man was something from which the companions of the Prophet (saws) were not exempted. Perhaps Islam had not fully filled the hearts of most of those who were in the company of the Prophet (saws) although they loved him greatly.

They remained under the influence of the last remnants of the moralities of the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyya*) and tribal prejudices so that they were ready to compete with one another after the demise of the Prophet craving for caliphate. The holy Prophet has been quoted as saying, "I do not fear that you will become polytheists after me, but I fear that you will fight with one another over this world".¹

9. There were hypocrites who constantly plotted against Islam and Muslims and exploited every moment for their own advantage. There was fear of their infiltrating into the Islamic government after the Prophet. Perhaps a group of them entered Islam from the very beginning of the Prophet's call, craving for authority.

10. History tell us that some of the chiefs of tribes, who had been invited by the Prophet (saws) to embrace Islam, agreed to enter Islam on condition that they would take part in the future Islamic government. In his *Sirah*, ibn Hisham says, "When the Prophet (saws) came to Bani ʿAmir clan, he introduced himself to them and invited them to worship Allah, the All-mighty, the High.

One of the men said 'If we give our allegiance to you, will we manage the affairs (of the state) after you if you prevail over your opponents?' The Prophet answered, 'The affair is with Allah. He appoints whoever He wishes'.²

11. Definitely it is central and instinctive for the person who rules over a group not to leave them without appointing someone as a successor even if the group were sheep.

12. When the second caliph was dying, Abdullah ibn Umar said to him, "people say that you do not

intend to appoint a successor. If the shepherd, who looks after your camels or sheep, leaves them without a guard, you will blame him. It is evident that guardianship of the people is more important than looking after camels or sheep. What will you tell God when you meet Him if you do not appoint someone to succeed you?"³

'A'ishah refers to the same point and says to ibn Umar, "Convey my greetings to Umar and say to him, 'Don't leave the *umma* (the community) of the Prophet (saws) without leader, and don't leave them to their chances after you lest sedition should befall them".⁴

It is also reported that Abdullah ibn Umar has said to his father, "I wish you had designated someone to succeed you. When you send someone who manages the affairs of the people, do you not like him to appoint someone to replace him?"

"Yes, I do". Umar said. His son added: "If you employ someone to look after your sheep, do you not like to see him appoint someone to replace him?"⁵

When Mu'awiyah wanted to appoint Yazid as his successor, he referred to the same point, and said, "I fear to leave the Ummah of Mohammad with no one to look after them like a flock of sheep without a shepherd".⁶

Whenever he decided to go on a trip, the holy Prophet (saws) appointed a deputy, and he never left Medina without appointing someone to take care of things. The *Sira* and history books have made a note of this and mentioned the names of those whom the Prophet had chosen to represent him (while he was away).

For Example, in ibn –Hisham's *Sira*, which includes the Prophet's military expeditions, the names of those the Prophet (saws) had chosen to represent him in Medina (during the Prophet's absence) have been listed as follows:

1. Bawat expedition: Sa'ib ibn Uthman ibn Madh'un⁷
2. Ashirah expedition: Aba Selemah ibn 'Abdul Asad⁸
3. The expedition of Safwan, Badr the first: Zayd ibn Haritheh⁹
4. Badr al Kubra expedition: Aba Lubabeh¹⁰
5. Bani Saleem expedition: Seba' ibn 'Arfatah¹¹
6. Sowaiq expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul–Mundhar (Abu Lubabeh)¹²
7. Zi–Amr expedition: Uthman ibn Affan¹³
8. Far' expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom¹⁴

9. Bani Qayniqa' expedition: Basheer ibn Abdul Mundhir¹⁵
10. Uhud expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom¹⁶
11. Bani al-Nazeer expedition: ibn Umma Maktoom¹⁷
12. Dhat al-Riqa' expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari or Uthman ibn Affan¹⁸
13. The second Badr expedition: Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Sellul al-Ansari¹⁹
14. Dawmat al-Jandal expedition: Seba' ibn 'Arfatah²⁰
15. Al-Khandak expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom²¹
16. Bani Kurayza expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom²²
17. Bani Lahyan expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom²³
18. Dhi Qurrah expedition: ibn Umm Maktoom²⁴
19. Bani al-Mustalak expedition: Abudhar al-Ghifari²⁵
20. Al-Hudaybiyya expedition: Nomaylat ibn Abdillah al-Laythi²⁶
21. Khaybar expedition: Nomaylat ibn Abdillah al-Laythi²⁷
22. Mecca Conquest: Kalthum ibn Hoseyn²⁸
23. Hunayn expedition: 'Utab ibn Aseed²⁹
24. Tabuk expedition: Mohammad ibn Muslimat al-Ansari, or Siba' ibn 'Arfatah³⁰

According to a correct, and well-known tradition when he wanted to leave Medina for Tabuk, the noble Prophet of Islam (saws) appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), may God bless him, as his successor. There are scores of other evidence in the books of *hadith* and history books which confirm this view.

25. The farewell pilgrim: Abu Dajani al-Ansari or S'iba' ibn 'Arfatah.³¹

The noble Prophet used to appoint a commander for each expedition in which he himself did not take part. Sometimes, he nominated more than one leader so that if the first was wounded, the second would take the lead instead.

For example, in Mu'tah Battle he appointed Zayd ibn Haritha to be succeeded by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and the latter by Abdullah ibn Rawaha in case the former commander was wounded.³²

When he sent a group of forty men to *B'ir Ma'unah*, the Prophet (saws) appointed Abdul Mundhir ibn

Umar as their leader³³ and for the six man group sent to Rajee' to teach *fiqh*, the Prophet appointed Marthad ibn Abi Marthad 'Anawi as a leader.³⁴

Now, it is clear that the Prophet's aim was to teach the people, as stated by the Qur'anic:

“And purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom”.

He never hesitated about appointing someone as his deputy whenever he decided to go on a long or short trip, he never sent a group without a leader, and he was aware of what would take place in the future after his demise.

Great traditionists of both Shi'ite and Sunni denominations have mentioned in their books of *hadith* that the Prophet was fully aware of the tribulations that would become of his religion after his death.

Given all this, can one claim that the Prophet (saws) has not thought of appointing someone to be his successor, an issue which is most awe-inspiring for the Islamic community or he has paid no attention to this matter?

Can anyone claim that God, the Most High, who has appointed the Prophet (saws) and praised him in the following words,

“Certainly an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful”(9: 128).

Has not appointed a successor to safeguard the divine message and preserve religious teachings, and to be an authority on all the teachings of *Shariah*. This is against the indisputable reasons presented by the Book of Allah and in the *Sunna*.

For this reason Imamiyyah Shi'ites believe that the holy Prophet (saws) has nominated his successor by divine decree. This question has been made clear in the Qur'an and the Sunna.

The present book cites some Qur'anic verses in order to examine the question of Imamate and characteristics of Imams. These verses are: *Ibtala*, *Mubahaleh*, *Aulu al-Amr*, *Wilayah*, *Sadiqeen*, *Tatheer*, and *Ilm al-Kitab*.

First the Qur'anic verses are discussed, then relevant traditions are quoted to support the idea included in the stated verses. Since the present book concerns the Sunnis too, the view of their scholars and commentators are stated and the traditions they have reported are soundly investigated; finally the doubts raised about these traditions have been cleared up...

Riqa Kardan

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1. – Sahih of Bukhari, vol. 4, the section on fil Hauz, p. 142, Dar al-Ma'rafat, Beirut.
 2. – Vol. 2, p. 425, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut; al-Rowz al-Unf, vol., 4, p. 38; al-Sirat Al-Nabawiyah, by Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, vol. 1, p. 283, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.
 3. – Al-Riadhul-Nazirah, vol. 2, p. 353, Dar al-Nadwah al-Jadidah, Beirut; Sunan of Beihaqi, vol. 8, p. 149, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; Hilyat al-Awliya', vol. 1, p. 44, Dar al-Fikr.
 4. – "Al-Imamah wal Siyasah", vol.1, p.23.
 5. – Ibn Sa'ds Tabaqat, vol. 3, p. 343, Dar Beirut lil-Taba'wa Nashr.
 6. – Al-Tabari's History, vol.3 part 5, p. 154; Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah, vol.1, p. 184.
 7. – Ibn Hisham's Sira, vol. 2, p.248.
 8. – Ibid.
 9. – Ibid, p. 251.
 10. – Ibid, vol. 2, pp 263–4.
 11. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.
 12. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.
 13. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 49.
 14. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 50.
 15. – Ibid, vol. 3, p.52.
 16. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 68.
 17. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 200.
 18. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 214.
 19. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 220.
 20. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 224.
 21. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 231.
 22. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 245.
 23. – Ibid, vol. 3, p.292.
 24. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.
 25. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 302.
 26. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 321.
 27. – Ibid, vol. 3, p. 342.
 28. – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 42.
 29. – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 83.
 30. – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 162.
 31. – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 248.
 32. – Ibid, vol. 4, p. 5.
 33. – Ibn Hisham's Sirah, v. 3, p. 194.
 34. – Ibid, v.3, p. 183.

Chapter 1: Imamate in the Qur'anic Verse of Ibtla'

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

“And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with commands, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam for mankind. (Ibrahim) said: And of my offspring (will there be leaders)? He said, my covenant does not include the unjust”. (2: 124)

The verse illustrates two points:

1. The position of Imamate is higher in rank than that of Prophet Hood.
2. Imamate (religious leadership) does not include the unjust.

The following section is divided into three parts, each one focuses on one of the following topics:

1. The prominent status of Imamate
2. The (position of) Imamate does not include the unjust
3. The (status of) Imamate in the words of the Imams themselves

Part One: The Prominent Status of Imamate

The above mentioned Qur’anic verse refers to the tests to which Allah exposed the Prophet Ibrahim many years after his prophet hood at the end of his life. Having successfully passed the divine tests and patiently withstood the great hardships, he was granted the position of Imamate.

In order to elucidate the above Qur’anic words, it is necessary to explain some basic questions such as:

1. What relationship was there between the series of trying to which the Prophet Ibrahim was exposed and granting him the position of Imamate?
2. What are the kinds of test to which the verse refers?
3. Can one say that the Imamate bestowed on the Prophet Ibrahim is equal to his Prophetic mission?
4. What idea does the above–mentioned Imamate convey?

We will now go through the above questions one by one.

The Relationship between Trying and the Position of Imamate

Question: In the Qur’anic verse

“And when his Lord tried Ibrahim by means (of certain) words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam for mankind...,”

The word “when” which is an adverb of time, requires an adjunct. The question is: What is its adjunct? The first supposition is that the word “when” requires the adjunct *remember*, which has not been stated explicitly. Thus, the verse reads

“O Prophet! Remember the time when his Lord tried Ibrahim by means (of certain) words...”

An assumption like this is open to criticisms, like:

- 1) This supposition entails deleting something or refraining from stating it explicitly which is contrary to basic rule (of rhetoric).
- 2) Without a conjunction “and” the clause “*Surely I will make you an Imam for mankind*”, is separated from the previous one.

Apparently, the context of the clause “*I will make you an Imam*” is not disconnected from the previous one but it is semantically and syntactically dependent on it. Since there is no conjunction “and” to join the two parts, it seems that when this part comes with the preceding part it forms a whole.

The relation between these two parts is an outcome of the dependence of “when” or “*He said*”. Thus the meaning will be like this: “When his Lord had tested Ibrahim, He said to him ‘I will make you an Imam’”.

Accordingly, tests prepared the ground for granting Imamate to Prophet Ibrahim. Another solid evidence is the Qur’anic verse wherein the relationship between the “patience” and “Imamate” of prophets is clearly explained:

“And we made of them Imams to guide by our command for they were patient, and they were certain of our clear signs”. (32:24)

The above verse mentions that it is due to the prophets’ “patience” and “certainty” that they were granted Imamate, and this clearly shows that there is a connection between the tests to which the Prophet Ibrahim was exposed and the rank of Imamate to which the stated verse refers.

Ibrahim’s Tests and Trials

What were the tests that made the Prophet Ibrahim worthy of holding the position of Imamate?

The Qur’anic verse states that Ibrahim was tested through “words”, and he brilliantly succeeded in the test. The words were apparently particular commands by means of which he was tested.

What the noble Qur’an means by “*manifest trial*”¹ which the Prophet Ibrahim faced in his life is his determination to offer his son as a sacrifice; an act which confirms Ibrahim’s boundless generosity and

complete submission to Almighty God.

It should be noted here that the Prophet Ibrahim was put to test when he was very old, many years after he had been made a prophet and was given a son, Ismail, when aged.

Does Imamate to which this Qur'anic verse refers mean the same as Prophet Ibrahim's prophethood?

Some commentators maintain that the Imamate given to the Prophet Ibrahim is identical to his divine mission and prophet hood but as previously stated Imamate is different from prophet hood for two reasons:

(a) The Qur'anic verse clearly states that this Imamate was granted to the Prophet Ibrahim after many trials, one of which is the offering of his son as a sacrifice, long after he had been made a prophet.

(b) The expression *ja'iloka* (I am assigning you) derived from the verb *ja'l* (make) is a present participle and its objective complement, *imaman* إماماً that has nunation (*tanween*) does not refer to the past it refers to the present or future.

Therefore, (contrary to the claim of some commentators,) the present participle “assigning” does not apply to the past and so it cannot indicate that the divine mission and prophet hood are the same as Imamate.

What does Imamate mean?

From the Qur'anic verse we learn that Imamate or religious leadership is different from *nubuwwat* (prophet hood). An Imam is a leader, definitely appointed by God, to be a guide and an example for people to follow in all aspects.

1. That the position of Imamate was granted to Ibrahim years after his being messenger and after he had successfully passed the great divine trials, clearly shows that Imamate is not on the same plane as prophet hood, but enjoys a higher status.

2. Now that Imamate has been proved to have a higher status than prophet hood, and according to immutable reasons a prophet must be divinely protected against any error and sin, it follows that inerrancy is inseparably linked to the position that is loftier than prophet hood.

Part Two: Imamate does not include the unjust

The stated Qur'anic verse points to the impeccability of Imams when it says

“My covenant does not include the unjust”

Thus signifying that the unjust must not hold this position.

When God, the Most High said,

“I will make you an Imam for mankind”

The Prophet Ibrahim (as) asked,

“And of my offspring (will there be leaders)?”

God the Most High replied,

“My covenant does not include the unjust”.

So, this verse suggests the following points:

- a) Imamate is God’s covenant.
- b) This covenant does not include the unjust, and since a sin is considered injustice, a person who is not divinely protected commits sins.

The above verse clearly and irrefutably shows that a religious leader (Imam) must necessarily be immune from sins and errors when his Imamate begins.

Does this mean that those who previously were unjust can hold the position of Imamate? In other words, does the (Arabic) derivative *zalim* (unjust) concern the present, not the past so that it does not include those who were unjust in the past but those who are just now?

Does the Qur’anic verse suggest that the person who is unjust at the time of undertaking Imamate will be deprived of this position, but the person who was unjust in the past but is not unjust now, can become an imam, (a religious leader)?

In answer to the above assumption, let us consider two citations:

1. In his Qur’anic Exegesis of *al-Meezan*, Allamah Tabataba’i quotes the renowned scholar the late Haji Sheikh Mohammad al-Husain Isfahani as saying, Prophet Ibrahim’s offspring can be divided into four groups:

- a) Those who had been unjust before holding the position of Imamate;
- b) Those who had been just before holding the position of Imamate, and became unjust after their holding it.
- c) Those who had been unjust prior to holding the position of Imamate, but became just after holding it.

d) Those who were just both before and after holding the position of Imamate.

Prophet Ibrahim, grand as his dignity is, never includes the first two groups in his inquiry. Therefore, his words “*and of my offspring?*” refer to the third and fourth group.

Then, the reply which he gets from God, the Most High, “*My covenant does not include the unjust*”, excludes those in the third group who were unjust in the past and are just at the time of occupying the position of Imamate. Accordingly, only the fourth group of his progeny are worthy of Imamate.

2. In his *Ma’jma’ al-Bayan*, a Qur’anic exegesis, the late Tabarsi says:

“We agree that the term *zalim* (unjust) does not apply to the person who is not unjust at the present, but this word applies to the person who had previously been unjust at the moment of his exercising injustice. The above mentioned Qur’anic verse refers to such a person whom it considers not worthy of becoming Imam. The statement “*does not include*”, which is a negative present tense, testifies to this idea”.

It follows that a person who has sinned, though for a single moment throughout his life can never become an Imam because such a person was a sinner at that particular moment, and the noble Qur’an states, “*My covenant does not include the unjust*”.

It is clear now that the Qur’anic verse emphasizes a twofold inerrancy of Imams, including the time of their holding the position of Imamate and throughout their lifetime. It is also clear that Imamate is a divine post set by the Almighty God, i.e. a divine gift given to those whom God considers worthy of it.

Part Three: The Status of Imamate in the Words of Imams

After we have investigated the Qur’anic verse, it is now befitting to go through a narration reported from Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (as), the 8th Imam of the Shi’ah, in which he elucidates the reality of Imamate:

“Abdul Aziz ibn Muslim is quoted to have said, ‘On the first days of our arrival at Marv, we assembled in the presence of Imam al Rida, (as) in the great mosque of the city of Marv. Some started talking about Imamate and said that there had been different views over it.

So, I went to my master, Imam al-Rida (as), and informed him about people’s arguing about the subject. He smiled and said ‘O Abdul Aziz, these men do not know the reality and have been deviated from what they believe to be right.

‘God, the All-mighty did not raise his Prophet up (to Him) before He had perfected the religion for him ,sent on to him the Qur’an, which ‘*clearly explains everything* and delineated the lawful, the unlawful, *hudood* (penal law), divine precepts and all that people need, as he says

‘We have not neglected anything in the Book’. (6:38)

In the Farewell pilgrimage and towards the end of the Prophet's life; God, revealed the verse:

'This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion'. (5:3)

Therefore, Imamate is indispensable to religion.

The Prophet did not leave this world before he had clarified to the Muslims the principal features of their religion, pointed out the true path and appointed 'Ali (as) as their leader, leaving nothing of their problems unsettled.

So, those who suppose that God, the All-mighty has not perfected His religion reject the Book of Allah, and those who reject the Book are disbelievers. Do they know the significance of Imamate and its status in the community to allow themselves to embark on it?

Imamate is too great in worth, too lofty in status, too high in rank, too invincible in nature and too profound in depth for people to fathom it by their intellect or approach it through their thought or elect an Imam according to their will.

Imamate is a position for which God, the All-mighty, has singled out Ibrahim (as) after granting him the rank of prophet hood and taking him as a friend, a favour with which He has honoured him, as he said, ***"I will make you an Imam for mankind"***. Then, God's friend, Ibrahim, who was highly delighted asked, ***"and of my offspring?"***

God the All-mighty said, ***"My covenant does not include the unjust"***. This Qur'anic verse has nullified the possibility of the unjust ones' becoming imams until the Day of Resurrection and so Imamate has become a privileged position for the purified. God has honoured Ibrahim when He granted Imamated only to the selected and pure ones from among his offspring, as in the Qur'anic verse:

"And We bestowed Isaac and (then) Jacob on him as an additional boon; each We made into honourable man. We made them leaders to guide (others) by Our command and We inspired them to perform good deeds, keep up prayer, and pay alms. They have been serving Us (alone)". (21:72-3)

Imamate continued as a privileged position for his offspring over the ages until God, the Mighty and High donated it to the holy Prophet, and said,

"Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrahim are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe and Allah is the guardian of the believers". (3:68)

Then, by God's command, the Prophet (sa) placed Imamate in 'Ali and in his chosen offspring, to whom God, the Mighty and High, has given knowledge and faith, as the Qur'an says,

And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: Certainly you tarried according to the ordinance of Allah till the day of resurrection". (30:56)

This position will remain in Ali's (as) unerring offspring until the day of resurrection. How can these ignorant people designate an Imam? Imamate is a privileged position for the Prophets and a heritage for the Prophet's trustees.

Imamate is God's caliphate and a successor to the Prophet's caliphate (saws) it is a privileged position of the Commander of the Faithful (saws), and the inheritance of al-Hasan (as) and al-Husain (as). Imamate is the reins of the religion, the Muslims' order, the soundness of this life and the believers' might. Imamate is the cornerstone of ever-growing Islam and its highest branch.

It is only through the Imam that prayers, alms, fasting, *Hajj* and holy war (*jihad*) can be accomplished; it is through Imam that the divine punishments and laws can be executed and frontiers safeguarded.

It is the Imam who proclaims lawful what God has made lawful and proclaims unlawful what God has made unlawful, defends God's religion, and summons (people) to the way of Allah through wisdom, good advice and conclusive argument. The Imam is like the sun that lights up the world while it is high up in the sky neither hands can reach it nor eyes can perceive it.

The Imam is the bright moon, the illuminating beacon, the radiant light and the star that (safely) guides people in gathering darkness, (unknown) tracks of towns and deserts and swelling waves of sea. The Imam is like pure drinking water, rainy cloud, a falling rain, a bright sun, and a shading canopy, an expanse of land, a gushing spring, and a brook and a garden.

The Imam is a companion, a friend, a loving father, an equal brother, a kind mother, a shelter to the God-fearing at the time of great distress. The Imam is Allah's trustee for His creatures, His proof over His worshippers, His caliph in His land, the one who summons (people) to Allah and defends Allah's sanctity.

The Imam is purified from sins and kept entirely free from defects, singled out as a man of (divine) knowledge and known for his endurance; hea source of the order of the religion, honour of Muslims, anger of hypocrites, and eradication of disbelievers.

The Imam is a peerless one of his time, whose dignity no one (else) can attain, whose merits are not acquired, but are granted to him by God, the Bestower who can (claim to) have known the Imam thoroughly, or to have the ability of electing him?

What an idea! Intellectuals are lost, visions are weary, the eminent are little, the sage had bewildered, orators have fallen short to give speech, poets have been tongue-tied, men of literature have failed and the eloquent have not been able to describe a single feature or a single merit of the Imam, for the Imam is like a star, too distant for men to reach or for describers to describe.

Do you imagine that these attributes are found in other than the family of the Prophet (saws)? I swear by God that, their souls that have cheated them and their illusion has made dire them deviate (from reality).

They have taken a steep road where their legs take them to degradation. They relied on their defective minds in their conception of the (office of) Imamate, therefore they have gone astray and deviated (from the divine command) so much so that they have too far from him,

“May Allah destroy them, how they are turned away” (9:30)

Having distanced themselves from the choices of God, His messenger and the Prophet’s Household, they followed their own inclinations, although the Qur’an addresses them as it states:

“And your Lord creates and chooses whom He pleases; to choose is not theirs”, (28:68)

“And it behaves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter” (33:36)

“How do you judge?” (10:35)

“Or have you a book wherein you read? That you have surely therein what you choose? Or have you received from us an agreement confirmed by an oath extending to the day of resurrection that you shall surely have what you demand? Ask them which of them will vouch for that. Or do they have associates if they are truthful” (73: 36–41)

Also, the Qur’an states:

“Do they not then reflect on the Qur’an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks” (47:24)

“...a seal is set on their hearts so they do not understand”. (9:87)

“...they said, we hear, but they did not obey. Surely the vilest of animals, in Allah’s sight, are the deaf, the dumb, who do not understand. And if Allah had known any good in them He would have made them hear, and if He makes them hear they would turn back while they withdraw”. (8:21–23)

“They said; we hear and disobey”. (2:93)

How can they ever venture to elect the Imam? he is one in whose sphere of knowledge ignorance has no place; he is a leader who knows no fear, nor does he retreat; he is the substance of divinity and sanctity, purity, asceticism renunciation; knowledge and worship of God.

He has been singled out in the Prophet’s supplications, he is a descendent of the Pure Fatimah, God’s peace be upon her; he is one whose lineage no one can question, he enjoys a unique honourable position, he comes from the *Quraysh* and is the pinnacle of the Hashim clan, a descendant of the holy Prophet, may God’s peace and blessing be on him, and the object of God’s good pleasure the honour of

the noble.

The offspring of Abd Monaf, praiseworthy who is known for his thriving knowledge and endless forbearance, Fully competent in imamate and aware of politics, obeying him is in combenton Muslims, he upholds God's command, offers counselling to god's servants, and protects God's religion.

Surely God gives success to prophets and Imams and grants them of his stored knowledge and wisdom, what he has not given to any, and so their knowledge is beyond that of the people of their time, as God has said,

“Is He who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What is the matter with you; how do you judge?” (10:35)

Or, ***“and whoever is granted wisdom, is given a great good”. (2:269)***

Or, referring to saul he has said “Surely Allah has chosen him in preference to you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique; and Allah grants His kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing”. (2:247)

God, the Mighty and High address His Messenger when he says,

“And Allah has revealed to you the Book and the wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know; Allah's grace to you is very great” (4: 113)

As regards the Imams from the Household of the Prophet, God, the Most High, has said,

“Or do they envy the people for the greace that Allah has given them? We gave the people of Ibrahim the Book and the wisdom, and we gave them a grand kingdom. So some of them believed in him and some turned away from him; and hell is sufficient to burn” (4:54)

When God appoints someone to manage the affairs of His servants, *He expands his breast for it*, deposits fountainheads of wisdom gush in his heart, and inspires him with abundant knowledge that enables him to answer any question and not to deviate from the right path.

That is, the Imam is fully immune from sin and error, is singled out for this by God to be God's proof over His servants,

“This is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing”. (5:54)

Do people have the ability to elect such a person? Or does their candidate enjoy such qualities? I swear by the house of God that these people have transgressed the right they have been entitled to,

And they threw the Book of Allah behind their back as if they knew nothing” (2: 101)

Whereas in the Book of Allah there is guidance and cure. They disregarded the Book of Allah and followed their own whims, and so God blamed them and despised them, as he says:

“and who is more erring than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allah? Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people”, (28:50)

Or, ***“for them is destruction and He has made their deeds ineffective” (47:8)***

Or, ***“greatly hated is it by Allah and by those who believe. Thus does Allah set a seal over the heart of every proud, haughty one”? (40:35)***

“May God’s abundant peace and blessing be upon the Prophet Mohammad and his descendants”!2

1. – Surah 37, verse 106

2. – Usool al-Kafi, the translation of vol. 1, p. 283 (the original text: vol. 1, p. 198); Oyoon Akhbar al-Rida (p.b.u.h.), vol. 1, p. 216.

Chapter 2: Imamate in the Qur’anic Verse of Mubahalah

﴿ فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَابْنَاءَكُمْ وَ نِسَاءَنَا وَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴾

“So, whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of the knowledge, then sa Come, We will call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our souls and your souls, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord), and (solemnly) invoke for the curse of Allah upon those who lie”. (3:61)

The Christians of Najran and Their False Claim

The above Qur’anic verse refers to the Christians of Najran, who considered Jesus Christ, peace be on him, a deity and assumed that his having no father is a sign of his being a deity. The Qur’anic verse preceding the afore mentioned verse refutes their claim.

“Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was” (3:59)

The verse above tells the Christians that if Jesus’ birth of no father is a sign of his being a deity as they claim, then Adam (as) is worthier of being a deity because he was born of no father and no mother. But the Christians would not accept the truth however compelling the argument was. Thus, the Prophet was ordered to invite them to *mubahalah*. (A contest of prayer to God)

Although there are many things to discuss in the Qur’anic verse of *mubahalah*, we will consider here certain issues concerning the Household of the Prophet (saws), particularly ‘Ali (as), who accompanied the Prophet to the *mubahalah*. These issues are concerned with the following:

1. Who was the Prophet (saws) assigned to invite to *mubahalah*?
2. What was the aim of their presence?
3. In compliance with the divine order mentioned in the verse, who did the Prophet take with him?
4. Clarifying the rank of ‘Ali (as) referred to in the Qur’anic verse, and his being “the Prophet’s soul” with traditions to support this point.
5. Answering the questions posed about the stated verse.

One: Those Accompanying the Prophet (saws) as in the Verse of Mubahalah

Concerning the first question about who the Prophet was supposed to invite to *Mubahalah*, it is necessary to deliberate on two things:

- a) To whom do “*our sons*” and “*our women*” refer?
- b) Who are meant by “our souls”?

The verse:

“...Come! We call our sons and your sons...”

Contains the plural noun “*sons*” preceded by “our”¹ which refers to the Prophet meaning that the Prophet has to invite at least three people from among his sons.

Next comes the phrase “***our women and your women***”, in which the plural form “*women*”, preceded by “our” means that the Prophet has to invite all the women of his Household (if the phrase is taken to mean all of them), or at least three of them – which is the smallest number in a plural noun in Arabic.

This discussion is intended to see to whom the words “*our sons, our women and our souls*” refer and to examine the aim of *mubahalah* (contest of the prayer to God). As for how many or who are the people to whom the Qur’anic verse refers in the words “*our sons*” and “*our women*” this will be discussed in a later section.

The plural noun “souls” preceded by “our”, which refers to the Prophet, means that he has to invite to *mubalah* at least three people whom he considers as his soul.

Can “our souls” be referred to the Prophet (saws)?

The word “soul” in the phrase “*our souls*” literally means the blessed soul of the Prophet (saws) but when we notice the context, we find that it does not mean so. Let us consider the following indications:

- 1) The word “souls” is a plural form and a person has only one soul.
- 2) The statement, “***Then say Come! We will call***” makes it incumbent on the Prophet to really issue a call, and the very speaker is never meant by the word “call” when it is used in its real meaning; it would be unreasonable to say that it is incumbent on one to call oneself.

Therefore, those who imagine that in such examples like “*فطوعت له نفسه*” or “*دعوت نفسي*”, the word “*نفس*”, meaning “soul or self”, and the very speaker is concerned, have overlooked the fact that either the word “soul” is not used in its real meaning which refers to the very person, or the word “call” is used figuratively.

For example, in the verse “*فطوعت له نفسه قتل اخيه*” – “*his soul prompted him to slay his brother*” the real meaning of the word “soul” is man’s inclination.

Likewise, the phrase means I prepared myself to do something, not *I invited myself*. Thus, the word “*دعوت*” means something different from “*inviting*”.

3. Since the holy Prophet has already referred to himself in the phrase “*We call*”, there is no need for him to invite himself to *mubalah*.

Two: the Aim of the Presence of the Prophet’s Family in Mubalah

Why was the Prophet ordered to invite his family members to *mubalah* when the dispute was seemingly between two sides the very Prophet of Islam (saws) and the representatives of Najran Christians?

Some maintain that the presence of the dearest of the Prophet’s close relatives in *mubalah*, merely expresses his certainty of and confidence in the truth of his words and his claim. Such a decision will not be wise unless one is completely certain of the truth of one’s words and claim. If he had not had such confidence, he would have exposed his relatives to the danger of annihilation and destruction, an act, which no sensible person will do.

Such a justification cannot explain why the holy Prophet (saws) invited from among all his relatives only the members of his family to attend *mubalah*, because if we suppose that the above view is true, the event would seem an ordinary one and their accompanying the Prophet to *mubalah* would be of no

value.

A deliberation on the Qur'anic verse and the *hadiths* on the verse of *mubahalah* will reveal the overwhelming superiority of those who accompanied the Prophet in this event.

a) Al-Zamakhshari, a great Sunni scholar says, that the verse of “***mubahalah*** contains a strongest evidence about the superiority of *Ashab al-Kisa*”²

b) In his *Rooh al-M'ani*, al-Alusi says, “That the above Qur'anic verse indicates the superiority of **Al-al-Allah** i.e. the Household of the Prophet (saws),— is something which no believer can doubt; because showing enmity towards them invalidates faith”.³

Following this observation, al-Alusi, however, tries to say something else about the superiority of the Prophet's Household.⁴

Now, let's see why God, the Exalted, ordered that the Prophet's family should accompany the Prophet for *mubahalah*. In order to answer this question, we need refer to the Qur'anic verse that says,

“Come! We will call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our souls and your souls, then will pray humbly (to our Lord), and (solemnly) invoke for the curse of Allah upon those who lie”. (3:61)

First comes the idea of inviting “*the sons*”, “*the women*” and “*the souls*”, then their “humble praying” followed by “invoking for the *curse of Allah upon those who lie*”.

The Highest Status of Prophet's Family in the Verse of Mubahalah

Commentators of the Qur'an take *ibtihal* to mean “praying humbly” or “uttering a curse”.

The Qur'anic verse deals with two things: *ibtihal* from which the word *nabtihil* (we pray) is derived as well as invoking for the curse upon liars as in the phrase

“Then we will pray humbly for the curse of Allah upon those who lie”.

Each of these things has its particular objective concept. Also, the latter i.e. “*invoking for the curse of Allah upon those who lie*” is combined with the previous part, i.e “praying humbly” by using “then”.

This means that praying humbly by the Prophet and his family represents the cause and invoking for the curse of Allah as the effect. God's exposing disbelievers to dread torment due to the humbly praying of the Prophet and his family, may God bless them, lends them a very high status.

One may say that the letter “ف” meaning “then” in the Qur'anic verse, “**فنجعل لعنت الله** *then we will pray and invoke for the curse of Allah upon those who lie*” in this particular case interprets the sentence rather than indicates sequence, as in the Qur'anic verse 45 of chapter 11,

﴿ وَ نَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي ﴾

And Nuh cried out to his Lord and said: My Lord! Surely my son is of my family” (11:45)

Where the word “ف –then” is intended to explain the previous part (i.e. explain why Nuh called his Lord).

The answer to his claim is as follows:

a) The letter “فا– then” indicates two things: ordering and grouping which make the second part dependent on the first part. We can thus come to the conclusion that the Qur’anic verse of *mubahalah* underlines the elevated rank of the Prophet’s Household for it shows that their *ibtihal* (praying humbly) is as important as that of the Prophet’s and all this leads to exposing to God’s dread torment those who lie.

b) In the statement: “*then we pray for the curse of Allah upon those who lie*”, the role of those who pray is (merely) to request from God not to put curses upon the liars. Thus, invoking for the curse is ascribed to the Prophet as well as his Household, may Gods bless them all, and invoking for the curse is one of the effects of their *ibtihal* as is indicated by the word “فا”.

This fact seems to have been grasped by the Christians of Najran too. Al-Fakhr al-Razi mentions in his *Commentary*: “Having seen their angelic faces, the Bishop of Najran was so impressed that he said, O Christians! I behold faces (of people) who, if they ask God to erase a mountain He will erase it. Therefore, do not dispute with them, lest you should perish and then no Christian will exist on earth until the Day of Judgment”.⁵

A deliberation on this Qur’anic verse will reveal the following:

1. The holy Prophet (saws) had the members of his family attend the very important *ibtihal* (contest of prayer) so that his and their family invocation for the curse would be effective.
2. The faith and confidence of the Prophet and his family in his message and invitation have become very evident.
3. Everyone has realized the most elevated position of the members of the Prophet’s family and of their nearness to God.

We will see now who the Prophet meant by “*our sons*”, “*our women*” and “*our souls*” and whom he took along for *mubahalah*.

Three: Whom Did the Prophet Bring along to Mubahalah?

The Shi’ites and Sunnis unanimously hold that in order to participate in *mubahalah* (the contest of prayer to God), the Prophet (saws) took no one with him other than ‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain, May God’s blessing be on them. Here, the following points are worth considering:

- a. There are traditions that confirm the presence of the members of the Prophet's family in the contest.
- b. The authenticity of these traditions.
- c. The *hadiths* recorded in some Sunni books of traditions and are worth noticing.

