

## Examining the Implications of the Verse of *Mubāhalah*: Ali as the Prophet's Soul

Morteza Agha Mohammadi<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This article explores the implications of the verse of *Mubāhalah* in relation to the status of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) as the soul of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). The verse, revealed in the context of a confrontation with the Christians of Najran, emphasizes the deep spiritual and existential bond between the Prophet and Ali (as), highlighting Ali's unique position among the companions. Through a qualitative textual analysis of various interpretations and commentaries, including those from both Shia and Sunni scholars, this study investigates how the verse underscores Ali's superior virtues and inherent right to leadership following the Prophet's demise. The article critically examines opposing views, particularly those presented by Ibn Taymiyyah, which seek to diminish the significance of this verse in establishing Ali's caliphate. Ultimately, this study aims to affirm the profound implications of the verse of *Mubāhalah* as a testament to Ali's esteemed role within the Islamic tradition and his rightful place in the succession narrative.

**Keywords:** *Mubāhalah*/*Mubāhala*, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), Soul of the Prophet (pbuh), Caliphate, Najran.



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1. Islamic studies department, Al-Mustafa international university, Qom, Iran:  
mam50025@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

Verse 61 of Surah Al-Imran references the event of Mubāhala, a significant moment in early Islamic history:

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

“Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls, and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.” (The Qur’an 3: 61)

### 1.1. The Importance of the Verse

This verse is crucial in Islamic tradition for several reasons:

A. Theological Significance: The verse highlights the importance of truth and divine justice, emphasizing that falsehood will ultimately be exposed.

B. Historical Context: The *Mubāhalah* incident also serves as a pivotal moment in early Islamic history, illustrating the Prophet's confidence in the integrity of his message and the integrity of his family. It highlights the challenges faced by the Muslim community in confronting theological disputes with other faiths and emphasizes the strength derived from unity and faith.

C. Validation of the Ahlulbayt: The inclusion of Ali and his family in this significant event underscores the esteemed status of the Ahlulbayt within Islam. They are portrayed as the embodiment of purity and truth, distinguishing them from others.

D. Status of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as): One of the most profound implications of this verse is its acknowledgment of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) as the "soul" of the Prophet Mohammad. In the context of *Mubāhalah*, the Prophet brought Ali, along with his daughter Fatimah, and his grandsons Hasan and Husayn (as) as representatives of the Ahlulbayt. This designation not only highlights Ali's intimate relationship with the Prophet (pbuh) but also affirms his elevated status among the companions. By referring to Ali as his soul, the verse indicates that Ali shares a unique and irreplaceable bond with the Prophet, elevating his position in the eyes of the Muslim community.

## 1.2. The Meaning of *Mubāhalah*

*Mubāhalah*, derived from the root *bahlah* (curse) (ibn Mnzūr, 1414 AH, vol.11: 72.), signifies invoking God's wrath upon those who are deceitful. It is about one of the important events in the history of early Islam i.e. the event of Mubāhala between the Prophet and the Christians of Najran. The Christians of Najran had traveled to Medina to debate the divinity of Jesus due to his fatherless birth and rejected the Prophet's logical arguments comparing Jesus to Adam, both created by God's command. Despite repeated reasoning, the Christians remained obstinate. At this point, Allah revealed the command for Mubāhala, inviting both parties to call upon their families and invoke a mutual curse, letting Allah judge the truthful; the Prophet invited them to a mutual invocation of Allah's curse upon the liars. When the Prophet, along with Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain, appeared for the Mubāhala, the Christians, fearing the power of these holy figures, withdrew, recognizing that invoking the curse could result in divine punishment (Tabarī, 2000, vol.6: 481). The event highlighted Islam's moral and spiritual authority while averting confrontation.

