

## MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

# **MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN**

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**The Ahlul Bayt World Assembly**

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*Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka (Mecca), blessed and a guidance for the nations. In it are clear signs, the standing place of Abraham, and whoever enters it shall be secure. Pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon people for the sake of God, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it; and whoever turns away, then surely God is Self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds (3:96 & 97).*



## Editorial

By the Grace of God, we are pleased to be able to present to our dear readers the new issue of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*. Similar to the previous two issues, in this issue we once again address different aspects of Islamic thought including the Doctrines, Spirituality, Law and History.

Publication of this issue has coincided with the last three months of the Islamic Lunar Calendar i.e. Shawwal, Dhu'l-Qa'dah and Dhu'l-Hijjah. Perhaps one can say that the highlight of this season is hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Every year millions of Muslims from all over the world leave behind their home, business and dear ones and go to the holy city of Mecca in response to the divine call: "And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path." (22:27) This positive response is formally declared when the pilgrim utters the words of *talbiyah* i.e. "*labbayk. Allahumma labbayk*" which mean "Here I am at your service, my Lord. Here I am." However, it remains a lifelong undertaking to discover to what extent we are prepared to be at the service of our Lord and prefer His Will to our own wants and

desires. In the full version of talbiyah, the pilgrim is recommended to say these sentences:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنَّعْمَةَ  
لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ ذَا الْمَعَارِجِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ دَاعِيَا  
إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ غَفَّارَ الذُّنُوبِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ أَهْلَ  
التَّائِبِيَةِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ مَرْهُوبًا وَ  
مَرْغُوبًا إِلَيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ تُبْدِي وَ الْمَعَادُ إِلَيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ  
كَشَافَ الْكُرْبِ الْعِظَامِ لَبَّيْكَ لَبَّيْكَ عَبْدُكَ وَ ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ لَبَّيْكَ  
لَبَّيْكَ يَا كَرِيمُ لَبَّيْكَ

Here I am, O' Allah, Here I am. Here I am, no partners do you have, Here I am. Verily the Praise and Bounties and the Kingdom is for you, no partners do you have. Here I am, O' High, Here I am. Here I am, O' One Who calls towards Heaven, Here I am. Here I am O' Forgiver of sins, Here I am. Here I am O' One Who owns my presence, Here I am. Here I am O' Mighty and Generous, Here I am. Here I am O' One Who is feared and to Whom there is inclination, Here I am. Here I am O' You Who first created and to Whom all will return, Here I am. Here I am O' One Who averts major calamities, Here I am. Here I am, Your servant and the son of Your servant, Here I am.



Here I am O' Generous, Here I am.” (*Al-Kafi*, Vol. 4, p. 336)

It seems appropriate to say that hajj is all about celebrating unity. It starts with the positive response of the faithful to One God by following in the footsteps of Abraham, the Champion of tawhid, who successfully denied all the false deities not only in words but also in practice. Hajj continues with giving up your own preferences and your own ways of doing things in day to day life and instead devoting yourself, at least during the hajj, to God the Almighty. During hajj one must learn how to overcome differences and achieve brotherhood and unity with others. Elsewhere, I have written:

Pilgrimage to Mecca is full of unforgettable experiences. Among them, perhaps the most outstanding are selflessness, brotherhood, equality and simplicity. Every year millions of Muslims from different continents leave their home, family, business, and whatever else is dear to them, and set out on their journey towards Mecca, located in a desert. Everyone is asked to be present there in the same places at the same time all wearing the same clothes and performing the same rites. The rich and the poor, the king and the ordinary man, the elite and the layman all stand shoulder to shoulder and wear two pieces of white cloth. This is something

that everyone must experience at least once in his lifetime, and should then try to implement lessons learnt from the experience in his day to day life.  
(Shomali, M. A. *Discovering Shi'a Islam*, Chapter Four)

This issue includes six papers, two of which are devoted to the topic of Muslim Unity. The first of the six papers is entitled: “The Prophet’s Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven”. Concluding his discussion in the last two issues about the life of the Prophet Mohammad (S) before and at the time of his mission, in this paper Hujjatu’l-Islam Dr. Sayyed Ahmad Rahnamaei studies two miraculous events in the life of the Prophet Mohammad (S) i.e. his night journey (*isrā’*) and ascent to Heaven (*mi’rāj*). He argues that they were not limited to the Prophet’s spirit; rather his body was also involved in these two journeys. Hujjatu’l-Islam Dr. Sayyed Ahmad Rahnamaei is an assistant professor in the Dept. of Education at the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute, Qum. This paper is a revised version of part of his M.A. dissertation submitted to the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, in 1995. The author has revised this paper especially for this issue of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The second paper is entitled: “Different Treatments of Spirituality.” Continuing the discussion on spirituality in the last two issues (i.e. “The Significance of Self-control and Self-purification” and “Different Methodological Approaches to Spirituality”), in this paper

Hujjatu'l-Islam Dr. Mohammad Ali Shomali studies three different ways the Qur'an and hadiths have treated the process of self-development and described man's effort and struggle to achieve piety and spirituality. Spirituality or the process of self-building is described as a kind of battle, medicine and as a journey. Hujjatu'l-Islam Dr. Shomali is an associate professor and the head of the Dept. of Religions at the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute, Qum. He is also the Dean of Postgraduate Studies for the International Students at Jami'at al-Zahra, the Islamic University for Women in Qum. God-willing, other theoretical and practical aspects of Islamic spirituality will be studied by the same author and others in the forthcoming issues.

The third paper is entitled: "The Shi'i Approach to the Interpretation of the Qur'an: Two Classical Commentaries." In this paper Hujjat'ul-Islam Dr S. Ahmad Rahnamaei describes the development and some of the characteristics of the Shi'i exegesis of the Qur'an and then focuses on two classic commentaries i.e. the *Tafsir* by Ali b. Ibrahim Qummi and *Al-Tebyān* by Shaykh Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi. Hujjatu'l-Islam Dr Namazi is an assistant professor in the Dept. of Philosophy at the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute, Qum.

The fourth paper is entitled: "A Probe into Wilāyah and its Social Dimensions." In this paper, Hujjat'l-Islam Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali studies the meaning and nature of wilāyah and then focuses

on its collective nature. Based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the believers are really brothers and sisters and the members of the faith community must function as different parts and organs of the same body. The paper was originally written in Farsi and published in the *Ilahiyyat-e Ijtima'i*, a quarterly journal for the social studies and translated into English by Mrs. Seyyedeh Zahra MirFendereski.

The fifth paper is entitled: "Proximity amongst Islamic Schools of Thought: A Necessity for Muslims in the Contemporary Era." In this paper Hujjat'l-Islam Abdulhusein Moezzi deals with the challenges that face Islam and Muslims in the contemporary world and argues that the only way for Muslims to survive and revive Islam is to be united. Hujjat'l-Islam Abdulhusein Moezzi is the Director of the Islamic Centre of England.

The sixth and final paper is entitled: "Pearls of Wisdom: A Selection of Hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad." In this paper Hujjat'ul-Islam Husayn Naghavi presents fifty hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad (S) on different aspects of human life. Hujjat'ul-Islam Husayn Naghavi is a PhD student of the Abrahamic Faiths at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qum.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to this volume and pray for their success. I especially want to thank Mrs. Fatima Khimji of Canada for editing and proofreading all the papers of this publication and making valuable

comments. I also want to thank Mrs. Zainab Rezavi of the UK for reading and commenting on draft of the fourth paper of this work. I would also like to thank the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly and the Islamic Centre of England for their support and encouragement. And last, but not the least, I thank God the Almighty for His guidance and favour upon us in the past and present and to help us all achieve a unified worldwide community.

Mohammad Ali Shomali

October 2009

# The Prophet's Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven

S. Ahmad Rahnamaei

## Preface

In this paper, the issue of the night journey (*Isrā'*) and the ascent to heaven (*Mi'rāj*) will be discussed from several aspects. First, the date of these occurrences will be considered, then, an interpretation of these events from the view of both the *Qur'an* and the *sirahs* is presented. As a third issue, the paper will deal with the question of whether the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* were only spiritual or whether they happened to both the soul and the body of the Prophet. The interpretation of these events from the point of view of rationality and modern sciences is a fundamental issue. This paper also deals with that the subject of 'the Prophet and Miracles'.

## When the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* Took Place

According to the vast majority of Muslim scholars of hadith, the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* occurred a few years before the Migration (*Hijrah*) of the

Prophet to Medina in 622 CE. They put the time between fifteen months after the Mission and six months before the Migration.<sup>1</sup> The most acceptable saying is the one that affirms that the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* took place three years after the Mission and before the number of Muslims reached that of forty people. This tradition is related from Imam Ali.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Reality of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj***

**Dream or Wakefulness? In Soul or in Body?** In describing the reality of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*, traditionists and biographers provide many details and yet come to two different conclusions. Those who speak of them as good dreams,<sup>3</sup> conclude that the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* were spiritual experiences. But those who agree that they were actual events,<sup>4</sup> adhere that they happened to the Prophet in both spiritual and physical form. This is because they believe that these incidents took place while the Prophet was in a state of complete wakefulness. Both groups invoke to their own evidence. Following their own heritage of traditions, they come to different results in their studies of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*.

### ***Spiritual Analysis***

The idea of the spiritual night journey and the ascent to heaven refers to some of the narratives related by Ibn Ishaq and some other Sunni biographers. He says,

On the night of al-Isrā', Muhammad was staying in the house of his cousin, Hind, daughter of Abu Talib, who was also called Umm Hāni. Hind related that "The Prophet of God spent the night in my quarters. He recited his night prayers and went to sleep. Just before dawn, the Prophet of God awoke us and we all prayed the dawn prayer together. When the prayer was through, he said, "O Umm Hāni, I prayed with you the night prayer in this place; then I went to Jerusalem and I prayed there, and as you see, I have just finished praying with you the dawn prayer."<sup>5</sup>

The following reasons have been provided to support the belief that the night journey and the ascent to heaven were spiritual rather than physical.

**1:** There are three reports that the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj took place in the soul. They are as follows:

**a)** The above-mentioned report of Umm Hāni in which she related that the Prophet was sleeping in her quarters on that night until dawn.

**b)** <sup>c</sup>A'ishah reports: "The body of the Prophet of God -may God's peace and blessing be upon him- was never missed from his bed. Rather, God caused him to travel in soul alone."<sup>6</sup>



c) Mu<sup>c</sup>awiyah was asked about the Isrā' of the Prophet, and he answered that it was a true vision from God.<sup>7</sup>

2: That the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj were in the soul and not in the body is indicated by the Qur'anic verse: "We granted the vision We have shown you only as a trial for the people."<sup>8</sup> It is claimed that there is no need to prove any miracles other than the *Qur'an* for Muhammad. That is to say, it is not necessary to assert that the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj were in the body simply in order to claim them as two miraculous events, since the Qur'an recites: "Say, 'I am but a human like you unto whom a revelation is given that your God is one God.'<sup>9</sup>

3: Agreement with modern sciences is another reason for the view of those who believe in the spiritual Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj. Concerning this proof, this view has been paraphrased and translated by A. Wessels as follows:

This journey by night and ascent into heaven in the spirit are confirmed by science in our time. ... In our time science confirms ... the transmission of sounds through the ether by means of radio as well as the sending of pictures and written messages, all things which men once ... viewed as fantasy. Every day our science unveils a new hidden power of life.

If a spirit attained to the power and the ability to which the soul of Muhammad attained, and God

caused him to travel by night from the holy mosque (*al-Harām*) to the most distant mosque (*al-Aqsā*), around which He spread blessing, in order to show him His signs,<sup>10</sup> then that is something which science confirms. And these meanings ... give expression in the purest way to the spiritual unity and the unity of existence in the soul of Muhammad. One can in some sense understand it, if one tries to rise in his soul above the temporal fantasies of life and tries to come to the essence of the highest reality.<sup>11</sup>

Those who believe that the night journey and the ascent to heaven were spiritual and say that it was only the Prophet's soul that experienced these two incidents establish this doctrine based mostly on the aforementioned reports on the authority of 'A'ishah and Mu'awiyah.<sup>12</sup> Refuting this view, we confirm that the authentic view is what the Shi'ā and a great number of Muslims accept i.e. the view that the Isrā' and the Mi'rāj were in both body and spiritual. The following explanation seems enough to prove this view.

1. Lady 'A'ishah, with whom this narrative ends, never reported directly from the Prophet since she was not yet his wife nor was she of an age to record such a story. Moreover, because of debatable hadiths, it is not clear whether she was born before or after the Isrā'.<sup>13</sup>

2. Besides the *hadiths*, we appeal to the Qur'anic verses such as:

Glory be to Him who had His servant travel by night from the Hallowed Mosque (Masjid al-Haram) to the Further Mosque (Masjid al-Aqsa) the surrounding of which We have blessed, so We might show him some of Our signs.<sup>14</sup>

This verse specifically depicts the Isrā'.<sup>15</sup> The case of the Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj is not mentioned directly or clearly in the Qur'an except in the verses of surat al-Najm:

... Someone possessing such ability that he soared up and stood, poised at the highest [point on the] horizon. Then he approached and came right down (to) and stood two bow-lengths off or even closer. He (God) inspired whatever He inspired in His servant. His vitals did not deny whatever he saw.<sup>16</sup>

These verses can work as proof-texts for the Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj on the condition that the underlined pronouns refer to the Prophet and not to the angel Gabriel. These Qur'anic verses plus the great number of *hadiths* leave no room to doubt that the Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj occurred in body and soul.<sup>17</sup>

The word 'servant' (*'abd*) in these two Qur'anic passages contains both the soul and body together. So if Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj happened in the Prophet's sleep, the text should read 'His servant's soul' instead of

‘His servant’ (*bi-rubi ‘abdihi* and *ila rubi ‘abdihi* instead of *bi-‘abdihi* and *ila ‘abdihi*). Furthermore, these verses were revealed to indicate God’s favour (*imtinan*) toward His Prophet. They imply praise to God and explain His wonderful power. But if these two events were mere dreams, they do not prove God’s power, for anyone may see such dreams, which may be regarded as merely a figment of the imagination or a hallucination. Consequently, these two events would be meaningless if they are not introduced as signs of God’s might and His glory.<sup>18</sup>

3. The miraculous aspect of the two incidents is the most important point of the stories; therefore, they cannot be mere dreams because the act of dreaming does not imply any miraculous element.<sup>19</sup>

4. It is related that at the time of these happenings, Abu Talib and the Hashimites were under the impression that Muhammad was missing and searched for him. If the Prophet was sleeping, it would be meaningless to say that his uncle was looking for him.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, those biographers who deny the *Isrā’* and *Mi‘rāj* to have occurred in both body and soul could be doing so because they are incapable of comprehending such events occurring in a physical form, or because they do not take into consideration the honour of the Prophet, or because they cannot convince people to accept such stories.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Goals of the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj**

The following points help us to understand the goals and philosophies of such miracles.

1. Indeed, the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj are two great ageless miracles that common people are incapable of fully understanding, let alone duplicating. Perhaps the wondrous nature of these events is now brighter than before. After man discovered some of the secrets of the universe and its wonderful aspects, he realized how difficult it is to pierce the heavens. The veracity of such inimitable incidents depends on the believers' affirmation of Muhammad's prophecy by their acceptance and belief in his sayings and his eternal miracle, the *Qur'an*. This approval causes the believers to be certain that everything which has come from the Prophet (with authentic evidence) is true. Thus, when the Prophet reports such extraordinary incidents, it makes it easier for the believers to accept that they took place in reality. With this condition, the Isrā' and Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj stay miracles forever, from generation to generation throughout the history of humankind.<sup>22</sup>

2. As the *Qur'an* indicates, one of God's aims in the Isrā' was to show the Prophet the signs of God's glory in order to establish more the power of faith in his heart. This does not contradict the argument that the Prophet was perfect and infallible from the beginning, for divine perfection and infallibility exist at several levels. Thus, for the Prophet

there were still ways to be more perfect; even though he was the most perfect of all the prophets.

