

Reflection on Immediate and Detached Indicators Denoting Singularity in the Phrase “Those Who Believe” in the Verse of Wilāya

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ABSTRACT

The verse of Wilāya, which is revealed in the event of giving alms by Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imam Ali (PBUH) while bowing in prayer to a poor person, indicates his guardianship according to immediate (muttaṣil) and detached (munfaṣil) indicators. However, the majority of Sunni scholars, although accepting the cause for the revelation of the verse, have appealed to some immediate indicators, such as the plural words in the verse and the principle of "what counts is the generality of the word not the particularity of the cause," and some detached indicators, such as the hadith narrated from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH), to prove inclusiveness of the verse and its application on all believers. In this article, their evidence and argumentation were thoroughly discussed and criticized. In addition, based on valid reasons it has been proved that the general words in the verse exclusively indicate Imam Ali (PBUH).

Keywords: Verse of Wilāya; Imam Ali (peace be upon him); Qarīnat al-Muttaṣila (immediate indicator); Qarīnat al-Munfaṣila (detached indicator); Shi'a; Sunni.

Description of the Issue

Considering the position of the Ahl-u al-Bayt (PBUT) among the general Muslims, especially Twelver Shi'a, and revelation of several verses in the Holy Qur'an about their virtues and guardianship, Shi'a scholars have divided these verses into verses that indicate their virtues and verses that prove their guardianship based on the causes of the revelation of these verses narrated – mostly explicitly - in excessive (mutawātir) and relatively-widespread (mustafīd) hadiths. In contrast, general Sunnis have considered many verses revealed about the Ahl-u al-Bayt (PBUT) as an expression of their virtues and have denied that these verses indicate their divine guardianship. Based on some scholarly incomplete and invalid reasons, they believe that these verses include other people as well.

According to Shi'a, the verse 55 of Surah al-Mā'idah, "indeed your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and those who believe who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down," which is known as the verse of Wilāya, refers to the Wilāya (guardianship) of Imam Ali (PBUH) based on various indicators.

The issues raised by exegetes and theologians of the two major denominations of Islam regarding this verse can be listed as follows:

- 1- The cause for revelation of the verse and some disagreement about it
- 2- Discussing the context of the verse and its indication on the ban of taking Jews or other people mentioned in the verse as guardian
- 3- Discussing the meaning of wilāya of "those who believe" in the verse – whether it means guardianship, friendship, or support
- 4- Raising many objections and problems to argue that the verse does not indicate the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH)
- 5- Discussion on whether or not the last clause of the verse, "while bowing down," is a circumstantial adverbial clause (ḥāl)

6- Discussion on whether "those who believe" refers to a group or a single person. This discussion has been pursued in two ways:

A: based on immediate (mutaṣil) indicators [textual]

B: based on detached (munfaṣil) evidence [contextual]

There has been a lot of discussion about the aforementioned issues, however, what is discussed in this article is the fifth and sixth ones.

The discussion on whether the indication of the immediate and detached indicators proves the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH) and criticizing the opinions of the opponents in this regard is one of the most important discussions. However, some issues like refuting the claim of the generality of "those who believe" was only done by quoting and drawing an analogy to some other verses such as "Those to whom the people said, 'All the people have gathered against you, so fear them.' That only increased them in faith, and they said, 'Allah is sufficient for us, and He is an excellent trustee.'" (3:173) This article tries to pay more attention to the Qur'anic immediate indicators, especially the rhetorical aspect which has received less attention. It is noteworthy that no research with this approach has been found in the works of exegetes, theologians or even in scholarly works and articles.

Terminology

Indicators (Qarīna)

What is meant by indicator is matters that have a verbal or non-verbal connection with the text or speech and are effective in understanding the meaning and comprehending what the speaker really meant; whether this indicator is immediate (mutaṣil) to the text or speech or detached (munfaṣil), whether it is a word - which is called "verbal indicator" - or it is not a word - such as the conditions and situation of utterance, the traits, and characteristics of the speaker, the moods and characteristics of the addressee, rational arguments, scientific facts and external events related to the meanings of speech - which is called "non-verbal indicator" or "intellectual indicator." (Rajabī 1396, 144)

