

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 15: QURANIC VERSES ON IMAMAT

VERSE OF MUBAHELA

Incident of 'Mubahela' with the Christians from Najraan

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

*"But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars."*¹

This verse of Mubahela is the strongest proof of the preeminence of the Ahle Bait (a.s) and the foremost evidence on the Imamate of Ahle Bait (a.s). We will discuss this verse from 5 aspects

1. The context of this verse is that after the '**Conquest of Mecca**' (Fath Makka), Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) had sent his representatives to various places, like the Roman and Persian empires, to accept the religion of Islam or be prepared to pay the Jizya. He also sent his delegates to various Christian and Jewish tribes in and around Arabia with the same proposal.

The Christians of Arabia gathered in their central church to discuss this issue. Some suggested that we should fight it out with the Muslims on the battlefield while others suggested that we should accept their proposal. Abu Haaris bin Alqamah, a senior priest, warned the Christians against waging a battle against Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). He said that the Prophethood of 'Mohammed' was prophesied by H Isa (a.s) and he read out the relevant texts from their four gospels. But some of the detractors were not convinced. They sent a delegate of Christians to Madina to inquire into the matter.

¹ Surah Aale Imran, v 61

The delegation met Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and discussed the 'Divinity' of H Isa (a.s). He (s.a.w.a) rejected Godhood for H. Isa. But the Christians were adamant about their belief. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) tried to reason with them that someone who is born, grows, eats etc cannot be God. But the Christians refused to accept his (s.a.w.a) rational arguments. Finally, on the orders of Allah, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) challenged them for Mubahela.

On the appointed day, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) took with him Imam Hasan (a.s) and Imam Husain (a.s) as an example of "our sons" and J Zahra as "our women" and H. Ali (a.s) as "our self" and set out for Mubahela with the senior Christian representatives towards the Najaran area. A large group of Muslims accompanied Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) towards Najaran. But when they were nearing the venue, (s.a.w.a) halted at a place and stretched out his hands. He pulled Imam Hasan (a.s), Imam Husain (a.s), J Zahra and Ameerul Momineen (a.s) towards himself and separated them from the rest. Then he said,

اللّٰهُمَّ هٰؤُلَاءِ اَهْلُ بَيْتِي

'O Allah! These are my Ahle Bait'

(It means the wives and companions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) are not his 'Ahle Bait') When Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), along with his Ahle Bait, came very near to the place of Mubahela, the Christians got a ringside view of the Ahle Bait (a.s). They saw their radiant faces and serious demeanour. They were overcome by the awe of the Ahle Bait (a.s) and none of them turned up for the Mubahela. They agreed to pay the 'Jiziya'. It was agreed that annually they would give a thousand dresses and a thousand dinars to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and the Muslims.

In a tradition narrated by Sayed Ibn Taoos in his book of Iqbal, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) said that had they (Christians) come forward for Mubahela, a raging fire would have engulfed all of them. So not doing Mubahela was in their best interest.

2. The word 'Mubahela' is from the root of **بُهِّلَ** and it means '*to come out of someone's protection*'. Thus, Mubahela means to pray that the opposite group is deprived of Allah's Mercy and protection. In many ways, it is similar to sending a

‘curse’ (لعنت). Hence, when Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) had proposed Mubahela, it means that it was decided that both the parties will send a curse on each other and pray that the erroneous group between them is deprived of Divine Mercy and is subjected to Divine chastisement.

3. In the religious texts of the Ahle Sunnah, this verse has been quoted as proof of the ‘chastity’ and ‘infallibility’ of Ahle Bait (a.s) as well as proof that only they are ‘People of cloak’ (As-haab Kisa). This incidence has been mentioned by 24 companions and has been noted by almost 52 scholars of the Ahle Sunnah across various centuries.

Ay Ali Milani has brought an extensive discussion on this verse in one of his books. Hence, the context and background of this verse are not only certain as per the Ahle Sunnah, but also it is an irrefutable fact and its authenticity is even higher than ‘mutwatir’ traditions.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s) has used this verse to prove his superiority in the Shura (council) of six people that was formed by Umar to appoint his successor.

Hakim Nishapouri, after mentioning the background of the revelation of this verse, has written that this verse speaks about the greatness of Ahle Bait (a.s) and it is universally accepted.

Ibn Turai Shafei too has accepted this incident based on the consensus of the famous companions. Many of the famous scholars have narrated this incident and have labelled it as authentic.

Based on this evidence, there is complete unanimity among the Ahle Sunnah concerning the context and background of this verse and that this verse speaks about their superiority. Two more points inshallah we will discuss later.

O Allah! For the sake of Ameerul Momineen (a.s), J Zahra, Imam Hasan (a.s) and Imam Husain (a.s), hasten reappearance of Imam Zamana – may our souls be sacrificed for him – and make him (a.s) happy with its glad tidings.