## 1.3. Background of the Event in the Narratives

Both Shia and Sunni commentators agree that during the event of Mubāhala, the Prophet Mohammad was accompanied by Ali, Fātima, Hasan, and Husain (Abū Hayyān al-Āndlusī, 1420 A.H, vol.3: 189/ Al-Wāhedī, 1430 A.H, vol.5: 320/ Al-Qurtubī 2008, vol.2: 1037/ Ibn ‘Ādil Al-Hanbalī, 1998, vol.5: 289/ Al-Zuhaylī, 1418 A.H, vol.3: 245/ Al-Hijāzī, 1413 A.H, vol.1: 238/ Al-Khatīb Al-Sharabyīnī, 1285 A.H, vol.1: 222/ Al-Nakhjawānī, , 1999, vol.1: 112/ Al-Jazāerī, 2003, vol.1: 325/ Ibn Jazzī Al-Kalbī, 1416 A.H, vol.1: 155/ Ibn ‘Atiyyah 1422 A.H, vol.1: 477/Al-Ijī Al-Shāfi‘ī, 2004, vol.1: 255 / Al-Baghawī 1420 A.H, vol.1: 450/ Al-Baydāwī, 1418 A.H, vol.2: 20/ Al-Tha’labī, 2002, vol.3: 85/ Al-Khāzin, 1415 A.H, vol.1: 254/ Al-Rāghib Al-Isfahānī, 1999, vol.2: 607/Al-zamakhsharī, 1407 A.H, vol.1: 368/ Al-Sam’anī, 1997, vol.1: 327/Al-Sha’rāwī, 1997, vol.3: 1520/ Al-Māwardī, n.d, vol.1: 398/ Al-Shawkānī, 1414 A.H, vol.1: 339). This event is widely regarded as a key moment demonstrating the virtues of Ahlulbayt. Al-Zamakhsharī, a prominent Sunni commentator, considers it the strongest proof of their excellence (Al-Zamakhsharī, *ibid*: 370). Sunni sources such as Sahīh Muslim and Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal also

recount that when Mu'āwīyah asked Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās why he refused to curse Ali, Sa'd cited Ali's virtues, including his participation in Mubāhala (Al-Naysābūrī, n.d, vol.4: 1871/ Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1995, vol.2: 277/ Al-Hākīm al-Neysābūrī, 1990, vol.3: 117).

The verse calls for "our sons," "our women," and "ourselves," and the Prophet's inclusion of Ali, Fātimah, Hasan, and Husain is seen as highlighting their unique status. Sunni scholars such as Al-Hākīm al-Neysābūrī (Al-Hākīm al-Neysābūrī, *ibid*: 163) and Ibn Hajar al-Haythamī (Al-Haythamī al-Shafī'ī, n.d: 539) affirm the authenticity of these hadiths and the significance of this event, with the latter noting that it demonstrates the superiority of Ahlulbayt over other companions. The hadith of Kisā, narrated in Sahīh Muslim (Al-Naysābūrī, *ibid*: 1883), reinforces this by showing the Prophet's special relationship with the members of his household (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 A.H, vol.1: 369/ Al-Neysābūrī, 1416 A.H, vol.2: 178/ Al-Khatīb al-Sharabyīnī, *ibid*: 223/ ibn 'Ādil al-Hanbalī, 1998, vol.5: 289).

While some, like ibn Kathir, downplay the specific virtues of Ali, even he acknowledges the authenticity of hadiths related to *Mubāhalah* (Ibn Kathīr, 2003, vol.11: 94). Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī, a companion of the Prophet, explicitly links the verse of Mubāhala to Ahlulbayt, identifying "our souls" as referring to both the Prophet and Ali (as) (ibn Kathīr, 1419 A.H, vol.2: 55). This consensus underscores the elevated position of Ahlulbayt within early Islamic tradition. In this context, the verse holds a special significance for Ali, as God instructed the Prophet to bring certain individuals with him for the *Mubāhalah*. The Prophet, following God's directive, practically brought Fatima from the women, Ali from the men, and Hasan and Husain from the children. Based on this action, Hasan and Husain were the embodiment of "our sons," Fatima the embodiment of "our women," and consequently, Ali inevitably represented "our souls." The importance of this phrase is quite clear, as Ali is the only individual among all the companions who, due to his closeness to the Prophet, is referred to as the soul of the Prophet. This alone is sufficient to demonstrate his distinguished position among the companions (Al-Hillī, n.d, 124). Due to this significant implication, many Sunni scholars, whose efforts have been focused on justifying historical events as they occurred, have made great efforts to downplay this issue. Some narrators omitted Ali's name entirely;