Sabab al-Nuzūl

One of the important topics in Qur'anic Studies is the discussion of "cause of revelation" (sabab al-nuzūl) which, in the terminology of exegetes and scholars of Qur'anic Studies, is an event or question according to which a part of the Holy Qur'an - a verse, a part of it, a few verses or a surah - is revealed at the same time or afterward. (Suyūṭī 1421 AH, 1:127; Ma'rifat 1415 AH, 1:241; Bābā'ī 1395, 147) Although these events and questions are not the complete cause of revelation of a verse, because they provide the ground for the revelation of the verse, they have been called the "cause of revelation." (Rajabī 1396, 144; Bābā'ī 1395, 147)

Sha'n al-Nuzūl

Literally, the word "sha'n" means work, mood, great thing, value, rank, and need, and the phrase "fi sha'n" means "in the case of," "about" or "concerning." Considering the lexical meanings of "sha'n" and its uses in some exegetical works and also considering the connection between the literal and technical meaning, it can be said, "sha'n al-nuzūl (case of revelation) is a person or persons or an event about which a part of the Holy Qur'an has been revealed." (Rajabī 1396, 150; Bābā'ī ibid, 152)

It is noteworthy that there is a difference between sabab al-nuzūl and sha'n al-nuzūl, as sha'n al-nuzūl is more general. The term sha'n al-nuzūl is applied when a verse or a set of verses is revealed about an individual, incident or even a practical ruling, for example, the verses that are revealed about the infallibility of angels or prophets such as prophet Ibrahim, Noah or Adam; all these cases are called sha'n al-Nuzūl of these verses. On the other hand, sabab al-nuzūl is an incident or event that resulted in the revelation of a verse or several verses. Thus, sabab is particular and sha'n is general. (Ma'rifat 1381, 100) Thus, one can say that "the concept of these two terms are contradictory while their cases and instances are mutually inclusive... i.e. some cases are both sabab and sha'n al-nuzūl." (Rajabī ibid, 164; Bābā'ī 1395, 157). In this

The Principle of "what counts is the generality of the word not particularity of the cause"

Since the Holy Qur'an is not confined to a specific time, place, or people, this principle has been used by Islamic scholars to convey this meaning and extract inclusive meaning from verses with a specific cause of revelation.

This principle means that the cause of revelation cannot make the generality and absoluteness of the verse particular and constrained; because the specificity of an event that caused the revelation of the verse or its case of revelation, does not contradict the generality of the meanings of the phrases and words used in a verse so that we can give it up for this reason. (Rajabī, Ibid, 164; Bābā'ī 1395, 157)

The Cause of Revelation of the Verse of Wilāya

Many hadith narrators, exegetes, theologians and other scholars from both Sunni and Shi'a have considered the cause for the revelation of the verse of Wilāya to be the incident during which a poor person asked for help in the mosque and no one gave him anything, but Imam Ali (PBUH) gave him his ring while he was performing prayer.

Narrators of the Cause of the Revelation of this Verse

The revelation of the verse in honor of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (PBUH), has been narrated by many scholars; including:

Tabari, Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr: al-Bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an, 6/186; Wāhidī al-Nayshābūrī: Asbāb al-nuzūl, H. 396 and 397; Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Vol. 4/384; Baghawī, Husayn ibn Mas'ūd: Ma'ālim al-tanzīl fī tafsīr al-Qur'an, 2/63; Baghdādī, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ali ibn Muhammad: Lubab al-Ta'wīl fī ma'ānī al-tanzīl, 2/56; Tha'labī al-Nayshābūrī, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm: al-Kashf wa al-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'an, 4/80; Ibn Jawzī, Abu al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Ali: Zād al-masīr fī 'ilm al-tafsīr, 1/560;