Traditions (Hadiths) on the Participation of the Members of the Prophet's Family in Mubahalah

1) Hadiths in Sunni Resources

Since the present discussion is directed mainly to the Sunnis, the traditions that follow are taken mostly from their *hadith* sources:

The First Tradition

Muslim has reported in his *Sahih*⁶, Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*⁷ and Ahmad in his *Musnad*⁸:

“Qotaibah ibn Sa'id and Mohammad ibn 'Abbad have narrated from 'Amir ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, on the authority of his father (Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas) that the latter said: Mu'awiyah asked Sa'd, “Why don't you curse Abu Turab (he meant Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him)?”

Saa'd answered: “I remember three outstanding merits that the Prophet (saws) attributed to Ali (as). So I will never curse him. If I had only one of these merits, it would be more valuable to me than my red hair camels.

a) One day the Prophet (saws) wanted to set out for a military expedition, and have Ali, peace on him, stay in Medina, so Ali said, “O Messenger of God! Do you leave me to take care of the women and children?” The Messenger of God replied, “Are you not content to be to me what Aaron was to Moses, except that there will be no prophet after me?”

b) During the battle of Khaybar, I heard the Prophet (saws) say, “I will give the banner to someone who loves God and His Apostle, and whom God and His Apostle love”. Sa'd added, “We were then craving for that. Then the Prophet of God said, “Call Ali to come”.

When he came, the Prophet let some of his saliva go into Ali's eyes (to cure him of eye-ache),

submitted the standard to him, and then God granted victory to Muslims at his hands”.

c) “When the Qur'anic verse

'Then say, 'Come, we will call our sons and your sons...'

was revealed, the Prophet (saws) asked Ali and Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), to come and said, “O God, these are *Ahli* (my family).

What can be inferred from the aforementioned tradition?

1. The last words of the Prophet: “O God, these are my family” confirm the idea that “*our sons*”, “*our women*” and “*our souls*” in the Qur’anic verse refer to the Prophet’s family.
2. Each of these words: “*sons*”, “*women*” and “*souls*” is in the plural form, as a result the Prophet had to invite to *mubahalah* all the sons and women of his family and those who are like himself, whereas he invited only “Hasan and al-Husain” for his “*sons*”, “*Fatimah*” for his “*women*” and “*Ali*, peace be on him” for his “*souls*”

An event signifying that it is only these people whom the Prophet meant by *Ahli* (my family), and so his wives are not included.

3. The words “*Ahl*” and “*Ahl al-Bayt*” technically mean only the five people known as “*Ashab al-Kisa*”, as is clearly demonstrated by a large number of the Prophet’s traditions relating to the verse of *Tatheer* and proclaimed in other occasions.

The Second Tradition

In his *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer*, a Qur’an commentary, when Fakhr al-Razi comes to the verse of *mubahalah* he states:

“It has been recounted that after the Prophet (saws) had presented to Najran Christians proofs (concerning his divine mission) and they persisted on their ignorance, he said to them, “God, the Almighty, has informed me to have *mubahalah* (a contest of prayer) with you if you do not accept the proofs”.

“O Abu al-Qasim, we will return (to our tribe) to consider (what you say) and come to you later” they said.

Having gone back to their tribe, they asked *al-aqib*, who was their advisor, called Abd al-Masih, to give them his opinion on the issue. He said, “O Christians! You know Mohammad, and you know that he is a prophet sent by Allah, and he has said the truth as regards your prophet, Jesus Christ.

By God! No people have ever had a contest of prayer with a prophet unless their younger ones and older ones were annihilated. If you have contest of prayer to God, you will all die. If you are determined to abide by your religion, leave him and go back to your land”.

When the Prophet (saws) came out (of Medina), he carried al-Husain (as) in his lap and held al-Hasan (as) by the hand, while Fatimah, God’s blessing on her, was following him, and Ali, peace be on him came next. The Prophet (saws) said, “When I pray to God, say: ‘*Amen!*’ “

The bishop of Najran said, “O Christians! I behold faces (of people) who, if they ask God to erase a

mountain, He will erase it. Therefore, do not dispute with them lest you should perish and then no Christian will exist on earth until the Day of Judgment.

The bishop of Najran said, “O Abu al–Qasim, we have decided not to have a contest of prayer with you and we acknowledge you as a prophet”. The Prophet (saws) said, “If you refuse to have a contest of prayers, you can profess Islam and share Muslims’ faith” but, they refused. He (saws) said, “Then, there will be war between us”.

They said, “We are too weak to fight the Arabs. We are ready to compromise with you (that you) will not make us break away with our religion and in return, we will annually give you two–thousand dirham worth of silk clothes in the month of Safar and one–thousand worth of them in the month of Rajab in addition to thirty protective breastplates”.

So, the Prophet (saws) accepted their proposal and said “By the One in whose hand my life is impending destruction was awaiting the people of Najran. If *mubahalalah* had been held, they would have transformed into monkeys and pigs, the valley in which they are would have been burnt, and all the Christians would have died before the year ends and no bird would have remained on the trees”.

It has been reported that when the Prophet (saws) left Medina he had a black cloak on (*kisa*). When al–Hasan arrived, the Prophet (saws) let him go inside it. Then came al–Husain (as), and he (the Prophet) also let him go inside it.

Then came Ali(as) and Fatimah (sa) and joined them respectively. So, the Prophet recited,

“Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and purify you a (thorough) purifying”. (33:33)

“This tradition has been confirmed as authentic and correct by traditionists and authorities on Qur’an commentary”.⁹

What can be inferred from the aforementioned Tradition?

1. The tradition describes the way the Prophet’s family, God bless them all, were moving along for the contest of prayer as follows: Carrying al–Husain (as), who was still a child, the Prophet led the procession holding the hand of al–Hasan (as), who was not much older than al–Husain (as).

Then came Fatimah (sa), his dear daughter, followed by Ali (as), God’s blessing on them. This striking array, quite in line with the verse of *mubahalalah*, has the following aspects:

a) The sequence they followed matches that which is mentioned in the verse of *mubahalalah* –that is, “*our son*”, “*our women*” and “*our souls*”, respectively.

b) The way the Prophet (saws) carried his youngest son, al–Husain ibn Ali (as) to his bosom, and held

the hand of his other young son, al-Husain ibn Ali (as) is a precise definition of “our sons” in the verse.

c) Having in between Fatimah (sa), peace be upon her, the only person in the group to which “our women” refers gives her protection and veil, which can be a good explanation of “our women” in the verse.

2. The Prophet (saws) told the members of his family to say: “Amen!” after he prayed to God; the very idea which is referred to in the above verse as: “then we will pray humbly for the curse of God upon those who lie”.

In order to actualize the *ibtihal* and make the divine punishment befall those who lie, the contest was not to be performed only by the Prophet (saws) but by the Prophet as well as those who were told, i.e. to say: “Amen!”

3. The Christians’ acknowledgment of the high position of the members of the Prophet’s family when they saw them and finally their decision not to have *mubalahah* (contest of prayer to God) with the Prophet and those who accompanied him.

The Third Tradition

Another tradition confirming that “our son”, “our women” and “our souls” refer to no one other than Ali, Fatimah al-Hasan and al-Husain, is called *مناشدة يوم الشورى*. *Monashadat Yawm al-Shura*. The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be on him, mentions his merits before the members of the consultative assembly, namely Uthman ibn Affan, Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, Talha, Zubayr, and Sa’di ibn Abi Waqass.

This assembly finally elected Uthman to caliphate. In this meeting whenever Ali, peace be on him, mentioned one of his merits the members of the assembly confessed and swore that the merits are exclusively ascribed to him. The tradition is as follows:

“Asim ibn Zamrah has related from Hubayrah, on the authority of Amr ibn Wathala, that he said, ‘On the day when the consultative assembly was held, Ali, peace be on him, addressing Uthman, Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, al-Zubayr, Talha and Sa’ad, said, “I will advance to them very convincing arguments which no one from *Quraysh*, the Arab, or the non-Arab can refute.

I adjure you by God, the One – to say if there is anyone from among you who had professed the Unity of God before I did”.

“By God, there is no one”. They said.

‘I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone –other than me– whom the Prophet has made his brother when he made me to him what Aaron was to Moses, except that I am not a prophet?’

“There is no one”. They said.

“I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone other than me who has been purified, when the Prophet, God bless him and his family, ordered that the doors of all houses be closed except the door of my house in addition to my constant presence beside him in his house and in the mosque and when his uncle (Abbas) stood up and said ‘O Prophet of God! You closed the doors of all our houses but left Ali’s door open’, and the Prophet (saws) answered, ‘It is God who ordered the door of his house be left open and the doors of your houses be closed”.

They confirmed Ali’s words.

“I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone other than me who is most loved by God and His messenger, a fact which was stated by the Prophet on the day of Khaybar when he, God bless him and his family, submitted the banner to me and said,

“I will give the banner to one who loves God and His apostle and is loved by God and his apostle’ and when he (saws) wanted to eat the bird and called upon God to bring to him the person most loved by God to eat with him and I arrived”.

They said, “By God, there is no one”.

“I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone –other than me– who helped the poor while praying in his whispered prayer until God abrogated this injunction?”

They said “By God there is none”.

“I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone –other than me– who killed the unbelievers of *Quraysh* and Arab for the sake of God and His Messenger?”

“By God, there is one”.

“I adjure you by God to tell me, if there is anyone among you for whom the Prophet (saws) prayed to increase his knowledge and to be his hearing ear, as he did for me?” “By God there is no one”. They said.

“I adjure you by God to tell me if there is anyone among you who is closer to the Prophet in kinship than I am, or whom the Prophet called “my soul”, or whose sons the Prophet called “my sons?” They said “By God, there’s no one”.

As we see, the above narration establishes the idea that the Prophet (saws) had taken along only Ali, Fatimah, al–Hasan and al–Husain (as) for the prayer of contest as God had ordered him to.

The Authenticity of the Traditions

The stated narrations taken from Sunni sources prove our viewpoint. Regarding the authenticity of these narrations, which state that the people who participated in *mubahalah* (contest of prayer) beside the Prophet were exclusively the five pure members from the house of the Prophet, (Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.)),

We quote Hakim Nayshaburi's words on page fifty of his *Ma'rifat Uloom al-Hadith*.¹⁰ He first mentions ibn Abbas's report on the revelation of the verse of *mubahalah*, indicating that "our soul" refers to Ali (as), "our women" to Fatimah, and "our sons" to al-Hasan (as) and al-Husain (as).

Then, he states that the narrations that have been related from ibn Abbas and others in this concern are authenticated and that the Prophet pointed to his Household and said, "These are our sons, our souls and our women".

It would be impossible for us to cite, in this short book, all the relevant narrations reported from the Prophet's companions such as Jabir ibn Abdillah, ibn Abbas and the Commander of the Faithful. Therefore, we have listed in the footnote the sources in which such narrations are included¹¹.

2) The Traditions of Imamiyyah Shi'ites

There is a large number of Shi'ite reports on this event. We will mention only a few of them.

The First Tradition

Imam al-Sadiq, (as) is quoted to have said, when "Najran Christians came to visit the Prophet, their arrival coincided with the time of prayer. They chimed their bells and performed their ritual prayers in their own way. So the companions of the Prophet said, 'Look, Messenger of Allah! Can't you see what they are doing here, in your mosque'. He replied, 'Let them do what they like'.

When they finished their prayers, the Christians came to the Prophet (Ssaws) and asked 'What do you invite us for?' He said, 'For worshipping God, the One, and professing that I am Allah's Messenger and Jesus is a servant of God and His creature, who eats, drinks and (satisfies his needs)'

They inquired, 'If he is a servant of God, who is his father, then?' The Prophet (saws) was inspired to ask them about Adam, and say 'Wasn't Adam a servant of God, created by Him and ate and drank, and got married, too?

They said, 'Yes'. Then, the following verse was revealed:

"Surely the likeness of Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was". (3:59)

“But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our souls and your souls...” (3:61)

So, the Prophet (saws) invited them for *mubahalah* (a contest of prayer). If what I say is right, chastisement will befall you; if what I say is false, it will catch me.’

‘What a fair judgment!’ They said, and a time was appointed for the contest of prayer. When they returned home their chiefs said to them, “If Mohammad (saws) comes with his people, we knew that he is not a prophet and we will have *mubahalah* (contest of prayer) with him, but if he comes with the members of his family we won’t”.

The following morning they came and saw that the Prophet (saws) was accompanied by the Commander of the Faithful, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (as).

‘Who are they?’ they asked.

The answer was ‘They are Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet’s cousin, inheritor and son-in-law Fatimah (sa) his daughter; and the two children are al-Hasan and al-Husain (as).’

The Christians decided not to have *mubahalah* (contest of prayer), and said to the Prophet, ‘We will agree to do that which will please you. Excuse us from having the contest of prayer.’

The Prophet agreed on a compromise agreement, and it was decided that the Christians pay *jiziyah*.¹²

The Second Tradition

In his *al-Burhan*, Sayyid al-Bahrani who relates from ibn Babaway from Imam al-Rida, peace be on him, states that in his talk with Ma’mun and some learned men about the difference between the Prophet’s Household (*itrah*) and the community (*ummah*) and the superiority of (*itrah*) over *ummah* Imam al-Rida points to the fact that concerning those enjoying the divine purity, God says in the Qur’anic verse:

“Then say, ‘Come, we will call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our souls and your souls...”

The scholars who were present said that the very Prophet (saws) is meant by ‘our souls’. Imam al-Rida (as) said to them, “You are mistaken. By *our souls* Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) is meant because the Prophet (saws) once said, ‘If the people of *Wali*’ tribe do not abandon what they are doing, I will dispatch someone similar to me, *ka-nafsi*. By “*our sons*” al-Hasan and al-Husain is meant, and by “*our women*” Fatimah is meant. ‘Ali’s being similar to the Prophet is superiority which no one can have, a merit which no one can attain, and an honour which no one can acquire.¹³

The Third Tradition

It is reported that Harun al-Rasheed said to Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as), "You consider yourself to be the Prophet's offspring, whereas one's progeny should descend from his son. You descend from the Prophet's daughter".

Imam did not want to reply but Harun insisted that Imam present a proof and said to him, 'You have to present your proof. You claim to be Imam Ali's (as) progeny and you are fully versed in the Qur'an and there is not a single letter in the Qur'anic verses which you do not know. You have heard God's words:

"We have not neglected anything in the Book..." (6:38)

And you claim you are not in need of the *ulama's* verdict and the analogy they follow.'

In answer to Harun, Imam recited the following Qur'anic verse:

"and of his descendants, Dawood and Sulaiman and Ayub and Yusuf and Haroon; and thus we reward those who do good (to others)... and Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Ilyas..." (6:84-85)

Imam then asked Harun, 'Who was Jesus's father?' Harun answered, 'Jesus had no father.' Imam said, 'God has linked him to the Prophets through Mary. He has likewise linked us to the Prophet (saws) through our mother, Fatimah (sa), peace be on her.'

Presenting another evidence, Imam recited the verse of *mubahalah* verse and said, 'No one has ever claimed that the Prophet (saws) has admitted anyone other than Ali (as), Fatimah (sa), Al-Hasan(as) and Al-Husain (as) into his cloak on the day of *mubahalah* (prayer of contest). Therefore, "*our sons*", in the verse refers to al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), "*our women*" refers to Fatimah, peace be on her, and "*our souls*" refers to Ali (as).¹⁴

The Fourth Tradition

In his *al-Ikhtisas*, Sheikh Mufeed, relates from Imam Musa ibn Jaffar (as) that he said, "The community, as a whole, unanimously hold that on the day the Prophet (saws.) Invited Najran Christians to the contest of prayer, no one was sitting under the *kissa* other than the Prophet, Ali(as), Fatimah(sa), Al-Hasan(as) and Al-Husain(as).

Therefore, in the words of God, the Almighty, "***Then come, we will call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our souls and your souls***", "*our sons*" refer to al-Hasan and al-Husain, "*our women*" to Fatimah, and "*our souls*" to Ali ibn Abi Talib, God's peace and blessing on them all.¹⁵

Comments on Sheikh Mohammad Abdah and Rasheed al-Rida's Remarks

The author of *al-Minar* commentary first says: "It has been reported that the Prophet (saws.)

Singled out Ali (as), Fatimah (sa), and their two children, may God's peace and blessing be on them, to accompany him to the scene of the prayer of contest and said, "When I pray, say: Amen!" Then, the author briefly quotes Muslim and Tirmidhi and adds:

"(Our) master and imam (Sheikh Mohammad Abdah) says, "The narrations unanimously maintain that the Prophet (saws) singled out Ali (as), Fatimah (sa) and their children to participate in the prayer of contest and that in the Qur'anic verse, the words "our women", refers to Fatima, and "our souls" to Ali (as)

But these narrations originally come from Shi'ite sources. (They have forged these *hadiths*) and their objective is quite known. They do their best, to propagate such accounts, a style which is in vogue among most Sunnis, too.

Those who had forged such traditions were not able to properly associate the verse with that to which it refers, because no Arabic dialect uses the word "our women" to mean one's daughter, especially when one has wives. Their (interpretation) is not consistent with the standard Arabic and to take "our souls" to mean Ali is quite impossible".¹⁶

How strange it is of Mohammad Abdah supposedly a great reformer and a well versed man! On the one hand he admits that there is a large number of reports and a consensus of opinion on the soundness of the narrations, and on the other, he holds that they have been fabricated. How can a Muslim, not to say a great scholar, so simply reject the truth which is firmly rooted in the Prophetic practice?

If the narrations in *Sahihs* and *Masanid*, including Muslim's *Sahih*, which Sunnis consider to be one of the two most perfect books after the Qur'an, are subject to criticism, then to what source can one refer in order to accept or reject an issue related to Islamic schools of thought?

Which narration can be taken as valid if they reject the *hadith* which they themselves consider *mutawatir*? Should one accept or reject narrations according to certain rules or according to one's desire? Won't such observations disparage the Prophetic traditions?

Abdah has not pondered over the meaning of the Qur'anic verse and so, he takes it for granted that "our women" refers to Fatimah, God's peace and blessing be on her, whereas it has been used in its literal meaning and no one of the Prophet's wives, nine at that time, had requirements for such a high rank.

The only woman, who had this merit and was considered among his *Ahl al-Bayt*, was Fatimah (sa), God's peace and blessing be on her, who was with the Prophet during the prayer of contest.

A Faked Narration Rejected by the Sunnis

The above mentioned narrations make clear that no one other than the five pure persons people of *kisa* were taken along to the prayer of contest. Thus, the narration which some books have quoted from ibn Asaker reporting that the Prophet (saws) took with him Abu Bakr and his children, Umar and his children,

Uthman and his children, and Ali (as) and his children, is by no means valid, for the following reasons:

a) In his *Rooh al-Ma'ani*,¹⁷ al-Alusi says, "This *hadith* contradicts the narration of most scholars; therefore, it should be discarded".

b) In the chain of transmission of the (above) tradition, some narrators accused of lying have been recognized. For example, Sa'id ibn 'Anbasa al-Razi, whom al-Dhahabi has mentioned, in his *Mizan al-I'tidal*.¹⁸ He said that Yahya ibn Mo'in says, "Sa'id is a big liar".

Also Abu Hatam says, "He does not tell the truth". Another narrator in the chain of transmission who is accused of lying is Haytham ibn 'Uday whom al-Dhahabi has mentioned in his *Siyar A'lam al-Nobala*,¹⁹ and said, "Ibn Mo'in and ibn Dawood say, 'He is a big liar' and al-Nisa'i and others say that his traditions he has narrated should be discarded."

Regrettably, the contents of the above mentioned fabricated *hadith*, are ascribed to Imam Al-Sadiq (as) and Imam Al-Baqir (as).

Four: Ali, peace be on him, is the Prophet's soul

In the previous discussions, it was made clear that the phrase "*our souls*" cannot be taken to mean the Prophet (saws) himself and since the narrations already cited confirm that those who were present during the contest of prayers were Ali (as), Fatimah (sa), Al-Hasan (as) and Al-Husain (as), God's blessing on them all, it follows that the phrase "our soul" applies to no one other than Ali (as), and this is one of his outstanding merits, or perhaps one of the most remarkable virtues.

In these Qur'anic words, Ali (as) is referred to as the Prophet's soul. Because an individual has only one soul, and because it will be meaningless to say that Ali (as) is really the Prophet's soul, it is apparent that the word 'soul' is not used in its literal meaning, rather it indicates his similarity (to the Prophet).

Since this similarity between them is absolute, it follows that Ali (as) enjoys each and every attribute of perfection and dignity that the Prophet (saws) has, except that which logic has excluded, and that is being a prophet. Consequently he enjoys all the perfections and particularities which the Prophet has, such as leadership over the people and superiority over all human beings including the past prophets.

Given this, the Qur'anic verse provides an evidence for the imamate of Ali (as), his superiority over the community after the Prophet (saws) and his outstanding precedence over other Prophets.

Fakhr al-Razi's Comments on the Verse of Mubahalah

In his *al-Tafseer al-Kabir*, Fakhr al-Razi says:

"There lived in Ray a teacher who followed Twelver Shi'ism.²⁰ he maintained that Ali had priority over all prophets except Mohammad (saws). This man used to say, 'An indication of Ali's superiority over all the

earlier prophets is the verse of *mubahalalah* wherein God, the Most High, says, “*and our souls and your souls*”.

This, “*Our souls*”, does not mean the Prophet (saws) himself because one cannot call one’s self. Therefore, it implies someone else, namely Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), peace be on him, an idea on which there is a consensus of opinion.

The Qur’anic verse, therefore, means that Ali is the Prophet’s “soul”, God bless them both. Since it is impossible for Ali (as) to be actually the Prophet, the phrase naturally means this soul is similar to that soul, which entails that both have the same characteristics except for two things prophet hood, (*nubuwwat*) and Ali’s superiority over the Prophet, because all agree that Ali (as) is not a prophet, nor is he superior to the Prophet (saws).

He (Hamsi al-Razi) adds, ‘This argument is confirmed by a *hadith* accepted by both supporters and opponents. In this *hadith* the Prophet states, “If one desires to see Adam (as) in his knowledge, Noah (as) in his piety, Ibrahim (as) in his friendship (with God), Moses in his awe of God, Jesus (as) in his devotion to God, one can look at Ali, God’s peace and blessing be on him’.

Fakhr al-Razi continues:

“Other learned Shi’ite scholars cite the stated Qur’anic verse as a proof to support the idea that Ali, peace be on him, is superior to any one of the Companions because when the Qur’anic verse considers Ali’s soul similar to that of the Prophet’s (saws) except for what is excluded by reason, and since the Prophet’s soul is superior to any one of the companions’, then Ali’s soul. is superior to any one of the Companions”.

Fakhr al-Razi, however, raises an objection to one of the sentences in this argument. This will be discussed and answered in the final part of the questions about the verse.

The Narrations that Consider Ali (as) as the Prophet’s Soul

The narrations that consider Ali (as) as the Prophet’s soul can be grouped under three headings:

Narrations about the Verse of Mubahalalah

Some of these narrations deal with the presence of the five pure ones, *the people of Kisa*, in the prayer of contest, as we have already stated. Below are brief sentences about this subject:

1. Having quoted the Qur’anic verse (of *Mubahalalah*), ibn Abbas says, “and Ali is the Prophet’s soul”, as confirmed by the verse of *mubahalalah*.²¹
2. After quoting Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari’s words concerning the Prophet’s family, (*Ahl al-Bayt*) (*p.b.u.th.*), Sh’abi says, by “*our sons*” al-Hasan and al-Husain, are meant by “*our women*” Fatimah and

by “*our souls*” Ali ibn Abi Talib”.²²

3. Having mentioned the authenticity of the reports related from ibn Abbas and other Companions about the fact that the Prophet (saws) had brought with him Ali, Fatimah and al-Hasan and al-Husain to the contest of prayer, Hakim Nayshaburi establishes the authenticity of the reports which hold that “*our son*” refers to al-Hasan and al-Husain, “*our women*” to Fatimah and “*our souls*” to Ali ibn Abi Talib.²³

4. According to the narration wherein Ali, peace be on him, has the members of the consultative assembly swear, he says, “I adjure you by God to tell me whether there is anyone from among you who is closer to the Prophet in kinship than I am, or whom the Prophet called “my soul”, and whose sons the Prophet called “my sons?” They said “There isn’t”.²⁴

Narrations Concerning Bani Wali’ah Clan

These narrations have been quoted from a number of Companions such as Abu Dhar, Jabir ibn Abdullah and Abdullah ibn Hantab According to these narrations, the Prophet (saws) has, as stated by Abu Dhar, said “The (people of) Bani Wali’ah (tribe) have to submit or, I will send to them someone who is similar to me to execute my orders, kill those who fight, and capture their offspring”.²⁵

Abu Dhar adds, “Umar, who was standing behind me, asked, “Whom does the Prophet mean?”

I said, “Neither you nor your friend (Abu Bakr)”.

He asked, “Who is that person, then?”

I said, “He is the one who is mending his shoes now”.

He said, “It is who is mending his shoes”.

Narrations about the Beloved of the Prophet (saws)

Some narrations report that the Prophet (saws) was asked about the best or most beloved person by him. After the Prophet (saws) answered he was asked about Ali’s popularity and precedence over others. So, the Prophet (saws) turned to his companions and said “This man is asking me about my soul” indicating to Ali (as) who is the Prophet’s soul.²⁶

Some other narrations report that once Hazrat Fatimah, God’s blessing be on her, asked the Prophet (saws) to make a mention about Ali (as). The Prophet said, “Ali is my soul. Can a person speak about his own soul?²⁷

These *hadiths* have been reported on the authority of a number of Companions such as Amr Aas, A’isheh, and Amr ibn Shoayb’s grandfather.

From these narrations, which are great in number and varied in the manner of transmission we realize

that Ali (as) is the soul of the Prophet (saws) and the Qur'anic verse emphasizes on the similarity between them, except for what is definitely and logically excluded, e.g. Prophet Hood.

Accordingly, all the other merits and characteristics which the Prophet enjoys, such as his superiority over the community and over the whole creation and his leadership over the whole Islamic community, are included in this similarity.

Five: Questions and Answers about the Verse

A) Comments on al-Alusi's View

Al-Alusi, who has interpreted this verse in his *Rooh al-Ma'ani*²⁸ states "No believer can doubt the fact that this verse indicates the outstanding merits of Prophet's family, Ahlul Bayt, God bless them all, and whoever tries to ignore the fact that they enjoy such merits, will be bearing animosity, an act which renders one's faith futile".

B) Stating the Shi'ites' Argument

Al-Alusi then mentions the Shi'ites' argument based on the stated verse concerning Ali's immediate succession to the Prophet, God bless them both.

Then, al-Alusi cites the narration which states that the noble Prophet accompanied Ali (as), Fatimah (sa), Al-Hasan (as) and Al-Husain (as), God bless them all, after the verse of *mubahalah* had been revealed. He says, "Thus, *our son*" refers to al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) *our women* to Fatimah, God's blessing be on her, and *our sons* to Ali, peace be on him.

When Ali (as) is referred to as the Prophet's soul, not in its literal meaning, (because Ali, peace be on him, cannot in reality be the Prophet's soul), it follows that his being the Prophet's soul suggests nothing but Ali's similitude to the Prophet.

Also, because the Prophet (saws) has full authority and priority over others in managing the affairs of the Muslims, the one who is similar to him must have such authority and precedence. Therefore, the Qur'anic verse is an evidence for Ali's excellence and guardianship over the whole community".

Al-Alusi Answers the Shi'ites

In his attempt to comment on the Shi'ites' view, al-Alusi observes:

"We do not accept the idea that "*our souls*" refers to Ali (as), because "our soul" refers to the Prophet himself (saws) and Ali (as) is included in the phrase "*our sons*" because usually one's son-in-law is called one's son".

Then al-Alusi quotes Sheikh Tabarsi, the renowned Shi'ite scholar as saying "*our souls*" cannot be

taken to mean the Prophet himself because one cannot invite oneself (to a meeting). Tabarsi says that such a claim is a kind of “hallucination”!

Responding to al-Alusi’s Claim

Al-Alusi first admits that the Qur’anic verse refers to the outstanding merits of the Prophet’s Household (*itrah*) and considers denying this fact a kind of animosity. Now, he himself tries to deny the honourable Household their excellence, thus rejecting all the narrations handed down which confirm this view, a view that Ibn Taymiyyah did not adopt, i.e. denying that “*our souls*” is ascribed to Ali (as).

Although at the outset of the discussion, we mentioned something about the Qur’anic phrase “*our souls*” and made clear that it does not refer to the Prophet, we would like to show that al-Alusi’s claim –taking “*our souls*” to mean the Prophet and Ali (as) to be referred to in the phrase “*our sons*”– is not correct for it is inappropriate and counters sound arguments.

It is not correct because the word invitation is used in its literal meaning and al-Alusi’s citing such phrase as *دعته نفسه* and concluding that these two words are commonly used in their literal meanings.

And so the Qur’anic phrase “*our souls*” refers to the Prophet, shows his overlooking the fact that is the phrase *دعته نفسه* the verb *دعته* is used figuratively and requires a contextual clue to (to spell it out), Whereas there is no such a clue in the Qur’anic verse. *دعته نفسه* means “urging oneself, or making up one’s mind”, it does not mean “calling” or inviting oneself”.

Supposing that the phrase “*our sons*” includes The Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet’s son-in-law (as) requires a figurative use of the word. Therefore, the phrase “*our sons*” the verse cannot mean anyone other than al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), and “*our souls*” is applicable to Ali (as).

One may ask: “How come that the clause *ندع*, *we call*– has a literal meaning, and the phrase “*our sons*” has a figurative sense and is applicable to Ali (as)? Why don’t you take the phrase “*our souls*” to have a literal meaning and say that it refers to the very person? And why don’t you take “*ندع*” to mean, “*make present*”? The answer will be:

If the clause *–we will call–* has a literal meaning, there will exist only one allusion and that is, ascribing “*our souls*” to Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). But if we assume that the clause “*we call*” is also used figuratively, another figurative example will be needed, and that is, referring to Ali (as), the Prophet’s son-in-law, as “*our sons*” whereas there is no clue about such figurative example.

The contextual clue to using “*our souls*” which refers to Ali (as) is the contradiction between “*we call*” and “*our souls*” that is logically and customarily impossible.

Al-Alusi’s claim counters sound arguments because most authenticated traditions say that the phrase “*our souls*” refers to Ali (as). These narrations oppose al-Alusi’s words.²⁹

Al-Alusi's Second Answer to the Shi'ites' Argument

Al-Alusi's second answer to the Shi'ite argument is as follows: Even if we assume that the Qur'anic expression "*our souls*" implies Ali (as), it cannot be a proof for the idea of his being the immediate successor to the Prophet (saws). The expression "*our souls*" is used to mean that Ali is the Prophet's close relative and shares his faith, perhaps because Ali (as) is Prophet's (saws) relative, i.e. his son-in-law and they are united in religion.

Besides, if it is taken to mean that he is equal to the Prophet, are they equal in all aspects or only in some? If they were equal in all aspects, it would inevitably imply that Ali (as) shares the (offices of) prophet hood, Termination of prophet hood, and being raised (as a prophet) to mankind. Such equality is unanimously rejected. However, if it is taken to mean equality in some aspects, it cannot be a proof for the Shi'ites' claim of Ali's superiority and succession to the Prophet (saws)".

Refuting al-Alusi's Claim

1. To address a close relative or one who is related with another in religion as "my soul" brings (that one) no privilege, whereas *hadiths* say that it has brought Ali, peace be on him, an outstanding merit. As we already mentioned, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas is reported to have rejected Mu'awiyah's suggestion to curse Ali, peace be on him, and pointed to Ali's virtues as a reason for his rejection.
2. Of the word "*soul*" is to refer to the person of the same religion or to a close relative, which is a figurative usage, it needs a contextual clue; such a clue does not exist in the Qur'anic verse.
3. When it is not possible to use the word "soul" in its real sense, it will mean someone other than the Prophet (saws), an absolute similarity and equality including all aspects except (the rank of) prophet hood.
4. Thus, there will be no place for the doubt al-Alusi has cast. The answer to the question: "Does it mean equality in all aspects or only in some?" is: "Equality" is absolute, including all aspects except for what is definitely excluded by reason- prophet hood. Thus the Prophet's superiority and guardianship (of the community), like his other perfect qualifications, are among the aspects which the successor must enjoy.

Al-Alusi's Third Claim

Al-Alusi says: "If the verse signified Ali's right to succeed the Prophet, he should have been (made) Imam during the lifetime of the Prophet, and this is unanimously rejected".

Concerning the idea that this caliphate is limited to a scertain time, the answer is:

- a) There is no evidence for the limitation of Imamate to a certain time.

b) The Sunnis themselves assert that Ali (ash.) was Imam at a certain period, that is, during his caliphate.

Responding to al-Alusi's aforementioned Claim

Numerous traditions prove that Ali (as) was appointed as the Prophet's successor during the latter's lifetime. The clearest evidence which supports this view is the narration of *Manzilah*, i.e. when Ali (as) was made to the Prophet as Haroon was to Moses during the latter's lifetime.

It is stated in the holy Qur'an that Prophet Moses said to his brother, Haroon, "**Take my place among my people**"³⁰. If Haroon had not deputized Prophet Moses, the Qur'an would not have used the words: "*take my place among my people*". As confirmed by this Qur'anic verse, whenever the Prophet (saws) was absent, Ali (as) took his place as was the case during Tabuk war. In the commentary on the narration of *Manzilah* this point has been discussed.³¹

a) The rank assigning Ali (as) in the verse of *Mubahalah* as the Prophet's soul is absolute. However, if there is a consensus of opinion that Ali (as) had not been the successor of the Prophet (saws) this consensus of opinion would have restricted the absoluteness during the Prophet's lifetime. Therefore, this absoluteness remained in force after the Prophet's demise.

Thus, all al-Alusi's critical remarks are baseless. There is no controversy about the fact that the verse indicates Ali's Imamate and caliphate.

A Word with Fakhr al-Razi

Having quoted Mahmood ibn Hasan al-Hamsi's argument on the superiority of Ali (as) over the Prophets of the earlier times, Fakhr al-Razi observes

a) There is unanimous agreement that a prophet is superior to a non prophet.

b) There is also unanimous agreement that Ali, peace be on him, was not a prophet. Therefore, the stated Qur'anic verse does not prove Ali's superiority over other prophets.

Responding to Fakhr al-Razi

First: To say that there is unanimous agreement that "a prophet is superior to non-prophets" cannot be generalized to prove that any prophet is superior to any individual of the people including those who are not from his own community. It is certain, however, that a prophet is superior to his own people.

To say that "Men are superior to women" means that a male person is superior to a female one; it does not denote that any man is superior to any woman. That is, it is not a problem to say that among the women there are some who are superior to men.

Second: That there is a general agreement on this point is not certain; the Shi'ite scholars have always

opposed this idea and they believe that their infallible Imams are, according to conclusive evidence, superior to the past prophets.

