

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 13: QURANIC VERSES ON IMAMAT

VERSE OF IMAMAT

Another verse of the Holy Quran that proves the Imamatus of Ahle Bait (a.s) is verse no 124 of Surah Baqarah. This verse is famous as the **Verse of Imamatus**. It was revealed concerning H Ibrahim (a.s). Allah says

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

“And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He”

This is an important verse in favour of Imamatus. The numerous differences between the Shias and Sunnis on the subject of Imamatus can be resolved with the help of this verse.

1. According to the verse, H Ibrahim was involved in a Divine examination. As per the traditions of Ahle Bait (a.s) , it was about accepting the Wilayat of all the **twelve Imams** – right up to H Baqiyatullah (atfs). H Ibrahim, confessed and accepted their Wilayat and thus passed that examination.

However, some exegetists are of the view, that the ‘examination’ mentioned in this verse is about H Ibrahim being thrown in the massive fire. While some other commentators believe that the ‘examination’ refers specifically to the slaughtering of his son, Ismail on the command of Allah. About this slaughter, a mention is made in the Holy Quran verse 106 in Surah Saffat. H Ibrahim, willingly and readily submitted to the divine Decree and passed the examination in flying colours. About this too, Allah says

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ

*Most surely this is a manifest trial.*¹

¹ Surah Saffat, v 106

Surah Baqarah, v 124 says, *“Allah involved H Ibrahim in some examinations”* Now whether the examination was of accepting the Wilayat of Ahle Bait (a.s), or leaving his son and wife in the scorching Meccan desert, or going ahead for slaughtering his son, H Ibrahim was successful and triumphant in each of these examinations and assessment. After proving his obedience and submission to Divine commands, Allah revealed this verse.

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

“Surely I have made you an ‘Imam’ amongst the people’

The status of ‘Imamat’ is superior than ‘Prophethood’ and ‘Messengership’ Since, H Ibrahim was initially the ‘servant’ (Abd) of Allah. Then he was promoted as a Prophet. Then as a Messenger. Then as a friend (khaleel) of Allah. In the last years of his life after he successfully passed the examination of agreeing to slaughter his son, Ismail, he was honoured with the rank of Imamat. So initially he was a servant of Allah, then a Prophet, then a Messenger, then a ‘friend’. And towards the end, he was an Imam. Hence, the rank of Imamat is loftier than Nabuwat and Risalat and this is an important point that can be derived from this verse.

Thus, the twelve Imams are not only superior to the angels, but also all other Prophets and Messengers – except Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a).

We have special traditions that state that the rank of Ameerul Momeneen (a.s), who is the chief of all Imams (as), is lower than Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) . Consequently, all our Imams (a.s) excel every Prophet in their status, except the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). When J Maryam was about to give birth to H. Isa, she received a Divine order to vacate the place of worship and go to some distant place since a place of worship cannot be a maternity ward. But, when J Fatima binte Asad was about to give birth to Ameerul Momeneen (a.s) , the walls of the Holy Kaaba split open and she entered the Holy Kaaba. There she gave birth to H. Ali (a.s). Thus, he (a.s) was born in the House of Allah.

Another proof of the superiority of Imams is that after the reappearance of H Mahdi (a.s), H Isa will descend on the earth and recite the morning prayers behind Imam Mahdi (a.s).

Bukhari, through his chain of narrators, has quoted a tradition from Abu Huraira who narrates from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) who said,

كيف انتم اذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم و امامكم منكم

‘Then how shall it be when the son of Maryam will descend from the sky while your Imam is amongst you’²

The commentators of Sahih Bukhari have mentioned that the phrase “your Imam is amongst you” specifically refers to H Mahdi (a.s)

The praying of namaz by H Isa behind Imam Mahdi (a.s) is a proof that the status of H Mahdi (a.s) is greater than H. Isa who is an Ulil Azam Prophet.

The neutral and unbiased scholars of Ahle Sunnah don’t consider their caliphs as Divine representatives. Nor do they consider them better than angels.

2. Allah told to H Ibrahim,

“Certainly, I appoint you as an Imam amongst the people”³

Just as He told to the angels about H Adam (a.s)

“Surely, I appoint a caliph for you on the earth.”⁴

Or he said to H Dawood (a.s)

“O Dawood! I appoint you as a caliph on the earth”

Or He said for H. Talut

Indeed, Allah has raised for you Talut as (your) leader.⁵

The common point in all these verses is that is Allah who appoints His representatives.

Thus, to appoint, authorise or raise any individual to the post of caliphate/Imamat is a Divine prerogative. It is neither decided by a council (Shuara) nor is it decided by the majority.

² Sahih Bukhari, vol 4 pg 205

³ Surah Baqarah, v 30

⁴ Surah Saad, v 26

⁵ Surah Baqarah, v 247

Imamat and caliphate is a Divine rank and designation. It cannot be decided by a few people gathering at Saqifah after the demise of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and selecting a successor of their choice.

The Holy Quran says

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

*“..... and their rule is to take counsel among themselves”*⁶

But Imamat and Caliphate is a ‘Divine Affair’ and not a matter of discussion in the domain of the people.

The Ahle Sunnah assumed that they had the right to select the successor of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) at the gathering at Saqifah. While the fact of the matter is that it is Allah who appoints the successor and caliph and the people have no say in it. Thus, the Sunnis have interfered in a Divine privilege and have trespassed in Allah’s domain. They did not have the authority to usurp the Divine right. Their choice and selection have no legitimacy and validity vis-à-vis Allah’s selection and appointment.

O Allah! For the sake of Ameerul Momeneen (a.s), hasten the reappearance of his blessed son, H Mahdi (a.s) and include us among those who possess his Wilayat and recognise his (a.s) rights in the present era.

⁶ Surah Shura, v 38