3. Also, Allah wished to prepare His servant for the strong challenges he would encounter and enable him to deal with the difficulties and troubles that people would make for his Divine Mission. The Prophet himself said that none of God's prophets was as mistreated as he was. In such circumstances, events like the Isrā' and Mi'raj opened his heart and his mind toward the universe in its totality. They gave him a clearer vision and a deeper awareness in his dealing with prophetic issues and helped him in solving problems related to the leadership of the Umma.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Possibility of the Isrā' and Mi'raj**

Discussing the possibility of the Isrā' and Mi'raj, S. J. Murtada gives an interpretation of these two happenings based on the Qur'anic verses and modern science. Referring to these two sources, he suggests two ways to resolve the issue of the possibility of both a bodily and a spiritual Isrā' and Mi'raj and to make this issue easy to understand. First, he starts with the story of the prophet Sulayman and his companions in the *Qur'an*. Sulayman invited Belqeys, the Queen of Saba' to his divine religion. The Queen, accepting Sulayman's invitation, decided to visit him in his court. This story is made use of by the author as a proof-text to confirm the possibility of

both a spiritual and bodily night journey and ascent to heaven. The whole story goes like this:

He (the prophet Sulayman) said, ‘O [members of the] elite! Which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?’ An afreet from among the jinn said, ‘I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. Indeed I have the power for it and am trustworthy.’ The one who had knowledge of the Book said, ‘I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.’ So when he saw it set near him, he said, ‘This is by the grace of my Lord, to test me if I will give thanks or be ungrateful... (27:38-40)

This companion of Sulayman brought the Queen’s throne from Saba’ in less than the wink of an eye and showed that it was possible, in reality, to perform such an extraordinary action by the permission of Allah.<sup>24</sup>

The second part of Murtada’s argument is based on science and technology. He says that the confirmation of the Isrā’ and Mi‘rāj is easier than in the past, especially after man invented an instrument by which he is able to exceed speeds of thirteen KMs per second. As well, man has discovered that the speed of light is around 300,000 KMs per second. Moreover, some scholars believe that the unseen waves of the force of gravity (*jādhība*) pass through the universe

timelessly. Thus, if a very great distance can be traversed by a limited being like human being in a very limited time, then it is not impossible for the Unlimited Creator of human being to make His servant travel by night from the *Kā'ba* to *Masjid al-Aqsā*, then to the heavenly world (*malakut al-samā'*), and then finally to his point of departure.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Prophet and Miracles**

In fact, what helped Islam to progress and achieve victory was the Prophet's greatest miracle, i.e. the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam which truly astonished the Arabs. It was a miracle not only due to its comprehensive rules and messages, its foretelling or reporting of unseen news and events, etc., but also due to its role as evidence and complete proof of the Prophet's prophecy. The Qur'an astonished the Arabs to the extent that they had no choice except either to deny it (in spite of the fact that their hearts felt certain about it) or to believe in it.<sup>26</sup>

The inimitability of the *Qur'an* refers to the fact that God challenged the adversaries of Islam to bring anything like this divine book.<sup>27</sup> When they could not do that, He challenged them to bring ten chapters the same as those of the *Qur'an*,<sup>28</sup> but again they were incapable of doing so. Then, He asked them to bring at least one chapter,<sup>29</sup> even a very short one. If the polytheists had been able to compose even a very short chapter like the shortest one of the *Qur'an*,



this new religion, Islam, would have vanished. Two of the greatest aspects of the wondrous nature of this Book, i.e. its eloquence and its fluency (*balāghah* and *fasābah*) are well-emphasized by Arab scholars.<sup>30</sup>

The *Qur'an* is the eternal and most important miracle of the Prophet of Islam. Nevertheless, other miraculous aspects of the life of the Prophet, in addition to those of the Isrā' and Mi'rāj, have been approved by Muslim biographers.<sup>31</sup> For instance, they speak of the episode of the cave Thawr, which occurred just before the Prophet's Migration to Madina. The story goes like this: When the Prophet was hiding in the cave of Thawr, God protected him from his enemies who were seeking for him by inspiring a spider to weave its cobweb over the door of the cave and a wild pigeon to build its nest and lay its eggs at the entrance of the cave. Thus, the enemies thought that Muhammad had never entered into the cave.<sup>32</sup>

The splitting of the moon (*shaqq al-qamar*) is another miracle which biographers and commentators ascribe to the Prophet. The date determined for this miracle is the eighth year of the Mission when the Prophet and his companions were under the pressure of the boycott. Some commentators on the *Qur'an*, shed light on the interpretation of the verse of the splitting of the moon:

The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split. If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, 'An incessant magic!' (54:1&2)

These verses announce that even if the Prophet would have split the moon, the polytheists would not believe in his message. These verses alone do not prove that the splitting of the moon occurred in reality or that the polytheists said that it was witchcraft. However, this interpretation would be reasonable if there were no sound and authenticated hadiths according to which the splitting of the moon happened in reality.<sup>33</sup>

### **Summarizing Comments**

We consider that the Isrā' and Mi'raj were two miracles of the Prophet and, therefore, these two events should be understood to have taken place in both body and soul, as it is accepted by the Imamites and a large number of other groups of Muslims. However, in order for us to understand how the Prophet's mental state was affected during his extraordinary night journey and ascent to heaven, we should have discussed the psychology of the Prophet both before and after these two events in order to compare the two conditions. This would have enabled the reader to come to a clearer conclusion.

As there is neither any single tradition nor any Muslim scholar who refutes the miraculous aspect of the *Qur'an*, this issue has been never a subject of dispute. It is confirmed that the main criteria for evaluating stories are the *Qur'an*, authentic hadiths and reason. One may realize that there is no contradiction between reason and the miraculous aspects of the events such as the Isrā' and Mi'raj. With

respect to the story of the splitting of the moon, we do not refute it because of authentic hadiths. Similarly, regarding the story of the cave, we focus on what is related and confirmed through authentic hadiths and biographies.

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- <sup>1</sup> Murtada, *Al-Sabih*, v. 1, p. 269 ; Majlisi, *Bihar*, v. 18, p. 319 ; Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, v. 3, p. 108
- <sup>2</sup> Murtada, *Al-Sabih*, v. 1, pp. 271, 274.
- <sup>3</sup> The majority of Sunnis.
- <sup>4</sup> Most of Shi'is.
- <sup>5</sup> Haykal, *The Life*, p. 139-140 ; Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat*, v. 2, pp. 52-53.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.140 ; Ibn Ishaq, *The Life*, p. 183
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> The *Qur'an*, 17 : 60 ; Haykal, *Hayat*, p.189.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 : 110 ; Cf. Haykal, *The Life*, p. 144.
- <sup>10</sup> The *Qur'an*, 17: 1.
- <sup>11</sup> Wessels, *Biography*, p. 67 ; Haykal, *Hayat*, p. 195.
- <sup>12</sup> Murtada, *Al-Sabih*, v. 1, pp. 275 & 277.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 275-276.
- <sup>14</sup> The *Qur'an*, 17 : 1. I have underlined the words in the passage.
- <sup>15</sup> Murtada, *Al-Sabih*, v. 1, p. 277.
- <sup>16</sup> The *Qur'an*, 53 : 6-12. I have underlined the words in the passage.
- <sup>17</sup> Murtada, *Al-Sabih*, v. 1, p. 277.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 276. From Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan*, v. 13, p. 22.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287. For details see p. 288.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 1, pp. 285-286.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 171.
- <sup>27</sup> "Say, 'Should all humans and jinn rally to bring the like of this Qur'an, they will not bring the like of it, even if they assisted one another.'" (17:88)
- <sup>28</sup> "Do they say, 'He has fabricated it?' Say, 'Then bring ten surahs like it, fabricated, and invoke whomever you can, besides God, should you be truthful.' But if they do not respond to you, know that it has been sent down by God's knowledge, and that there is no god except Him. Will you, then, submit [to God]?" (11:13 & 14)
- <sup>29</sup> This Qur'an could not have been fabricated by anyone besides God; rather it is a confirmation of what was [revealed] before it, and an elaboration of the Book, there is no doubt in it, from the Lord of all the worlds. Do they say, 'He has fabricated it?' Say, 'Then bring a surah like it, and invoke whomever you can, besides God, should you be truthful.' (10:37 & 38)
- <sup>30</sup> For more information, see: Murtada, *al-Sabih*, v. 1, pp. 198-216.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 1, pp. 286-287.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 250. Murtada does not employ the word miracle in the case of the above-mentioned story.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 120.



# Different Treatments of Spirituality

Mohammad Ali Shomali

In the previous issue we studied different methodological attitudes among Muslim scholars towards spirituality. In this issue we will study the ways the Qur'an and hadiths have treated the process of self-development and described man's effort and struggle to achieve piety and spirituality.

**1. Spirituality as combat with the self:** According to this approach, self-building is an internal battle against the enemy within. In a very well-known and inspiring hadith, we read that once, in Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) saw a group of his companions who had won a battle approaching. The Holy Prophet said:

«عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ ع قَالَ قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
ع إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِقَوْمٍ

قَضُوا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَ بَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ»

“Well done! Welcome to those people who have completed the minor struggle and on whom the greater struggle is still incumbent.” The Apostle of God was asked: “What is the greater struggle?” He replied: “To fight one’s own self.”<sup>1</sup>

The companions had defeated their enemies in a severe battle and had been prepared to give up the dearest thing to them, their life, to defend Islam. They were astonished and wondered what could be greater than that. The Holy Prophet replied: ‘*Jihad al-nafs*.’ This means to fight one’s own self, to struggle with your own self.

In a well-known hadith Abu Dharr asked the Prophet Muhammad: ‘Which struggle is the best?’ The Holy Prophet replied:

«ان يجاهد الرجل نفسه وهواه»

“To struggle against one’s own self and lusts”.<sup>2</sup>

The likening of self-development to an internal battle is indeed rooted in the Qur’an itself. For example, the Qur’an says:

وَ مَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ



“And whoever strives, he strives only for his own soul; most surely Allah is Self-sufficient, above (need of) the worlds.” (29:6)

According to many exegetes of the Qur’an, this striving or struggle (*jihad*) which has been mentioned here is a spiritual jihad. There are two main pieces of evidence that they use to prove this. Firstly, the use of the word “himself”: this is significant as in a war a soldier fights for a cause; it may be for the oppressed, for the dignity of Islam or for his country. However this verse mentions the cause as “himself.” Secondly, previous to this verse Allah (SWT) says:

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ وَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”(29:5)

This concept of meeting Allah (SWT) is also a spiritual concept and so it is consistent with the following verse i.e. the verse 29:6 being about jihad for the self, as this too is a spiritual concept. Of course, this is not to suggest that this verse does not include the militant jihad, but that it also includes the spiritual jihad.

The following verses also refer to the spiritual jihad, though they may also include the militant jihad, since the militant jihad also needs purification of the intention and the soul:

...وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ

“And wage jihad for the sake of God, a jihad which is worthy of Him...” (22:78)

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good.” (29:69)

To fight an internal enemy is the greater struggle because it is more difficult. When an enemy is found inside it is more dangerous and more difficult to defeat. An internal civil war is more difficult to face than war against an external foreign enemy on one’s borders. It is much more difficult to expel someone who has occupied our house than to repel someone who is only outside it. If our enemy is inside us then he knows all our secrets. He knows our weak points and our strong points and he knows exactly how to ‘play’ with us. An internal enemy is always with us and allows us no rest. We might be able to negotiate a cease-fire with an external enemy but with an internal enemy the fight goes on day and night, unceasingly. And unfortunately we love and admire this enemy because it is our own soul. He has done so many bad things to us and yet we still love him. So this is a very difficult and complex battle. We should be

really determined and fully alert. Indeed, God should have mercy upon us if we are to win this battle.

We should know that, despite all the challenges to be faced in this struggle, in the end it is not so difficult. God will guide and make it easy for those who sincerely want it. It is very important that when we know something we must put it into practice. If we put our knowledge into practice, then God will give us knowledge of the things that we do not know. If we put into practice the small things that we know, it will enlighten the path before us.

## **2. Spirituality as a medicine.**

Another approach is to consider spirituality as a kind of medicine for our soul or spirit. Spiritual problems are described as illness and so we need to treat ourselves with special medicines. We are patients in need of a cure, in need of medicine. Just like our bodies, our souls may also become ill. Unfortunately the most difficult sort of illness is when we suffer deep inside. In twelve verses, the Qur'an talks about a group of people who suffer from "disease in their hearts". This disease may be increased by God because they do not want to be cured and insist on being ill. For example, we read:

«فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا»

‘In their hearts is a disease and God has increased their disease.’ (2:10)

The Qur’an also talks about hearts which are healthy and pure:

«ولاتخزنى يوم يبعثون - يوم لاينفع مال ولابنون- الا من اتى الله  
بقلب سليم»

‘Do not disgrace me on the day when people are revived, the day on which neither money nor children can help, except the one who comes to Allah with a healthy (pure) heart.’ (26:87-89)

This is the prayer of the Prophet Abraham (A.S). In verses (37:83 & 84), God informs us that this request was granted: ‘Indeed, Abraham was among his [i.e. Noah's] followers, when he came to his Lord with a healthy (pure) heart.’

Thus, we can understand that having a pure and healthy heart is so important that someone like Prophet Abraham, the father of all monotheistic religions, asks God for it. Indeed, this is the only thing which will be useful on the Day of Judgement when neither children nor money will benefit us. In *Nah al-Balaghah*, sermon 388, Imam Ali says:

أَلَا وَ إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ الْفَاقَةَ وَ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْفَاقَةِ مَرَضُ الْبَدَنِ وَ أَشَدُّ مِنْ  
مَرَضِ الْبَدَنِ مَرَضُ الْقَلْبِ

‘One of the catastrophes that may happen to a person is poverty, but more difficult than poverty is illness. And more difficult than illness of the body is illness of the heart.’

Therefore the worst poverty is to suffer from a lack of piety. The concept of medicine is also a very important related topic. Imam Ali (A.S) says in his Sermon of the Pious:

أَمَّا اللَّيْلُ فَصَافُونَ أَفْدَامَهُمْ تَالِينَ لِأَجْزَاءِ الْقُرْآنِ يُرْتَلُونَهَا تَرْتِيلاً  
يُحَزِّنُونَ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَيَسْتَشِيرُونَ بِهِ دَوَاءً دَائِهِمْ

“[Pious people are] those who stand up and recite the Qur’an at night, and they try to make themselves sad. They try to take from the Qur’an the treatment as medicine for their illnesses.”<sup>3</sup>

Imam Baqir (A.S) told Jabir b. Yazid al-Ju‘fi:

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا عِلْمَ كَطَلَبِ السَّلَامَةِ وَلَا سَلَامَةَ كَسَلَامَةِ الْقَلْبِ

“And know that there is no knowledge like seeking health, and there is no health like the health of the soul.”<sup>4</sup>

In the case of spiritual medicine, the most important point is that we must try to prevent illness from penetrating our souls, in the same way as we might try to maintain a distance from people who

are ill, so that the disease does not affect us; by being close to them we endanger our own health. However, there are cures to our illnesses, as Allah (SWT) is the Most Forgiving. Furthermore, we need a guide who can show us what to do and how to prevent or cure our illnesses. One of the beautiful things Imam Ali (A.S) mentions about the Holy Prophet (SAW) is that he was a doctor, but he did not *wait* for the sick people; instead he went to them himself, taking the equipment with him.

طَبِيبٌ دَوَّارٌ بِطَبِّهِ قَدْ أَحْكَمَ مَرَاهِمَهُ وَ أَحْمَى مَوَاسِمَهُ يَضَعُ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ  
الْحَاجَةُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قُلُوبٍ عُمِيٍّ وَ آذَانٍ صُمٍّ وَ أَلْسِنَةٍ بُحْمٍ مُتَتَبِعٍ بِدَوَائِهِ  
مَوَاضِعَ الْغَفْلَةِ وَ مَوَاطِنَ الْخَيْرَةِ

The Prophet was like a roaming physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.<sup>5</sup>

There were people who were deaf, blind, or those people who could not speak the truth, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) used the appropriate medicine to cure them. Imam Mahdi (A.S) who is the Imam of our age has also a significant role; and if Allah (SWT) pleases we can receive guidance and healing from him (A.S).

### 3. Spirituality as a journey.

In Islamic literature, spirituality is also described as a journey. We should think of ourselves as wayfarers. We have all embarked on a journey away from God and then we are going back to Him. We have all been created by God and this creation is a sort of separation from our origin. Before we were created we were not separate from God but now we are. However, God has given us the chance to return to Him. The Qur'an says:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Truly we belong to God and to Him we will return".

(2:156)

When we depart, our destination is clear. But in order to reach our destination we must be very careful about our direction. If we are on the right path, we will certainly reach our destination. However, if we are on the wrong path, we will not reach our destination and may even go farther and farther away from it. We are not in a static or fixed position. Every day and every hour we are moving and getting either further from or closer to our destination. The Glorious Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

“O man, you are trying hard to reach your Lord and you will finally meet Him.” (84:6)

Having read this verse, some may think that there is nothing to worry about because we have all come from a good place and there is a good destination ahead. But our status when we meet God is of utmost importance. There are two states of reaching God: to reach Him while He is happy with us or to reach Him while He is angry with us. Human beings are among the very few creatures whose levels of perfection are not fixed, that is, they have been given the capacity to upgrade or degrade themselves.

Thus, the spiritual journey consists of trying to increase our closeness and proximity to God. It should be noted that God is always close to us, but we are not necessarily close to Him. We can reach a position in which we can get closer and closer to God through self-purification, and, as suggested by the Glorious Qur’an, “meet” Him. Mystics normally speak of the possibility of losing our own selfhood, limits and boundaries and then becoming identified with God. I am not commenting on this concept here, but in any case it seems obvious that we can get closer and closer to God to the extent that nothing will remain between us and Him and this is what we mean by returning to God.

So this life is a journey and we cannot say that we do not want to go on this journey. We are all on this journey and it is up to us to



gather enough provisions for ourselves. One of the main goals of self-building is to try to reduce this distance by wayfaring towards Allah (SWT). The path towards Him is infinite and full of challenges. However, for the people who embark on this journey, all the support and guidance are provided. In this regard, Imam Sajjad (A.S) says:

سبحانك ما اضيق الطرق علي من لم تكن دليله و ما اوضح الحق عند  
من هديته سبيله

“May you be glorified! What a narrow path it is for whom You do not guide, and what a clear path it is for whom you have guided!”<sup>6</sup>

**Conclusion:** In this part we have discussed spirituality or the process of self-building as a kind of battle, medicine and as a journey. Allah (SWT) is encouraging and guiding us by demonstrating many analogies. He is showing us that there is always hope of reaching Him, and appeals to us in many different ways to encourage us to come closer to Him. He is the Most Merciful.

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 5, p. 12, no 3 and *Al-Amāli* by al-Saduq, Session 71, p. 377, no 8. There is an addition to the above hadith, which can be found in *Bihar al-Anwār*, Vol. 67, p. 62 and reads as follows:

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ثُمَّ قَالَ صَ أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهِ

‘The best struggle is to fight one’s own self.’

<sup>2</sup> نهج الفصاحة (مجموعه كلمات قصار حضرت رسول ص)، ص: 230، 397: أفضل الجهاد أن يجاهد الرجل نفسه و هواه.

<sup>3</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 193.

<sup>4</sup> *Tuaf al-Uqul*, p. 284.

<sup>5</sup> See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Mafātih al-Jinān*, Munājāt al-Muridin.

