



**In the Name of Allah,
the Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful.**

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- 1- Helping to spread the culture of Ahl al-Bayt (as) research in scientific and research centers;
- 2- Promoting and deepening Ahl al-Bayt (as) culture and knowledge;
- 3- Promoting and presenting scientific products of Imam Mobin Research Center;
- 4- Publishing an authentic and reference Quarterly with scientific-research validity in the field of Ahl al-Bayt (as) culture and education.

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Dr. Mohammad Reza Aram
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The Prophet and Imam's Knowledge of the Unseen in the Qur'an

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Abstract

This research explains the problem of the prophet and imam's knowledge of the unseen from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadiths. The approach of this study is interpretative and narrative, and by adopting the descriptive analytical method based on library studies, the view of the Qur'an regarding the knowledge of the unseen of the Prophet and Imam (as) has been examined. In this research, after explaining the intended meaning of the prophet and imam's knowledge of the unseen, its instances in the verses and hadiths have been examined and analyzed. The findings of this research illustrate that in the Holy Qur'an, two types of occult sciences are mentioned, the inherent knowledge that is specific to the Lord of the Universe and no one can know about it; non-inherent knowledge, which is a blessing from the Lord and is available to prophets and divine saints. The prophet and imam's knowledge of the unseen is of the second category and by the grace of God, it is given to the prophets and imams pertaining to the important responsibility of guiding and bringing people to the abode of eternal happiness and final perfection. Therefore, believing in the Prophet and Imams' knowledge of the unseen is completely based on the teachings of the Qur'an, and opposing the attribution of such knowledge to the prophets and imams is an explicit opposition to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Keywords: Knowledge, Knowledge of the Unseen, the Prophet (pbuh), Imam, Qur'an and Hadiths.

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Problem Statement

Why is opposing the Prophet and Imam (as)'s knowledge of the unseen contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah? The attribution of occult knowledge to the Prophet and Imam is based on which Qur'anic verses and authentic traditions? If such a belief is in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an, why do some people try to introduce the belief of the Shias in the knowledge of the unseen against the teachings of the Qur'an? This research seeks to evaluate and investigate the belief in the unseen knowledge of the Prophet and Imam by referring to the verses of the Qur'an and authentic Islamic sources, and to show that opposing such a belief is in fact opposing the explicit verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the infallible (pbuh).

Although according to the verses of the Qur'an and authentic narrations, attributing the knowledge of the unseen to the prophets and the infallible imams (pbuh) is an obvious and undeniable matter, some strongly oppose this belief and those who believe in the knowledge of the unseen to the prophets and imams have been introduced as a rebellion and tyrant. (Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Collection of Treaties ..., vol. 1, p. 377) While such a thing is neither philosophically or logically impossible (Ibn Sina, 1375, pp. 151-150) nor is it impossible from a psychological point of view. (Alexis Carle, p. 135) On the other hand, the occurrence of such a thing, that is, informing the prophets and divine saints of unseen news throughout history, is a clear proof of its realization. But due to the fact that the deniers of this belief consider such a belief to be invalid (Qafāri, Nasser ibn Abdullah, vol. 2, p. 629) and claim that such a belief is against the teachings of the Qur'an and traditions (Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, Interpretation, vol. 1, p. 124) in this research we try to briefly examine the knowledge of the unseen of the Prophet and the Imam from the perspective of the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

Unseen from the lexical and technical point of view



Examining dictionaries and thesauruses shows that the term *ghaib* (unseen) is originally an infinitive and literally means something that is covered and hidden from the external senses, in contrast to intuition, which means something that can be felt and understood by the senses.

(Tareehi, Majma' Al-Bahrain, 1375, vol. 2, pp. 134-135; Rāgheb, 1412, p. 616) Therefore, the fact that human beings and that truth have been separated and veiled by barriers of understanding, that truth can be said to be hidden, which is beyond the understanding of an ignorant person.

Technically, it is something whose knowledge cannot be realized with the help of normal means. (Sobhani, 1420, vol.3, pp. 402-407) Therefore, the knowledge of the unseen means knowing the unseen and speaking of the unseen and being aware of hidden things and things that cannot be understood by the senses. (Javadi Amoli, 2008, vol.3, p.414) The meaning of unseen is terminologically opposite to the meaning of being observed, and the world of the unseen is opposite to the world of observation, such as the world of angels, the world of purgatory, the world of resurrection, where the understanding and knowledge of the details of these worlds are beyond the power of human senses.

Types of knowledge of the unseen

According to a division, occult affairs are of two types: first, what is revealed by education, thought and religious or spiritual exercise, and austerity. Second, what can be achieved is possible only with God's permission, and He grants it to anyone he wishes. The second part is of two types: What is necessary for prophets and divine messengers to reveal such as miracles, religions and other unseen news. What is special to God and He does not inform anyone about it (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1365, vol. 27, pp. 17-18.) This category of unseen things cannot be seen by anyone other than God with external senses or intellectual and heart. (Javadi Amoli, 2008, vol. 3, p. 415)

The meaning of the knowledge of the unseen in this research is the knowledge that God provides to His special servants, and this knowledge is not inherent to them, but the inherent knowledge is specific to the Lord of the Universe, and no one is aware of it. The prophets and imams (AS) gain knowledge from the other world, and such knowledge is not their inherent knowledge, but a blessing that God has given them. Like the knowledge mentioned in verse 65 of Surah Kahf, where God says: We enlightened him with knowledge of Our Own. This type of knowledge is specific to prophets, imams and divine saints, which was given by God, and this is the occult sciences. As



Imam Bāqir (as) says: There are two kinds of knowledge, one is the knowledge that is exclusive to God and He has not informed any of His creatures about it, and the knowledge that He has given to His angels and messengers. (Kāfi, vol. 1, Bada chapter, p. 203) Therefore, the knowledge of the unseen is a divine gift that is given to the infallible by God without any training or practice.

Qur'an and knowledge of the unseen

The verses in which the knowledge of the unseen of the Prophet and the infallible imams (as) are proven can be divided into three general categories. In one group of these verses, the prophets are briefly introduced as those who know the unseen, and in the second group, the knowledge of the unseen is attributed to them under the general heading, such as the verses of witnessing deeds, knowledge of the kingdom of things, verses teaching the language of birds, the verses of teaching names and the third category is the verses that prove the Prophet's knowledge of the occult in specific cases.

The first category: general verses of knowledge of the unseen

These verses indicate that God has granted the knowledge of the unseen to the prophet and he himself is their protector and guardian, and the prophets enjoy what they have been taught with the same clarity. "He is the Knower of the unseen, disclosing none of it to anyone, except messengers of His choice." The implication of this verse on the teaching of the knowledge of the unseen by God to the Prophet is completely clear and there is no room for doubt. "Allah will not 'directly' reveal to you the unseen but Allah chooses from His Messengers whom He will."

By referring to the narrations of the infallible imams (as) it is found that God has given them the knowledge of the unseen, which is briefly referred to two examples of these hadiths. "But the knowledge about the things that God has decreed and signed is the knowledge that reached the Messenger of God and from him to us." (Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 256) It can be concluded from this hadith that the knowledge of everything that God has decreed is at the disposal of the Prophet and the Imam (a.s.). In another long narration, quoted by Salman Farsi, the

Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), referring to the mentioned verse, stated that I am "Mortaza", which means that I am favored among those to whom God has revealed His knowledge of the unseen. (Tabari, Muhammad bin Jarir, Nawādir al-Mujizāt, p. 83)

Imam Riḍā (as) says: "So the Prophet has been praised by God and we are the heirs of that Messenger who God made him aware of what he wants from the unseen, so he made us aware of the past and the future until the Day of Resurrection." (Tafsir Nūr al-Thaḳalain, vol. 5, p. 444) Apart from these two narrations, we have many hadiths where *Maṣūm* says, "The Messenger of God is Morteza [favored] by God, and we are the heirs of the same Messenger whom God has informed and made aware of whatever He wills on His unseen. So, we are aware of what happened in the past and what will happen in the future until the Day of Judgment." (Ravandi, Qutbuddin, Vol. 1, p. 343)

"And your fellow man is not insane. And he did see that 'angel' on the clear horizon, and he does not withhold 'what is revealed to him of' the unseen." This verse, while removing the unreasonable proportion of insanity from Holy Prophet and knowing the Prophet to be far from being stingy with the Prophet's knowledge of the unseen, clearly states that the Prophet saw an angel, which proves the Prophet's knowledge of the unseen.

The verses of teaching names

This group of verses proves the widest knowledge of the unseen, an example of it is mentioned: "'Remember' when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth.' They asked 'Allah', 'Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?'" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know." He taught Adam the names of all things, then He presented them to the angels and said, "Tell Me the names of these, if what you say is true?" According to the emphasis that is put on the word all, it seems that all the facts of the world are meant, both the unseen and the seen, of course, this includes divinely ordained beings, not what is in the treasury of God in indefinite forms, which they are from The scope of this occult science is outside. Of course, the names in this verse do not



mean the names of beings, which includes the science of vocabulary, because God, in the face of the angels' protest, makes them understand that man has talent and strength that the angels do not have, and it seems far-fetched that Angels do not have the patience to learn vocabulary. Another point is that the names of words and phrases are for understanding between humans and angels do not need to learn them.

The verses of witnessing actions

In this section, we examine the verses that demonstrate the awareness of the prophets and imams on the deeds of the servants, and the meaning of testifying is also witnessing. Of course, such knowledge is not accessible to the prophets through normal means, therefore, knowledge is generally considered to be unseen; The number of this type of verses in the Qur'an is very large, and in this research, a few examples of them are briefly mentioned.

“So how will it be when We bring a witness from every faith-community and bring you 'O Prophet' as a witness against yours?” “Indeed, We have sent to you a messenger as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh.” “And so We have made you 'believers' an upright community so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you.”

These verses clearly illustrate the awareness of the Prophet on people's actions, which is a kind of knowledge of the unseen. These verses clearly state that the Prophet will be raised as a witness in the court of divine justice on the Day of Resurrection. A group of witnesses will be brought from among them, and the Prophet will be a witness to those witnesses. The requirement of witnessing and testifying is that the witness observes the act himself, not that something is taught to him later. The context of the verses makes it clear that what is meant by being a bearer of good news, witnessing and warning is that the possessor of the attribute must be in this state at the moment of the revelation of the verse, and according to the research of the lexicographers, witnessing is the same as declaring presence and awareness of the action. and it says that witnesses are those who are present and aware of the act. On the other hand, we come across verses in the Qur'an in which it is stated that the Prophet and Imams saw the

deeds, and this example of the verses itself is clear evidence of seeing the deeds in person, not that they were taught later.

The verses of inner and esoteric leadership and infallibility

One of the truths that the Noble Qur'an and the hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt have spoken about is inner guidance or imamate and formative leadership. According to the Qur'an, the formative imamate is a high position that many of the first prophets have reached and certainly the Prophet of Islam and the infallible imams have this position. The requirement of all-round infallibility in the imam, which consists of immunity in speech, action and thought, is the knowledge of the occult, because a person cannot perceive all the realities with ordinary tools as they are, rather, he commits mistakes. And only God's knowledge and divine vision can protect him from error.

Here, we will first discuss some of the verses that introduce religious leaders as having the position of inner guidance, and then we will discuss the verses that state their infallibility.

“We ‘also’ made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and inspired them to do good deeds, establish prayer, and pay alms-tax. And they were devoted to Our worship.” “We raised from among them leaders guiding by Our command, when they patiently endured and firmly believed in Our signs.”

A brief explanation about the word *Amr*

There are two types of command: The Shari'i command and the formative command. Man is free against the first type, that is, he has the ability to disobey it, such as the command to pray, give zakat, etc., but the second type is a formative command that nothing can do against it. No one has the authority and ability to be stubborn. Like this verse in which God says: “All it takes, when He wills something ‘to be’, is simply to say to it: “Be!” And it is!”

The meaning of the word command in verse 24 of Surah Sajdah is the second type of command, i.e. the formative command that is given after trials and reaching the stage of certainty, and the meaning of words in verse 124 of Surah Baqarah is the facts with which Abraham was tested, not words. Because for the position of leadership, there must be



tests that prove his mental and spiritual perfection, and testing with words and expressions is not appropriate for this position. These verses are well used that the prophet imam has immunity in terms of speech and behavior and only behaves according to the command of the Lord.

Esoteric guidance

In the Qur'an and the hadiths of the infallible, it is also mentioned about the inner guidance and Imamate that many of the Ulu l-'Azm Prophets and the Prophet (pbuh) and the Imams have reached the high position of formative Imamate. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned guidance in every case that it has tried to describe the imamate, and then it has tied the guidance to the command of God, as a result, it is clear that the imamate is not just any guidance, but the guidance is the command of the Lord. In fact, the inner imam is a kind of guardianship over the people in their actions, and guiding them is to bring them to their destination according to the divine command, not that the purpose of the imam is merely guidance, which the prophet can also do. Rather, every believer plays the role of guidance to God with good advice and preaching.

Verses of Infallibility

"Satan said, "By Your Glory! I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen servants among them." This verse displays that the devil's lack of greed in misleading the sincere servants is due to their immunity from being misled and contaminated (therefore, the sincere is equal to the infallible). According to this, sincere servants of God will never commit an ugly or sinful act under the influence of Satan's temptation. In another verse of the holy Qur'an, it is said that "And whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray." It is clear from these verses that God's prophets are never subject to error, and since committing sin is one of the sure examples of error, these verses show that the prophets are infallible from sin.



"Allah only intends to keep 'the causes of' evil away from you and purify you completely, O members of the 'Prophet's' family!" God only wants to remove any impurity from you (Prophet's) family and purify you fully. From the fact that the will of God is dedicated to Ahl al-Bayt,

it is clear that the will is formative, because the legislative will include all servants, on the other hand, no obstacle can prevent the fulfillment of God's formative will. Since the meaning of *Rijs* (abomination) includes material and spiritual filth, this verse protects the family of Ahl al-Bayt from all filth. Many hadiths have been narrated from Holy Prophet (pbuh) who says that these verses are about Ali (as), Fatima (as), Hasan (as) and Husayn (as), and he said, "O Allah, praise be to the people, and when the verse was revealed, there was no one in the house except them."

The verses of seeing the kingdom of heaven and earth

Seeing the kingdom of the universe and the inner course of things is beyond the limits of human consciousness, which God bestows on some of His servants. One of these servants is Ḥaḍrat Ibrahim, whom God says about him:

"Thus, did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty" According to what was mentioned, Abraham's vision of the kingdom is not an intellectual vision, because the way of thinking about divine creations and the way of proof and rational reasoning is a conventional science and available to everyone, but in the case of Abraham, it means observation and intuition above these. For this reason, seeing the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is considered the knowledge of the unseen.

There are many narrations about seeing the kingdom of the heavens and the earth by the infallible imams (pbuh), here, for brevity, one of them is mentioned. Referring to the above verse, Imam Ṣādiq (as) says: For Abraham, the veil of the seven heavens was removed, so that Abraham saw up to the top of the throne, and the seven lands appeared to him, and it also happened to Muhammad (pbuh), and I see that your imam and the next imams also did this to them. (Tafsīr Burhān, vol. 1, p. 531) It is also found from other narrations about the throne that God has shown the kingdom to all his chosen ones.

Ascension of the Prophet and observation of great divine signs

One of the occult sciences that was obtained for the Prophet through unconventional intuition and passed on to his guardians is the



observations of Holy Prophet (pbuh) during the Ascension journey, which is mentioned in the first verse of Surah Isrā'. "Glory be to the One Who took His servant 'Muḥammad' by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We may show him some of Our signs.¹ Indeed, He² alone is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing." In Tafsir Qomi, in a narration by Mam Ṣādiq (as), more details of this trip are mentioned. This hadith is very long and detailed, and in short, in this narration, it refers to things such as the Prophet's companions, his means of flight, praying, his different positions, continuing the journey of Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the heavens, seeing past prophets, God's angels, seeing things from heaven, talking with angels and past prophets. These observations are definitely beyond the power of ordinary human senses and powers, and therefore, they are considered as one of the sure examples of occult knowledge, which was transmitted by His Holiness to his guardians (the infallible Imams, peace be upon him).

Conclusion

What has been examined in this research under the title of unseen knowledge is the information that the prophets and imams (pbuh) obtain through revelation and spiritual communication or inspiration from the world beyond, and their knowledge is not inherent, but rather a blessing that God has bestowed on them. According to this definition, the knowledge of the occult, which in some verses of the Qur'an is denied to anyone other than God and attributed to God, is the inherent and special knowledge of God. The verses that attribute the knowledge of the unseen to the Prophets and Imams are the knowledge of the unseen that God has bestowed upon them. The difference of narrations regarding the knowledge of the unseen is also the same, and the existence of the knowledge of the unseen in the prophets and imams is not in doubt. If in some cases the knowledge of the unseen is denied, it has its own reasons, which include *taqīyyah* (dissimulation), negation of inherent knowledge, etc.



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Ahl al-Bayt (as) as the True and Exclusive Exegetes of the Holy Qur'an in Understanding *Mutashābih* Verses

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Abstract

Considering the important and fundamental position of Qur'an, which has the role of guiding all people to eternity, in order to achieve this goal, the Exalted One has assigned the explanation and exegesis of the Qur'an among the duties of Holy Prophet (pbuh) so that the content of the Qur'anic messages and teachings be clarified for everyone, and the Messenger of God (pbuh) delegated his mission in explaining and interpreting the Holy Qur'an to his Ahl al-Bayt (as). In this article, based on the documentation of verses and narrations and through applying the descriptive and analytical method, it will be explained that in Shia logic, understanding the teachings of the Holy Qur'an as the most important source of knowledge and religious thinking and a source of removing ambiguity from *Mutashābih* verses as well as interpreting ambiguous verses and achieving understanding the appearance and interior of the Qur'an could not be made without referring to Ahl al-Bayt (as), since, otherwise, it would lead to gross errors and exegeses. The study suggests that the exegesis of the verses of the holy Qur'an is the prerogative of Muhammad (pbuh) and his family, that is, Ahl al-Bayt or the infallible imams (as).

Keywords: The Qur'an, Ahl al-Bayt (as), Exegesis, Exegetes, *Mutashābih* Verses, Prohibition of Subjective Exegesis.



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Introduction

Field of Tafsīr (exegesis), ta'wil (commentary) and expression of the meanings and concepts of the Qur'an has a special prominence due to their connection to the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his noble family, and the connection of the teachings of this family with revelation. The exegesis of the infallibles, peace be upon them, is unique to them due to the breadth and depth of unmatched meanings, plenty of insights and hints and selection of the best method to reach the intended message and truth of the Qur'an. Since taking advantage of the Qur'an at any time depends on its correct exegesis and explanation, it is necessary to examine the exegesis heritage of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. In order to know the teachings of the Qur'an and its correct exegesis, one should only refer to Ahl al-Bayt (as), for their precious interpretative heritage provides the basis for taking advantage of the Qur'an in all areas of life and guides people in reaching perfection and happiness.

Problem statement

Current research emphasizes that the interpretation of the Qur'an is exclusive to Ahl al-Bayt, and it aims to answer the following questions: To what extent is the special knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) regarding the Qur'an? What levels of understanding and exegesis of the Qur'an are exclusive to them? Is the human intellect sufficient to understand the purposes and meanings of the Qur'anic verses? In other words, is understanding the teachings, Mutashābihat (ambiguities) and ibhamat (indistinctness) in some verses of the Qur'an possible for anyone? Can the Qur'anic commentator or scholar having a complete mastery over Arabic literature and some other preliminary knowledge such as the knowledge of meanings and expression achieve the understanding of the concepts, meanings and teachings of the Qur'an without needing any other source, and benefit greatly from the guidance of this divine book? And in short, is it possible to interpret the Qur'an from the Qur'an itself, and is it not possible to say that, for example, the understanding of some verses of the Qur'an, such as Mutashābihat and their commentaries, requires the expression and exegesis of the infallibles (as)? Can it not be said that only Ahl al-Bayt (as) are the ones

who have knowledge of all dimensions and angles of the Qur'anic teachings, including *zahir* (exterior; external), *batin* (interior; internal), *muhkam* (clear), *Mutashābih* (ambiguous), *nasikh* (abolisher), *mansoukh* (abolished), *'am* (general), *khas* (special), etc.? Do people need to refer to Ahl al-Bayt (as) due to reaching a comprehensive understanding which is simultaneously free from any sort of ambiguity? And the last but not the least, should people rely solely on their own understanding?