In answer to the Shi'ites' argument that "the word 'soul' in the Qur'anic verse means "similarity and equality in attributes", Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi has quoted al-Razi³², in his *Al-Bahr al-Muheet*,³³ and said:

"It is not necessary in using the (word) "soul" to take it to mean "similarity" in all attributes theologians say. Because it is something which they themselves have made up. In Arabic the word "soul" may be used to refer to certain attributes too, as in the example "هذا من انفسنا" meaning "this person is from our tribe".

Answer

"Similarity" in all or in some attributes is neither a philological discussion nor a theological one; it has to do with the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence. When it is not possible to use the word "soul" in its literal meaning, it should be taken to express a figurative idea, and the closest meaning to the literal one must be sought.

The closest figurative meaning of "soul" that has literal meaning is "being similar". This similarity is absolute, with no conditions, meaning that Ali (as) is equal to the prophet in all attributes except for prophet hood which for external reasons is not included in this "similarity".

All other attributes, including Ali's superiority over other prophets, may God's peace and blessing be on them, and his absolute authority over the Islamic community are included in this similarity.

A Word with ibn Taymiyyah

Discussing the argument Allamah Helli had presented concerning the Imamate of Ali, peace be on him, based on the verse of *mubahah*, ibn Taymiyyah says:

"The tradition that the Prophet (saws) had taken Ali (as), Fatimah (sa), Al-Hasan (as) and Al-Husain (as) with him for the contest of prayer is sound.³⁴ But this does not indicate Ali's Imamate and superiority. It would do so if the verse had an evidence for Ali's equality to the Prophet (saws) but the verse does not, and no one ranks equal to the Prophet, neither Ali (as), peace be on him, nor anyone else".

In Arabic, the word "our souls" does not necessarily mean equality,³⁵ but merely means congruity and similarity; similarity in such aspects like faith or religion will do; it would even be better if common lineage is added to it".

"The phrase "our souls" in the verse "our souls and your souls", therefore, points to men who are nearer to one another in religion and ancestry than to any other one. That is why the Prophet took with him from

among the sons Al-Hasan (as) and Al-Husain (as), from among the women Fatimah (sa), and from among the men Ali (as) and these people were closer to the Prophet than any other people”.

“Besides, the contest of prayer to God is held with the close kinsmen (taking part), not with those who have distant family relations, however dear to God the latter may be”.

Concerning Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle, who was alive and closer in family line than Ali, peace be on him, ibn Taymiyyah says:

“Although Abbas was alive, he was not one of the first people who embraced Islam. None was closer to the Prophet (saws) than Ali (as). Thus the reason that Ali was chosen to take part in the contest of prayer was because there was no one among the Prophet’s relatives to take his place. This, however, by no means proves that Ali was equal to the Prophet”.

Refuting ibn Taymiyyah’s Claim

1. Ibn Taymiyyah would be right if he meant that no one can equal the Prophet (saws) in everything including prophet hood. But for the definite reasons previously stated that Mohammad (saws) is the Seal of the Prophets, this “equality” is limited (to certain attributes). Thus, to the exclusion of that, it is absolute.

Ibn Taymiyyah’s other argument to prove that the phrase “our souls”, does not denote “equality” is not correct either, even though he has cited Qur’anic verses containing “انفسهم” or “انفسكم” to prove his claim, because these words do imply “equality” in the verses he was cited.

For example, when the lexical item “انفس” meaning “souls” in



“And do not find fault with your own people” (49: 11)

Is used to refer to others it does not mean that they are really similar to the very person. It denotes that there is a certain kind of equality and similarity among them it is clear that in such usages each of those addressed is a member of the group have the same belief or they are of the same clan; **(otherwise they would not have been addressed in this way)**

Thus, in the above verses, there *is* (the idea of) similarity, but there is a contextual clue which suggests that this equality is in a certain thing. It is possible that where there is no contextual clue, the idea of absolute equality except for what reason excludes will exist.

2. To ibn Taymiyyah family relation is a contributory parameter in this respect, but this is not correct for

two reasons:

a) It is incompatible with the phrase “*our women and your women*” (in the Qur’anic verse), because the idea of “*our women*” has nothing to do with blood relationship. Of course, it is not contradictory to say that Fatimah Zahra, God’s blessing be on her, is the daughter of the Prophet (saws) and his daughter.

The verse has not referred to her as “بناتنا means our daughters” that indicates the blood–relationship, but as “our women” and she was with the group (to take part in the contest of prayer) because she is from among the women of the family. Besides, there was no woman who was as meritorious as she to attend the contest of prayers to God.

b) If “blood–relationship” was the criterion, then Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle, was closer to the Prophet (saws) but he was not invited to take part in *mubahalah*. “Being close to the Prophet (saws)” means “being spiritually close to” him. Ibn Taymiyyah felt that he had to admit to this fact when he said, “Ali (as), peace be on him, was one of the first people who embraced (Islam), and therefore he is closer to the Prophet than the others”.

The group who attended the contest of prayer were especially related to the Prophet (saws) as confirmed by *hadiths*, they are referred to as the Prophet’s *Ahl al-Bayt*, and each of them is given another title: some are referred to as: “*our sons*”, others as “*our women*” and others as “*our souls*”.

It is thus clear that the phrase “*our souls*” indicates something other than “blood–relation” and the equality, similarity and homogeneity between Ali (as) and the Prophet (saws) are absolute, in all attributes, particularities, ranks and positions, except for that which is excluded by reason.

In our discussing of the aim of the Household of the Prophet’s attending the contest of prayer to God, it was made clear that their role in *mubahalah* is equal in force to that of the Prophet, producing the same effects, which lends the beloved family, the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet, God bless them all a lofty station.

1. – The pronoun “ن” in “ندع – we call” differs in meaning from the pronoun “نا” in “ابنائنا – our sons”, and from the one in “نسائنا –our women” and– “our souls”: the first one refers to both sides of the dispute (the Prophet –S.A.W.– and the Christians); thus “our sons”, “our women” and “our souls” are excluded, whereas the second and the third refer to the Prophet’s side, thus the other side of the dispute and their “sons”, their “women” and their “souls” are not included. As for the phrase “we will pray (humbly)”, it includes all: the Prophet (S.A.W.), the other side of the dispute, the sons, the women, and the souls.

2. – Al-Kashaf Commentary, vol. 1, p. 370, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi; Beirut.

3. – Rooh al-M’ani, vol. 3, p. 189, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-Arabi; Beirut.

4. – We will duly answer his observations in the section titled “Answering the Objections”.

5. – Tafseer al-Kabir by Fakhr al-Razi, vol. 8, p. 80, Dar Ihya’ al-Torath al-Arabiyyah.

6. – Muslim’s Sahih, vol. 5, p. 23, Kitab Fadha’il al-Sahabah, the chapter on Ali ibn Abi Talib’s outstanding merits, hadith 32, Izz al-Deen Institute.

7. – Tirmidhi’s Sunan, vol. 5, p. 565, Dar al-Fikr.

8. – Ahmad’s Musnad, vol. 1, p. 185, Dar Sader, Beirut.

9. – Al-Tafsir al-Kabeer by Fakhr al-Razi, vol.8, p.80.

10. – Ma'rifat Uloom al-Hadith, p.50, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

11. – Ahkam al-Qur'an by al-Jesas; vol. 2, p. 14, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut.

Mufeed's Ikhtesas, p. 56; Jami'at al-Mudarriseen fil Howzatol Ilmiyyah.

Asbab al-Nozool, p. 68, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Asad al-Ghabah, vol. 4, p.25; Dar Ihiya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

Al- Isabah, vol.2, part 4, p.271.

Al-Bahr al-Muheet, vol. 3, p. 479, Dar Ihiya'al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 5, p. 49, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 289, Isma'ilyan Publications.

Al-Taj al-Jami' lil-Usool, vol. 3, p. 333, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

The History of the City of Damascus, vol. 42, p. 431, Dar Fikr.

Tadhkirat Khawas al-Ummah, p. 17, printed in Najaf.

Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 378, Dar al-Ma'rafah, Beirut.

Baydawi's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 163, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Khazin's Commentary (Bab al-Ta'weel), vol. 1, p. 236, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Razi's Commentary, vol. 8, p. 80, Dar Ihiya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

Al-Samarqandi's Commentary (Bahr al-Uloom), vol. 1, p. 274, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Al-Tabari's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 299–301, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Tantawi's Commentary, vol. 2, p. 130, Dar al-M'arif, Cairo.

Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qommi's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 104.

Al-Mawardi's Commentary, vol. 1, pp.389 and 399, the Institute of al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyah, and Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Al-Muneer Commentary, vol.3, pp. 245, 248 and 249, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Nasfi's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 236, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Nayshaburi's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 213, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut

A Summary of al-Mustakrak, vol. 3, p. 150, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

Qortobi's Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 4, p. 104, Dar al-Fikr.

Jami' al-Usool, vol. 9, p. 469, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi.

Al-Tirmidhi's, Jami' al-Saheeh, vol. 5, p. 596, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Durr al-Manthur, vol.2, p.230–233, Dar al-Fikr.

Abu Na'eem al-Isfahan's Dala'il al-Nubuwwah. p.297.

Thakha'ir al-Uqba, p. 25, al-Wafa Institute, Beirut

Rooh al-Ma'ani, vol. 3, p. 189, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi

Al-Riyadh al-Nadirah, vol. 3, p. 134, Dar al-Nadwah al-Jadeedah, Beirut.

Zad al-Maseer fi Ilm al-Tafseer, vol.1, p. 339, Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Hakim al-Hasakani's Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 1, p. 155–167, Majma' Ihya' al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah.

Muslim's Sahih, vol. 5, p. 23, Kitab Fadha'il al-Sahabah, the chapter on Ali ibn Abi Talib's outstanding merits, hadith 32, Izz al-Deen Institute.

Al-Sawa'q al-Muhriqah, p. 145, Maktabt al-Qahirah.

Fath al-Gadeer, vol. 1, p. 316, Egypt.

Fara'id al-Simteyn, vol. 2, pp. 23 and 24, al-Mahmoodi Institute, Beirut.

Al-Fosool al-Muhimmeh, pp. 23 – 25 and 126 –127, Manshoorat al-'A'lami.

Kitab al-Tasheelli-Uloom al-Tanzeel, vol. 1, p. 109, DarFikr.

Al-Kashshaf, vol. 1, p. 193, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

Madarij al-Nubuwwah, p. 500, Bambay.

Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, vol. 3, p. 150, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 1, p. 185, Dar Sader, Beirut

Mishkat al-Masabeeh, vol. 3, p. 1731, al-Maktab al-Islami.

Masabeeh al-Sunnah, vol. 4, p. 183, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

Matalib al-Su'ool, p. 7, Tehran.

Ma'alim al-Tanzeel, vol. 1, p. 480, Dar al-Fikr.

Ma'rifaht Usool al-Hadith, p. 50, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

Ibn Magazili's Manaqib, p. 263, al-Maktabat al-Islamiyyah, Tehran.

12. – Ali ibn Ibrahim's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 104, Matba'at al-Najaf; al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 285.

13. – Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 289, Isma'ilyan Publications.

14. – Al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 289 Isma'ilyan Publishing House.

15. – Al-Ikhtisas, p. 56, Jami't al-Mudariseen fil Huzatul Ilmiyyah.

16. – Al-Manar Commentary, vol. 3, p. 322, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

17. – Rooh al-Ma'ani, vol. 3, p. 190, Dar Ihya' al-Torath al-Arabi.

18. – Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 2, p. 154, Dar al-Fikr.

19. – Siyra A'lam al-Nobala, vol. 10, p. 104, Mu'ssasat al-Risala.

20. – According to the accounts written in some books about this great scholar, thus mentioned by Fakhr al-Razi, he is a renowned Shi'ite mujtahid, theologian, and professor of Fakhr al-Razi, whom the late traditionist, Qommi, mentions in volume 1, page 340 of his Safinah al-Bihar and says: "Sheikh Sadeed al-Deen Mahmood ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Himsi of Rayy, is a religious scholar, an authority on theology and author of al-Ta'leeq al-Iraqi, a book on rhetoric". Sheikh Baha'i has been quoted as saying: "He was a learned scholar among the Shi'ite ulama. He came from Hims, a village in Rayy, now a ruin.

Safina al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 340, Kitabkhana Mahmud.

The late Sayyid Mohsen Amin Jibal Ameli quotes from a manuscript of al-Ta'leeq al-Iraqi or al-Munqidh min al-Taqleed, on which the following sentence is written: "This is written by our master, the great Sheikh, Hujjat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, the Tongue of the Sect and theologians, the Lion of Debaters, Mahmood ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Himsi, may God prolong his life in glory and humiliate his enemies". Ayan al-Shiah, vol. 10, p. 105, Dar al-Ta'aruf lil Matbo'at, Beirut.

In Al-Qamoos al-Moheet vol. 2, p. 299, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut. Firoozabadi refers to Himsi and says: Mahmood ibn Ali al-Himsi is a theologian and al-imam Fakhr al-Deen's teacher".

From the above statement of Firoozabadi we realize that this eminent theologian was Fakhr al-Razi's teacher, a position which has not been mentioned by Fakhr al-Razi.

21. – Ma'rifaht Uloom al-Hadith, p. 50, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut .

22. – Asbab al-Nuzool, [p. 67, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

23. – Ma'rifaht Uloom al-Hadith, p. 50, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

24. – The History of the City of Damascus, vol. 42, p. 431, Dar al-Fikr.

25. – Al-Sunan al-Kobra lil-Nisai'i, vol. 5, p. 127; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; a research-worker has said, "There are trustworthy narrators within the chain of narrators of the hadith.

al-Musannaf li-ibn Abi Shaybah, vol. 6, p. 374; Dar al-Taj;

al-Mo'jam al-Awsat lil-Tabarani, vol. 4, p. 477; Maktabat al-Moarif, Riyadh

Note: al-Mo'jam al-Awsat has used the word "Li-Nafsi" rather than "Ka-Nafsi", this being an error, intentional or otherwise, for Haythami who had quoted Tabarani in his Majma' al-Zawai'd used the word "Ka-Nafsi".

Majma' al-Zawai'd of Haythami, vol. 7, p. 110, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabiyyah, also p. 240 (of the same source printed) by Dar al-Fikr.

26. – Al-Suyuti's Jami' al-Ahadith,, vol. 16, pp. 256–7, Dar al-Fikr; Kanz al-Ummal, vol. 13, pp. 142–3, al-Risalih Institute.

27. – Al- Khawrazmi's Manaqib, p. 148, Mu'asasat al-Nashr al-Islami; Maqal al-Husain, p. 43, Maktabat al-Mufeed.

28. – Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 3, p. 189, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi.

29. – Ma'rifaht Uloom al-Hadith, p. 50, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

30. – Surah 7, verse 142.

31. – See our article "Imamate in Ghadeer, Thaqaalayn and the Narration of Manzilah".

32. – It is not clear whether Abu Hayan had Fakhr al-Razi in mind when he mentioned "Razi", because Fakhr al-Razi's

Tafseer contains only the stated objection. Therefore, Abu Hayan must have quoted the above argument from other works by al-Razi.

33. – Al-Bahr al-Muheet, vol. 2, p. 481, the Institute of al-Tarikh al-Arabi and Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi.

34. – Ibn Taymiyyah accepts the fact that “our soul” refers to Ali, peace be on him.

35. – To support his argument, ibn Taymiyyah quotes five Qur’anic verses among which are the following:

“لولا اذ سمعتموه ظن المؤمنون و المؤمنات بانفسهم خيرا”

Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people?” Surah 24, verse 12, “انفسكم ولا تلمزوا” ...and do not find fault with your own people” Surah 49, verse 11.

Chapter 3: Imamate as Envisaged in the Verse of Aulu al-Amr

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَ أَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ الرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَ أَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴾

“O, you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you (truly) believe in Allah and the last day; this is better and fairer in the end”. (4:59)

In the above Qur’anic verse, God, the Most Exalted, orders people to obey Him and to obey the Prophet (saws) and those in authority. It is clear that obedience to God primarily includes obedience to the commands that God has revealed in the Qur’an and imparted to the people through the Prophet (saws) as in the verse,

“Keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate”. (2:43)

Obeying the commands of Prophet (saws) can be discussed under two headings:

1. The Prophet’s Commands handed Down to us as his Sunnah

These are Divine commands inspired to the Prophet, who imparted them to the people, but in case they begin with such phrases as “I command you to...” and “I forbid you from”, abundantly found in *fiqhi* sources, they are called Prophetic orders. Obeying them means obeying the Prophet. Acting according

to them means obeying God's commands since they are ascribed to the Divine.

2. Commands Issued by the Prophet as a Wali and Ruler of the Muslims

These commands are not classified as "Divine commands", but they are commands issued by the Prophet as a *wali*, guardian and ruler of the Islamic community, such as the commands concerning war, peace, administration of the Islamic government and community. The Qur'anic words, "... **and obey the Apostle**", in the verse includes both kinds of commands.

The Impeccability of the Prophet (saws) in All Commands and Prohibitions

The irrefutable reasons raised in theology (*kalam*), prove that the Prophet (saws) is divinely protected against error when issuing any commands or prohibitions. He never orders others to commit sins, nor does he issue erroneous commands or prohibitions.

In the above mentioned Qur'anic verse a mention is made that the obedience to the Prophet is absolute. Had there existed a possibility of his issuing any erroneous command or prohibition, the holy Qur'anic verse would have restricted the obedience to the Prophet (but it has not.)

When ordering that parents should be obeyed which is far less important than obeying the Prophet, God the Most Exalted says,

"And we have enjoined on man goodness to his parents, and if they contend with you that you should associate (others) with me, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them". (29:8)

Because the parents might enjoin (their children) to associate someone with God they must not be obeyed if it comes to association with God. In the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*, however, obeying the Prophet (saws) is not restricted to any circumstances or situations.

Yet another evidence confirming and emphasizing the unrestricted obedience to the Prophet (saws) is that in many verses the phrase "obedience to the Prophet" comes directly after the phrase "obedience to God", without repeating the verb اطيعوا meaning "obey".

For example, in,

"And obey Allah and the Apostle, that you may be shown mercy" (3: 132)

the verb "obey" is used only once before the words "Allah" and "the Apostle", indicating that one has to obey the Prophet in all commands and prohibitions he issues, just as one has to obey God's commands

and prohibitions. Therefore, the obedience to the Prophet (saws) is undoubtedly absolute.

Obedience to Those in Authority *Aulu al-Amr*

When we want to examine the issues of imamate and inerrancy of the Imams, God bless them all, in the verse of *Aulu al-Amr* we need to consider the following:

1. What the term *Aulu al-Amr* means.
2. To whom it is ascribed.
3. *Aulu al-Amr*, in the traditions of “*Manzilah*”, “*Ita’ah*” and “*Thaqalayn*”.
4. The traditions on “*Aulu al-Amr*” in Shi’ite and Sunnite sources.

What the Term *Aulu al-Amr* Means

This word is made up of two words “*أولى*”, meaning “possessor,” and “*الأمر*” meaning “command”, and “affair, authority”, the latter sense is more distinct, because *Aulu al-Amr* is mentioned in the following verse, which refers to the second meaning

“And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it abroad; and if they had referred it to the Apostle and to those in authority among them, those among them who can search out the knowledge of it would have known it” (4:83)

Thus *Aulu al-Amr* “*أولى الأمر*” means the possessors of authority who have the right to manage the affairs of all aspects of life, who naturally have the qualifications of becoming guardians of the affairs (of people) and it is God, the Owner of Authority and the Guardian of everything, who has entrusted this responsibility to them, and He has not given it to those who illegitimately and forcibly come to power. It is quite obvious that the owner of a house is the real possessor of the house, not the one who has occupied it by force, deceptions and tricks.

To Whom *Aulu al-Amr* Is Ascribed

The commentators of the Qur’an introduce various views about the meaning of this word including the following:

1. Commanders.
2. The Companions of the Prophet (saws)
3. The Immigrants (*Mahajrun*) and the Helpers (*Ansar*).
4. The Companions (*Sahabih*) and the second generation of the Companions (*Tab’in*).

5. The four Caliphs.
6. Abu Bakr and Umar.
7. The knowledgeable people.
8. Army commanders.
9. The Imams from the family of the Prophet, *Ahl al-Bayt*, God's peace and blessing on them all.
10. Ali (as), peace on him
11. Those whom the *Shariah* has somehow entrusted with guardianship (over people)
12. *Ahl al-Hill wa al-Akd* "اهل حل و عقد"
13. The rulers of justice "امرا الحق" 1

We will ponder into the points and indications in the Qur'anic verse before judging and evaluating the above statements.

The Status of *Aulu al-Amr* (As Stated) in the Verse

Here it is worth considering how the quoted Qur'anic verse sketches obedience to "*Aulu al-Amr*".

One: Absolute Obedience to *Aulu al-Amr*

The obedience to "those in authority", as mentioned in the verse, is absolute, that is, it is restricted by no condition, just as is the case the of obeying the Prophet we already discussed. This absolute obedience indicates that no particular command or circumstance has confined it. Rather, obeying their commands and prohibitions is obligatory.

Two: Obeying *Aulu al-Amr* is the same as Obeying God and the Prophet

Obeying these three entities knows no bound, as the layout of the verse indicates.

Three: Verb "Obey" is not mentioned preceding the Words *Aulu al-Amr*

Before the word God and the word Prophet, the verb "obey" is mentioned: "***Obey Allah and Obey the Apostle***", whereas the words *Aulu al-Amr* come directly after to "the Prophet"; thus the same verb embraces both *the Prophet* and *Aulu al-Amr*, which shows that the verb "obey", preceding the word the Prophet, applies to *Aulu al-Amr*, too.

Just as the Prophet has to be obeyed, so have the *Aulu al-Amr*, which is a clear proof indicating that the

obedience to *Aulu al-Amr* is identical to the obedience to the Prophet in all commands and prohibitions (they issue). The unavoidable conclusion is that, will be: like the Prophet, “*Aulu al-Amr*” are inerrant in all their commands and prohibitions.

To expound this point, it can be said that the verb “obey” has been used only once to refer to both the Prophet and to *Aulu al-Amr*. Logically, it cannot be absolute and a conditioned at the same time i.e. absolute for the Prophet, and conditioned for “*Aulu al-Amr*” because these two opposites do not go together.

Inasmuch as the verb “*obey*” which refers to the Prophet is absolute, rendering obedience to *Aulu al-Amr* must be absolute, too, with no conditions to restrict it, otherwise, the verb will mean two contradictory things.

Thus, the verse clearly indicates that, like the Prophet (saws) *Aulu al-Amr* (those in authority), are infallible. Rendering obedience to *Aulu al-Amr*, who have the mentioned particularities, signifies their inerrancy which has attracted the attention of a number of Sunni commentators of the Qur’an, such as Fakhr al-Razi², whose argument is briefly stated below.

Fakhr al-Razi’s Comment on the Verse of Aulu al-Amr

Fakhr al-Razi, too has recognized the inerrancy of “*Aulu al-Amr*”, as shown in the summary that follows: “God, the Most Exalted, has definitely made it obligatory to obey “*those in authority*”. Those to whom obedience is thus made obligatory must be infallible.

If they were not, and if they were liable to err, they according to the verse ought to be obeyed which justifies obeying an erroneous act, whereas it is forbidden to commit wrong deeds. Therefore, such a supposition does not observe the difference between these two opposing points”.³

Having advanced his argument for the inerrancy of those in authority, Fakhr al-Razi refers to the Qur’anic verse, and says about these who are meant to be *Aulu al-Amr*: “This *Aulu al-Amr* cannot be taken to mean the Imams, the Shi’ites hold to be infallible. Rather, it denotes the People of *Hal* and *Aqd* **اهل حال و عقد** those who are responsible for taking decisions in important social questions.

These people are free from sin in their decisions and their decisions are absolutely correct and in accordance with reality”.

Responding to Fakhr al-Razi’s Claim

Fakhr al-Razi’s phrase “those in authority” means people of *Hal*. and *Aqd*, who are free from sin in decisions, is not correct for the following reasons:

1) The phrase “*Aulu al-Amr*”, in the Qur’anic verse, is plural in form, inclusive of individuals (whose

decisions ought to be obeyed; that is, each one of them pronounces a decision that ought to be obeyed). If, on the other hand, it means the People of *Hal wa Aqd*, it will be a collective unit, which opposes the apparent meaning of the verse.

The verse obviously indicates the necessity of obeying those in authority, each of whom has to be obeyed by a special command. They are not a “group” whose members have to be obeyed through a joint decision.

2) *Ismah* (inerrancy) is a divinely–bestowed immunity, a real spiritual quality, requiring a real referent (to match) who must undertake a genuine affair “the People of *Hall* and *Aqd*”, is a collective unit and collective unit is an arbitrary group. It is thus impossible to apply a genuine affair to an arbitrary one.

3) All Muslims agree that other than the Imams of the Shiites and the prophets there are no infallible (*m’asum*) ones.

Fakhr al–Razi’s Objections to the Idea of the Imamate of the Infallible Imams (as)

As regards Imamiyyah Shi’ites’ views that by *Aulu al–Amr* they mean the twelve infallible Imams, Fakhr al–Razi has raised the following objections:

The first objection: The necessity of obeying these infallible Imams is either absolute and does not require true knowledge of them or the ability to know them and this would be too demanding, for it would be beyond one’s capacity, i.e. it is impossible for us to obey them if we, presumably, cannot know them or requires true knowledge of them which is not correct, either. It is incorrect to limit their obedience because Qur’anic verse confirms that it is unconditioned”.

Answer: Obedience to the infallible Imams, does not require having true knowledge of them and so one cannot shoulder it aside on the excuse of lack of true knowledge of them, because the obedience to them is, conditioned. It is thus ones duty to know them in order to be able to obey them. These are two different cases.

An Explanation

Conditions are of two kinds: a condition that renders something *wajib* (obligatory), and a condition which is itself *wajib*. For example, Hajj becomes obligatory when one can afford it; so, affording it is called *wujub condition*. Hajj will not be *wajib*, if one cannot afford it, but, in order to perform prayers, one has to be ritually pure. This means performing prayer, a religious duty, depends on being ritually pure.

Therefore, one cannot perform his prayers without being ritually pure. If one does not get ritually pure, one cannot perform prayer and is said to have sinned because it is incumbent on one to be purify

(beforehand). As regards Hajj one cannot afford the expenses it is not *wajib* (incumbent) on him to go on Hajj, if and such a thing is not an offence.

In the same way, obedience to both the Prophet and the Imams is dependent on knowing them. Therefore, one has to know them in order to obey them. Thus, the necessity of obeying them is an absolute one, but the very obedience to them is dependent (on other factors).

By giving irrefutable arguments, God, the Exalted, has prepared the way for acquiring this knowledge. Just as the Prophet is known by indisputable proofs, so are the Infallible Imams, who are the successors to the Prophet. They are made known to people through detailed conclusive and convincing reasons in Shiite theological books and narrations. Therefore, acquiring knowledge about them is very necessary.

The second objection: “According to Imamiyyah Shi’ites there is only one Imam for every period, but (as we know) the term “*Aulu al-Amr*” refers to more than one person.

Answer: Although there is only one Imam for every period the obedience to Imams extends to various periods. This, however, does not oppose (the idea that) obedience to an Imam is obligatory during a certain time. The believers are, therefore, bound to obey, in various periods, the infallible Imams, who are made known to them.

The third objection: “If *Aulu al-Amr* were to mean the Infallible Imams, the verse would read like this: ‘then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle and those in authority’ but the verse does not say so.

Answer: Since settling disputes and quarrels by the Infallible Imams is according to the Qur’an and the Sunnah and because they are fully versed in the Book and the Sunnah, referring a problem to them is, in fact, referring it to God and His Messenger. So, it is not necessary to have the phrase “*Aulu al-Amr*” in the verse.

Further Explanation: The Letter “ﻻ” (fa’) in the a Conditional Sentence

Another important point in explicating the meaning of “*Aulu al-Amr*” is the significance of letter *fa* ﻻ that has the function of, producing an effect. This is clear in the conditional sentence after the statement: “Obey Allah and **Obey the Apostle and those in authority**”; which reads: *then if you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Apostle*”.

This sentence means that the necessity of referring cases of dispute to Allah and the Apostle originates from the necessity of obedience to Allah, the Apostle and *Aulu al-Amr*. The use of the letter *fa*’ in the conditional sentence reveals two fundamental things: “inerrancy of those in authority” and “their extensive knowledge of the whole Book and the Sunnah”.

1) Inerrancy of those in authority

Some claim that if “those who are in authority”, err and sin or take wrong decisions on a case of dispute, their judgment will have nothing to do with the Book and the Sunnah.

But, the idea which the Qur’anic verse conveys by using the letter *fa’* لَآ, is that just as the obedience of those “in authority” is obligatory the dispute must be referred to God and Apostle.

2) Extensive knowledge of the whole Book and the Prophet’s Sunnah.

Those who are in authority ought to have extensive knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah because if they issued even one particular command which is not according to the Book and the Sunnah, and the command was deviating, this would mean that the principle of “*referring the dispute to Allah and Apostle*” had, not been put into effect.

The use of the *fa’* to express consequence shows, that obedience to those in authority is always the cause of referring disputes to Allah and Apostle. Therefore, the *fa’*, لَآ, in the stated verse, is a clear indication that those in authority applies to none except the Infallible Imams.

We can conclude from the above–mentioned observation that:

- a) “*Aulu al–Amr*”, those in authority, in the stated verse, are liable to no sin and error when they issue a command or prohibition.
- b) The term “those in authority” does not include *Ahl al–Hall* and *Aqd*, though Fakhr al–Razi claims that it does.
- c) According to what has been proved, if we reconsider the eleven points about *Aulu al–Amr* we find that the only plausible meaning of “those in authority” inferred from the Qur’anic verse, is the Shiites’ Infallible Imams and there is a consensus about that: no one other than the Imams is included in *Aulu al–Amr*.

Unjust Rulers are not Part of Aulu al–Amr

In explaining the meaning of *Aulu al–Amr* it was stated that this term includes only those who have the right to be guardians and owners of the affairs of the community, and they continue having this right even if they are deprived of it, just as in the case of usurping one’s house and driving its owner out.

Yet, another indication of the dignified position and eminent rank of those in authority is their being mentioned next to God and the Messenger in the Qur’anic verse, thus making absolute obedience to them incumbent on others, a rank assigned to no one except those who are worthy of it.

These two important points (i.e. the meaning of “those in authority”, and their being mentioned next to

God and the Messenger with regard to the necessity of obedience to them) tyrants and unjust rulers from the domain of *Aulu al-Amr*, referred to in the Qur'anic verse.

In his *Kashaf*,⁴ a commentary of the Qur'an, referring to the above verse Zamakhshari says:

“God and His Messenger are averse to those who rule with an iron fist; they are not worthy of being related to God and the Messenger as regards the obedience. The most fitting name to them would be “the conquering bandits”.

The above quotation is an answer to Al-Tabari, who includes “those who rule with an iron fist” under *Aulu al-Amr*, and claims that it is incumbent on people to obey them. Thus his view proves to be groundless.

Tabari's Perspective of Aulu al-Amr

The following is Al-Tabari's words:

The best thing said in this regard is, “they (*Aulu al-Amr*) are the commanders and rulers, as it has been soundly reported from Prophet (saws), and that obedience has to be rendered to *imams* and governors in things to be obeyed and in things that bring benefits to the Muslims”

Which corresponds to the words of Ali ibn Muslim al-Tusi, who relates from, ibn Abi Fadayik from Abdullah ibn Mohammad ibn Urwah from Hisham ibn Urwah, on the authority of Salih al-Samman on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, who said,

“The Prophet (saws) has said, ‘There will come after me, good governors, with all good, and evil-governors, with all evil. Listen to them and obey them in all that agrees with truth, pray behind them and if they do good, it will do you and them good, and if they do you ill, it will be to your benefit and against them”.

Ibn al-Mothna has reported from Yayha ibn Ubaydillah from Nafi' ibn Abdullah, who has quoted the Prophet (saws) as saying: “It is incumbent on a Muslim to obey what he likes and dislikes, except if it comes to committing sins. If one commands you to commit a sin, do not obey him”. Ibn al-Mothna relates from Khalid ibn Ubaydillah, on the authority of Nafi, on the authority of ibn Ummar who has quoted a similar account from the Prophet (saws).⁵

Tabari refers to the above mentioned narration and concludes that “the commanders” in general whether righteous or wicked, are meant by *Aulu al-Amr* and considers obedience to governor as obligatory.

Besides the real meaning of *Aulu al-Amr* and its coming next to the Messenger in the Qur'anic verse, other objections are directed to Al-Tabari's view, which are as follows:

The first objection: The traditions (Tabari has cited) are not authentic because in the chain of transmission of the stated narration we find the name of ibn Abi Fadayik, concerning whom ibn Sa'd, a

leader of *ilm rijal and hadith*, says, “He is said to have reported a large number of traditions, but he is not authentic”.⁶

Ibn Habban considers him (ibn Abi Fadayik) to be the narrators who make errors.⁷

Abd Allah ibn Mohammad ibn Urwah says that there is no evidence in the well-known books of *rijal*, which confirms that he is “authentic”.

The chain of transmission of the second tradition also contains (name of some) weak and unknown narrators, such as Yahya ibn Ubaydillah whom leaders of *ilm rijal*, such as Abu Hatim, ibn Aiyynah, Yayha al-Qattan, ibn Moeen, ibn Abi Shaybah, Nisa’i and Darquotni consider weak and unreliable.⁸

The second objection: The traditions have nothing to do with the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*, nor are they concerned with the interpretation of the Qur’anic verse in question.

The third objection: This **Al-Tabari**’s interpretation is not consistent with other Qur’anic verses, including the following:

“And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant, which make mischief in the land and do not act aright”. (26: 151-152)

Religious Scholars are not Meant by “Aulu al-Amr”

The term “Aulu al-Amr” implies “guardianship”, whereas the function of “religious scholars” is simply to clarify things to people.

a) The term “Aulu al-Amr” does not convey the idea of “jurists”, unless there is an indication from outside that assigns them such a position. This, however, has not been referred to by the verse. The reason why some say that by Aulu al-Amr ulama are meant is because regarding their daily affairs, people usually follow and obey ulama.

b) The Qur’anic verse preceding the one we have started (at the beginning of this chapter) says: **“...when you judge between people, you have to judge with justice”**, which clearly delineates the duties of rulers.

The Qur’anic verse in question points out to the people’s duties towards Aulu al-Amr, which clearly indicates that Aulu al-Amr refers to governors not ulama.

c) If by Aulu al-Amr it means ulama, then two questions will have to be asked: “does it mean ulama in general or every individual (religious scholar) whose opinion has to be accepted and decisions obeyed?”

If the first one is meant, then the answer will be the same as that we have given while commenting on Fakhr al-Razi’s objections (pages 52–3 concerning the people of *Hal* and *Aqd*). If the second one is

meant, then, “how can the Qur’anic verse say that absolute obedience to them is obligatory?” Were it really so, the Qur’an and traditions would have specified the (relevant) conditions.

As we already stated about the effect of the letter (ثـ–i.e. then) in the previous verse, the other part of this verse is:

“...then if you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Apostle”.

This (part of the verse) shows clearly that the necessity of referring the cases of quarrel to God and the Apostle is undoubtedly related to the necessity of obeying God, the Apostle and Aulu al–Amr.