Qurṭubī, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad: al-Jāmi' li aḥkam al-Qur'an, 6/221; Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān in his al-Tafsīr: 1/485; Nayshābūrī, Nizām al-Dīn Hasan ibn Muhammad: Tafsīr gharā'ib al-Qur'an wa raghā'ib al-Furqān, 2/65; Ṭabarānī, Abu al-Qāsim Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Lakhmī: al-Mu'jam al-kabīr, 7/130 H. 6228; Zamakhsharī, Maḥmūd: al-Kashshāf, 1/624; Rabi' al-abrār, 1/147; Jaṣṣāṣ, Aḥmad ibn Ali: Aḥkām al-Qur'an, 4/102; Ṭabarī Kīāharāsī, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad: Aḥkam al-Qur'an, 3/84; Ibn 'Arabī, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥyy al-Dīn: al-Tafsīr, 1/180; Rāzī, Ibn Abi Ḥātam 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muhammad: Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-azīm, 4/1163; Qarnāfī, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Jizzī: Kitāb al-tashīl li 'ulūm al-tanzīl, 1/236; Rashīd al-Dīn Miybudī, Aḥmad ibn Abī Sa'd: Kashf al-asrār wa 'uddat al-abrār, 3/236; Bayḍāwī, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar: Anwār al-tanzīl wa asbāb al-ta'wīl, 2/132; Ibn 'Asākir, Abu al-Qāsim Ali Ibn Husayn, Tarīkh Dimashq, 2/409; Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, Muhammad ibn Yūsuf: al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī al-tafsīr, 4/301; Isfarānī, Abu al-Muẓaffar Shāhḥūr ibn Tahir, Tāj al-tarājim fī tafsīr al-Qur'an li al-a'ājim, 2/598.

Based on these numerous accounts, which pass the level of tawātur (excessive narration), claims such as "some liars have forged a hadith that this verse is revealed about Ali when he gave his ring as a charity during prayer and this is a lie (and it is understood) when referred to hadiths and its falsity is clear from various aspects" (ibn Taymīyya 1406, 2:30) or "scholars have unanimously reported that this verse was not revealed about Ali in particular, and that Ali has not given his ring as a charity during prayer, and hadith scholars unanimously believe that this story is forged" and "the majority of the Umma have not heard this hadith" (ibid, 7:11) are not listened to at all.

Critique of the Indicators on Generality of the Verse

Situational Indicator

According to Shi'a, based on valid scholarly reasons and also by paying attention to the immediate and detached indicators, this verse proves the specific guardianship (al-wilāyat al-khāṣṣa) of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Imam Ali (PBUH) whose guardianship is mentioned along with the guardianship of God Almighty and the Great Prophet (PBUH&HP).

On the other hand, many Sunni theologians (cf. Ijī, 1325 A.H., 8/360) and exegetes¹, while acknowledging that the verse is revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH), tried to deny that the phrase "those who believe" indicates the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH) by applying principles such as "interpreting a plural word as singular is against the apparent meaning," "the plural form is general" or "interpreting a plural word as singular is against the principals" in the clause "those who believe" which is a plural form that indicates generality. For this purpose, they also appealed to the principle of "the case or cause does not make the word particular in meaning." Nevertheless, according to Shi'a "some Qur'anic speeches about a particular person or group are issued as an external [and not a real] proposition and its wording [although general] does not include all cases, and the general word refers to a specific case that existed at the time of the revelation of the verse. In such cases, there is no real general concept to say that the general wording in the verse refers to it." (Ma'rifat, 1415 AH, 1:261; Bābā'ī, 1395, 158)

In logic, it is said that "an external proposition (qaḍīyyat al-khārijīyya) is a universal proposition, but from the beginning a limited and definite number of individuals is considered as the subject of the proposition, and then the predicate is stated for that considered set of individuals." Therefore, all propositions in which the subject matter exists right now are counted as this type. Thus, the predicate has been stated for a subject that has existed in a certain time and place; but in the real proposition (qaḍīyyat al-haqīqīyya), the predicate is not for individuals, rather for a general title. So, if the proposition has been made to prove a predicate for a subject that exists right now or will exist after this or has been existed before

¹- cf. most of Sunni exegetes' commentary on this verse.

this, then the proposition will be called real; because it has acquired this property from this title, therefore it is said that whatever is an incident of this title, must have this property.

According to what is stated, the interpretation of the verse to have a general subject has its drawbacks. The reason that the verse of Wilāya cannot include individuals other than Imam Ali (PBUH) is that without a doubt the clause “while they are bowing” is a circumstantial adverb (ḥāl) for the [relative] pronoun in “those who perform prayers” and “those who give alms.” According to scholars of Arabic rhetoric, circumstantial adverb (ḥāl) in the two latter phrases is technically called “ḥāl al-muntaqila” (transferring circumstantial adverb) and this type of ḥāl does not need the conjunction “wāw” (translated as while in this verse) unless it comes in a form of a clause. (Amīn Shīrāzī, 1371, 2:172) In this verse, since the ḥāl is a clause, there must be the conjunction “wāw.”

