

Chapter 4: Classes of Special Form of Positive Wala'

So far we have observed that the question of having affection towards Imam Ali and other members of the Ahl al-Bayt is incontrovertible. The only point which requires some further consideration is the exact sense of the affection which has been enjoined in this and other verses and in the hadith of the Holy Prophet.

To make the point clear we have to see in what context the words *Wala'* and Wilayat translated by us as affection, have been used in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah with reference to the Ahl al-Bayt. Generally speaking these words have been used in four different senses.

Wala' of Love or Kinship

Wala' of love or kinship means that the Ahl al-Bayt are the kinsfolk of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims have been asked to hold them in love and esteem to a greater degree than what general *Wala'* demands. A number of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and many sayings of the Holy Prophet which have come down to us both through the Shi'ah and the Sunni sources, show that the love of the Ahl al-Bayt including Imam Ali is one of the basic tenets of Islam. In this connection two questions arise

The first question is why after all the people have been called upon to hold the Ahl al-Bayt in love and esteem and why this love has been declared to be a means of gaining proximity to Allah? Suppose everybody recognizes the Ahl al-Bayt and loves them; what will be the practical advantage of that? We know that all the Islamic teachings are based on reason and philosophy. If affection towards the Ahl al-Bayt is one of the basic instructions of Islam, there must be a philosophy behind it.

The answer to this question is that exhortation to love the Ahl al-Bayt does really have a philosophy. It is neither a superfluous demand nor a recompense to the Prophet or the Ahl al-Bayt themselves. The Holy Qur'an has said "**Say: I ask you no reward for my preaching save love and affection toward my progeny**" The Holy Prophet explains that the advantage of having love for the Ahl al-Bayt or the

Prophet's Family accrues to the believers themselves.

This love is a prelude to all kinds of *Wala'* prescribed by Islam. It binds the people to the Holy Family and gives them an opportunity to be benefited by its teachings, practice and precepts.

The second question is whether the love of the Ahl al-Bayt is a feature peculiar to the Shi'ah or all the Muslim sects believe in it. To answer this question it may be said that it is not a feature peculiar to the Shi'ah. All the Muslim sects attach importance to it. Imam Shafi'i, one of the four Imams of the Sunni, in his famous verses says "Let everybody know that if the love of Muhammad's descendants means to be a Rafizi, I am a Rafizi ". 1

Imam Shafi'i also says "O Ahl al-Bayt! Allah has made it obligatory in the Qur'an to love you. It is a matter of pride for you that without invoking blessing on you, prayer is not valid,". Again he says in his verses "After having seen that the people have chosen different ways which have led them to the Ocean of deviation and ignorance. I have, in the name of Allah, embarked the ship which may lead me to safety. The Ahl al-Bayt of the Holy Prophet are that very ship We have been ordered to hold fast the rope of Allah, and that rope is their love".2

Zamakhshari and Fakhruddin al-Razi, who bitterly oppose the Shi'ah on the question of succession to the Holy Prophet, quote him in their commentaries on the Qur'an as having said "He who dies adhering to the progeny of Muhammad dies the death of a martyr; his sins will be forgiven he dies the death of a repentant and his faith will be regarded as perfect".3

Imam Ali also says in Nahj al-Balaghah, in the end of sermon 232 "He who dies in his bed, but acknowledges the rights of Allah, His messenger and the Ahl al-Bayt is as good as one who dies a martyr in the battlefield He will be rewarded for his good intentions, which will be regarded as a substitute for his fighting with his sword".

Ibn al-Fariz, the well-known Egyptian mystic and lyric poet, who is compared to the Persian poet, Hafiz, says addressing Allah "If I do not earn Your pleasure, my life will be wasted and will go in vain. But I have no means to please You except the bond of my affection towards the progeny of Muhammad, a descendant of Qusayy".4

In this case it is possible that by using the word *Wala'* he might have meant a higher feeling, but there is no doubt that the word signifies love.

Mulla Abd al-Rahman Jami is a man about whom Qazi Nurullah Shustari has said that the two Abd al-Rahman(s) — Abd al-Rahman Jami and Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim Muradi, have hurt Imam Ali. Still he has rendered into Persian verse the ode composed by Farazdaq in praise of Imam Ali ibn Husayn al-Sajjad.