# The Shi‘i Approach to the Interpretation of the Qur’an: Two Classical Commentaries

Dr S. Ahmad Rahnamaei

## *Introduction*

Although the emergence of formal written *tafsir* in the history of Shi‘i interpretation of the *Qur’an* can be dated almost to the third and fourth centuries AH (10-11th CE), there is enough evidence to suggest that the first generation of Shi‘a traditionist (*muhaddith*) exegetes belonged to the first century AH. Since the time of Imam Ali (A.S), and for about three centuries thereafter Shi‘a traditionists, jurists and theologians used to refer directly or indirectly to their Imams. During the time of the Prophet, the exegesis of the *Qur’an* was embarked upon through his explanations of verses of the *Qur’an*. This was followed by the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). At the time of Imam Ali, some of his companions such as his cousin and disciple, Ibn ‘Abbas, used to ask him occasionally about the interpretation of a verse or verses of the *Qur’an*.

Ali the first Imam, is said to have challenged his audience saying, ‘Ask me about the book of God! For by God, there is no verse of the book of God sent down by day or night, on a journey or while present [that is, while at home], about which the Apostle of God did not teach me its recitation and exegesis ... Whatever was sent down of the Qur’an to the Apostle of God in my absence, the Prophet recited it to me when I had returned,..’<sup>1</sup>

Any interpretation presented by the Imam was considered to be one of the most authentic statements in relation to a Qur’anic passage or word. As a disciple of the Imam, Ibn ‘Abbas took part in the sessions held by the Imam to teach exegesis of the *Qur’an*. In this regard, Ibn ‘Abbas was one of his outstanding students.<sup>2</sup> For a long time, the approach taken by other exegetes was dominated by Ibn ‘Abbas’s *Tafsir*. Muslims were acquainted with tafsir almost through the remarks of Ibn ‘Abbas. It is believed that “after the Prophet’s departure tafsir became prevalent after it had been initiated by Ali.”<sup>3</sup> Ali himself stated that the Prophet taught him a thousand branches of knowledge one of which must have related to the exegesis of the *Qur’an*. The Imams after `Ali, too, continued his tradition in dealing with the Book of Allah.<sup>4</sup>

In the present essay, which focuses on the classical Shi‘i approach to the *Qur’an*, I intend first to bring to light the very early categories of

the commentators who, as the companions of the Imams or as the pupils of the companions, reported what they used to hear from the Imams or their close companions with respect to the interpretation of the *Qur'an*. In doing so I shall also deal with their methodology and their impact on later Shi'i tafsir. As two examples of Shi'i classical commentary on the *Qur'an*, I will deal with an early traditional Shi'i tafsir of the third century (9<sup>th</sup> CE) *Tafsir al-Qummi*, as well as with a work of the fifth century (11<sup>th</sup> CE), al-Shaykh al-Tusi's theological commentary *Al-Tibyan*, describing both of their approaches to tafsir. Before I come to the main body of the discussion, I shall first look at some of the essential criteria and characteristics that may be found in the Shi'i approach to the interpretation of the *Qur'an*.

### **The Core of Shi'i Tafsir**

Shi'i exegesis makes frequent reference to the reliable and sound traditions of the Imams besides those from the Prophet. From the Shi'i point of view, the *Qur'an* is more than a "guide through this life and the next." In this perspective one of the function of tafsir is to establish "the link between the faithful and their spiritual guides, the Imams."<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Mahmood Ayoub remarks, "Shi'i tafsir in its entirety is too vast a subject for any comprehensive treatment, let alone a comparative presentation."<sup>6</sup> Ayoub regards the special role that the Imams play as the unique characteristic of Shi'i Tafsir.<sup>7</sup> The Prophet

and his vicegerents, who are the elect of his Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), “are distinguished by the inheritance of divine knowledge,” thus they “know the full meaning of the *Qur’an*.” Ayoub explains the widely transmitted tradition of the *Thaqaalayn*:

In a long and well-known tradition by both Shi’i and Sunni traditionists (with many variants), the Qur’an is presented as the ‘greater weight’ (*al-thaqal al-akbar*) and the Imams as the ‘lesser weight’ (*al-thaqal al-asghar*). ... In another version quoted by al-‘Ayyaāhi in proof of the authority (*walāyah*) of Ali, it is related that Muhammad went on to say regarding *ahl al-bayt* that ‘the All-Gracious, All-Knowing told me that they [the two weights] shall not be separated until they meet me [on the day of resurrection] ... Do not precede them, for you would go astray, and do not fall behind them, for you would perish. Do not teach them, for they are of greater knowledge than you.’<sup>8</sup>

A Shi’i commentator will always give due consideration to traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt touching upon interpretation of Qur’anic passages. The justification for this is “because Muhammad was the last prophet and the Qur’an was the final revelation, the prophetic circle continues only through the imamah which shall continue until the day of resurrection.”<sup>9</sup> In this realm the main distinction of the

Imams from the Prophet is that the former never possessed revelation.<sup>10</sup>

The continuous nature of tafsir is perfectly understandable: “The more distanced we are from the time of the Prophet and Imams the more questions are raised in regard to lexical concepts, as well as rational and theological matters.” Certain questions were raised in the minds of people when confronted by a verse. Here, mere reliance on reason could not provide the answers; rather it, in its turn, raised further questions. Therefore, recourse had to be made to those who were familiar with the *Qur’an*. After a while, theological discussions arose from such inquiries. For example, it was al-Hasan al-Basri, a theologian and a contemporary of Imam Ali, who employed Qur’anic verses as the basic element of his reasoning. The questions raised in his mind or in those of others were answered by the Qur’anic passages. In this regard, verses were taken as a proof--examples to demonstrate theological concepts. Gradually, Qur’anic exegesis was affected by more and more disciplines and doctrines, a process which consequently caused tafsir to become “wider in scope.” Thus, a kind of extension occurred in relation to the tafsir. The variety of this extension depended mostly on the proficiency of exegetes in special field of knowledge. Naturally, the same phenomenon happened in literary as well as in rational, theological and even in natural discussions and considerations. These occurrences distanced the *Qur’an* from pure exegesis.<sup>11</sup>

Allamah Tabataba'i,<sup>12</sup> describing several categories of both Sunni and Shi'i exegetes, mentions that among the sixth category, there are those who wrote their tafsir during the age of the emergence and development of different branches of sciences. Thus, each wrote his commentary based on his proficiency and expertise in a particular field. Examples of this are: Zamakhshari<sup>13</sup> who wrote as an expert in literature as well as a Mu'tazili theologian, al-Fakhr al-Razi<sup>14</sup> as a theologian, Ibn 'Arabi<sup>15</sup> as a Sufi, al-Tha'labi as an extreme traditionist, al-Qurtubi<sup>16</sup> as a jurist, al-Sharif al-Radi<sup>17</sup> who was concerned with the Qur'anic language, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi<sup>18</sup> who offered a philosophical *tafsir*, etc. All of these commentators were influenced by their special background of knowledge in interpreting the Qur'an.<sup>19</sup>

Allamah Tabataba'i also states that such contributions to Qur'anic exegesis played an important role in the development of this science and its elevation to the surface of teaching and inquiry. Nevertheless, most of the discussions presented by these exegetes are not related directly to pure tafsir.<sup>20</sup>

The Shi'a exegetes, under the light and guidance of the Imams' traditions, were in large able to keep the subject-matter of their tafsir under control and "remain immune from extremism." This approach has saved the Qur'an from extreme interpretation to some extent. Due to the nature of the approach itself the thoughts and interpretations of the infallible ones were applied to *tafsir*. From the



Shi'a point of view the infallibility of the Prophet and the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt was taken as guaranteed, so their ideas, approved through authentic chains of reliable authorities and sources, have been made use of in most Shi'i *tafsirs*. Among the Sunnis, too, a similar approach has been taken, with the difference that they believe that only the Prophet was infallible.<sup>21</sup> They also rely to a great deal on the reports of the companions of the Prophet who are in the chains of the authorities transmitting the Prophet's traditions. The Shi'a for their part apply certain criteria in evaluating a *hadith* or a *Muhaddith*. It is on this basis that some hadiths on the authority of some of the companions are excluded as inauthentic or invalid, except for those that are confirmed through other reliable chains.

### **The Classification of Shi'i Commentators**

Since the Shi'i approach to the tafsir differs markedly from the Sunni, their categorization in the field of tafsir also differs from one another. 'Allamah Tabataba'i states:

The method employed by the Shi'ite commentators, however, was different, with the result that the patterning of the groups was also different. The Shi'ite commentators, in their study of a verse of the Qur'an, viewed the explanation given by the Prophet as proof of the meaning of the verse.<sup>22</sup>

The Shi'a believe in the absolute validity and authenticity of the Prophet's sayings and hadiths. However, the narratives through the companions and the followers (*tabi'in*) are not accepted as indisputable proofs except when it is confirmed that they were from the Prophet himself and functions as a *Nabawi hadith*.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, in accordance with the widely transmitted hadith of *Thaqaalayn*,<sup>24</sup> the hadiths which are related from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt are valid. The Shi'a believe that the authentication (*hujjiyya*) of the Prophet's and Imams' hadiths is a doctrine that is indicated in the Qur'an itself. This validity or authentication, according to the Shi'a, is clearly established in the case of those hadiths that have been certainly transmitted by fully trustworthy chains from the Prophet or the Imams. Thus a tradition may not be recognized as totally acceptable if its ascription to the Prophet and the Imams is not certain.<sup>25</sup> Due to this belief the Shi'a rely only on those hadiths which are certainly transmitted from the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt. Based on a presupposition that 'the people of the house have a better understanding and knowledge of what occurs in the house' (*Ahl al-bayt adrā bi-mā fi al-bayt*),<sup>26</sup> the Shi'a declare that their Imams, who all were the family of the Prophet and his progeny, were more learned ones after the Prophet. They are more familiar with the prophetic mission and divine laws including the interpretation of the *Qur'an*.

### ***The First Generation***

We have studied that Shi'ī tafsir was initiated by the traditions of the Imams. Thus, the first generation of Shi'ī commentators include those Shi'ī traditionists and scholars who narrated the interpretation of the Qur'an from the Prophet and from the Imams. Men like Abu Hamzah al-Thamali,<sup>27</sup> Zurarah, Muhammad b. Muslim,<sup>28</sup> Ma'rif b. Kharbudh, Jarir,<sup>29</sup> Abu al-Jārud,<sup>30</sup> Abu Basir,<sup>31</sup>, etc.<sup>32</sup> and their fellows among the companions of the Imams were the first authorities in Shi'ī commentary of the Qur'an. Among the huge number of hadiths that have come down to us on the authority of them, or even later Shi'ī narrators of hadith, one may find many hadiths concerned with the interpretation of several verses of the Qur'an. These hadiths are to be found in several books of Shi'ī tradition. Aqā Buzurg Tehrani<sup>33</sup> in his *Al-Dhari'ah* attributes some tafsir works to this generation.<sup>34</sup> Though no individual work has come down to us from these early traditionists, their traditions served as the sources for later tafsirs written by Shi'ī exegetes of the second generation.

### ***The Second Generation***

This includes the first compilers of formal tafsir and writers of classical traditional tafsir as Furāt b. Ibrahim al-Kufi,<sup>35</sup> al-'Ayyashi<sup>36</sup> and Ali b. Ibrahim al-Qummi<sup>37</sup> and al-Nu'mani<sup>38</sup>.

The method employed by this group in interpreting the *Qur'an* was to relate the traditions from the first generation and include them along with their full chains of transmission in their books of tafsir. Thus their tafsirs are considered to be *al-tafasir bil-ma'thur*, which were written in accordance with their understanding of the traditions. On occasions, the texts of hadiths would be included without their chains of authorities. An example of this may be seen in al-'Ayyashi's *Tafsir* where the omission of the chains was done by his pupils in order to make their master's *tafsir* shorter.<sup>39</sup>

### ***The Third Generation***

This includes people with expertise in different sciences who approached the interpretation of the *Qur'an* based on their knowledge in scientific fields. Within this category we encounter the names of the Shi'i scholars whose tafsirs represent particular approaches to *Qur'anic* interpretation. Among these exegetes are al-Sharif al-Raḍiyy<sup>40</sup> with his literal and rhetorical tafsir, al-Shaykh al-Tusi<sup>41</sup> with his theological commentary, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi<sup>42</sup> who wrote from a philosophical perspective, etc. There are other commentators in this category who tried to write comprehensive tafsirs employing several aspects of knowledge such as hadith, literature, theology, and so on. Al-Tabarsi's<sup>43</sup> *Majma' al-Bayān* is considered to be an example of such a tafsir. Thus his work is a

traditional, literal, rhetorical and theological interpretation of the *Qur'an*.<sup>44</sup>

In what follows, rather than try to survey all of the formal written tafsirs attributed to Imami scholars, I intend to restrict myself to two of them. First, I will concern myself with *Tafsir al-Qummi*, and then briefly discuss the qualities of *Al-Tibyan* by al-Tusi.

### *I Tafsir al-Qummi*

#### **Al-Qummi the Exegete (d. 919 C.E)**

The name of Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Qummi comes to mind when one thinks of classical and traditional Shi'i tafsir. He was contemporary of the eleventh Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (A.S). Qummi was at the same time one of the most respected scholars of his time, as well as a reliable transmitter in Shi'i tradition. He used to narrate mostly on the authority of his father Ibrahim b. Hashim al-Qummi (d. 217 / 832), who lived during the time of four Imams (from the eighth to eleventh Imam) and learned hadiths from many of their disciples. It is said that Ibrahim met Imam Riḍa the eighth Imam and obtained from the Imam several hadiths. The famous Shi'i muhaddith al-Kulayni relied on Qummi to a great extent and in his *Al-Kāfi*, described as "one of the four canonical collections of the Shi'i hadith," related many traditions from him. Also, many prayers

(*du'ās*) have come down to the Shi'a on his authority. It is said that his father Ibrahim b. Hashim was originally from Kufa, Iraq. He departed to Qum and took it as his residence. Ibrahim was a great traditionist who loyally and accurately attempted to transmit the Imams' traditions from Kufi Shi'i traditionists to Qum for the first time. At any rate he and his father have a good reputation among the Shi'a.

### ***His Tafsir***

Qummi begins his *Tafsir* with an introduction concerning the value of the Qur'an and the philosophy of revelation. He explains the *Hadith al-Thaḡalayn* and remarks that the hadith insists on the great status of the Thaḡalayn, (the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt). The commentator discusses many issues concerning the Qur'anic sciences as well as Shi'i theology. He argues that the Qur'an refutes idol-worshippers, dualists, fire-worshippers, Jahmites, Mu'tazilites, Qadarites, Ash'arites and other sects whose doctrines are opposed to those of the Shi'i Imami school.<sup>45</sup>

Before Qummi, his master in exegesis al-Furat al-Kufi collected tafsir materials and compiled them in a commentary of his own. However, Qummi's *Tafsir* is regarded by al-Jazā'iri, the editor of the work, as the earliest commentary on the Qur'an in Twelver Shi'i history. Muhammad al-Kazim, the editor of al-Furat's work, points out that the compiler is more likely to have been a Zaydi Shi'i<sup>46</sup> and not a

Twelver.<sup>47</sup> Possibly because of this, al-Jazā'ri considers Qummi's work to be the earliest commentary on the Qur'an in Twelver history.<sup>48</sup> At any rate, neither 'Allamah Majlisi in his encyclopaedia of Shi'i tradition *Bihār al-Anwār*, nor al-Shaykh Aqā Buzurg Tehrani in his encyclopaedia of Shi'i literature *Al-Dhari'ah ilā Tasānif al-Shi'ah* mentions that al-Furāt al-Kufi was a Zaydi.<sup>49</sup> The editor of *Tafsir al-Furat* therefore seems to be alone in this assumption. Describing *Tafsir al-Qummi*, al-Jaza'ri considers the work to be the basis of many later Shi'i tafasir. The traditions related by Qummi derive mostly from the fifth and sixth Imams, al-Sadiqayn (676-765). This is why the tafsir is sometimes called as *Tafsir al-Sadiqayn*. The *tafsir* contains traditions describing the Ahl al-Bayt's excellencies. Most of the commentator's consideration lies in his exposition of many verses that would be difficult to understand except through the guidance provided by a number of Ahl al-Bayt hadiths. The first traditionist to whom Qummi read his *tafsir* was his pupil Abu al-Faḍl al-'Abbas b. Muhammad b. Qasim b. Hamzah b. Musa b. Ja'far. In fact, Abu al-fadl was a descendent of Imam Musa b. Ja'far (749-799) the seventh Imam.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Qummi's Methodology***

Qummi restricts himself to one methodology. He brings the meaning of the verses to light with the help of the Imams' traditions. These

traditions are related by Qummi with their full chains of authorities. In each chain the first authority from whom Qummi relates the hadith is his father Ibrahim b. Hashim; thus the traditions usually begin with “*baddathani abi*”, i.e. “my father related to me.” In some cases, he cites several chains of authority for the interpretation of just one verse or passage. For instance, in respect to the interpretation of the *Basmala*, i.e. ‘In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful,’ the *Tafsir* lists five chains of authorities all explaining the same issue. Qummi not only plays the role of an exegete but also demonstrates his ability as a Shi‘i muhaddith, always finding the appropriate hadiths and inserting them to his exegesis. The chains of authority attached to these traditions related by Qummi end with the Imams and often include three or four hadith scholars, most of whom were the disciples of the Imams.<sup>51</sup> This characteristic gives Qummi’s narration as well as his interpretation a high level of authenticity among Shi‘i traditionists and commentators of the Qur’an.

### ***His Other Works***

Besides his *Tafsir*, Qummi contributed eleven more works to Shi‘i literature. The variety of these works suggests that Qummi was a theologian as well as a traditionist, and one who challenged several



notions, basing himself on Shi'ī doctrine. Some of his more important works are as follows:

- 1- *Al-Nāsikh wal-Mansukh* (On the Abrogation)
- 2- *Qurb al-Isnād* (hadith)
- 3- *Al-Sharā'i'* (Shi'ī jurisprudence)
- 4- *Al-Tawhid wal-Shirk* (theology)
- 5- *Faḍā'il Amir al-Mu'minin* (On the Merits of Imam Ali)
- 6- *Al-Maqāzī* (history)
- 7- *Al-Anbiyā* (theology)
- 8- *Ikhtiyār al-Qur'an*<sup>52</sup> (Qur'anic studies).