They have put forth two arguments for the above-mentioned point: first, circumstantial adverb (ḥāl) is like an adjective for the entity whose circumstance has been described (dhu al- ḥāl), except that adjective is for the entity in general, but ḥāl describes the entity while performing an action. For example, we say, “Zayd came to me riding” the state of being rider is only applicable to Zayd when he was coming to me; on the other hand in the example, “Zayd, the rider, came to me” he has this trait even if he did not come to me i.e. modification of Zayd by an adjective is not dependent on performing any actions (ibid). Therefore, in the verse of Wilāya, as the subject (dhu al- ḥāl) is performing the action, ḥāl is for the subject who gave alms while bowing.

Most of those who reject the externality of proposition in this verse argue that the word “bowing” is a figure of speech and only means “showing reverence.” This interpretation is against the Qur’anic reality and Arabic literature; because according to Arabic grammatical principles both sides of conjunction are the same and whatever is related to one side is related to the other as well. In the case of this verse, the clause “those who perform prayer” and “give alms” are both sides of the conjunction and according to opponents’ opinion, they must be interpreted as “those who perform prayer while showing reverence” and “give alms while showing reverence,” while there is no intellectual nor narrated evidence that encourages or necessitates giving alms while showing reverence. In addition, considering that ḥāl in this verse is transmittable (al-muntaqila) it is only modifying the subject while he is performing an action; but in this interpretation ḥāl clause “while bowing” is not at all related to the clause “those who give alms” rather it only related to the former clause “those who perform prayer.” Moreover, if we consider the verse to be a real proposition, it means that this description is for all believers throughout the history while it is against the idea that “while bowing” is “al-ḥāl al-muntaqila” which, as it was mentioned before, means only when the subject is doing the action and this simultaneity of performing prayer (bowing) and giving alms has happened in a specific time that has already passed.

Interpreting a Plural Word as Singular

What is stated by some exegetes of the Qur’an that “interpreting a plural word as singular is against the apparent meaning,” or “the plural form is general ... and interpreting a plural word as singular is against the principals,” (Bayḍawī 1418 AH, 2:132) or “this verse contains seven plural words, so interpreting all of them as a singular person is against the principle” is against the eloquence and rhetoric of the Qur’an.

Let’s assume that the verse was revealed with singular words, and read “[the one] who performs prayer and gives alms while he is bowing.” Who does this verse describe in such a case? Would not the reader get confused whether this clause describes the word “apostle” (rasūl) in the verse or the relative pronoun in “[the one] who believe”? Thus, the eloquence and rhetoric of the Qur’an require mentioning the third guardian in a plural form so that the reader does not get confused understanding that clause as a description of the Prophet, whose guardianship has already been established.

Scholars of Arabic rhetoric, including Taftāzānī who is one of the opposers of interpreting plural words as singular in the verse (Taftāzānī 1409 AH, 5:272), have discussed this case under the title “meaning-

related aspects for improving the speech” (al-wujūh al-ma’ nawi li taḥsin al-kalām) (Taftāzānī 1376 SH, 265) and mentioned “collection with division” (al-jam’ ma’ al-tafrīq) as one of its types. It means that in a text or speech there are two or more things sharing an aspect, however they are separated from another point of view, like this verse, “We made the night and the day two signs. Then We faded out the sign of the night, and made the sign of the day lightsome” (17:12). In this verse creation of day and night was considered as a sign of God’s omnipotence, then each of them was described with a specific feature, i.e. darkness and brightness. (Taftāzānī 1376 SH, p. 274; ‘Atīq n.d., 160) Moreover, it can be counted as a kind of iltifāt (grammatical shift for rhetorical purposes) as it is said “diversion from a meaning of a word to another meaning is counted as iltifāt” (‘Atīq n.d., 43). In the verse in question, there are three titles that share the same status of being guardian (walī), however, because the guardianship of “Allah” and “rasūl” (apostle) is obvious for every Muslim and the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH) is disputed; thus he was separated from the two first by this rhetorical method. To sum up, responding to this idea that “interpreting a general word as particular is against principles and doing so without necessity is not right, and in this case, there is no necessity that requires such interpretation;” (Ālūsī ibid) it must be said that in this case there was a necessity for interpretation of the general word as a specific instance. Not only this kind of interpretation has no contradiction with the wording of the verse or the meaning of the words, rather it is counted as “good” in Arabic rhetoric; therefore, it is strange that scholars of Arabic literature have fallen into such a fallacy in this discussion.