He has narrated a story that after the death of Farazdaq somebody saw him in a dream and asked him

what treatment was meted out to him by Allah. Farazdaq said that he was delivered from sins and sent to Paradise on account of the ode he had written in praise of Ali ibn al-Husayn.

Jami himself adds that it would not be surprising if all people were delivered because of this ode. Jami has also written some lines about Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik, who imprisoned and tortured Farazdaq. He says "Had Hisham been sagacious and virtuous, he would not have done wrong to Farazdaq, and, instead of imprisoning him, would have awarded him a robe of honour".⁵

Thus the Shi'ah and the Sunni do not differ on the question of *Wala'* of love. Only the Nasibis are inimical towards the Prophet's House. They are denounced by the whole Muslim society and regarded to be as dirty as the infidels. Fortunately in modern times they have become almost extinct.

These days a few persons are seen here and there who sporadically write books with the sole purpose of widening the gulf between the various sects of the Muslims. Persons of similar character exist in our own ranks also. All those persons, who work to create discord among the Muslims, whether they call themselves Shi'ah or Sunni, are the lackeys of imperialist powers.

Zamakhshari and Fakhruddin al-Razi, immediately after quoting the above saying of the Holy Prophet, quote one more of his sayings according to which he said "He who dies disliking the progeny of Muhammad will die as an infidel and will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise".

Imam al-Sadiq has said "The filthiest thing that the Almighty has created is the dog, and he, who is hostile to us, is even filthier than that".⁶

This kind of *Wala'*, if it is ascribed to the Ahl al-Bayt and it is said that they are entitled to it, may be called the *Wala'* of Kinship and if it is ascribed to the Muslims as their duty, it may be called the *Wala'* of Love.

There is no doubt about the fact that the root of the word "*Wala'*" and its derivatives give the sense of love. We come across the word, Muwal especially in Ziarats in the sense of friend. For example, we say "We are friends of those who are your friends and we are enemies of those who are your enemies".

There are two other points which deserve consideration. Firstly, is the word "Waly" used in the sense of friend and secondly in what sense has it been used particularly in the verse "Surely Allah is your Waly.." which proves the Wilayat of Imam Ali?

Some people believe that the word "*Wala'*" used in the Holy Qur'an, invariably means friend. But if you look at its use minutely, you can observe that it means something different. For example, take the verse

"Allah is the Waly of the believers and it is He who takes them out of the darkness into light". (al-Baqarah, 2 258)

It does not mean that Allah is the friend of the believers. It means that Allah in His kindness takes

special care of the believers, and they enjoy His special protection. Similarly take the verse "The Waly (s) of Allah have nothing to fear, nor will they be grieved ". It does not mean that the friends of Allah have nothing to fear. Here the word, Waly has been used as a past participle.

Hence that verse means that those who are looked after by Allah have nothing to fear. The same is the case with the verse "***The believers, men and women, are the Waly of one another***". It does not mean that the believers are friends of one another. On the other hand it means that they take care of one another and influence the destiny of one another. That is why the next verse says "***They enjoin the right and forbid the wrong***".

This makes the answer to the second question clear. In the verse in question the intention is not that Allah, the Prophet, and Imam Ali are the friends of the believers. The intention, in fact, is to say that they have an authority to deal with the affairs of the Muslims.

Even if it is presumed that the word "Waly" has the meaning of friend also, this meaning is not appropriate in the context of this verse, for it does not make sense to say that Allah, Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali are the only friends of the believers. This shows that those Sunni exegetes of the Holy Qur'an who hold that this verse does not say anything more than that Ali is a friend of the believers and as such should be an object of their love, are misunderstood.

As a matter of fact, in this verse *Wala'* does not signify mere love. It indicates something higher. The explanation we propose to give later will make the point clear.

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1. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab by Muhaddith al-Qummi and Nur al-Absar by Shibli.
 2. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab by Muhaddith al-Qummi.
 3. Al-Tafsir al-Kabir by Fakhrudin al-Razi Vol. 27, p. 166 and Al-Kashshaf by Zaamakhshari Vol. 4 commentary on verse 32nd of Surah al-Shura.
 4. Qusayy was the fourth ancestor of the Holy Prophet.
 5. Silsilatul Zahab.
 6. Wasail al-Shi'ah, Vol. 1, p. 159, New Edition.

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