a report by Ibn Abī Shaybah illustrates the Umayyads' hostility toward Imam Ali, as his name is excluded from the Companions of *Mubāhalah* — a clear sign of his superiority over other companions:

"Jarir, from Mughayrah, from Al-Sha'bi, said: 'When the Prophet intended to engage in *Mubāhalah* with the people of Najran, he took the hands of Hasan and Husain while Fātima walked behind him.'" (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1409 A.H, vol.6: 379)

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, a disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah, echoes this, stating that when the verse of *Mubāhalah* was revealed, the Prophet took Fātima, Hasan, and Husain for the event (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1987: 264). However, big majority of the Sunni scholars have come to downplay the event and its connotation. The article by applying comparative and analytical method evaluates the views of some outstanding figures.

#### 1.4. Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this article is qualitative textual analysis with a focus on comparative analysis. This approach involves several key elements:

A. Literature Review: it examines the views of some outstanding Sunni scholars regarding the verse of *Mubāhalah* and the merits of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). This establishes a foundation for understanding differing perspectives within Islamic scholarship.

B. Critical Analysis: it analyzes and critiques the arguments presented by these scholars. This involves evaluating their reasoning, identifying potential biases, and assessing the validity of their claims about the verse and its implications.

C. Contextualization: By situating the verse within its historical and theological context, it provides deeper insight into the significance of the event, particularly regarding the status of Ali and the Ahlulbayt (as).

## 2. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Perspective on "Our Souls"

Al-Rāzī discusses the argument presented by Mahmud bin Hasan al-Humsī, a Shia theologian, regarding the phrase "our souls" in the verse of *Mubāhalah*, which refers to Ali (as). Humsī contends that this phrase signifies Ali's superiority over other prophets, except for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He reasons that since it is illogical for the Prophet to bring his own soul to the event, Ali must represent the Prophet's soul, implying their equality in all aspects except where there is explicit evidence

otherwise—such as the Prophet's higher status and Ali not being a prophet. Furthermore, Humsī supports this claim with a hadith, which states that anyone who wishes to see the knowledge of Adam, the obedience of Noah, the forbearance of Abraham, the leadership of Moses, and the piety of Jesus should look at Ali. Al-Rāzī, while acknowledging the claim, responds by citing a consensus that prophets are superior to non-prophets, including Ali (as). He argues that just as the verse is specified to indicate the Prophet's superiority over Ali, it also implies that all prophets are superior to Ali (Al-Rāzī, 1420 A.H, vol.8: 248).

Despite his critique, Al-Rāzī does not deny Ali's superiority over other companions. His assertion of consensus regarding the superiority of prophets over non-prophets lacks solid grounding, as narrations like the one he quotes from Humsī challenge this claim. Moreover, from the Shia perspective, consensus without the involvement of an infallible authority holds no theological weight.

Humsī's argument is supported by the Shia belief that Ali, though not a prophet, possessed *wilayah* (God-given authority), which is considered the essence of prophethood. As discussed in another article by the author, it is plausible for an Imam to be superior to a prophet, as exemplified by Ibrahim, who attained the status of Imamate after passing divine trials, even while being a prophet (Agha Mohammadi, 2024: 96).