The reason why word Aulu al–Amr is not reiterated in other part of the verse is because Aulu al–Amr are fully–versed in the Book and in the Sunnah, and so “referring cases of quarrel” to them is actually referring them to God and the Apostle. We know, however, that except for those who are divinely protected from sins and errors, others, are not free from mistakes.

Other notes in the Verse

As regards supposing that the term “*Aulu al–Amr*” means religious scholars there are yet other comments that are worth considering. A deliberation on these comments discloses further problems:

a) “You” in “*then if you quarrel*” and those addressed in “*O you who believe*” refer to the same people, and this shows that “the believers” who are thus addressed and *Aulu al–Amr* are (two) different groups. “*Aulu al–Amr*” means those who issue commands and “the believers” means those who have to obey.

b) It is thus understood that “the quarrel” eluded to in the aforementioned verse means the quarrels between different groups of believers, not the quarrels between believers and *Aulu al–Amr*.

c) The assumption that there is a change in address from “believers” to “*Aulu al–Amr*”, opposes the context of the verse. Besides, there is no evidence for it in the verse.

Criticism of Some Theories

a) Qortubi and Jasses hold that the verse “***then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle...***” indicates that religious scholars are meant by *Aulu al–Amr*, because common people do not know how to refer things to God and the Messenger. Taken this, God addresses religious scholars in the verse ordering them to refer the disputes which may occur to God and the Messengers.⁹

Abul So’ud has quoted the above mentioned Qur’anic verse in his commentary, but has given a quite different view from what the above mentioned two commentators hold.

He says, “The phrase ‘*then if you quarrel*’ indicates that *Aulu al–Amr* cannot mean religious scholars because the followers of a jurist are not qualified enough to argue with him over juridical verdicts, unless

we say that the Qur'anic phrase '*then if you quarrel*' does not concern the followers and only the jurists are addressed which is also impossible.¹⁰

a) Qortubi and Jessas both maintain that the jurists are addressed in the phrase "*if you quarrel*". But it is obvious that the verse addresses all believers. So, their view stands groundless.

b) Abul So'ud believes that if jurists are meant by *Aulu al-Amr*, then the word "quarrel" will mean the quarrel between jurists and their followers, whereas it is the believers who are addressed in the verse.

c) Inasmuch as both the "believers" and "*Aulu al-Amr*" are mentioned in the verse, it can be understood that the quarrel is between the believers themselves not between the believers and *Aulu al-Amr* if we take *Aulu al-Amr* to mean *ulama*.

So far, it has become clear that on the basis of what has been already stated, *Aulu al-Amr* cannot mean *ulama* and so Qortubi and Jasses' claims are not correct and it is clear that Abul So'ud's statement is unsound.

Aulu al-Amr does not mean the Companions or the Tab'in

A deliberation on the holy Qur'anic verse makes it clear that *Aulu al-Amr* does not mean the Companions, the Tab'in, or the Immigrants, (*Muhajirun*) and the Helpers (*Ansar*):

a) The holy Qur'anic verse addresses the believers in general, specifying those whom the believers have to pledge absolute obedience.

The believers are thus ranked among those who obey and submit, while God, His Messenger and *Aulu al-Amr*, give commands and possess absolute authority. A juxtaposition of these two groups clearly shows that "*those who believe*" are different from *Aulu al-Amr*, "*those in authority*" the believers merely obey God, the Messenger and *Aulu al-Amr* give commands.

The thing which confirms that they are different is that "*Aulu al-Amr*" is mentioned next to God and the Messenger, who have to be obeyed. This requires that *Aulu al-Amr* cannot be the Companions, the Tab'in, the Immigrants, or the Helpers. The believers who were addressed when the verse was revealed were the Companions, the Immigrants and the Helpers.

b) In case *Aulu al-Amr* is taken to mean the Companions, then the following question will arise: Does this mean that each one of the Companions has authority as a guardian, or all the Companions have such a position? If we accept the second view their words will not be valid unless they all reach a consensus. This opposes the truth of the verse, as we already explained in response to Fakhr al-Razi's observations.

The first option and that is each one of the Companions has an authority as a guardian also opposes the truth and is not consistent with the life style of the Companions, for in the time of the Companions none

of them was so superior to others that the others had to (absolutely) obey them.

In addition, the Companions differed widely in as far as knowledge and practice are concerned and many of them lacked scholarly and morally qualifications so that concerning these people, including Walid ibn Auqba, the Qur'anic verse

“O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done” (49:6)

Was revealed. So, how can *Aulu al-Amr* mean all of the Companions, or the Immigrants and the Helpers?

Aulu al-Amr Does Not Mean Military Commanders

Aulu al-Amr does not mean military commanders of *serriyahs*, in which the Prophet was not personally present. Besides the already-mentioned proofs –i.e. having in the verse, the phrase *Aulu al-Amr* next to the Messenger which indicates that obeying *Aulu al-Amr* is obligatory, the use of the letter *lā*, meaning “then”, in the Qur'anic statement: “*then if you quarrel about anything...*”

Which requires an absolute obedience to God and the Messenger and *Aulu al-Amr* and confirms that *Aulu al-Amr* are infallible and finally reaching the conclusion that military commanders are not inerrant—what the Companions and the Tab'in have left behind confirms this idea. Here are some of what they have left:

1. Ibn Abbas is quoted to have said that the Qur'anic verse of *Aulu al-Amr* concerns a person whom the Prophet (saws) had assigned as a military leader of one of the campaigns.¹¹ In the chain of transmission of this *hadith* mention is made of the name of Hajjaj ibn Mohammad concerning whom ibn Sa'id says, “He suffered from a failing memory in the final stage of his life”. Ibn Hajar says, “He (Hajjaj) was narrating while he was in this condition”.¹² Naturally, his reports are not valid.

2. Maymoon ibn Mehran is reported to have said “*Aulu al-Amr* are those who led campaigns”.¹³ In the chain of transmission of this *hadith*, mention is made of the name of Anbast ibn Sa'id Zarees concerning whom ibn Habban says, “He often erred”.¹⁴

Tabari has quoted Sadi to have said that¹⁵ the verse of *Aulu al-Amr* refers to the story of the army in which Khalid ibn al-Walid was appointed as a leader and Ammar Yassir, who was present, had disputed with Khalid ibn al-Walid over a promise of protection Khalid had given to one of the Muslims.¹⁶

Comment:

This report is not sound (*saheeh*) firstly because it is a *mursal* report and secondly because Yahya ibn Mo'in and 'Aqili say that Sadi is “weak” (in his reporting narrations) while Jowzjani considers him a big

3. Below is Bukhari's account of the interpretation of the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*

"Sadaqat ibn al-Fazl has reported on the authority of Hajjaj ibn Mohammad, on the authority of ibn Joraij, on the authority of Y'ali ibn Muslim, on the authority of S'aeed ibn Jubayr, that ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with both of them, has said, "the verse *Obey God and Obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you*" refers to Abdillah ibn Hozafat ibn Qays ibn 'Adi whom the Prophet (saws) assigned as a military leader to fight a war". 18

Comment:

As is understood from *Fath al-Bari*, a book by ibn Hajar, this narration has probably been quoted on the authority of Saneed ibn Dawood Musaysi as is stated by ibn Sekan, not on the authority of Sadaqat ibn Fazl, as most narrators have mentioned and confirmed by *Bukhari's Saheeh*. Now, both Abu Hatem and Nisa'i consider Saneed ibn Dawood to be "weak". 19

a) So we can conclude that: We are not sure that this tradition has been reported by Sadaqat ibn Fazl. It may have been reported by Saneed, who is regarded to be "weak".

b) In the chain of transmission, mention has been made of the name of Hajjaj ibn Mohammad, concerning whom ibn Sa'd says, "He suffered from a failing memory in the final stage of his life". Ibn Hajar says, "He (Hajjaj) reported traditions while his condition was like that. 20

"Aulu al-Amr" Does Not Apply to Abu Bakr and Umar

From the discussions previously presented it is clear that Abu Bakr and Umar cannot be regarded as "*Aulu al-Amr*". Also, their manifest inability to give (appropriate) answers to questions they were asked and their views which were contrary to the Divine injunctions, as it is recorded in history and *hadith* literature, confirm our claim. For further elucidation, the reader may refer to volumes 6 and 7 of *al-Ghadir*.

In some Sunni books of traditions we can find this narration: "Follow those after me: Abi Bakr and Umar" ordering people to follow them. This tradition is open to dispute.

In the chain of transmission of this narration mention is made of the name of Abdul Malik ibn Umayer about whom Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, in his *Tahdhib al-Kamal*²¹ "Abdul Malik ibn Umayer is (a person who relates) really confused *hadiths*".

Ahmad ibn Hanbal considers him to be "weak", and Abu Hatim says, "He does not have a good memory; his memory failed him in the final stage of his life".

In his chain of transmissions of Tirmidhi²² mention is made of the name of salim ibn 'Ala Moradi, whom

ibn Mo'in and Nesaii consider to be "weak"²³. In the same source the name of Sa'id ibn Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Omawi is mentioned. Ibn Hajar quotes Salih Mohammad to have said, "He (Yahya ibn Sai'd al-Omawi) often made mistakes".²⁴

If such traditions had existed, Abu Bakr and Umar would have cited them in the consultative assembly at *Saqifah* as evidence of their competence to hold the position of caliphate. But it is definite that this tradition had not been quoted. This confirms that the tradition (in question) cannot be attributed to (the Prophet -S.A.W.-), and it is a faked tradition.

Those "Given Authority" by Shariah (such as One's Father) Are Not Meant be "Aulu al-Amr"

Based on the aforementioned evidence, it is clear that those given authority by Shariah, such as one's father and grandfather, are not considered as "absolute *Aulu al-Amr*".

Aulu al-Amr, and the Traditions of "Manzilah", "Ita'ah" and "Thaqalayn"

The Tradition of Manzilah

In his interpretation of the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*, Hakim Hasakani²⁵ mentions in his *Shawahid al-Tanzil*²⁶ that Mojahid has said:

"The person concerned in the verse "... *and those in authority from among you*", is The Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) and the verse was revealed when the Prophet (saws) appointed Ali (as) as his deputy in Medina. Then Ali (as) inquired, 'Do you appoint me as your deputy to take care of the women and children?'

The Prophet said, "Are you not content to be to me as Aaron was to Moses when he (Moses) said '*Take my place among my people, and act well?*'" When God, the Mighty and the Magnificent, said "*and those in authority from among you*" he (Mojahid) said *Aulu al-Amr* refers to no one but Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), who was appointed by God during the Prophet's lifetime to run the affairs after the demise of the Prophet.

This occurred when the Prophet (saws) appointed him (to represent him) in Medina. Then, God, the Mighty and the Magnificent, ordered His servants to obey him (Ali) and not to oppose him".

Mojahid, a learned figure, a commentator of the Qur'an and one of the Tab'in, states that the verse (in question) was revealed when the Prophet (saws) appointed Ali (as), peace be on him, to take his place in Medina. According to this *hadith* Ali (as) was given all that was with the Prophet just as Aaron was

given all that was with Moses, including his being the Prophet's deputy.

Accordingly, obedience to Ali (as) is incumbent upon all Muslims.

Besides the occasion of the revelation of the verse, it is worth mentioning that the tradition of *Manzilah* is, according to both the Shi'ites and the Sunnis, perfectly sound. Having cast light on the tradition of *Manzilah* and the reason for the revelation of the verse, Hakim Hasakani says,

“The tradition of *Manzilah* is the tradition concerning which our master, Abu Hazim used to say, ‘I have extracted this tradition attributing it to five thousand narrators’. Thus, there is no doubt that this tradition is authentic and many great narrators of *hadith*, such as ibn Asaker, have related it on the authority of many Companions.²⁷

This tradition indicates that after the Prophet, Ali (as) is the best and most learned of Muslims, and was the Prophet's deputy in the lifetime of the Prophet and after his demise.

The Tradition of Obedience (Ita'ah)

Another evidence that Ali (as) is meant by *Aulu al-Amr* is “the narration of obedience”, which has been related through many ways and in different versions. Hakim Nayshaburi has mentioned it in his *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan*²⁸; Dhahabi has given a summary of the tradition confirming that it is sound. The text of the *hadith* is as follows:

“The Prophet (saws) has said, ‘Whoever obeys me, has obeyed Allah; whoever disobeys me, has disobeyed Allah. Whoever obeys Ali, has obeyed me, and whoever disobeys Ali has disobeyed me’”.

In this *hadith* the Prophet (saws) has made obedience to Ali inseparable from obeying himself and has made obedience to himself inseparable from obeying God. He has also made disobeying Ali equal to disobeying himself (the Prophet), and the Prophet has made disobeying himself as disobedience to God.

This *hadith* explicitly signifies that obedience to Ali (as) is as obligatory as the obedience to the Prophet (saws) and it conveys the same idea as that of the *Aulu al-Amr* verse. They both state that obeying *Aulu al-Amr* is the same as obeying the Messenger of God (saws). This tradition which is in fact an interpretation of the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*, is applicable to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

This tradition also shows that Ali (as) is divinely protected from sin and error. (To prove it logically, we can say that): obedience is consequent on a command; that is, if there is no command, there is no obedience. “Command” (in turn) is consequent on a “will” which is ascribed to “yearning” and “perceiving” the profit of one's act.

Now that the *hadith* links “obedience to Ali (as.)” to the “obedience to the Prophet (saws.)” and considers them united, the command of Ali (as) is the command of the Prophet (saws) and his will is the

will of the Prophet and the profit he perceives is the profit which the Prophet perceives and this means nothing but Ali's infallibility.

The Tradition of *Thaqalayn*

Yet, another proof which supports the idea that the Household of the Prophet, God's peace and blessing be on them all, (the infallible Imams), are meant by *Aulu al-Amr*, is the *hadith* of *Thaqalayn*, which both the Shi'ites and the Sunnis confirm strongly. This *hadith* is mentioned in many *hadith* sources. Though variously worded, the *hadith* contains the following two statements:

"I am leaving behind two great and precious things (*Thaqalayn*): the Book of Allah, and my *Ahl al-Bayt* (Household). If you hold fast to them, you will not be deviated; the two will never separate until they return to me at the pond (of *Kawthar*)"²⁹.

In his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*³⁰, ibn Hajar says the concerning this *hadith*:

"The *hadith* of holding fast to of the two precious things has been related in many ways". It has been related on the authority of more than twenty of the Companions. Some say that the holy Prophet (saws) said these words when he was ill in Medina, at a time when the Companions were gathering around him in his room.

Others say that the Prophet (saws) said it at Ghadir Khumm. Still others say that the Prophet (saws) said it after he had returned from Ta'if. There is no contradiction between reports, because the Prophet (saws) may have said it in all these occasions to emphasize the special status of the Qur'an and his pure *itrah*".

Alamah Bahrani, a great Shi'ite scholar, has reported in his *Ghayat al-Maram* the *hadith* on the authority of thirty nine Sunni and eighty two Shi'ite scholars.³¹

Several things can be deduced from this noble narration:

(1) People's not going astray, will be impossible without holding fast to two great and precious things the Qur'an and the Household of the Prophet (saws). If they do not follow either one or both, they will surely go astray.

(2) The Prophet's Household and the Qur'an are inseparably joined; they will never separate. This clearly indicates that people must hold fast to the Prophet's Household. The first of whom is Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), peace be on him and obey them just as they abide by the Qur'an and obey it.

(3) That the members of Household of the Prophet will never separate from the Qur'an clearly shows that they are free from error and sin. Should the Household of the Prophet not be free from error, they will be separated (from the Qur'an); whereas according to the *hadith* of *Thaqalayn* they will never be.

Hadiths on “Aulu al–Amr” in Shi’ite and Sunnite Sources

Another proof that *Aulu al–Amr* is applicable to Ali (as) and his eleven infallible progeny (the twelve Imamiyyah Shi’ite Imams), are the reports recorded in Shi’ite and Sunni sources, where *Aulu al–Amr* is interpreted as Ali, peace be on him and the eleven infallible Imams who came after him.

The First Narration

In his *Fara’id al–Simtayn*³² Ibrahim ibn Mohammad ibn Mo’ayd Jowayani³³ relates on the authority of a number of narrators, and Sheikh Saduq ibn Babwayah Qommi in his *Kamal al–Deen*³⁴ have (both) reported that Saleem ibn Qays has said:

During the period of the caliphate of Uthman Ali (as), was in the mosque of the Messenger of God (saws), where a group of people were talking about the merits and past records of *Quraysh*, and what the Prophet (saws) had said about *Quraysh*, and *Ansars*’ merits, their illustrious deeds and feat, and God’s praise of them in the Qur’an. Each group mentioned their own merits.

Over two hundred men were gathering including Ali (as) Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, Abdul Rahman ibn Owf, Talhe, Zubayr, Miqdad, Abudhar, Imam al–Hasan and Imam al–Husain (as) and ibn Abbas. Ali (as) remained silent throughout the session that lasted until noon.

When he was asked to speak, he said, “You have each given a detailed account of your merits and left nothing unsaid. O *Quraysh* and *Ansar* I want you, to tell me why God, the Mighty and High has given you such superiority? Was it because of your own particularities, your tribal characteristics or your family attributes? Or was there other reasons?”

They said, “It is for the Prophet’s (saws) sake that we have been given such a favour”.

“You have said the truth, O you, the assembly of *Quraysh* and *Ansar*!” Ali (as) said. “Don’t you know that it is because of us, Household of the Prophet (*Ahl al–Bayt*) that you have attained good in this world the next?”

Ali (as) then mentioned some of the outstanding merits of *Ahl al–Bayt* and his own and had the audience affirm it, which they did.

He then asked them, “Do you know when these Qur’anic verses were revealed:

‘O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you’
(4:59)

“Only Allah is your wali and His apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor rate while they bow” (5:55)

'What! Do you think that you will be left alone while Allah has not yet known those of you who have struggled and have not taken any one as an adherent besides Allah and His Apostle and the believers. (9: 16)

Then people asked the Prophet, 'O Messenger of Allah, do these verses allude only to particular believers or to all of them?' So, God the Most High had the Prophet make it known who "*those in authority*" from among them are, give them a clear idea about *wilayah* just as he had (already) informed them about prayers, *zakat*, and going to Mecca for *hajj*, and to appoint me as a guardian over people.

Therefore, he (the Prophet, God bless him and his family,) said to the people, 'Surely Allah had sent me a message (because of which) I felt my breast became straitened, and thought that people would distrust me.

Then, Allah the Mighty and High ordered me to deliver the message or I would be punished. The Prophet (saws) ordered people to gather together for prayer. (When they did), he God blesses him and his family, delivered a sermon and said, "O people! Do you know that Allah is my Master and I am the master of believers, and I have authority over you more than you have over yourselves?"

"Yes, we do, O Messenger of God". They said.

"The Prophet then said to Ali (as), 'Stand up, Ali (as).', and I did. The Prophet, God bless him and his family, said, "For whomever I am *mawla* (master), Ali (as) is also his master. O God, be friendly with whoever is friendly with Ali (as) and enemy to whoever shows hostility to him".

Then Salman stood up and said, "O Messenger of God, What is this *wilayah* like?"

The Prophet (saws) answered, "It is of the type of authority that I have (over the people). On whomever I have more authority than one's self Ali (as) also has more authority". It is on this occasion that God the Mighty and High, revealed the verse:

'This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion'

"God is greater!" cried the Prophet (saws) "Ali's becoming my successor is the perfection of my prophet hood and the perfection of the Religion of Allah".

Then Abu Bakr and Umar got up and asked, 'O Messenger of God! Do these verses mean only Ali (as)?'

The Prophet said, "yes, they mean only Ali (as) and my executors (*awsiyat*) until the Day of Judgment.' They said, 'O Messenger of God, tell us who they are.' The Prophet (saws) said, 'They are Ali (as), my brother, my aide, my inheritor, my executor, my vicegerent over my community, and the guardian over every believer after me.

Then comes my sons Al–Hasan (as) and Al–Husain (as) followed by nine descendants from al–Husain (as), one after the other. They are with the Qur’an and the Qur’an is with them. They will never separate from the Qur’an, nor will the Qur’an separate from them until they return to me at the pond (of Kawthar)”.

Ali (as) asked those who had been present at Ghadir Khumm and remembered what the Prophet (saws) had said to stand up and bear witness that it was true. Zayd ibn Arqam, Bara ibn ‘Azib, Salman, Abudhar and Miqdad stood up and said, ‘We bear witness and we remember what the Prophet (saws) had said on a pulpit, and confess that you were beside him.

He said, ‘O People! God the Mighty and High has ordered me to appoint as your Imam, the one who will rise up among you after me to be my executor and successor. He is the one, the obeying of whom God, the Mighty and High, has made obligatory as it is stated in His book, the obeying of whom God has made equal to obeying me.’ (This is an allusion to the verse of *Aulu al–Amr*.

‘O people! God, the Mighty and High, has commanded you to perform prayers and do your *Hajj pilgrimage* and I have explained that to you. He, the Mighty and High, has also ordered you to (believe) in *wilayah*, (an authority God has given to Imams) and I call you to witness that this *wilayah* belongs to this (person). (At this point, the Prophet pointed to Ali) and to his two sons (al–Hasan and al–Husain), who are his successors.

The above report is very detailed, but we will focus on things related to the verse of *Aulu al–Amr*. Those interested can refer to the details of this report in the abovementioned sources.

The Second Narration

Late Saduq mentions this narration in his *Kamal al–Deen*³⁵, on the authority of Jabir ibn Yazid Jo’fi. It is as follows:

“I heard Jabir ibn *Abdallah Ansari* say ‘When Allah, the Mighty and High, revealed the Qur’anic verse **‘O, you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you’**,

I said, ‘Messenger of Allah, we know who God and His Messenger are. Would you tell us who *‘those in authority’* whose obedience God, the Mighty and High, has made equal to obeying you are?’

The Prophet (saws) said, ‘Jabir, (you must know that) they are my successors and Imams of the Muslims after me, the first of whom is Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), followed by Al–Hasan (as), Al–Husain (as), Ali ibn al–Husain (as), Mohammad ibn Ali (as), known in Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

When you do, convey my greetings to him. After him, there will come Sadiq (as), Jaffar ibn Mohammad (as), then Musa ibn Ja’far (as), followed by Ali ibn Musa (as), Mohammad ibn Ali (as), Ali ibn Mohammad (as), al–Hasan ibn Ali (as), and finally the one whose *kuniya* (name), is the same as mine he is the *hujja* (argument), of God on the earth, the one whom God has prolonged his life, the son of al–Hasan ibn Ali

Al-Askari (as).

He is the one through whom God will conquer the East and the West of the world. He is the one who according to the Shi'ah and his friends has gone into occultation, a period during which no one will remain steadfast in one's belief concerning his Imamate except those whose hearts God has tested.

The Third Narration

*Usool al-Kafi*³⁶ quotes Bareed Ejlî to have said:

“Imam al-Baqir (as) has said, ‘In the verse:

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you,

God refers to us; He has ordered all the believers from now until the Day of Judgment to obey us (the infallible Imams).’

Besides the aforementioned narrations the books of *hadith* of Shi'ites and Sunnites include other narrations that interpret “*those in authority*” as the Infallible Imams. Researchers may refer to such books as *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, *Yanabi al-Mawadeh*, (from among the Sunni sources) and *Usool al-Kafi*, *Ghayat al-Maram*, and *Muntekhab al-Athar* (from among the Shi'i sources).

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1. – Bahr al-Moheet, vol. 3, p. 278; Al-Tafseer al-Kabeer.
 2. – Nayshaburi's Qara'ib al-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 434, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; Mohammad Abdah and Rasheed Rida's Tafseer al-Minar, vol. 5, p. 181, by Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 3. – Al-Tafseer al-Kabeer, the last part of the Qur'anic verse in question.
 4. – Al-Kashaf, vol. 1, pp. 276–277, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 5. – Tabari, Tafseer, vol. 5, p. 95; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 6. – Al-Tabaqat al-Kobra, vol. 5, p. 437, Dar Beirut Liltiba'a wa al-Nashr.
 7. – Kitab al-Thiqat, vol. 9, p.42, Al-Kotob al-Thaqafiyah Institute.
 8. – Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 11, p. 221, Dar al-Fikr.
 9. – Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 5, p. 260, Dar al-Fikr; Ahkam al-Qur'an, by Jasses, vol. 2, p. 210, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
 10. – Irshad al-'Aqil al-Saleem, Abul So'ud's commentary, vol. 2, p. 193, Dar lhya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.
 11. – Tabari's Tafseer, vol. 5, p. 92, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 12. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol.2, p. 181.
 13. – Tabari's Tafseer, vol. 5, p. 92, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 14. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 8, p. 138.
 15. – Tabari's Tafseer , p. 92, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
 16. – Ibid, p. 92.
 17. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 1, p. 273.
 18. – Bukhari's Saheeh, vol. 3, p. 376, al-Tafseer, the section on “Obey Allah..., tradition 1010; Beirut.
 19. – Fath al-Bari, vol8, p. 253.
 20. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 2, p. 181.
 21. – Tahdhib al-Kamal, vol. 18, p. 373, Al-Risalah Institute.
 22. – Tirmidhi's Sunan, vol. 5, p. 570, tradition 3663.

23. – Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 2, p. 112, Dar al-Fikr.
24. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 4, p. 86.
25. – Hakim Hasakani is a great Sunni reporter of narrations concerning whom Dhahabi says, “Ubaydillah ibn Abdullah Mohammad ibn al-Hasan al-Qorashi, al-'Ammeri al-Nayshaburi al-Hanafi, al-Hakim, known as ibn Hadhdhá. He is an adept Sheikh (master) of the science of hadith.
26. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 190, the Institute of al-Tab' wa al-Nashr.
27. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 195, the Institute of al-Tab' wa al-Nashr.
28. – Al-Mustadrak, vol. 3, p. 121, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
29. – Tirmidhi's Sahih, vol. 5, pp. 621–2, Dar al-Fikr; Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 3, pp. 17 and 59; also, vol. 5, pp. 181 and 189, Dar Sadir, Beirut; Hakim's Mustadrak, vol. 3, pp. 190–110, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; Khasa'is al-Nisaii, p. 93, Maktabahi Ninavi, there are many other sources quoted in Kitab Allah wa Ahl al-Bayt fi Hadith Thaqalayn.
30. – Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, p. 150, Makitbah al-Qahireh (Egypt).
31. – Qayat al-Maram, vol. 2, p. 304 and 367.
32. – Fara'id al-Simtayn, p. 312, vol. 1, the institute of al-Mahmoodi lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, Beirut. Ismail Pasha in his Izah al-Maknoon, p. 182, vol. 4, Dar al-Fikr says, “Fara'id al-Simtayn which deals with the outstanding merits of al-Murtida (Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.)), al-Batool, (Hazarat Fatimah Zahra (S.A.)), Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husain, peace be on them by Abdillah ibn Ibrahim ibn Sa'd al-Deen Mohammad ibn Abi Bark ibn Mohammad ibn Hamoyeh al-Jowayani; He finished it in 716.
33. – On page 65 of his al-Mo'jam al-Mukhtas bil Mohaddtheen, Moktabat al-Sideeq, Ta'if, Dhahabi says, “Ibrahim ibn Mohammad ...is a great imam, traditionist, Sheikh of Sheikhs, who was born in 644 A.H. and died in Khorasan in 722 A.H.”. On page 67, volume 1 of al-Durar al-Kamineh Ibn Hajar says: He attended hadith lectures of (certain) professors in Hilla and Tabriz, and specially favoured it. He was a religious, dignified and good-looking man who recited the Qur'an well.
34. – Kamal al-Deen, p. 274.
35. – Kamal al-Deen, p.253.
36. – Usool al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 217.

Chapter 4: Imamate As Envisaged in the Verse of Wilayah

﴿ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ﴾

“Only Allah is your wali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor rate while they bow”. (5:55)

One of the strong arguments advanced by Imamiyyah Shi'ites in support of Imamate and wilayah of Ali (as) is the Qur'anic verse of *wilayah*.

In order to confirm the idea presented in the Qur'anic verse about the word “*wali*”, we have to prove the following:

1. The word “انما” meaning “only”, indicates restriction.
2. “*Wali*”, in the stated verse, means most worthy of possession of authority and being a guardian.
3. The phrase “*bow down*” refers to a ritual movement while praying, not to a humbleness and humility.
4. It is certain that this Qur'anic verse refers to the occasion when the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as), paid *Zakat*, to the poor for the sake of God, while he was bowing in praying.

Here, we seek to prove the aforementioned points and to finally answer the questions posed in regard to this Qur'anic verse.

The Use of “انما” (only) for Restriction

Arabic lexicographers say that, the word انما indicates restriction:

a) Ibn Manzur says, “A combination of ان and ما that, indicates specification. An instance for this the Qur'anic verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ﴾

Alms are only for the poor and the needy” (9:60)

In which انما shows that the following command includes the mentioned group and excludes others. 1

b) Jawhari, another lexicographer, says something similar to that. 2

c) Firoozabadi says, “Like انما, the word انما indicates restriction and both are found in the Qur'anic verse:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

Say:

It is only revealed to me that your God is one will you then submit?” (21: 108)

Contains both انما and انما. 3

d) Ibn Hisham says the same thing.⁴

Therefore, there is no doubt that “انما” is used to indicate restriction. It may also be used to indicate something else. If there is a contextual clue, which is a figurative use of the word.

An Investigation into the Meaning of “Wali”

The word “ولي” is a derivative of “وَلِي” meaning “made *wali*”, and “ولاية” meaning “guardianship” a word that has various meanings. An investigation into the meanings, however, shows that it originally means “guardian”, “one who has preference over others”, and “possessor of free will”.

a) Ibn Manzur’s *Lisan al-Arab* says the following: “*Wali* means an orphan’s guardian who manages the orphan’s affairs, and provides him or her. The *wali* (guardian) of a woman is the one who supervises her marriage contact.

It has been reported that if a woman gets married without the permission of her *muwalli*, her marriage contract will be nil and void. Yet another report contains the word “*her wali*” rather than her *muwalli*, which means someone who has full authority”.⁵

b) Fayoomi says in his *al-Misbah al-Muneer*,⁶ “the word *wali*, pronounced in the same way as *fa-eel* فَعِيل, has the meaning of agent, as in the holy Qur’anic verse

“Allah is the guardian of those who believe” (2:257)

c) Ibn Faris has said, “The person who is delegated to manage someone’s affairs is his or her *wali*. This word is sometimes used to mean the one who sets a slave free, the freed slave, the cousin, the helper, or the friend”.

From what this great lexicographer says, it can be understood that such meanings as “helper” and “friend” are not the real meanings of *wali*, but sometimes it can be used figuratively.

To define *wali*, dictionaries⁷ usually the following example: “The one who manages someone’s affairs is his *wali*, (guardian).”

It can thus be understood that *wali* conventionally means “one who has free will and authority”; this is confirmed by the Qur’anic verses mentioned below:⁸

A Few Basic Points to Notice

A) Dictionaries usually give the various meaning of a word. This does not mean that each word has a real meaning According to linguists’ view the idea that each lexical item has many real meanings opposes the principle rule (of language).

For example: Jamal al–Deen ibn Hisham al–Misri, a leading Sunni scholar of (Arabic), grammar and literature, and author of *Mugni al–Labib*, comments on the way some grammar scholars interpret the Qur’anic verse:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ...﴾

Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet, (33:56)

Has not been mentioned explicitly. These scholars maintain that the word *angels* in the Qur’anic statement is a predicate. (In answer to them) he says, “There are reasons to believe that what these people say is far from reality first, on the basis of their claim the word *صلاة* “blessing” must have various meanings, and this opposes the linguistic principle so that some have denied (such possibility) and those who have not, prefer to consider it a figurative usage.

Firoozabadi, a lexicographer, has written in a book on “calling for (divine) blessing on the Prophet”, and investigated the Qur’anic verse, citing what ibn Hisham has said in this regard.⁹

“Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet...”

Accordingly, as regards the meaning of the word *wilayah*, which has several meanings, it definitely means “guardianship” and “authority” whereas “friendship” and “helper” are excluded from the province of the meaning. Thus, whenever the word “*wali*” is used without a contextual clue, it denotes “guardian” and “authority”.

B) Some lexicographers assume that the root “*w–l–i*” means closeness and some commentators take the lexicographers’ view for granted. It should, however, be noticed that:

- 1) Such view is based merely on guessing; not on reasoning.
- 2) What contributes to understanding the real meaning of a lexical item is the time in which it is used. There is no doubt that most often the word “*wali*” does not mean “closeness”, but in some cases when there is a contextual clue, it does as in the phrase *المطر الولي*. This phrase means: a second rain close in time to the first one.

Even if we assume that the word “*wali*” formerly meant “*closeness*”, but now it does not because it is obsolete.

C) Certain lexicographers, for instance, ibn al–Atheer in his *al–Nihayah*, and ibn Manzur in his *Lisan al–Arab*, say at the outset of their discussion of the meaning of *wali* that it is one of the names of God, and it means “*helper*”, and it can mean “*Administrator of the universe*”.

This, however, is not true because the word *wali* comes from the root which is pronounced like *fa-ee/*. Were it mean “*helper*”, it would convey this idea both when it is a root and derivative provided that it gives the meaning of a subject.

It should be added that neither of the two has a proof, besides, the word that is pronounced like *fa-ee/* is a verb-like *adjective*, implying a constancy (in the attributes it refers to), whereas *fa-ee/*, denotes an occurrence, and each of them oppose the other.

So, the word *wali* which is considered as a name of God means possessor of authority and administrator of the affairs of the world. However, the two above mentioned lexicographers, give their own opinion about the meaning, using the word *qeel* which means “it is said that”.

D) The word *wali* has, in many Qur’anic verses, been juxtaposed with *Naseer* (helper), as in the Qur’anic verse,

“...and that besides Allah, you have no guardian or helper” (2:107)

. If *naseer* was one of the meanings of the word *wali*, it would not be used next to *wali*. Semantically, the two words differ from each other.

E) On the basis of many Qur’anic verses such as

﴿ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ﴾

“Not yours is their guardianship”, (8:72)

Some people have taken *wali*, and *wilayah*, to indicate “help” and “assistance”, whereas (*wilayah*) could mean “guardian with giving assistance”. The (actual meaning of) *wilayah* is not “assistance” because assistance is part of (the responsibility of) *wilayah*. The only sense of *wilayah* in the above mentioned verse is guardianship and (giving) assistance is observed, too.

We can thus conclude that “guardianship and authority” are the only meanings for *wali* in the mentioned Qur’anic verse.

Besides, the verse contains a definite clue to indicate that it does not mean “friend” and “helper”. This will be explained in the forthcoming pages.

The Meaning of Ruku’

Ruku’ literally means bowing down. This word is also used to mean a certain ritual act when we perform our prayers. 10

Zubaydi says in his *Taj al-Aroos*,¹¹ “The phrase *raka’a al-Rajul*, ركع الرجل may mean that the person was once wealthy but is poor now”. Here, the word “bow down” is used figuratively. Thus, the real meaning of *ruku’* is “bowing down” in praying; but when it is used to indicate poverty or humbleness, it will be a figurative use and needs a contextual clue.