## ***II Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an***

### **Al-Tusi the Exegete (995-1067 C.E)**

Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Ali al-Tusi Shaykh al-Tā'ifah was born at Tus in the north-east of Iran. He left for Baghdad in 1017 after having completed his early primary Shi'ī education in the city of his birth. In Baghdad he studied under the supervision of al-Shaykh al-Mufid,<sup>53</sup> at the time the greatest jurist and theologian of the Shi'a.

In Baghdad, he was also among the pupils of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍa<sup>54</sup> a distinguished student of al-Mufid for about twenty-three years. In 1056, a group of adversaries burned down his residence in Baghdad for sectarian reasons. This occurrence caused al-Shaykh al-Tusi to depart for al-Najaf, where he stayed for the rest of his life. It has been said of al-Tusi: “He is the greatest doctor of the Shi‘a sect and is popularly known as Shaikh al-Tā’ifa.”<sup>55</sup> In Najaf he started to teach Shi‘i jurisprudence and theology; for this reason the foundation of the Seminary of Najaf is attributed to al-Tusi.

### ***Tusi’s Tafsir: Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an***

*Al-Tibyan*, a work in twenty volumes,<sup>56</sup> is considered to be a comprehensive commentary on the Qur’an.<sup>57</sup> It is the first Shi‘i tafsir in which our commentator covered almost every aspect of the Qur’anic sciences. In his introduction to his *tafsir*, Tusi mentions that since he did not find among the works of Shi‘i scholars any comprehensive exegesis, he decided to write one. He explains the different methods used by exegetes before him, considering the works by Abu Muslim al-Isfahani and by Ali b. ‘Isā al-Rumani to be the best ones, except for the fact that they went into unnecessary details. Tusi remarks that a group of Shi‘i scholars were interested in having a commentary which discussed all aspects of the Qur’anic sciences and which provided as well arguments by which they might be able to

establish the authenticity of their faith in all its principles. He devoted a chapter to explaining that the Qur'an which is in our hands is the Divine Revelation revealed to the Prophet, the revelation which has never been changed. Thus, it is worth engaging ourselves in its interpretation.<sup>58</sup>

Tehrani, quoting the above-mentioned passage of Tusi, states that the latter's *tafsir* is a very invaluable commentary on the *Qur'an*. He continues by pointing out that the catalogues of Al-Azhar, Sultān Muhammad al-Fātih, and Sultān 'Abd al-Hamid libraries show that they have copies of this *tafsir*. 'Allamah Majlisi records this *tafsir* in his *Bihār al-Anwār*.<sup>59</sup>

It should be noted that there is also an abridged version of this *tafsir* by Ibn Idris,<sup>60</sup> a grandson of al-Tusi,

### ***Tusi's Methodology***

After explaining the verses word by word and point by point, and discussing about the terminological and literal meanings of the Qur'anic terms, Tusi goes into an exposition of the theological attitudes and doctrines which are implied in the verses. For instance, in commenting on the meanings of the word *al-Asbāf*<sup>61</sup> the plural of *al-sibt*, Tusi mentions that according to one possibility the word is considered to be the title of the sons of Isrā'il (Jacob), i.e. Yusuf and

his eleven brothers. He then states that many Sunni commentators prefer to think that *al-Asbāt* (Jacob's sons) were the prophets of God. Tusi for his part remarks that based on his *madhhab* (denomination) not all of *al-Asbāt* were prophets. This is because among them were some who committed sin by their evil action against their brother Yusuf, and according to the theological concept of *'ismah* (infallibility) in Shi'a thought all the prophets of God should be infallible. Therefore, it is not acceptable from Tusi's point of view to claim that *al-Asbat* were all prophets.<sup>62</sup>

Tusi, before being a jurist or commentator, was a well known Shi'i theologian who had taken up the challenge of studying Shi'i religious doctrine. Another example of the theological aspect of tafsir is the author's interpretation of the verse "Your *walis* (friends / masters) are God, His apostle, and the believers who establish regular prayers and pay charity while they are bowing down humbly (in worship)."<sup>63</sup> The exegetes argue about the circumstances of the revelation of this verse. Among these exegetes, Abu Bakr al-Razi, Tabari, al-Rumani, Mujahid, etc. all indicate that it was revealed after Ali b. Abi Talib (A.S), while bowing down in prayer, gave his ring (*kbātam*) to a poor man. Tusi then elaborates that this is what is related from the Imams Baqir and Sadiq and that it is attested to by all Shi'a scholars. Tusi, in explaining the concept of *wali* as someone who possesses authority (*walāyah*), remarks that this verse is one of the clear proof-texts that indicates

the status of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali as Imam after the Prophet.<sup>64</sup> These cases and others represent Tusi's *Tafsir* as a theological one.

### ***Tusi's Other Works***

Forty works have been attributed to Tusi by Mahmud Ramyar the editor of Tusi's *al-Fibrīst*. Besides his *Tafsir*, the more important of Tusi's works are as follows:

1- *Tabdhib al-Abkām*, a book containing *hadiths* which relate to the Shi'a school of jurisprudence.

2- *Al-Istibār fī-mā Ukbtulīfa fī-hi min al-Akbbār*, another work on hadith in the field of jurisprudence. "The first work is a comprehensive one and contains all kinds of Hadiths, while the second deals only with those traditions which appear to be discrepant." In the Shi'a school of jurisprudence these two works "are among the four canonical books" (*al-Kutub al-Arbi'ab*) "which are held in the highest veneration."<sup>65</sup>

3- *Al-Mabsut*, a work on Shi'i law and jurisprudence.

4- *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shi'a*, a collection of books written by Shi'i scholars.

5- *Al-Fusul fī al-Usul*, a book on Shi'i theology.<sup>66</sup>

These works demonstrate the important contribution of Tusi to Shi'a doctrine, especially in the fields of jurisprudence and theology.

### ***Conclusion***

So far we have seen how the Shi'i interpretation of the Qur'an was developed. The Shi'a base their interpretation of the Qur'an on the sayings of the Prophet, Imam Ali and the Imams after him. When one deals with a Shi'i *tafsir* one can easily recognize for example, the traditional or theological materials that have come from these sources. This is especially true of the well authenticate traditions related from the Sadiqayn. The large number of the traditions that have come down to us from these two Imams<sup>67</sup> is due to the circumstances that for the most part took place during the lifetimes of Imam Baqir (A.S) and Imam Sadiq (A.S), circumstances such as the political and military struggle between the Ummayyads and 'Abbasids that ended in the victory of the latter over the former. While these rival forces were engaged in conflict, both Imams, one after the other, took advantage of the situation and provided an appropriate academic and scholarly seminary for their disciples and companions.

While the Shi'i *tafsirs* in general and those by Qummi and Tusi in particular utilize many hadiths from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt,<sup>68</sup> the Sunni works on the Qur'an, with the exception of very few cases,

lack such hadiths. Instead, they mostly rely on what is related from the Prophet on the authority of his companions or trust in what has reached them from the companions or the followers (*ṭabi'in*), and sometimes follow what they have received from one of the four Imams of the Sunni schools of jurisprudence.

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<sup>1</sup> Mahmood Ayoub, "The Speaking *Qur'an* and the Silent *Qur'an*; A Study of the Principles and Development of Imami Shi'i *Tafsir*," citing al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. xcii, pp. 78-79 in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, edited by Andrew Rippen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 182,

<sup>2</sup> A. Saeni, "Approaches to the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an," *Message of Thaqalayn* (Tehran: Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly, a Quarterly Journal of Islamic Studies, April 1995), no. 2, pp. 135-137.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Ayoub, "The Speaking Qur'an," p. 177.



<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178-179.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180, citing Muhammad b. Mas'ud b. 'Ayyashi al-Sulami al-Samarqandi, *Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi*, edited by al-Mahallati, v. 1, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Saeni, "Approaches to the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an," pp. 137-139.

<sup>12</sup> Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i known as 'Allama was one of the contemporary Shi'i philosophers and exegetes whose major work on the *Qur'an al-Miẓān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an* containing 20 volumes (Beirut: 1970) is considered to be the most distinguished example of the cross-reference exegesis of the *Qur'an*.

<sup>13</sup> The well-known literal rationalist Mu'tazili scholar and exegete whose exegesis *Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmid al-Tanzīl* is regarded as rhetorical and theological *tafsir*. He died in 1143 C.E.

<sup>14</sup> Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209), a famous Ash'ari theologian, exegete and the author of *Mafātih al-Ghayb* in 32 volumes in the exegesis of the Qur'an.

<sup>15</sup> The great sufi and the author of his famous mystical *Tafsir*, died in 1034 or 1035 C.E.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Qurtubi (d. 1269 C.E), the author of *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Musawi al-Shrif al-Raḍi (d. 1013 or 1015 C.E), a great Shi'i jurist and the most learned man of his age in poetry and literature. One of his works is his collection of Imam Ali's sayings and sermons, *Nahj al-Balaghah*.

<sup>18</sup> Sadr al-Din Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Shirazi, a famous Shi'i philosopher whose *Asrār al-Ayāt* and *Majmū'at Tafasīr* were written in the exegesis of the Qur'an.

<sup>19</sup> 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i, *Al-Qur'an fī al-Islam*, translated into Arabic by al-Husayni Sayyid Ahmad (Tehran: 1983), pp. 74-75 & 78.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> Saeni, "Approaches to the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an," p. 139.

<sup>22</sup> Tabataba'i, *The Qur'an in Islam* (London: 1987), p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> Tabataba'i, *Al-Qur'an*, p. 76.

<sup>24</sup> In his introduction to his *Tafsir*, Qummi remarks that the term *Thaqalayn* in the hadith followed by *Kitaballah wa 'Itrati, Abl Bayti* refer to these two as the two magnificent and invaluable things that the Prophet left behind, i.e. the *Qur'an* and his Ahl al-Bayt. The Prophet insisted that these two should go with each other and they should never be separated from one another. In one aspect, it means that the Qur'an after the Prophet should be interpreted by the Imams of his family. See: Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Qummi, *Tafsir al-Qummi*, (Qum: 'Allamah, 1967), v. 1, pp. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> Tabataba'i, *al-Qur'an*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Sayyid Ja'far Murtaḍā, *Al-Sahib min Sirat al-Nabi al-A'zam*, (Qum: 1983), v. 1, p. 192.

<sup>27</sup> Abu Hamzah was a Shi'i jurist and one of the well-known companions of the Imams Sajjad (A.S) and Baqir (A.S), the fourth and fifth Imams.

<sup>28</sup> Zurarah b. A'yun and Muhammad b. Muslim were two Shi'ī jurists and the distinguished companions of the fifth and sixth Imams, Baqir and Sadiq.

<sup>29</sup> Ma'ruf and Jarir were two of the very close companions of the sixth Imam.

<sup>30</sup> He was a muhaddith among the companions of the fifth Imam whose hadiths from the Imam are mentioned in several cases by al-Qummi in his *Tafsir*. For instance, see: al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, p. 271.

<sup>31</sup> One of the very famous companions of Imam al-Sadiq whose name is mentioned as the first authority among the chains that al-Qummi employed in his *Tafsir*. *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Tabataba'i, *al-Qur'an*, p. 76. Also, see: al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, pp. 28, 30, 271.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Shaykh Agha Buzurg Tehrani, a great Shi'ī scholar of the late century whose fame is due to his twenty-volume encyclopaedic work of the Shi'a researches, collections and compilations up to his time. His work was entitled by him as *Al-Dhari'ah ilā Tasānif al-Shi'a* (Tehran: 1939).

<sup>34</sup> Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'ah*, v. 4, p. 231.

<sup>35</sup> Furat was one of the masters and teachers of Ali b. Ibrahim al-Qummi in tafsir. His work on the *Qur'an* has come down to us as *Tafsir al-Furāt al-Kuḥfī* in two volumes.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad b. Mas'ud al-Kufi al-'Ayyāshi was one of the highly-ranked Imami scholars in the second half of the third century whose commentary *Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi* has reached us.

<sup>37</sup> I will deal with his biography and *Tafsir* later.

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad b. Ibrahim was al-Kulayni's pupil in hadith and one of the Imami scholar in the early fourth (tenth) century.

<sup>39</sup> Tabataba'i, *Al-Qur'an*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 17.

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi known as Shaykh al-Tā'ifāh (d. 460 / 1067) was an important figure in jurisprudence, theology whose *Al-Tabdhīb* and *Al-Istibṣār* are regarded as two of the four basic sources in Shi'a tradition.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Shirazi (1050 / 1640) the famous philosopher and the author of *Asrār al-Ayāt* and *Majmu'at al-Tafāsir*.

<sup>43</sup> Amin al-Islam al-Faḍl b. al-Hasan al-Tabarsi (d. 548 / 1153) the well-known Imami scholar and the author of *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsir al-Qur'an* in ten volumes.

<sup>44</sup> Tabataba'i, *Al-Qur'an*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, Qummi's introduction, pp. 3-6.

<sup>46</sup> The Zaydis are the followers of Zayd b. Ali b. al-Husayn, the son of the fourth Imam of the Shi'a. They believe in Zayd b. Ali as their final Imam.

<sup>47</sup> Ibrahim al-Furat al-Kufi, *Tafsir al-Furāt al-Kuḥfī*, (Qum: 1986), v. 1, editor's introduction, p. 11.

<sup>48</sup> See: al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, editor's introduction, p. 8, 14. Also, see: Ayoub, "The speaking Qur'an," pp. 184-185.

<sup>49</sup> See: Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'ah*, v. 4, pp. 298-300.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, editor's introduction, pp. 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28; Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'ah*, v. 4, p. 308.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Qummi, *Tafsir*, v. 1, editor's introduction, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Nu'mān al-Baghdādī (d. 1022).

<sup>54</sup> Abu al-Qasim `Ali b. al-Husayn (d. 1044).

<sup>55</sup> Hidayet Hosain, "al-Tusi," *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by M. Th. Houtsma, M. J. Wensinck, H. A. R. Gibb, W. Heffening (E. J. Brill: Leiden, New York ... 1987), v. 8, p. 982, Also see: Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'ah*, v. 3, pp. 328-331.

<sup>56</sup> Tehrani, citing the author of *Tārikh Misr*, remarks that the latter mentions the name of al-Tusi saying that he was the author of a great *tafsir* in twenty volumes. See: *Al-Dhari'ah*, v.3, p. 331.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 328-331. Also see: *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v. 8, p. 982.

<sup>58</sup> Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'ah*, v. 3, p. 329.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Abu `Abdillah Al-Shaykh Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Idris al-Hilli (1148-1201) who abridged Tusi's *tafsir* in two volumes and named it *Al-Muntakhab min Tafsir al-Qur'an wal-Kutub al-Mustakbraja min Kitāb al-Tibyan*, (Qum: 1986).

<sup>61</sup> *The Qur'an*, 2: 136.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Idris al-Hilli, *Al-Muntakhab*, v. 1, pp. 19-20.

<sup>63</sup> *The Qur'an*, 5: 55.

<sup>64</sup> Ibn Idris, al-Hilli, *Al-Muntakhab*. v. 1, p. 234.

<sup>65</sup> The two other canonical books are *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih* by al-Shaykh al-Saduq and *al-Kafi* by al-Shaykh al-Kulayni.

<sup>66</sup> For more details see: al-Tusi, *Al-Fihrist*, edited by Mahmud Ramiyar, (Iran: Mashhad, 1972), pp. 285-288 and *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v. 8. p. 982.

<sup>67</sup> Approximately two third of the traditions used in Shi'i literature are derived from these two Imams.

<sup>68</sup> These are besides the authentic hadiths from the Sunni traditionists utilized by Shi'i commentators as well.



# **A Probe into Wilāyah and its Social Dimensions**

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## **Abstract**

The issue of wilāyah is one of the most fundamental Islamic concepts in the Holy Qur‘an and Islamic hadiths. The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly it makes an effort to study the nature and meaning of wilāyah and secondly, by studying the social aspects of wilāyah, it aims to explain that wilāyah (or *muwālāt*) is a strong spiritual bond between believers and the Infallibles. As will be explained later on in the article, for believers wilāyah produces the same fate and aims both in this world and the hereafter. Contrary to what most people believe, wilāyah is not just the relationship between each individual believer and the Prophet and Imams, rather it is the relationship between the community of believers as a whole and the Prophet and Imams and also the relationship amongst the believers themselves. The wilāyah of Allah swt and His walīs creates a united society and an integrated

body of believers who demonstrate love, devotion and dedication amongst themselves. This type of wilāyah is the soul of Islam and is able to give spiritual life to the Islamic ummah and bring unity to it. This article examines issues such as the essential elements, hierarchical order and mutuality of wilāyah, whether or not unbelievers are under the wilāyah of Allah swt, and also the social function of wilāyah. By doing so, one can improve one's understanding of wilāyah and also take a small step towards strengthening religious brotherhood and achieving a society governed by wilāyah. Indeed, strengthening and reinforcing the relationship of wilāyah amongst the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) results in the best conditions for achieving Islamic unity and furthermore, Islamic unity results in the ideal conditions for friendship and collaboration of all believers in God throughout the world.

The concept of wilāyah has a great and very special status in the Holy Qur'an and Islamic hadiths. Many studies have been conducted, extended discussions have been held by commentators, theologians, and mystics and many works have been written about this issue. However, it seems that it is necessary to do much more, both from the theoretical and the practical aspects. In this article, we seek help from Allah swt in attempting to profoundly study the meaning and nature of wilāyah from the theoretical point of view, and to illustrate that wilāyah, by its very nature, is a matter which relates to the community and not just to individuals. Limiting wilāyah to a

relationship between individuals and the Infallibles is not only incorrect according to Islamic principles, but also prevents fulfillment of some of the main functions of wilāyah in a religious society.