1. Investigating the reasons for *Mutashābih* verses in the Qur'an

1.1. Differences of opinion in similar verses

In many Qur'anic verses, the purpose of God is not clear for us, and thus, the commentators have discrepancy of ideas in the exegesis of the verses, and each of them has tried to understand the meanings by referring to the *muhkam* verses and has reached a conclusion while others reach other conclusions with the same method, and each one claims that actually he is the one who has reached the truth and thus makes others wrong. In these cases, why is not the dispute resolved with deliberation and consideration? Is not the difference in opinions a sign of concealment of the truth? Should the Qur'an's guidance and light lead to invitation to quarrels and disputes? Should we consider all the thinkers who have meditated on the verses with reason and wisdom - in spite of differences - right? Or, should we inevitably accept it as a fact that Almighty God has set a reference for understanding *Mutashābih* verses? As a result, the disagreement among the exegetes is the best proof that they have not found the true meaning of the Almighty making us understand that although the Qur'an expresses and explains everything, but this explanation is recognized and realized through the guardian of the Qur'an, not by the Qur'an itself.

Some more questions may now come to mind as follows: Why did Almighty Allah not reveal all the verses in the same way? Why did He put some verses in His book that people are incapable of understanding? And finally, what is the secret of the existence of *Mutashābih* verses in the Qur'an? In response, it should be said that different opinions have been presented in this regard, but what has reached us from Ahl al-Bayt

(as) indicates that God's purpose in doing this was to force the people to ask Ma'soumin (the Infallible Imams) to understand these verses. In a hadith, Imam Sadiq (as) states that God's purpose of placing Mutashābih verses in the Qur'an is that people reach the door of the House of God and the path He has determined, and on the path of worshipping and accepting His word obey the guardians of the Qur'an, who speak according to the God's commands and refer to those guardians in their needs [at the time of the existence of ambiguities], and not to rely on their own in inferring the God's purpose(s) (Barqi, 1992; Majlesi, 1980).

1.2. Verses on the reasons for the exclusivity of exegesis by Ma'soumin

Theory of the exegesis of the Qur'an by Ma'soumin and the need for the clarification and explanation of the Qur'an by the infallible (as) can be proven by the following evidence:

A: The Qur'an itself has spoken about the necessity of an interpreter, a teacher, and an exegete in several verses:

1. "And We sent down to you the Remembrance [the Qur'an] so that you can make clear to people what has been sent down to them, in order that they reflect' (Nahl: 44)¹.
2. "We have not revealed to you (Prophet Muhammad) the Book except that you may clarify for them that upon which they differ, and as guidance and mercy to a nation who believe" (Nahl: 64)².
3. "And when We have recited it, follow its recitation. Then, its exposition [also] lies with Us" (Qiyāmah: 18 & 19)³.
4. "It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Parts of it are definitive verses, which are the mother of the Book, while others are metaphorical. As for those in whose hearts is deviance, they pursue what is metaphorical in it, courting temptation, and seeking its interpretation. But no one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge; they say,

1 «الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ»
 2 «وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ»
 3 «فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَأَنشِدْ قُرْآنَهُ» ثُمَّ أَنْ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ»

‘We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord.’ And none takes admonition except those who possess intellect” (Al-e Imran: 7).¹

It has been narrated from Barid bin Muawiya that he said he had heard from one of the two imams, al-Baqir (as) or al-Sadiq (as), that in the exegesis of the verse “And none takes admonition except those who possess intellect” (Al-e Imran/ 7), the imam said: “The Messenger of Allah is the best of the steadfast in knowledge. God Almighty has taught him all the exegeses and revelations that He has revealed to him, and it has never happened that God revealed something to him and did not teach him the exegesis of it, and the successors after him also know all of it” (Kulayni, 1966, p. 270).-(Al²

5. “It is He who has raised among the illiterate (Arabs), a Messenger from themselves, to recite to them His verses, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though before that they were in clear error ...”³ (Jom‘ah: 2).
6. “And before thee (Prophet Muhammad) also the messengers We sent were but men [and not angels], to whom We granted inspiration: if ye realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message” (Nahl: 43)⁴.

From the above verses, we clearly understand that the Qur’an needs an expositor, a teacher, and an exegete, and this teacher and interpreter is none other than Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his progeny (as) who are the bearers of his knowledge. Therefore, if the Qur’an has called itself light and clear and “illuminating of everything”⁵ (Nahl: 82), according to the above verses and even according to the exegesis of the Qur’an through the Qur’an, we must interpret them in such a way that the Qur’an is light and clear and the expression of everything along with the

1 «هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۚ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۚ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ»

2 «فَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ الرَّاسِخِينَ فِي الْعِلْمِ قَدْ عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - جَمِيعَ مَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ التَّنْزِيلِ وَالتَّوِيلِ وَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ شَيْئًا لَمْ يَعْلَمْهُ تَأْوِيلَهُ وَ أَوْصِيَائِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَعْلَمُونَهُ»

3 «هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ»

4 «وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ»

5 «تَبَيَّنَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ»

expression, explanation, exegesis and teaching of the Prophet (pbuh) and Ahl al-Bayt (as) and not without the need to them.

2. The need for the infallible imams' exegesis in comprehending the Qur'an

2.1. Ahl al-Bayt (as), the true scholars of the Qur'an and firm in knowledge [those who possess intellect]

Ahl al-Bayt (as) forbade people from commenting on the verses of the Qur'an without knowledge, by stipulating that common people should refrain from delving into the Qur'an, arguing about its verses, and speaking about them without knowledge. Sometimes a person falls into a deep abyss with reference to a verse, the depth of which is greater than the distance between the sky and the earth. Whoever makes a mistake in the exegesis of the Qur'an not only has destroyed himself but also has led others to destruction and misguidance. Indubitably, in understanding the Qur'an, we need the statement (and explanation) of the Prophet (pbuh), as it is stated in the Qur'an and some related verses like Al-Qayamah: 19, and Nahl: 44 & 64 were referred to earlier in this study. In other word, understanding the purpose of God from the Qur'anic verses will be possible when the the Great Lord states it for the Prophet (pbuh) and then the Prophet narrates it to us. This type of narration and interpretation is true for the infallible imams as well. According to Ṣadūq (1998) "The Qur'an and the Imam [referring to each of the twelve imams] express each other and agree with each other. The imam guides people to the Qur'an, and the Qur'an guides them to the Imam" (p. 132). Saffar (1995) emphasizes that "The Imam is the interpreter of the God's purpose from what He has stated in Qur'an" (p.412); "And each one is attached to the other and will not be separated until they appear in the court of Divine Justice on the Day of Resurrection, and God will judge between them and the people" (Tabari, 1997, p. 30).

Regarding the sacred verse "Indeed, it is [present as] manifest signs in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge,..."¹ (Ankabut: 49), Imam Baqir (as) states: "I swear by God that the Exalted God did

¹ «بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ»

not state that the clear verses are between the two sides (covers) of the Mushaf (the Qur'an), but He stated within the breasts of the pople of knowledge". The narrator [of this hadith] says: "I said: May I be thy ransom! Who are they"? Imam Baqir (as) said: "Can it ever be possible that there is anyone but us?! How is it possible that the meaning [reference] of this verse is someone other than us, when we are 'rasikhoon' [those firmly grounded in knowledge; the most learned] in knowledge"?!'' (Kulayni, 1966, p. 213). Consequently, the purpose of the verse 44 of the surah Ankabout from 'those who have been given knowledge' is the infallible imams. Moreover, in the explanation of the noble verse: "We draw these parables for mankind; but no one grasps them except those who have knowledge" (Ankabout: 43)¹ it is said that by the word 'alemun' meaning literally those who have knowledge, Ahl al-Bayt (as) are meant by God (Majlesi, 1980).

According to the statements of Shaykh Tusi, Shaykh Tabarsi and other great Shia scholars, based on the ahadith (narrations) from the Prophet (pbuh) and the infallible imams (as) as the true leaders of guidance, it is proven that the exegesis of the Qur'an is only allowed and acceptable if it is according to whether the explicit text of the holy Qur'an, or the authentic hadith (Tusi, 2010). Some of the Muslims asked the Commander of the Faithful, Amir al-Mu'mineen Ali (as), "What should we do with what God said in the Qur'an?": 'Ask the scholars of Al-e Muhammad (Muhammad's progeny)", he answered (Saffar, 1995, p. 196). Then, Imam Ali (as) continued: "The knowledge of God's book - that contains everything - is with us Ahl al-Bayt. God has given us knowledge that no one but us is aware of. Right after, addressing the person who claimed to know the interpretation of the Qur'an, he asked: Do you have a correct knowledge of the Book of God?! Do you know the nasikh and mansoukh verses?! You have made a huge scientific claim, woe betide you! God has placed this knowledge only with the people of the Qur'an - to whom He revealed His book - and not with others. Woe to you! This knowledge is with a special [limited] number of the descendants of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon them" (Şadūq, 2013, p. 89).

1 «وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ لَضَرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ»

One of the underscored teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (as) is allocating the comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an to the Prophet (pbuh) and the infallible imams (as). They have introduced and verified the complete mastery over [the knowledge of] the Qur'an, the knowledge of commentary, the secrets, and the inner worlds of the Qur'an as their specialty, so that no one is able to definitively understand all the Qur'an's muhkamat (muhkam verses), Mutashābihat (Mutashābih verses) and ta'wilat (commentaries), except by referring to the texts received from the Prophet (pbuh) and the infallible imams.

2.2. Special knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (as) in the field of the exegesis of the Qur'an

One of the meanings of ta'wil is equivalent to Tafsīr and it means discovering the meaning of God (Khoei, 1973; Ragheb Esfahani, 1981). The category of ta'wil is not exclusive to Ahl al-Bayt (as), and it is not beyond the reach of all people, and anyone can reach it by making efforts and acquiring the required knowledge. But no one can claim that what he has understood is surely God's intention. Ahl al-Bayt (as) due to attaining the truth of the Qur'an, possess definite knowledge of the divine purpose and the meanings of the verses, and they know the main purpose and meaning of God from each and every verse. Therefore, it will be undeniable that they possess a unique, complete and definite understanding of all the verses of the Qur'an. A narration from Imam Baqir (as) specifies this uniqueness and exclusiveness: "No one can claim to have memorized and compiled the Qur'an as it was revealed and intended by God except a liar; because, this cannot be made by anyone except Ali bin Abi Talib and the imams after him."¹ (Al-Kulayni, 1966, p. 228).

Moreover, considering this knowledge of the Qur'an as a divine gift, Imam Sadiq (as) states: "We are aware of the God's Book, and the God's Book reflects various meanings, and God has given us [imams] knowledge that others are unaware of" (Majlesi, 1980, p.69). It has been mentioned in many narrations that interpretation of the Qur'an is the

¹ «ما ادعى أحد من الناس أنه جمع القرآن كله كما أنزل إلا كذاب و ما جمعه و حفظه كما نزل الله تعالى إلا على بن أبي طالب و الأئمة من بعده»

farthest thing from human intellect (Qomi, 1981; Al-Ayashi, 1986; Barqi, 1992). The content of these narrations demonstrates that all the meanings and teachings of the Qur'an, its *zahir* and *batin*, cannot be interpreted by human reason. Reasonably, in order to understand many parts of the Qur'an, the explanation of the Prophet (pbuh) and that of his precious offsprings is needed, and those parts cannot be understood without their help since they have received their interpretation knowledge from God. As Imam Reza (as) in response to a person who said to him, "You are interpreting something from God's book that has not been heard before", said: "The Qur'an had been revealed to us before it was revealed to people, and it had been interpreted for us before it was interpreted for people. We know what is *halal* and *haram*, *nasikh* and *mansoukh* in the Qur'an"¹ (Saffar, 1995, p. 198).

Since Ahl al-Bayt (as) in all their words and actions are manifestations of the attributes of Almighty God and the mirror of the teachings of the Qur'an, then the root of their words and deeds can be sought in the Qur'an; Just as Amir al-Mu'mineen Ali (as) declares: "When I inform you about something, ask me where it is in the Qur'an" (Barqi, 1992, p. 269; Majlesi, 1980, p. 446). This narration depicts the deep connection of the all-round knowledge of the Imam with the Qur'an.

According to a narration from Imam Sadiq (as), after explaining the different types of sciences and knowledge of the Qur'an, he considers the knowledge of all those sciences to be special and unique to Ahl al-Bayt (as) (Al-Hurr al-Amili, 1990; Majlesi, 1980). But other than Ahl al-Bayt (as), others are also not deprived of understanding the *zahir* or appearance of the Qur'an. Knowledge of the *zahir* of the Qur'an is not exclusive to a specific person or group, it is available to everyone if certain conditions are met; However, according to the hadith of the *Thaqalayn*², any correct understanding [of the Qur'an] occurs in the

1 «علينا نزل قبل الناس و لنا فسر قبل أن يفسر في الناس؛ فنحن نعرف حلاله و حرامه و ناسخه و منسوخه و في أى ليلة نزلت كم من آية و فيمن نزلت و فيما نزلت»

2. The hadith of the *thaqalayn* (saying of the two treasures) refers to a statement, attributed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, that introduces the Quran, the principal religious text in Islam, and his progeny as the only two sources of divine guidance after his demise. Widely reported by both Shia and Sunni authorities, the hadith of the *thaqalayn* is of particular significance in Twelver Shia, where their Twelve Imams are viewed as the spiritual and political successors of Muhammad. The translation of text of hadith from

shadow of loyalty and adherence and resort to the family of Muhammad (pbuh), who are the gates of the city of knowledge, and it is not possible to enter such a city except through its gate.

2.3. The special knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (as) in the interpretation of Mutashābih verses

There is no doubt that according to the Qur'an and many hadiths, there are some Mutashābihat among the luminous verses of the Qur'an. In some cases, after acquiring the skills obtained in the shadow of riwayat (pl. of riwayat; traditions, narrations), the problem of understanding Mutashābihat is solved by referring to muhkamat. Understanding these verses should not be considered absolutely impossible, but due to their difficulty, interpreting such verses is too difficult, chiefly because most of them are in the field of God's beliefs and attributes. In many cases, it may not be possible to solve the problem of understanding Mutashābihat by referring to muhkamat, for which it is necessary to refer to Ahl al-Bayt's (as) hadiths. They are the best in this field due to their complete coverage of and mastery over all aspects of the Qur'an. Only are Ahl al-Bayt (as) the ones who know God's definitive meaning of each verse and can translate and interpret the words of the Qur'an to the intended real meaning. This level of understanding, which is the ultimate level of the Qur'an, is unique to them and no one is allowed to do so. According to a narration from both Imam Bāqir (as) and Imam Riḍā (as) regarding the exegesis of the verse 49¹ of the Surah Ankaboot, they said: "They are Imams from the offspring of Muhammad"² (Majlisi, 1980, p.189; Al-Kulayni, 1966, p. 214; Atarodi, 1983, p. 365). This means that, the verses of the holy Qur'an are manifested and present in their hearts of the Imams who are from the family of Muhammad.

original Arabic text is as follows "I [Muhammad] left among you two treasures which, if you cling to them, you shall not be led into error after me: The book of God (Quran), which is a rope stretched from Heaven to Earth, and [the second one is] my progeny, my Ahl al-Bayt. These two shall not be parted until they return to the pool [of abundance in paradise, kawthar]" (Saffar, 1995).

1 «بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ»
2 «هُمْ الْأَنْمَةُ مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ»

Understanding Mutashābihat requires scrutinization in science. Accordingly, those who are in the highest level of firmness in knowledge, know all Mutashābihat with all their levels and degrees. The Qur'an states: "No one knows its exegesis except God and rasikhoon in knowledge" (Al-e Imran: 7). Lexically, the word 'rasikhoon' is derived from 'rasikh' which means firm and stable. Therefore, *rāsikh* in science means someone who is firm and stable in all his and does not waver or change his opinion (Tabataba'i, 1995); And, this is if true when all his knowledge is in accordance with reality, understanding the truth as it is, and thus he is firmly established in knowledge in absolute terms. It is clear that except Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the infallible imams (as) whose knowledge originates directly or indirectly from the source of revelation, no one has absolute penetration and stability in their knowledge. That is why there has never been a change in their opinion. So Rasikhoon in science is unique to these people as in the hadiths, the verse has been interpreted in this way.

Ali (as) has pointed out the stability in knowledge for *Ulul Amr*¹ as an exclusive feature, while others do not possess such a complete, solid and deep knowledge, and thus except'olel-amr no one can understand the deepest layer of the word of God; That is, Umm al-Kitab²: "People are incapable of interpreting the Qur'an, and only those who have authority can infer it; Because they are firm in knowledge and a place [source] of confidence in the interpretation of the Qur'an, and about them the Qur'an has stated that no one knows the interpretation of the Qur'an but God and those who are firm in knowledge... and God Almighty has also stated that the Qur'anic verses are clear verses in the hearts of the people of knowledge"³ (Majlesi, 1980, p.74). Therefore, access to this level of interpretation is specific to Ahl al-Bayt (as) who are the owners of ta'wil. They are superior and leading scholars in all levels, and complete access [to the word of God and its exegesis] is

1. In Arabic writing, "أولى الأمر": Those in authority; this term refers to the infallible imams (A) from the family of holy prophet Muhammad (SAAS) who possess the position of infallibility like the holy prophet Muhammad (SAAS). The term 'أولى الأمر' is in the verse 59 of the surah Nisa.

2. The Quran

3. «و عجز كل أحد من الناس عن معرفة تأويل كتابه غيرهم لأنهم هم الراسخون في العلم المأمونون على تأويل التنزيل قال الله تعالى و ما يعلم تأويله إلا الله و الراسخون في العلم ... و قال سبحانه بل هو آيات بينات في صدور الذين أوتوا العلم»

exclusive to them. It is reemphasized here that the verses and hadiths also indicate that the science of batin and exegesis of the Qur'an is exclusively for the infallible imams (Rajabi, 1385). Moreover, as it was mentioned earlier Imam Sadiq (as) states that God's purpose of placing Mutashābih verses in the Qur'an is that people reach the door of the House of God and the path He has determined, and on the path of worshiping and accepting His word obey the guardians of the Qur'an, who speak according to the God's commands and refer to those guardians in their needs [at the time of the existence of ambiguities], and not to rely on their own in inferring the God's purpose(s) (Barqi, 1992; Majlesi, 1980).

3. Harms, prohibitions, and the duties of people in facing Mutashābih verses

3.1. Abuse of Mutashābih verses

Many deviant sects and false schools and religions have misused Mutashābih verses to mislead people and thereby spread their false teachings and ideas. The Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) says: "There exist many misleading points having been adorned with the verses of the Qur'an, as if a counterfeit coin had been covered with silver!" (Tamimi, 1989, p. 95). When Ali (as) sent Ibn Abbas to debate with the Kharijites (Khawarij), he said to him: "Do not argue with them using the verses of the Qur'an, because there are various possibilities in the verses, so none of you can make the other convinced, then argue with them using Sunnah, so that they have no choice but to accept it" (Nahj al-Balagha, p. 465).

Therefore, even though the Qur'an is light and guidance, it does not increase knowledge and insight for some groups of people, and quite the reverse, it increases ignorance, losses, harms, and idiocy; "...; and it increases the wrongdoers only in loss" ¹(Isra': 82). And for them, it is 'blindness' (ignorance, straying and perdition); "... and this book is for them the cause of blindness ..." ²(Fossilat, 44) and not guidance. Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him, has clearly stated that

1 «وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا»
2 «وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى»

the preservation of the Qur'an from such distortions – known as spiritual distortion– can only be achieved through Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them); “Allah nullifies the distortions of the extremists and exaggerators in the revelation of the Book of God [the Qur'an] and He invalidates the misplaced reports of the people of falsehood and the interpretation of those who mislead the people through my successors [the infallible imams]” (Şadūq, 2016, p. 281).

