

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

GHADEER LECTURE SERIES

Lecture 22: QURANIC VERSES ON IMAMAT

Verse of Knowledge of the Book (Part 2)

قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

‘And the one who possessed the “knowledge of the Book” said, ‘I can get it for you in the twinkling of an eye.”¹

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

And those who disbelieve say: You are not a messenger. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the Book.²

While comparing the above two verses, we find that the word ‘Ilm’ is used as a common noun in the first verse, while in the second verse, it is a proper noun.

The verse of Surah Naml was revealed in honour of Janab Asif bin Barkhiyya. The word مِنْ in the verse indicates ‘partial’. In other words, he had only *a little from* the Ilm-ul-Kitab. According to Imam Baqir (a.s), who is the guide and teacher of the Holy Quran, Janab Asif had Ilm-ul-Kitab equivalent to the drop of water of the ocean on the wing of a fly. In the last verse of Surah Ra’ad, the word مَنْ does not indicate ‘partial’ or ‘limited.’ It implies that the one who has Ilm-ul-Kitab, has the entire ocean of knowledge with him.

After comparing the above two verses, we can say that ‘the one who has ‘Ilm-ul-Kitab’ is no ordinary person. He is in the ranks of Divine representatives. He is superior to all the past Prophets, except the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). The one who has ‘a little’ from *the Ilm-ul-Kitab*, is the successor of Hazrat Sulaiman. Then the one who has the entire

¹ Surah Naml, v 40

² Surah Ra'ad, v 43

Ilm-ul-Kitab is at a higher status than all Prophets. This blessed and revered individual is none other than Ameerul Momineen (a.s).

Verse, no 43 of Surah Ra'ad says that there are two witnesses of the Prophethood of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a),

- Allah
- Ali Ibn Abi Talib, with whom is the entire *Ilm-ul-Kitab*.

The one who claims to be a witness must be present at the place of the event and should have direct and first-hand information about the incident. Ameerul Momineen (a.s) was present besides Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) in the cave of Hira when he (s.a.w.a) was appointed as a Prophet.

In sermon no 192 of Nahjul Balagha, which is also famous as 'Sermon Qaseyah' Ameerul Momineen (a.s) has pointed to this fact. Towards the end of the sermon where he shows his attachment and special relation with Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), he says

وَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَوْضِعِي مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص بِالْقَرَابَةِ الْقَرِيبَةِ وَالْمَنْزِلَةِ الْخَصِيصَةِ وَضَعَنِي فِي حَجْرِهِ وَأَنَا وَلَدٌ
يَضُمُّنِي إِلَى صَدْرِهِ وَيَكْنُفُنِي فِي فِرَاشِهِ وَيُسِّنِّي جَسَدَهُ وَيُسِّنِّي عَرَفَهُ وَكَانَ يَضْغُ الشَّيْءَ ثُمَّ يُلْقِمُنِيهِ.....

“..... Certainly, you are aware of my kinship and special relation to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). When I was a child, he took charge of me. He used to hold me tightly to his chest and would lay me beside him in his bed.

وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَتَّبِعُهُ اتِّبَاعَ الْفَصِيلِ أَثَرُ أُمِّهِ يَرْفَعُنِي فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَخْلَاقِهِ عَلِمَاءٌ وَيَأْمُرُنِي بِالْإِقْتِدَاءِ بِهِ وَلَقَدْ كَانَ
يُجَاوِرُنِي فِي كُلِّ سَنَةٍ بِحَرَاءِ فَأَرَاهُ وَلَا يَرَاهُ غَيْرِي وَلَمْ يَجْمَعْ بَيْتٌ وَاحِدٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ غَيْرَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص وَ
خَدِيجَةَ وَأَنَا ثَالِثُهُمَا أَرَى نُورَ الْوَحْيِ وَالرِّسَالَةِ وَأَشْمُرُ رِيحَ النَّبُوءَةِ وَلَقَدْ سَبَعْتُ رَنَّةَ الشَّيْطَانِ حِينَ نَزَلَ الْوَحْيُ

