

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

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 4: VERSE OF MASTERSHIP (Wilayah)

Continuing our discussion on the **“Verse of Wilayah”** – which is the most important verse proving the Imamate and Wilayah of Ameerul Momineen (a.s) and his sons (as) – we now discuss a few doubts and queries that are raised by our detractors and opponents about this verse.

Some of the exegetists of the Ahle Sunnah, due their prejudice and enmity, have raised doubts and objections about this verse. Notable amongst them is Ibn Taimiyyah, the advocate and intellectual founder of the Wahabism sect, and Fakhruddin Razi, the famous Sunni scholar. Both of them are aware of the context and background of this verse and know that it speaks about the Wilayah of Ameerul Momineen (a.s). Yet, due to their bias and hostility they are skeptical and unconvinced about it.

Some of the objections are trivial and frivolous. For instance, if H. Ali (a.s) has given his ring as charity in the state of namaz, then this act invalidates his namaz. Although we know that neither Ameerul Momineen (a.s) moved from his place to give the charity nor spoke to anyone while praying. He only pointed his little finger and gestured the beggar to take the ring. Such a minor act cannot be the cause of invalidation of namaz.

Or they say that since H. Ali (a.s) had not given his zakat (till then) then his namaz was basically invalid (and hence the ‘Verse of Wilayah’ cannot be applied to him). We say that the zakat given by Ameerul Momineen (a.s) was not obligatory zakat. Rather, it was charity and sadaqah. Renowned Sunni scholars like Qurtubi in his *“Tafseer Jama’e Ahkam Quran”* has explained that this zakat was mustahab (recommended) and it was charity (sadaqah)

Or they say that it is famous about Ameerul Momineen (a.s) that an arrow was removed from his leg while he was praying and he did not realise it; then how did he hear the plea of

the beggar? It means that he was inattentive in his namaz. In reply we would like to say that there are various spiritual states of the *Awliya* (friends) of Allah during their worship. In some acts of worship their spiritual state is so high that when an arrow is pulled out from the leg – assuming that this is an historically correct incident – they pain is not experienced by them. And at other times, they can hear the appeal of the beggar during their prayers. This verse itself proves this point (of varying degree of presence of heart during acts of worship.) How come this is being interpreted as lack of presence of heart in the namaz?

In this verse, the Holy Quran describes and lauds a believer – and has bestowed him with the rank of Wilayat – who gives charity while in ruku. This does not contradict or nullify the presence of heart or the reality of worship.

However, two fundamental doubts have been raised about this verse which need to be answered comprehensively

1st doubt

The word “*wali*” in this verse is in the sense of ‘love’ (and not authority). The proof of this are the verses before and after this verse. If look at the Quran, then the verses before and after the verse of Wilayat are as follows

• يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنهُمْ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people. (Surah Maidah, v 51)

- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ¹

O you who believe! whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him. (Surah Maidah, v 54)

- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِّرَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ²

O you who believe! do not take for guardians those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelievers; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah if you are believers. (Surah Maidah, v 57)

They say that based on the meaning and context of the verses prior to the Verse of Wilayat, which speak about not **befriending** the People of the Book viz the Jews & Christians as well not **befriending** the polytheists and kuffars, the word أَوْلِيَاءُ (root ولي) is in the sense of “friend” and not “master or one who has authority”

Replies

1. The meaning of “love or friend” of the word of ‘wali’ is incompatible with the word *Innama* that is used in the beginning of the verse. If we take the meaning of *wali* as friend then the verse will be read as “Only Allah, His Messenger and those who give charity while bowing are your friends” But this meaning is against other verses of Quran. For instance, the Holy Quran says

“All believers are brothers of each other” (Surah Hujrat, v 10).

It means that all believers – irrespective of they paying zakat while bowing – are brothers of each other. If the interpretation of ‘wilayat’ in the above verse is taken as love, then *Innama* should not have been used in the beginning of the verse.

¹ Surah Maidah v 54

² Surah Maidah v 57

2. The “Verse of Wilayat” and the “Verse of dissociating with the Jews and Christians” were not revealed together. According to the Shias and the Sunnis, the present Quran was compiled by a group under the supervision of Zaid bin Saabit. While compiling the Quran he has placed the verse of ‘dissociating with the Jews and Christians’ along with the ‘Verse of Wilayat’ since it speaks about the friendship of the Jews & Christians. In reality, the verse that speaks about distancing and not befriending the Jews and Christians is related to the initial years of Islam in Madina where Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) had to constantly face harassment from them and fought wars with them. But the Verse of Wilayat has been revealed and is accompanied with supporting traditions. This verse was revealed in the last year of the life of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). Hence, although both the verses are divinely revealed, yet their revelation were at different times.

2nd doubt

Fakhre Raazi in his exegesis ‘Tafseer-e-Kabeer’ says, “The explanation of Abu Zar concerning the context of this verse is unacceptable when we look at the words used in the verse. Thus, the claim of Abu Zar that this verse refers to Ali ibn Abu Talib is incorrect. The plural pronoun has been used seven times in this verse **الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا، الَّذِينَ يَاقِيُونَ، يُؤْتُونَ، هُمْ، رَاكِعُونَ**. Then this verse implies that it has been revealed for a group of individuals. While the hadees of Abu Zar says that it is for a single individual (H. Ali (a.s)). Both these points are contradictory. Hence, we cannot accept the narration of Abu Zar concerning the context of this verse.

Replies

1. J Fakhre Raazi, you are a ‘Raazi’ meaning you are from ‘Raei’ the old name of Tehran. It is expected that you will not speak nonsense on matters of literature and grammar. The famous expert of Arabic grammar, ‘Jarullah’ Zamakhshari in his renowned ‘Tafseer-e-Kashhaf’ writes under this verse that it is revealed concerning Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). Zamakhshari (d 578 AH) – almost 70 years before Fakhre Raazi – has addressed this issue and given its explanation. He says that in Arabic grammar, if a

person is to be encouraged and motivated for something then instead of singular pronoun a plural pronoun is used.

Eg: A teacher wants to praise and motivate a student who has written a very good essay. He says in the class, “*Those who* have written a very good essay will be given a prize and certificate” Not more than one student had written the essay. Then why teacher has used the plural pronoun and say ‘*Those who have written*’? Because he wants to encourage other students in the class to write a similar essay of good quality. This is what Zamakhshari is trying to say. This verse too is trying to encourage the believers to help the poor and so for a single individual, the plural pronoun is used.

In many of the famous Tafaseer of the Ahle Sunnah and in the Tafseer of Fakhre Raazi itself, there are more than 30 verses in which Allah has used the plural pronoun while addressing a single individual. For instance, He says

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ

“They say, "If we return to Madinah, surely the more honorable (element) will expel therefrom the meaner....” (Surah Munafeqoon, v 8)

According to all Tafaseer of Ahle Sunnah, the person who has uttered this statement is the leader of the hypocrites viz Abdullah ibn Obay. It means that although an individual is uttering the statement, yet a plural pronoun (*They say, If we return ..*) is used.

And in the same verse – with the plural pronoun – is to be interpreted in the present era, then it will apply to twelve people and not one person. Although at the time of its revelation it applied to only one person. So even though this verse was revealed to show the greatness of Ameerul Momineen (a.s), yet it also applies to Imam Muhtaba (as), Sayyadush Shohdah (as), Imam Sajjad (as) and all later Imams (as).

Then in the present times, “the believer who gives charity while bowing (in ruku)” and to whose Imamah and Wilayat this verse is pointing is none other than H Baqiyatullah (a.t.f.s). It is for this reason the present tense has been used in this verse meaning that such a believer will come in the future also.