The Occasion of the Revelation of the Verse of Wilayah

According to many reports in Shi’ite and Sunni commentaries of the Qur’an, the holy verse of *wilayah* – “Only Allah is your wali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow” – was revealed in favour of Ali ibn Abi Talib, God’s peace be on him. Below is a narrative related by Tha’alabi¹² in his *Tafseer*¹³ on the authority of Sunni leading commentators, and by Sheikh Tusi, a great Shi’ite commentator, in his *Majm’a al-Bayan*¹⁴:

“It is reported that Abayat ibn Rab’i said, ‘Abdullah ibn Abbas was sitting by the Zam Zam well (in the House of God) relating *hadiths* from the Holy Prophet (saws). Then, a man with a turban on his head entered. Ibn Abbas began saying, ‘The Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants said...’ and the man repeated (the same phrase, saying), ‘The Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his descendant said...’

This statement was repeated (several times). Finally, ibn Abbas said to him, ‘For God’s sake tell us who you are.’ The man took his turban off and said, ‘I will introduce myself to those who do not know me. I am Jundub, the son of Junadah al-Badri, that is, Abu Dhar Ghifari. ‘I heard the Prophet (saws) and saw him say, ‘Ali (as) is the leader of those who do good and killer of those who disbelieve.

Whoever helps him will be helped (by God) and whoever abandons him will be abandoned (by God).’ As he said the first phrase Jundub pointed to his ears and said, ‘May my ears become deaf if I am not telling you the truth,’ and pointed to his eyes and said ‘May my eyes become blind if I am not telling you the truth”.

“The Jundub also said, ‘Once I performed the noon prayers in a mosque, behind the Prophet (saws) then, a beggar came in but no one attended to him. The beggar extended his hands towards the heaven and said, ‘O God, bear witness! Here, in the mosque of the Prophet of God (saws) I asked (to be given something), but no one attended to me.’

Ali (as), who was in *ruku’*, saying his prayers gestured with his hand, inviting the beggar to take a ring which was on his little finger. The beggar stepped closer, and removed the ring from Ali’s (as) finger. This incident took place in the presence of the Prophet (saws).

“When the prayer finished, the Prophet (saws) extended his hand towards the heaven and said,

“My God! My brother Moses supplicated to you, and said: O my Lord! Expand my breast for me, and make my affair easy to me, and loose the knot from my tongue (that) they may understand

***my word; and give to me an aider from my family: Haroun, my brother”.* (20:25–30)**

There and then came a revelation (to Moses)

‘We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority’ (28:35)

‘O My God, I am Mohammad(saws), Thy Prophet and Thy Chosen one; expand my breast for me and make my affairs easy to me and give me an aider from my family, Ali (as), and back me up by him.’

“Abu Dhar continued ‘By God! No sooner had the Prophet (saws) finished his words than Gabriel descended and said: O Mohammad! Recite.’ The Prophet (saws) asked, ‘What should I recite?’ Gabriel said, ‘*Only Allah is your wali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor–rate while they bow*”.

There are many narratives that mention this specific reason for the revelation of Qur’anic verse. Some of these *hadiths* will be cited later on, and some others will come on the page containing responses to ibn Taymiyyah’s objections.

When we come across these *hadiths* it will become clear that the mentioned reason for the revelation of this Qur’anic verse is definite.

Questions and Answers on the Verse of Wilayah

In this section it is appropriate to answer the questions raised concerning the verse of “wilayah”.

Question One: Doesn’t the word “Wali”, in the verse, mean “friend”?

The Qur’anic verse in question comes in the same context as those verses that prohibit believers from taking the Jews and the Christians as their *wali*. Inasmuch the word *wali* means “helper” and “friend” in those verses, in this particular verse of *wilayah* it must also mean helper or friend because these verses make them integrated with the other verses.

Given this, the verse means: your friends are only Allah and His Apostle and those believers who keep up prayers and pay the poor–rate when they stand before God in humbleness.

Answer

First: It is unsound to say that these verses are integrated with the verses preceding them because, as we already stated the reason for the revelation of this particular verse and on the basis of the elaboration that will follow the reason for the revelation of this verse is different. By “different” we mean that there is no relationship between the content and the subject matter of this verse and the content and subject matter of the other verses.

Without doubt the arrangement of the Qur’anic verses, which we usually read, differs from the order in

which the verses were revealed. There are verses, such as those revealed in Mecca, that come in the final part of the Qur'an, and vice versa. For example the chapter "Baqara" is the second in the present order, whereas it was the first chapter revealed in Medina. The way the Qur'an is arranged does not correspond with the time the verses and chapters were revealed.

The verses and chapters of the Qur'an have been arranged under the supervision of the Prophet (saws). While determining the order of each verse and chapter, he considered the occasion and spiritual pertinence of the verses. Therefore, the difference between the present arrangement of the verses and the time of their revelation does not harm the contextual integrity.

Answer

It is true that the present order of the verses was arranged under the Prophet's supervision and there is a reason for locating every verse and chapter. There is no evidence to support the claim that the Prophet (saws) observed the wisest order, occasions and spiritual relations between the verses.

Thus, when there is solid evidence that a certain verse has been revealed after another, (we can say that) they make a structural whole but when a verse has been independently revealed or there is doubt about that, we cannot say that the two verses make a structural whole.

The Qur'anic verse in question has been independently revealed. Therefore, it is not contextually related to the previous verses.

Secondly, it is not certain that *wali*, in the Qur'anic verse means "friend" or "helper".

"O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians as wali, some of them act as walis for one another..." (5:51)

Based on the previous discussions, *wali* in the above verse can also mean "guardian" and "authority".

Third: If the word "*wilayah*" in verse 55 of chapter 5 is taken to mean "friendship" and "assistance", the content of the verse will contradict the reality, because the verse would mean "Only Allah and His apostle are your friends **or** helpers and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow".

It is evident that the "friends" and "helpers" of those who believe are not only those who pay the poor-rate while they bow, but all believers are each other's "helpers" and "friends". If the word راکعون (*they bow*) in the verse is interpreted to as "they humble themselves before God" it will be a metaphorical usage. As we said before, the word "راکعون" means "bowing down (in prayers)".

Thus, to claim that there is a contextual relationship between verse 51 of chapter 5 and those before it is groundless.

However, even if there is a contextual relationship between verse 51 of chapter 5 and the preceding ones, it will not have a negative influence on the meaning the verse wants to convey.

Question Two: That the verse has been revealed on the occasion of Ali's paying the poor-rate while he was bowing down should be proved

Certain people express their doubt about the idea that the verse has been revealed on the occasion of Ali's (as) paying the poor-rate while he was bowing down in prayers. Tha'alabi, one of those who have narrated the event, is not qualified enough to differentiate between sound and unsound reports. Great traditionists, such as al-Tabari, ibn Hatam and others have not mentioned such faked stories.

Answer: A large number of books of hadith and Qur'an commentary written by Shi'ite and Sunni authors confirm this particular reason for the revelation of the verse: i.e. paying the poor rate by Ali (as) while he was bowing in prayers. Since These books are too many to mention here, we will mention some of them in the footnote. 15

To call such an authentic report "a forged story" is an infuriating insult both to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) and to the great traditionists who have narrated this *hadith*. Tha'alibi, whom this reckless critic considers "unable to distinguish between sound and unsound *hadiths*" is highly commended by Sunni scholars of *ilm-Rijal*. Let us see the view of two of them:

1. Dhahabi, a great Sunni scholar of *ilm-al-Rijal*, and a renowned *hadith* expert says about Tha'alabi: "He is an imam, who has learned the Qur'an by heart, an authority on the Qur'an commentary, a treasury of science, who was truthful and trustworthy and has a good insight in Arabic". 16

2. In his *Selection of the History of Nayshabour*, Abd al-Ghafir Nayshaburi says, "Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn Ibrahim who is well qualified in recitation of the Qur'an; a commentator (of the Qur'an), a preacher, a man of letters, a trustworthy one who has learned the Qur'an by heart, has written invaluable books of the Qur'an commentary containing various (lexical) meanings and allusions". Then, he says, "His *hadiths* are authentic and reliable". 17

Besides the fact that Tha'alabi is a trustworthy and great scholar, the incident of giving the ring by Ali (as) to the needy man can be found in many *hadith* books of both Shi'ites and Sunnis, including Tabari and ibn Abi Hatem, who are among the critics about whom some say do not narrate such forged stories" have narrated it. It is appropriate here to quote these two scholars.

Ibn Katheer says, in his *Commentary*:

"Ibn Abi Hatem said: Abu Sa'id al-Ashaj told us: al-Fazl ibn Dekeen Abu Na'im al-Ahwal told us: Musa ibn Qays informed us on the authority of Salamat ibn Kuhyal, who said: Ali (as), gave his ring while he was bowing in prayer. Then (the following) verse was revealed,

“Only Allah is your wali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor–rate while they bow.” 18

Also Ibn Jarir al–Tabari says in his *Commentary*: Mohammad ibn al–Husain told us: ‘Ahmad ibn al–Mofazzal told us: Asbat related from al–Seddi to have said “Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was in the mosque, in the position of bowing in prayer, and when a need person passed by, he gave him his ring” 19

Question Three: Does the word **انما only indicate restriction?**

Fakhr al–Razi’s answer is no, and, in order to support his view, he cites this verse:

“The likeness of this world’s life is only as water which We send down from the cloud, then the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows luxuriantly thereby; until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped seed–produce, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; thus do We make clear the communication for a people who reflect” (10:24).

He says, “This is not the only parable for the life in this world, –there are other parables too. Therefore, the word **انما** (*only*) in this verse, does not really indicate restriction.

Answer

First: The word **انما**, meaning “only”, does indicate restriction, even in the verse Fakhr al–Razi has quoted (as an example in his attempt to justify his point). This is called, *hasr*, (exclusiveness) in Arabic. There are, however, two kinds of *hasr*: real and relative the idea of the addressee in the latter, is omitted. For example, when someone says, “A certain person, (a), is standing”, and another one says “*Only* (b) is standing”, this means that the idea that someone other than “b” is standing is rendered null and void.

In the same way, the verse 24 in chapter 10 quoted above, wants to say that the life in this world is like (rain) water falling from the sky, causing the plants to grow and finally the plants’ wither which is an indication of annihilation and the end of life in this world. This means that the life in this world is not permanent.

Second: The word **انما** (*only*) that indicates restriction may not mean restriction, provided that there is a contextual clue. The word *only* is figuratively used in the mentioned verse and this cannot be a reason for using it in the cases where there is no contextual clue. Therefore, in the verse of **wilayah**, the word *only* has been used in its real meaning i.e. to indicate restriction.

Question Four: Is referring to Ali (as) as “those who believe” – in the verse of

wilayah – used figuratively?

If the phrase “*those who believe*” – plural in meaning – is used to refer to Ali (as), then it has a figurative sense, and this cannot be acceptable if there is no contextual clue.

Answer: First: Based on Imamiyyah Shi’ite hadiths, the phrase “those who believe” does not refer only to Ali (as). It also includes all infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.), who according to our traditions have the privilege of having given a needy person a ring when they were in prayer.²⁰

Second: If we assume that the Qur’anic phrase wants to allude specifically to Ali (as), and that it is used figuratively, there are *hadiths* that explain the reasons for the revelation of the Qur’anic verse which serve as contextual clue.

Question Five: Did Ali (as) possess a ring to give in the cause of God?

It is quite known that Ali (as) himself was of little means, and did not own an expensive ring to give to a needy person.

Answer: Ali (as) was not poor. Traditions and history attest to the fact that he personally worked hard, planting palm trees and digging grooves, but he never amassed wealth; rather, he donated all his wealth in the cause of Allah.

Question Six: Is giving of the ring congruent with complete absorption in prayers?

When he performed ritual prayer, Ali (as) got totally absorbed in praying so that he did not hear others. How could he hear the needy person asking for help? How did he give the ring to the needy man?

Answer: Although, when he said his ritual prayer, Ali (as) paid no heed to what was going around him because he concentrated on praying, it is quite possible that God, the Mighty and High, who is capable of changing one’s condition, had turned Ali’s attention to the needy person so that he could give him something, a valuable act of worship which led to the revelation of the Qur’anic verse.

A number of the traditions about the occasion of the revelation of the verse we have already mentioned prove that Ali (as) did notice the beggar and as a result he gave the poor man poor-rate.

Question Seven: Does giving something during the prayer, invalidate it?

Giving of the ring harms the formal rules of ritual prayer, an act which can never be attributed to, Ali (as).

Answer: What invalidates the (formal rules of) prayer is, according to Shi’ite and Sunni jurists, making *katheer* (major) moves. Minor gestures do not invalidate ritual prayer.

In a section under the title of *Minor moves in prayers*, Abu Bakr Jassas discusses the Qur’anic verse in question in his book, *Ahkam al-Qur’an*,²¹ and says ‘If the Qur’anic verse refers to the giving of *sadaka*

(poor–rate) while (the donor is) bowing down in prayers, this means that minor motions are permissible while performing ritual prayers.

There are reports about some of the minor moves made by the Prophet (saws) while he was performing his prayers, such as touching his beard, and pointing to something and so on. These reports clearly show that it is permissible to give poor–rate while performing ritual prayer”.

In his *Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an*,²² Qortubi quotes al-Tabari to have said, “This (event of) donation of ring by the Commander of the Faithful (as) indicates that slight moves do not invalidate ritual prayers. Consequently, giving a poor man *sadaka* (a donation in the cause of God) while performing prayers, does not invalidate the prayers”.

Question Eight: Can recommended Sadaka be called Zakat?

Fakhr al-Razi says that the term *Zakat*, in the Qur'anic verse means obligatory *Zakat* (alms), not voluntary *sadaka* (poor–rate or charity), as is understood from God's oft–repeated “... اتوا الزكوة meaning pay the alms”, an imperative form making it obligatory.

Now that the term “*Zakat*” is considered an “obligatory act”, if Ali (as) had given an obligatory alms when he was performing ritual prayers, he would have delayed, an obligatory act, which most scholars consider a sin. No one, however, can attribute such a thing to Ali (as).

If (on the other hand) the term *Zakat* is taken to mean “recommended poor–rate”, it will contradict the principle because it is understood from the (Qur'anic verse) “pay the alms” that any *sadaka* that is called *Zakat* is obligatory.

Answer: First: There is no doubt that “*Zakat*” in the verse means “recommended poor–rate”. The hadiths about the occasion of the revelation of the stated Qur'anic verse, emphasize this fact. It is not correct to assume that since the verse “pay the alms” refers to “obligatory *Zakat*” then any kind of “*Zakat*” must be obligatory. What is obligatory in the verse “and pay the alms” is the imperative “pay”, whereas the word “*Zakat*” has a general sense.

In fact “*Zakat*”, regardless of any contextual clue, is divided into two kinds: obligatory and recommended. Thus, “*wajib* (obligation)” or “*istihbab* (being recommended)” falls outside the province of denotation. This view is supported by Shi'ite and Sunni jurists, who divide *Zakat* into two kinds: “obligatory” and *mandub* (recommended)”.

Therefore, the assumption that anything (paid as) *Zakat* must be “obligatory contradicts what we have stated”.

Second: The Qur'anic verse does not contain the imperative verb “pay”, and the sentence: “(they) pay the poor–rate” is a statement. That *sadaka* (poor–rate), in the Qur'anic verse is “recommended”, not

“obligatory” is confirmed by some Sunni jurists.

For example, in his *Ahkam al-Qur’an*, Jassas says: the Qur’anic phrase “*they pay the poor rate while they bow*” shows that recommended *sadaka* is called *Zakat* because Ali (as) gave his ring as “recommended *sadaka*”.

Zakat in the Qur’anic verse “***and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allah’s pleasure it is these (persons) that shall get manifold***” covers both obligatory and recommended *sadaka* (poor–rate). Similarly, the word *salat* (ritual prayer) includes both prescribed and *mustahab* (recommended) ritual prayers”²³

Question Nine: Is giving poor–due while bowing in prayer a highly praised act?

If by bowing down it is meant *ruku* which is part of ritual prayers, (we should say that) giving things, in this particular part of prayer does not deserve praise, because there is no difference between giving something in this particular part and in any other part.

Answer: Concerning the incident of giving *Zakat* by Ali (as), the Qur’anic verse refers to bowing down not because it is highly praised to give *zakat* in this particular part of prayer, but because it is the time that the needy man asked Ali (as) for something.

In other words, it is merely an external proposition: there is nothing particular in the term *ruku’*, but it is the act of worship done by Ali (as) that deserves praise. If Ali (as) had not given the ring, the needy man would have left the mosque disappointed.

Question Ten: Does the content of this verse contradict that of the verse before it?

Fakhr al–Razi says, “If this Qur’anic verse is taken as a proof of the Imamate of Ali (as), the verse will then contradict the verse preceding it because the latter indicates the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abu Bakr.

Answer: The verse preceding the verse of *wilayah* in the Qur’an never indicates the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abu Bakr. The verse says

“O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers; they shall strive in Allah’s way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah’s grace. He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample–giving, Knowing”²⁴.

Fakhr al–Razi, however, says that the above verse points to the legitimacy of Abu Bakr’s caliphate because God, the Mighty and High, has told the believers that if they turn back from their religion, He will bring a group of people who have the attributes mentioned in the verse to fight them.

Fakhr al-Razi then says that after the death of the Prophet (saws) Abu Bakr was the only person who fought against the apostates. Because this Qur'anic verse is taken to be in favour of Abu Bakr, it is an indication of the legitimacy of his caliphate, too.

b) In order to support his argument of the legitimacy of Abu Bakr's caliphate, Fakhr al-Razi adds a phrase of his own: "fighting against apostates". The verse refers to a group with certain attributes including readiness "to strive in Allah's way". The verse has not said that "these people will fight the apostates".

Similar to the content of this verse is found in some other verses:

1. **"... if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it".**²⁵

2. **"... and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you".**²⁶

3. **"If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do Him no harm".**²⁷

The content of the Qur'anic verse (in question) is similar to that of the above mentioned verses. In the verse Fakhr al-Razi has cited, there is no mention of a group of people who will fight the apostates.

Question Eleven: Doesn't the restriction in the verse invalidate the Imamate of the Infallible Imams?

If we say that the Qur'anic verse indicates the Imamate of Ali (as), this will oppose the doctrine of Imamiyyah School of thought just as it contradicts the Sunni doctrine, because the Shi'ites' do not believe only in Ali's Imamate, but in the imamate of other eleven Imams, as well.

Answer: First: On the basis of the solid evidence already presented, the term *wilayah* means "divine authority and guardianship" and "bowing down" means a bowing down in prayer. It has become clear that the word only, indicating restriction, shows that *hasr* (restriction) in the verse is relative, not real, because besides the Prophet and the Imams there are other "guardians" such as jurists, rulers, the judges, fathers, grandparents, and executors.

If we take *hasr* to have real meaning, the verse will negate the authority of all these *walis* (guardians), but such is not the case. This is a clue indicating that the restriction in the Qur'anic verse is (functionally) relative, meaning authority, guardianship and succession of the Commander of the Faithful (as) after the Prophet (saws). Therefore, this is not incompatible with the idea of the Imamate of the other (infallible) Imams.

Second: Based on the traditions in *hadith* sources of both Imamiyyah Shi'ites and Sunnis, the Qur'anic

phrase “*those who believe*”²⁸ does not refer only to Ali (as), because all the (infallible) Imams have had the privilege of giving *Zakat* while they were bowing down in their prayers just as Imam Ali (as) did. Thus, the Qur’anic verse has shown, from the outset, that Imamate is granted to True Imams only.

Question Twelve: Did Ali (as) have the office of guardianship in the lifetime of the Prophet (saws)?

If the Qur’anic verse provides evidence for the Imamate of Ali (as), Ali (as) must to have had such a rank during the lifetime of the Prophet (saws) but this was not the case.

Answer: First: Multitude evidence prove that Ali (as) also had authority in the lifetime of the Prophet (saws) and whenever the Prophet (saws) was not present (in the town) he appointed Ali (as) as his deputy. The tradition of Manzilah clearly shows that Ali (as) held all the ranks and positions the Prophet had, just as Aaron had all the ranks held by Moses, peace be on him.

When Prophet Moses wanted to leave for Mount Sinai, he said to his brother Aaron “*Be my deputy*”. As Sunni scholars hold, Aaron’s succeeding Moses is not limited to the time when Moses was staying in Mount Sinai.²⁹ Therefore Ali (as) is the Prophet’s successor.

Second: If there is no evidence to prove Ali’s authority in the lifetime of the Prophet (saws), the verse of *Wilayah* (certainly) indicates his authority from the moment of the Prophet’s death.

Question Thirteen: Considering the verse of Wilayah, can we consider Ali (as) as the fourth caliph?

Assuming that the Holy Qur’anic verse denotes, the appointment of Ali (as) to the rank of Imamate, it does not negate the caliphate of the three caliphs before him, because on the basis of the consensus and consultative assembly, we accept the caliphate of the caliphs who came before Ali (as) first and then observe the verse of *wilayah* which indicates his Imamate.

Answer: First: The consultative assembly and consensus can be relied on only if they are credible. Concerning Sunnis’ claim, the Imamiyyah Shi’ites do not consider them satisfactory.

Second: The consultative assembly and the consensus of opinion can be based on if there is no *nass* (divine decree). When there is an explicit *nass* neither the consultative assembly nor consensus of opinion is rendered effective, as God, may His majesty be extolled, has said,

“*And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His apostle have decided a matter*”. (33:36)

Question Fourteen: Did Ali (as) invoke the verse of Wilayah to support his claim?

If the holy verse of *wilayah* indicates Ali's Imamate, why didn't he invoke it to prove his claim although, for example, on the day of the consultative assembly (**see p. 31**) and on many other occasions he made known many of his merits to the people he met?

Answer: Some great Shi'ite and Sunni traditionists have reported the occasions when Ali (as) introduced arguments for his Imamate including the verse of *wilayah*.

For example, Ibrahim ibn Mohammad Jowayni, in his *Fara'id al-Simtayn*³⁰ and ibn Babaway, a Shi'ite scholar, in his *Kamal al-Deen*³¹, have reported that during the caliphate of Uthman, when a group of the Companions, Emigrants and *Ansar* were gathering in the Prophet's mosque, Ali (as) reminded them of his merits and excellence, and of the verse of *wilayah*.

We have mentioned this long tradition at the end of the discussion on the verse of *Aulu al-Amr*. The readers may refer to the last part of the commentary of this verse in order to have a clear idea about the personality of the author of *Fara'id al-Simtayn*.

1. – Lisan al-'Arab, vol. 1, p. 245.

2. – Sihah al-Lughah, vol. 5, p. 2073.

3. – Al-Qamus al-Muheet, vol. 4, p. 198, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

4. – Mughni al-Labeeb, vol. 1, p. 88, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

5. – Lisan al-Arab, vol. 15, p. 401, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

6. – Al-Misbah al-Muneer, vol. 2, p. 350, Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladah, Egypt.

7. – Lisan al-Arab, vol. 15, p. 410; al-Misbah al-Muneer, vol. 2, p. 350, Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, Egypt; An-Nihayah, vol. 5, p. 228, al-Maktibah al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; Muntahil al-Irab, vol. 4, p. 1339, Sanaii Library; Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 4, p. 554, Nashr Farhang Islami; Sihah, p. 2529, Dar al-Ilm lil-Malyeen; al-Mufradat, p. 535, Daftar Nashr Kitab; Mo'jam Maqaiis al-Lughah, vol. 6, p. 141.

8. – a) "Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light". 2: 257.

b) "Surely my guardian is Allah, Who revealed the Book, and He befriends the good". 7: 196.

c) "Or have they taken guardians besides Him? But Allah is the Guardian, and He gives life to the dead". 42:9.

d) "Say, Shall I take a guardian besides Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed". 6: 14.

e) "Thou art our Guardian, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of the forgivers". 7:155.

f) "but if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding, or weak, or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, let his guardian dictate with fairness" 2:282.

g) "and whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority". 17:33.

Also the Qur'anic verses that follow: 12:101; 11:113; 42:46; 42:31; 16:63; 2:107, and 120; 9:74 and 116; 29:22; 42: 8 and 31; 4: 45, 75, 89, 123 and 173; 33:17 and 65; 48: 22 where wali and naseer (helper) are used simultaneously; 4:119; 19:5; 34:41; 27:49; 2: 139; 10:62; 17:97; 39:3; 42:6; 60:1; 3:175; 8:40; 47:11; 2:286; 9:51; 22:78.

9. – Assalat wa al-Bashar fi Assalat ala Khayr al-Bashar, p. 33, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

10. – Jawhari's Sihah, vol. 3, p. 1222, Dar al-Ilm Lil-Malyeen; Firoozabadi's al-Qamoos al-Moheet, vol. 3, p. 31, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; Fayoomi's al-Misbah al-Muneer, p. 254, printed in Egypt; ibn Durayd's Jamharat al-Lughah, vol. 2, p. 770; Khalil ibn Ahmad Faraheedi's Kital al-Ein, vol. 1, p. 200.

11. – Taj al-Aroos, vol. 21, p. 122, Dar al-Hidayah lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr wal Tuzee'.

12. – Dhahabi's words will be discussed in "Answer Two" to the objections.

13. – Al-Kashf wal-Bayan, vol. 4, pp 80–81, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi.

14. – Majm'a al-Bayan, vol. 3, p. 324.

15. – Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 399–411;

Jesass's Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 446;

Arba'in Abu al-Fawaris, p.22;

Arjah al-Matalib, (as quoted by Ihqaq al-Haqq) p. 169, printed in Lahoor;

Asbab al-Nuzool, p. 133, Shareef Radhi printing Press;

Usool al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 143; tradition 7; p. 146, tradition 16; p.228, tradition 3, al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah;

Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p.381, Dar al-Fikr;

Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, (Ibn Katheer's History), vol. 7, p. 371, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah;

Bahr al-Uloom, vol. 1, p. 445, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah;

Bahr al-Muheet, vol. 3, p. 514, al-Tarikh al-Arabi Institute;

History of the City of Damascus, vol. 42, pp. 356 and 357, Dar al-Fikr;

Tarjamat al-Imam Amir al-Mumineen, vol. 2, pp. 409 and 410, Dar al-Ta'aruf Lil-Matbooat;

Al-Tasheel Li-Uloom, al-Tanzeel, vol. 1, p. 181, Dar al-Fikr;

Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 2, p. 74, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;

Baydawi's Tafseer, vol. 1, p. 272, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah;

Al-Khazin Commentary vol. 1,p. 468, Dar al-Fikr;

Forat Commentary,vol.1, pp. 123–129;

Ibn Abi Hatam's Tafseer al-Qur'an, vol. 4, p. 1162, al-Maktabah al-Ahliyyah, Beirut;

Fakhr al-Razi's Tafseer al-Kabeer, vol. 6, part 12, p. 26, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut;;

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31. – Kamal al-Deen, vol. 1, p. 274.

Chapter 5: Imamate in the Qur'anic Verse of Sadiqin

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴾

“O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty towards) Allah and be with the truthful”. (9: 119)

At first glance the verse we are about to consider seems to be concerned with a moral injunction: it orders believers to observe piety and hold fast to the truthful. We do, however, know that we should always avoid looking at the surface of things and concerning the Qur'an, we are always requested to study it deeply over and over in order to acquire its lofty knowledge and fathom its profound meaning.

The Holy Qur'an says,

“Look once again; can you see any flaws? Then look still another time”. (67:3-4)

We must, therefore, avoid looking at the Qur'an outwardly; we should, instead, meditate upon its verses.

If we study the above-mentioned Qur'anic verse in this way, we will find in it one of the most important and genuine Qur'anic disciplines delicately expressed; that is of Imamate and (religious) guidance. That is why this verse has a special importance when examining the verses relating Imamate. The issues of the verse are centred on the following points:

1. Examining words and their meanings
2. The relationship between the verse and the one preceding it.
3. The relationship between the verse and Imamate, and evaluation of its clues.
4. The comments of the scholars and interpreters
5. *Hadiths* and narrations of the Shi'ites and the Sunnites

A Discussion on the Vocabulary of the Verse

The two words “*Sidq*, truthfulness” and “***Sadiqin***, the truthful” need to be studied. We will, therefore, review their literal meaning and then see how they are used in the Qur'an.

Literal Usage

The following are definitions given by two lexicographers:

1. In his *Lisan al-Arab*, ibn Manzur presents various meanings of *sidq*, such as:

Al-Sidq (truthfulness) is the opposite of *kidhb* (lying); as an example: *Rajulu sidq naqiz rajulu su'* meaning “a good person” is the opposite of “a bad person”. Here, *sidq* and *su'* are opposites.

Another example is *thowbu sidq* meaning a “nice dress”, and *khomaroon sidq* meaning “nice veil”.

The expression *Rajulu Sidq* means “nice person”.

Rajulun Sidq al-Liqa wa sidq al-nazar which means “a sociable and optimistic person”.

Sedq with fathah, means a straight lance, or a straight sword.

Ibn Dorstawayh says that the word sidq refers to all praiseworthy qualities.

Al-Khalil says sidq indicates complete perfection.

2. In his Mufradat al-Qur'an, Ragib says, "Anything that is outwardly and inwardly agreeable is referred to as sidq, to which a qualified noun may be attached.

Examples of Qur'anic Usage of the Word Sidq

In the Holy Qur'an, we can find verses in which "sidq" is used as an adjective of things which are irrelevant to speech. Such as:

﴿وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ﴾

a) "... **and give good news to those who believe that they have a sure footing with their Lord**".
(10:2)

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مَبَوَّأً صِدْقٍ﴾

b) "... **and we settled the children of Israel in a sure settlement**". (10:93)

﴿وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ﴾

c) "...**and say: My Lord! Lead me in with a just ingoing and lead me out with a just outgoing**".
(17:80)

The words *madkhal* means "ingoing", and *makhraj* means "outgoing" in this verse either function as adverbs of place for entering and leaving, or infinitives meaning *to lead in* and *to lead out*. They are, nevertheless, irrelevant to speech.

﴿فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ﴾

d) ***“In a sure abode, in the presence of a King Omnipotent”***. (54:55)

e) ***“It is not righteous that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is this that one should believe in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayers and pay the poor–rate; keep up their word when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflicts – these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who are the truly god–fearing”***. (2: 177)

In the above verse, God, the Mighty and High, first mentions righteousness of belief in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Divine Book and prophets. Then, He points to righteousness in practice including giving away one’s wealth, *infak*, to the relatives, the needy, the wayfarers, the beggars, or for the emancipation of captives for the sake of God, and keeping of promise.

He also refers to righteousness of morality, represented in patience in time of conflicts and endurance in time of hardships. He praises those who enjoy these three kinds of righteousness and calls them the truthful and the pious.

These applications of the word “*Sidq*” and verses of the Holy Qur’an show that *Sidq* has an extensive meaning which is not always connected to discourse, word, promise and narration, but it can also come together with such things like thought, belief, human disposition, behaviour, etc. where the word has real meaning.

The Relationship of This Verse with the Preceding One

As stated in the books of commentary and *hadith*, this verse concerns those believers who refused to accompany the holy Prophet (saws) to the Tabuk war. Upon the order of the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, Muslims stopped having ties with them to the extent that even their wives decided not to talk to them.

Remorseful of what they had done, these people later on repented for their mistake. They went outside the town and began to supplicate to God, augmenting their entreaty. So, God accepted their repentance and they returned home happily.

In the next verse, God, the Mighty and High, orders people not to disobey the Prophet (saws) reminding them of the value of the hardship, thirst and hunger they suffer for the sake of God.

In the verse in question, God, the Mighty and High, orders the believers to observe piety, refrain from disobeying God, and be with the *Sadiqin* (the truthful). We need now to see who “the truthful” are.

The Relationship of the Holy Verse with the Imamate of the Infallible Imams

When the meaning of *sidq* was explained, it was stated that the phrase “كونوا مع الصادقين” seems to be an order (for us) to be with the truthful. It should be noted that to tell the truth and to avoid telling lies is obligatory, but to be with the truthful is not.

But (we see that) the idea of being with the truthful in the Qur’anic verse represents an order and the order is used to express necessity. The coming of the phrase “be with the truthful” in the same context as the phrase اتقوا الله (*be careful of your duty to Allah*) where we are ordered to observe piety and definitely expresses necessity of being with the truthful, confirm the idea of being with the truthful.

Because of the wide shade of meaning of the word *sidq*, that is, it is not associated only with discourse but extends to thought, morality, and behaviour, and since according to the Qur’anic verse it is obligatory to be with the truthful, the phrase to “be with the truthful” does not mean to be physically with the truthful, but to abide by all the things implied by truth and correctness.

By *sadiqin* (the truthful) it is meant those who possess absolute truth, not mere truth and a truthful person, in its absolute sense, is the one who is true (and sincere) in all aspects – one whose way of thinking, his word, his conduct and his disposition, know no crookedness and deviation. Such a person is none other than the infallible one, the (*m’asum*).

Being with such a person means following him and complying with his way of thinking, his actions and his conduct.

Muslims unanimously agree that except the fourteen Infallible ones the Prophet and the Household of the Prophet, no one possesses the rank of *ismah*, and is true in his words; therefore, by *sadiqin* (the truthful) it is meant the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, and the Infallible Imams, may God bless them all.

Scholars and Interpreters’ Remarks

Below, are the words of two great religious scholars:

A) Allamah Behbahani

Let us first consider the words of one of the Imamiyyah Shi’ite scholars, a great religious authority and prominent thinker, the late Allamah Sayyid Ali Behbahani. When explaining the holy Qur’anic verse, in his *al-Misbah al-Hidayah*, a precious book on Imamate he states:

“Multitudinous narrations presented in both Shi’ite and Sunni sourced state that the “*Sadiqin*” –in the

holy Qur'anic verse – are the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* (p.b.u.th.). Late Behbahani has cited in his book, *Ghayat al-Maram*, ten narrations from Shi'ite sources and seven narrations from Sunni sources.

To prove that by “the truthful”, in the holy verse, it is meant the Infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.) – as stated in the *hadiths* quoted by both the Shi'ites and the Sunnis– we can say: if by “truth” component of it is meant “truth” in its absolute sense in any degree, and if “the truthful” has a general meaning which includes anyone endowed with truth at any level.

The Qur'anic verse would have said “...and be one of the truthful”, which entails that every Muslim has to be one of the truthful and has to avoid telling lies. The phrase “with the truthful”, however, indicates that “truth” has a special status and “the truthful” is a special group. It is evident this perfect status is only “truth” freedom from sin and error (*ismah*) and purity (*taharah*).

The verse of the *Tatheer* and unanimity of Muslims prove that in the Muslim community there exists a “*Ma'sum*” (infallible one). But if we say that the truthful means people other than the Infallible Imams, it will be incumbent on all Muslims, even the Infallible Imams, to follow a non-*Ma'sum* person, which is not sensible. Therefore the qualities of *ismah and taharah* can be attributed to no one other than the Household of the Prophet, may God bless them all.

Further evidence: Another evidence which supports idea that the Infallible Imams are meant by “the truthful”, is that, God, the Mighty and High, orders in the verse all Muslims to observe piety and to keep away from sins and then orders them to be with “the truthful”. Being with them means nothing but obeying them and refraining from disobeying them. Imamate means that God has made obeying the Imam incumbent on the Imam's follower.