### **The meaning of wilāyah**

Wilāyah has many different meanings, but it usually means guardianship, assistance or friendship. Accordingly, walī (in Arabic, the subjective noun derived from wilāyah) or mawlā (in Arabic, another subjective noun derived from the same root) means guardian, assistant, or friend. By examining verbal references and textual inferences, one can find out which meaning is intended. For example, in the following verse from the Holy Qur‘an, Allah swt says:

انما وليكم الله و رسوله و والذين آمنوا  
الذين يقيمون الصلوة و يؤتون الزكاة  
و هم راعون

“Your walī is only Allah, His messenger, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the alms while bowing down” (5:55)

In the above-mentioned verse, due to verbal and historical references (the specific historical circumstances of the sending down of the verse), walī cannot just mean assistant or friend, but rather it conveys

the idea of a guardian or the one whose orders must be obeyed or the one who has the right to take control of people.<sup>1</sup>

In the following two verses, *mawlā* also means guardian:

و ان تولّوا فاعلموا ان الله مولاكم نعم  
المولي و نعم النصير

“And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your Master (*mawlā*): an excellent Master (*mawlā*) and an excellent Helper!” (8:40)

... فاقيموا الصلوه و آتوا الزكوه و  
اعتصموا بالله هو مولاكم فنعم المولي و  
نعم النصير

“...So maintain the prayer, give the alms, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Master (*mawlā*) an excellent Master (*mawlā*) and an excellent Helper.” (22:78)

In these two verses, both Allah swt’s guardianship and His assistance are emphasized. If *mawlā* was supposed to mean ‘assistant’, the phrase ‘an excellent Helper’ would be a pointless repetition which served no purpose.



### Are the unbelievers under the wilāyah of Allah swt?

An important point in the Holy Qur‘an is that on some occasions Allah swt is considered as the walī for the faithful and it is mentioned that the faithless (the unbelievers) do not have a mawlā:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ أَنَّ  
الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

“That is because Allah is the mawlā of the faithful,  
and because the faithless have no mawlā.”<sup>2</sup> (47:11)

However in other verses of the Holy Qur‘an, Allah swt is considered to be the mawlā of everyone, even the faithless. Thus it is stated:

و رَدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ  
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

“And they will be returned to Allah, their real mawlā,  
and what they used to fabricate will forsake them.”  
(10:30)

هٰنَاكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ

“There, all wilāyah belongs to Allah.” (18:44)

In addition to the two verses mentioned above, there are other verses which state that the faithless have illegitimate and tyrannical mawlās or walīs. For example, in Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah, verse 257, we read:

الله ولي الذين آمنوا يخرجهم من الظلمات  
الي النور و الذين كفروا اولياؤهم  
الطاغوت يخرجونهم من النور الي  
الظلمات اولئك اصحاب النار هم فيها  
خالدون

“Allah is the Walī of the faithful: He brings them out of darkness into light. As for the faithless, their walīs are the Rebels, who drive them out of light into darkness. They shall be the inmates of the Fire, and they shall remain in it [forever].”

Also in Chapter 28, Al-Qasas, verse 41, these walīs are described as those leaders who invite the faithless to the fire of Hell:

جعلناهم ائمة يدعون الي النار و يوم  
القيامة لا ينصرون

“We made them leaders who invite to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not receive any help.”

By conducting an in-depth analysis of these three kinds of verses, the following points can be deduced:

1. Allah swt is the Guardian (Walī) of the faithful amongst the peopel, and so, because the faithful also put themselves under His

guardianship by their own free will, He guides them and helps them, supports them through difficult times and circumstances and brings them to their destination.

2. Allah swt is also the Guardian (Walī) of the faithless. Their existence and all aspects of their lives depend on divine blessings just like all other creatures.

3. Using their free will in the wrong way, the faithless hand over control to those who are neither guided, nor can direct others, and who are neither supported, nor can support others, instead of to Allah swt. The faithless have chosen tyrants and evil powers as their walīs, those who are neither beneficial to them nor are capable of doing anything to help them in this life or in the hereafter. The Holy Qur'an states:

ام اتخذوا من دونه اولياء فـالله هو  
الولي و هو يحيي الموتى و هو على كل  
شيء قدير

“Have they taken walīs besides Him? [Say,] "It is Allah, who is the Walī, and He revives the dead, and He has power over all things.” (42:9)

4. Only the faithful have a mawlā who loves them for their own sake and helps them without any expectations. However, false leaders

invite their followers to the Fire of Hell due to their selfishness and self-interest.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note that we have all been given free will by Allah swt and it is entirely up to us to make responsible choices throughout our lives, for example, as in the above case, regarding the kind of people we choose as our guardians to protect, support and help us.

### **Hierarchical order of wilāyah**

Throughout history, Allah, the Exalted, who is the Walī and Mawlā of the faithful, has chosen certain people as walīs for them due to His Grace and Blessing. For example, He chose the Holy Prophet (S) and his rightful successors as the walīs for the people of the final stage of life in this world. Allah swt appointed them to guide and help people.

It is important to note that this kind of wilāyah is subordinate to Allah swt's wilāyah and not at the same level. The Holy Qur'an disproves any kind of partnership with Allah:

و قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا و لَمْ  
يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ و لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ  
وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذَّلِّ و كَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

“And say," All praise belongs to Allah, who has neither taken any son, nor has He any partner in

sovereignty, nor has He [taken] any walī out of weakness," and magnify Him with a magnification [worthy of Him]." (17:111)

ألم تعلم أنّ الله له ملك السموات و الارض  
و ما لكم من دون الله من ولي و لا نصير

“Do you not know that to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? And besides Allah you do not have any walī or any helper.” (2:107)<sup>4</sup>

While other verses state:

إتّما وليكم الله و سوله و الذين آمنوا  
الذين يقيمون الصلوة و يؤتون الزكاة  
و هم راعون

“Your walī is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down.” (5:55)

... و اجعل لنا من لدنك وليا و اجعل  
لنا من لدنك نصيرا

“...and appoint for us a walī from You, and appoint for us a helper from You" (4:75)

... فهب لي من لدنك ولياً يرثني و يرث  
من آل يعقوب و اجعله ربّ رضياً

“...So grant me from Yourself walī (an heir) who may inherit from me and inherit from the House of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You.” (19:5, 6)

Arabic linguists and people with appropriate knowledge understand the difference between the two phrases "*min dūn*" (which in Arabic means "beside") and "*min ladun*" (which in Arabic means "from") in the above verses. If it was "beside Allah" ("*min dūnillab*" in Arabic), it would be incorrect from the point of view of Allah swt's Dignity. But the phrase "from You" ("*min ladunka*" in Arabic) precisely denotes dignity and even brings honour to the slaves and thus is surely not in conflict with Allah swt's Dignity.

This wilāyah indicates that Allah swt, out of His Mercy, has appointed his walīs "who make mighty the walīs and abase the enemies"<sup>5</sup> in order to pave the way towards dignity for the faithful.

Originally Might and Glory belong to Allah swt Alone:

فله العزة جميعاً

Indeed all might belongs to Allah" (10:65)

And then they belong to Allah's walīs such as the Holy Prophet (S) and the faithful:

... العزة و لرسوله و للمؤمنين . . .

“Yet all might belongs to Allah and His Apostle, and the faithful...” (63:8)

Those who take the faithless as their walīs are in fact seeking might, but they will not find it:

الذين يتّخذون الكافرين اولياء من دون  
المؤمنين أيبتغون عندهم العزة فإنّ  
العزة لله جميعا

“-- those who take the faithless for walīs instead of the faithful. Do they seek might with them? [If so], indeed all might belongs to Allah.” (4:139)

### **Wilāyah is mutual**

Another important point about the word wilāyah and its derivatives is that they are used in a sense of mutuality. For example, in the following verse, to believe in the wilāyah of Allah, the Holy Prophet and his successors (the chief amongst whom was the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali (a.s) who gave zakāt while bowing down, according to a previously quoted verse) is called *tawalli* in Arabic, which means to take as walī:

“Whoever takes for his walīs Allah, His Messenger and the faithful [should know that] the walīs of Allah are indeed the victorious.” (5:56)

According to this verse, the faithful are walīs for Allah swt, the Holy Prophet (S) and his successors (A.S). Again, in another verse, undertaking wilāyah (guardianship) of the righteous by Allah swt is also called "Tawalli" in Arabic, which means to take as walī:

“My walī is indeed Allah who sent down the Book, and He takes wilāyah of the righteous.” (7:196)

According to this usage, Allah swt is the Walī of the faithful (the righteous). So Tawalli (to take as walī) is mutual in that Allah swt is the Walī of the faithful: "Allah is the Walī of the faithful" (2:257) and also true believers are Allah swt’s walīs: “Look! The friends (walīs) of Allah will indeed have no fear nor will they grieve.” (10:62)

In *Tafsīr-e Nemuneh*, the following explanation is given for the above verse:

Awliyā’ (walīs in Arabic) is the plural form of walī which is derived from "waliya" (in Arabic, the infinitive form of walī in the past tense, normally taken as the original root of the verb), "yaliy" (the infinitive form of walī in the present tense). The original root of the verb means that no intermediate



agent exists between two things which are successive. For this reason, everything or everyone that is close to another, whether by place, time, genealogy (family) or status, is called walī. And this is the reason that the word walī is used for guardian, friend and so on.

So Allah's walīs are those for whom there is no kind of obstacle or any distance between them and Allah swt. These are the ones from whose hearts all veils have been removed and in the light of knowledge, faith and good deeds, they see Allah swt (with their heart) in such a way that there remains no doubt for them...<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (A.S) are our walīs and if we accept them as our walīs, we are also their walīs. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Arabic verbal mode of mufā'alah (a verbal mode in Arabic which normally indicates that an action is mutual) is frequently used to indicate a mutual relationship between the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (A.S) on the one hand and us on the other hand. For example, in the sermon of Ghadīr, the Holy Prophet (S) stated:

“For whomsoever I was mawlā, ‘Ali (S) is then his mawlā. O’ Allah! Take the one as walī (or mawlā) who takes him as his walī and consider the one as your enemy who considers him as an enemy.”<sup>7</sup>

So muwalat (taking as walī) is a mutual relationship. In the prayer which follows Ziyārat-e Āl-e Yāsīn, we implore Allah swt to: "Grant me devotion filled with the light of taking Muhammad (S) and his Household (A.S) as walīs."

When somebody or something is close to another in such a way that there is nothing between them as an obstacle, the root verb walayah (infinitive form in the past tense) and yalīyu (infinitive form in the present tense) are used in Arabic to form other derivatives from them. For example, a derived verb form of them is used in the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

“...the faithless who live in your vicinity” (9: 123)

This denotes those faithless people who are living near Muslims without any other tribes or groups between them and the Muslims.

If we wanted to emphasize the mutuality of the wilāyah relationship, we would use its verbal mode of mufā‘alah (which was mentioned and explained above). With respect to the faithless it is not right to use muwālāt, because although Allah swt is close to them, they are far from Him and so there is no such mutual relationship of muwālāt. But in the case of the believers, where Allah swt is their Mawlā and they are His Mawlā, then there is a mutual relationship of muwālāt. The relationship between believers and the Infallibles is also mutual. They are walīs for the believers: “Your guardian is only Allah, His

Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down.” (5: 55)

And also their mawlās as in:

“Whomever I was his mawlā, then ‘Ali is his mawlā”<sup>8</sup>

And the believers can tell them:

“I am a walī for you.”<sup>9</sup>

“I am a mawlā for you and I am among your followers.”<sup>10</sup>

Ayatollah Misbāh explains this issue as follows:

Sometimes when two things are close to one another, the wilāyah relationship is mutual. For example, the Qur’an says: “But the faithful, men and women, are walīs of one another.” (9:71) Every believer is the walī for another, and vice versa, while both of them have influence over each other. The relationship between Allah swt and the believers is of the same kind. On the one hand we have: “Allah is the walī of the faithful...” (2:257) While on the other hand we have: “Look! The walīs of Allah...” (10: 62) So, Allah is the Walī of the faithful and also the faithful are walīs of Allah.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere, he states:

Thus, the relationship of wilāyah is mutual and both sides influence each other. Naturally when two friends have common beliefs and emotions, they influence each other's behaviour: "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another." (9:71) Both sides are walīs for each other and both influence each other. However, it is not only amongst mankind and sometimes this relationship is formed between "Allah" and "mankind".<sup>12</sup>

**Note:** It should be noted that the mutuality of the relationship does not necessarily mean the equality of the two sides in this relationship. Certainly, wilāyah of Allah swt over the believers differs from the believers' wilāyah with Allah swt. And also the wilāyah of divinely appointed leaders i.e. the Prophet and the Imams over the believers differs from the wilāyah of the believers with them. One side is the leader and the other side is the disciple. One is to be obeyed and the other is obedient. One is guiding and the other is receiving guidance. But so much love, closeness and mutual understanding exists between the two sides that it is as if there is a kind of reciprocity and partnership in this relationship.<sup>13</sup>

### **Essential elements of wilāyah**

Now, we will briefly study the essential elements of wilāyah. The author has been thinking for a long time about the essence and nature

of our wilāyah relationship with Allah swt, His Apostle (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). Although the author considers himself to be very far from a thorough comprehension of this issue, he does believe that wilāyah has three essential elements:

1. Love and devotion
2. Knowledge
3. Obedience

Wilāyah is not regarded as any common or usual kind of guardianship or mastery. There must be devotion, sincerity and true-heartedness between different parties involved in wilāyah. When one considers Allah swt or His Apostle (S) as his walī, most surely it does not mean guardianship of the kind practiced by worldly rulers or tyrannical leaders, who rule only over bodies and not over souls. As was mentioned before, although Allah swt is in one sense the Walī for all beings in creation, however, He allowed mankind to choose a walī for himself in a responsible manner and thus the believer is the one who, through knowledge and love, chooses Allah swt as his Walī. Therefore based on Allah swt's blessed command, he will then benefit from the wilāyah of Allah swt's Apostle (S.) and his successors (A.S).

The kind of knowledge meant here is considered to be far deeper than the usual knowledge or understanding that exists between any superior and his inferior or even between two neighbours or

colleagues; which is normally nothing more than the common knowledge without which no relationship can be formed. The knowledge which is meant here is the one that is sometimes called the “truth of knowledge”. It is comprehensive and at the same time so profound and effective that the one who possesses it cannot disregard or disobey what or whom the knowledge is about. In other words, the true believer who accepts wilāyah, knows his walīs i.e. Allah swt, then His Apostle (S) and then the Imams (A.S) to the best of his ability. He then becomes captivated and enthralled by them,<sup>14</sup> organizes his life based on obedience to them,<sup>15</sup> respects and attends to their will before his own<sup>16</sup> and eventually considers their pleasure as his own.<sup>17</sup>

When the above explanation is taken into consideration, it becomes clear why it is of utmost importance to know the “Imam of the Age (A.S)”.<sup>18</sup> “Knowing the Imam of the Age (A.S)” would not merely involve the kind of common knowledge that everyone could have at any time. Knowing the Imam of the Age (a.s) means knowing the personality and teachings of the Imam (A.S), knowing his age and knowing what the Imam (A.S) wants us to do in different situations and circumstances. This kind of knowledge can be the preliminary step towards action for everyone and can lead both individuals and society as a whole to success and happiness.

### **Collective Nature of Wilāyah**

Following on from, and in addition to, the issues discussed previously, this paper will introduce and explain the idea that wilāyah is a close spiritual bond between believers and the Infallibles which binds their destinies in this world and in the hereafter. Contrary to what many people think, wilāyah is not the relationship between individual believers and the Prophet and the Imams, but rather it is the relationship between all believers and them and also amongst the believers themselves. For example, in our time, Imam Mahdi (A.S) is the walī of all the believers, and also the believers are his walīs and each others' as well:

“But the faithful, men and women, are walīs of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the alms, and obey Allah and His Apostle. It is they to whom Allah will soon grant His mercy. Indeed Allah is all-Mighty, all-Wise.” (9: 71)

“Indeed those who have believed and migrated and waged jihad with their possessions and persons in the way of Allah, and those who gave [them] shelter and help, they are walīs of one another. As for those who have believed but did not migrate, you have no

walāyah with them whatsoever until they migrate...”

(8: 72)

Unbelievers also have leaders and they are walīs for their leaders and for each other:

"As for the faithless, they are walīs of one another..."

(8: 73)

"...Indeed the wrongdoers are walīs of one another, but Allah is the Walī of the god wary." (45: 19)

The destinies of unbelievers and their leaders are also tied to one another. Those who follow a leader in this world, take him as walī, and also take each other as walīs, will be gathered together in the Hereafter and will be led together to Heaven or Hell. The Holy Qur‘an states:

“The day We shall summon every group of people with their imam, then whoever is given his book in his right hand they will read it, and they will not be wronged so much as a single date-thread.” (17: 71)

Commenting on this verse, ‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī states:

“We can understand from the verse that it is about Pharaoh, one of the leaders who led people astray: "On the Day of Resurrection he will lead his people



and conduct them into the Fire: an evil goal for the incoming!" (11: 98) And also from the following verse: "So that Allah may separate the bad ones from the good, and place the bad on one another, and pile them up together, and cast them into hell.." (8: 37)

Also, from many other verses, it is understood that people who go astray never become separated from their walīs. The inevitable result of such a belief is that they will be gathered accompanying their leaders on the Day of Judgment... therefore the apparent understanding would be that the imam of every group is the one whom is taken by those people as their walī, whether he is the imam of the Right or the imam of the Wrong."<sup>19</sup>

‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī quotes a hadith from Imam Sādiq (A.S) which is cited in *Tafsīr-e Burhān* from Ibn Shahr Āshūb which says:

“Do you not praise Allah? On the Day of Resurrection, He will summon all groups to join whom they have taken as their walīs. We will join the Apostle of God (S) and you will join us.”<sup>20</sup>

In *Tafsīr-e Nemūneh*, the same hadith goes on saying:

“Where do you think you will be taken? By the Lord of Ka‘bah, to Heaven. (Imam (A.S) repeated the last sentence three times.)”<sup>21</sup>

‘Allāmah Tabātabāeī also quotes from *Tafsīr-e ‘Ayāshī* that Imam Sādiq (A.S) commented on the verse 71 of Chapter Isrā’ by saying:

“On the Day of Resurrection Allah will ask: Does not your God’s justice necessitate separating people according to whom they have taken as their walīs? They will answer: Yes.” Then Imam Sādiq (A.S) said: “Then Allah will order them to be separated from each other and they will do so.”<sup>22</sup>

The Holy Qur’an states about the faithless: “The faithless will be driven to hell in throngs...” (39: 71) And also about the faithful: “Those who are wary of their Lord will be led to paradise in throngs...” (39: 73) There is much evidence regarding this matter.