### 3. Ibn Taymiyyah's View on “Our Souls”

Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledges that the Prophet took Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain (as) with him for the event of *Mubāhalah*, a fact confirmed by an authentic hadith also found in *Sahīh Muslim*, where the Prophet declared them as his household. However, Ibn Taymiyyah argues that this does not imply Ali's Imamate or his superiority over the other Companions. He further concedes that the event of *Mubāhalah* was exclusively limited to Fatima, Ali, Hasan, and Husain (as). This serves as a rebuttal to opponents of the Ahlulbayt (as) and those who have attempted to distort the hadith by including non-Ahlulbayt among the companions of *Mubāhalah*.



Then, he attempts to reduce the importance of the application of “our souls” upon Ali in several ways:

### 3.1. “Our Souls” Does not Imply Equality

Ibn Taymiyyah's argument challenges the notion of equality between the Prophet and Imam Ali (as) based on the term *anfus* (our souls/ourselves) in the verse of *Mubāhalah*. He contends that "Anfus" does not imply equality, using other Qur'anic verses to demonstrate that the term refers to a collective identity rather than individual equivalence. For example, in verses like "do not defame yourselves" (Qur'an 49:11) or "kill yourselves" (Qur'an 2:54), *anfus* addresses the community without implying equality among its members.

Hence, Ibn Taymiyyah argues that while Ali (as) is included in *anfus* this inclusion does not confer any unique status or privilege upon him. Instead, it reflects a commonality shared by the faithful (Ibn Taymiyah Al-Harranī, 1986, vol.7: 124).

If the term "Anfus" (souls) appears unconditionally, as in the verses “You shall not shed your blood or expel yourselves” (Qur'an 2:84) or “slay the guilty among yourselves” (Qur'an 2:54), it refers to a collective identity, such as ethnic, social, or religious ties. However, in the verse of *Mubāhalah*, where “our sons, our women, and our souls” are mentioned, *anfus* cannot carry this general meaning.

The specific mention of sons and women suggests a closer, more intimate relationship, implying that *anfus* signifies a unique connection rather than a mere tribal or communal bond (Javādī Amulī, n.d, vol.14: 461).

The relationship between a father and son is particularly strong, so when sons and women are mentioned explicitly, *anfus* must carry a special meaning alongside them. It wouldn't make sense to interpret it as a general relationship, as children and women already fall under the broader category of relatives. In other words, it would be redundant to say, "Call your sons, women, and relatives," since sons and women are already included in the term "relatives." If it meant a general relationship, other relatives of the prophet could have been included, but the Prophet brought only Ali (as).



Furthermore, *anfus* is plural, and the Prophet should have brought at least three people if it merely referred to believers, but he brought only Ali (as), indicating a special status. Like verses where *anfus* is mentioned alongside family (Qur'an 66:6; 39:15), distinguishing the two terms, "Anfusana" in *Mubāhalah* similarly refers to the soul of the Prophet, identifying Ali (as) as uniquely connected to him.

### 3.2. A Plural Form is not Limited to One

He furthermore argues that the term *anfusana* (our souls) in the verse of *Mubāhalah* is a plural form, but its application is not restricted solely to Ali (as). At the time, however, no one from among the Prophet's close male relatives, besides Ali (as), was present to participate in the event (ibn Taymiyah al-Harranī, *ibid*: 129).

In classical Arabic, while a plural form generally denotes three or more individuals, there are numerous instances in the Qur'an and other Arabic literature where plurals are used to refer to fewer than three individuals. This linguistic flexibility is also present in non-Arabic texts. It is plausible that when articulating a legal rule or drafting a contract, a general form is employed, but its implementation can apply to just one or two persons. Such specificity does not contradict the generality of the original expression. In the context of *Mubāhalah*, the Prophet (pbuh) was required to bring those described as "our sons," "our women," and "our souls" (Makārim shīrāzī, 1995, vol.2: 586).