The leaders of the Saqifa were not unaware of this point, and therefore from the beginning, they raised a false cry of “the Book of God suffices us”¹ (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, 2014) against the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who brought them the Qur'an, and after taking office, they stopped the people from compiling the Sunnah [of the prophet Muhammad] and retelling the traditions of Muhammad (pbuh) under the pretext that the Qur'an should not be merged with something else for people will fall into error. Therefore, they were satisfied only with the teaching and learning of the Qur'an. After them, other usurpers abused their position and authority and clearly prevented the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an through the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) and Ahl al-Bayt (as) (Siyuti, 1992). Later, the followers of the school of the caliphs and people like Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Kathir, etc., following the method of their predecessors, theorized that the best way to interpret the Qur'an is to interpret them with the verses of the Qur'an (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991). This theory later became known among the scholars of the field as the Qur'an's Independence Theory which is not discussed in this study and due to its controversial nature and plenty of arguments about it can be a subject of research in other studies.

3.2. Denotative versus connotative meaning of the Qur'an

We know that the appearance of some verses of the Qur'an has not been the intention of God Almighty, and in some other verses, we assume that something other than its appearance is meant. The issue of these cases has been mentioned in many hadiths. Concerning the



1 «حَسْبُنَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ»

existence of such possibilities, is it possible to say with certainty what God's intention for each case was?!

In a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) and Imam Ali (as) it has been stated that in some verses, the singular word is used but has a plural meaning, or vice versa, the word is plural but has a singular meaning. Sometimes the sentence is past tense, but it has a future meaning. Sometimes the interpretation of a verse is bound to the exact time of its revelation [simultaneity of an event with revelation of the related verse], while in some other cases, the interpretation of the verse is bound to an event before or after its revelation. Sometimes the remaining [point] of some verses is found in another surah. In some verses, half of it is abolished by a new abolishing verse revealed by God, while the other half is left as it is. There exist some verses that are different in wording but the same in meaning, whereas there exist some other verses that are the same in wording but different or even opposite in meaning. In some of the verses, the addressee is not the real target, sometimes a verse is addressed to the Prophet (pbuh) but the real target or addressee is the Ummah. Sometimes the word is specific but the meaning is general. After dividing the verses into many types, which exceeded a hundred categories, he stipulated that the existence of various types of the Qur'anic verses is an obvious proof that the words of the Almighty God are not similar to those of humans, just like His deeds which are different from human's deeds. Because of this reason - and the like - no one can access the true exegesis of God's Book except the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his successors, that is, the infallible imams (peace be upon them) (Majlesi, 1980).

Ishaq Kandy, who was considered a philosopher of his time, was busy writing a book on the contradictions of the verses in the Qur'an. Imam Hassan Askari (as) told one of his students to ask him in a good and appropriate manner and with kindness: "Don't you think that Allah's intention in His words may be different from what you have thought?! How do you know that God may have wished a meaning while you have had a different comprehension?!" Upon hearing this, Kandy thought, accepted the Imam's message, and then burned everything he had written (Ibn Shahrashub, 2000, p.434). It is stated in many hadiths that there is nothing further from human thought than the



interpretation of the Qur'an; And, in some hadiths, the reason for this has been stated that since regarding many verses, the beginning of the verse has been revealed about something, the middle of it has been revealed about something else, and the end is about something else (Al-Ayashi, 1986).

3.3. Prohibition of interpreting the Qur'an without knowledge

Ahl al-Bayt (as) forbade people from commenting on the verses of the Qur'an without knowledge and according to the narrations from them, they have stated as follows: "Refrain from delving into the Qur'an (and plunging into it), and do not argue about its verses, and avoid discussing it without knowledge" (Sadooq, 2020, p. 90). "Sometimes, by misunderstanding a verse, a person falls into a deep abyss, the depth of which is greater than the distance between the sky and the earth" (Al-Ayashi, 1986, p. 17). "Whoever speaks in the verses of the Qur'an without knowledge or according to his own opinion, has prepared a place for himself in the fire, and on the Day of Judgment he will enter the Mahshar desert¹ with a fiery bridle" (Al-Hurr al-Amili, 2007, p. 204). "Whoever makes a mistake in the exegesis of the Qur'an has not only destroyed himself but also have led others to destruction and misguidance" (Al-Astarabadi, 1977, p. 462).

In another group of hadiths, mixing verses with one another has been forbidden. In this regard, there exist some hadiths from Ahl al-Bayt (as): "Whosoever mixes verses with each other has become a disbeliever (Al-Kulayni, 1996, p. 262). Additionally, concerning the verse 13 of the surah Ma'idah: "...they pervert words from their meanings, and have forgotten a part of what they were reminded. You will not cease to learn of some of their treachery..."², Ahl al-Bayt (as) said: "Because they replaced some verses with others, the mansoukh verses with the nasikh verses, and the Mutashābih verses with the muhkam ones, and the specific verses with the general ones, and then argued and protested with it, while they did not know the causes of

1. The desert where people's deeds are judged by God on the Day of Resurrection

2 «يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ ۖ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۚ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ»

revelation, because they had not learned the Qur'an from the people of Qur'an [the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Ahl al-Bayt (as)], so they led both themselves and others astray" (Al-Hurr al-Amili, 2007, p. 200).

Some other hadiths from Ahl al-Bayt (as) have forbidden the arbitrary interpretation of the Qur'anic verses: "The annihilation of the people is due to commenting on the Mutashābih verses, because they are unaware of their meaning and do not know their reality; yet, they interpret them with their own opinions and ideas, and consider themselves needless of referring to and asking the infallible imams (peace be upon them), and in this way, they have ignored the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him and his family) and left them behind" (Majlesi, 1980, p. 90). "A person who subjectively interprets and speaks with his own opinion about the verses of the Qur'an, even if he is right, he has made a mistake" (Deylami, 2009, p. 79). "...and there is no reward for him, and if he makes a mistake, he will fall into a chasm bigger than the sky. In case of a mistake, his guilt is his own responsibility (and his pretext that 'I did not do it on purpose' is not accepted, because he had no right to do such a thing). Man prepares his place in the [hell] fire with subjective interpretation, and thus by maligning to God, he destroys himself and leads others to destruction. Such a person is cursed, even more, he changes to a disbeliever" (Al-Ayashi, 1986, p. 18). According to a narration from the Messenger of God, Muhammad (pbuh), God Almighty states: "He who interprets my words with his opinion, does not believe in me" (Tabarsi, 1980, p. 410).

3.4. Sufficiency of a general faith in the Mutashābih verses

Regarding the Mutashābih verses, the only duty we have is to have an honest and general faith and in them unless their explanation has reached us with a valid reason from the infallible imams (as) so that, it is necessary to adhere to it whether in belief and whether in practice. Nonetheless, the idea that it is permissible or necessary for us to try to remove the curtain from the Mutashābih verses and reach the meaning of it, or to seek help from the rest of the verses, is a misplaced illusion.

The beloved Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of God be upon him, states: "One of the things that I am worried about the Ummah, after my departure from this world, is that they interpret the Qur'an wrongly". Then he explains the way to escape from this problem as follows: "Follow the muhkamat of the Qur'an [and obey their instructions] but in facing Mutashābihat, just believe them [as the word of God]" (Ṣadūq, 1991, p. 164). In the Farewell Pilgrimage¹, The Prophet (pbuh) said: "O people! I leave among you something that you will not go astray [if you follow it and go after it]; that is, the Book of God; So, consider what the Qur'an declares halal (permissible) as halal and what it declares haram (prohibited) as haram; Act according to the muhkamat [of the Qur'an] and have faith in the Mutashābihat [of the Qur'an]; And say: We accept what God has revealed to us from the Qur'an and we believe in it" (Tabarsi, 1980, p. 273). Moreover, Muhammad (pbuh) states: "Learn the Qur'an... The Qur'an has five aspects: halal, haram, muhkam, Mutashābih and exempla. Do what is halal and leave what is haram; Act according to the mukamate and leave the Mutashābihat; And, Learn from the exempla" (Tusi, 1996, p. 357). Similarly, Imam Sadiq (as) states: "The verses of the Qur'an are of two types: muhkam and Mutashābih. Our duty towards muhkamat is to both believe in it and act on its content; however, in the Mutashābihat, we only believe in it but do not act on it" (Qomi, 1981, p. 451).

In the letter of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) to Muawiyah, it is stated: "Every verse of the Qur'an has an external and an internal aspect. There exists no word of the Qur'an unless it has an interpretation that no one knows except God and rasikhoon in knowledge who are us, Ahl al-Bayt. God has ordered the rest of the ummah to say: "We believe in it; all of it is from our Lorde -(Al²" Imran: 7); and [the rest of the ummah/ the people should] accept and obey whatever we, Ahl al-Bayt, say to them in this regard, and thus they should leave the things [the knowledge of the Qur'an's verse], which they do not know, to us, as He says: "...but had they referred it to

1. In Arabic, Hijjatul Wadā': The Hajj pilgrimage that Muhammad (SAAS) performed in the Islamic year 10 AH, following the Conquest of Mecca, as his last pilgrimage to Mecca.

the Apostle or to those vested with authority among them, those of them who investigate would have ascertained it...(Nisa: 83). I swear by ¹" my soul that if people had referred to our family and followed us after the demise of the Prophet (pbuh) and had left their affairs to us, they would have received the blessings of the earth and the sky" (Salim, 2001, p. 769).

Similar narrations are also found in popular books. Al-Suyuti (1992) has narrated from some famous figures that the Prophet of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, saw a group arguing about the verses of the Qur'an, and while he was angry, he addressed them: "The past nations also did the same. They went astray because they differed on (what they had heard from) the Prophets (as), and they confused the contents of the holy books". Then he added: "The Qur'an has not been revealed in a way that its verses deny each other, but it has been revealed in a way that the verses confirm one another. You should do and act upon whatever you know about it, and in what you suspected [Mutashābih verses] about it, having a faith to it is enough" (p. 6). Besides, according to Hanbal (1993) in another narration it is stated: "Say whatever you know about the Qur'an and whatever you do not know, leave its knowledge to the scholar" (p. 512).

1 «وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ»



Interpretation and correct understanding of Qur'anic verses as the most important source of thought and guidance, especially understanding the meaning of Mutashābih verses of this divine book, has always been of interest to scholars of the field. Many verses and narrations clarify this issue that Ahl al-Bayt (as) are the exclusive exegetes of the Qur'an and everyone should refer to them for a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an, the commentary of the Mutashābih verses and a comprehension of the real meaning of the verses, otherwise, grasping the concepts, meanings and purposes of the Qur'an will be impossible in many verses. Due to the breadth and depth of the meanings of the Qur'anic verse and the connection of the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (as) with the revelation, the exegesis of the infallible imams (as) is special to them, in such a way that others do not have such abilities to understand and interpret and are unable to enter this territory. The Holy Qur'an possesses an exterior, an interior, an interpretation and a revelation. The knowledge of the interior and exegesis of the Holy Qur'an is at the disposal of the infallible imams (as), and they have a complete understanding [and mastery] of all aspects of the Qur'an. In this study, while enumerating some Qur'anic evidences regarding the necessity of interpretation of Mutashābih verses by rasikhoon in science, who are Ahl al-Bayt; that is, the infallible imams (as), some examples of their hadiths were mentioned to enlighten and explain the issue. Therefore, the verses and traditions make it clear that the science of the exegesis of Mutashābih verses is prerogative of Muhammad (pbuh) and Ahl al-Bayt of Muhammad- the infallible imams, and they are the leaders, pioneers, and best of the scholars in all levels of it, and the complete understanding of the divine meaning of Mutashābih verses is unique to them.



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A Comparative Study of “The Words” the Prophet Ibrahim Was Tested with

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Abstract

Using analytical method, this article examines the verse 124 of the second chapter of the Qur'an regarding the issue of the prophet Ibrahim being raised to the position of Imamate. According to the verse, it was after “the words” of Allah were fulfilled about Ibrahim. Understanding the true concept of “the words” has a crucial impact in finding out the proper meaning of Imamate which has been the most controversial issue in the history of Islam. Findings of this article establish the point that the tests were difficult tasks Ibrahim was tested with. This is while, he was already a prophet at the time of these tests. Another point is that the Imamate was the prize of success in those tests. As a result, Imamate is something precious granted to a prophet and it should be a position higher than prophethood as well as what is in the jurisdiction of a prophet.

Keywords: Ibrahim, Abraham, Imamate, Imam, the Verse of Test, Infallibility.



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1. Introduction

Verse 124 of the second chapter, Al-baqarah reads:

﴿وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“And when his Lord tested Ibrahim (Abraham) with certain words, then he fulfilled them, He said, I am making you (appointing you as) Imam of mankind. He said, and from among my descendants?” He said, My pledge does not extend to the unjust (the oppressors).”

Verse states that after Ibrahim was tested with various words and when he fulfilled them all successfully, Allah provided him with a great reward that was Imamate. This article tries to provide a correct explanation of the meaning of Imamate by carefully examining the meaning and structure of each word and phrase in the divine verse. Of course, the clarification of the concept of Imamate needs another article, but the findings of this article will establish the foundation of it. In other words, in order to clarify the meaning of Imamate and the characteristics of an Imam, it is necessary to specify the meaning of the phrases “testing with certain words”, “he fulfilled them”, “I am making you”, “of mankind”, “Imam”, “from among my descendants”, “My pledge” and “the unjust” in the verse. To study each of these points, the views of some Sunni and Shia commentators will be presented, and they will be scientifically evaluated later.

2. Problem statement

To define the proper meaning of the term “Imam” which has been the most controversial topic among Muslims from the day first, it is of decisive importance to establish a reasonable understanding of the Words Ibrahim was tested with. This is because there are two main approaches among Muslims concerning the position of Imamate. According to Sunni understanding, Imam in the verse, means a role model or a political leader and consequently, there is not any unique specific qualification needed to meet such a position. Therefore, Imamate can be a position to be given to anyone. They also interpret the Imam as a prophet, so that the Imamate could be a common position among all prophets. The other opinion belongs to Shia who consider



Imamate to be a specific position that not all prophets can achieve and only some from among them were ascended to such a position.

Studying the Words Ibrahim was tested with sheds light on this issue. It is because if these Words and tests are the ones Ibrahim went through at the time he was a prophet, then it does not make sense to claim that he was appointed to Imamate meaning prophethood after already being a prophet. As it is unlikely to say Imamate means leadership and being a role model and Ibrahim while he was a prophet was not a leader or a role model and he was granted the position later. Thus, there must be another definition for Imamate that was granted to Ibrahim after being a prophet, a leader and a role model. However, if the Words deal with the time before his prophethood, then it is acceptable to claim some of those definitions for the concept of Imamate. Thus, as it is visible, clarification of the concept of "Imam" is directly related to the definition of the Words.

3. Testing with certain words

There are different views about what is meant by "words" (كلمات). Since explaining the meaning of "Testing with certain words" has an impact on the correct understanding of the verse, we will express and examine these phrases:

3.1. First view:

The term "words" refers to the commanded deeds mentioned in the above cited verse as well as the following verses up to the verse 131. Mujāhid bin Jabr has narrated a hadith through 'Abd Al-Rahmān from Ibrahim from Adam from Warqā' from Ibn Abi Najih from 'Ikrimah from Ibn Abbās that Allah told Ibrahim: "I am going to test you with a task. (Guess) what is that?" Ibrahim said: "are you making me Imam for people?" Allah replied: "indeed." Ibrahim asked: "are you making the House a place of reward for mankind?" Allah answered: "sure" Ibrahim continued: "and a sanctuary?" Allah answered: "yes" Ibrahim asked: "are you making us submissive to You?" Allah replied: "of course". Ibrahim asked: "and are you raising from our progeny a nation submissive to You?" Allah replied: "indeed" Ibrahim asked: "are you going to show us our rites of worship?" Allah said: "yes" Ibrahim asked:



“and are you turning to us clemently?” Allah replied: “sure” “Are you making this a secure town?” asked Ibrahim. Allah replied: “sure and as for him who is faithless, I will provide sustenance for him too and I will provide sustenance for them in this world as you requested it for those who have faith in Allah, then the faithless will be taken to the hell.” (Mujāhid, 1989: 213) this hadith surprisingly has reversed the verses of the Qur’an i.e. whatever according to the Qur’an has been mentioned by Allah to Ibrahim, is recounted by Ibrahim in this hadith as if Ibrahim had the knowledge of unseen and he was making decisions and suggestions and Allah was confirming what Ibrahim was recommending. What makes one more doubtful about this hadith is the presence of ‘Ikrimah in the chain of its narration.¹

According to this theory, the deeds include Imamate, purification of the house, raising the foundations of the house, being in full submission to Allah and praying for the coming of Prophet Mohammad. They believe that the Imamate which is one of the difficult tasks of Ibrahim in this verse is nothing other than Prophethood. According to them, Prophethood which is also Imamate has many difficulties, because the Prophet must endure many hardships in the way of propagating the religion even if it costs his life. Construction of the house and its purification, also contained severity and hardship, due to the quality which has been mentioned in the narrations. In addition to this, it also included performing rituals, and Allah tested him with the devil in performing Ramy (Stoning the Devil) and other things. Praying for the selection of the Prophet Muhammad also required a lot of sincerity and avoidance of jealousy, and this is also a difficult matter (Al-Rāzī, 1999, vol.4: 34). Al-Zamakhsharī quoted this view from Muqātil bin Sulayman (Al-zamakhsharī, 1986, vol.1: 184).

1 - Jarīr bin Abd al-Hamīd narrates from Yazīd bin Abi Zīyad that one day I went to visit Ali bin Abdullah bin Abbas and I saw ‘Ikrimah tied at the door of the grove, I asked: Why did you tie grove? He said: because he is ascribing lies to my father (Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, n.d, vol.7: 268). The story of ‘Ikrimah's lying about Ibn Abbas was famous among the elites to the point that it became a proverb. Yahya Ibn Buka says, I heard from Ibn ‘Umar that he said to Nafi’: “Fear Allah and do not ascribe lies to me as ‘Ikrimah did about Ibn Abbas (ibid) It has been said that ‘Ikrimah held the opinions of the Khawarij, that is why Imam Malik and imam Muslim did not narrate a hadith from him (Al-Zahabi, 1998 vol.1: 74).

According to this interpretation the sentence “I am making you an Imam” is considered as one of the “words” not a reward for fulfilling them (Al-Tabarī, 2000, vol.2: 12; Ibn Kathīr, 1998, vol.1: 286).

Analysis

Apparent drawback of this view is that it has imagined Imamate itself as one of the “testing words”, while the verse apparently states that Imamate was the reward of success in the divine tests and not one of them. However, the other examples can be assumed to be from the “words”. Fakhr al-Din Al-Rāzī narrates that Qazi (Qazi Adhud Al- Din Iji) objected the above-mentioned view saying that if this were the case, first the phrase “I am making you Imam” (انى جاعلك) should have come and then “he fulfilled them” (فاتمهن) should have been mentioned after, however it is vice versa (Al-Rāzī, *ibid*). All the tests should be mentioned first and then the phrase, “Ibrahim fulfilled all of them” at the end. Thus, if Imamate was also among the tests it had to be mentioned before “he fulfilled them”. Hence, it turns out that first there were tests and examinations, and after their fulfilment, Allah said, “I am making you Imam for people”. As a result, the phrase “I am making you Imam” is not a test but it is a reward for the fulfilment of those tests.

Al-Rāzī after narrating this statement of Qazi, goes on to justify the first view by claiming that the tests are not only Imamate but beside Imamate, raising the foundations and purification of the house, and prayer for the coming of the final Prophet are altogether the tests that are first stated briefly by the term “words” and then mentioned in detail (*Ibid*). With this statement of Al-Rāzī, the problem still remains unsolved since according to the appearance of the other statements in the verse that Imamate was not an example of the words and tests, but it was a reward for completing those tests so that Ibrahim was requesting it for his progeny as well.

Moreover, Javādī Āmolī, well-known contemporary Shia exegete of the Qur’an rejects this view because on one hand, Sunni scholars including Al-Rāzī believe that Imamate in this verse is prophethood and on the other hand, the divine tests for the prophets are typically through revelation and so were the tests Ibrahim went through. Thus, he had



attained the position of prophethood before these tests because the tests came through revelations and how could he receive them if he was not a prophet? Therefore, if Imamate means to be a prophet, then, he was already a prophet before the tests (because he received revelation and the tests were delivered to him through revelation), it does not make sense to consider his prophethood as a test to come later. Thus, Imamate has to be different from being a prophet (Javādī Amulī, 2022, vol.6: 430-431). If we assume Imamate to be different from prophethood, the claim of Al-Rāzī will fail.