Thus, relationships by blood, through marriage and all other customary and conventional ones come to an end when we experience death. Then every person as an individual is responsible before Allah swt:

“And each of them will come to Him individually on the Day of Resurrection.” (19: 95)

“Certainly you have come to Us alone, just as We created you the first time, and left behind whatever We had bestowed on you. We do not see your intercessors with you —those whom you claimed to be [Our] partners in [deciding] you[r] [fate]. Certainly all links between you have been cut, and what you used to claim has forsaken you!” (6:94)

Depending on the way a person lives in this world and the wali he takes, he will be gathered into the group with which he is most in harmony and fits the most and then will follow his leader towards Heaven or Hell.

Furthermore, it should be realised that the love and devotion between the faithful and their leaders, and also amongst the faithful themselves will last and they will also receive much help from Allah swt and from the righteous leaders in His court. However, the faithless, even if grouped together, will receive no kindness or devotion from each other:

"On that day, friends will be one another's enemies, except for the god wary." (43: 67)

Indeed, the faithless will implore Allah swt to give their friends more punishment:

“He will say, ‘Enter, along with the nations who passed before you of jinn and humans, into the Fire!’ Every time that a nation enters [hell], it will curse its sister [nation]. When they all rejoin in it, the last of them will say about the first of them, ‘Our Lord, it was they who led us astray; so give them a double punishment of the Fire.’ He will say, ‘It is double for each [of you], but you do not know.’” (7:38)

The leaders of the wrongdoers will denounce their followers:

“When those who were followed will disown the followers, and they will sight the punishment while all their means of recourse will be cut off.” (2: 166)

When the followers become aware of their leaders’ powerlessness and denouncement of them, they will also want to denounce their leaders:

“And when the followers will say, ‘Had there been another turn for us, we would disown them as they disown us [now]!’ Thus shall Allah show them their deeds as regrets for themselves, and they shall not leave the Fire.” (2: 167)

It is important to note that when the followers experience their leaders’ unkindness and denouncement of them, instead of saying that they will now denounce their leaders, they will say, “Would that we

could return to the world to denounce our misguided leaders as they have now done to us.” It might mean that they know that it is too late to denounce their leaders. They spent their whole lives following those who never really loved them and just used them for their own benefit. And then they will all go down into the depths of the Hell together and will not be able to separate themselves from each other.

### **The social function of wīlāyah**

In this section, we will study what the faithful are like and how the wīlāyah of Allah swt creates unity amongst them in such a way that in all situations, whether in times of comfort or hardship, in this world or the hereafter, they always think about each other, love each other and they are quite willing to sacrifice their lives, property and time not only for their walīs, but also for their sisters and brothers in religion. This is what they learn from their leaders, who are the exemplars of loyalty and kindness and are not neglectful of their followers even for a moment.

We should carefully consider why the Holy Prophet (S) stated: “The faithful are like components of one building where each part supports another.” And “The faithful are like one soul.” And “Friendship and compassion of the faithful make them like parts of one body; when some parts are in pain, the other parts would not be at rest.”<sup>23</sup>

It is wīlāyah that makes an integrated and fully functioning body out of the faithful. It is wīlāyah that melts any kind of self-centeredness and egotism and causes love and self-sacrifice to flourish. Wīlāyah is the spirit and soul of Islam and it can give spiritual life to Islamic communities.

In what follows, we will study some important teachings from the most well-known supplications and ziyārāts concerning this issue:

### **Ziyārat-e ‘Āshūrā**

In Ziyārat-e ‘Āshūrā we find ver profound ideas about the way the faithful should relate to each other and form a very united and homogenous community. For example, in one place we read:

“O’ Abā ‘Abdillāh! Indeed, I am at peace with whoever is at peace with you and I am at war with whoever makes war with you, until the Day of Resurrection.”

What is emphasized in this part of Ziyārat-e ‘Āshūrā is that taking wīlāyah of the Imam (A.S) must have two results: to love his friends and to fight against his enemies. Therefore, it is by no means enough that one just loves Imam Husayn (A.S) and considers e.g. Yazīd as an enemy, rather one must love their friends and makes efforts to remain

always at peace with those who are at peace with them forever, right up until the Day of Resurrection. This is the real challenge; otherwise just to love the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) is not difficult. The only time one should be able to claim that one loves the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) is when one loves their friends and by no means harms or hurts them.

In another part we implore:

“O’Abā ‘Abdillāh! Indeed I seek closeness to Allah and His Apostle and to the Commander of the Faithful (A.S) and to Fatimah (A.S) and to Hasan (A.S) and to you through wīlāyah with you and by denouncing the ones who martyred you and those who made war with you and through denouncing those who laid the foundations and those who built upon them and carried out oppression and cruelty upon you all and upon your followers.”

In this part of the zīyarat, the way of seeking nearness to Allah swt, the Holy Prophet (S) and his Household (A.S) is considered to be through taking wīlāyah of Imam Husayn (A.S) and denouncing those who fought against him and whoever laid the foundations for oppressing the Household (A.S) and it becomes clear that this denunciation also includes those who oppress the followers of the Imams (A.S). So, the issue is not confined to Karbalā or to those in Imam Husayn (A.S)’s army and Yazīd’s army. It is not even confined

to the early stages of Islam and those on the side of the Household of the Prophet (A.S) and those on the opposition's side; but rather this positioning will continue until the Day of Resurrection and will be repeated in all lands that are like Karbalā and at all times throughout history which are like 'Āshūrā. This is why we say: "All days are 'Āshūrā and all lands are Karbalā".

Therefore, everyone must be very careful not to do any injustice to any person, since this is one of the greatest sins in Islam and everyone must be extraordinarily careful not to do injustice to the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) since this is considered by the Ahl al-bayt (A.S) as an act of injustice against themselves, no matter whether the person who is unjust claims to be himself one of their followers or not.

Immediately following the above section, when the supplicant has had some mental preparation, he states:

“...and I seek nearness to Allah and then to you through wīlāyah with you and your friends and through denouncing your enemies and those who fought against you and denouncing their adherents and followers.”

In the above section, the way of seeking nearness to Allah, the Holy Prophet (S) and his Household (A.S) is considered to be through taking wīlāyah of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Household (A.S) and



wilāyah of their friends and their followers and through denouncing the enemies of the Household (A.S), their followers and their friends. So, one important factor in seeking nearness to Allah swt and the Household (A.S) is befriending and taking wilāyah of their followers. Then, following on from the above section, the section mentioned first is repeated again with the addition of an important issue:

“Surely, I am at peace with those who are at peace with you, and I am at war with those who are at war with you; and I am a walī of those who are in wilāyah with you and an enemy to those who are enemies to you.”

Then we implore Allah regarding some requests:

“So then I ask Allah, who has honored me with recognition of all of you and recognition of your walīs and has also granted me the opportunity to denounce your enemies, that He places me with you, both in this world and the hereafter, and that He makes firm my honest and truthful stance in your presence both in this world and in the hereafter. And I ask Him (Allah) that He enables me to reach the most praised station that you have with Allah and that He grants me the ability to seek justice for those who shed your blood

with the rightly guided Imam, who shall surely reappear and speak the truth.”

Thus for the four requests we implore Allah swt, “who has honored me with recognition of all of you and recognition of your walīs and has also granted me the opportunity to denounce your enemies”. These requests must be related to knowing the Household (A.S) and their walīs as well as denouncement of their enemies. Generally, when we call on Allah swt using one of His Attributes and then ask for something or when we implore Him for something and then praise Him with some of His Attributes, there should be some form of correlation between the request and the Attribute. For example, it is stated in the Holy Qur‘an:

“Say, ‘My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and You are the best of the merciful.’” (23: 118)

In this verse, there is a correlation between imploring for forgiveness and mercy and the attribute of mercifulness. Another example is:

“He said, ‘My Lord! Forgive me, and grant me a kingdom that does not befit anyone except me. Indeed You are the All-Munificent.’” (38: 35)

Here there is a strong correlation between asking for forgiveness and a kingdom from Allah swt by appealing to His Munificence. The same can be said about the following verse:

“...and turn to us clemently. Indeed You are the All-Clement, the All-Merciful.” (2: 118)

So it can be concluded that having recognition of the Household (A.S) and their walīs and denouncing their enemies are necessary for the fulfillment of those four requests. In fact, we implore Allah swt, who has bestowed the above-mentioned three prerequisites, to grant us our demands and show us His Mercy. The four requests are:

1. To be with the Household (A.S) in this world and the hereafter.
2. To stand firm and be on the right path with the Household (A.S)
3. To achieve the praiseworthy status that the Household (A.S) have before Allah swt.
4. To take revenge for the blood of the Household (A.S) in the company of the Imam of our Time (A.S)

To be with the Household (A.S) in this world does not mean physically being with them; for it is not possible during the Time of Concealment, nor was it achievable for many Shī‘ites even at other times. Furthermore it might even be quite unpleasant if everyone wanted to go to the residence of the Imams (A.S) and live there. In view of what was mentioned before, it seems that knowing the

Household (A.S) and more specifically the Imam of our Time (A.S) means that we know the Imam (A.S), the time, and the Imam's (A.S) aims and goals at this time. We should know the faithful and those who have his wilāyah and we should have enough knowledge about their condition, needs, potentials and their efforts. We also have to know our enemies and keep away from their plans and actions (by denouncing them) and by generally keeping away from associating with them.. If we do all the these things, then we can be hopeful of being considered as being with the Household (A.S) in this world and the hereafter, remaining on the right path and not going astray and then in the end being gathered together with the Household (A.S) on the Day of Resurrection. As we read:

“To be assembled with you (A.S)”<sup>24</sup>

Our ultimate goal is to follow the Holy Prophet (S) and his Household (A.S) when entering Heaven and to live where they live.. Before then, our short-term wish is to be beside Imam Mahdī (A.S), whether alive or resurrected, at his service and not against him when he (A.S) starts his movement:

“.....in your return and .... in your government”<sup>25</sup>

“O Allah! If death occurs between me and him (before his reappearance) death which You have made necessary and decreed for your servants, then raise me from my grave, wrapped in my shroud, my sword

unsheathed, my spear bared, answering the call of the caller in cities as well as deserts.”<sup>26</sup>

If the faithful are like one body, united and gathered around the wali of Allah swt or his deputies, and support each other from the heart in word and deed, happiness will surely be granted to them in this world and the hereafter. Furthermore the bitter period of separation and the Time of Concealment will pass and the sweet time of reappearance and union will come; about which Imam Mahdi (A.S) has stated:

“Surely, if our Shī‘ites – may Allah help them for their obedience to Him – were united in their hearts securely on [their] promises [with us], there would not be any delay in [the blessing of] meeting us.”<sup>27</sup>

It is very likely that if the Shī‘ites are separated and disconnected, they will be surrounded by calamities and deviations and their enemies who appear to be friends and ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’ will hunt them down.

### **Du‘a of Nudbah**

In that part of the Du‘a of Nudbah where the prayers reach fever pitch and total enlightenment and the supplicant adoringly implores Imam Mahdi (A.S), he says:

Is there any helper with whom I can prolong my weeping and lamenting?

Is there any lonely mourner whom I may accompany in mourning when he mourns in private?

Is there any eye in pain for you like an eye pricked by thorn so that my eye can help it with tears?

Although weeping and crying about something might be considered a private and personal matter; however here we are being taught that even in this situation, if we want to express our feelings, we should seek out people with the same beliefs as our own with whom we could then cry more. It does not just mean that when a group of people cry together their combined weeping will be more effective than each individual's alone, but rather it means that when friends cry and weep in each other's company, everyone can cry more and also for longer. This is the fruit of teamwork that increases the efficiency of each individual.

The next question is: "Is there any lonely mourner whom I may accompany in mourning when he mourns in private?" So this is not just a matter of being limited to reading the Du'a of Nudbah in the mosque or other places. In addition to their social relationships in general, the Shi'a should be aware of each other's personal lives in order to share their needs and ideas and thus be allowed in each other's private lives..

It is narrated that once a person called Barid 'Ijli said to Imam Bāqir (A.S) : “You have many followers in Kufah. If you order them, they will obey and follow you.” Imam (A.S) stated: “Can every one of them put his hand into the pocket of his brother in faith when in need, and thus eliminate his need?” He answered: “No.” Imam (A.S) stated: “So (if they are mean and niggardly amongst themselves concerning their possessions) they would be even more niggardly about their lives.”<sup>28</sup> It is interesting that the Imam tests their obedience and loyalty towards himself by asking how much they are ready to share their possessions with their brothers and sisters in faith.

Continuing with the Du'a of Nudbah, after that it is asked: “Is there any eye in pain for you like an eye pricked by thorn so that my eye can help it with tears?” The important point here is that the request for a helper is made once, whilst the announcement of readiness to help is made twice. The sign of a decent society is that its people's readiness to provide help to other people is more than their expectation of receiving help from others, even for important, public goals. Whilst in an unhealthy society, even if its people work for the sake of religion (or think that they do so), firstly each person only cares about his own job, secondly he considers his own job as the most important of all and thirdly although he expects everyone else to help him, yet he is not willing to make any effort for other people or offer any of his own facilities to others.

Many different parts of the Du'a of Nudbah raise the idea of the spirit of teamwork and care for others. The supplicant is not only seeking to fulfill his own personal needs, but also prays for others. For example, we read:

“Will we be able shortly to come over to you on your reappearance to which we eagerly look forward?

When will we be able to drink from your streams (of benevolence) to quench our thirst (for your benevolence)?

When shall you see us and we see you whilst you have unfurled the banner of Islam for victory, at the same time seeing us gathered around you when we, with utmost sincerity (out of love and affection for you), have gathered around you and you are leading the masses? At that time we see you having filled the earth with justice.

So, O Allah! Convey to him from us our sincere greetings and salutations and through these greetings, O our Lord, enhance our honour; and make his place (in Paradise) a home and resting place for us; and give him precedence over us in completing Your Bounties on him until You grant us a place in Your Paradise



and the companionship of martyrs from among the pure and sincere people.”

The supplicant’s requests are for the establishment of truth, the elimination of falsehood, dignity for the walīs of Allah swt and debasement of His enemies, remaining on the right path and not being separated from the Household (A.S):

“O Allah! Through him (Imam) establish the truth and through him destroy falsehood and through him guide those who are close to You and through him disgrace Your enemies.

O Allah! Establish such a relationship and love between us and him (our Imam) that will give us the honour of the company of his ancestors. And let us be of those who always seek their company and stay permanently under their shelter.”

### **Du‘a al-‘Ahd**

The spirit of teamwork is also strongly felt in Du‘a al-‘Ahd. This becomes clear where, for example, the supplicant as a Shi‘a of Imam Mahdi (A.S) implores Allah swt to bless his walī (A.S). Here we see that he does not only care about himself, or at most, his parents, but

before himself and his family, he cares about the faithful men and women everywhere around the world and implores Allah swt thus:

“O Allah, convey to our master, the leader, the guide, the guided, he who rises by Your Command, blessings of Allah be upon him and his pure forefathers from the believing men and women in the east of the earth and its west, in its plains and its mountains, its lands and its seas, and from me and my parents, blessings which weigh as much as of Allah's throne and ink of His words, and whatever His knowledge enumerates and His book encompasses.”

How many believers would there have been in the east and the west of the known world when this supplication was taught by Imam Sadiq (A.S)? How many Shi'a were there in China for example? How many believers travelled on the seas or how many of them were living beyond the seas? Would it not appear that Imam (A.S) wanted to tell you and me that it is seriously expected from us, the Shi'a during the Time of Concealment, who live in an age of propagation and participation in Shi'a societies around the world, to begin our days thinking about the Imam of our Time, concerned about his Shi'a, considering ourselves as part of a whole and thinking about the ummah before making requests about our own personal matters?

At the end of this du'a, we say:

“O Allah! Remove this sorrow (of concealment) from this nation by his presence and hasten for us his reappearance. They (the disbelievers) consider it to be distant while we consider it to be near. For the sake of Your Mercy, O the Most Merciful of all the Merciful.”

### **Du‘a of Iftitāh**

The Du‘a of Iftitāh, especially towards the end, is full of references to issues concerned with community and care for society and the world which relate to the entire body engaged in wilāyah., It is sufficient to read the section below to justify the above claim:

“O’ Allah, we ardently desire [his] honourable government, in which Thou should reactivate Islam and stimulate its followers, and humble and humiliate the imposters and their double dealing, and include us among those who invite people unto Thy obedience, and lead them to Thy approved path, and give us the good of this world and the world to come.

O’ Allah, through him, set in order our disorder; gather and unite our flock; stitch together our sundered separation; turn our want and poverty into sufficiency; lift us up from our degradation; free us

from our misery; pull us out from our debts; eradicate poverty amongst us.

O' Allah, we feel uneasy about and are disturbed by the departure of our Prophet, Thy blessings be on him and on his family, the absence of our walī, too many enemies, our numerical scarcity, widespread disorder, and the vicissitudes of time.

So send blessings on Muhammad and on his family, and help us to overcome this state of affairs at once.