B) Fakhr al-Razi's Remarks

Interpreting the Holy Qur'anic verse, Fakhr al-Razi, the famous Sunni commentator says:

“In the verse God, the Mighty and High, has ordered the believers to be with the truthful. This requires the presence of “the truthful” at all times which indicates that the community can never resort to falsehood. So, if the community unanimously agree on something, it will be on the right path. This proves that the unanimity of the community is a convincing argument.

If someone asks: Why is it not allowed to say that “be with the truthful” means “follow the truthful way” – just like a father's saying to his son “be with the good” means “follow the way of the good”? This does not mean that there is a truthful person at all times.

The answer will be: This opposes the apparent meaning (of the verse), because “*Be with the truthful*” suggests that there must be a truthful person..

If someone says: This statement is connected only with the time of the Prophet (saws) because the

Prophet was the only truthful person of the time which indicates that the truthful person does not exist at all times.

The answer will be: Like other Qur'anic discourses, this statement addresses all those who according to Islamic law, have to perform the obligations. It is not connected only to the time of the Prophet (saws) but, because of the validity of "exception" it includes.

Besides, God, the Most High, has first ordered the believers to observe piety even those who are possibly not pious. The verse thus indicates that the erring must always follow the inerrant so the inerrant will prevent them from committing error, at all times. As a result, the verse extends in time forever it is not specifically limited to time of the Prophet (saws)".

So far it is understood from Fakhr al-Razi's words that *Sadiqin* (the truthful) refers to those who are free from sin (*ma'sum*), and these people exist at all times. Such an idea is correct.

However, Fakhr al-Razi continues: "By the infallible truthful, it is meant the community as a whole, not particular individuals in the community, otherwise, it would be necessary for everyone to know who those particular individuals are so that they can be with them.

Discerning such people is impossible. We do not know who these people who are protected error are. Thus, this (*ma'sum*) means the whole community, and so the consensus of the community will be a convincing argument".

Responding to Fakhr al-Razi

There are two focal points in Fakhr al-Razi's remarks:

a) The infallible truthful cannot be particular individuals because we have no knowledge of them.

The above saying is an evident fallacy because it is possible for anyone to know who they are by referring to the evidence which proves the inerrancy of the Shi'ite Imams. The traditions that clearly mention the names of the Infallible Imams are greater in number than what makes a tradition *mutawater*, authenticated. These traditions are presented in some Sunni sources and in many Imamiyyah Shi'ite sources.

b) The weakness in the words, "By the infallible truthful it is meant the whole community" lies in the fact that:

1. To say that there are infallible people other than the fourteen Infallible (members of the Household of the Prophet, God's peace and blessing be on them all) opposes the definite consensus of all Muslims.

2. The phrase "*the truthful*", used in the Qur'anic verse, is apparently a generic title. It is *istigraqi title* (referring to certain people in the community) not *majmo'i title* – referring to the whole. On the basis of

Fakhr al-Razi's words *ismah* (inerrancy) belongs to the whole community. *Majmo'i* group is an arbitrary combination, linking individuals together. It is "*istigraqi* state" that is genuine in a generic title, because the *majmo'i* state is a figurative element that needs a contextual clue (to be clearly understood). What is genuine is *istigraqi* where a word is used in its real sense.

3. Divine inerrancy (*ismah*), is a real title requiring a real subject, whereas *majom'i* state is arbitrary. It is impossible for a real existent to get strength from an unreal one.

4. Fakhr al-Razi's words contradict the indication to the contrast between "*the truthful*" and "*O you who believe*". The contrast between these two demands that "*those who believe*" be different from "*the truthful*".

5. To take "*the truthful*" as the plural of *majom'i* nature disagrees with what Fakhr al-Razi himself has said because while arguing that "the truthful" is not limited to the Prophet (saws) Fakhr al-Razi says "The Qur'anic verse points to (the fact) that at all times there are believers who are liable to make mistakes and there are always "the truthful" who are unerring.

The errant must be with the truthful who are infallible". He has thus considered the believers to be liable to make mistake and the truthful to be infallible (*ma'sum*).

Traditions of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis on this Verse

Hakim Hasakani¹ has quoted in his *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*² traditions indicating that by "*the truthful*" in the Qur'anic verse, it is meant either the Prophet and Ali, God's peace and blessing be on them, or the Household of the Prophet, God bless them all. Below is one of these traditions.

"Ya'qub ibn Sufayn al-Baswi has reported on the authority of ibn Q'anab, on the authority of Malik ibn Anas that Abdullah ibn Umar said, in these words "*Be careful (of your duty) toward Allah*" God has ordered all the Companions of the Prophet (saws) to fear God. He has also told them to be with the truthful, that is, with the Prophet (saws) and his dear *Ahl al-Bayt*, God bless them.³

Ibn Shahr Ashoob, the great Shi'ite traditionist and scholar has quoted the same tradition from Ya'qub ibn Sufayn's commentary; on the authority of Malik ibn Anas, on the authority of Nafi' who quoted it from ibn Umar.⁴

Kulayni, the great Shi'ite traditionist says in his *Usool al-Kafi*:

"Ibn Ozayneh has quoted Bareed ibn Muawiyah al-Ijli to have said: When I asked Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, about God's words "*Be careful (of your duty) toward Allah and be with the truthful*" he answered, "God has meant us (the Household of the Prophet)".⁵

Jowayni, the great Sunni traditionist has reported the following in a tradition:

“Then Ali, peace be on him said, ‘I adjure you by God! Do you remember when the Qur’anic verse *Be careful (of your duty) toward God and be with the truthful* was revealed, Salman asked the Prophet:

‘O Messenger of God! Does it concern all or special people?’ And the Prophet (saws) said ‘As for the believers, it concerns the believers in general, and as for the truthful it includes my brother Ali (as), and my executors after him until the Day of Judgment’. They said ‘By God, we do’.”⁶

Some Sunni books of *hadith* and commentary state that the phrase “the truthful” refers to Abu Bakr and Umar or the Prophet (saws) and his Companions. Such reports are not reliable. Below are some of these reports:

1. Ibn Asaker has quoted Dhahak to have said, in the verse, “*O You who believe, be careful (of your duty) toward God and be with the truthful*” the words “with the truthful” means “With Abi Bakr, Ummar and their Companions”. He holds that “the truthful” refers to Abu Bakr, Ummar and their Companions.
2. “Tabari has quoted Sa’id ibn Jobayr to have said that Abu Bakr and Umar are meant by the truthful”.⁷

Responding to These Traditions

a) In the chain of transmission of the first *hadith* the name of Joybar ibn Sa’id Azdi is noticed. In his *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Ibn Hajar has named many scholars of *ilm-Rijal*, such as: ibn Mo’in, Abi Dawood, ibn Adi and Nisa’ii who consider Joybar Azdi as “weak”. Al-Tabari has also quoted this tradition on the authority of Dhahak in which Joybar’s name is found.

b) In the chain of transmission of the second *hadith* the name of Ishaq ibn Bishr Kahili is found. In his *Mizan al-’Itidal*, Dhahabi says that ibn Abi Shaybeh, Musa ibn Haroon Zar’ah, and Dar-Qutni consider Ishaq ibn Bishr Kahili as “liar” and “forger of *hadith*”

Having concluded from the evidence in the Qur’anic verse that “the truthful” in the verse refers to the Infallible whom we have been ordered to follow, we realize that this verse does not include those whom Muslims unanimously consider as non-ma’sum.

1. – Concerning Hasakani, Dhahabi, the great Sunni scholar of *ilm-rijal*, says on page 1200 of the third volume of his book *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut: “He is a meticulous sheikh (master), unwavering in the science of traditions. He has good command of the chain of transmission of hadiths.

2. – *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*, vol. 1, p. 341.

3. – *Ibid*, p. 345, tradition 357.

4. – Discussing the events that took place between 581 to 590 A.H., Dhahabi says on pp. 309 – 310 of his *History of Islam*, that some great scholars (e.g. ibn Abi Tayy) praised Hasakani, calling him peerless leader of his time, equal to Khatib Baqdadī in the science of *hadith* and to Yahya ibn Mo’in in *rijal*, and a person of true word, wide knowledge, intense humbleness, worship and night vigilance.

5. – Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 208, Maktibat al-Saduq;

6. – Far'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, p.317, al-Mahmoodi lil-Tibai'i wan-Nashr, Institute Beirut; Kamal al-Deen, p. 264; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 33, p. 149; al-Misbah al-Hidaya, p. 91, Salman al-Farsi.

7. – Jami' al-Bayan, vol. 11, p. 46

Chapter 6: Imamate in the Qur'anic Verse of Tatheer

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً ﴾

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House and to purify you a (thorough) purifying”¹

Another verse indicating the impeccability of the Shi'ite Infallible Imams is the verse of *Tatheer*, which points to the inerrancy of the Prophet (saws) and his dear family: Hazrat Fatimah, God's peace be on her, and the twelve inerrant (*ma'sum*) the Imams of Imamiyyah Shi'ism.

In order to clarify the argument of the verse, let us consider the following points:

1. The word *انما* which means only, in the verse indicates *hasr* (restriction).
2. The word *iradeh* (will) from which the verb *يريد* is derived, is an ontological will, not a legislative one
3. The phrase “*Ahl al-Bayt*” in the verse refers exclusively to Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain, (p.b.u.th.), and the other Shi'ite Infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.). The verse does not include wives of the Prophet (saws).
4. Questions and answers concerning the Qur'anic verse.

The Word *انما* Indicating Restriction

Just as we observed in the discussion of the verse, of *wilayah* lexicographers maintain that the word *انما* indicates restriction. One can review the objections of Fakhr al-Razi included in the chapter about the objections on the verse of *wilayah*.

“Iradeh” in the Verse of Tatheer has Ontological, not Legislative Connotation

“*Iradeh*” in the above Qur’anic verse (translated as “desire”) is ontological, not legislative. The desire of God, the Most Exalted, is of two kinds:

a) Ontological (*takweeni*) desire, is a kind of desire the object of which occurs (immediately) after the desire is expressed, just like the case when God willed that fire be “*comfort and peace*” to Prophet Ibrahim, and it did.

b) Legislative desire is a kind of desire which concerns man’s duties. It is evident that this kinds of desire is not integrated with the object of desire. God has willed that people perform their prayers, but many do not pray. Contrary to ontological desire, which cannot be ignored, legislative desire may be ignored.

“Desire” in the above holy Qur’anic verse is of ontological, not legislative kind. This means that God has willed that the People of the House (*Ahl al-Bayt*) be free from any uncleanness and defilement, including the dross of sins and disobedience (to Him). He has purified them. This wish of the Majestic God, is behind their impeccability and spiritual purity. It is not that God has willed that they keep aloof from sins, and that they purify themselves by obeying divine orders and obligations.

Evidence for the Idea that “desire” in the Verse of Tatheer has Ontological Connotations

1. Like any obligation, legislative desire concerns what others do, whereas desire in the holy verse concerns keeping away of abomination and uncleanness which is regarded an act of God. This indicates that “desire” in the stated verse does not have legislative connotations.

2. God’s legislative desire is not intended for the removal of impurities and purification of only the family of Prophet (saws) but God has desired and demanded all people to avoid impurities and be pure, whereas desire in the verse is restricted to the family of the Prophet, which is expressed by the use of *hasr* at the onset of the verse of *Tatheer*, making clear that the object of the desire i.e. keeping away from impurity and God’s specially endowed purification has been achieved externally

3. Many reports and narrations in both Shi’ite and Sunni *hadith* and commentary sources bear witness that the holy Qur’anic verse praises the Prophet’s family. If the desire (stated) in the Qur’anic verse had legislative connotations, it would contain such praise.

What we learn from the holy Qur’anic verse is “the accomplishment of God’s desire” regarding the utter purification of the Household of the Prophet (saws) and keeping from them impurities. This indicates the divine impeccability (*ismah*), of these chosen people.

Another solid evidence supporting (the idea) that this desire has ontological connotations are the *hadiths*

indicating the particular divine purity of the Household of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*). Below are two such *hadiths*:

1) It is stated in *al-Dala'il* by Hakim Tirmadhi, Tabarani, ibn Murdawayh, Abu Na'im and Beihaqi that ibn Abbas has said, "The Prophet (saws) said, 'God has divided people into two groups and placed me in the best group. Hence, He says,

"And the Companions of the right" (56:27)

"And those of the left hand" (56:41)

And I am better than any of the Companions of the right. He then divided each of these two groups, into three and placed me in the best one. Hence, He says,

"Then (as to) the Companions of the right hand; how happy are the Companions of the right hand, and (as to) the Companions of the left hand; how wretched are the Companions of the left hand. And the foremost are the foremost" (56:8-10).

I am among the foremost and I am the best of the foremost. He then divided these three groups into tribes and families. He placed me, in the best tribe. He, therefore, says,

"And made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty)". (49:13)

Humbly speaking, I am the one who is most careful of my duty and most honourable (toward Allah), of all mankind. God then divided the tribes into houses, and placed me in the best one. He, thus, says,

"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House and to purify you a (thorough) purifying". (33:33)

So, I and my family have been purified".²

2) "Husain ibn Zayd told me on the authority of Umar ibn Ali who reported from his father Ali ibn al-Husain (as), that 'After Imam al-Hasan's dear father, Imam Ali (as) had died, Imam al-Hasan (as) gave a speech in which he glorified God and said, "tonight God has taken to Him a man whom neither the early (Muslims) surpassed nor the later Muslims can surpass in good actions.

The Prophet (saws) used to give him his standards in wars and he (Ali, peace be upon him) fought with Gabriel, (the intermediary angel for God's grace in legal matters) supporting him on his right and Michael (the intermediary angel for God's grace in matters of the divine sustenance) supporting him on his left until God made him score victory.

He has left behind him neither gold nor silver but seven hundred dirham's of his stipend ('ata), with which to buy a servant for his family". He (Imam al-Hasan -p.b.u.h.-) continued, "Those who (already)

know me, know me. As for those who do not know me, I am al-Hasan ibn Ali, the (grand) son of the Prophet, and the son of his vicegerent. I am the (grand) son of the one who has brought good news, *basheer*.

I am the (grand) son of the one who, with God's permission, summoned the people to God. I am the (grand) son of the divinely illuminating light (*al-Siraj al-Muneer*). I belong to the House, wherein Gabriel descended and whence Gabriel ascended. I belong to the House from whose members God has sent away abomination and whose members God has purified thoroughly.

I belong to the House, the love for whose members God has made incumbent on people, as He, the Most High, states, *'I do not ask of you any reward but love for (my) near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein; surely Allah is Forgiving Grateful'* So, to do good is to show love towards us, the People of the House, *Ahl al-Bayt*".³

It is concluded from these two *hadiths* that the external fulfilment of specifically divine purity of *Ahl al-Bayt* is nothing but their inerrancy. This illustration clearly indicates that "the desire" in the Qur'anic verse of *Tatheer* has ontological connotations.

Ahl al-Bayt in the Verse of Tatheer

The third point in the discussion on the verse is about who *the Ahl al-Bayt* are. Below are the two focal points:

- a) The meaning of *Ahl al-Bayt*.
- b) To whom the term *Ahl al-Bayt* is applicable.

When in isolation, the word *Ahl* means deserving. But in collocation with other words, it acquires a special meaning. For example, *Ahl al-Ilm* meaning the knowledgeable, *Ahl al-Madina* or *Qariyah* meaning "those living in a town or a village" and "people of the house" those residing in a house.

As for the word *Bayt*, it may mean residence, and it may mean lineage. It may also mean The Prophet's Household, which is the most probable meaning. Further explanation of this meaning will follow. Thus, *Ahl al-Bayt* refers to those who are closely related, to the Prophet's House and are fully aware of what goes on in it.

Now, let's see who it externally applies to and who the *People of the House (Ahl al-Bayt)*, are. There are three views in this regard:

First: "*Ahl al-Bayt*" means only the Prophet's wives.

Second: *Ahl al-Bayt*, means only the Prophet, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), and the Prophet's wives.⁴

Third: According to Imamiyyah Shi'ites, "*Ahl al-Bayt*" refers to the Prophet (saws), his beloved daughter Hazrat Fatimah, and to the twelve Infallible Imams, God bless them all.

Some Sunni scholars, such as Tahawi in his *Mushkil al-Athar* and Hakim Nayshaburi in his *al-Mustadrak*, take *Ahl al-Bayt* to mean only "the five people".

In order to clarify who is meant by *Ahl al-Bayt*, we need to examine the following points:

- 1) The purport of the holy Qur'anic verse.
- 2) A review of the reports and narrations concerning this Qur'anic verse.

The Purport of the Qur'anic Verse

For examining the purport of the Qur'anic verse, it is necessary to take a look at these points:

- a) Literally and traditionally, *Ahl al-Bayt* includes these five persons.
- b) Using the pronoun **عنكم**, which is a plural masculine form indicates that the verse does not refer to wives.
- c) There is a large number of narrations which state that *Ahl al-Bayt* includes the five persons. To say that the Prophet's wives are among *Ahl al-Bayt* is an unfounded allegation and does not sound reasonable. One of such allegations has been put forward by Ukromah who says, "I am ready to have a contest of prayer with anyone to prove that *Ahl al-Bayt* exclusively means the wives of the Prophet (saws)".⁵

If only Ukromah had a contest of prayer, he would have been exposed to God's punishment! He ignores the bulk of *hadiths* which confirms the lofty rank of these five persons and the revelation of the verse of *Tatheer*.

In addition to that, a large number of Sunnis take *Ahl al-Bayt* to mean the wives of the Prophet (saws) as well as Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.). In order to prove their point of view the Sunnis resort to the context of some verses, for example in the verse of *Tatheer* the verse which precedes it and the verse which follows it concern the wives of the Prophet (saws).

(They say that) the appropriateness of the meaning of the Prophet's wives to *Ahl al-Bayt* as well as the contextual clues indicate that the Prophet's wives are included among *Ahl al-Bayt*.

In his *commentary*, Ibn Katheer, considers the contextual clue as a convincing proof for including the wives of the Prophet among *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The Context of the Verse of *Tatheer*

Can the alleged context (*siaq*), apply to the verse of *Tatheer*? Can it be proved that the wives of the Prophet (saws) are included among *Ahl al-Bayt*? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider the following points:

First: The mere succession of two verses does not indicate that the verses belong to a structural whole (*siaq*) and one cannot confirm that these verses were revealed together, because forming a structural whole, requires that the verses be revealed at the same time.

For this very reason we are not certain that we can affirm the existence of (*siaq*). Besides, because the present arrangement of the Qur'anic verses does not correspond to the chronology of revelation of the verses, one can never be certain that the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed after the verses about the wives of the Prophet (saws).

If someone says: Although these verses were not revealed at the same time, they form a structural whole (*siaq*) because the verses and chapters were arranged on the basis of a especial position owing to spiritual link under the supervision of the Prophet (saws), and so *Ahl al-Bayt* consists of the wives of the Prophet as well as the five persons (p.b.u.th.).

Answer: There is no evidence (at hand to prove) that due to the particular position which the verse of *Tatheer* has owing to the spiritual link between the verses, the Prophet (saws) has placed this verse among the verses related to his wives for he thought it was the wisest thing.

But to consider the spiritual link as the only wise thing to do cannot be substantiated for, it may be considered as an admonition for the wives of the Prophet to observe their behaviour due to their relation with "*Ahl al-Bayt*, not because they are included among *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Second: There are some reasons which make us conclude that the context of the verse of *Tatheer* varies from the context of any of the verses preceding or following it. There are two separate contexts, each one is independent of the other. The reasons are as follows:

a) The context of the verses about the wives of the Prophet (saws) conveys reproach (as is in the verses 28 and on) and there is no sign and praise of the wives, whereas the context of the verse of *Tatheer* speaks of praise and admiration. When we go through the *hadiths* related to the verse of *Tatheer*, this will be more distinct.

b) The conditions of the revelation of the verse of *Tatheer* are different from those of the verses concerned with the Prophet's wives. The latter verses were revealed at a time when the Prophet's wives demanded from him more expenses than was their due. The reader may refer to the commentaries of both the Shi'ites and the Sunnis.

We will first quote the verses concerned with the wives of the Prophet (saws) and then introduce the tradition reported by Ibn Kathir concerning the conditions of the revelation of the verses.

“O Prophet! Say to your wives: If you desire this world’s life and its adornment, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing. And if you desire Allah and His Apostle and the latter abode, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward. O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open indecency, the punishment shall be increased to her doubly; and this is easy to Allah. And whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Apostle and does good, We will give to her reward doubly, and We have prepared for her an honourable sustenance. O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other of the women; if you will be on your guard, then be not soft in (your) speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a good word. And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. And keep to mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and the wisdom; surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware”. (33:28–34)

Ibn Kathir has related on the authority of Abi Zubayr, that Jabir said, “While people were sitting opposite the Prophet’s house, Abu Bakr and Umar came and asked permission to enter (the house), which they were first denied. Then, when they were allowed to enter they noticed the Prophet (saws) sitting. Around him sat his wives. The Prophet (saws) was silent.

Umar, who wanted to make the Prophet smile, said: O! Messenger of God, I wish you had seen how I beat Zayd’s daughter (he meant his wife) when she asked for expenses.

The Prophet (saws) smiled so that his blessed teeth were visible, and said “They (my wives) are sitting around me asking for (more) payment”.

Then Abu Bakr got up, and went towards ‘A’ishah to beat her, and then Umar got up, and they addressed their daughters saying, ‘Do you want the Prophet (saws) to give you something which he does not have?’ The Prophet forbade them (from beating their daughters).

Then the Prophet’s wives said, “From now on, we will never ask the Prophet (saws) for things which he does not have”. God, the Most High, revealed the verses that leave it to the Prophet’s wives to choose between remaining as the Prophet’s wives or getting divorced”.⁶

This is the condition of the revelation of the verses concerning the wives of the Prophet (saws) whereas the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed in favour of the five blessed ones of *al-Aba* and the Infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.). Commentary and *hadith* sources of both the Shi’ites and the Sunnits are replete with narrations in this regard. Some of these narrations will be presented when we deal with these traditions.

Probably there is a long period between the condition of the revelation of the verses concerned with the Prophet's wives and that of the verse of *Tatheer*. So how could one take these verses to belong to a single structural whole (*siaq*) and justify one's interpretation of the verse according to this idea while these Qur'anic verses belong to two separate periods.

Third: The third reason that shatters the idea of unity of context is the dissimilarity of the pronouns in the verses concerned with the wives of the Prophet (saws) and those in the verse of *Tatheer*.

There are twenty two plural feminine pronouns in the imperative, twenty of them in the verses preceding the verse of *Tatheer* and two in the verse following it, whereas in the verse of *Tatheer* there are two pronouns in the imperative, both of them are macular. Given this, how can we assume that these verses form one single structural whole?

Objection: In the verse of *Tatheer*, the phrases *عنكم* "from you", and *يطهركم*, "to purify you" do not refer to men only; because in addition to the women, Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th), are included. That is why the pronoun *كم* (you) is used here. In Arabic this is called *taqleeb* (dominance) and that is when two various genders are to be referred to the masculine gender dominates and it is used for both.

We can see in the Qur'an similar cases of using masculine pronouns to refer to the feminine gender. For example:

a)



قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحِمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ



"They said: Do you wonder at Allah's bidding? The mercy of Allah and His blessings are on you, O people of the house". (11:73)

Here, Prophet Ibrahim's wife is addressed; and the masculine plural pronoun before *Ahl al-Bayt* in which she is included.

b) **﴿قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُتُوا﴾**

“He said to his family: Wait” (28:29)

Having mentioned Prophet Moses’ *Ahl* (meaning wife), the Qur’an uses the plural verb of masculine gender.

Answer

The basis of any discourse, is to associate the words with their real meanings which is a logical principle of any conversation in any language. On the basis of this principle, whenever we are uncertain whether or not a word is used in its real meaning, we should refer to its real sense.

Thus, the pronoun *عنكم*, which comes twice in the verse of *Tatheer*, which is a plural masculine pronoun in the imperative, refers to all the male members of *Ahl al-Bayt*, and according to external clues and *hadiths*, Hazrat Fatimah, peace be on her, and no other female, is definitely included among *Ahl al-Bayt*. Thus, the principle of “closest figurative meaning” applies to this verse.

As a contextual clue, the Qur’anic verses quoted as testimony, contains a masculine pronoun used figuratively for a feminine (noun) and a figurative usage of a word together with a contextual clue cannot prove that this can also occur without a clue. As stated before, the basic principle is to associate words with their real meanings. But where this is not possible, the “closest figurative meaning” should be observed.

Narrations Concerning the Verse of Tatheer

Abundant traditions in Shi’ite and Sunni *hadith* sources, clearly tell us that *Ahl al-Bayt* means only the Five Pure People and that the wives of the Prophet (saws) are not included. Such narrations are so plentiful that Hakim Hasakani,⁷ has devoted pages 18 to 140 of his *Shawahid al-Tanzeel* to this issue.⁸

In the footnote, there is a list of some Sunnite sources containing such narrations:⁹

Below is a partial list of the Sunnite sources of the above-mentioned *hadith*.

The Companions of the Prophet, from whom these *hadiths* have been quoted, are:

The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be on him.

1. Fatimah Zahra, peace be on her
2. Al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be on him
3. Anas ibn Malik
4. Bara’ ibn ’Azib al-Ansari

5. Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari
6. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas
7. S'ad ibn Malik (Abu Sa'eed al-Khidri)
8. Abdullah ibn Abbas
9. Abdullah ibn Jaffar al-Tayyar
10. 'A'ishah
11. Umm Salamah
12. Umar ibn Abi Salamah
13. Wathilat ibn Asqa'
14. Abi al-Hamra'

In addition to the sources stated in the footnote, it is understood from the *hadiths* included in Shi'ite sources of *hadith* and Qur'an commentary and in some Sunnite sources that by "*Ahl al-Bayt*" it is meant the Prophet, Ali, Fatimah, and the eleven Infallible Imams of the Shi'ites (p.b.u.th.).

Classification of the Narrations on the Verse of Tatheer

When we study the narrations on the verse of *Tatheer* recorded in Sunnite sources, and look through the Shi'ite texts we will find that these narrations can be divided into the following groups:

1. Narrations which say that "*Ahl al-Bayt*" means Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th).
2. Narrations which state that the Prophet (saws) placed Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) under a kind of dress (*kisa*) and the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed. This is known as *hadith al-Kisa*. Some narrations also say that Umm Salamah or 'A'ishah asked the Prophet "Am I one of them?"
3. Narrations which report that the Prophet (saws) used to call at Hazrat Ali and Fatimah's house, (peace be upon them) every morning or five times a day and greet them and recite the verse of *Tatheer*.
4. Narrations indicating that the holy verse of *Tatheer* has been revealed in favour of the Five People, or in favour of the Five People and Gabriel and Michael.

Below are some examples of these five groups:

1– The Traditions which say that “the Ahl al–Bayt” means the Five pure People

a) In *Al–Mustadrak ‘ala al–Sahihyan*, Abdullah ibn Ja’far is quoted to have said:

“When the Prophet (saws) noticed God’s mercy descending from heavens, he said ‘Call (them) to me, call (them) to me.’ Saffiyeh asked, ‘Whom should I call, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said, ‘Call my *Ahl al–Bayt*: Ali, Fatimah, al–Hasan and al–Husain.’

When they were brought forth, the Prophet (saws) covered them with his *kisa*, and extended his hands and said, God, these are my *Ahl al–Bayt*. Send Thy blessings on Mohammad and his descendants.’ At this time the Qur’anic verse: “*Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O People of the House and purify you a thorough purifying*” was revealed. This narration has an authentic chain of transmission”.¹⁰

Hakim Nayshaburi, a forerunner in (science of) *hadith* and *ilm–al–rijal*, says:

“The chain of transmission of this *hadith* is authentic, although Bukhari and Muslim have not mentioned it in their *Sahihs*”.¹¹

b) Abu Sa’id al–Khidri quotes Umm Salamah to have said, “This Qur’anic verse: ‘*Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O Ahl al–Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*’ was revealed in my house.

Then, I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, am I not one of them?’ The Prophet (saws) said, ‘You are on the good path. You are one of the wives of the Prophet’. Umm Salamah (then) said, ‘Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Hussein (p.b.u.th.) are the Prophet’s Household, *Ahl al– Bayt*”.¹²

2– Expressions in Hadith al–Kisa Used in the Interpretation of the Verse of Tatheer

In Shi’ite and Sunnite sources of *hadith* and commentary there are a large number of narrations which say that the Prophet (saws) had his *Ahl al–Bayt* go under a covering (*kisa*) and the verse of *Tatheer* was then revealed in favour of them. Below are some examples of such narrations.

It should be noted that *Hadith al–Kisa* has a particularly outstanding position among the Shi’ites. This *hadith* is narrated by Hazrat Fatimah Zahra, peace be on her, and included in the late Bahrani’s¹³ book *‘Awwam al–Uloom*. The chain of transmissions of this *hadith* is ornamented with the names of great Shi’ite scholars and jurists of various epochs and it is read by the Shi’ite’s in special gathering to attain God’s blessings.

The expressions, in the above–mentioned group of reports which confirm that *Ahl al–Bayt* means the Five Pure People, are worth considering. They are as follows:

1. “You are on the good path”, or annexed with the expression “You are one of the Prophet’s wives”.¹⁴

2. “ Keep away, you are on the good path”. 15
3. “He took it away from my hand”. 16
4. He did not say, ‘You are one of (members of) the Household’. 17
5. “No, and you are on the good path”. 18
6. By God, he did not say, ‘Yes’. 19
7. “Stay where you are; you are on the good path”.20
8. I wished he had said, ‘Yes’.21
9. Stay away from my Household.22
10. You are on the good path, but he did not include me with them23
11. By God, he did not say, ‘You are with them’.24
12. Sit where you are; you are on the good path.25
13. You are on the good path, and these are my *Ahl al-Bayt*.26

We will cite a narration for each of these expressions.

A. The Expression “You Are on the Good Path”

“Ibn Jarir, ibn Abi Hatam, al-Tabarni and ibn Murdayy state that Umm Salamah, the Prophet’s wife, has said, ‘The Prophet was in her house when Hazrat Fatimah Zahra (sa) brought food for the Prophet (saws).

The Prophet (saws) told her to call her husband, Ali, and her children al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.), to go to him. So, they went. While they were having food, the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed, and the holy Prophet (saws) extend his hands towards the sky and said, “God , These are my *Ahl al-Bayt* and my special close relatives (*khassati*), so take uncleanness away from them and purify them a thorough purifying. Umm Salamah said, ‘I placed my head under Khaybari covering (*kisa*), and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Am I with you?’ The Prophet answered, ‘You are on the good path”. He said it twice.

It should be noted that if Umm Salamah had been, according to the verse of *Tatheer*, among the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the Prophet would have clearly given her a positive answer. But his excellent attributes, praised in the Qur’an, would not allow him to explicitly give her a negative answer. Thus, the Prophet’s words, in the various *hadiths*, can be a clear indication that the Prophet’s wives are excluded from the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

B. The expression “Keep away; you are on the good path”

“Al-Awwam i.e. ibn Hawshab quotes his cousin to have said, “My father and I went to ‘A’ishah and I asked her about Ali (as). She answered, ‘You are asking me about someone who is most loved by the Messenger of God (saws), someone whose wife is the Prophet’s daughter who is most loved by the Prophet.

I saw the Messenger of God (saws) call Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) and put some kind of dress (*thawb*) on them and say, “O God, these are *Ahl Bayti* (my Household); take uncleanness away from them and purify them a thorough purifying”. Then, I went close to them and said, ‘O Messenger of God, am I one of your *Ahl al-Bayt*?’ He (saws) said ‘Keep away, you are on the good path’.²⁷

C. The expression “He took it away from my hand”

Umm Salamah is quoted to have said, “The Messenger of God (saws) said to Fatimah, peace be on her, “Call your husband and your children to me”. Fatimah (sa) told them to go and they did. Then, the Prophet (saws) cast on them a *kisa* woven in Fadak, put his hand on them and said,

‘O God, these are Mohammad’s *Ahl* (Household), (in another version he said *Al*); send your blessings on Mohammad’s Household, just as you sent blessings on the Household of Ibrahim, Thou art the Praised, Glorious. Umm Salamah said, “Then I lifted the *kisa* to join them. He took it away from my hand and said, ‘You are on the good path’.

D. The expression “He did not say: You are one of (the members of) the Household”

Umrah, the daughter of Af’a is quoted to have said, “I heard Umm Salamah say, ‘This verse: *Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying* was revealed in my house. At that time there were seven individuals in the house: Gabriel, Michael, the Messenger of God, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.).

Standing at the door of the house, I said, ‘O Messenger of God, am I not one of them?’ He said, ‘ you are on the good path; you are one of the Prophet’s wives. He did not say, ‘You are one of (the members of) the Household’.²⁸

E. The expression “No, and you are on the good path”

“Attiyyah has reported on the authority of Abi Sa’id, that Umm Salamah said, ‘The Prophet (saws) covered Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) with *kisa*. Then, he said, ‘O God, these are my *Ahl al-Bayt* (Household) who will return to You, not to the fire.’ Umm Salamah added, ‘I asked, O Messenger of God, am I with them?’ He said ‘No, and you are on the good path’.²⁹

F. The expression “By God, he did not say ‘Yes’”

A'mash has quoted Hakim ibn Sa'ad to have said, “When we mentioned the name of Ali (as) before Umm Salamah, she told us that it was in his favour that the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed, and added that after the Prophet (saws) had placed Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) under the *kisa*, the verse and *Tatheer* was revealed, and when Umm Salamah asked the Messenger of God, if she was one of them she heard no positive reply. She conveyed this idea when she said “By God, he did not say ‘Yes’”). He only said, “You are on the good path”.³⁰

G. The expression “Stay where you are; you are on the good path”

Shahr ibn Hawshab has quoted Umm Samalah to have said, “The Messenger of God (saws) took *thawb* a garment, , and put it on Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.); he then recited this verse “*Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*” Umm Salamah added, ‘When I went (closer) to step in, under the garment the Prophet (saws) said, “Stay where you are, you are on the good path”.³¹

There is another version of the *hadith* which is as follows: “Keep to your own place, and you will gain good”, or as follows: “Sit where you are, you are on the good path”.³²

H. The expression “I wished he had said, ‘Yes’ ”

Umrat al-Hamdaniyyeh is quoted to have said, “I went to Umm Salamah’s (house) and greeted her. She asked me ‘Who are you?’ I said, ‘I am Umrat al-Hamdaniyyeh.’ Then, Ummrah said, ‘O Mother of the Believers, tell me about the man (referring to Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him) who was recently murdered, and whom some people love and others hate.’

Umm Salamah asked, ‘Do you love him or hate him?’ Ummrah said, ‘I neither love him nor hate him.’... Then, God, the Mighty and High, revealed the verse “*Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness...*” at a time when there was no one in the house other than Gabriel, the Messenger of God, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) all.

Then I asked the Messenger of God, ‘Am I (a member of the) *Ahl al-Bayt*? He said, “For you there is a good reward with god.” At that time I wished he had said, ‘Yes’; which was more dear to me than that over which the sun rises and when it sets.³³

I. The expression “Stay away from my Household”

Abi al-Mo’addel Attiyyeh al-Tafawi reported on the authority of his father, who quoted Umm Salamah to have said, ‘The Messenger of God (saws) was in my house when the servant said, ‘Ali, and Fatimah (p.b.u.th.) are at the door’. The Prophet (saws) said (to me) ‘Get up and stay away from my Household’.