More so, the other examples Al-Rāzī has mentioned for the tests like building the house of Allah are not hard tests to suit the level of Ibrahim. This is something that ordinary believers can also do as it can be seen that they build mosques everywhere they are. To make a building does not require a strong faith that is admired by Allah. The other example Al-Rāzī mentioned as not feeling jealous of Prophet Muhammad also does not seem suiting because a person at the level of Ibrahim was beyond feeling jealous of a prophet from his progeny. He was so caring for his progeny that in different places-such as the verse being discussed- when he found his prayer likely to be answered by Allah, he immediately included his children in his prayer too.

3.2. Second view

The “words” in the verse are divine commands and prohibitions. Testing Ibrahim by the “words” is to address him by commands and prohibitions to make him deserve the position of Imamate (Al-Zuhaylī, 1997, vol.1: 301; Al-Qurtubī, 1946, vol.1: 98; Al-Tabarī, 2000, vol.2: 12; Al-Busaylī, n.d, vol.1: 273). Those who believe in this view have differed in what the commands and prohibitions were:

2.2.1. It is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the “words” are the natural disposition/Fitrah acts (Khisal al-fitrah), which include Making Mazmaza (rinsing out the mouth), Istinshaq (snuffing water into nostrils and blowing it out), brushing with tooth-stick, clipping the mustache, opening the hair, shortening the nails, removing the armpit hair and shaving the pubes, circumcision and cleaning one's private parts with water (Al-Tha’labī, 2002, vol.1: 268; Al-Zuhaylī, ibid: 302; Al-



zamakhsharī, ibid; Al-Tabarī, ibid: 9; Al-Qurtubī, ibid; Al-Suyūtī, n.d, vol.1: 273).

2.2.2. Again it is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the "words" are the rituals of Hajj (Al-Tabarī, ibid: 12; Al-Busaylī, ibid; Al-zamakhsharī, ibid; Al-Qurtubī, ibid).

2.2.3. the third view also quoted from Ibn Abbas is that Ibrahim was examined with thirty things, ten of which are mentioned in Surah Al- Tawbah¹, ten in Al-Ahzab² and the last ten are in Surah Al-Mu'minun (verses 1-10) and Surah Al-Ma'arij (verses 1-33). (Al-zamakhsharī, ibid; Al-Tabarī, ibid: 8; Al-Khatīb Al-Sharabyīnī, 1868, vol.1: 90; Al-Rāzī, ibid: 34-35)

2.2.4. The "words" are, being tested by worshipping the moon and the stars and the sun, circumcision, being thrown into fire, leaving his wife and emigrating, and the command to slaughter his son (Al-zamakhsharī, ibid; Al-Tabarī, ibid).

2.2.5. The "words" are the life, the wealth and the son of Ibrahim, so that he presented his property to the guests, offered his life to the fire and he was ready to sacrifice his son, so that he emptied his heart for the Merciful, and Allah honored him to be His Khalil (very close friend). (Al-Tha'labī, ibid)

2.2.6. Al-Suyūtī quotes Ibn Abbas as saying that the "words" are the separation from the relatives and the migration, quarreling with Nimrod and patience in being thrown into fire while being aware of the

1 - Al-Suyūtī in the page 273 of the very book says; these ten qualities are mentioned in verse 112 of surah Al-tawbah:

﴿التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْآمِنُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

(The faithful are) penitent, devout, celebrators of Allah's praise, wayfarers, who bow and [prostrate] in prayer, bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, and keep Allah's bounds and give good news to the faithful.

2 - they are in the verse 35 of this Surah (Al-Suyūtī, ibid: 274):

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

Indeed the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the faithful men and the faithful women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the patient men and the patient women, the humble men and the humble women, the charitable men and the charitable women, the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, the men who remember Allah greatly and the women who remember] Allah greatly [Allah holds in store for them forgiveness and a great reward.

dangers of all these acts, and the next migration again after that and obedience in slaughtering his son (Al-Suyūtī, *ibid*: 273).

2.2.7. Allah tested him with seven things: worshipping the sun, the moon, the stars, circumcision at old age, fire, the slaughter of son, and migration (Al-Rāzī, *ibid*: 35).

Analysis

Ascribing the tests to Allah (And when his Lord tested Ibrahim) indicates that the purpose of testing was to train Ibrahim and strengthen his will so that he could rise to do difficult things. About the first interpretation of the second view which recounts “the words” as Fitrah acts (Khisal al-fitrah), it must be said that these examples are not compatible with the concept of testing a high rank person and then rewarding him Imamate for his success in them. The tone of the verse indicates fulfilment of difficult tests. The well-known Sunni commentator Al-Māturīdī realizing this point declares that there is no significant wisdom in considering Fitrah acts to be the tests of Ibrahim, because these are things that anyone can do, but the “words” must be patience to be thrown into fire, the settlement of his family in a dry desert, the migration to Syria and slaughtering his son, such hard things that the other prophets were not tested with. In this case, the test and the reward are due to wisdom (Al-Māturīdī, 2005, vol.1: 554-555). Contemporary Sunni commentator Rashīd Redha says: “I have no doubt that this is one of the distortions and additions the Jews have made to our religion. Otherwise, what is more ridiculous than saying that these cases were the tests of Prophet Ibrahim and then Allah praised him for his success in these matters and made it the prelude to the Imamate of Ibrahim. These are things that a child can also do.” (Rashīd Ridhā, 1990, vol.1: 373-374)

Therefore, first of all, it is very unlikely that Fitrah acts are meant in the verse. Secondly, it should be noted that the test by Fitrah acts had to be after sending revelation to Ibrahim from Allah commanding him to do these things, and this means that Ibrahim at that time was at a state of receiving revelations to clearly clarify for him what he was supposed to do. Hence, he was already a prophet and later after fulfilling the tests he was raised to Imamate.

The second interpretation of the second view considering "the words" to be worshipping the moon, the stars, and the sun is not acceptable either. Rashīd Ridhā criticizes the proponents of this interpretation for they insinuate that Prophet Ibrahim believed the sun, the moon, and the star to be his God, and later he was successful to acknowledge the invalidity of that belief, while this is not the case. The fact that Ibrahim said "this is my Lord" was a prelude to arguing the invalidity of the belief in the divinity of these things. That is why Allah said, "This was Our argument that We gave to Ibrahim against his people." (Rashīd Ridhā, *ibid*: 373)

Concerning the third interpretation, "the words" were the thirty qualities mentioned in the chapters of Al-Tawbah, Al-Ahzab, Al-Mu'minun and Al-Ma'arij, which are repentance, worshipping, praising, traveling, bowing in Ruku', prostration (Al-Sajdah), enjoining the good, forbidding the evil, observance of divine limits, faith, Islam, qunut, truthfulness, patience, humbleness, paying charity, fasting, chastity, remembrance, avoiding vain talk, paying zakat, keeping covenants, observance of trust, maintaining prayers and the like. Beside suffering from repetition and also being less than the mentioned number, these attributes cannot be considered the "words"; because, firstly, these characteristics are among the general characteristics of the believers and everyone is tested with such qualities. Second, there is no defining argument to prove that the mentioned attributes are "the words" Ibrahim was tested with. Thirdly, the "words" were the commands of Allah Almighty which were communicated to the prophet through revelation and if the meaning of "Imam" in the verse is "Prophet" (as they believe), it is not acceptable to ascribe those attributes to Ibrahim before he reached that high position (Javādī Amulī, *ibid*: 430) because before prophethood he could not receive revelation to learn about these attributes and as a result he could not practice them in his life, and consequently he could not reach to Imamate. Henceforth, to accept this view, one cannot interpret Imamate as prophethood, but it must be a different and a higher position that a prophet could achieve after being tested. However, as already mentioned by the above-named commentator, these thirty attributes are not that hard and special to make a person to reach to Imamate. Even if we consider Imamate to be

the same as prophethood, there are many people who can practice these qualities in their lives and turn themselves into icons of these qualities without being a prophet. Thus, the tests Ibrahim went through must be harder than these things.

According to Ibn Jarir said that in expressing the meaning of the words, there are certain facts whose authenticity is to be considered, and for this reason, the best way is to say that the meaning of the words was the commands and decrees of God, which Abraham (pbuh) performed in the best way. They came out proud. "Faa" on the head of "Faatomahhun" indicates his urgency and compliance, which is a sign of his determination and strength of certainty. And the poems themselves have this description that those words that Abraham (pbuh) was tested with were things that required firm determination and determination.

Famous Egyptian commentator, Al-Sha'rāwī has stated that "the words" must be tests that are appropriate to suit the dignity of Ibrahim the father of Prophets, that is, they must be great trials (Al-Sha'rāwī, 1997, vol.1: 570). So Allah assigned Ibrahim with some tasks including falling into fire and slaughtering his son and he succeeded in all (Al-Sha'rāwī, ibid: 572). After that, Allah made him the Imam of mankind. Allah knew that Ibrahim would succeed in these tests, but he tested him so that the ordinary and general human beings would know how Allah chooses those near to Him and how they reach the Imamate. So Ibrahim reached the Imamate through his deeds (ibid: 573).

Al-'Uthaymīn also believes "the words" to be things that require patience and endurance, and also every command of Allah being addressed to Ibrahim is counted in those words, including the slaughter of his son and patience when thrown into the fire (Al-'Uthaymīn, 2002, vol.2: 40).

Javādī Āmolī, stating that Tanvin (ـَ) in "كلماتٍ" (the words) is for glorification, points out that using the term "the words" is not because the commands and prohibitions of Allah are conveyed in words. There are many tests and commands that have been mentioned in the form of words in the Qur'an, but none of them have been referred to as "words". The term "word", which has its own application in significant matters of Divine unity, creation and resurrection, indicates the importance of



the test materials; as in the case of Adam's repentance, the term "words" (فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ) (Qur'an 2: 37) is applied (Javādī Amulī, *ibid*: 432).

From what has been said, it appears that the tests were hard enough to be on the scale of a great man like Ibrahim Al-Khalil, such as being thrown in fire, the abandonment of his son and wife in a dry desert, and the command to slaughter his son. Even if we assume other things to be of the tests, certainly these hard tasks cannot be ignored.

As mentioned in the critique of the views in the interpretation of "words", the appearance and tone of the verse indicate that fulfilling the tests preceded Imamate; "Then he fulfilled them". So, the story of being thrown in the fire, emigration, leaving the family in the desert and the command to slaughter his son must have happened before Imamate, and if so, then Ibrahim must have been a prophet and even a messenger at this time, therefore it can no longer be said that Imam means a prophet or a messenger, otherwise nothing has been added to Ibrahim with his Imamate.

For more clarity, here we will quote one of the Shia commentators who paid attention to an important point in the verse that has been overlooked by all Sunni commentators. Ṭabātabāī believes that Allah gave Ibrahim the position of Imamate at the end of his life, that is, after the birth of Ishmael and Isaac and after he transferred Ishmael and his mother from the land of Palestine to the land of Mecca. It is because after the sentence: "I am making you Imam of mankind" it is narrated from Ibrahim asking the position of Imamate to be passed down to his progeny: "And from among my descendants?" If the story of the Imamate was before the good news of the angels on the birth of Ishmael and Isaac, Ibrahim at that time did not know or even guess that he would have children and grandchildren, and it did not make sense for him to request Imamate for his progeny, because he did not have a child until old age, and even after the good news of the angels about granting children to him, he could not believe it, and in his response to the angels, there was a kind of despair of having children:

"And inform them about the guests of Ibrahim, when they entered into his presence and said, "Peace!" He said, "We are indeed afraid of you." They said, "Do not be afraid. Indeed, we give you the good news of a wise son." He said, "Do you give me good news though old age has

befallen me? What is the good news that you bring me?" They said, "We bring you good news in truth; so do not be among the despondent." (Qur'an 15: 51-55)

Also, as the Qur'an narrates, his wife did not hope to have a child: "His wife, standing by, laughed as We gave her the good news of] the birth of [Isaac, and of Jacob, after Isaac. She said, " Oh, my! Shall I, an old woman, bear children, and while [this husband of mine is an old man?! That is indeed an odd thing!" They said, " Are you amazed at Allah's dispensation? That is Allah's mercy and His blessings upon you, members of the household. Indeed, He is all-laudable, all-glorious." (Qur'an 11: 71-73)

It can be seen that there was despair all over the words of Ibrahim and his wife, therefore the angels on the other side gave them glad tidings to comfort them and make them happy. Thus, Ibrahim and his wife did not know that they will have children soon.

Now we see Ibrahim, after hearing the good news that Allah will raise him to the position of Imamate, asks Him to grant this position to some of his descendants as well. Consequently, this request should be at a time he had children, because this speech can be uttered by someone with children. If someone has the least knowledge of the utmost decorum and politeness of a prophet like Ibrahim Al-Khalil in addressing his glorious Lord, would know that he would have never allowed himself to speak like that, if he did not have a child. Moreover, if we make such a statement possible from that esteemed person, he should have said: "O Allah, from my descendants, if you bestow me any child", so it turns out that his request was at the old age and after having children. Moreover, the sentence "And when his Lord tested Ibrahim with the words, then he fulfilled them, He said, I am making you (appointing you as) Imam of mankind." indicates that this Imamate that Allah gave him was after the completion of the divine tests, and it is clear that these tests were the same type of calamities that befell him in life, and the Holy Qur'an clarified them that the hardest of those trials was the story of slaughtering his son, and this happened after being a prophet as it is recounted in the verse 39 of chapter 14 (Tabātabāī, 1995, vol.1: 404-406.).

Explaining the meaning of "then he fulfilled them", Ṭabātabāī says: If the pronoun "he" goes back to Ibrahim, it means that Ibrahim fulfilled those "words" i.e. tests, that is, he obeyed what Allah commanded him to do. But if "he" refers to Allah Almighty, as it appears to be, then it means that Allah fulfilled those words and gave the chance to Ibrahim to follow divine instructions and to obey what Allah wanted from him (Ibid: 408). As a result, it is understood that the Imamate was bestowed to him after the fulfillment of those words and certainly, this was at his old age and it was after being a prophet and a messenger.

4. Granting Imamate

After expressing Ibrahim's success in the tests, Allah addressed him with the phrase, "أني جاعلك للناس إماما" (I am making you Imam of mankind.) Ibn Kathīr says: After Ibrahim successfully completed the tests, he was granted the reward of Imamate (Al-Tabarī, ibid: 12; Ibn Kathīr, ibid: 283-284). Tantāwī also believes that the phrase is to express the divine grace in granting Ibrahim a high position in exchange for his endurance in the difficult matters that were cast upon him (Sayyid Tantāwī, 1997, vol.1: 266). Sayyid Quṭb also considers granting Imamate to be a reward for Ibrahim's success in difficult tests (Sayyid Quṭb, 1991, vol.1: 112). Al-'Uthaymīn, one of the Salafi commentators, has also considered the Imamate as Ibrahim's reward for completing the divine words and tests (Al-'Uthaymīn, ibid).

Javādī Āmolī, refers to another subtle point in the verse: The term used by Allah is not "we are making you", but it is "I am making you" with the form of a single speaker; that when something is very close to the almighty, the single form will be used, showing the glory of it. Hence, instead of obedience the term "fulfilment" (فاتمهن) was used, and it was expressed with the letter "Fa" (ف) which is a sign of full submission and immediate completion to show the spiritual health and soundness of the heart of Ibrahim (Javādī Āmolī, ibid: 432).

As it was clarified, the fulfilment of the divine tests was at the old age of Ibrahim, and he certainly had the status of prophethood and being a messenger at that time, and after the fulfilment of those tests, he reached the position of Imamate. Rewarding the position of Imamate to

him after prophethood shows the significance and loftiness of this position.

Allah expresses Imamate as “my covenant” so Imamate is a divine covenant, and like prophethood, it is given to whomever Allah wills, and it is not that anyone who succeeds in the tests of life and gained purity of soul can necessarily reach the position of Imamate. For this reason, the phrase “I am making you” was used, meaning that Imamate is by the appointment from Allah, not only through acquisition and effort of human beings. Man’s purity and success in the tests is required but it is not enough. Unlike many positions and degrees such as *ijtihad*, piety, justice, which are by acquisition, as the way to achieve them has been stated, Imamate is a divine covenant and a gifted position; as Allah said about it: “My pledge does not extend to the unjust.” The status of prophethood as well as Imamate are divine gifts and are distributed according to Allah Almighty “Allah knows best where to place His apostleship” (Qur’an 6: 124) Therefore, one cannot say; since the Imamate does not extend to the unjust, then whoever was not unjust can achieve the Imamate (Javādī Amulī, *ibid*: 438).

Conclusion

All in all, from the aforementioned discussions it becomes clear that “the words” referred to in the verse 124 of chapter Al-Baqarah were difficult tests that Ibrahim went through. It was also established that the completion of the tests was at the old age of Ibrahim. More so, it was shown that Ibrahim held the position of being a prophet and a messenger before the fulfilment of the tests. The fourth point was his being gifted Imamate at this stage of life i.e. being of the old age; after he was a prophet already. Therefore, Imamate cannot mean leadership in worldly or religious affairs, because these are some of the duties fixed for the Prophets and Ibrahim already had such authorities as a prophet especially, being one of the five prophets of determination (*Ulul-azm*). Fifth, according to what appears from the verse, Imamate is a higher authority than the position of prophethood and unlike the prophethood that was given to Ibrahim years ago, the Imamate was given to him at his old age after difficult trials and tests. There are also other verses indicating that some of the prophets were raised to the position of



Imamate not all of them; like the verse 24 of the chapter 32 “And from amongst them We appointed imams to guide by Our command”. As a result, Imamate is a divine pledge and covenant, and whoever is the Imam must be chosen by Allah, and appointment of the Imam is not assigned to people. For this reason, the verse declared that the Imamate does not reach the unjust people to state that the Imamate cannot be obtained, but it is a position that must come to the Imam from Allah, and for that reason Allah called it his own pledge and covenant. Now, it is time to discuss the other question as what the position of Imamate is. There are different views for the Sunni and Shia scholars that will be studied in another article.

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**Recognizing the Concept of *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*
in the Light of the Verses of the Holy Qur'an
and the *Aḥādīth* of Ahl al-Bayt (as)**

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Abstract

The term *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* has an important place in Islamic tradition, especially in Qur'anic commentary and mysticism, but also in other religious disciplines, such as dogmatic theology, principles of jurisprudence, jurisprudence, and philosophy. The main topics of this research revolve around the interpretation of the verse 3:7 in which *Muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihāt* are allocated a lot to discuss and debate. Here, another important issue named *ta'wīl* appears. *Ta'wīl* is used in connection with the *Mutashābihāt*; it is applied to all levels of meaning, from a simple, literal meaning to the hidden meanings. In the exegetical traditions, *ta'wīl* is mostly applied to the hidden meanings and esoteric exemplars of Quranic words. Since every passage of the Qur'an has a hidden meaning and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, the significance of the accurate meaning of *Mutashābihāt* and its communication with *ta'wīl* becomes obvious. This research will attempt to answer the question of whether *Mutashābihāt* are part of the Qur'an or they are used to describe the entire Quran. In order to do this, the study will document all verses of the Qur'an in which the *Mutashābih* or its derivatives have been used; it will analyze the major views among these to see how the authors justify their use of *ta'wīl*, and whether any of them provide an explicit methodology of how *ta'wīl* is known, and finally it will compare these various approaches to each other.

Keywords: Qur'an, *Ḥadīth*, *Muḥkamāt*, *Mutashābihāt*, Esoteric Interpretation, *Ta'wīl*, *Zāhir* and *Bāṭin*.

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Introduction

The main topic of this discussion is the seventh verse of *Surah Āl-e 'Imrān*, which has been the subject of controversy among the scholars of the Qur'an since the era of revelation. The common translation of that verse is as follows:

He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are clear verses (Muḥkamāt), which are the mother of the Book, and others are ambiguous (Mutashābihāt). Those in whose heart is sickness follow the ambiguous of them, seeking dissent and seeking their ta'wīl, and none knows their ta'wīl except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge. They say. 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'; yet none remember, but men possessed of minds.