Disperse the ominous clouds hanging over our heads; lend a helping hand to achieve success; bring in the rule of justice and fair play, make us bright and free us from grief, and take us in Your Care. (It is possible) through Your Mercy, O the Most Merciful.”

It is as if we are reading the articles of an association which set out its aims and objectives as well as its difficulties and their solutions. This is an association in which there is no selfishness, egotism, division and polarization, negligence regarding enemies, hopelessness or despair.

### **Ziyārat-e Amīn Allah**

Ziyārat-e Amīn Allah is one of the most authentic and valid Ziyārats according to Shaykh ‘Abbas Qumī and ‘Allamah Majlisi and should be recited in all religious gatherings. It has an additional section which is found in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. Jabir quoted from Imam Baqir (A.S) that once Imam Sajjad (A.S) prayed and declared beside the tomb of Imam Ali (A.S) that:

“O’ Allah, You are my God, Master and Walī. Forgive our friends and withhold our enemies from us and keep them so busy that they cannot bother us. And make the word of truth highest and make the word of falsehood lowest. Indeed, You have power over all things.”

The above sentences indicate that Imams (A.S) have great concern for their followers and also deep concern about the question of truth and falsehood in general. Thus, we must take both of these things into consideration: to be concerned about our friends and walīs both in our prayers and in practice, and to spare no efforts in making truth prevail over the falsehood.

In a letter to Ishaq Neyshāburi, Imam 'Askari (A.S) expressed his love and concern for his friends as follows:

“May Allah swt bless you! Due to Allah’s Mercy, we are the family that constantly cares for our friends and we are happy when Allah's Mercy and Blessings embrace them and we consider each gift bestowed on to them by Allah, the Exalted, as great. May Allah swt completes His Blessings upon you and your friends, and on whom Allah swt has had mercy upon and has shown the truth to them as He did to you. They turn their face away from the falsehood and would not sink into transgression. And to complete the blessings upon you so that you may enter into Heaven. There is no blessing from God that saying Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah!) and praising Allah - Exalted be His names- does not serve as gratitude and thanking for it. So Then I say: Alhamdulillah as much as all the praises which one who praises would praise for the grace Allah swt has bestowed upon you and by which He has saved you from destruction ...”

What kind of love and devotion is it that makes Imams (A.S) care for their friends constantly? The pleasure of Shi’a makes Imams (A.S) happy and their hardships makes Imams (A.S) sad. They consider as great every gift bestowed by Allah swt on the shi’a, as great and know that they themselves are obliged to thank Allah swt because of those gifts and they implore Allah swt to complete His blessings upon the

Shi'a by granting them permission to enter to Heaven. It would be even more interesting when we know that Ishaq Neiyshāburi and his friends were not very good people with regards to Imam 'Askari (A.S) and his father, Imam Hadi (A.S). In this letter which is filled with love and devotion for them, Imam (A.S) states:

“During the age of the previous Imam (A.S) and also during my lifetime up until now, you have undertaken actions which I disagree with.

To which wrong things are you are being directed and to which destination you are heading like animals? You turn your faces from the truth and believe in the falsehood and show ingratitude for the blessings from Allah.”<sup>29</sup>

Imam (A.S), whose heart is so painful because of due to the bad actions of Ishaq Niyshāburi and his friends, still shows love towards them to the extent that even a father does not do towards his children. If the last part of the letter did not exist, one would suppose that the letter was addressed to the most sincere and devoted Shi'a .

In another letter, Imam 'Askari (A.S) wrote to people of Qum as follows:

“...Allah, the Exalted, joined you and us in a close relationship and made a kinship like relationship

amongst us, for Imam Rida (A.S) stated: “The faithful person is like a real brother in relationship to another person.”<sup>30</sup>

We hope that the this article, which used only a few of the many Islamic sources concerning the social aspect of wilāyah, could be a step towards reinforcement of religious brotherhood which will then go further by taking other scientific and practical steps. .Certainly, reinforcement and strengthening of the relationship of wilāyah amongst the Shī‘ites of the Household (A.S) will create the best possible conditions for Islamic unity in the same way that Islamic unity creates the best conditions for friendship and collaboration amongst believers all over the world.

## **Conclusion**

In the present article, the meaning of wilaah was studied using the Holy Qur‘an and hadiths. It became clear that wilāyah is not just a relationship between individual believers and Allah swt’s walīs, nor is it between individual believers and those who have wilāyah. Wilāyah is a social issue that is based on three essential elements: knowledge, love and obedience. In other words, wilāyah is a kind of strong spiritual bond which connects believers to the Infallibles swt’s representative (A.S) and enables them to have the same aim and destination in this world and the hereafter. Wilāyah is a relationship



between all believers collectively and the Infallibles (A.S) and also amongst the believers themselves. Wilāyah establishes a united society and an integrated body of believers which is ruled by the love and devotion amongst them.

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<sup>1</sup> To see commentaries and hadiths regarding this verse refer to *Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr Al-Qur‘an*, vol. 6, pp. 5-25 and *Tafsīr-e Nemuneh*, vol. 4, pp. 421-434.

<sup>2</sup> “Mawlā means walī, guardian, helper and friend.” *Tafsīr-e Nemuneh*, vol. 21, p. 429. The Holy Qur‘an also states:

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ لِلَّهِ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَلَكًا مُّؤْتًا  
 مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ  
 (بقره: 107)

“Do you not know that to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? And besides Allah you do not have any walī or any helper.” (1:107).

Many other verses also emphasize this issue.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Qur‘an states: “Whoever takes Satan as a guardian (walī) instead of Allah has certainly incurred a manifest loss.” (4:119); “Say, ‘Shall I take for guardian (walī) [anyone] other than Allah, the originator of the heavens and the earth, who feeds and is not fed?’” (6:14). “Who feeds and is not fed” could mean that Allah swt is the Benefactor but He is not a beneficiary.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 18:26, 29:22, 32:4, 42:31, ...

<sup>5</sup> Du‘a of Nudbah

<sup>6</sup> *Tafsīr-e-Nemuneh*, vol 8, p. 333.

<sup>7</sup> In these sentences ‘taking as walī’ is in the verbal mode of mufā‘alah which means this relation is mutual.

<sup>8</sup> From the sermon of Ghadīr.

<sup>9</sup> *Ziyārat-e Āl-e-Yāsīn*

<sup>10</sup> Abū Basīr’s talk with Imam Baqir (a.s.) cf. *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 27, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Dar Partu Wilāyat* (In the Light of Wilāyah), p. 265.

<sup>12</sup> In the book *Dar Partu Wilāyat* (In the Light of Wilāyah), pp. 290-291, the author emphasizes that the relationship of wilāyah between Allah swt and mankind is mutual. Ayatollah Misbāh then explains that Allah swt is not influenced by mankind and says:

“When the relationship of wilāyah is formed between mankind and Allah, then could it mean that Allah influences us and we influence Him? The answer is clear: surely, in such a case, there could not exist any counter influencing. It is only Allah who influences us. The wilāyah relationship between mankind and Allah means that man's knowledge grows to be the knowledge gained from Allah, his love becomes a kind of love Allah wants, his behavior becomes so and etc.

Then, in the wilāyah relationship between mankind and Allah, Allah does not gain any influence from man; in fact, He does not gain any influence from any being. However this wilāyah is mutual as well...

Although in this case, wilāyah is also mutual, the influence is just from one side. In other words, the connection between Allah and man is mutual, which means that Allah is close to man and vice versa, but influencing and gaining influence is not mutual.” (*ibid.*, pp. 291 & 292)

<sup>13</sup>This issue is more tangible when considering the relationship of muwālāt between the Holy Prophet (S), the Imams (A.S) and their followers, and it is emphasized more. However, Allah swt is so much higher in status in comparison to the believers that one needs to be considerably more careful about the usage of words and thus the word ‘muwālāt’ is used less, although both sides are walīs for each other and sometimes the verbal mode of mufā‘alah is even used (that Allah swt is grammatically subject and the believers are the object). For example, in the sermon of Ghadīr, the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h) says this sentence about ‘Ali (a.s.) “O Allah! Be the walī of whosoever is the walī of him [‘Ali (a.s.)]”. In the case of the Imams and the believers because both the believers and the Imams (a.s.) are human and created beings, one can talk more easily about the relationship between them and so the word ‘muwālāt’ is used frequently.

<sup>14</sup> Verse 35: 28 and other similar verses explain how knowledge leads to captivation with and awe of Allah swt.

<sup>15</sup> Verse 3: 31 and other similar verses explain how love and devotion lead to obedience.

<sup>16</sup> Verse 33: 6 and other similar verses explain how the right and will of the walī is prior to the right and will of one’s self.

<sup>17</sup> Verse 4: 65 and other similar verses indicate that the believer, in addition to obeying his walī, must be satisfied with his decision and must consider his walī’s will as prior to his own.

<sup>18</sup> Referring to the prophetic hadith reported by all Islamic schools of thoughts: “One who dies and does not know the Imam of his age, has died of the Age of Ignorance”, ‘Allamah Majlisī considered this hadith as a mass reported hadith among all Islamic schools of thoughts. Cf. *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 8, p. 368.

<sup>19</sup> *Tarjomeh Al-Mizān*, vol. 13, p. 229.

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Mizān fi Tafsīr Al-Qur’an*, vol. 13, p. 170.

<sup>21</sup> *Tafsīr-e Nemūneh*, vol. 12, pp. 204, 213.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Mizān fi Tafsīr Al-Qur’an*, vol. 13, p. 171.

<sup>23</sup> *Tafsīr-e Nemūneh*, vol. 3, pp. 33.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ziyarat Jami'ah Kabirah*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Du'a al-'Abd*

<sup>27</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 53, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 52, p. 273.

<sup>29</sup> *Pishwayan-e Hidayat* (the Leaders of Guidance), vol. 13, PP. 269-270

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 277.

# **Proximity amongst Islamic Schools of Thought: A necessity for Muslims in the Contemporary Era**

**Abdolhusein Moezzi**

*“Indeed this community of yours is  
one community, and I am your  
Lord. So worship Me.” (21:92)*

A very important and immediate need of the Muslim world is to achieve proximity among different schools of thought in Islam. It is necessary for all Muslims to unite by focussing on the true teachings and values of Islam based on the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet’s Sunnah, and the enlightening teachings of the religious leaders. In October 2007 the Islamic Centre of England had organised a conference to fulfil its momentous Islamic duty by following on the footsteps of reformist thinkers and on the footsteps of the Imam Khomeini who emphasised Islamic unity and proximity among Islamic schools of thought from the beginning of Islamic movement and up to the last

moment of his fruitful life, and following the wise guidance of the leader of Islamic Revolution, His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, who named the Persian calendar year (21 March 2007 to 20 March 2008) as the Year of Islamic Cohesion.

This paper contains material presented at the conference in the hope that this activity can be revived. It is only by achieving unity that we can move forward and fulfill our responsibility to establish a just society.

### **Necessity for Achieving Proximity**

**First Point:** From the nineteenth century onwards, there existed in the Muslim world two main attitudes amongst Muslim scholars with regards to the West:

- 1- A positive attitude that those who were fond of the scientific developments and advances pursued. They described the way of progression and success to be in following the Western political, social and cultural philosophies and theories.
- 2- A non-positive attitude which stressed going back to Islam's glorious past and guarding Islamic identity by using all aspects of Islam. This was a reaction to the decline of Muslims and losing their dignity and grandeur.

We can see that after the Second World War, the first approach permeated the Muslim world, and many Muslim elites and politicians followed the West and organised their social, political and cultural lives based on the Western approach.

During the final two decades of the twentieth century, the attitude of going back to the Islamic identity and its revival strengthened and led to extensive movements. A wave of revival spread across the Muslim world from East Asia to North Africa and particularly with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, this wave impressed itself upon, and bewildered, many in the world, especially those in the West.

**Second Point:** From the early sixteenth century, Western civilisation surpassed other civilisations and categorised all the other societies from primitive to advanced civilisations and in this category considered itself to be the pinnacle of civilization. As time passed, Western civilisation, especially the liberal democracies in the West, not only humiliated others but also needed a foreign state to show their pre-eminence and prominence. Thus, after World War II, the Cold War emerged between the Eastern and Western blocs. In that final decade of the twentieth century after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this conflict ended as well. But still the West needed an imaginary foreign enemy and to present this imaginary enemy as a threat to its existence to keep its internal vigour and the aim of

achieving sovereignty over the whole world, so it can carry out its planned policies in order to dominate the world.

Thus, on the basis of this proposition, the theory of “Clash of Civilisations” was devised at the dawn of the twenty first century. After the collapse of Soviet Union the German chancellor, the French prime minister and the NATO chairman in 1995 concurred that “Islamic Fundamentalism” threatens the West the same way communism does. And also, the former American president officially announced before the U.S. Congress that we should focus on “Islamic Fundamentalism” instead of the Soviet Union.

In order to present this theory as a viable threat, the West needed to convince the people all over the world and particularly the Westerners that Islam is not only a threat to the West but also a great threat to humanity.

It is no secret that the largest and most powerful multi-media sources including news agencies, television stations, news papers and magazines and even blockbuster movies and video and computer games are at the disposal of the West. Thus, after the West took the decision that the communism threat is now over but the new threat of Islam has emerged, the media launched the negative publicities and propagandas.

To this end, the Western multi-media companies began to portray Islam as a violent religion full of terror and bloodshed. They



demonstrated to the public that Islam is a very large threat to the West.

**Third Point:** To prove the threat of Islam to the West, some politicians pursued another policy which was to cast divisions and fractions between Muslims, by amplifying the theological, jurisprudential and historical differences amongst Muslims and inciting their religious emotions against one another. They wanted to achieve a number of aims. The most important of those being:

- 1- By causing religious conflict and bloodshed between the different sects of Islam, they wanted to show the West how the Muslims have blind prejudices and are illogical and their only logic is violence.
- 2- To show the West if this is how Muslims treat each other imagine how they are going to treat foreigners!
- 3- To put an end to the revival of Muslims by these religious divisions and sectarian conflicts, and to prevent Muslims from achieving their main goal of the revival of Islam and the Islamic identity.

### **Proximity among Different Schools of Thought**

Now after this introduction, one has to ask the following questions:

Is it not time for the intellectuals, theoreticians and the scholars of the Muslim world, either Shi'a or Sunnis, to come together and work towards bringing hearts and minds of Muslims across the world closer, by benefiting from the assets available in Islam, the Qur'an and the Prophet's (S) tradition and example, and prove to the world and particularly to the West that Islam is a religion of justice, peace, brotherhood, equality and humanity and that its prophet is the prophet of compassion and benevolence?

Is it not time to prove to the world that Islam is not the religion of violence and conflict but the most formidable opposition to terror and violence?

Is it not time to come together with empathy, understanding and compassion and tell the world the statement by French intellectual, Boulian Wielers who has said: "Mohammed's religion is so intellectual that in order to convey its message, you need not any force or wrath, you just need to put its principles across to people and they would join it. The principle of Mohammed's (S) religion is so in line with logic and common sense that in a short period of time of less than fifty years it filled the hearts of half the population of the world."

Is it not time to come together with empathy, understanding and compassion and prove that Islam is not a threat for the West or indeed for anyone else in the world? And that Islam does not want to

go to war with anyone and that Muslims do not have any wish to expand their territories?

And is it not time to prove to the world that the message of Islam is peace, justice and humanity?

Is it not time to come together with empathy and understanding to find a solution for the sectarian and religious conflicts that are built by foreign secret agents or people who are unknowingly serving their ends and stop the bloodshed of innocent Muslims every day?

Is it not time to come together with empathy, understanding and compassion, to interact with young Muslim girls and boys who live in the world of information explosion to respond to the many innuendoes which are raised by different programmes on television and the internet about Islam with finesse and accuracy, and with the consideration of the time we live in, so that we can prevent them from being in bewilderment and confusion and God forbid from going astray, and to equip them with the genuine teachings of Islam?

### **Unity of God and Unity of Cause, the Most Important Axis of Proximity**

But a question always emerges whenever there is a discussion of proximity among Islamic schools of thought. The question is: How

and with what discourse can we invite the Muslim thinkers as well as the followers of various denominations of Sunni and Shi'a sects to proximity and ask them to engage in intellectual give and take?

In brief, we must realise that the most important principles in proximity discourse are the unity of God and the unity of cause, because Islam is the religion of *Tawhid* and *Tawhid* is, in turn, the spirit of Islam. *Tawhid* is not only one of the principles of our belief, but also the distillation of beliefs, teachings, and individual and social programs of Islam. Since *Tawhid* is the main pillar of Islam and is rooted in the innate nature and foundation of all human beings, it can help the Muslims, regardless of their race, language, nationality and gender, achieve not only the goal of proximity but also the goal of unity. Hence, Islam commands Muslims to establish the United Worldwide Muslim Community (*ummah wāhidah*) based on the Oneness of God so that under the effulgent rays of *Tawhid* they can achieve wide-ranging physical and spiritual perfection which is what God Almighty wants.

The Prophet of Islam indeed spared no effort during the difficult period of his prophethood to establish the United Community (*ummah wāhidah*) and to bring about the unity and brotherhood of Muslims. He diligently worked towards leading the Muslims away from disunity and waged a struggle against those who were seeking to sow the seeds of discord. He was able to fashion Muslim community into an *ummah wāhidah*, much to the disbelief of the world.

Undoubtedly the unity of cause is among the biggest and most important goals of Islam. Therefore, after Prophet Muhammad (S), the great men of religion, the eminent men of integrity, and Muslim thinkers have emphasised Islamic unity, have warned Muslims against disunity and have reminded Muslims of the ominous consequences of the division and discord.

