

Home > Imamate And Infallibility of Imams In The Qur'an > Chapter 4: Imamate As Envisaged in the Verse of Wilayah > Questions and Answers on the Verse of Wilayah > Question Fourteen: Did Ali (as) invoke the verse of Wilayah to support his claim?

Chapter 4: Imamate As Envisaged in the Verse of Wilayah

﴿ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ هُمْ 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 وَالْمَسْكِينِ﴾

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 إنما indicates restriction and both are found in the Qur’anic verse:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ 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 3. انما

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 “وَلِيٌّ” 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-eel*. 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-eel* is a verb-like *adjective*, implying a constancy (in the attributes it refers to), whereas *fa-eel*, 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’alibi: “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’alibi 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 الزكوه 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 Maqais 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;
- Jessass’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-Matboot;
- 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;;

Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 6, pp 221 and 222, Dar al-Fikr;

Jam'i al-Usool, vol. 9, p. 478, tradition 6503, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi;

Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, vol. 4, part 6, p. 186, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;

Al-Jawahir al-Hisan, vol. 2, p. 396, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut;

Hashiya-Shahab Ala Tafseer, Al-Baydawi, vol. 3, p. 257, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut;

Hashiyat al-Sawi Ala Tafseer al-Jalayan, vol. 1, p. 291, Dar al-Fikr;

Al-Hawi Lil-Fatawi, (as in Ihqaq al-Haqq), Maktabah al-Quds, Cairo;

Al-Dur al-Manthur, vol. 3, pp. 105 and 106, Dar al-Fikr;

Dhakhar al-Uqba, p. 88, al-Wafa' Institute of Beirut;

Rooh al-M'ani, vol. 6, p. 167, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi;

Al-Riyad al-Nadarah, vol. 2, p. 182, Dar al-Nadwat al-Jadidah;

Taftazani's Sharh al-Maqasid; vol. 5, pp. 270-1;

Jorjani's Sharh al-Mawaqif, vol. 8, p. 360;

Ibn Abi Hadeed's Commentary of Nahj al-Balaghah;

Shawahid al-Tanzeel, pp. 209 to 248; tradition 26;

Nayshabur's Gara'ib al-Qur'an; vol. 2, part 6, p. 606, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut;

Fath al-Gadeer, Shokani's Commentary; vol. 2, p. 66, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut;

Ibrahim ibn Mohammad Jowayni's Fara'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, pp. 187 and 195, al-Mahoodi Institute;

Al-Fosool al-Mohimmah, pp. 123 and 124, al-'Alami Publishing House, Tehran;

Zamakhshari's al-Kashaf, vol. 1, p. 347, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut;

Kifayat al-Talib, pp. 249-50, Dar Ihya' Turath of Ahl al-Bayt;

Kanz al-Ummal, vol. 13, pp. 108 and 165, Al-Risalah Institute;

Al-Bab fi Uloom al-Kitab, vol. 7, pp. 390 and 398, Dar al-Kitab al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut;

Majma' al-Zawaid, vol. 7, p. 80, Dar al-Fikr;

Al-Muraj'at, p. 257;

Murqat al-Mafateeh, vol. 10, p. 462, Dar al-Fikr;

Matalib al-Su'ool; vol. 1, pp. 86-7;

Ma'alim al-Tanzeel, vol. 2, p. 47;

Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, vol. 7, p. 129-30, Makitbat al-Mu'arif al-Riyadh;

Ma'rifaht Uloom al-Hadith, p. 102, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah;

Manaqib, Ibn Magazili, p. 331, al-Maktib al-Islamiyyah;

Manaqib, Khawarizmi, pp. 264-6, Al-Nashr al-Islami Institute;

Eeji's Mawaqif, vol. 8, p. 360;

Nazm Durr al-Simtayn, (as in Ihqaq al-Haqq) p. 86, Al-Qadha' Publishing House;

Al-Nokat wa al-Oyoon, (al-Mawrodi's Commentary), vol. 2, p. 49, al-Kutub al-Thaqafiya Institute;

Noor al-Absar, pp. 86-7, Dar al-Fikr.

16. – Siyar A'lam al-Nubalah', vol. 17, p. 435, al-Risalah Institute, Beirut.

17. – History of Nayshabur, p. 109.

18. – Ibn Katheer's Commentary, vol. 2, p. 74.

19. – Al-Tabari's Commentary, vol. 6, p. 186, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

20. – Usool Kafi, vol. 1, p. 143, tradition 7, p. 146, tradition 16, p. 228, tradition 3, al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah;

Kamal al-Deen, vol. 1, pp. 274-279, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah;

Far'id al-Simtayn; vol. 1, p. 312, tradition 250, al-Mahmoodi li-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr Institute;

Yanabi' al-Mawadah, pp. 114-116.

21. – Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 446, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

22. – Jami' Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 6, p. 221, Dar al-Fikr.

23. – Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 446.

24. – Surah 5, verse 55.
25. – Surah 6, verse 89.
26. – Surah 47, verse 38.
27. – Surah 9, verse 39.
28. – Usool Kafi, vol. 1, p. 143, tradition 7; p. 146, tradition 16; p. 228, and tradition 3, Al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah; Kamal al-Deen, vol. 1, pp. 274–279, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; Fara'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, p. 312, tradition 250, al-Mahmoodi Institute lil-Tibah; Yanabi al-Mawadah, pp. 114–116.
29. – Taftazani's Sharh al-Maqasid, vol. 5, p. 276, al-Shareef al-Razi Publications.
30. – Fara'id al-Simtayn, vol. 1, p. 312, Al-Mahmoodi Institute lil-Tibah wa al-Nashr.
31. – Kamal al-Deen, vol. 1, p. 274.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/imamate-and-infallibility-imams-quran-ridha-kardan/chapter-4-imamate-envi-saged-verse-wilayah>