Yet, at that time, the Prophet had only two sons (Hasan and Husain), one from women (Fātimah), and one man (Ali) who possessed the necessary attributes to accompany him. Thus, the Prophet included all those from his household who fulfilled the categories of "sons, women, and souls." Among the women, there was no one comparable to Fātimah (as), and among the men, no one shared the Prophet's spiritual and familial closeness except Ali (as). The fact that the Prophet did not bring any other companions or relatives, such as his wives or uncles, illustrates the unique status of these individuals.

It is important to note that if Allah the Almighty had used a singular form and commanded the Prophet to bring only one man and one woman, critics might have argued that the Prophet excluded others because he was restricted to a specific number.

However, by using the plural form and allowing the Prophet to bring only Ali and Fātima (as), it becomes evident that these individuals held a special, unparalleled status. Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawārī views Imam Ali (as) as one of the individuals closest to the Prophet (pbuh) and asserts that Allah granted Ali (as) this special closeness during the event of *Mubāhalah* and chose him for “our souls and your souls” (ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawārī, 1991, vol.1: 5).

### 3.3. No Specific Virtue for Ali

Ibn Taymiyyah argues that the verse of *Mubāhalah*, revealed in the tenth year A.H., does not indicate that Ali (as) is equal to the Prophet (pbuh) or superior to other Companions. He explains that at the time, only Abbas remained from the Prophet's close relatives, but Abbas was neither an early convert nor as close to the Prophet as Ali (as). Jafar had died, leaving no one else like Ali to accompany the Prophet. Thus, while Ali's participation in *Mubāhalah* is a virtue, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts it is shared with Fātima, Hasan, and Husain (as) and does not imply Imamate, otherwise Fātima (as) would also be considered an Imam. Consequently, “Anfusana” does not equate Ali (as) with the Prophet (ibn Taymiyyah al-Harranī, ibid: 129).

Even Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledges Ali's (as) virtue in the context of the verse of *Mubāhalah*, stating: “For Ali (as), there is a kind of virtue in the verse of *Mubāhalah*.” He also explains that the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, was not invited because he lacked the pioneering virtues of Ali (as). This raises a question: If “Anfusana” in the verse only implied kinship or being Muslim, why was the Prophet's Ahlulbayt brought rather than others like Abbas or Zubayr to fulfill the plural form in Arabic, which requires at least three members?

Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation seems contradictory. On one hand, he claims “Anfus” merely indicates kinship, which would have included Abbas. On the other hand, he argues Abbas was excluded due to lacking Ali's virtues, suggesting the presence of special qualities beyond kinship, contradicting his own assertion.

Moreover, in Saḥīḥ Muslim, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās told Mu'āwiyah that Ali's (as) participation in *Mubāhalah* was one of his virtues, so great that Sa'd would have valued it more than material wealth. If this was not a significant virtue, why did Sa'd express such a desire? This challenges Ibn Taymiyyah's view, especially since the Salafī methodology emphasizes the

understanding of the Salaf, including the companions like Sa'd, who clearly valued this event as a unique virtue of Ali (as).

Ibrahim ibn Mohammad al-Beyhaqī narrates that someone asked Mohammad ibn Aisha, a reliable hadith scholar of Basra, about the best companions of the Prophet (pbuh). He named Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Talha, Zubayr, Sa'ad, Sa'id, Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Awf, and Abu 'Ubaidah ibn Jarrah. When asked why he did not mention Ali (as), Mohammad replied, "Did you ask about the Companions or the Prophet's soul?" He then recited the verse of *Mubāhalah*, highlighting Ali's unique status as the Prophet's soul (Al-Beyhaqī, n.d, p.18). Al-Qundūzī al-Hanafī devotes a chapter to the virtues of Ali (as) as the soul of the Prophet, citing 24 hadiths, including those related to the event of *Mubāhalah*, all supporting this interpretation (Al-Qundūzī al-Hanafī, n.d, vol.1: 195).