### **Proximity Began from the Time of Prophet (S)**

The invitation to proximity and Islamic unity and avoiding discord and disunity has not been started by such luminaries as Shaykh al-Maraghi, Shaykh Mustafa ‘Abdur-Razzaq, Shaykh Abdul-Majid Salim, Shaykh Mahmoud Shaltout, Shaykh Tantawi, Ayatollah Boroujerdi, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita, Sayyid Abdul-Hussayn Sharaf al-Din, Imam Khomeini and Imam Khamenei, as well as other Sunni and Shi’a thinkers whose names cannot all be mentioned here. This invitation, indeed, began when God Almighty revealed the following verses to His Prophet:

“Indeed this community of yours is one community,  
and I am your Lord. So worship Me.” (21:92)

“The faithful are indeed brothers.” (49:10)

“Hold fast, all together, to Allah’s cord, and do not be divided.” (3:103)

“and do not be like those who were divided [into sects] and started discord.” (3:105)

“and do not be among the polytheists of those who split up their religion and became sects.” (30:31 & 32)

“and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone” (8:46)

Thus, it becomes clear that the foundation of proximity was in fact established from that time, a foundation based on the unity of God Himself. But since the beginning of the twentieth century the religious leaders, the reformist thinkers and conscious scholars have witnessed that the Muslim Ummah has become divided due to the ignorance of the people and the selfishness and worldly desires of some leaders and rulers who had control over vast sections of the Muslim lands. They noticed that Muslims had lost their past dignity, majesty and grandeur, and that the Islamic culture, ideology and identity of the Muslims have been plundered by the enemies of Islam and the colonialists.

Inspired by the teachings of the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet (S), these great men promoted the proximity among Islamic schools of thought so that they could bring about awareness among

the Muslims all over the world, compensate for past mistakes and regain their past majesty and grandeur in the form of the Worldwide Islamic Community.

They rightly believed in the fact that the differences in opinions and jurisprudential, theological and historical disputes were only accidents, and not part of the essence of Islam, and hence they should not prevent Muslims from getting closer to each other in their thinking, their hearts and their aspirations. They believed that the proximity could be achieved by setting aside dogmatic thoughts, blind imitation and ignorant prejudice and by engaging in debate, dialogue, writing, speaking and enlightening one another about the truth. They believed that through piety, cooperation and good deeds, the Islamic Ummah could be guided toward establishing united worldwide Muslim Nation.

They believed that those whose disputes go back to the essence of their faith, for instance the Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians within the Christendom, are not only getting closer to each other, but also are going to become united and become one entity. At the same time they were wondering how the Muslims—who enjoy the unity in the essence of their religion, and who all worship one God and follow one Prophet and pray in the direction of one Qiblah, and circumambulate around one Ka'bah—cannot achieve proximity and cannot avoid separation and enmity.

They were asking the following questions: How can the followers of Islam not achieve unity despite the fact that Islam itself is a religion that is based on reason, understanding, wisdom, and brotherhood; a universal religion whose message is peace and justice and whose teachings are founded upon Oneness of God?

We believe that as long as Muslim thinkers and scholars have not gathered as elites and have not paved the way for the path of unity, the ultimate goal of establishing a united worldwide Muslim Nation will not be achieved. Therefore, one of the first requirements for achieving such a goal would be to create a context for dialogue and proximity. It is hoped that Muslim scholars and thinkers will engage in dialogue and debate about the proximity among Islamic schools of thought which is the most urgent need of the Islamic world today.



# **Pearls of Wisdom: A Selection of hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad**

**Husayn Naghavi**

The Prophet Muhammad (S) has spoken about various aspects of human life, both worldly and heavenly, and his words are curative prescriptions for the various illnesses of human beings. In addition to the sayings quoted in this paper, he has communicated many others on topics too numerous to mention, and on diverse topics such as women, children, orphans, justice, government, leisure and sport, entertainment, selflessness and sympathy, self-restraint, truthfulness, watchfulness, cheating, oppression, relatives, animals and the environment.

## **God and Man**

1. "God's kindness towards His creatures is more than a mother's towards her baby."<sup>1</sup>
2. "Remembrance of God is like polish for the heart."<sup>2</sup>

3. "Serve God as you would if you could see Him because although you cannot see Him, He can see you."<sup>3</sup>
4. "God does not look at your appearance or your possessions, but He looks at your heart and your deeds."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Faithful**

5. A man asked: "O Prophet of God! What is faith?" The Prophet said: "You are a person of faith when your good deed gives you pleasure and your evil deed grieves you."<sup>5</sup>
6. "A believer is like a mirror to another believer. A believer is a brother to another believer."<sup>6</sup>
7. "The most faithful of you are the best mannered."<sup>7</sup>
8. "Believers are like the different parts of a building, each one supporting the other."<sup>8</sup>
9. "You will observe that the believers are like parts of the body in relation to each other in matters of kindness, love and affection. When one part of the body is afflicted, the entire body feels it, there is loss of sleep and a fever develops."<sup>9</sup>

**The True Muslim**

10. “The perfect Muslim is not perfect if he eats until he is full and yet leaves his neighbours hungry.”<sup>10</sup>
11. “A perfect Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands his fellow brothers and sisters are safe.”<sup>11</sup>

**Wisdom, Knowledge and Thought**

12. “Fearing God is the peak (or source) of wisdom.”<sup>12</sup>
13. “Ignorance is the worst kind of poverty, intellectuality is the greatest of riches, and thought is the best form of worship.”<sup>13</sup>
14. “Seek knowledge even in China because acquiring knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim.”<sup>14</sup>
15. “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.”<sup>15</sup>
16. “Retain knowledge by writing it down (recording it).”<sup>16</sup>

**Society**

17. “The best people are those who are the most useful to others.”<sup>17</sup>
18. “A moment of justice is better than a year of worship.”<sup>18</sup>

19. “Cursed be he who imposes his burden on people.”<sup>19</sup>
20. “The best struggle (*jihad*) is a just word before a tyrannical authority.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Friendship and Love**

21. “It is better to sit alone than in the company of bad people and it is even better to sit with good people rather than alone. It is better to speak to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; but silence is better than idle words.”<sup>21</sup>
22. The Prophet of Islam said: “The Apostles said to Jesus: “O Spirit of Allah! With whom should we keep company?” He said: “The person the sight of whom reminds you of God, the speech of whom increases your knowledge and the deeds of whom make you desirous of the other world.””<sup>22</sup>
23. “Seven people shall be sheltered by God in the Shade of His Throne when there will be no shade except His Shade... and two people that love each other for the sake of God...”<sup>23</sup>

### **Family Ties**

24. “The best person among you is the one who treats his family members the best and I am the person who treats his family

in the best way.”<sup>24</sup>

25. A man once told the Prophet that he had many children but had not kissed any of them. The Prophet (S) replied: “Verily, God will only show mercy to those of His servants who show mercy to others.”<sup>25</sup>

26. A person came to the Messenger of God (S) and asked, “Who among people is most deserving of my good treatment?” He said, “Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then those closest to you, then those closest to you”<sup>26</sup>

27. “A child’s affectionate look at their parents is a form of worship.”<sup>27</sup>

28. “Paradise is under the feet of mothers.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Equality of Human Beings**

29. “The God of all people is the same and the father of all people is the same. All of you are children of Adam and Adam was made from earth. The most honourable of you in God’s estimation is the most pious.”<sup>29</sup>

30. “Be careful because you are not better than people who are a different color, unless you are better in piety.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Neighbours**

31. “Gabriel (the Angel of Revelation) is always instructing me about neighbours, so much so that I think that neighbours may inherit from their neighbours.”<sup>31</sup>
32. “The person whose neighbour is not safe from his bad behaviour will not enter Heaven.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Peace**

33. “Forgive him who wrongs you, re-unite with him who cuts you off, do good to him who does you harm and speak the truth although it may be to your disadvantage.”<sup>33</sup>
34. “Do you know what is better than charity, fasting, and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Good Conduct and Morality**

35. “If you guarantee me six things on your part, I shall guarantee you Paradise: Speak the truth when you talk, keep a promise when you make it, when you are trusted with something fulfil your trust, avoid sexual immorality, lower your gaze (out of modesty) and prevent your hands and tongue from

committing injustice.”<sup>35</sup>

36. “The best people are the best mannered.”<sup>36 & 37</sup>

37. “On the Day of Resurrection nothing will weigh heavier in the scale of the believer than good manners.”<sup>38</sup>

38. “When you see flatterers, throw dust in their faces.”<sup>39</sup>

39. “Whoever is kind, God will be kind to him; therefore be kind to man on earth. He Who is in heaven will then show mercy to you.”<sup>40</sup>

40. If Prophet Muhammad (S) heard the crying of a child in the company of its mother during prayer, he would recite only a short chapter of the Holy Qur’an (in order to finish the prayer more quickly and let the mother comfort her child).<sup>41</sup>

41. “Love of this world (dunyā) is the origin of every sin.”<sup>42</sup>

### **Control of Anger**

42. “Anger is like the devil. The devil has been created from fire and fire is extinguished by water. Therefore, when any of you feels angry, you should perform ablution”.<sup>43</sup>

43. “Three things are part of the good morals of a believer. When he is overcome by anger, his anger should not drive him to

falsehood. When he is happy, his happiness should not take him beyond the bounds of what is right. When he has power, he should not stake a claim to something which is not his.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Modesty**

44. “Modesty (hayā) does not bring anything except good.”<sup>45</sup>

45. “God has revealed to me that you must be humble. No one should boast over another, and no one should oppress another.”<sup>46</sup>

46. “If someone does not feel ashamed of anything, then he is likely to do whatever he likes.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Patience**

47. “How wonderful is the situation of a believer. There is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity comes to him, he expresses gratitude to God and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.”<sup>48</sup>

48. “Understand that victory comes to the one who is patient.”<sup>49</sup>



### **The Golden Rule**

49. “None of you (truly) believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.”<sup>50</sup>

### **Harmfulness of Envy**

50. “Truly, envy eats up and takes away good deeds as fire eats up and burns wood.”<sup>51</sup>

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7. Payande, Abulqasim (1337), *Nahj al-Fasābah*, (Tehran: al-Islamiyya Publication)
8. Waseti, Ali b. Muhammad al-Laysi (1376), *Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawā'iz*, (Qum: Dar al-Hadis)

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<sup>1</sup> إن الله تعالى أرحم بعبده من الوالده المشفقه بولدها. (*Rawdat al-Wā'izīn*, p. 503)

<sup>2</sup> ذكر الله جلاء الصدور... (*Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawā'iz*, p. 256)

<sup>3</sup> أعبداً لله كأنك تراه فإن كنت لا تراه فإنه يراك. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 335)

<sup>4</sup> إن الله تعالى لا ينظر الي صوركم و اموالكم ولكن ينظر الي قلوبكم و اعمالكم.

(Ibid. Tradition 719.)

<sup>5</sup> إذا سررتك حسنتك و ساءتلك سيئتك فأنت مؤمن.

(Ibid. Tradition 215 and *Ithnā 'Ashariyya fi al-Mawā'iz al-'Adadiyyah*, p. 10)

<sup>6</sup> المؤمن مرأت المؤمن، المؤمن أخ المؤمن.

(*Ithnā 'Ashariyya fi al-Mawā'iz al-'Adadiyya*, p. 8)

<sup>7</sup> افضلكم ايماناً احسنكم اخلاقاً

(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 420 and *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, Tradition 69.)

<sup>8</sup> المؤمن للمؤمن كالبناء يشدد بعضه بعضاً

(*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah fi al-Mawā'iz al-'Adadiyyah*, p. 8)

<sup>9</sup> مثل المؤمنين في توادهم و تراحمهم كمثل الجسد إذا اشتكى بعضهم تداعي سائرهم بالسهر و الحمي.

(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 2712.)

This tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq like this:

المؤمن أخو المؤمن كالجسد الواحد، أن اشتكى شيئاً منه وجد ألم ذلك في سائر جسده ...

(*Usūl al-Kafī*, Vol. 2, p. 133)

<sup>10</sup> ما أمن بالله و اليوم الاخر من بات شبعان و جاره جائع

(*Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, p. 273)

- 11 المسلم من سلم المسلمون من يده ولسانه  
(*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah fi al-Mawā'iz al-'Adadiyyah*, p. 8)
- 12 رأس الحكمة مخافة الله (Ibid.)
- 13 لافقر أشد من الجهل ولا مال أعود من العقل ... ولا عباده مثل التفكر.  
(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 2505)
- 14 أطلبوا العلم ولو بالصين فإن طلب العلم فريضة علي كل مسلم.  
(Ibid. Tradition 324.)
- 15 أطلبوا العلم من المهد الي اللحد. (Ibid. Tradition 327.)
- 16 قَيِّدُوا الْعِلْمَ بِالْكِتَابِ.
- (*Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, Tradition 8 and *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p. 14)
- 17 سئل رسول الله صل الله عليه و آله من أحب الناس ألي الله؟ قال: أنفع الناس للناس.  
(*Usūl al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 131)
- 18 عدل ساعة خير من عبادة سنة. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1936)
- 19 ملعون من القي كلّه علي الناس. (*Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, Tradition 19)
- 20 أفضل الجهاد كلمه حقّ عند سلطانٍ جائر. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 394)
- 21 الوحدة خير من جليس السوء والجليس الصالح خير من الوحدة وأملاء الخير خير من السكوت و  
السكوت خير من أملاء الشر. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 3194)
- 22 .. قالوا: يا روح الله فمن نجاس أذ؟ قال: من يذكركم الله رؤيته و يزيد في عملكم منطقته و يرغبكم  
في الآخره عمله. (*Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, Tradition 60.)
- 23 سبعة يظلمهم الله تحت ظل عرشه يوم لا ظل إلا ظله: ... و رجلان تحابا في الله ...  
(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1731 & 1732.)
- The Prophet also said: "If a man loves his brother in faith, he should tell him that he loves him." (Ibid. Tradition 1520)
- 24 خيركم خيركم لأهله و أنا خيركم لأهلي (Ibid. Tradition 1520)
- 25 أن رسول الله كان يقبل الحسن بن علي عليهما السلام فقال الاقرب بن حابس: أن لي عشرة من الولد ما  
قبلت أحدا منهم فقال رسول الله (ص): من لا يرحم لا يرحم.  
(*Rawdat al-Wā'izīn*, p. 369)
- 26 أمك أمك ثم أمك ثم أباك ثم الاقرب فالاقرب. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 546.)
- 27 نظر الولد الي والديه حباً لهما عباده. (*Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, Tradition 79.)
- 28 الجنة تحت اقدام الأمهات (8) (*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah fi al-Mawā'iz al-'Adadiyyah*, p. 8)
- 29 أيها الناس إن ربكم واحد و أن أباكم واحد، كلّمك لأدم و آدم من تراب إن أكرمكم عندالله اتقاكم.  
(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1044)
- 30 أنظر فإنك لست بخير من احمر و لا أسود ألا أن تفضله بتقوي. (Ibid. Tradition 562)
- 31 ما زال جبريل يوصيني بالجار حتي ظننت أنه سيورثه. (Ibid. Tradition 2640)
- 32 لايدخل الجنة عبدٌ لا يأمّن جاره بواغيه (15) (*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p.15)
- 33 واعف عمّن ظلمك و صل من قطعك و أحسن إلي من أساء اليك وقل الحق و لو علي نفسك.

(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1842 and *Usul al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 87)

34 ألا أخبركم بأفضل من درجة الصيام و الصلوة و الصدقة؟ صلاح ذات البين فإن فساد ذات البين هي الحالفة. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 458.)

35 تقبلوا اليّ بسبّ أتقبل لكم بالجنة إذا تحدّثتم فلا تكذبوا و إذا وعدتم فلا تخلفوا و إذا ائتمتم فلا تخونوا و غصّوا ابصاركم و احفظوا فروجكم و كفوا أيديكم و ألسنتكم (*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p. 226)

36 See also No 7.

37 خيرّ الناس أحسنهم خلقاً. (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1498)

38 ليس شيء أثقل في الميزان من الخلق الحسن. (Ibid, Tradition 2397)

39 أحتوا التراب في وجوه المدّاحين. (Ibid. Tradition 91)

40 الرّاحمون يرحمهم الرحمن تبارك و تعالي إرحموا من في الارض يرحمكم من في السماء.

(Ibid. Tradition 1679 and *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p. 14)

41 صلّي رسول الله (ص) بالناس الظهر فحفّف في الركعتين الاخيرتين. فلما انصرف قال له الناس: هل حدث في الصلاة حدث؟ ... فقال لهم: أما سمعتم صراخ الصبي؟

(*Al-Furu' Min al-Kāfi*, Vol. 6, p. 48)

42 حب الدنيا رأس كل خطيئة (*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 1342)

43 أنّ الغضب من الشيطان و أنّ الشيطان خلق من النار و إنّما تُطفأ النار بالماء فإذا غضب أحدكم فليتوضأ. (Ibid. Tradition 660)

44 ثلاث من اخلاق الايمان: من إذا غضب لم يدخله غضبه في الباطل و من إذا رضي لم يخرجه رضاه من الحقّ و من إذا قنّز لم يتعاط ما ليس له. (Ibid. Tradition 1267)

45 الحياء لا يأتي إلا بخير.

(Ibid. Tradition 1426 and *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p. 8)

46 إنّ الله أوحى الي أن تواضعوا حتّي لا يفخر أحدٌ علي أحد و لا يبغى أحد علي أحد.

(*Nahj al-Fasābah*, Tradition 678)

47 إذا لم تستحي فاصنع ما شئت. (Ibid. Tradition 238)

48 عجباً لأمر المؤمن، إنّ أمره كلّ خيرٍ و ليس ذلك لأحدٍ إلا للمؤمن إن أصابته سرّاء شكر و كان خيراً له و إن أصابته ضرّاء صبر و كان خيراً له. (Ibid. Tradition 1932)

49 أعلم أنّ النصر مع الصبر... (Ibid. Tradition 363)

50 لا يؤمن عبدٌ حتّي يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه من الخير (*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, p. 15)

51 أنّ الحسد لياكل الحسنات كما تأكل النار الحطب. (Ibid. p. 17)