

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 17: QURANIC VERSES ON IMAMAT

VERSE OF PURIFICATION

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying” (Surah Ahzab, v 33)

The Verse of Purification was revealed in the 9th Hijri, i.e. the last years of the life of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). As per the famous narration of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), this incident occurred when he was in the house of J Umme Salmah. She was his dearest wife, after J Khadija (s.a). However, some sources of Ahle Sunnah say that this incident occurred when he (s.a.w.a) was in the house of Ayesha. But these two versions should not create differences about the actual event.

The actual incident goes like this. Imam Hasan (a.s) and Imam Husain (a.s), the noble grandsons of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and who were 6 years and 5 years old respectively, came to visit their grandfather (s.a.w.a). Ameerul Momineen (a.s) and H Zahra had also accompanied them. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) noticed that an angel of revelation was about to descend on his house. Immediately he (s.a.w.a) picked up his cloak – which is known as ‘Kisa’ – and flung it over the heads of five people – himself, Ameerul Momineen (a.s), H Zahra, Imam Hasan (a.s) and Imam Husain (a.s). So that whatever blessings were brought by that angel would apply to all five of them. That angel was carrying this verse

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“Allah intends to keep away from your family all kinds of impurities and uncleanness and give you a thorough purification.”

With this preface, we will now refer to the traditions under this verse vis-à-vis the context of its revelation.

The recital of Hadis Kisa, in light of the traditions under the above verse, is customary among the Shias. Its recitation is the means of Divine Grace, Blessings and Mercy.

The Verse of Purification and the traditions under it - Hadise Kisa – has been unanimously quoted by the scholars of both, Shia and Sunni sects. Both groups agree that this Verse extols the virtue and greatness of the Ahle Bait (a.s). There is no clash of opinions between them. This verse highlights a few important points that are worth noting.

1. This verse begins with the word “*Innama*” (إِنَّمَا). The Verse of Wilayat also begins with the same word of “*Innama*”

The word “*Innama*” is used for ‘restriction’ and ‘confinement’. Hence, it is translated as “only” or “solely” or “exclusively” or “purely”. It restricts the ‘general’ meaning of a word and makes it meaning ‘specific’

In this verse, the “purification” and “removal of uncleanness” is not general but specific.

It means that Allah’s intention of ‘**complete purification**’ is restricted to - based on the context of the revelation - these five individuals. In light of the traditions and ‘interpretation’ (taveel) of this verse, it includes the fourteen masoomeen (a.s). None except these personalities (a.s) are included in the Verse of Purification.

In the Muslim nation, infallibility is restricted to these fourteen individuals. There may be many pious, devout and God-fearing people in the Muslim nation. Yet, ‘infallibility’ is exclusive to these “**People of Purification**”.

2. The intention (*Iradah*) of Allah is of two types – ***Iradah Takweeni*** & ***Iradah Tashreei***. ‘*Iradah Takweeni*’ is the “Firm” and “irrefutable” intention of Allah about a thing. In other words, if Allah makes ‘*Iradah Takweeni*’ for a thing then that it is bound to materialize without delay or deviation.

However, '*Iradah Tashreei*' consists of all 'command' and prohibition' of the shariah. The actualization of those commands and prohibitions depends on the people.

The '**intention**' in this verse is of the *Takweeni* category since it speaks about the excellence and merit of Ahle Bait (a.s). If it was from the *Tashreei* category – meaning that Allah wished impurity and uncleanness to be away from all the Muslims - then He would not have used the word "*Innama*" at the onset. With the word, "*Innama*" Allah has restricted and limited this "**thorough purification**" only for the Ahle Bait (a.s). This Verse is specifically revealed in their excellence and the intention is '*Iradah Takweeni*'

3. Paying special attention to the words and grammar of the verse the following points are worth noting.

The word (*Uzhebo – Izhaab*) means to 'to remove' or 'to prevent. It means that Allah has prevented all kinds of uncleanness and filth from entering their (a.s) existence. In other words, their existence is free and pure from every impurity and contamination. The 'Alif-laam' (ال) at the beginning of الرجس implies "all, every, each" In other words, Allah has purified the Ahle Bait (a.s) from "every" impurity. It means that the Ahle Bait (a.s) are free from the impurities of the body, mind, beliefs, character etc. Allah has made them "thoroughly" and "comprehensively" pure from every uncleanness.

Based on this explanation, the '**removal of all uncleanness**' proves the infallibility of the Ahle Bait (a.s). It means that as per the words of this verse and its contextual and grammatical interpretation, the Ahle Bait (a.s) are protected, with the 'firm intention' of Allah, from all kinds of sins and impurities.

4. The word "Ahle Bait" in this verse is in the meaning of "family". A family consists of 'permanent members' – i.e the 'blood relatives' We should pay attention to this point. Family does not include 'wife' in the sense of 'blood relative'. The

‘permanent members’ of a family include the children and grandchildren of an individual. In this verse, the word ‘Ahle Bait’ is specific to the progeny. It includes H Fatima (s.a), Imam Hasan (a.s), Imam Husain (a.s) and the nine descendants of Imam Husain (a.s). Only this group can be included in ‘Ahle Bait’

Thus, the Ahle Bait are only those five individuals whom Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) covered with his cloak. Neither Umme Salmah (as per the Shias) nor Ayesha (as per the Sunnis) – in whose house this verse was revealed is part of the Ahle Bait of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). Because Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) did not include these wives under the cloak.

It is only the **‘people of the cloak’** that Allah has intended to completely and comprehensively purify them.

5. The words “purify you a thorough purification’ (يُطَهِّرْكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا) – as per the rules of Arabic grammar - implies Allah has made a firm intention to purify the Ahle Bait (a.s) in a “thorough”, “absolute”, “complete”, “comprehensive”, “outright” manner

These are the five points that can be derived from this verse and which need to be paid attention to.