### 3.4. Attending *Mubāhalah* Was Not a Characteristic of Imamate

Ibn Taymiyyah argued that the virtue of attending *Mubāhalah* was not exclusive to Ali (as), as it was shared by Fātima, Hasan, and Husain (as). Therefore, it cannot be considered a characteristic of Imamate, as Fātima (as) possessed this virtue without being an Imam.

Ibn Taymiyyah shifts focus from the core Shia argument. Al-'Allāmah al-Hillī did not base Ali's (as) Imamate solely on his presence at *Mubāhalah*, though this participation was a unique virtue. The key evidence for Ali's (as) Imamate lies in the phrase "our souls" from the Qur'anic verse, where Allah commanded the Prophet (pbuh) to bring someone representing his soul. The Prophet chose Ali (as) for this role, a distinction no other Companion received. This signifies Ali's unparalleled closeness to the Prophet and his precedence over others, underscoring his special status (Mullā Mūsā Meybudī, 2013: 139-140).

### 3.5. The Prophet's Presence Was Sufficient for *Mubāhalah*

Ibn Taymiyyah argues that the purpose of the call was not to gather individuals to ensure the prayers were answered, as the Prophet's prayer alone was sufficient. If the goal had been to increase the likelihood of the prayer being answered, the Prophet would have summoned all believers, as is done when praying for rain. Instead, the intention behind bringing specific individuals to the event of *Mubāhalah* was to confront the Christian delegation with the Prophet's family, the Ahlulbayt, rather than to amplify the power of prayer (Ibn Taymiyyah al-Harranī, *ibid*: 127).

Contrary to Ibn Taymiyyah, it is clear that the purpose of *Mubāhalah* is not merely to gather and curse, but to invoke an effective curse whose results would be revealed through the punishment of the liars. *Mubāhalah* serves as a last resort when logic and reasoning have failed. The intention is for the curse to yield tangible results rather than being an empty act; if the Prophet's curse were unanswered and resulted in no visible punishment for the opponents, it would reflect poorly on him. Therefore, those with pure and holy souls were required to participate in this invocation and curse.

In addition, ibn Taymiyyah claimed that a larger number of people praying increases the likelihood of their prayers being answered. However, this assertion is not always accurate, as there is a distinction between general prayer for needs and specifically asking Allah to validate a claim. Even if all Muslims gathered to pray, it does not guarantee their prayers would be answered, since among them could be both righteous and unjust individuals.

The presence of some unrighteous people might hinder the effectiveness of the prayer. Therefore, those participating in *Mubāhalah*, which held significant implications for the reputation of Islam and the Prophet, needed to be esteemed and virtuous to ensure their prayers would be answered. Moreover, since there were hypocrites and sinners among the Muslims, their inclusion in the gathering would not validate the Prophet's truthfulness, as they themselves represented falsehood.

Besides, Ibn Taymiyyah's claim contradicts the textual declarations (Nās), which hold greater significance than opposing arguments. According to Hadiths, the Prophet brought Husain, Hasan, Fātima, and Ali (as) and instructed them to say "Āmen" when he prayed against their opponents. Their "Amen" undoubtedly contributed to the efficacy of the Prophet's prayer. The bishop of Najran recognized this truth, stating, "I see faces that, if God wishes, can move mountains." (Al-Zamakhsharī, ibid: 368/ Al-Wāhedī al-Naysābūrī al-Shāfi'ī, Al-Tafsīr al-Wasīt, vol.5, p.321/ Al-Khatīb al-Sharabyīnī, ibid :222/ Al-Nakhjawānī, Al-Fawātih al-Ilāhīya, vol.1, p.112/ Ibn 'Ādil al-Hanbalī, Al-Lubāb Fī 'Ulūm al-kitāb, vol.5, p.289/ Al-Baghawī al-Shāfi'ī, Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an, vol.1, p.450/ Al-Baydāwī, Anwār al-Tanzīl, vol2, p.20/ Al-Tha'labī, Al-Kāshf wa al-Bayān, vol.3, p. 85/ Al-Nasafī, Madarik al-Tanzil, vol.1, p.261/ Al-

