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Chapter 2: Imamate in the Qur'anic Verse of Mubalahah

﴿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 *mubalahah*. (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 *mubahalah* 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 *mubahalah*.

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

Why was the Prophet ordered to invite his family members to *mubahalah* 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 *mubahalah*, 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 *mubahalah*, because if we suppose that the above view is true, the event would seem an ordinary one and their accompanying the Prophet to *mubahalah* 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, “**فَنَجْعَلُ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ** *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,

﴿وَنَادَى 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 “ثا– 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 *mubahalalah* 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 “ثا”.

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 *mubahalalah*.

Three: Whom Did the Prophet Bring along to Mubahalalah?

The Shi’ites and Sunnis unanimously hold that in order to participate in *mubahalalah* (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 *mubalahah* 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 *mubalahah* 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 *mubalahah* (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 *mubahalah* 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 *mubahalah*, has the following aspects:

a) The sequence they followed matches that which is mentioned in the verse of *mubahalah* –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–Hasan 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 *mubahalah* (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 *mubalahah* (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 *mubalahah* (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 *jiziyeh*.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 *mubahalah* 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 Mubahalah

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 *Mubahalah*), ibn Abbas says, "and Ali is the Prophet's soul", as confirmed by the verse of *mubahalah*.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 Abi 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 *mubahalah*, 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 Ihya’ al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut.

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

Al-Bahr al-Muheet, vol. 3, p. 479, Dar Ihya’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 Ihya' 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'lam.

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

Ibn Magazili's Manaqib, p. 263, al-Maktabit 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-Buḥran, vol. 1, p.289 Isma'ilyan Puplicing 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, Hojjat 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, [. 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; Maqatal 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.

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