

IN HIS NAME & BY THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS LAST HUJJAT (ATFS)

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 2: QURANIC VERSES ON IMAMAT (contd)

The Shias, along with some great leaders of the Motazelah (a Sunni sect) as well as some renowned Sufi leaders believe that the world cannot survive - even for a moment - without the presence of a Divine representative (Hujjat). The first person to come to this world was a Hujjat of Allah and the last person to depart from the world – when the trumpet shall be blown by J Israfeel – too will be a Hujjat of Allah. On the basis of this belief, even if two individuals remain on this earth, then one of them will be a Divine representative since his presence is mandatory for the existence and survival of the world.

لَوْ بَقِيَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِغَيْرِ إِمَامٍ لَسَاخَتْ

“If the world were to be without an Imam, it would certainly get destroyed”¹

The existence of a “divine proof” (Hujjat) is the cause of survival of the earth itself as well as the continuation of life on this earth. The aim and purpose of human creation is to worship Allah. If there is no Hujjat of Allah to guide mankind on the proper and correct ways of Divine worship, then the need for earth’s survival is not justified.

Thus, the Shias believe that the earth can never be devoid of a Divine representative. Incidentally, scholars of two sects of Ahle Sunnah also share the same Shia view. One group is of the Motazelah from Baghdad. And the other group is of Sufis.

We will discuss this matter using a rational approach as well as suitable Quranic verses - even though there are numerous traditions available in support of this belief.

First verse

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

“Surely you are only a warner. While nation is accompanied by a guide”²

¹ Al-Kafi, vol 1. Pg 437

² Surah Raad, v 7

In Tafseer Durre Mansoor of Jalaluddin Suyooti – one of the great Sunni exegetists – a tradition from Ibn Abbas has been noted under this verse. He says that,

لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ وَضَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدَهُ عَلَى صَدْرِهِ فَقَالَ أَنَا الْمُنذِرُ وَأَمَّا بِيَدِهِ إِلَى مَنْكَبِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَ أَنْتَ الْهَادِي يَا عَلِيُّ بِكَ يَهْتَدِي الْمُهْتَدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي

When this verse was revealed, then Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) put his hand on himself and said “I am the warner.” And then he put his blessed hands upon the shoulders of Ali and said “And you are the guide” After me, people will be guided through you”³

This tradition has been narrated in the books of Ahle Sunnah in different ways.

2nd verse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O those who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful ones”

This verse implies that some “truthful ones” will always exist on the earth and the believers must associate with them and follow their footsteps.

The word “truthful” can **only** be interpreted as “infallible” A truthful person is the one who’s apparent is the same as his inner self. This is in addition to the fact that he always speaks the truth. His words and actions must be in harmony. Consequently, in the Tafseer of Sa’albi – who is considered among the reliable Sunni scholars, as well as in the book of Hafez Ghanji Shafei, a famous traditionalist of the Sunni world – both have narrated a hadees from Ibn Abbas who says that “be with the truthful ones” implies “be with Ali Ibn Abu Talib and their Shias”

3rd verse

وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

“..... and there are not a people but a warner has gone among them”⁴

³ Durre Mansoor fi Tafseer Ma’soor, vol 4 pg 45

⁴ Surah Fatir, v 24

This 'warner' is sometimes called as a "Prophet", sometimes a "Messenger or Apostle" and sometimes a "successor". In any case, a Divine representative has always been present on the earth.

Hence, most of the traditions listed under this verse speak about the presence of an Imam in every era. And at no time was the earth devoid of an Imam. Our Imams (a.s) are Divine "warners" as well the representatives of His Messenger (sawa) till the day of Qiyamat.

Hence, in one of his (as) discussions with Kumayl bin Ziyad Nakhae, Ameerul Momeneen (a.s) says

اللَّهُمَّ بَلَى، لَا تَخْلُو الْأَرْضَ مِنْ قَائِمٍ لِلَّهِ بِحُجَجِهِ، إِمَّا ظَاهِرًا مَشْهُورًا، أَوْ خَائِفًا مَغْمُورًا لئَلَّا تَبْطُلَ حُجُجُ اللَّهِ وَبَيِّنَاتُهُ

"The earth is never devoid of a Divine representative who establishes His proofs and exhibits His Signs. That divine representative may be famous and apparent. Or he may be hidden and anonymous. His presence is vital for the survival and protection of religion and the implementation of Divine laws in their true and authentic form."

This tradition of H. Ali (a.s) which is found in Nahjul Balagha is widely accepted by the scholars of Ahle Sunnah. In fact, Ibn Abil Hadeed Motazli has written a commentary (Sharh) on Nahjul Balagha and he too has upheld the authenticity of this hadees. This crystal clear hadees highlights the necessity of a Divine representative in every era.

Conclusion

With the help of three Quranic verses and a tradition of Ameerul Momineen (a.s) we have proved the necessity of the existence of a Divine representative in every era. Sometimes that representative is called as a Prophet (Nabi) or Messenger (Rasool). At other times he is referred to as Wali, Wasi or Imam. This proves the presence of the Imams (a.s) from the progeny of Ameerul Momineen (a.s) right up to the twelfth Imam (a.s). These Imams (Hujjah) are Allah's representative after Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and are cause of the existence and survival of this world.