One of the branches of Qur'anic studies pertains to the study of the *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* verses in the Book of God. According to most scholars of the Quran, the verses of the Qur'an are stated to be partly *Muḥkam* and partly *mutashābih* and they have stated that the *Mutashābih* verses must be understood in light of the *Muḥkam* ones. Let us explain the first statement first. The context shows the theme of this verse. It says that the verses of the Qur'an are classified into *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*.

Problem Statement

Dispute with the opinion of the majority of the scholars, is here that they interpret the *mutashābih* in contrast with the *Muḥkam* and saying 'Muḥkam' is derived from the verb *aḥkama* which means clear, decisive, confirmed and would refer to verses which are the substance and foundation of the Book in clear Arabic. Therefore, *Mutashābih* as a contrasted term to 'Muḥkam' in verse 3:7 would then be best understood as 'obscure, unclear, dubious or ambiguous' and not allegorical. These verses would not be the focus of the Book.

According to many scholars (Razi, v.2, p. 79-178; Nishaburi, v.3, p. 138), the term *Muḥkam* derives from *ihkām*, which is the act of making firm and strong, and *Mutashābih* derives from *tashābuh*, meaning similarity, and derives from the same root as *shubhah* (ambiguity, uncertainty, doubt) and *ishtibāh*, meaning making or becoming subject to doubt. In fact, The root from which 'Mutashābih'

takes form is SH-B-H and the verb *tashābaha* which means to be similar, alike, to resemble one another and in contrast, can also mean ambiguous. It means that if we focus on its roots (*Shabah*) it means to be similar and resemblance but '*Mutashābih*' as a contrasted term to *Muḥkam* in verse 3:7 would then be ambiguity, uncertainty and doubt.

In contrast to verse 3:7, *Mutashābih* appears in its primary meaning in verse 39:23 and is used to describe the entire Quran.

God Almighty says in the verse (39:23): ("*God has revealed the best statement (Arabic: *hadith*), a Book with its parts resembling each other (Arabic: *Mutashābihan*) ...*")

Classical lexicons pick up the discussion and it is noted how the meaning of 'ambiguous' was also posited as being derived from its primary meaning of semblance and something being co-similar.

Therefore, this research revolves around two axes: semantics and methodology based on two sources of Islam (the Book and Sunnah); including topics like: Description of *Muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihāt*, another approach to the meaning of *Mutashābihāt*, description of *Ta'wīl*, the meaning of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, those who possess the knowledge of *ta'wīl*.

Another approach to the meaning of *Mutashābihāt*

In addition to the two occurrences, *Mutashābihāt* and *tashabaha*, in 3.7, the root from sh/b/h occurs in ten other instances in the Qur'an. In eight of these, the meaning is clearly that of similarity, resemblances and sameness between two objects (cf. 2.25, 70, 118; 4.157; 6.99, 141; 13.16; 39.23). In six instances, it is used in adjectival form *Mutashābih/mushtabih*, as in Sura 6 where the word appears four times and denotes how the fruits of heaven, specifically pomegranates and olives, are similar (*Mutashābihan/mushtabihan*) and yet dissimilar (*ghayr Mutashābihin*). In all these examples, the word has positive connotations derived mainly from the positiveness of the items being compared. i.e. olives, pomegranates. It is only when it is used as a verb i.e. in derivatives such as *shubbiha*, *tashābahat*, *tashābaha* that negative connotations of prevarication, distortion and false or pretended confusion set in. In 4.157, for example, the verb *shubbiha* is used to indicate that it was not Christ who was killed and crucified but that it

‘appeared to be so’ to some people (*shubbiha lahum*). In 13.16, polytheists are ridiculed for seeming to be confused between what God has created and what their idols have allegedly created. Perhaps the more famous and oft-quoted example of false resemblances is 2.70, where the Israelites three times ask Moses to pray to God to identify for them which heifer they were supposed to slaughter in expiation for a murder. The verb *tashābaha* (‘to become similar’) is here used by the Israelites: ‘They (Moses’ people) said: Call upon your nurturer to clarify to us what is she (The cow). The cows looked similar to us (In a confusing way). And we, if the GOD willed, are/will be gifted with guidance.’

The Qur’an (11:1) explains the first designation by declaring that it is "a book whose verses are precisely, clearly or unambiguously set forth" (*uhkimat*). Here the purpose of *Muḥkam* is to provide clear guidance. With regard to the second designation, the Qur’an (39:23) says: "God has sent down the best speech, a *Mutashābih* book (*kitaban Mutashābihan*)". The word *Mutashābih* here means resembling one another in verbal expression.

The third statement asserting that the Qur’an (3:6) is both *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* "He it is Who has revealed the Book to you: some of its verses are decisive (*Muḥkam*), they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical (*Mutashābih*)." The *Muḥkam* here refers to verses whose meaning is apparent and are in need of no interpretation. The *Mutashābih* on the other hand cannot be readily understood and must therefore be needed for its *tawil*.

The word *Muḥkam* is derived from *hakama*, meaning he prevented, whence *ahkama*, i.e. he made a thing firm or stable), is that of which the meaning is secured from change and alteration, and *Mutashābih* (from *shib-h*, meaning likeness or resemblance) is that which is co similar or conformable in its various parts, and *mutahabihat* are therefore things like or resembling one another, hence susceptible of different interpretations. Therefore, when it is stated that the whole of the Book is *Muḥkam*, the meaning is that all its verses are decisive, and when the Qur’an is called *Mutashābih* (39:23), the meaning is that the whole of it is conformable in its various parts; while in the verse under discussion is laid down the important principle how verses susceptible

of different interpretations may be interpreted so that a decisive significance may be attached to them. The Qur'an establishes certain principles in clear words, which are to be taken as the basis, while there are statements made in allegorical words, or susceptible of different meanings, the interpretation of which must be in consonance with the other parts and the spirit of the Book.

It should be noted that the meaning of *muhakm* and *Mutashābih* in the verse 3:7 should be interpreted according to 11.1 ('A book whose verses have been made decisive and then explained in detail' – *kitabun uhkimat ayatuhu thuma fussilat*); all the verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamat* while 39:23 (*kitabān Mutashābihān mathanī*) implies that all the verses of the Quran are *Mutashābihāt*. To resolve the issue, commentators usually deal with all three verses together, saying that there is a general *Muḥkam/Mutashābih* and a particular *Muḥkam/Mutashābih*. The first has to do with verses 11.1 and 39.23 in which the *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* are taken to mean 'perfected/decisive' and 'consistent' respectively. The second has to do with verse 3.7 and all the various interpretations of *Muḥkamat/Mutashābihāt* that this generated. Obviously, it is clear that in all three examples, these binary terms are not meant to be regarded as opposite but rather as complementary terms. It is perhaps significant that the opposite of the word *Mutashābih* is *ghayr Mutashābih* and not *Muḥkam*; this is quite explicitly referred and reiterated in 6.114 and 6.99. It also be noted that although the *Muḥkamat* are presented as fundamental and as the essence of the book (*umm al-kitab*), that does not mean that the *Mutashābihāt* should in any way be considered less important. An alternative interpretation is to view them as having part-whole relationships where the *Muḥkamat* are the source *ayas* that are capable of generating all the *Mutashābihāt*. The notion of similarity encapsulated in the word *Mutashābihāt* would seem to strengthen this idea that they are somehow derived from the *Muḥkamat* hence their stated similarity or resemblance. In addition, the use of the phrase *umm al-kitab* (the source or origin of the book) would seem to further reinforce the notion of the *Muḥkamat* as the primordial source, akin to the *al-lawh al-mahfuz* (preserved tablet), out of which all *ayas* in the Quran and other scriptures are derived. It is also significant to note that,

according to 11.1, the revelation of the Quran is a two-stage process, as suggested by the conjunction *thumma* which denotes a sequence in time. Although some commentators have preferred to view *thumma* here as a coordinating conjunction, it is more commonly used and generally understood in the language to mean sequence; the first stage involves the establishing of fundamental principles and commandments; the second stage involves generating a multitude of *ayas* detailing and explicating these principles and injunctions. There thus appear to be two categories: one fixed for all time, reserved for fundamental discourse, and another for those that reiterate, expound, and comment. There is no question of the two terms being opposites and because it is never made explicit what the *Mutashābihāt* are supposed to ‘resemble’, the word can designate either the subdivision of the Quran into similar-looking *ayas* or the subdivision of the *Muḥkamat* into *ayas* that resemble it but are yet different from it. The implication of this two-stage process is that the *Muḥkamat* and the *Mutashābihāt* cannot be considered separately; they must be viewed in combination as components in a system of interdependent verses in which, on the one hand, the verses that are *Mutashābihāt* are the counterparts of the *Muḥkamat* verses, and on the other hand, they themselves are in turn the counterparts of each other.

Here is another important point which has been neglected by many scholars and it is the real meaning of the word ‘*Ukhar* (أُخْر)’ in the verse 3:7. In contrast with its common translation, *Ukhar* means *Thumma* (ثُمَّ); regarding to this meaning, the accurate meaning of the word *Ukhar* in the verse 12:46 and 3:7 will be as the following:

(12:46): “Of this and the king said, “I see seven fat kine whom seven lean ones devour, and seven green ears of corn and then they were converted to seven withered. O chiefs, expound to me my vision if it be that you can interpret visions.”

(3:7): He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are *Muḥkamat*, which are the mother of the Book, and then (at the same time) they are *Mutashābihāt*.



Description of *Ta'wīl*

Esoteric interpretation (*Ta'wīl*) of the Qur'an which includes attribution of esoteric or mystical meanings to the text by the interpreter is different from the conventional exegesis/commentary of the Qur'an, called *Tafsir*. Esoteric interpretations do not usually contradict the conventional (in this context called exoteric) interpretations; instead, they discuss the inner levels of meaning of the Qur'an. A *Hadith* (Kulayni, v. 4, p. 398-399; Majlisi, v. 89, p. 78) from the Prophet states that the Qur'an has an inner meaning, and that this inner meaning conceals a yet deeper inner meaning, and so on (up to seven levels of meaning), has sometimes been used in support of this view.

Most Muslim scholars believe that many passages of the Qur'an have a hidden meaning not readily apparent to the reader "The whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, which cannot be comprehended directly through human thought alone. Only the prophets and the pure among the saints of God who are free from the dross of human imperfection can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence." (Tabataba'i, Shi'ite Islam, p. 99) Therefore, because of its great significance and, we will start our discussion with the meaning of *ta'wīl* in the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

The word *ta'wīl* is from *a-w-l*, which means to return, to revert, which means going back to the original of a word to see what its meaning and connotations are. (Suyuti, v. 2, p. 221-222) Tabatabai defines *ta'wīl* as to lead back or to bring something back to its origin or archetype and says *ta'wīl* is derived from the word *al-awl* (to return). *Ta'wīl* of an ambiguous verse is its "returning base" to which it is returned. *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'an is the source from which it gets its realities. For want of a better word, it is mostly translated as interpretation, final interpretation, or the end; although these words do not convey its true connotation. (Tabatabai, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, v. 3, p. 35-44)

Some other scholars say *ta'wīl* is derived from the word *al-awl* (to return). *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'an is the source from which it gets its realities. (Firuzabadi, *Al-Qamus*, Under the topic of *al-ta'wīl*) Both *tafsir* and *ta'wīl* have been used in the Qur'an in the sense of exposition and

explanation (Furqan, 32). Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifat is of the opinion that the word *ta'wīl* occurs seventeen times in the Holy Qur'an:

1. Five times in the sense of the ultimate outcome (*ma'al*; 4:59; 17:35; 7:35 twice; 10:39);
2. Eight times in the sense of interpretation of dreams (12:6, 21, 36, 37, 44, 45, 100, 101); and
3. Four times in the sense of interpreting the *Mutashābih* (3:7, twice; 18:78, 82).

Some scholars consider *ta'wīl* to mean foregoing the literal meaning of a text for its metaphorical sense without violating the norms of the Arabic language for metaphorical usage, and in consonance with metaphorical relations, such as referring to a thing by the name of something similar to it or by its cause or that of something which is closely associated with it. Some have held *ta'wīl* to mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt* and the finding of a second meaning for the text which is called its inward or esoteric sense (*baṭn*) as opposed to its apparent and literal meaning (*ẓahr*).

Here we don't agree with the viewpoint of some scholar who says, *ta'wīl* is based on reason and personal opinion (*ra'y*), while *tafsir* is based on the material transmission of the Prophet himself or through his companions or his successors in the form of hadith. In this view, *ta'wīl* is generally defined as "interpretation according to rationality" while *tafsir* is "interpretation in accordance with what has been transmitted". (Massimo Campanini, p. 69-73)

Thalabi in his *Tafsir* has a chapter on the meaning of interpretation and hermeneutics (*tafsir* and *ta'wīl*) and the difference between them. He says that the function of *tafsir*, according to many scholars, is the unveiling (*al-kashf*) of the subject matter of the verse, its story, its meaning, and the reasons behind its revelation. *Ta'wīl*, on the other hand, is the rendering of the meaning of the verse (*sarf al-ayah*) into a different meaning that it might entertain (*ma'ná yahtamiluh*) which is consistent with what comes before and after it.

Thalabi goes on to explain that because *tafsir* is restricted to the subject matter (*sha'n*) of the verse and the reasons behind its revelation, and because *tafsir* is based on information that one learns from the tradition, it is an area in which one cannot adduce new material; *tafsir*

thus involves all the information the scholars have received about certain verses from previous generations reaching back to Muhammad and his followers: the why and when about them. *Tafsir* as such is a matter which depends on learning (*sama'*) and therefore it is forbidden (*maḥduūr*) to speculate in this area. Since *ta'wīl* is the art of explaining the Qur'an in a way that is coherent and consistent, it is not forbidden for scholars to engage in it as long as the explanation is in agreement with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. (Walid A. Saleh, p. 92-93)

Here, as we mentioned before, *ta'wīl* is based on traditional sources as it has been transmitted from the Prophet and it is not based on rationality. Some have stated that *tafsir* relates to denotation (*'ibārah*) while *ta'wīl* relates to connotation (*isharat*). Muhammad Husayn Dhahabi, a scholar of the Qur'an and history of *tafsir*, writes that *tafsir* relates to narration (*riwāyah*) and *ta'wīl* to critical study (*dirāyah*). (Dhahabi, p. 154) The Qur'an itself speaks about the necessity of *ta'wīl* and so have the Imams, the Companions, and Qur'anic scholars of later eras. But not everyone is competent to do the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an and the Qur'an itself (in accordance with evidence to be cited) as well as many traditions point out that erroneous and illegitimate *ta'wīl* is the work of the perplexed victims of false and misleading creeds. However, a correct and legitimate *ta'wīl*, which unravels the meanings of the Qur'anic *Mutashābihāt*, is the duty of those who are firmly grounded in knowledge (*rāsikhūna fi al-'ilm*), that is, those who are learned in religion, who follow a correct creed, and understand the subtleties of language and discourse. Later in this article, we will have more to say about the *rāsikhūn* who know the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an. (Khorramshahi, v. 3, no.3 Autumn 1997/1418)

According to what is cited above and a number of traditions from the Prophet's Family that indicate there are various levels of meanings in the Holy Qur'an and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, how can we agree with some have held that the verses of the Qur'an are stated to be partly *Muḥkam* (decisive) and partly *mutashābih* (allegorical) and *ta'wīl* to mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt*? This declaration cannot be approved unless we accept that all the verses of the Qur'an while are *Muḥkam*, they are also *Mutashābih*. According to 11.1 ('A book whose verses have been made

decisive and then explained in detail' – *kitabun uḥkimat āyātuhu thuma fuṣṣilat*); all the verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamat* while 39:23 (*kitāban Mutashābihan mathānī*) implies that all the verses of the Quran are *Mutashābihāt*; and a number of hadiths that declare the whole Qur'an possesses and inner (*bāṭin*) and outer (*ẓāhir*), it is concluded that belongs to the inner (esoteric) meaning of the verses. Otherwise, there will be a big paradox between some hadiths declaring that the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, and the fact that the verses of the Qur'an are partly *Muḥkam* and partly *mutashābih* and *ta'wīl* only mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt*. To resolve the issue, we must consider the verses of the Qur'an to have a set of interconnected and also interrelated to each other and its verses should be interpreted in the light of the similar verses. Regarding this fact, the verse 3:7 should be interpreted with the help of the verses 11.1, 6.114 and 6.99 and the traditions are as the following:

“In truth, the Qur'an possesses an inner and outer”. (Kulayni, v. 4, p. 549; Saduq, 'Ilal al-Sharāyī', p. 606)

“In truth, the Qur'an possesses an inner and outer, and its inner possesses another inner up to seven inners”. (Sayyid Haidar Amuli, p. 530)

The meaning of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*

In some traditions, it is the structural form of Qur'anic passages that is intended by the word *ẓāhir*, not the outward meaning of it. In these traditions, *bāṭin* refers to “meaning” and it includes all levels of meanings - from a surface (external) meaning to a deep one. In fact, these traditions note that both the structure and the meaning of the Qur'an are remarkable. The rhythmic letters, words and statements in the Qur'an also possess deep meanings. The following traditions imply the application of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. (See, Methodology of Qur'an Interpretation, Shaker, Muhammad Kazem, vol. 16 (1): (143-166)).

Imam Ali said: “Certainly the outward of the Qur'an is wonderful and its inward is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never cease; its amazements will never pass away.” (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 18)

“The outward of the Qur'an is reciting, and its inward is understanding.”

(Fayḍ Kāshani, vol. 1, p. 29) “The outside of the Qur'an is reciting and its inside is *ta'wīl* (hermeneutics).” (Ālusi, vol. 1, p.7)

Clearly, it is the words of the Qur'an that are recited, not their meanings! Therefore, the term *ẓāhir* in this group of traditions refers only to the words of the Qur'an and their extraordinary structure. There are traditions which interpret *ẓāhir* literally and *bāṭin* as the wider context, including all levels of non-literal meanings.

Imam Baqir (as) said: “The outward of the Qur'an is the meaning that includes only the persons about whom the verses of the Qur'an were sent down, and its inside is the meaning that includes other people—those who are similar to the first group throughout history.” (Fayḍ Kashani, vol. 1, p. 27)

The Prophet said: “The outward of the Qur'an is God's law and its inward is His knowledge.” (Majlisi, vol. 74, p. 136)

Imam Sadiq said: “The outward of the Qur'an is *tanzil* (descent), and its inside is *ta'wīl* (hermeneutics).” (Saffar, p. 216)

From the above traditions, it can be inferred that the Qur'an has meanings other than the literal ones.

Two ways of *Qirā'ah* (Those who possess the knowledge of *Ta'wīl*)

According to the other reading, the translation of the relevant part of the verse will be as follows: *and none knows their ta'wīl except Allah, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. They say: 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'.* It means that the ayah (3:7) can be read in two ways. The first is to stop here, “...and no one knows its *ta'wīl* except for Allah. And those grounded in knowledge say....” This is how ibn Mas'oud and Ubay bin Ka'b would recite it. The second is to read it, “...and no one knows its *ta'wīl* except for Allah and those grounded in knowledge. [They] say....” and this was the recitation of ibn Abbas.

The recitation of ibn Abbas goes back to interpretation (*tafsīr*) and the reading of ibn Mas'oud is of actualization. One of the proofs of this is ibn Abbas saying that I am of the people of knowledge and know the *ta'wīl*.

Ibn Qutayba, a prominent Sunni scholar who passed away in 276 Hijri, gives many arguments about how to understand the "*raasikhun fil-Ilm*" and *ta'wīl* passage in the Quran. He says that if the *rāsikhūn fil-*



Ilm had no share in the knowledge of the *Mutashābih* except saying, "We believe in it, all is from our Lord," then they would have no superiority over the students or even the ignorant because all of them say "We believe in it, all is from our Lord,". He states if it is permissible to say that the Prophet knew ambiguous (*Mutashābih*) so His scholar companions knew too. He adds there is a famous tradition comprising a prayer made by the Messenger of God for Ibn Abbas, the outstanding scholar of the Quran: "O God, make him learned in the religion and teach him *ta'wīl*".