Then, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) entered, and the Prophet (saws) prayed (to God)

sayings' God, these are my Household, to You, not to the fire.' Umm Salamah said, 'O Messenger of God, and I?' The Prophet said, "You, too"³⁴.

It is evident that in his words, the Prophet (saws) first stated clearly that Umm Salamah was not included among the Household— but then in his prayer for keeping them away from the Fire he joined her with them.

J. The expression "You are on the good path; but he did not include me with them"

'Awwam ibn Hawshab quoted Jami' al-Taymi to have said, "My mother and I went to 'A'ishah's house. My mother asked her about Ali (as). 'A'ishah said, 'What do you think of a man whose spouse is Fatimah, peace be on her, and whose children are al-Hasan and al-Husain?"

I saw the Prophet (saws) place a garment on them and say 'These are my Household. O God, take away uncleanness from them and purify them a thorough purifying'. Then, I said, 'O Messenger of God, am I one of your Household?' He said 'You are on the good path.' He did not include me with them"³⁵.

K. The expression "By God, he did not say 'you are with them' "

Umm Salama said, "The Messenger of God (saws) placed Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) under the *kisa*. Then, he prayed, saying 'O God, these are my Household, take away uncleanness from them and purify them a thorough purifying'. So, I said, "O Messenger of God, am I (included) among them?" Then, Umm Salamah adds, 'By God, he did not say, 'you are among them', but he said 'You are on the good path and towards the good'.³⁶"

L. The expression "You are on the good path, and these are my Ahl al-Bayt (Household)"

Atta ibn Yasar reported that Umm Salamah, may God be pleased with her, had said, "The Prophet (saws) sent some one for Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.). When they arrived, the Prophet (S.A.) said, 'O God, these are my Household.' Umm Salamah said, "O, Messenger of God, Am I not one of (your) Household?" The Prophet said, 'You are on the good path, but these are my Household. O God, my Household are more worthy.'

Having narrated the *hadith*, Hakim Nayshaburi said, 'This *hadith* has all the conditions that make it genuine to Bukhari, but he did not mention it.'³⁷

3– Recitation of the Verse of Tatheer at the Door of Ali and Fatimah's House

There are narrations which report that the Prophet (saws) used to call at Hazrat Ali and Fatimah's house, (peace be upon them) five times a day at the praying times, and recite the verse of *Tatheer*. These narrations are of various types. In order to avoid lengthy details we will only refer to the headings.

Some of these narrations state that the Prophet (saws) did that for a month,³⁸ some others say for forty

days,³⁹ still some others say for six,⁴⁰ seven,⁴¹ eight,⁴² nine,⁴³ ten or even seventeen months⁴⁴.

It is necessary to mention two important things concerning these traditions:

1. These traditions, each of which talks about a particular period, do not (in fact) contradict each other. The difference in the period of time reported indicates the period reported by the individual Companions who were with the Prophet (saws). For instance, Abu al-Hamra once reported that the period was six months, and in another *hadith*, he said seven months, in another eight or ten, and still in another seventeen months.
2. Repeating this act by the Prophet (saws) for such a long period reminds us of the fact that after the literal use of the word *Ahl al-Bayt*, it is used technically to mean Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.) besides the holy Prophet himself (saws). This being the new application. This is a very significant point in all the traditions related to the verse of *Tatheer*, and *hadiths* of *Thaqalayn* and *Saffinah*.

4– The Qur’anic Verse was Revealed in Favour of the Five Pure People

There are other *hadiths* stating that the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed in favour of the Prophet (saws) Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.). Some of these traditions are ascribed to the Prophet. For example, “Abi Sa’id al-Khidri quotes the Messenger of God (saws) to have said, ‘This verse: Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying’ was revealed in favour of me, Ali, Hasan, Husain and Fatimah’.⁴⁵

Other traditions state that Abu Sa’id Khidri believes that the verse of *Tatheer: Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying* had been revealed in favour of the five people: the Messenger of God, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.).

Also, Abu Sa’id Khidri is quoted to have said that Attiyyeh asked “Who are the Household?”. Abu Sa’id answered ‘They are the Prophet, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.).’⁴⁶

Some other *hadiths* quote Umm Salamah to have said that the holy Qur’anic verse is in favour of the five pure people, such as the following:

“Umm Salamah said “This verse *Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*’ was revealed in favour of the Prophet (saws), Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.).”⁴⁷

Two More Notes about the Verse of *Tatheer* and Hadiths Related

to it

1) From the foregoing discussions it is clear that the word “*Bayt*” in “*Ahl al-Bayt*” does not mean “residence” because other people such as Abil-Hamra, Wathileh, Umm Ayman, and Fizzeh also lived in the same house, but none of them is regarded as a member of *Ahl al-Bayt*.

“*Bayt*” does not mean kinship either because there are some other people such as Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle, and his sons, some of whom were closer to the Prophet than Ali (as) are not included with “*Ahl al-Bayt*”. (There is a tradition concerning Abbas, with which we will deal in the section on questions and answers concerning the Qur’anic verse).

By “*Bayt*” it is meant the Prophet’s Household, consisting exclusively of “The Five Members of al-Aba”, the members of this House, to whom the secrets of this House have been entrusted. It is worth considering Suyooti’s words⁴⁸ concerning the Qur’anic verse “***In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them***”⁴⁹ which are as follows interesting to note:

“Ibn Murdawayh has quoted Anas ibn Malik and Buraydah to have said, ‘After the Prophet (saws) had recited this Qur’anic verse: “*In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted...*” someone got up and asked “What houses are these?” The Prophet (saws) said, “The Prophets’ houses”. Then, Abu Bakr got up and asked, “O Messenger of God, is Ali and Fatimah’s house (p.b.u.th.) one of them?” The Prophet said, “Yes, it is. It is one of the best of them”.

2) A deliberation upon these narrations clearly shows that there is an instance of restriction which is intended to exclude the wives of the Prophet (saws) and his other relatives such as Abbas, (the Prophet’s uncle), and his children from *Ahl al-Bayt*).

This, however, does not oppose other *hadiths* which define the *Ahl al-Bayt* as the fourteen infallible persons – i.e. the holy Prophet, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, al-Husain and the other nine Infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.) – because the verse of *Tatheer* has, in addition to using the phrase “*to keep away uncleanness from you*”, stressed (the significance) of the phrase “*Ahl al-Bayt*”.

The reason why *hadith al-Kisa* reports that (only) the five pure people have been covered with *kisa* and that the holy Prophet (saws) prayed for them is because at that time the Prophet’s grand family consisted of only these five people. Yet, all the infallible Shi’ite Imams including Hazrat Mahdi (as) are among *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The fourth Imam, Zayn al-‘Abidin (as) cites the verse of *Tatheer* as an evidence of his being a member of *Ahl al-Bayt*.⁵⁰ Many traditions in both Shi’ite and Sunni sources consider Hazrat Mahdi (as) among the *Ahl al-Bayt* (saws).⁵¹

According to the definitely authentic tradition, *hadith of Thaqalayn*, the holy Prophet (saws) says about

the Qur'an and *Ahl al-Bayt*, "...the two will never separate until they return to me by the pond (of *Kawthar*)"⁵²

From this tradition it is understood that the Qur'an and *Ahl al-Bayt* will remain side by side until the Day of Resurrection. The tradition also indicates that the members of the Household of the Prophet are infallible, and that there will be at least one of them at all times worthy of being followed.

Some Sunni scholars support the idea inferred from the tradition of *Thaqalayn* that there will always be people from among *Ahl al-Bayt* at all times.⁵³

Bellow is one of the traditions which interpret *Ahl al-Bayt* as the fourteen infallible (Imams), narrated by both Sunnis and Shi'ites.

In his *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, Ibrahim ibn Mohammad Jowayni has quoted a detailed narration of which we cite only the sentences which are related to the verse of *Tatheer*.

In this *hadith*, Imam Ali (as) addresses a group of distinguished men from the Immigrants (*Muhajrin*) and the Helpers (*Ansar*), reminding them of his merits and pointing to some verses of the Qur'an such as the verse of *Tatheer* which was revealed in favour of him and *Ahl al-Bayt*. He says:

"O people, you know that after God, (the Mighty and High) had revealed the verse: *Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*, the Prophet (saws) gathered me, Fatimah and my children, al-Hasan and al-Husain, covered us with *kisa* and said

'O God, these are *Ahl al-Bayti* (my Household) and whoever hurts them, has hurt me whoever displeases them, has displeased me. So keep away uncleanness from them and purify them a thorough purifying'. Umm Salama said, 'O Messenger of God, 'And I?' The Prophet said, 'You are on the good path.

This verse has been revealed in favour of me, (and my daughter), as well as my brother, Ali ibn Abi Talib, my children (al-Hasan and al-Husain) and the nine descendants of al-Husain; no one else is included with us (in this verse)'. You know these, don't you?"

All those who were present said, "We bear witness that Umm Salamah told us the same thing and we, ourselves, asked the Prophet (saws) and he told us the same thing which Umm Salamah had told us".⁵⁴

Questions and Answers about the Qur'anic Verse of *Tatheer*

It is appropriate now to answer some questions about the Qur'anic verse of *Tatheer*

Question One

It is understood from the aforementioned discussions that the desire expressed in the Qur'anic verse is

ontological. It follows that the spiritual purification of *Ahl al-Bayt*, is definite and immutable. Wouldn't the acceptance of this idea lead to ascribing determinism to them?

Answer

God's, ontological desire will entail determinism only if they do not have the will to act but if God has ontologically desired that the *Ahl al-Bayt* be kept away from uncleanness and sin on the basis of insight and knowledge, it will not lead determinism, but will affirm a free choice and negate of determinism. According to this assumption, God has not willed that they are not to do things which they do not want. God's desire is that they are to obey (Him) by exercising a free choice. The existence of free will contests (the idea) of determinism.

Furthermore, we can say that *ismah* (inerrancy), means an extensive and profound insight and knowledge which an infallible person enjoys and which never lets him deviate from obeying God or think of committing sins. Enjoying such insight and knowledge will make the evil of sins so manifest that one will never seek to commit sins voluntarily, just as it is impossible for ordinary people to drink dirty water. The reason is that their insight and knowledge prevents them from doing so.

Question Two

In the holy Qur'anic verse: "*Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl al-Bayt and purify you a thorough purifying*", the use of the two phrases "انهاب", "to keep away" and "تطهير", "to purify" indicate that "*uncleanness*" previously existed but was removed when these words were revealed. This use of the phrases "*to keep away*" and "*to purify*" indicates that *Ahl al-Bayt* used to commit sins, but their "*uncleanness*" is then removed. They, therefore, became "*pure* after a time"

Answer

In this verse the word "انهاب", "preceded by" "عن" meaning "from" is a transitive verb which means "to keep away" uncleanness from *Ahl al-Bayt* and this desire is pre-existent, not that the opposite state existed in *Ahl al-Bayt* and God removed it from them. The word "تطهير", "purifying" does not mean "removal of not previously uncleanness, been clean", but it refers to the pre-existence of *Ahl al-Bayt's* purity". This is similar to the idea in the Qur'anic verse,

"and they shall have pure mates". (2:25)

The definite evidence supporting the above view, is that "*Ahl al-Bayt*" includes the very Prophet (saws) about whose being "*Ma'sum*" from the very beginning no one doubts. No one can say that he was not so before the revelation of the verse of *Tatheer* and became "*inerrant*" afterwards. When we say that the two concepts i.e. "*keeping away*" and "*purifying*" do not indicate previous "*uncleanness*" in the case of the Prophet (saws) the same can be said about the members of *Ahl al-Bayt*, otherwise the two concepts with regard to the Prophet (saws) would mean something and regarding his Household something else.

Question Three

The holy Qur'anic verse contains no clue to indicate that *Ahl al-Bayt* enjoy this kind of purity before the verse was revealed; rather the verse indicates that this God's desire concerns the future because the verb يريد refers to something to come.

Answer

First: The verb *yurid* يريد (want) does not indicate futurity, and this is clear in similar applications, as in these examples:

“God desires to explain to you, and to guide you into the ways of those before you” (4:26)

Also, ***“And Allah desires that He should turn to you (mercifully)” (4:27)***.

Accordingly, in the Qur'anic verse (in question) God's desire does not indicate futurity but it means that God, the Mighty and High, still has this desire and it is still in effect.

Second: Including the Prophet (saws) in the desire is a confirmation of this idea, for none would say that previously God's desire of purification did not include the Prophet, and it occurred later on. The purity of the noble Prophet (saws) is pre-existent. It is thus evident that “*yuridu*” is not used with regard to the Prophet in a different meaning from that of his Household.

Question Four

Probably the letter “ل, ل” in “ليذهب” expresses cause and the object of the verb “يريد” is the duties assigned to the noble Prophet's family, God bless them. Then the meaning of the verse will be: in view of the particular obligations and duties assigned to you, the Household, God, the Most High, “desires” to remove uncleanness from you, and make you thoroughly pure. If so, the verse cannot be an indication of the Household's inerrancy.

Answer

First: (To claim) that the object of the verb “desire” is omitted and unsaid opposes the rule, which leaves nothing unsaid. If there is a contextual clue, it will be possible to ignore this principle. But there is no such clue in the Qur'anic verse (under discussion).

Second: Since there are several possible views concerning the function of the letter “ل” with the verb “يذهب” (to keep away) some consider God's “desire” to be ontological and some consider it to be legislative, the most probable one that agrees with the context is its being ontological. We already introduced some reasons for its being ontological, for example, with legislative desire” there is no need to praise this dear family, whereas we see that Prophet's Household are highly praised in the Qur'anic verse, as in the aforementioned *hadiths* have clearly stated.

Therefore, in this case, the letter “J” has special purpose; i.e. to make the verb transitive, and what follows it, is the object of the verb *yuridu* as can be seen in other Qur’anic verses where the verb ‘desire’ can be in the transitive form whether with or without the letter “J”.

Now, let us consider the following examples:

﴿فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

“Let not then their property and their children excite your admiration; Allah only wishes to chastise them with these in this world’s life...”⁵⁵

Also:

﴿وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا﴾

“And let not their property and their children excite your admiration; Allah only wishes to chastise them with these in this world”.⁵⁶

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will not consent save to perfect His light though the unbelievers are averse”.⁵⁷

﴿يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse”.⁵⁸ In one of the verses the verb *yuridun* (they desire) has been made transitive without the use of letter “J” and in another by using the of letter “J”

Question Five

“The Household” in the verse, do not mean only five people. It includes other relatives of the Prophet

(saws) too, because some traditions mention that the Prophet (saws) placed his uncle Abbas and his children under a covering, and said, “These are my Household” and prayed for them.

Answer

There are so many *hadiths* confirming that “The Household” includes only the five or the fourteen infallible persons, and so, the mentioned *traditions* are by no means valid. Besides, they are not trustworthy (for the following reasons):

In the chain of the narrators of this *hadith* there is the name of Mohammad ibn Yunus, concerning whom ibn Hajar has quoted ibn Habban to have said, “He fabricates *hadiths*. He has made up more than thousand *hadiths*, falsely attributing them to trustworthy people. “Ibn Adi has also accused him of making up narrations”.⁵⁹

Another narrator of this *hadith* is Malik ibn Hamzeh, about whom Bukhari mentions in his book that he is among the weak narrators⁶⁰

Abdullah ibn Uthman ibn Ishaq is another narrator of this *hadith*, concerning whom ibn Hajar has quoted Uthman to have said, “I asked ibn Mo’in about this narrator. He answered that he did not know him. Ibn Adi said, ‘He is not known’.

In view of the above notes, the mentioned tradition cannot challenge the (authentic) *hadiths* at all.

Question Six

When Umm Salamah asked the Prophet (saws) if she was among the members of *Ahl al-Bayt*, the noble Prophet said, “You are (moving) towards the good”; in another version, “You are on the good path”, meaning: there is no need for me to pray for you because the Qur’anic verses have, from the beginning, commended you. The expression “You are on the good path” also means: you are in a better position. This does not suggest that Umma Salamah was not among the members of *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Answer

From the previous discussions on the context of verse, it can be concluded that the verse of *Tatheer* and those preceding it do not have the same *siaq* (context) thus the wives of the Prophet (saws) are excluded from *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The word “good” in the expression “on the good path” or “moving towards the good” does not mean preference and not indicate that the Prophet’s wives are superior to the five pure people. There are some indications in these *hadiths* which support this idea, such as Umm Salamah’s wishing that she was joined to the Household, a position which she preferred to all that on which the sun shines.

A deliberation upon the Qur’anic verses related to the wives of the Prophet (saws) including those

preceding the verse of *Tatheer* and what the reasons and conditions of their revelation are and those in the *Surah of Prohibition* makes the above mentioned point completely clear. Let us, for example see the following Qur'anic:

“If you both turn to Allah (in repentance), then indeed your hearts are already inclined (to this)”;
“Perhaps should he divorce you, his Lord would grant him even better wives than you are in your stead wives better than you, submissive (to Allah), believing, pious, penitent, devout, inclined to fasting, widows and maids”. “Allah sets forth an example to those who disbelieve the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut: they were both under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said: Enter both the fire with those who enter”. (66:4, 5 & 10)

Question Seven

Traditions report that the Prophet (saws) prayed for his family after the verse of *Tatheer* was revealed. He said, “O God, take uncleanness away from them and purify them a thorough purifying”. This request of the Prophet (saws) is inconsistent with the idea that inerrancy can be inferred from the verse, because it would not be reasonable to ask God to confer inerrancy on *Ahl al-Bayt* if the Qur'anic verse indicated their inerrancy.

Answer

First: This supplication clearly indicates that God's desire to purify the Household is an ontological not a legislative one, because asking God “to take away uncleanness” and (to grant) “purification” is in no way not a legislative matter and the Prophet's supplication is certainly granted. Therefore, this supplication emphasizes the content of the verse of *Tatheer*.

Second: Inerrancy is a blessing granted by God to chosen people in each and every moment of their lifetime because, like other creatures, they always need God in each and every moment. One cannot assume that God's grace given to them in one moment will make them needless of God's blessings in other moments.

This is like the case of the Prophet's repeatedly saying, “*Guide us along the Straight Road*”, asking God for guidance, although he has attained guidance in its most perfect form. It is an indication that whatever ranks a God's servant attains, essentially he is still in need of Allah, and so his expressing the need and imploring God's blessings is but perfection.

One's knowledge that God's blessings will be granted in the future does not prevent one from praying and a similar example is found in *Ulu al-Albab's* supplication to which God refers here:

“Our Lord! And grant us what Thou has promised us by Thy apostles and disgrace us not on the day of resurrection; surely Thou does not fail to perform the promise (3:194)

They implore God although they know that Allah, the Mighty and High, will not fail to perform His promise to the believers.

With regard to the noble Prophet's supplication, we notice that although "purification" and "divine protection" have already been attained and will also be granted in the future, the Prophet's supplication indicates that in spite of the lofty rank of the Household they are always in need of Allah, whose great and invaluable bliss reaches them every moment.

Therefore, the holy Prophet's supplicating before or after the revelation of the verse of *Tatheer*, does not contest their inerrancy.

Question Eight

Prophets' inerrancy is necessary for safeguarding divine revelation. Why should we believe that those who are not prophets are infallible?

Answer

First: In the Shi'ites' view, Imamate is a continuation of prophet hood, and is equal to or higher in position than prophet hood.⁶¹ Imams play the same role as that of the Prophet (saws) except that they are not revealed to. The belief of Imamiyyah Shi'ites in the inerrancy of Imam is based on intellectual (*aqli*) and transmitted (*naqli*) proofs.

Second: Having no necessary intellectual condition for the inerrancy of Imam does not justify the absence of inerrancy.

Explanation: As regards the prophet and Imam intellect is the criterion of their being, but those other than the Prophet and the Imam do not have such privilege. Inerrancy is a special divine blessing that God gives to whoever He considers good.

As for the Prophet and the Imams, there is an intellectual demonstration of their being inerrant, but regarding other than them, if there is a transmitted proof supporting their being inerrant, it must be taken for granted, and the verse of *Tatheer* is a proof of the inerrancy of the Prophet, Imams, and Hazarat Fatimah (p.b.u.th.) all.

Question Nine

In his *Sahih*,⁶² Muslim has quoted Zayd ibn Arqam, one of the Companions, to have reported that the Prophet (saws) said, "I am leaving behind two precious things among you: the book of Allah ... and *Ahl al-Bayti* (my Household)". Zayd ibn Arqam was asked, "Who are *the Ahl al-Bayt*?" Are the women included with the Prophet's Household?"

He said, "No". When he was asked, "Who are they?", he said, "The Prophet's Household are those to

whom paying of *sadaka* (the voluntary alms) is forbidden. They are: Ali's family, Abbas's family, Ja'far's family and Aqil's family". Now, how can *Ahl al-Bayt* be confined to the five pure members of *Ale al-Aba*, or to the fourteen infallibles (p.b.u.th.)?

Answer

First: This tradition indicates that the wives of the Prophet (saws) are excluded from *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Second: This tradition, though reported by various transmitters, ends a Yazid ibn Hayan, who is not qualified to challenge the content of (*thaqalayn*) tradition and many other *hadiths*.

Third: Even if (he) is proved (to be qualified), we cannot consider the independent judgement of one of the Companion as a convincing argument.

Fourth: Zayd ibn Arqam has reported the tradition of *Thaqalayn* in different ways all of which contain the following sentence: "if you hold fast to them, you will not be misguided at all, i.e. the Book of Allah and my *Ahl al-Bayt* will never separate until they return to me by the pond (of *Kawthar*)".

These notes which indicate *Ahl al-Bayt's* leadership and their inseparability from the Qur'an, do not agree with the above mentioned interpretation quoted from Zayd ibn Arqam, according to which the Abbasid caliphs are, in spite of their oppression and tyranny, regarded among *Ahl al-Bayt*. This is in opposition with the content of the verse of *Thaqalayn*.

Question Ten

Some traditions report that in answer to Umm Salamah's inquiry: "Am I among *Ahl al-Bayt*?" and in another version "Let me be with them", the Prophet (saws) answered "Yes, if God wills", and "You are among my family". It can, therefore, be said that the term *Ahl al-Bayt* is not limited to five people.

Answer

In the numerous traditions previously cited, the particular term *Ahl al-Bayt*, includes no one other than the Five People of *Ale al-Aba*. It can be said that the traditions referred to in the above question which are concerned with the literal meaning of "*Ahl*" or "*Ahl al-Bayt*" include the wives of the Prophet (saws).

Mention is made here of a Sunni leading figure in *fiqh* and *hadith*, Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, who considers *Ahl al-Bayt* only five people, and that the wives of the Prophet (saws) are not among those referred to in the holy Qur'anic verse. On pages 332-3 of his *Mushkil al-Athar* he quotes

Umm Salamah to have asked the Prophet (saws) to let her be among them (*Ahl al-Bayt*). The Prophet (saws) said, "انت من اهلي", you are among my family". Tahawi then continues: "From these traditions it can be understood that it is sometimes permissible to consider Umm Salamah one of the Prophet's *Ahl*, because she is a wife of the Prophet, and his wives are his *Ahl*".

Having quoted eight traditions supporting the idea that Umm Salamah is not one of *Ahl al-Bayt* referred to in the verse of *Tatheer*, al-Tahawi adds:

“It can be understood from the words of the Prophet (saws) to Umm Salamah, as we previously mentioned, that there exists no *hadith* which states that Umm Salamah is one of (the members of) *Ahl al-Bayt* as it is meant by the Qur’anic verse recited. No one is meant by this verse other than God’s Messenger, peace be on him and his family, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husain (p.b.u.th.)”.

Another possible explanation given by al-Tahawi is that by the phrase “انت من اهلى *You are among my Ahl*” the Prophet (saws) meant to tell Umm Salamah that she was among his family because she was following his creed, expressing the same idea in the case of the Prophet Nuh when he was told that his son was excluded from his family as in the verse, “**surely he is not of your family**”⁶³ which indicates that the members of his family are those who (believe) and do good deeds.

Tahawi offers the above possible explanation after he quotes Wathileh’s report which confirms the presence of the five pure persons, their being covered with *kisa*, and the Prophet’s supplicating “*O God, these are my Ahl al-Bayti, and my Ahl al-Bayt are most deserving*”. Then, Wathileh says: I asked, “O Messenger of God, am I among (the members of) your *Ahl*?” The Prophet said, “You are among my *Ahl*”.

Tahawi continues in this way:

“Wathila, a member of *Bani Layth* not a *Qurayshi*, was farther from the Prophet (saws) than Umm Salamah whereas Umm Salamah, the Prophet’s wife, belonged to the *Quraysh* tribe yet the Prophet says to him, “You are among my *Ahl*”, meaning “because you follow the religion and have faith in me you are among my family”.

In his book *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Bayhaki quotes Wathila’s narration and says,

“The Prophet seems to have used a metaphorical, not literal way when placing Wathila among the members of his family”.

Therefore, it is not a problem to say that *Ahl al-Bayt* has an exclusively reference.

Question Eleven

The Qur’anic verse:

“**Allah only desires...**” (33:33) is similar to the verse:

“**...Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you...**” (5:6) and similar to the verse,

“**...and to take away from you the uncleanness of Satan...**” (8:11)

Now, if the verse of *Tatheer* suggests “inerrancy”, then we can attribute inerrancy to many Companions.

Answer

The first sentence comes at the end of the verse dealing with *wudu* (i.e.washing for the ritual prayer) and total ablution. The verse is:

“O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles; and if you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves) and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith, Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful”. (5:6)

In the above verse, God, the Mighty and High, having issued the command on washing for prayers, total ablution, and betaking to pure earth, says that (by legislating these laws) He does not desire to put you in any difficulty, but wishes to purify you by your washing and betaking to pure water. “Purity” in this verse has nothing to do with the ontological purity mentioned in the verse of *Tatheer*.

In the second verse “uncleanliness of Satan”, refers to the wet dream which (a group of) Muslims had during the Battle of Badr. God, the Mighty and High, sent down rain on them. They washed themselves with it and removed the defilement.

This verse too refers to a particular purification required for removing the stain which occurred as a result of wet dream to (a number of) the Companions who had participated in the war. This purification has nothing to do with the absolute ontological purification referred to in the Qur’anic verse of *Tatheer*.

1. – Surah 33, verse 33.

2. – Al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 5, p. 378, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; Showkani’s Fath al-Qadeer, vol. 4, p. 350, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut; al-Ma’rifah wal-Tarikh, vol. 1, p. 498.

3. – Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihyan, vol. 3, p. 172, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

4. – Ibn Katheer’s Commentary, vol. 3, p. 491.

5. – Ruh al-Ma’ani, vol.22, p. 13, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

6. – Ibn Katheer’s Commentary, vol. 3, p. 491.

7. –In Tadhkiratol Hoffaz, p. 1200, vol. 2, Dhahabi says, “Hakim Hasakani, is master, firm and unwavering in the science of hadith”.

8. – Asad al-Ghabah, vol. 5, p. 521, Dar Ihya’ al-Torath al-Arabi, Beirut.

9. – Al-Isabah, vol. 2, p. 509, Dar al-Fikr;

Adhwa al-Bayan, vol. 6, p. 578, ‘Alam al-Kutub; Beirut;

Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p. 354, Dar al-Fikr;

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 35, pp 206 – 232, on the verse of *Tatheer*, al-Wafa Institute; Beirut;

History of Baghdad, vol. 9, p. 126, and vol. 10, p. 278; Dar al-Fikr;

History of the City of Damascus, vol. 13, pp, 203, 206 and 207; vol. 14, pp. 141 and 145;

Ibn Abi Hatim’s Commentary, vol. 9, p. 3129; al-Maktabah al-Misriyyah; Beirut;

Abi al-Saud's Commentary, vol.7, p. 103; Dar Ihya' al-Torath al-Arabi; Beirut;
 Al-Baidawi's Commentary, vol. 33, p. 382; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah;
 Forat al-Kufi's Commentary, vol. 1,p. 332 – 342; An-No'man Institute;
 Ibn Katheer's Commentary of al-Qur'an al-Azim, vol. 3,p.492, Dar al-Ma'rifah; Beirut;
 Ibn Adil al-Dimashqi's Al-Lubab Commentary, vol. 15, p. 548; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah; Beirut;
 Al-Mawardi's Commentary, vol. 4,p. 401; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;
 Al-Tafsir al-Muneer, vol. 23, p. 14; Dar al-Fik al-Mo'asir;
 Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 2, p. 258; Dar al-Fikr;
 Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, vol., 22, p. 5; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;
 Qurtubi's Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 14, p. 183; Dar al-Fikr;
 Al-Durr al-Manthur; vol. 6, p. 604; Dar al-Fikr;
 Dhakha'ir al-Uqba, pp. 21 – 24;
 Rooh al-Bayan, vol., 7, p. 171; Dar Ihya' al-Torath al-Arabi;
 Al-Aloosi's Rooh al-Ma'ani, vol 22, p. 14; Dar Ihya' al-Torath al-Arabi;
 Al-Riyadh al-Nadawah, vol. 2 (3-4), p. 135; Dar al-Nadwat al-Jadidah; Beirut;
 Ibn al-Jawzi's Zad al-Maseer, vol. 6, p. 198; Dar al-Fikr;
 Tirmidhi's Sunan, vol. 5, pp. 327-328 and 656; Dar al-Fikr;
 Beihaqi's Al-Sunan al-Kobra, vol. 2, p. 149; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;
 Dhahabi's Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 3, pp. 254 and 283; al-Risalah Institute; Beirut;
 An Exposition of al-Sunnat-al-Nabawiyah, vol. 14, p. 116; al-Maktab al-Islami; Beirut;
 Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, pp. 18-140; al-Tab' wa al-Nashr Institute, Wizarat al-Irshad;
 Ibn Habban's Sahih, vol. 15, pp. 442 to 443; al-Risalah Institute; Beirut;
 Muslim's Sahih, vol. 5,p. 37; Kitab al-Fada'il, the section: Fada'il; 'Ezzodin Institute; Beirut;
 Showkani's Fath al-Gadeer; vol. 4, pp. 349-350; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiya; Beirut;
 Jowayni's Far'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, p. 367; al-Mahmoodi Institute; Beirut;
 Kifayato-Talib; pp. 371 to 377; Dar Ihya' Turath Ahl al-Bayt;
 Majma' al-Zawa'id; vol. 9; pp. 166-169; Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi; Beirut;
 Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, vol. 2, p. 416, and vol. 3, p. 147; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;
 Abi Y'ali's Musnad; vol. 12, pp. 344 and 456; Dar al-Hamoon Lil-Turath;
 Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 4, p. 107, and vol. 6, p. 292; Dar Sadir; Beirut;
 Ishaq ibn Rahawiyih's Musnad; vol. 3, p. 678; Maktabt al-Eman; City al-Munawarah;
 Tayalisi's Musnad; p. 274; Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani;
 Tahawi's Mushkil al-Athar; vol. 1, p. 335; Dar al-Baz;
 Tabarani's al-Mo'jam al-Sagir;vol. 1, p. 135, Dar al-Fikr;
 Tabarani's al-Mo'jam al-Awsat, vol. 2, p. 491; Maktabat al-Ma'arif; Riyadh;
 Tabarani's al-Mo'jam al-Kabir; vol. 23; pp. 245, 281, 286, 308, 327, 330, 333, 334, 337, 357, 393, and 396;
 Baswi's al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tarikh; vol. 1, p. 498;
 al-Muntakhab min 'Abd ibn Hamid's Musnad, pp. 173 and 367; 'Alam al-Kutub, Cairo;
 Ibn Magazili's Manaqib; pp. 301-302; al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah.

10. – Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, vol. 3, p. 148.

11. – Hakim Nayshaburi has listed in his al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, narrations containing the conditions of the narrations that Bukhari and Muslim consider as authentic, but have not quoted in their works. In his Talkhis, Dhahabi expresses his idea concerning "Molaiki", one of the transmitters of this hadith. He says, "al-Molaiki takes the narrations away (i.e. deletes the narrations)". (On the other hand), in vol. 6, p. 132, of his Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, ibn Hajar says he is "truthful", this being subsequent to Saji's opinion who used the same term, which is an indication of Molaiki's truthfulness (in narrations). Criticisms are directed against his narration of hadiths. Many other narrators of hadith have been criticized by Bukhari and Muslim.

12. – History of the City of Damascus.

13. – 'Awwam al-Uloom, vol. 11, p. 638, al-Imam Mahdi (A.S.) Institute. (This volume is about Hazrat Fatimah Zahra, peace be on her).

14. – Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p.603.

15. – Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol.3, p. 493.

16. – Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 604; al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer, vol. 23, p. 336.

17. – History of the City of Damascus, vol. 14, p. 145.

18. – Ibid. vol. 13, p. 206.

19. – Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 492; al-Tabari's Commentary, vol. 22, p. 5.

20. – History of the City of Damascus, vol. 14, p. 141.

21. – Mushkil al-Athar, vol.1, p. 336.

22. – History of the City of Damascus, vol. 13, p. 203.

23. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 61.

24. – Ibid, vol. 2, p. 134.

25. – Ibid, vol. 2, p. 119.

26. – Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, vol. 2, p. 416

27. – Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 493.

28. – Mushkil al-Athar, vol. 1, p. 333, Dal al-Baz; History of City of Damscus, vol. 14, p. 145; Dar al-Fikr.

29. – History of the City of Damascus, vol. 13, p. 206, Dar al-Fikr. The chain of transmission of the hadith is as follows:

Abu Abdullah al-Frawi and abul Mozafar al-Qushayri informed us on the authority of Abu Sa'd al-Adeeb, on the authority of Abu Amru ibn Hamdan, and Umm al-Mujtaba al-Alawiyeh informed us on the authority of Ibrahim ibn Mansoor, on the authority of Abu Bakr ibn al-Muqri, on the authority of Abu Ya'li, on the authority of Mohammad ibn Ismail ibn Abi Samina, on the authority of Abdullah ibn Dawood, on the authority of Fuzayl on the authority of Attiyyeh.