Appealing to the Principle of “Incident or Cause of Revelation Does Not Make the Meaning Particular”

The application of this principle, which is discussed in usūl al-fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and tafsīr (Qur’anic exegesis), has received more attention in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). However, in tafsīr – although this principle in this form is more known among Sunni scholars and among Shi’a it is known as “inclusiveness and application” (al-jary wa al-taṭbīq) – it was more frequently used. Most scholars from both major Islamic sects have considered this principle as a “general verbal indicator” (dalīl al-‘amm al-lafzī). According to Āmadī “if no cause is mentioned for the word, it will be general and that is only due to the generality of the word not the absence of cause, as the absence of cause is not a verbal indicator while having a general meaning is a verbal indicator.” (Āmadī n.d., 2: 294) In addition, Sunni scholars have mentioned the sayings and actions of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HP) as a proof for this principle (Suyūṭī 1421 A.H., 1:123) and many exegetes and scholars of Qur’anic studies have accepted it (Zarkashī 1410 A.H., 1:126; Zarqānī n.d., 1:118; Ma’rifat 1415 A.H., 1:261) to the extent that Fakhr al-Rāzī has used and appealed to it throughout his tafsīr and Zarqānī said that it is accepted by the majority [of scholars] (jumhūr). (Zarqānī n.d., 1:118) Suyūṭī, also, has accepted it and explained the disagreement of scholars of usūl²[al-fiqh] then reminded the reader of the opinion of Ibn Taymīyya on acceptance of this principle. (Suyūṭī 1421 A.H., 1:123)

According to what has been mentioned some Sunni exegetes, while acknowledging the cause of revelation of the verse of Wilāya, believe that the above-mentioned principle is applied in this verse and thus the meaning of the verse is beyond the incident in which it was revealed (the cause of revelation) and it conveys an inclusive meaning.

According to some of them, the clause “those who believe” in this verse contains plural words that conveys a general meaning and the principle “the incident or cause does not make the meaning particular” is applied in this verse; therefore, the verse denotes that the guardianship is not exclusive and Imam Ali (PBUH) is one of the individuals whose guardianship was proved by this verse and interpretation of a plural word as a particular incident is against the principles. Making such interpretation with no necessary reason

² - Suyūṭī does not mention the name of the opposers, but some scholars have mentioned their names, explained their views, summarized them and tried to reconcile between their ideas and that of those who agree. Cf. (‘Ashūr Rāḍī, 2018, pp. 314-331); Pīrūzfar, 1389 H.S., pp. 47-58.

is not correct and, in this verse, there is nothing that necessitates this kind of interpretation. (Ālūsī 1415 A.H., 3:335)

In this verse the clause “while bowing” is ḥāl for “those who perform prayer and give alms” and this ḥāl is for a specific person who was performing prayer and at the same time gave alms. Not with an intellectual reason nor with a traditional one, it can be proven whose ḥāl is that. Although the clause “those who believe” has a plural form, it indicates a specific incident in reality in a form of an “external proposition” (qaḍīyyat al-khārijīyya) and the person involved in this incident was Imam Ali (PBUH). It is impossible to analyze this verse as a “real proposition;” (qaḍīyyat al-haqīqīyya) therefore, there is a connection between the edict issued in the verse and the subject, and these two are inseparable. Moreover, many verses have a cause for revelation, but based on the connection between the edict and the subject in them the final meaning is extracted and the above-mentioned principle is not applied to them. For example, many verses are revealed about the holy Prophet (PBUH&HP) or his wives, which now have no applicability to anyone because there are neither a prophet nor women known as his wives.³