Neysābūrī, *Gharāib al-Qur'an wa Raghāib al-Furqān*, vol.2, p.178/ Abū Al-Su'ud, *Irshād al-'Aghl al-Salim ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm*, vol.2, p.46/ Haghī al-Istānbūlī al-Hanafī, *Rūh al-Bayān*, vol.2, p.44/ Al-'Āmerī, *Bahjat al-Mahāfil wa Baghīyyat al-Amāthil*, vol.2, p.15/ Ibn Hadidah, *Al-Misbah al-Mudī'*, vol.2, p.205).

More so, at the conclusion of the verse, Allah commands, "and call down Allah's curse upon the liars," indicating that both parties were to invoke God's curse on the liars. This implies that one side consisted of truthful individuals while the other contained liars. The Prophet's companions in *Mubāhalah* were called to declare the opposing side as liars and to seek Allah's curse, as they confidently believed in their own righteousness. In essence, the Prophet's claim had to align with that of his companions; otherwise, they could not rightfully label the others as liars or request a curse. One cannot denounce an opponent as a liar without certainty in their own stance. Therefore, those who accompanied the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) were not merely family members but also partners in this claim (Javādī Amulī, *ibid*: 477).

At the end of the verse, Allah commands, "and call down Allah's curse upon the liars," which implies that if those invoking the curse were liars themselves, they would incur Allah's wrath. This highlights that the participants in *Mubāhalah* were to actively pray together, rather than having one person pray while the others remained silent. Each participant, including those who said "Amen," played a role in the prayer. If the Ahlulbayt (as) were insincere or false in their prayer, they would face God's curse, further demonstrating their genuine involvement and significant role in this event (Mullā Mūsā *ibid*: 135).

Therefore, the assertion that the Prophet's invitation of the Ahlulbayt (as) was solely based on familial ties is untenable. Ibn Taymiyyah contradicts himself here; if "our souls" were meant only to signify kinship, the Prophet had many close relatives, including Abbas and his children, whom he could have invited.

As previously noted, the Companions regarded participation in the event of *Mubāhalah* as a significant virtue. Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās, when asked by Mu'awiyah why he refrained from disparaging Ali ibn Abī Tālib (as), stated, "I know three virtues of Ali, and if any one of them were in me, I would not trade it for red-haired camels," a symbol of luxury at the time.

He specifically identified participation in *Mubāhalah* as one of these esteemed virtues. If the Ahlulbayt's (as) involvement in *Mubāhalah* were merely based on family ties, then the Companions' recognition of it as a virtue would be meaningless. Additionally, there is no record of Mu'awiyah contesting the significance of this event for Ali (as), which further supports our argument; any objection would likely have been noted.

#### 4. Ālūsī's Perspective on Ali's Caliphate in Relation to the Verse

Ālūsī argues that if Shia scholars assert that Ali ibn Abī Tālib was the caliph at the time the Qur'an was revealed, this is incorrect. He points out that the verse of *Mubāhalah* was revealed in the 9th year of Hijri, during which Ali was not the caliph. However, if they mean that he would become caliph in the future, this is a statement that no one disputes. The key difference lies in the claim that Ali's immediate caliphate after the Prophet must be substantiated by separate arguments, as this verse does not provide that proof (Ālusī, 1415 A.H, vol.2: 182).

Ālūsī did not pay enough attention that according to Shia, the phrase "our souls" does not explicitly denote Ali's caliphate. Therefore, it is wrong to reject this implication based on the fact that Ali was not caliph at the time the verse was revealed. Rather, it underscores his superiority over all other companions, as he is referred to as the soul of the Prophet and after the Prophet's passing, if the matter of leadership is to be settled among his companions, Ali, as the Prophet's soul, would naturally be prioritized for the caliphate.