This tradition clearly indicates that *ta'wīl* is something that can be understood by the "*rāsikhūn fil- Ilm*". (Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'an, p. 98-101)

Tabataba'i says: "What is, then, the reply to the question asked in the beginning? Does anyone, other than God, know the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an? The majority of Twelver Shi'a answers: "Yes, the Qur'an proves the possibility of the knowledge of its *ta'wīl* for someone other than God", although this verse does not prove it.

Tabataba'i states that there is no conjunction, exception or qualification in this absolute statement. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Qur'an's interpretation is reserved for God. Nevertheless, there may be other proofs to show that someone, other than God, may know this *ta'wīl*. There are in the Qur'an instances in which an absolute restriction of one verse has been qualified by another. Take the example of the knowledge of the unseen. The Qur'an has declared in many verses that it is confined to Allah: *Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen but God (27:65). Say: The unseen is only for God (10:20). And with Him are the keys of the unseen - none knows them but He (6:59).*

And after all these restricting statements, comes the following verse: *The Knower of the unseen! He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle. (72:26-27)*

This verse clearly says that some persons other than Allah, that is, the chosen apostles, are given the knowledge of the unseen.

Now time has come to discuss the first statement: Other verses of the Qur'an prove that it is possible for someone, other than God, to have the knowledge of the Qur'an's *ta'wīl*." (Mizān, vol. 3, p. 35-44)

On the other hand, Al-Sharif al-Radi, a prominent Shi'i scholar who passed away in 406 *Hijri*, in his book *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fil-Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* accepts the reading the verse (*Al 'Imran*, 7: "and none knows their *ta'wīl* except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge ...") with *atf* and says that there are many reasons that this verse is concerned to join those who are firmly rooted in knowledge (*rāsikhūn fil- 'Ilm*), with Allah, in the knowledge of the Book's *ta'wīl*. He states that not only the Prophet know the *Qur'anic Mutashābihāt* and *ta'wīl* but the infallible Imams and others who are learned in religion, also know the *ta'wīl* of the *Qur'an*. (*Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, p. 7-14)



Conclusion

In conclusion, we should again back to our discussion to summarize that, in contrast with who states that the verses of the Qur'an have been divided into two categories and classified to be partly *Muḥkam* and partly *Mutashābih*, the whole verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamāt* while all the verses of the Quran are also *Mutashābihāt* ; and The most Muslim scholars believe that every passages of the Qur'an have a hidden meaning not readily apparent to the reader and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, which cannot be comprehended directly through human thought alone. Only the prophets and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge (*rāsikhūn fil-ʿIlm*) can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence. According to this view, the accurate meaning of the seventh verse of the Surah Āl-e ʿImrān will be as the following:

He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are Muḥkamāt, which are the mother of the Book, and then (at the same time) they are Mutashābihāt. Those in whose heart is sickness follow that of it which is unspecific of them, seeking dissent and seeking their ta'wīl, and none knows their ta'wīl except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge. They say. 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'; yet none remember, but men possessed of minds.



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Parental Responsibility in Moral Security of Children in Shi'a Teachings

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Abstract

This scientific article has explored the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping the character and moral development of children, and understanding the specific principles and guidelines provided by Shi'a Islam can greatly inform and guide parents in fulfilling their obligations. The article begins by examining the significance of moral security in the context of Shi'a teachings, highlighting the emphasis placed on nurturing virtuous qualities and safeguarding children from moral deviations. It delves into key themes such as the role of parents as primary educators, the importance of positive role modeling, and the cultivation of ethical values based on Islamic teachings. The study also explores various practical strategies and approaches suggested by Shi'a teachings to foster moral security in children. These include nurturing a strong spiritual connection, providing a nurturing and loving environment, promoting ethical behavior through discipline and guidance, and encouraging community involvement to reinforce moral values. In conclusion, this article underscores the critical role of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings. By emphasizing the unique principles and guidance provided by Shi'a Islam, it provides valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in fostering the moral development of children within a religious and cultural context. Recognizing and implementing these teachings can contribute to the overall well-being and moral security of future generations.

Keywords: Responsibility, Moral Security, Parents, Children, Shi'a.

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Introduction:

Parenting is a complex and multifaceted task that carries immense responsibility in shaping the character and moral development of children. Across various cultures and religions, the role of parents in nurturing and safeguarding the moral security of their offspring is widely recognized. In the context of Shi'a teachings, a branch of Islam with a distinct set of beliefs and practices, parental responsibility holds particular significance and is deeply rooted in religious doctrines.

Shi'a Islam places a strong emphasis on moral education and the cultivation of virtuous qualities from an early age. The teachings of Shi'a scholars provide comprehensive guidance on parenting and offer a framework for parents to fulfill their obligations effectively. Understanding the specific principles and guidelines outlined by Shi'a Islam can not only empower parents but also contribute to the overall moral security and well-being of children.

This scientific article aims to explore the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. By examining the religious and cultural context, as well as the practical implications of these teachings, this study seeks to shed light on the unique perspectives and approaches that Shi'a Islam offers to parents and educators.

The article will begin by elucidating the concept of moral security and its significance in Shi'a teachings. It will delve into the rich tradition of moral education within Shi'a Islam, highlighting the importance of instilling ethical values and protecting children from moral deviations. By exploring the scriptural sources, interpretations, and scholarly works, the article will uncover the underlying principles that shape the understanding of parental responsibility in the context of moral security.

In addition to discussing the theoretical aspects, this article will explore practical strategies and approaches suggested by Shi'a teachings to foster moral security in children. It will examine the role of positive role modeling, nurturing a strong spiritual connection, creating a nurturing and loving environment, and implementing effective discipline and guidance. Furthermore, the article will explore the significance of community involvement and the role of the wider



society in reinforcing moral values within the framework of Shi'a teachings.

By delving into the teachings of Shi'a Islam, this article aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for parents, educators, and policymakers in fulfilling parental responsibilities and ensuring the moral security of children. Recognizing and implementing these teachings can contribute to the well-being and moral development of future generations, fostering a society that is grounded in strong ethical principles and values.

About the background of the subject, articles and books have been written about the educational role of parents or their moral responsibility towards children. Of course, all of them are in Farsi language, and less attention has been paid to the issue of children's moral security. I mention a few things below:

1. An Analytical Look at: The Moral Responsibility of Children and Parents from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadiths, Mohammad Mahdi Shamsi, 2016.
2. The requirements of children's religious education from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadiths; From before birth to seven years old, Abolfazl Assari, 2015.
3. Explanation of encouragement and punishment in moral education from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadiths, Maryam Esmaili, 2017. To clarify some of the terms, we first provide definitions of ethics, responsibility, and moral security.

The most commonly used terminology of "morality" among Islamic scholars and philosophers is the stable virtues in the soul that produce the actions for a man without the need to think and reflect. (IbnMiskawayh, 2002, p. 84)

"Security" means relaxing and feeling unafraid, which can be considered in a variety of ways, including social security, human security, financial security and moral security. The meaning of security in this article is moral security, and the meaning of responsibility here is moral responsibility of parents toward their children.

"Moral upbringing" means how to use and cultivate the inner talents of a person to grow and establish moral qualities in order to



conduct moral behaviors and avoid immoral mistakes. (Deylami & Azarbaijani, 2000, p. 19)

“Shi'a” is one of the two great schools of Islam, which refers to the followers of Imam Ali. Shia has several sects, Shia in this article means Imami Shia (Imamiyyah). They believe in the caliphate of Imam Ali after the Prophet and consider the Imamate to be limited to 12 infallible people, all of whom are descendants of Imam Ali. Shia teachings are based on the Quran, and the narrations of infallible Imams (Mofid, 1993, p. 35).

Problem statement

The problem addressed in this scientific article is the need for a comprehensive understanding of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the context of Shi'a teachings. While parenting plays a crucial role in shaping the character and moral development of children, there is a lack of specific guidance and exploration of the unique principles and guidelines provided by Shi'a Islam. This knowledge gap hinders parents, educators, and policymakers from effectively fulfilling their obligations and promoting moral security in children. The problem statement emphasizes the importance of recognizing the significance of moral security in Shi'a teachings, understanding the role of parents as primary educators, and exploring practical strategies and approaches derived from Shi'a teachings to foster moral development. Addressing this problem will contribute to the well-being and moral security of children, as well as provide valuable insights for individuals involved in parenting and education within a Shi'a religious and cultural context.

1. Parental responsibility for children's moral security

From Islamic point of view, one of the important family responsibilities is parental responsibility for children's moral security. Two points should be mention here; first, a man has many responsibilities in various personal, social, legal, family and moral dimensions. The second, man's evolution is based on the proper fulfillment of these responsibilities. Because Islam sees human development in the path of the family, one of the most important

responsibilities of the man is responsibility towards family members, especially children. In Shiite narrations, the emphasis is also placed on the responsibility of parents for the upbringing of children (Saduq, 1413, p. 2:623). Parents' responsibilities to children are many, this research will focus on moral upbringing and moral security of children.

1-1. The Importance of moral upbringing of children

Morality has an essential role in Islamic teachings. Morality discusses moral virtues and vices, and the aim of it is to bring the man to perfections. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) considers his goal of prophethood, the completion of moral values, and says: "انما بعثت لاتتم مكارم الاخلاق." I was sent to perfect honorable morals (Al-Tabarsi, 1992, p. 8)

It should be also noted that, the morality is the secret of the continuity and life of nations. The moral ethos develops friendships, improves the inner peace of the individual, secures the social spirit, and controls the misconduct of human beings. (Imani, 2011, p. 20) In short, moral upbringing has a great contribution to mental health of humans in individual and social arenas. These points indicate that moral upbringing is very important in Islam.

1-2. Parent responsibility for the moral upbringing of children

Parents are the most influential factor in the moral upbringing of children. The flourishing of high human talents and values is based on upbringing and education. Given that Children are born without social knowledge or social skills, parents are child's first teachers and role models, and usually, children are affected by what their parents do. Therefore, parents should be careful about how they interact with their children. Moral or immoral behavior of parents is the first threat to the moral safety of children .

In the formation of the moral and behavioral character of children, two factors of heredity and environment are involved. Among the environmental factors, the most influential factor is the family and the most important factor among family is parents. (Panahi & Sharifi , 2009, p. 139)



When we come to the narratives in this field, we find that the most emphasis is on parental behavior. For example, about lying as an immoral attribute, several factors can be involved in how the child may become a liar, like friend, environment, etc., but from the point of view of Shi'a, parents can play a key role as child's first teachers and role models, in their behavior and in the importance of choosing a suitable friend for their children. When the father or mother is accustomed to lying, often their children will also become a liar.

If parents want to improve others, they must first be self-righteous and have moral qualifications and good behaviors. The behavioral patterns of children should be high-quality people, and their character must be a blend of honesty, purity, affection, sacrifice, steadfastness, and self-confidence. If the children see these features consistently from their parents, then they will believe them, and they try to think in a way that parents like to behave in a way that is pleasant to parents. (Mahmoudi, 2007, p. 31)

1-3. Responsibility for providing children's mental and physical needs

One of the responsibilities of parents in securing the moral security of children is to pay attention to the material and spiritual needs of the children. For instance, one of which is paying attention to Halal earning.

Halal earnings have many features, one of which is the growth of moral and special virtues in the child. (Paknia, 2003, p. 22) The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) says:

"The worship of God is seventy parts, and the best of them is Halal earnings" (Boroujerdi, 2007, p. 77).

Parents are struggling to meet the material needs of children, but there are psychological needs that are more important than material needs. Undoubtedly, one of the most basic needs of child, after material needs is the need to be loved. Parents need to pay particular attention to this child's need. The correct answer to this need of the child forms the basis of his upbringing. Because the realization of this requirement leads to mental relaxation, security, self-esteem, trust in the parents and even his physical health. The failure to realize it leads to self-denial,



feel sorry and deprived, and many social deviations. (Hosseinizadeh, 2009, pp. 83-84)

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him), one of the Shi'a infallible imams, says: "Moses asked God:" O God! What is the best action to you? The Lord said: love of children. (Al-Tabarsi, 1992, p. 237)

One should bear in mind that the consequences of parents' non-compliance with their moral responsibility are:

1. Unhealthy children; failure to pay attention to the moral security of children leads to having unhealthy children.
2. Unhealthy family; the result of having unhealthy children is having an unhealthy family.
3. Unhealthy society; the result of having unhealthy family is having an unhealthy society (Shamsi, 2016).

Considering the key role of parents in the transfer of moral values to children and the importance of moral development, some of the factors of moral upbringing of children and the ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety are referred to.

2. Ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety

There are some ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral security. The first point is matching parents' thoughts and behavior with each other towards children. It is very important in this regard, because if the parent's thoughts are not in line with each other, it can have a significant negative impact on children. In this case, parents cannot play their role well in securing the moral safety of children.

The second point, which is the most important one, is that whatever parents will behave more intimate and emotional, they will be more successful in securing their moral security. Whatever parents provide the emotional and psychological needs of the child, the child will take the pattern of their parents and will more trust their parents. Parents should behave with their children as intimate friends, and accompany them in healthy activities, exercise, play, go to mountains, cinema, park, and allow the child to have a telephone interview with friends. Spending more time with children in the outdoors can be very effective and etc.



Ways to fulfill Parental responsibility for children's moral safety can be categorized into as follows:

2-1. Provide a safe and secure environment

In Shi'a traditions, the provision of safe conditions for the moral education of the children is very much considered and they have tried to use the methods to create the environment for the fulfillment of the goals of moral education. Some of the methods are:

- a. Avoiding children from unhealthy environments (Seyed Razi, 1414, p. 460)
- b. Getting away from immoral friends, the friends who do not care about moral issue (Sadouq, 1983, p. 1:169)
- c. Creating a moral atmosphere in society (Davoudi, 2010, p. 116)

Today, cyberspace is one of the most important issues that threatens the moral security of children. Despite the positive points for the growth of children in Cyberspace, there are many negative points, some of which have a direct and indirect impact on the formation of the personality and attitudes of children. Informing children about cybercrime abnormalities is essential. One of the effective ways is to restrict the use of cyberspace.

Avoiding excessive monitoring and inquiring is necessary. We need to know that excessive over monitoring and inquiring into the activities of our children in cyberspace will erode their sense of independence and this will reduce children's trust in parents. The solution is to have enough information before entering the cyberspace and to use safe search.

2-2. Awareness of Parents and children

Awareness plays an important role in shaping individual behaviors. This law also affects human moral conduct. Awareness raising should be done both for parents and for children. Parents should have sufficient knowledge and information about the child's moral development and responsibilities that parents bear. Parents should also be aware of the ways in which this responsibility is exercised. (Hoseini & Shamsi, 2009, p. 7)



Familiarizing children with ethical teachings play an essential role in moral development. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was especially concerned with the teaching of ethical education. We can find this point in the devise of the Prophet of Islam to Imam Ali (as) (Sadouq, Amali, 1400, p. 376)

Another way is to foster children's moral thinking. Those who possess this ability can easily identify their moral duty in different situations; make the right decision and avoid being subjected to moral deviations. To promote the development of moral thinking same ways can be noted like encouragement for thinking before doing anything (Al-Tamimi, 1987, p. 57), and the discussion of ethical issues (Majlesi, 2007, p. 67:141)

3-2. Methods of cultivating moral habits

Creating good moral habits is one of the most important parts of moral education. Therefore, in Shi'a traditions, besides creating the best conditions for moral education, and the growth of moral awareness, the development of desirable moral habits has also been considered. In order to cultivate the desirable moral habits, there are methods in narratives such as: Introducing ethical characters to the children (Seyed Razi, 1414, p. 300) and taking care of behaviors (*Moraqabah*) (Sadouq, Amali, 1400, p. 234)

4-2. Correction of moral wrongs

One of the main duties of parents in moral education of their children is to correct their moral mistakes. There are a number of ways in narrations to correct moral errors like remembrance (Tabataba'i, 1999, p. 78), one of the duties of the parent is to give advice to their children and give them their life experiences. With advice and guidance, prevent their children from walking on the path to error and deviation. Therefore, the Almighty God in the Holy Quran has narrated the advice of a kind father to his child and introduces it as an apostle and model for children and parents. (Paknia, 2003, p. 37) Lukman told his son while he was preaching:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Lukman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with



Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice." (Al-Quran, p. 31:13)

Imam Ali also preaches his son, Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) and helps him on the right path of life. He says:

" Revive your heart with preaching and good words" (ImamAli, 2002, p. 370)

Another way is ignoring some errors. (Majlesi, 2007, p. 74:214)

Finally, Positive thinking and goodwill to others will reduce immoral behaviors.

5-2. Convergence of religious beliefs

The most fundamental issue in the family that promotes the moral development of its members is the principle of convergence of religious beliefs in family members, especially parents. (Faghihi & Najafi, 2013, p. 4) One of the principles that is recommended in Shi'a teachings when choosing a spouse is the principle of "*kofw*", which means equal and similar, meaning that men and women must be close in their thoughts and beliefs. (Majlesi, 2007, p. 10:236)

Convergence of religious beliefs in family members, not only is important in the consolidation of family relationships but also it influences the moral secure of children.

6-2. Honesty in behavior and speech

One of the important ways in child moral upbringing is, to be honest in your behavior and speech with the child, and avoiding lies. Non-honest behavior has three types of anti-training effects:

- a. Parents are a practical model for children, so parents' behavior has a greater impact on children than their spoken advice.
- b. Parents with Non-honest behavior loses their children's trust, a child who faces parents with non-honest behavior, does not trust their words and promises, so, parents training work will be ineffective.
- c. Parents thus hurt the child's personality, a child treated with non-honest behavior and falsehood, feels that his value is the same, because if he had value, respect and personality, this would not be treated with him. (Hosseinzadeh, 2009, p. 150)



3. Balancing religious teachings with modern influences:

The challenges and considerations that need to be considered when addressing the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings include the cultivation of morality from an early age to strengthen religious values (Effiati, 2018). Additionally, efforts must be made to protect children from sexual violence, including teaching them to recognize, reject, and report potential threats (Shohib, 2019). Religious education is seen as a solution to the problem of children's moral decay, with the hope that it will instill good moral values and ethics in everyday life (Assyauqi, 2020). These challenges and considerations emphasize the importance of parental involvement, protection from violence, and the role of religious education in shaping the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings.

Religious teachings can be balanced with modern influences in children's moral education by incorporating religious values into education, shaping children's character through religious education in family life, creating a favorable environment for spiritual and moral education, and using exemplary methods to develop moral religious values in early childhood (T.B. Baynazarova, 2022). By including religious beliefs in education, students' moral and spiritual development can be positively impacted, leading to a more respectful, compassionate, and sustainable society (Safitri, 2022). Parents play a crucial role in shaping children's character through religious education in family life, preventing children from being easily influenced by the negative aspects of the modern world. Creating a warm and respectful environment, involving children and parents in a uniform educational space, and utilizing play therapy can contribute to the spiritual and moral education of pre-school children. Exemplary methods, such as role models, use of audio-visual media, storytelling method, and habituation method, can influence the development of moral religious values in early childhood (Farisia, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this scientific article has explored the concept of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children within the framework of Shi'a teachings. The study has shed light on the



significance of moral security in Shi'a Islam, emphasizing the importance of moral education and protecting children from moral deviations.

Through an examination of the role of parents as primary educators, the article has highlighted the profound responsibility parents have in conveying religious teachings and instilling moral values in their children.

Moreover, the article has discussed practical strategies derived from Shi'a teachings for fostering moral security in children. Positive role modeling, nurturing a strong spiritual connection, creating a loving and supportive environment, implementing effective discipline and guidance, and fostering community involvement have been identified as key approaches in this regard.

Recognizing and implementing the teachings and principles discussed in this article can have significant implications for parents, educators, and policymakers. By fulfilling their parental responsibilities in line with Shi'a teachings, individuals can contribute to the moral development and well-being of children, ultimately fostering a society grounded in ethical principles.

However, it is important to acknowledge and address the challenges and considerations that may arise in implementing these teachings within diverse cultural and societal contexts. Balancing religious teachings with modern influences, accommodating diverse family dynamics, and promoting inclusive approaches are essential in ensuring the effectiveness of parental responsibility in moral security.