Many scholars have admitted this truth. (Āshūr Rāḍī, 2018, pp. 314-331) Fakhr al-Rāzī says, “when we saw that many general expressions were used for [describing] specific incidents, and what is meant [by these general expressions] is only those specific incidents, we knew that their indication of the general meaning is not strong, and God knows best.” (Fakhr al-Rāzī 1420 A.H., 3:576)

Furthermore, this principle is only applicable to the verses which have a cause of revelation and does not include those verses which have a case of revelation (sha'n al-nuzūl). Without a doubt, the verse of Wilāya, in addition to the cause of revelation, has a case of revelation, as we know that it was revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH) and it proves the guardianship for Imam Ali (PBUH) along with the guardianship of Allah and the Prophet (PBUH&HF). Thus, even if we accept that this principle is applied in this verse, there is no way for accepting that the case of revelation in this verse is also general.

In the exegesis of the verse of Wilāya: “indeed your guardian is Allah and His apostle and those who believe who perform prayers and give alms while bowing,” according to some indicators such as the proportion of edict to subject (tanāsub al-ḥukm wa al-mawḍū') and several reliable hadiths about this verse, it can be concluded that the clause “those who believe,” although general in wording, is an external proposition that refers to a specific incident that took place in reality and it is an addressing title ('unwan al-mushīr) that refers to Imam Ali (PBUH) who gave his ring while bowing in the prayer to a poor person. Therefore, the principle of “incident or cause of revelation does not make the meaning particular” does not apply in this verse at all and one cannot appeal to this principle to generalize this verse to individuals other than Imam Ali (PBUH). (Ma'rifāt 1415 A.H., 1:261; Bābā'ī ibid, 158)

Appealing to the Hadith Narrated from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH)

One of the detached indicators that is appealed to in claiming that this verse is applied to all Muslims is a hadith narrated from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) in the Sunni corpora of hadith. Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥātam al-Rāzī, and Ḥākim al-Ḥasakānī have narrated through their own chain of narrators from 'Abd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān that he asked Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) about the verse “indeed your guardian is Allah and His apostle and those who believe who perform prayers and give alms while bowing.” “who are the ‘those who believe’?” Imam said, “believers.” I said, “we heard that it was revealed about Ali” Imam replied, “Ali is also one of the believers.” (Ṭabarī, 1412, 6:186; Ibn Abī Ḥātam al-Rāzī 1419 A.H., 4:1163; Ḥasakānī 1411 A.H., 1:220).

With regard to this hadith the following points must be taken into consideration:

³- Of course, some of these verses are capable of generalization, not all of them, and according to Shi'a, based on the principle of “inclusiveness and application” (al-jary wa al-taṭbīq), which is debatable in its place, even many verses related to the personality of the Great Prophet can be attributed at least to his rightful successors.

This hadith, in addition to being *khbar al-wāhid* (only narrated by one narrator, who is in this case ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān), is only mentioned in Sunni sources and has not been reported in any Shi’a books. Therefore, this hadith is not unanimous so that others could be compelled to accept it. Moreover, there are multiple hadiths in Shi’a sources narrated through different chains of narrators from different Imams that denote this verse was revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH). (cf. Bahrānī 1416 A.H., 2:328.315)

Among the narrator of this hadith, there is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muhammad ibn Zīyād al-Muḥāribī (d. 195) who was accused of *tadlīs* (hiding the defects) in his hadith. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal have denied his hadiths that he has narrated from Mu’ammār. (‘Asqālānī, 1380 A.H., 3/416; No. 4573) Quoting the scholars of Rijāl, Dhahabī writes about him, “Yahya ibn Ma’in said, ‘he has munkar (denied) hadiths from unknown narrators’ also Abū Ḥātam said, ‘he narrated munkar (denied) hadiths from unknown narrators, and he spoils his hadith by this.’” (Dhahabī, 1405 A.H., 9:137) Moreover, Sufyān ibn Wakī’ ibn al-Jarrāh (d. 247) is one of the narrators in the chain of narrators of this hadith; he is severely dispraised in Sunni sources of rijāl. Abu Zur’a says, “he was accused of lying ... and he is not reliable.” Ājurī says, “Abū Dāwūd (the author of Sunan-i Abī Dāwūd) has avoided narrating hadith from him.” (Asqālānī *ibid*, 2:361, No. 2874; *ibid*, 4:117, No. 205)

Ṭabarī says, “Hannād ibn al-Sarī (al-Tamīmī) told us [this hadith],” however according to what has been reported, Hannād died in 243 (Dhahabī *ibid*, 11:469) and Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was born in 225 or 224 and died in 310, so how is it possible that an 11-or-12-year old boy has narrated from Hannād? On the other hand, Ṭabari himself and Ibn Abī Ḥātam al-Rāzī have narrated several hadiths with regard to this verse, all of which denote that the verse of Wilāya is only revealed about Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (PBUH).