Verification of the chain of transmission of the hadith:

a). Abu Abdullah Farawi Mohammad ibn Fuzayl ibn Ahmad, concerning whom Dhahabi says, "He is a master, a leader, a jurist, a theologian, Faqih, a Mufti, a famous hadith scholar in Khorasan, and the jurist of the Shrine. Regarding him Sam'ani says, "In Marv, I heard Abdul Rasheedal-Tabari say, 'Al-Farawi is as knowledgeable as a thousand narrators (of hadith). Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 19, p. 615, al-Risalah Institute;

b). Abu Sa'id Adeeb Kunjroodi, concerning whom Dhahabi says, 'He is a master, a jurist, a leader, a man of letters, a grammarian, a physician, a hadith scholar in Khorasan. Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 18, p. 101. Regarding him Sam'ani says, "He is a man of letters, knowledgeable, wise, well-bred; trustworthy and truthful". Al-Ansab, vol. 5, p. 100, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

c). Abu Umar ibn Hamdan, concerning whom Dhahabi says, "He is a leader, a traditionist, trustworthy, fully versed in syntax, an ascetic, pious, and hadith scholar in Khorasan" Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 16, p. 356.

d). Ibrahim ibn Mansur, concerning whom Dhahabi says, "He is a righteous and trustworthy master; the Qur'an by" Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 18, p. 73.

e). Abu Bakr ibn al-Moqri, Mohammad ibn Ibrahim, concerning whom Dhahabi says, "He is a trustworthy master who has learned the Qur'an by heart"; Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 16, p. 398

f). Abu Y'ali, the author of a Musnad, Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Muthanna; a traditionist of Musil; Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 140, p. 174.

g). Mohammad ibn Isma'il ibn Abi Samineh; concerning whom ibn Hajar has quoted in Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb Abu Hatim and Salih ibn Mohammad to have said, "He is trustworthy". Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol, 9, p. 50; Dar al-Firkr.

h). Abdullah ibn Dawood; concerning whom Mazzi has quoted in Tabaqat Mohammad ibn Sa'd to have said, "He is trustworthy, and worshipping", Tahdheeb al-Kamal, vol. 14, p. 458.

i). Fuzayl ibn Gazwan; about whom ibn Jahar has quoted Ahmad and ibn Mo'in to have said, "He is trustworthy; ibn Habbab has mentioned his name in his al-Thiqat". Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb; vol. 8, p. 267;

j). Attiyyeh (ibn Sa'd); as it is understood from Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 7, p. 200, Sa'ad considers him trustworthy, and ibn Mo'in says that he is meritorious. Some leaders of ilm-ar-rijal have criticized his reports. These criticisms made by such people as Nisa'i are very harsh. Experts of Dihayah and hadith, such as Tahanawi, in his Qawaid fi Uloom al-hadith, p.

117, considered the criticisms, of people as invalid. Hajaj had Attiyyeh flogged four hundred times because he refused to revile Ali (p.b.u.h) on him. One who is so steadfast in his faith will never tell lies. Some criticisms made by scholars of ilm-ar-rijal may have been made against Attiyyeh because he was a Shi'ite.

30. –Al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, vol. 22, p. 7; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 493; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

31. – History of the City of Damascus, vol. 14, p. 141; Dar al-Fikr.

The chain of transmission of the hadith is as follows: Abu Talib ibn Abi Aqeel informed us on the authority of Abu al-Hasan al-Khal'i on the authority of Abu Mohammad al-Nahas, on the authority of Abu Sa'id ibn al-Arabi, on the authority of Abdol Rahman ibn Mohammad ibn Mansur, on the authority of al-Husain ibn al-Ahsqar, on the authority of Mansur ibn Abi al-Aswad, on the authority of al-A'mash, on the authority of Habib ibn Abi Thabit, on the authority of Shahr ibn Hawshab on the authority of Umma Salamah...".

Verification of the chain of transmission of the hadith:

a). Abu Talib ibn Abi Aqeel; concerning whom Dhahabi says, 'He is a religious sheikh', vol. 20 p. 108; Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', Dar al-Risalah Institute;

b). Abul al-Hasan al-Khul'i, Ali ibn al-Hasan concerning whom Dhahabi says, 'He is a religious Sheikh and a hadith scholar in Egypt'; Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah; p. 74, vol. 19;

c). Abu Mohammad al-Nahas; concerning whom Dhahabi says, "He is a truthful Sheikh, an imam (leader), a jurist, a traditionist, truthful and a hadith scholar in Egypt; vol. 17, p. 313; Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah.;

d). Abu Sa'id ibn al-Arabi, Ahmad ibn Mohammad ibn Ziyad; about whom Dhahabi says, 'He is an imam, a traditionist, a truthful good example, who has memorized the Qur'an, and Sheikh al-Islam; p. 407, vol. 15, Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah;

e). Abu Sa'id Abdul Rahman ibn Mohammad ibn Mansur; whose name ibn Habban has mentioned in his al-Thiqat, p. 383, vol. 8; al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyah Institute;

f). Husain al-Ashqar al-Fizari; ibn Habban has mentioned his name in his book al-Thiqat; and Ahmad ibn Hanbal has said about him, "I do not consider him among those who tell lies". When asked whether al-Fizari was a truthful person, ibn Mo'in said "Yes he is". Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 2, p. 91; Dar al-Fikr;

It was because of the school of thought al-Ashqar followed that certain criticisms were made against him which is not valid.

g). Mansur ibn Abi al-Aswad; ibn Hajar has reported ibn Mo'in's statement in favor of Abi al-Aswad, and said that ibn Habban has mentioned Abi al-Aswad's name in his book al-Thiqat as 'one of the trustworthy'. Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 10, p. 271, Dar al-Fikr;

h). Al-A'mash; that he is truthful goes without saying. Numerous narrations are found in Bukhari and Muslim's Sahih which confirm his truthfulness. He is so truthfulness that certain Sunni leaders of hadith say he is like a Mushaf; Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 4, p. 196, Dar al-Fikr;

i). Habib ibn Abi Thabit, he is without doubt, a trustworthy person. Numerous narrations in Sihah confirm this truthfulness. Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 2, p. 156;

j). Shahr ibn Hawshab, Ibn Hajar quotes ibn Mo'in, Ijli, and Ya'qub ibn Shaybah to have said that ibn Hawshab is a trustworthy person. Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, p. 325, vol. 4, Dar al-Fikr.

32. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, p. 119, vol. 2.

33. Mushkil al-Athar, vol. 1, p. 336, Da'irt al-Ma'rifah-Nizamiyyah bil-Hind.

34. – History of the City of Damascus, vol., 13, pp. 202–3; Dar al-Fikr.

35. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, pp. 61–2.

36. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, pp. 133–4.

37. – Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, A commentary on the Qur'anic Surah of al-Ahzab, vol. 2, p. 416, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

38. – Abi Dawood Tayalesi's Musnad, p. 274; Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani.

39. – Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 267, tradition 14987; Dar al-Fikr; al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 606; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 44, The Institute of al-Tab' wa al-Nashr Li-Wizarat al-Irshad al-Islamiyya.

40. – Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, vol. 22, pp. 5–6; Dar al-Ma'rifah; Beirut; Haythami's Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 266, tradition 14985; Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, pp. 354–5, Dar al-Fikr; al-Muntakhab min Musnad Abd ibn Hameed, pp. 367–8;

'Alam al-Kutub; Tirmidhi's Sunan, vol. 5, p. 328, Dar al-Fikr; Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 3, p. 259, Dar Sadir; Beirut; ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 492, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan, and Dhahabi's Talkhees, vol. 3, p. 158, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, and other books.

41. – Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, vol. 22, p. 6, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 492, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut; Fath al-Gadeer, vol. 4, p. 350, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyeh, Beirut.

42. – Al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 5, p. 613, and vol. 6, p. 606, Dar al-Fikr; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 46.

43. – Al-Muntakhab min Musnad Abd ibn Hameed, p. 173, 'Alam al-Kutub; Dhakha'ir al-Uqba, p. 25, Al-Wafa Institute, Beirut; al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 604, Dar al-Fikr; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 47.

44. – Majma' al-Zawa'id vol. 9, p. 267, tradition 14986, Dar al-Fikr; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 78.

45. – Al-Tabari's Jami' Al-Bayan, vol. 22, p. 5, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

The chain of transmission of the hadith is as follows: "Mohammad ibn al-Muthanna told me: Bakr ibn Yahya ibn Zaban al-Anazi told us: Mundal informed us on the authority of al-A'mash, on the authority of Attiyyeh, on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khidri.

The name of Bakr ibn Yahya ibn Zaban, is mentioned in the chain of transmission of this hadith and also in Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 1, p. 428, Dar al-Fikr, Ibn Habban says' in his book al-Thiqat that Bakr ibn Yahya is among the trustworthy narrators of hadith.

As regards Mundal (ibn Ali), Ibn Hajar says in vol. 10, p. 265, of Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, that Ya'q'b ibn Shaybah and the companions of Yaya ibn Mo'in, and Ali ibn Madeeni consider Mundal (ibn Ali) weak in narrating hadiths, besides his being pious, learned, truthful.

It is, thus, understood that he (Mundal) is criticized for no reason but because. as Eijli has said, he is a Shi'ite.

Another narrator of the tradition is A'mash (Sulayman ibn Mehran) whose truthfulness is confirmed in many rijal books and he is so well known for his truthfulness that he is compared to the Mushaf; Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 4, p. 196, Dar al-Fikr.

Attiyyeh ibn Sa'id Awfi is another narrator of the hadith. As previously stated when explaining the verse of Tatheer, he has quoted the expression "No, and you are on the good path".

46. – History of The City of Damascus, vol. 13, p. 206, Dar al-Fikr.

47. – Ibid, vol. 1, p. 332.

48. – Al-Durr Manthur, vol. 6, p. 202, Dar al-Firk.

49. – Surah 24, verse 36.

50. – Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 3, p. 493.

51. – See Muntakhab al-Athar.

52. – For futher knowledge about the various transmitters, see "Kitab Allah wa Ahl al-Bayt fi Hadith al-Thaqalayn".

53. – Samhoodi's Jawahir al-Iqdayn, p. 244, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyeh, Beirut; ibn Hajar's al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, "On Ahl al-Bayt's Merits".

54. – Fara'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, p. 316, Al-Mahmoodi Institute lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, Beirut.

55. – Surah 9, verse 55.

56. – Surah 9, verse 85.

57. – Surah 9, verse 32.

58. – Surah 61, verse 8.

59. – Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb, vol. 9, p. 542, printed in India.

60. – Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 3, p. 425; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

61. – See the pamphlet on "Imammate in the hadiths of Ghadeer, Thaqalayn an Manzilat, by Rida Kardan.

62. – Muslim's Sahih, the book of Faza'il, the section on "the Merits of Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him".

63. – Surah 11, verse 46.

Chapter 7: Imamate in the Verse of IIm al–Kitab

﴿وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ
عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ﴾

“Those who disbelieve say: “You are no emissary (of Allah)”. Say: “God suffices as a witness between me and you (all), as well as the one who has knowledge about the Book”. (13:43)

This verse speaks of one of the great virtues of Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on upon him; a virtue that the *hadith* of *Ihtijaj*¹ has called Imam Ali’s (as) greatest virtue. The verse is, therefore, worth further deliberation.

At the outset, the verse refers to the pagans who rejected the prophet hood of the Prophet (saws) and names two witnesses who confirmed his prophecy: the Most Exalted God, and the one who has knowledge about the Book.

In order to clarify what the Qur’anic verse wants to demonstrate, we need to follow up the discussion by considering the following two points:

1. How is God’s testimony given?
2. Who is meant by “the one who has knowledge of the Book”?

The Testimony of the Most Exalted God

The Qur’anic verse mentions God, the Most Exalted, as the first witness to the prophet hood of the Prophet (saws). This testimony may be either of these two:

1. The testimony may be an oral one represented in words and discourse, and the Qur’anic verses that clearly point to the prophecy of Mohammad (saws) confirm this view, as shown in this verse,

“I swear by the Qur’an full of wisdom; most surely you are one of the apostles” (36:2-3)

2. The testimony may be an actual one, in the form of miracles which God, the Most Exalted, made manifest through the Prophet (saws). These miracles, particularly the Glorious Qur’an, which is Mohammad’s ever–enduring miracle are irrefutable documents, lucid proofs and eloquent arguments for the truthfulness of his claim of being messenger of God. These miracles which are made by God in some way attest to the prophecy of the Prophet (saws).

Who Is Meant by “the One Who Has Knowledge about the Book?”

Here, the discussion focuses on what is meant by “the Book”, and by “the one who has knowledge about the book”. Some ideas are proposed in this regard, and they are as follows:

First: By “*The Book*” means the divine Scriptures before the Qur’an, and “*the one who has knowledge about the Book*” means the Jewish and the Christian scholars. Accordingly, the meaning of the verse would be: (O Messenger), Say: God and those who have knowledge about the previous Books, such as the Jewish and Christian scholars, are sufficient (witnesses between us) to my being messenger.

These Books contain the name and mission of the Prophet (saws); so the Jewish and Christian scholars, who are aware of the matter, bear witness to it.

Answer: This proposition is not valid, because the Jewish and Christian scholars, though well acquainted with their own divine Books, were disbelievers and would never stand witness against themselves.

Second: “The Book” means any divine Scriptures before the Qur’an, and “*the one who has knowledge about the Book*” means those Jewish and Christian scholars, who were well acquainted with their own divine Scriptures (Torah and the Gospel), and who converted to Islam, such as Salman Farsi, Abdullah ibn Salam, and Tamim al-Dari.

Answer: This proposition is not valid either, because the Qur’anic Surah of *Ra’d*, and the verse at the beginning of this chapter which comes at the end of this Surah were revealed in Mecca, and when the above mentioned people converted to Islam they were in Medina (subsequent to the Prophet’s emigration to this city). So, to invite disbelievers who have not converted to Islam to bear witness against themselves would not make sense.

It is reported that Sha’bi and Sa’id ibn Jubayr have rejected the stated proposition that “*the one who has knowledge about the Book*” refers to Abdullah ibn Salam, because the Surah of *Ra’d* is a Meccan one, whereas Abdullah ibn Salam became muslim in Medina.²

Third: “*One who has knowledge about the Book*” means God, the and “*the Book*” means لوح محفوظ “*the guarded Tablet*”, thus the verse will mean: God, and the one who has knowledge of the guarded tablet –in which all facts of the world are inscribed– bear witness to your prophet hood.

Answer: This proposition is not valid either because it is understood from the appearance of the organization of the sentence, “*Say: God suffices as ... the Book*”, that “*the one who has knowledge about the Book*” is not God, who is referred to at the beginning as the first witness.

Also, in Arabic it is quite common to conjoin two attributive adjectives, as it is noticed in the following

verse:

“The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Knowing, the Forgiver of faults and the Acceptor of repentance” (40:2–3)

in which the two attributive adjectives “*the Forgiver of faults*”, and “*the Acceptor of repentance*”, conjoined by “*and*”, refer to God, the Mighty and High. But in the cases where a concrete noun was mentioned, commonly, no adjective is taken to refer to it. Therefore, no one can claim that the phrase “*the one who has knowledge about the book*” is God, the Mighty and High.

Fourth: *The Book*, means “*the guarded Tablet*”, and “*the one who has knowledge about the Book*” means Imam Ali (p.u.b.h.) the Commander of the Faithful.

We try in the following pages to expound this proposition.

The Guarded Tablet, and the Facts of the Universe

It is understood from many Qura’nic verses that all the facts of the universe are contained in what the holy Qur’an calls “*a clear book*”³, “*a clear writing*”, “*a guarded tablet*”⁴, a notion which can be found in such verses like, “***And there is nothing concealed in the heaven and the earth but it is in a clear book***”⁵. Now, the question is: Is it possible for one to have acquaintance with the facts contained in the guarded tablet? If it is, who can have such acquaintance, and to what extent?

“The Purified Ones” and Their Knowledge of “the Guarded Tablet”

Now, let us consider some of the verses in the Qur’anic Surah of *Waqia*,

“But nay! I swear by the stations of stars; And most surely it is a great oath if you knew, Most surely it is an honoured Qur’an, In a book that is protected; None shall touch it except the purified ones”. (56:75–79)

At the beginning God swears by the stars, then the greatness of the oath is emphasized. It is necessary to note that there is congruity and balance between the “oath” and the “truth” to be established and emphasized. The truth for which this great oath is taken is:

“most surely it is an honoured Qur’an, In a book that is protected; None shall touch it except the purified ones”.

The last statement:

“None shall touch it except the purified ones”

deserves particular attention.

When seen at the first time it is thought that the mentioned verse indicates that except for those who are ritually pure, no one is allowed to touch the Qur'an and its lines, for it is strictly forbidden. A deeper study of the verse, however, reveals that in the verse, the word touching is not used in its literal sense.

Also "the *purified ones*" does not mean those who have done ritual washing, for example *wudu*. Besides the pronoun "it" in "*None shall touch it*" does not refer to the holy Qur'an, and the word "*touching*" in this verse means "spiritual contact", and "*the purified ones*" means those to whom God, the Mighty and High, has granted particular "purity". The antecedent for pronoun "it" in "*none shall touch it*" is "*the guarded tablet*". Below are explanatory notes on this point:

1. The sentence "*None shall touch it*" is a descriptive one not a command. Apparently this sentence, like the phrases previously used as adjectivals, functions as an adjective, so it cannot be a command. It is a descriptive sentence. Also, there is no indication in the verse that there is a command that "the non-purified" must not touch the Qur'an due to the fact that the stated sentence is a command, not a descriptive one.
2. The pronoun "it" in the sentence "*Non shall touch it*" refers to the phrase "*a book that is protected*" which comes directly before this sentence, not to "*the Qur'an*", which comes before this phrase and which is separated from it by some words.
3. The glorious Qur'an is described to have been placed "*in a book that is protected*", out of reach of ordinary people, and this notion is incongruous with the idea that the Qur'an should not be touched.
4. Those who are ritually pure, that is who have already done the ablution or total ablution (*gusl*) or have betaken themselves to pure earth (as is their duty) are called (in Arabic) *mutatahir* متطهر , not *mutahar*, مطهر.

These notes show clearly that the Qur'anic sentence: *None shall touch it except the purified ones* means that no one except the "*purified*" one are allowed to touch, i.e. be in contact with "*the book that is guarded*", i.e. (*the guarded tablet*) and get acquainted with the facts contained in it.

Let's now see who enjoys such purity, and who "*the purified ones*", who can get acquainted with the facts contained in "*the protected book*" are.

Who Are the Purified Ones?

Is the term "*the purified ones*" ascribed only to angels, as certain commentators claim,⁶ or does it have a general sense which includes divinely purified people, as well?

A study of the verses concerned with the creation of Adam, and his knowledge of "*the names*" –of

whose reality the angels pronounced their lack of knowledge—, along with his being placed God's "vicegerent" on the earth and the angels' bowing themselves to Adam, all establish the fact that a "perfect man" is worthier of being acquainted with special knowledge than angels.

Thus, to interpret "*the purified ones*" in the verse: "*None shall touch it except the purified ones*" as the angels has no reasonable basis, since the glorious Qur'an itself states that there *are* chosen people who enjoy such purity.

The Verse of Tatheer and the Prophet's Family

"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying"

This verse indicates that the respectable family of the Messenger of God (saws) enjoy particular purity granted to them by God, and the phrase (*thorough*) *purifying* denotes typical purity.

We do not want here to give a detailed analysis of the verse, because we have elaborated on it in chapter six, and reached the conclusion that the respectable family of the Prophet (saws) headed by the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) enjoy the divine purity mentioned in the mentioned verse, are the purified ones (*mutahirun*), and are meant by the holy verse: *None shall touch it except the purified ones*.

Asaf ibn Barakhya and His Knowledge of Some of the Book

It is known that God, the Mighty and High, granted Prophet Solomon extensive authority not only over man but over the *jinn*s and birds, as well. At that time when *jinn*s and (a group of) people were gathering around him, Solomon asked them "Which one of you can bring the throne of Bilkis to me before she comes to me in submission? The glorious Qur'an says, an efreet of the *jinn*s said,

"I will bring it to you before you rise from your place" (27:39)

Then, "***The one who had some knowledge of the Book said, "I will bring it to you in the winking of an eye" (27:40)*** and this he did.

As commentators say the "Book" in the mentioned verse means "*the guarded tablet*". Both Shi'ite and Sunnite commentators say that the phrase "*the one who has some knowledge of the Book*" is Asaf ibn Barakhya, Prophet Solomon's *wizir*, who had a surprising and extraordinary power because he had a some knowledge of the Book (the guarded tablet).

It is obvious that there are different grades of purity; the more perfect purity is, the more extensive the knowledge and power will be. We have learnt from the holy Qur'anic verse "*None shall touch it except the purified ones*" that the acquaintance with the facts in "*the guarded tablet*" results from a particularly divine purity.

The verse of *Tatheer* has established the idea that this purity, which is granted to *Ahl al-Bayt*, is equal to the purity of the Messenger of God. It is, therefore, not strange if one says that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, and the other infallible Imams of the Shi'ates (p.b.u.th) are acquainted with the facts in the *guarded Tablet*.

Accordingly Th'alibi, whom the Sunnite scholars⁷ of the Qur'an commentary consider an *imam* (leader) a *hafiz*, and a *Sheikh* master in the Qur'an commentary, and whose narrations the leading scholars in *ilm-al-rijal*⁸ regard as "sound and trustworthy", states in his commentary *al-Kashf wa al-Bayan*,⁹ that by "*the one who has knowledge of the Book*" it is meant the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as). Hakim Hasakani,¹⁰ in his *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*,¹¹ a commentary (of the Qur'an), quotes a few Companions such as Abu Sa'id Khidri, Abdullah ibn Salam and ibn Abbas to have said same the same thing.

Furthermore, Abu Sa'id Khidri and Abdullah ibn Salam are quoted to have asked the Prophet (saws): "Who is meant by "*the one*" in the verse: "*except the one who has knowledge of the Book*"? The Prophet (saws) told them that it was Ali (as) Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Abi Saleh and Mohammad ibn Hanafiyyeh have reported the same *hadith*.

Various narrators have also reported that Abdullah ibn 'Ata was once accompanying Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him and ibn Salam's son passed by. So ibn 'Ata, referring to ibn Salam, asked Imam al-Baqir (as), "Is this the son of the one who has knowledge of the Book? The Imam said, "No, he is not". The one who has knowledge of the Book is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

As regards the Qur'anic verse 43 of Ra'd chapter:

"And those who disbelieve say: You are not a messenger. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and the one who has knowledge of the Book",

Ibn Shahr Ashoob¹² states in his book *Manaqib*¹³: Mohammad ibn Muslim, Abu Hamzah Thumali, and Jabir ibn Yaqzi quoting Imam al-Baqir (as), Ali ibn Fazzal, Fuzayl ibn Yasar and Abu Basir quoting Imam al-Sadiq (as) and Ahmad ibn Mohammad Halabi and Mohammad ibn Fuazyl quoting Imam al-Rida (as) that they said:

"*the one who has knowledge of the Book*" is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) and the other infallible Imams (p.b.u.th.). This account is also quoted from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as), Zayd ibn Ali, Mohammad ibn Hanafiyyeh, Salman Farsi, Abu Sa'id Khidri and Ismail Sadi.

Kulayni's *Usul al-Kafi*, through an authoritative chain of transmission, quotes Barid ibn Mua'wiyeh, a companion of Imam al-Baqir (as) to have asked the Imam: "Who is meant by 'the one' in the Qur'anic verse:

'And those who disbelieve say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and the one who has knowledge of the Book'?"

The Imam answered, “The verse means none other than us (the infallible Imams), and Ali (as) as the foremost and best of us after the Prophet (saws)”.

We can find an interesting comparison in *hadiths* between the one who has knowledge of the Book i.e. Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and the infallible Imams on the one hand and the one who has some knowledge of the Book (Asaf ibn Barkhya) on the other, which is as follows:

“Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said, ‘The one who has knowledge of the Book is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as)’. When asked: ‘Who is superior, the one who has some knowledge of the Book (i.e. Asaf ibn Barkhya) or the one who has knowledge of the Book (i.e. Ali ibn Abi Talib)?’,

the Imam answered, “Comparing the knowledge of the one who has some knowledge of the Book with of the one who has knowledge of the Book is like comparing the small amount of water that touches the wing of a mosquito with the water of the sea”.¹⁴

These discussions aim to establish the idea that by “الكتاب *the Book*” in the verse “*the one who has knowledge of the Book*” it is meant “*the guarded tablet*”. If it is taken to mean any book because it is preceded by the definite article ‘the’, it will denote any book including “*the guarded tablet*”, such as the earlier Scriptures and the holy Qur’an.

The phrase “*the one who has knowledge of the Book*”, however, means Imam Ali (as), and his acquaintance with the facts in “*the guarded tablet*” is inferred from the verse, “*None it except the purified ones*” and from the verse of *Tatheer*.

His being aware of the every detail of the holy Qur’an is understood from many *hadiths*, including the *hadith* of Thaqalayn¹⁵ which confirms that the Household of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*), will never separate from the Qur’an, an indication that Imam Ali (as), has complete knowledge of the Qur’an. Were there anything in the Qur’an of which he was unaware, he would be separated from the Qur’an. Therefore, such a proposition counters this *hadith*.

Imam Ali’s knowledge of the divine Scriptures can be inferred from the *hadiths* quoted by both the Shi’ite and the Sunni narrators. It is related that Imam Ali has said, “If the cushion (on which a judge sits) was folded for me, I would judge among the people of the Torah by their Torah, among the people of the Gospels by their Gospels, and among the people of Psalms by their Psalms”.¹⁶

1. – al-Misbah al-Hidayah, p. 43.

2. – Ma’alim al-Tanzeel, vol. 3, pp. 364–5; al-Itqan, vol. 1, p. 36; Dar ibn Katheer, Beirut.

3. – Surah 10, verse 61; Surah 27, verse 75; Surah 34, verse 3.

4. – Surah 85, verse 22.

5. – Surah 27, verse 75.

6. – Ruh al-Ma’ani, vol.27, p. 154, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

7. – Dhahabi, a Sunnite great authority on ilm al-rijal says on vol. 17, p. 435, of his Siyar a’lam al-Nubalah’, “al-imam, the

one who knows the Qur'an by heart, the most knowledgeable, allamah, and a master in Exegesis of the Qur'an".

8. – Abdul Gafir al-Nayshaburi in his book *Tarikh Nayshabur*, p. 109 regards Tha'libi as trustworthy in transmitting hadiths.

9. – *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayan*, vol. 5, pp. 303–3, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabiyyah; Beirut.

10. – See Dhahabi's words concerning Hasakani, chapter five, the commentary on the Qur'anic verse of Sadiqin.

11. – Shawahid al-Tanzeel, reviewed by Sheikh Mohammad Baqir Mahmodi, vol. 1, p. 400.

12. – Dhahabi's praise of Shahr Ashoob was previously mentioned while explaining the verse of Sadiqin, the truthful.

13. – *Manaqib, ibn Shahr Ashoob*, vol. 2, p. 29, Alama Publications, Qum.

14. – *Nur al-Thaqalayn*, vol. 4, pp. 87–88.

15. – *Sunan of Tirmidhi*, vol. 5, p. 622; *Ahmad's Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26, and 59; also, vol. 5, pp. 188–9; *Nisa'i's Khasa'is Amir al-Mumenin* (p.b.u.h.) pp. 84–5.

16. – *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, vol. 1, pp. 339–341; *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*, vol. 1, p. 366, tradition 384.

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59. *Safinatol Bihar*, Sheikh Abbas Qommi; died 1359 A.H.; Mahmudi Press.
60. *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husain Beihaqi, died in 458 A.H.; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
61. *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Nisa'i; died 303 in 303 A.H.; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.
62. *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah*, Dhahabi; died in 748; Al-Risalah Institute, Beirut, Lebanon.
63. *Al-Siratol Nabawiyeh wa al-Athar al-Mohammadiyyah* (Hashiyatol Huluwiyyeh), Sayyid Zayni Dahlan; died 1304; Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.
64. *Al-Siratol Nabawiyeh*, ibn Hisham; died in 218 A.H. Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.
65. *Al-Tajrid Commentary*, Qushchi, died in 879 A.H..
66. *Al-Sunna Commentary*, Bagawi, died in 510 A.H.; Al-Maktab al-Islami, Beirut.
67. *Al-Maqasid Commentary*, Taftazani, died in 793, A.H.; Asharif al-Radi Publications.
68. *Sharh al-Mawaqif*, Jorjani; died in 812 A.H.; Asharif al-Radi publications.
69. *Nahjul Balagah Commentary*; ibn Abil Hadid, died in 656 A.H..
70. *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*, Hakim Hasakani, died towards the end of 5th century A.H.; al-Tab' wan Nashr Institute.
71. *Sihah al-Lughah*, Jawhari, died in 393 A.H..
72. *Ibn Habban's Sahih*, Mohammad ibn Habban Basti, died in 354 A.H., al-Risalah Institute.
73. *Bukhari Sahih's*, Mohammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, died in 256 A.H. Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, Lebanon; Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, Lebanon.
74. *Muslim Sahih's*, Muslim ibn Hajaj Nayshaburi, died in 261 A.H., Izo-din Institute Lil-tiba' wan Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon.
75. *As-Salat wal Bushra*, Firoozabadi, died in 817 A.H.; Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon.

76. *As-Sawa'q al-Muhriqa*, ibn Hajar Haytami, died in 954 A.H.; Maktabat al-Qahirah.
77. *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ibn Sa'd, died in 230 A.H., Dar-Beirut Lil-tiba' wan Nashr.
78. *Al-Tara'if*, Ali ibn Musa Tawus, died 662 A.H. Matba'at al-Khayyam, Qom.
79. *Al-Umdeh*, ibn Batriq, died 533 A.H. al-Nashr al-Islami Institute.
80. *'Awwam Ulum*, Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, died 1107 A.H.; al-Imam al-Mahdi Institute.
81. *Oyoon Akhbar al-Rida*, Saduq, died in 381 A.H.
82. *Ghayatol Maram*; Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, died 1107 A.H.
83. *Gara'ib al-Qur'an*, Nayshaburi, died in 850 A.H., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.
84. *Fath al-Bri*, ibn Hajar Asqalani, died in 852 A.H.
85. *Fath al-Ghadir*, Showkani, died in 1250 A.H., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon.
86. *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, Ibrahim ibn Mohammad ibn Jowayni, died in 722, al-Mahmoodi Lil-Tiba' wan Nashr Institute, Beirut.
87. *Al-Fosool al-Muhimmeh*, ibn Sabag Maliki, died in 855 A.H.
88. *Faza'il al-Sahabah*, Samani, died in 562 A.H.
89. *Al-Qamoos al-Muheet*, Firoozabadi, died in 817 A.H., Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
90. *Qawa'id fi Ulum al-Hadith*, Zafar Ahmad Tahanawi Shafi'i; reviewd by Abul Fatah Abu Gudeh.
91. *Al-Kafi, Kulayni*, died in 329 A.H.; Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.
92. *As-Thiqat, ibn Habban*; died in 354 A.H., al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah Institute, Beirut.
93. *Kitab al-Ayn*, Khalil ibn Ahmad Farahidi, died in 175 A.H. Dar al-Hijrah Institute.
94. *Al-Kashshaf*, Zamakhshari, died in 583, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut;
95. *Al-Kashf wal-Bayan*, Tha'alabi Naysaburi; died in 427 or 437 A.H., Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.
96. *Kifayto-Talib*, Mohammad ibn Yusef Ganji Shafi'i, died in 658 A.H. Dar Ihya' Turath Ahl-Bayt.
97. *Kamal al-Deen*, Mohammad ibn Ali ibn Babiwayh, died in 381 A.H..
98. *Kanz al-Ummal*, Muttaqi Hindi, died in 975 A.H., al-Risalah Institute, Beirut.

99. *Al-Lubab fi Ulum al-Kitab*, Umar ibn Ali ibn Adil al-Damishqi al-Hanbali, d. 880 A.H., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.
100. *Lisan al-Arab*, ibn Manzur, died in 711 A.H. Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.
101. *Ma Nazala min al-Qur'an fi Ali*, Abu Bakr al-Shirazi, died in 407, A.H..
102. *Ma Nazala min al-Qur'an fi Ali*, Abu Na'im Isfahani, died in 430 A.H. (as quoted by Ihqaq).
103. *Al-Mutafiq wal Mutafariq*, Khatib Baghdadi, died in 463 (through Kanz al-Ummal).
104. *Majma' al-Bahrayn*, Turayhi, died in 1085 A.H. Nashr-e Farhanq Islami Office.
105. *Majma' al-Bayan*, Tabarsi, died in 560 A.H. Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
106. *Majma' al-Zawaid*, Haythami, died in 807 A.H. Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut.
107. *Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihyan*, Hakim Nayshabur, died in 405 A.H. Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.
108. *Musnad of Abi Dawood Tayalisi*, died in 204 A.H., Dar al-Kitab al-Lobnany.
109. *Musnad of Abi Ya'li Musili*, died in 307 A.H..
110. *Musnad of Ahmad*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, died in 241 A.H., Dar Sadir, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr.
111. *Musnad of Ishaq ibn Rahuyah*, died in 238 A.H., Maktabat al-Iman, Madina.
112. *Musnad Abd ibn Hamid*, died in 249, A.H.; Alam al-Kutub.
113. *Mushkil al-Athar*, Tahawi, died in 321, A.H. Majlis Da'ratol Ma'arif al-Nizamiyyah bil Hind.
114. *Al-Misbah al-Muneer*, Ahmad Fayoomi, died in 770 A.H.; printed by Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladah, Egypt.
115. *Misbah al-Hidayah*, Bihbihani, Salman Fari Press, Qom.
116. *Al-Musannaf*, ibn Abi Shaybah, died in 235 A.H..
117. *Matalib al-Suool*, ibn Talha Nasibi Shafii, died in 652 A.H.
118. *Ma'alim al-Tanzeel*, Baghawi, died in 210 A.H..
119. *Al-Mo'jam al-Awsat*, Tabrani, died 360 A.H..
120. *Al-Mo'jam al-Sageer*, Tabrani, died in 360 A.H..
121. *Al-Mo'jam al-Kabir*, Tabrani, died 360 A.H..

122. *Al-Mo'jam al-Mukhtas bi Muhaddithin*, Dhahabi, died in 748 A.H. Maktabat al-Siddiqh, Saudi.
123. *Mo'jam Maqaiis al-Lugha*, ibn Faris ibn Zakariya al-Qazwini al-Razi, died in 390 A.H..
124. *Ma'rifahto Uloom al-Hadith*, Hakim Nayshaburi, died in 405 A.H., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.
125. *Al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tarikh*, Ya'qub ibn Sufyan ibn Baswi, died in 277 A.H..
126. *Mugni al-Labib*, ibn Hisham, died in 761 A.H. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.
127. *Al-Mufradat*, Ragib Isfahani, died in 502 A.H..
128. *Maqatal al-Husain*, Khwarizmi, died in 568 A.H., Maktabat al-Mufid
129. *Al-Manaqib*, Mowafaq ibn Ahmad Khwarizmi, died in 568 A.H..
130. *Manaqib of ibn Magazili the Shafi'i*, died in 483, al-Maktabat al-Islamiyyah.
131. *Manqib Ali Al Abi Talib*, ibn Shahr Ashoob, died in 588 A.H., Dhawil Qurba.
132. *Muntaha al-Arab*, Abdul Rahim ibn Abdul Karim al-Hindi, died in 1257 A.H..
133. *Al-Mizan*, Mohammad al-Husain Tabatabaii, died in 1402, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.
134. *Mizan al-I'tidal*, Dhahabi, died in 748 A.H. Dar al-Fikr.
135. *Nahj al-Balaghah*.
136. *Nazm Durar al-Simtayn*, Mohammad ibn Yusef Zarandi al-Hanafi.
137. *Al-Nihayeh*, ibn al-Atheer Jazri, died in 606 A.H., al-Maktabahul Ilmiyyeh, Beirut, Lebanon.
138. *Noor al-Absar*, Shibliji, died in 1308, Dar al-Fikr.
139. *Noor al-Thaqalayn*, al-Howayzi, died in 1112 A.H., al-Matba'at Ilmiyyah, Qom.
140. *Yanabi al-Mawadeh*, Sheikh Sulayman Qundozi.

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