In summary, this article underscores the critical role of parental responsibility in ensuring the moral security of children in Shi'a teachings. By providing valuable insights and practical guidance, it offers a foundation for further research and informs the practices of parents, educators, and policymakers, leading to the cultivation of a morally secure and virtuous generation.



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Women and Intercultural Communication in Hosseini's Arba'īn Ceremony

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Abstract

The prominent presence of women in Hosseini's Arba'īn has caused the role of women in intercultural communication in this ceremony to be discussed in this article. By focusing on this role and increasing the quality of intercultural communication, strengthening the commonalities of Muslim nations and not highlighting their differences, as well as cultural and economic strategies, including learning the language to establish verbal communication with tone, non-verbal communication, giving gifts, attending reception processions to provide services, hospitality and economic sacrifice, and in a word, the manifestation of moral virtues, which was the goal of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him have been emphasized.

Keywords: Arba'īn ceremony, Intercultural communication, Women.

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1. Introduction

The Islamic world is geographically vast. This expansion has caused cultural, linguistic, social and ethnic differences. On the one hand, this dispersion is an opportunity for the Islamic world, and it can be said that if attention is not paid to this issue, it can be considered a threat. The existence of ethnic, racial and geographical diversity can be a unique opportunity in the development of the Islamic world, but if these differences are fueled, it can cause division in the Islamic world.

The presence of collective rites and rituals such as Hajj and Arbaʿīn can cause unity and solidarity in the Islamic world. The discussion of intercultural communication in the Hosseini Arbaʿīn ceremony comes from the fact that every year millions of Muslims from around the world gather together in Karbala and in the Holy Shrine of Imam Hossein (peace be upon him) and establish communication with each other and communication between pilgrims. Based on their culture, which is of different ethnicities, races and languages, this issue highlights the role of intercultural communication. Although the pilgrims present in Arbaʿīn are from different cultures, these differences should be put aside in the light of this spiritual ceremony and become a united social movement. Pilgrims should seek to converge to a common religious identity in this huge and diverse community of millions in intercultural communication. But what is the way to achieve this goal? And what is the role of women in this? The personality of the people of a society is formed in the loving lap of the mother, and women play a vital role in the physical, mental, ideological, educational and behavioral health of the society. The great men and women of history have grown in the shadow of wise and capable mothers. Therefore, the growth and prosperity of a society depends on the existence of women who have vision and awareness.

A Muslim woman has a role model like Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra, peace be upon her. In her existence, purity, cultural and political activity are manifested. He was raised in the bosom of a mother with patience, perseverance and bravery who spends all her wealth on Islam. The bosom of such a mother raises a daughter with a passionate, epic and social presence in the event of Karbala. If a woman is placed in her main



position, which is in accordance with her existence, nature and rationality, she can have a strong presence in all the pillars of Islamic society. From the point of view of the verses of the Holy Quran, the status of men and women is equal, as in verse 35 of Surah Al-Ahzab, God mentions men and women next to each other and considers the same reward for both. In verse 97 of Al-Nahl Surah, it is stated that there is no difference in gender, and the criterion is righteous action. God Almighty says in verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujrat: People, we first created you all from one male and female, and then We made many different branches so that you would know each other, so the most noble and proud of you in the sight of God is the most pious of you. Indeed, God is all-knowing and aware. In this verse, women and men have been placed in the same category, and God Almighty has not made a difference between people in terms of materiality and appearance and has given preference to piety. A woman also can acquire knowledge and reach moral perfection. A woman has unique characteristics, including the multiplication of the human race. As mentioned in verse 223 of Surah Al-Baqarah. Woman is the creator of the human, and woman is the first teacher of the human. A woman is the source of peace in life, and the creation of a woman is one of the signs of God Almighty. The woman is the centre of the family, and in the shadow of the presence of the woman, the family grows and becomes perfect. A woman is a mother, and one of the characteristics of a mother is selflessness. *Arba'īn* procession is very effective in promoting women and their accompanying children. During the *Arba'īn* procession, children learn social behaviour, more interaction with people, selflessness, and forgiveness. In this way, the *Arba'īn* ceremony promotes children's social and religious development with their mothers. By attending this ceremony, women also learn the Islamic lifestyle, simplicity, patience, contentment, sacrifice, and forgiveness. Therefore, the presence of women in the epic rituals of *Arba'īn* is necessary. Now, with the requirement and need for the presence of women, it is necessary to examine their intercultural communication in *Arba'īn*, which has been researched in this paper.



2. Problem Statement

The review of the background of the research shows that intercultural communication has been investigated in various fields, which are discussed briefly below. However, no research has been done specifically in the field of women and intercultural communication in the Hosseini Arbaʿin ceremony, so this research is a contribution to this field.

Razi [2] first examines the formation of studies related to intercultural communication and how it is done and then examines the characteristics and differences of each. In an article, Shalchian [3], while explaining the side effects and results of the tourism industry on the development process, has examined the positive effects of cultural interaction and ways of familiarizing and introducing religious identity in the tourism scene between the most popular divine religions, namely Islam and Christianity.

Emami [4] has presented an analysis of the impact of Muslim science and knowledge on Europe as an intercultural connection (before the beginning of decadence and the 10th century of Hijri) in four areas of wisdom and philosophy, basic sciences, natural sciences and literature. Yousefi and Varshoi [5] showed in research that traveling for pilgrimage strengthens the intercultural communication of Shia communities. Salimi [6] has analyzed the content of the Quran and the interpretations of this holy book by using the theories of intercultural communication in order to investigate the possibility of a theory attributable to the Quran.

Mohsenian [7] first examines the evolution of intercultural communication in the world before modern information and communication technologies and then puts forward the view that although the formation of the term cultural imperialism is a product of the unipolar system centered on America and the emergence of the term cultural invasion is the result of the developments of the era of the global village. Roshandel Arbatani and Saber [8] defined the concepts of culture and information technology and examined the relationship between culture and information technology with regard to new communication technologies, the most important of which is the



Internet. After examining the conceptual position and scientific origin of intercultural relations and theories, Hajiani and Akhlaghi [9] have examined the most important methods of measuring intercultural relations.

In a research, Vadi and Akhlagh Nasab [10] determined the indicators of intercultural communication from the perspective of religion. Among the indicators, three indicators: dialogue expansion, tension reduction, and mutual respect were significant at the 99% confidence level. Yazdkhasti et al [11] study the impact of virtual social networks on the dialogue between cultures in the virtual public domain. Moradi et al. [12] conducted descriptive-analytical research that deals with the role of sports in the development of intercultural and social communication. Yusefzadeh and Fayaz [13], using descriptive and interpretive methods, look for the answer to the question that to what extent intercultural philosophy is compatible with Islamic thought and what mechanisms does the Islamic view (the Holy Quran) have to overcome the current deadlocks.

Bashir et al [14] investigated the impact of culture on the international negotiation process and addressed the issue of foreign and international relations with a cultural approach. Yousefi and Varshoi [15] examine the impact of language unfamiliarity and intercultural communication in Shia communities and for this purpose they use the theoretical foundations of intercultural communication and a random sample of 598 foreign pilgrims whose research results show that shows that pilgrimage (length and number of trips) has a significant and positive effect on intercultural communication, and language unfamiliarity has a negative and significant effect on intercultural communication. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, Arzani and Ehtemam [16] have studied and analyzed the verses of the Holy Quran that are related to Christians and describe the process of interaction with them. Yousufzadeh Arbat [17], using the documentary method and conducted research, examines cultural characteristics, including language and its role in intercultural communication, and then points to the Islamic point of view in this regard.

Yusufzadeh et al. [18] have investigated whether intercultural communication can be reduced to communication between Muslims



and non-Muslims and in other words interreligious communication? By analyzing the culture and using the method of qualitative content analysis in Islamic texts, a positive answer is given in this research. Hosseini Jabali [19] investigates the common intercultural principles of Indonesia and Iran to create more friendship and cooperation. Meshkat and Mosleh [20] examine the possibility of finding a model for intercultural philosophy from Herder's philosophy of culture. Fayaz and Nadi [21] examine the role of intercultural communication in reducing the challenge of Islamophobia in the world by emphasizing the understanding of cognitive phenomena.

Mojavar Sheikhan et al. [22] have studied the role of national media in the development of intercultural communication in Iran and use the Delphi technique in their study. Zandieh and Khaniki [23] have designed a model of the various functions of virtual social networks in ethnic intercultural communication. In a qualitative research, Bashir and Keshani [24] conducted interviews with 20 Afghan immigrants living in Bomhen with the theoretical framework of Gudykunst and Orb and analyzed the behaviors of these immigrants based on the theory of co-culture. The results of their research show that the third generation of Afghan immigrants, unlike the previous generations, who traditionally chose the compromise approach, choose the adaptive method and sometimes the separation method in a more limited way. Ahmadi [25], focusing on intercultural communication, seeks to explain important and effective policies in increasing intercultural convergence between nations in the Arbaʿīn procession. Khaniki et al. [26] are trying to design and evaluate the model of various functions of virtual social networks, in inter-cultural and ethnic communication (case of study: students of Tehran universities). Bazarafshan [27] investigated the cultural-communication issues between Shiites and Sunnis of Iran by using documentary and library methods and with a descriptive-analytical approach, and after analyzing based on Levinas's thought, he has extracted axes to improve intercultural communication in Iran.

Elviri et al. [28] are trying to discover effective cases in the type of intercultural communication based on the Qur'anic model of cultural empathy to reach a common meaning of Islam and Muslims in the eyes of the natives in order to provide a suitable and effective propaganda

ground on the axis of monotheism and human nature. Bashir and Bazarafshan [29] tried to study effective communication according to the following cases: searching in the sources of Shia narrative books and using the method of analyzing the content of speech and behavior and the recommendations of the innocents, peace be upon them, in interaction with Sunnis in the framework of the theory of anxiety/uncertainty management. Yusufzadeh [30] raises the issue of cultural intelligence in Islamic teachings.

Ghamami and Islami Tanha [31] examine the Quranic model of intercultural communication by posing the questions of why, who, where, what and how and with the method of Quran to Quran and during a comparative approach of inference. Yusufzadeh [32] has investigated the thoughts of Ayatollah Ayatollah Khamenei Madzaleh al-Ali with the aim of achieving the problem of intercultural communication and with a descriptive and analytical method. Sanai and Dehghani [33], have sought to find a way to realize the intercultural philosophy of understanding. Mojaver Shaikhan [34], has examined the role of the national media (television) in the development of intercultural communication in the country and what strategies television It can provide the reasons for the development of intercultural communication in the country.

As it can be seen in the review of the background of the research, the research specifically on women and intercultural communication in the Hosseini Arba'īn ceremony has not been studied so far, and therefore in this research, this issue has been addressed and the innovation of this research paper is in the field of Women and their role in intercultural communication.

3. Theoretical foundations and investigation of cultural and economic potentials in women's intercultural communication

The purpose of this research is to study the role of women in the relationship between cultures in the Hosseini Arba'īn ceremony. Islam emphasizes on social solidarity and the creation of social phenomena that cause solidarity between cultures. Religious rituals can be an



important factor in creating this solidarity. The Arbaʿīn walk in which Muslims and even followers of other religions participate is one of these symbols of solidarity that has become a global phenomenon.

Arbaʿīn is the 40th day of the martyrdom of the third Imam of the Shiites, Imam Hossein (peace be upon him) and his honorable companions. Jaber ibin Abdullah Ansari, one of the Companions of Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, entered Karbala as the first pilgrim on this day and performed the Arbaʿīn pilgrimage [35] [36]. After that, with all the hardships, harassments and threats, this pilgrimage has continued until today and has become a movement of millions in which not only Muslims but also non-Muslims participate. Arbaʿīn pilgrimage has only been mentioned about Imam Hossein, peace be upon him, and there is no history of observing Arbaʿīn and its related actions before the Ashura incident [37]. Shiites have been performing the Arbaʿīn pilgrimage since the very beginning, the date of which is not known. There are many narrations about commemorating Arbaʿīn, among them Imam Hasan Asgari (peace be upon him) said that one of the clear signs of a believer is visiting Arbaʿīn [38].

Imam Sadeh (peace be upon him) says about the reward of visiting Imam Hossein (peace be upon him) on foot: Whoever walks to the grave of Imam Hossein (peace be upon him), God writes a thousand good deeds for every step he takes and removes a thousand bad deeds from him. The Almighty raises his rank a thousand degrees. This good Sunnah while showing devotion to Ahl al-Bayt brings closer hearts and shows the aliveness of jurisprudence and creates solidarity among the Muslims of the world. In this pilgrimage, the text of which was given by Sheikh Tusi, quoting from Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, it is stated that Imam Hossein, peace be upon him, sacrificed his life to save the people from ignorance and misguidance. The goal of the uprising of Imam Hossein, peace be upon him, is the same goal of Holy Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, had [36]. The full text of Ashura Pilgrimage is found in Allameh Majlesi's Bihar al-Anwar Chapter 25.

Differences in the way of life and national values in different ethnic groups cause big and widespread differences, but different ethnic groups from Muslim and non-Muslim countries with different cultural

professions, languages, behaviors and rituals participate in the Arba'īn procession. Pilgrims forget these differences and ethnic boundaries. Everyone forgets his individuality and contributes to the welfare of the others participating in the congregation. Pilgrims form a phenomenon that baffles all the principles of schools of thought. A large group of people, regardless of position, nationality, language, age, gender, time and place, set out to visit Imam Hossein (peace be upon him).

These rites and social solidarity are emphasized by the Holy Quran, as God says in the Holy Quran in verse 103 of Surah Al-Imran: And all of you hold on to the rope of God and do not scatter, and remember God's favor upon you, how you were enemies to each other and He created friendship between you and you became brothers by the blessing of him. It is also stated in verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujrat: People, we have created you from a single male and female and divided you into clans and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most pious of you. Surely, God is All-Knowing and aware. Undoubtedly, the Arba'īn walk was inspired by this verse. Language, ethnicity, race, country and any component that causes differences are all left aside in front of the life-giving and unifying truths of Islam. Man-made borders will disappear and Holy Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, will become the teacher of the whole world, as God the Almighty says in verse 28 of Surah Saba: And we did not send you except as a bearer of good news and a warning to all people. It is also stated in verse 158 of Surah Al-A'raf, I am God's Messenger to all of you. According to these divine teachings to Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his family and peace be upon him, Bilal Abyssinian, Salman Farsi, Sohaib Rumi, Abuzar Ghafari, and Miqdad Kandi were among the companions of Holy Prophet, may God bless him and his family, who were brothers in faith. These brothers were closer to each other than blood brothers.

Islam is a religion of moral virtues, as Holy Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, says: Verily, I have been sent to perfect moral virtues. Moral virtue begins with cultivation. Cultivation means self-improvement and change in behavior inspired by divine teachings. Performing prayers, giving alms and paying zakat and the like are among the things that purify a person and ultimately lead to moral



virtues. In verse 199 of Surah Al-A'raf, it is mentioned, practice forgiveness and moderation (accept people's excuses and make it easy for them), and enjoin good and rational actions, and refrain from the ignorant. In the interpretation of this verse, it is said to forgive the one who wronged you, give to the one who deprived you, and establish a relationship with the one who cut ties with you. Therefore, according to this verse, it can be said that forgiveness is one of the most important examples of moral virtues.

Imam Hossein (peace be upon him) is a free human being with all human dignity, who grew up according to the teachings of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and in the loving arms of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (peace be upon him) and in the school of Hazrat Ali (peace be upon him). He has fascinated every human being and this movement is due to the love and affection that people have for Imam Hossein (peace be upon him). He showed the world that the Alawite School is not a belligerent school, but it does not accept humiliation either. The Alawi School is the school of chivalry and kindness, just as Holy Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and is the prophet of mercy and kindness (verse 107 of Surah Al-Anbiyah). Arba'īn walk is a movement that gives the message of peace, love, freedom, chivalry and unity to the world. He sees all people in all corners of the world as a single nation regardless of border, language, race, tribe and gender. As Almighty God says in verse 92 of Surah Al-Anbiyah, all Muslims are one nation. That Islam is a religion of mercy and brotherhood and invites people to kindness and goodness. God says in verse 159 of Surah Al-Imran: By the blessing of God's mercy, you became soft and (kind) towards them (people), and if you were harsh and hard-hearted, they would disperse from around you.

Man is a being who makes mistakes in life, and as he likes to be forgiven by others, he should also be forgiving towards others. As mentioned in verse 149 of Surah Al-Nisa. Of course, there is no doubt that the pardon is in personal matters, not in the rights of people and Bait Al-Mal. Although it is stated in verse 194 of Surah Al-Baqarah that if someone else does something bad to you, you have the right to do the same. But a person who has moral virtues does not respond immorally to immoral actions. Because if he behaves like this, then what is the



difference between a person with faith and moral virtues and a person who behaves unethically. But in social issues, the punishment of wrongdoers has been emphasized to prevent disorder in the society and the spread of oppression. As Imam Hossein (peace be upon him), inspired by these teachings, stood against oppression to revive true Islam.

The human is a social being and the material and spiritual needs of a person are met in the society. The human's need for others is basically defined in the existence and nature of human existence. Natural factors in human existence cause the formation of a small community called family, and then with the help of this small community it moves towards society. The community includes colleagues, neighbors and all humans with whom he communicates in some way. When a person understands that he needs others to meet his needs in society and that his needs are met in social life, his emotions and love for people are aroused and this strengthens social relationships.

Religious rituals prepare people for social life due to the need for self-restraint and refinement. People of different ages participate in these rituals, and in this way, these values are passed on to the next generations, and because the people who participate in this ceremony have self-cultivation, the good behavior of these people creates vitality and excitement in others. One of the religious ceremonies that play an essential role in creating social solidarity is the mourning ceremony of the months of Muharram and Safar and especially *Arba'in*. This ceremony is usually accompanied by recitation of the Holy Qur'an and pilgrimage to Ashura, speech and mention of the calamity, which is held in homes, *takiyas*, mosques, and *Hosseiniyehs*, and culminates with a walk on the day of *Arba'in* from Najaf Ashraf to Karbala Ma'ali.

Almost, the history of rituals in Islam goes back to the beginning of Islam. These rituals are divided into two aspects of personal and social effects. Prayer is one of the religious rituals that has both individual and social effects. The fact that God says in verse 45 of Surah Ankabut: Indeed, prayer prevents (man) from ugliness and evil, and God knows what you do. But in order to be able to create a collective life, Islam has expressed some rituals, among them, we can mention the rituals of Hajj, congregational prayer, and Friday prayer. Although all



these cases are matters of worship, but God Almighty recommends these rituals because of the following reasons: awareness of the problems and needs of Muslims, creating social cooperation, eliminating class differences, and establishing a sense of equality, creating discipline, punctuality, the closeness of hearts and the formation of a community of faith brothers. Collective rituals show the power of Muslims that they are a single nation and there is no place for division among them. In religious rituals, all Muslims stand in a line and worldly privileges such as race, language, position, position, wealth are put aside and believers feel strength, empathy and unity when they meet each other. These cases are among the social, political, moral, educational effects and the link between generations in religious rituals.

God Almighty says in verse 43 of Surah Al-Baqarah: And establish the prayer, and pay the zakat, and bow with those who are bowing. In verse 97 of Surah Al-Imran, it is stated: In that house, the signs (Lordship) are evident, the position of Hazrat Ibrahim Khalil is there, and whoever enters that house will be safe, and Hajj and pilgrimage to that house is obligatory by the command of God for those who are able to reach it, and whoever disbelieves (has harmed himself and) God is not in need of the worlds. Also, God Almighty says in verse 9 of Surah Al-Juma: Those of you who have believed, when the call was given for Friday prayer, hasten to the remembrance of God, and give up trading. If you know this is better for you.

As it is clear in these verses, religious gatherings are highly emphasized by Almighty God. Because the religion of Islam is in accordance with human nature and for all people at any time and place. The mourning ceremony of Imam Hossein (peace be upon him) is on the one hand a communal religious ceremony, and on the other hand, it is very different from other religious ceremonies due to its role in the preservation of the Islamic religion. In fact, the Arbaʿīn walk is a demonstration of people's preparation for the appearance of Hazrat Mahdi (peace be upon him) and the purpose is not only to visit the grave of Imam Hossein (peace be upon him). As in mourning, the goal is not only to shed tears. The ultimate goal is to revive religion.