عَلَيْهِ ص فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا هَذِهِ الرَّئَةُ فَقَالَ هَذَا الشَّيْطَانُ قَدْ آيَسَ مِنْ عِبَادَتِهِ إِنَّكَ تَسْمَعُ مَا أَسْمَعُ وَتَرَى
مَا أَرَى إِلَّا أَنَّكَ لَسْتَ بِنَبِيِّ وَلَكِنَّكَ لَوَزِيرٌ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خَيْرٍ

“.... while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footsteps of its mother. Every day, he would show me some signs of his high traits and order me to follow it. Every year he (s.a.w.a) used to go in seclusion to the cave of Hira, where only I saw him. In those days, Islam was not practised in any house except that of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and Khadija, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the glory of the Divine revelation and message, and I breathed the scent of Prophethood. When the revelation descended on Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), I heard the moan of Satan. I said, “O Prophet of Allah! What is this moaning?” He replied, “This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O Ali! You see all that I see and hear all that I hear, except that you are not a prophet; you are a vicegerent, and you are surely on (the path of) virtue along with me.”³

Based on this testimony of Ameerul Momineen (a.s), we can say that he was the witness to the Prophethood of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and was present at the time of the first proclamation. Then, the Holy Quran urges Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) to reveal the name of the one who was the witness to his Prophethood.

Most of the Sunni Exegetists have mentioned the name of Abdullah bin Salam while referring to the verse of Surah Ra’ad - “*the one with whom is Ilm-ul-Kitab*”. Abdullah bin Salam was a Jewish scholar and was well versed with the Torah and Injeel. He had read the prophecies concerning Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) in the divine books. Abdullah bin Salam converted to Islam and then preached about the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) among the polytheists. The Ahle Sunnah scholars say that Abdullah bin Salam is the witness to the Prophethood of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and who

³ Nahjul Balagha, Sermon no 192

verified the Prophethood of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), in the light of the past divine books.

This is a baseless and hollow assertion. Because

1. The entire surah Raad was revealed in Mecca. While Abdullah bin Salam converted to Islam when Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) was settled in Madina. It is absurd to assume that Allah will ask His Messenger to endorse his Prophethood through a person who accepted Islam many years later and who was not present in Mecca at the time of the proclamation.
2. Someone who had a little of the *Ilm-ul-Kitab*, i.e. Janab Asif bin Barkhiyyah, was the successor of Prophet Sulaiman. How can it be that someone who has the entire ocean of *Ilm-ul-Kitab* will be a Jew who has accepted Islam? The one who has the entire *Ilm-ul-Kitab* should be at the rank and status of 'Hujjat' of Allah and much higher than J Asif bin Barkhiyyah.

In light of the traditions narrated by both Shia and Sunni scholars, and especially referring to the traditions narrated by the Ahle Bait (a.s) – who are the ones *'firmly entrenched in knowledge'* and are *'the people of remembrance'* – the words ***'and the one with who is the Ilm-ul-Kitab'*** refers to Ameerul Momineen (a.s) and his eleven successors (a.s)

Besides, the meaning of *"the Book"* in the above verse is not Torah or Injeel. It refers to the Holy Quran. This knowledge of 'the Book' (Holy Quran) includes the knowledge of the apparent meaning of the verse, (knowledge of) concealed meaning, the Tanzeel of the verse, the Tafseer of the verse, the Taveel of the verse and all other secrets that are hidden within the Holy Quran.

This verse points to the Universal superiority of Ahle Bait (a.s) in the field of knowledge. It highlights the fact that they (a.s) are the source of every knowledge. Due to this extraordinary merit, the entire Muslim nation needs the knowledge of the

Ahle Bait (a.s) and the wisdom of Ameerul Momineen (a.s). These personalities (a.s) are the teachers and leaders (Imam) of the entire Muslim nation. They are the inheritors of the knowledge of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and, thus, his lawful successor. They are the “Siql-e-Asgar” and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), in his lifetime, had ordered the people to attach themselves with the “Two priceless). He had said, “I leave behind amongst you two weighty things...”

O Allah! For the sake of Ameerul Momineen (a.s), who is mentioned as the ‘one who has the Ilm-ul-Kitab’, hasten the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s).

O Allah! Grant us the Maarefat of Ameerul Momineen (a.s) and the Imams (a.s) from his progeny right up to Imam Zamana (a.s)