#### 5. Rashīd Ridhā's View

Rashīd Ridhā, an early proponent of Wahhabi thought in Egypt, narrates a hadith from Tārīkh Dimashq concerning the verse of *Mubāhalah*, claiming that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali brought their children for the event (Rashīd Ridhā, 1990, vol.3: 265). He claims that the narrations stating that the Prophet selected Ali, Fātimah, Hasan, and Husain (as) for the *Mubāhalah* are from Shia sources. Ridhā critiques the Shia interpretation, arguing that extending the verse's application to include all believers is more reasonable. According to him, considering that these four figures went to stay before the non-Muslims and decided to curse them is a mockery of them (ibid).



Rashīd Ridhā and his teacher surprisingly attributed these hadiths to Shia sources, neglecting to consult key Sunni collections such as Sahīh Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, and *al-Mustadrak* by al-Hākim al-Neysābūrī, despite the fact that Sunni hadith scholars have confirmed their authenticity. It is implausible, moreover, to suggest that prominent Sunni hadith compilers like Muslim al-Neysābūrī were influenced by Shia traditions in their narration.

On the other hand, Ridhā's reliance on a weak and suspicious hadith from Tārīkh Dimashq, with narrators identified as liars like Sa'id ibn 'Anbasal and Haytham ibn 'Uday<sup>2</sup>, undermines his argument. Irrespective of the problem in the chain of narration of this hadith, ibn 'Asākir died in the sixth century, and a hadith that is only found in his book and the primary sources of the hadith did not mention it, is invalid. Moreover, a close examination of the individuals named in this hadith reveals the clear intent behind its fabrication, as it awkwardly lists them in the sequence of their caliphate.

In addition, his claim that summoning Ali and his family for *Mubāhalah* would demean their dignity while affirming the summoning other Muslims does not hold a logical consistency (Rashīd Ridhā, *ibid*). How can the inclusion of Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hussain in the event of *Mubāhalah* be deemed undignified, yet the gathering of a large number of Muslims, including these four, to engage in mutual prayer with Christians be considered acceptable?



1. Ibn Ma'īn and others considered him a liar (Al-Zahabī, n.d, vol.1: 381)

2. Ibn Ma'īn and Abu Dāwūd considered him very liar and Imam Nasāī ignored his hadiths (Al-Safdi, 2000, vol.27: 237)

## Conclusion

The verse of *Mubāhalah* is one of the significant verses that establishes the esteemed and special status of the Ahlulbayt, particularly Imam Ali. The analysis presented in this article highlights that the designation of Ali (as) as the "soul" of the Prophet is not merely a symbolic gesture; rather, it underscores his unique closeness to the Prophet and his unparalleled virtues among the companions.

According to this verse, Ali is regarded as the closest individual to the Prophet in terms of virtues and high human qualities, a status that none of the companions possessed.

Through an examination of the critiques offered by various Sunni scholars, it becomes evident that their attempts to undermine the significance of this verse often stem from a reluctance to acknowledge the implications it has for Ali's position as the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). The Prophet's decision to summon only Fātima among the women and Ali among the men, while excluding other relatives, clearly demonstrates that their selection was not arbitrary, but rather based on their distinct virtue and superiority.

Ibn Taymiyyah's criticism can be seen as a reflection of bias. Perhaps the most explicit expression of this bias is found in the words of Ibn 'Uthaymīn, who candidly acknowledges the challenge posed by this verse and Ali's elevated status. In his commentary, after recounting the relevant narration, he concedes that the traditions in question are authentic and irrefutable.

He admits, "There is no doubt that these four individuals (Ali, Fātimah, Hasan, and Husain) are members of the Ahlulbayt, but there is something in the heart that prevents us from fully accepting it." This reluctance stems from the implications of these hadiths, which affirm Ali's superiority over the other companions and Fātimah's preeminence among Muslim women.

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