Millions of people walk the 80-kilometer route from Najaf Ashraf to Karbala in about three days in the days close to Arbaʿīn, and along



the way they are entertained and rested in processions and participate in a peaceful march. Islam has spread in a wide geographical and cultural area. In different cultures, lifestyles, customs, language, values and behaviors are different. Intercultural communication examines the problems of communication between different cultures and tries to solve this problem. In intercultural communication, cultures should be analyzed, and sociologists believe that as much as possible, ethnocentrism, which means judging other cultures in comparison to one's own culture, should be avoided. In the communication between cultures, the prejudice on specific cultures should be left aside so that the ways of life of different ethnic groups can actually be examined, that is, how people with different ethnic, racial, educational, religious, social and family backgrounds communicate with each other. The fact that a message has different interpretations in different cultures. In intercultural communication, the thought patterns and customs of different groups should be understood. Cultures change with the passage of time and social changes, so cultural communication skills should also change in parallel.

For intercultural communication, it is necessary to understand and give importance to cultural differences. Cultural contact between different ethnic groups causes cultural influence or in other words cultural diffusion. Intercultural communication is usually communication that occurs between members of cultures in contact with each other. Intercultural communication is distinct from intracultural communication and intercultural communication, intracultural communication occurs between people who share a common culture, and intercultural communication refers to exchanges between people from different cultures. In this communication, attitudes, beliefs, ways of intercultural exchange, language, mass communication media, non-verbal signs, thinking patterns and values should be used.

In the religion of Islam, there are religious orders to establish peace between Muslims or intercultural communication. Intercultural communication can be studied in three areas of cultural, political and economic policies. Focusing on cultural commonalities that include beliefs, values and attitudes can be very effective in strengthening these



connections. Monotheism, prophethood, resurrection and faith in the Holy Quran are common principles of all Muslims in the world, by focusing on them, a single Islamic Ummah can be created in the world. But differences in attitudes, values and beliefs among Muslims must be managed in such a way as to prevent division. Cultural tolerance is one of the effective options in controlling these differences. The cultural and communication sensitivities of nations should be known through cultural contact. In order to create cultural tolerance in the Arbaʿīn ceremony in an effective way, setting up Arbaʿīn processions with the presence of women can create a feeling of empathy and closeness between pilgrims of different cultures. Setting up joint processions with different ethnic groups can help bring these ethnic groups closer together. Because women are the foundation of the family and play an essential role in transferring culture to the family. Women establish a bond between generations, and with a strong presence in processions, they can institutionalize this empathy in the family. Giving gifts in processions is another means of strengthening cultural communication. Giving gifts is the tradition of Holy Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. A gift instills a sense of respect for another and establishes a heart connection. Giving gifts can increase the sense of empathy and solidarity between cultures.

The event of Ashura took place in a few days and in one place, but this historical event was not limited to that time and place, and its effects can be seen all over the world and at all times. Media, mass communication tools, social networks, weblogs and religious and cultural websites are one of the cultural tools that can play an effective role in communication between cultures that focus on cultural commonalities and avoid highlighting cultural differences. By using these cultural tools and relying on the positive points of the cultures of other nations, it is possible to strengthen the closeness between them. Educational policies in the discussion of cultural recognition of Muslim nations and how to establish good communication from the very beginning can cause the growth of intercultural communication.

Verbal communication is one of the most important means of intercultural communication. Arabic, Turkish and Farsi are the three main dialect languages among Muslims, despite the fact that non-verbal

communication is also very effective in establishing intercultural communication, but learning the language of different cultures and establishing verbal communication can be very helpful, as well as learning English for communicating with the followers of other religions present in the *Arba'in* ceremony and showing the greatness of this ceremony to the world and clarifying the facts of this saga seems very necessary. Women can have the greatest impact in intercultural communication by learning the language and using verbal tools and tone. Because the tone actually reflects the feelings of the speaker and thus increases its impact. The speaking of nations in each other's language increases their interest and empathy and strengthens the cultural connection between them.

Economic sacrifice is one of the policies that can strengthen intercultural communication. In *Arba'in*, public institutions play a central role in economic sacrifice, providing welfare, social and catering services at Salavati stations is one of the effective factors in cultural communication. The presence of women in receiving processions can make this economic sacrifice much more colorful. Just as the Holy Qur'an sets a model for women's housekeeping and emphasizes how they receive guests, as mentioned in Surah Al-Hud verses 69-71 and Al-Dhariyat verses 24-26. In this way, pilgrims experience a pilgrimage in a loving and spiritual atmosphere by using offerings and free services.

4. Conclusion

The religion of Islam emphasizes the creation of social phenomena that cause solidarity between cultures. Religious rituals can be an important factor in creating this solidarity. The *Arba'in* ceremony and walk in which Muslims and even followers of other religions participate is one of these symbols of unity that has become a global phenomenon. In this ceremony, the cultural contact between Muslim and non-Muslim pilgrims from different countries has highlighted the issue of intercultural communication. In the intellectual system of Islamic religion, women have a high position and great responsibilities.



Arbaʿīn commemorates the enlightenment and captivity of women and children in the shrine of Aba Abdullah al-Hossein, peace be upon him, and women participate in the ceremony on this day in memory of Hazrat Zainab, peace be upon her, and other prisoners of Karbala. The Arbaʿīn ceremony and procession is a big and international cultural event that symbolizes the solidarity, unity and power of the Muslims of the world. People from a wide geographical area with different cultures, languages, races and ethnicities participate in this spiritual ceremony, and about half of them are women. Therefore, in this large community, the role of women's intercultural communication is very prominent. The prominent presence of women in Hosseini's Arbaʿīn ceremony has caused the role of women in intercultural communication in Hosseini's Arbaʿīn ceremony to be discussed in this article. Focusing on this role and increasing the quality of intercultural communication, in this article the following points are emphasized: strengthening the commonalities of Muslim nations and not highlighting their differences, as well as cultural and economic strategies including learning the language to communicate verbally with tone, non-verbal communication, giving gifts, attending reception processions to provide services, hospitality and economic sacrifice, and in a word, the manifestation of moral virtues which was the purpose of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him.

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Ahl al-Bayt (as) in Holy Qura'n

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Abstract

Debate on *Ahl al-Bayt (as)* or the household of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is probably the most discussed, and yet, the most misunderstood issue among the Muslims, since the demise of Holy Prophet, some 1400 plus years ago. In this research work, we intend to find out, first of all, who are *Ahl al-Bayt* mentioned in Holy Qura'n, and what responsibilities do the Muslims have, with regards them, according to Holy Qura'n, as it has been commanded by Allah(s.w.t.) in His Holy Book. We shall also try to find the answers from Holy Qura'n, regarding some questions on the subject of *Ahl al-Bayt (as)*, which has been going on for so long, without being solved or answered beyond those sectarian affiliations.

Key words: *Ahl al-Bayt (as)*, Holy Qura'n, THousehold, Islam, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims

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This research work intends to explain the "position of *Ahl al-Bayt*" of Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the Holy Qur'an, which 90% of the Muslims (the Sunni Muslims) who follow the "Caliphate" (not the Imamate) have not realized/ recognized fully/ despite the passage of 1,400 years of the history of Islam. In this research, we have chosen Holy Qura'n as the "source", to avoid any doubts (unlike in the Hadith) about the facts presented in this research work.

The Importance of the Study

According to Holy Qura'n, the concept of *Ahl al-Bayt* is the essential part of the *Risālah* or the Prophethood in the "Abrahamic Religions" and even going back up to the time of Prophet Adam (as) and Noah (as) down to Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the last of the Abrahamic Religions -i.e. Islam.

Who Are *Ahl al-Bayt* (as)

Before anything else, it's very important to know who really the 'Ahl al-Bayt' in the terminology of Holy Qura'n are, and then to understand what is their respectful position in the Eyes of Allah (s.w.t.) as well Holy Prophet (pbuh)?

It's because of those misunderstandings about them that the Muslim *Ummah* has been divided into 73 sects, or more (sub-sects) that Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "All are wrong, except one group" (Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidī/ Hadith on the Muslim Sects)

What Does *Ahl al-Bayt* mean?

The term *Ahl al-Bayt* in Arabic language, refers to the "household of a man" (Zannawi, 2023), but, when it comes to *Ahl al-Bayt* in Holy Qura'n, it refers to the "Blessed Descendants" of Holy Prophets, like Prophet Abraham and Holy Prophet Muhammad (Holy Qura'n, ch.11/v.73 or ch.33/v.33). But, it is not only being the member/s of that family, rather there are two more specifications also, which are as follows:

- 1) They must be blood related, too.
- 2) They must also be believers in the mission of the Prophets (as)

For example, when the son of the Prophet Noah (as) misbehaved, and did not want to accept the Faith, Holy Qura'n says that Allah (s.w.t) told Prophet Noah: "He is not from your 'Ahl'! (Holy Qura'n·ch.11/v.46)

Regarding the unbelieving wife of the Prophet Noah and Lot (as) both of them were condemned by Allah in Holy Qura'n, by declaring: "Both of those (unbelieving wives of those two Prophets) were told Enter ye in the hellfire!" (Holy Qura'n, ch.66/v.10). So, based on these clear Qur'anic verses, the conditions for being included in 'Ahl al-Bayt' aside from being in that house (household) is also:

- 1) To be Blood related with the Prophet
- 2) To be a believer, too.

Ahl al-Bayt in Holy Qura'n

To better understand the Ahl al-Bayt, of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) we better look at them in Light of Holy Qura'n. A very interesting example is the event of the *Mubāhalah*, which was the spiritual confrontation between Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Christian heads of church; Holy Qura'n, delivers the Message of Allah (s.w.t.) to Holy Prophet, this way:

"And say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) to those who disputed with you (the Church fathers):"Come, let's bring our sons, and your sons, our women, and your women, and ourselves and your selves, and to ask Allah, to punish the liars!" (Holy Qura'n, ch.3/v.61)

According to all Muslims, in that 'Spiritual fight' the household of Holy Prophet (his woman folk, and his sons, and his 'selves' were only these five personalities:

- 1) Holy Prophet, 2) Imam Ali, 3) The Prophet's only begotten daughter from Lady Khadijah (as) namely, 'Fatimah Zahra' 4) Imam Hassan and 5) Imam Huseyn (who are also known as the 'Pure Five')

Another very well-known verse, in Holy Qura'n, which refers directly to Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) talks about the duties and responsibilities of the Muslims towards Ahl al-Bayt; In that verse Allah (s.w.t.) orders His Beloved Prophet this way:



"Tell them (the Muslims) I ask nothing from you, for what I have done (delivering the message of Islam to you) except (I ask you to) love the nearest/relatives/descendants/ (Holy Qura'n·ch.42/v.23)

The interesting part is that, another Qura'nic verse explains this verse by stating that: "What I asked from you is for your (spiritual) benefit"(your Islamic faith needs this act, in order to be right) (Holy Qura'n, ch.34/v.47).

Examples of *Ahl* in Abrahamic Faith

Considering the fact that, according to Holy Qura'n, the true religion, from the time of Adam(as) down to his descendants Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other honorable Prophets of Allah (s.w.t) has 'always been Islam ', it will serve us here to see how Holy Qura'n explains the 'Ahl al-Bayt' with regards to them, too.

Holy Qura'n, talking about the 'Ahl al-Bayt' of the great Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) says:

"This is the Blessing, and the Mercy that Allah has blessed you with 'O' Ahl al-Bayt"(Holy Qura'n, ch.11/v.73)

And to perfect this blessing, Allah (s.w.t) has obliged all the Muslims that in every Wajib Daily Prayer to Him, they must also include the Holy Families of "Muhammad and Aale Muhammad, just as He had blessed Ibrahim and Aale Ibrahim, in the World"

Look at this part of the Daily Salaat (Salawat Ibrahimiyya, in tashhod) very carefully:

"Allahumma Salle alā Muhammadin, wa Āl-e Muhammad, kama Sallaita 'alā Ibrahima, wa 'alā Ibrahim, fil 'Ālamīn; InnaKa Hamīdun Majīd"(O' Allah! Bless Thee Muhammad and his Descendants, as Thou has blessed Ibrahim and his Descendants, in the world.)

According to Imam Shafe,iy of the Sunni Islam, anyone who does not include this prayer, in his Daily *Ṣalāt* to Allah, "Has not performed any prayer at all!"

(Note: The Arabic version of Imam Shafe-iy's statement, in the form of his own famous verse is such:



Yā 'Ahla Bayt' Rasulul Lāh, hubb- komu

*Fardum minal Lāh, fil Qur'an, anzalahu
Kafā- kumu min azimish Shan, anna-kumu
Man lā yusalli alay-kum lā Salāta la-hu!*

(Translation: "O' Ahl Bayt of Prophet!

Loving you, is a Duty,
As is commanded by Allah,
In His Glorious Qura'n.
So much so that, if anyone,
Does not pray for you, even
Though he may pray, to Allah,
Has not had a prayer, at all! (Imam Shafe'iy /Diwan)

Now, considering that even the Daily Prayers are called 'Qur'an' by Allah, in Holy Qura'n(see: ch.17/v.78) itself, then you may realize that how relevant this is to the title of this research which is: "The Holy Ahl al-Bayt(as) in Holy Qura'n"

Two Questions Answered

In order to clarify farther, and to answer some misunderstanding and interpretations that has pestered for long, and has misled many Muslims, for millennia, here are some more points to explain:

- 1) Some ignorant people say that: The term 'Aale Muhammad means 'his followers' not necessarily his Descendants
- 2) Some others object that how could you include anybody's name, in your prayers to Allah? Isn't it a 'Shirk' as the Whhabis preach?

Well, our answer to the first misunderstanding is that: How come 'Āl-e Ibrahim' means his Family/ Descendants/ but for 'Āl-e Muhammad' in the same prayer, and in the same line, suddenly it becomes ' his followers!'(Some years ago, a booklet about *Ṣalāt* printed in Singapore, had translated the *tashahhud*, as: "O' Allah! bless thee Muhammad, and his 'followers', as You blessed Ibrahim, and his Descendants!)

Now, to understand that 'Aal' is not 'follower' here, we should realize that a "Prophet like 'Isá/Jesus to the Christians/ has many 'followers' and some 12 Disciples/Hawaari/ but no Muslim says /Āl-e 'Isá/ but the other Prophets like Ibrahim, Mūsá, Y'aqūb, Ishāq etc. Are called 'Aale Ibrahim, Āl-e 'Imrān, Āl-e Y'aqūb, in Holy Qura'n, but



never Āl-e 'Isá because Prophet 'Isá had no children/descendants/ although he had followers! With regards to the Wahhabis belief that:

"Don't bring anybody's name with Allah, or don't include anyone's name in the prayer to Allah, etc. the answer must be clear to you by now that:

Not only the Holy Names of the Holy Ahl al-Bayt are obligatory in our Daily Prayers to Allah (s.w.t.) but even the names of Holy Prophet Ibrahim as well as his *Āl*, all of them are included in the *Tashahhud* of the entire Muslims, in their Daily Prayers to Allah (s.w.t.)!

And regarding to whether bringing the name of any other person together with the Holy Name of Allah, is allowed or not, we all know that no one becomes a Muslim, unless and untill he/she declares his/ her/ *Shahādah* as: '*Lā Ilāha illal Lāh and Muhammadun Rasulul Lāh*'! (Meaning not only the faith in Allah, but also belief in His Holy Prophet/s, too!). In every Azaan/ call to prayer/ all the Muslims say: "*Ash- hadu 'an laa ilaaha 'illal Laah 'Ash-hadu 'anna Muhammadan Rasulul Laah! This declaration is repeated by all the Muslims, many times, everyday!*"

Another Qura'nic Mention of Ahl al-Bayt

There is a very popular, yet also very less understood, or misunderstood verse in Chapter 33 of Holy Qura'n, that states the great position of the household / Ahl al-Bayt/ of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). That verse, supported by many Hadith or the Narrations (also called Traditions) of Holy Prophet, is known to the Muslims (both Shiah and Sunni) as the "*Āyah of Taṭhīr*"(the Verse to Declare the Purity of Ahl al-Bayt).

We want to quote that important Ayah here, and we shall also try to explain it a little, for those who may not yet have read, or not understood it very well. The Ayah goes like this:

(After some advices to the wives of Holy Prophet, and even 'scolding' and then 'warning' them, in the specific feminine gender, to make it sure that the scolding is to the wives of Holy Prophet, suddenly the verse turns in to the masculine gender, which means the addressees are different, and it declare):

"Truly! Truly! Allah, only wants to keep away any impurities from you O' Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you, a Perfect Purification"! (Holy Qura'n, ch.33/ v.33)

Anybody who knows who is Allah the Almighty, should also know that, whenever Allah purifies, He purifies to Perfection, and He performs nothing less than a perfect job. While every Muslim believes that this verse is referring to Holy Prophet, and it was revealed, when only the Pure Five members of the family (those in the *Mubāhalah*, meaning:

1) Holy Prophet, 2) Imam Ali, 3) Blessed Fatimah, 4) Imam Hassan and 5) Imam Hosayn (as) were present at home with Holy Prophet, who gathered them in his own Yemeni *Kisá* (=Cassock) and said: "O' Allah, Thou Knowest that these are my 'Ahl al-Bayt". (Hadith in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhari* and many other books of hadith) But, some people, out of ignorance, or the envy towards Ahl al-Bayt, have argued that the household means anybody inside the house, which includes the nine wives of Holy Prophet (and possibly even the domestic helpers, in the house!) But as we have already seen in several Qur'anic verses earlier, the term 'Ahl al-Bayt' of Holy Prophets first of all are blood related, and secondly, they are believers, and as this last Ayah certified: "They are Purified by Allah", and they can't be sinners, too! Otherwise the purity guarantees, by Allah (s.w.t.) in His Own Glorious Qura'n, will be meaningless!

(Note: One of the wives of the Prophet, was involved in a military rebellion against the Holy Imam Ali, the successor to Holy Prophet, and such a rebellion, is considered a 'Mortal Sin' in Islam!)

A Wife can be Divorced!

Those who claim that the title of 'Ahl al-Bayt' can be used for the wives of Holy Prophet (pbuh) forget that a wife becomes a wife by a marriage, and she can be separated by a divorce, but Ahl al-Bayt is blood related member of the Prophets, i.e., Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Moses...as well as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).



Conclusion

In conclusion, we must say that those Qura'nic Ayahs, indicate that Ahl al-Bayt are:

- 1) Only those who are blood related to the Prophet/s (pbuh)
- 2) More so, they must also be believers in the Missions of the Prophets (as)
- 3) Allah (s.w.t.) in Holy Qura'n, has excluded the unbelieving son of Prophet Noah, by declaring: "He is not your 'Ahl'!"
- 4) He, in Holy Qura'n, also has excluded the unbelieving wives of Prophet Noah and Prophet Lot, from the 'Ahl' and sends them to Hell! (Holy Qura'n, ch.66/v.11)
- 5) Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were only the 'five personalities' whom Holy Prophet included in the "*Mubāhalah*".
- 6) Holy Prophet, following the command of Allah, did not bring his own wives, or his adopted son or daughters, in the 'Spiritual confrontation' with the unbelievers.
- 7) Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet are 'Purified by Allah's own Will, and no sin is possible from those whom Allah has Purified (impeccable/infalibles)
- 8) One of the wives of Holy Prophet, after the demise of the Prophet started a "rebellion against the Islamic state" which is a 'mortal sin' in Islam, and that means that she was not included in those, whom Holy Qura'n says were Purified by Allah (that woman was included among the misbehaving wives of Prophets Noah and lot.
- 9) Holy Qura'n calls the Daily Prayers as the Qura'n as well; and all the Muslims, around the world, five times a day perform the *wājib* Prayers, in the *Tashahhud* of which, they say: "O' Allah! Bless Thee, Muhammad and Āl-e Muhammad (pbuh), as Thou has blessed Ibrahim and Āl-e Ibrahim (i.e. Holy Ahl al-Bayt of the both Prophets)
- 10) The last, but not the least, all true Muslims, who follow Holy Qura'n and the true Sunnah (the way of the Prophet) must also recognize Ahl al-Bayt, too, and they must accept their leadership (not the leadership of their rivals or even their enemies, as some did!).



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