Abū Ḥātam al-Rāzī narrates the hadith of Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) from Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj, who also narrates from Salamat ibn Kuhayl that this verse was only revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH). Ṭabarī, Abū Nu’aym al-Isfahānī and Ibn ‘Asākir have narrated the same hadith from Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj. In the chapter about the life of Imam Ali (PBUH) Ibn ‘Asākir writes, “... informed us Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj [he said that] informed us Abū Nu’aym al-Aḥwal from Mūsa ibn al-Qays from Salamat ibn Kuhayl [that he] said, ‘Ali gave his ring as alms while he was bowing (in prayer) then this verse was revealed, ‘indeed your guardian is Allah and His apostle and those who believe who perform prayers and give alms while bowing.’” (Ibn ‘Asākir *ibid*, 2: Āmadi 409, H. 915) Therefore, the narration of Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj which denotes that the verse refers to Imam Ali (PBUH) has been narrated by many narrators from Salamat ibn Kuhayl and others. This hadith, which has been narrated frequently and accepted unanimously by all Muslim sects, contradicts the narration narrated from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH). Thus, if these people have previously quoted from someone like Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj that the verse was revealed about all believers, the same Abū Sa’īd al-Ashajj has narrated that it was revealed only about Imam Ali (PBUH).

Additionally, the saying of the narrator from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH): “I said, ‘we heard that is was revealed about Ali’,” shows that at that time it was famously known that the verse has been revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH).

What some exegetes quote that the meaning of the verse includes all believers is narrated from Ṭābi’in (the followers). Except for one case, which is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās and is only mentioned in Sunni sources and has a weak chain of transmitters, there is not a single hadith from any of Saḥāba (the companions of prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP)) with such meaning. All that is quoted is the *ijtihād* (inference) of Ṭābi’in and it is not acceptable when contradicting the explicit hadiths. Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) – although according to Shi’a beliefs, is an infallible and a must-be-obeyed Imam - is one of Ṭābi’in and mujtahids in Sunni thoughts and his *ijtihād* that contradicts the explicit hadith is not acceptable.

The narrated hadith from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) is *khbar al-wāhid* (narrated only by one narrator) and such hadith, in addition to not being acceptable and reliable in matters that relate to beliefs, does not even have the capability to be considered as a contradiction to other hadiths which have passed the limit of *tawātur* (excessive narration) according to both major sects of Islam. Based on what has been stated, from

the Shi'a point of view, the hadith of Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) is completely rejected due to the weakness of some of its narrators and its failure in contradicting the explicit hadiths. Even if someone assumes that this hadith is authentic, it would be considered as a case of taqīyya (hiding the truth for a greater reason), or a case of primitive conflict with hadiths that narrates the cause of revelation of the verse; a conflict that can be reconciled.

Conclusion

The incident of giving alms by Imam Ali (PBUH) while bowing during the prayer, which is the cause and case of the revelation of the verse of Wilāya, has been quoted and confirmed by many scholars from both major Islamic sects. Appealing to arguments such as non-adverbiality of the clause "while they are bowing," interpretation of general as particular, the principle of "what counts is the generality of the word" etc., Sunni scholars have tried to prove that the clause "those who believe" in this verse does not only refer to Imam Ali (PBUH) and consequently, the verse does not prove his guardianship (wilāya). In this article, we thoroughly explained that the clause "while they are bowing" is a circumstantial adverb (ḥāl), the verse is an external proposition (qaḍīyyat al-khārijīyya), interpretation of the verse to include all believers is against Arabic rhetoric, and expression of the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH) by plural words is in total compliance with Arabic rhetoric and rules. Moreover, the principle of "what counts is the generality of the word" does not apply here as the verse, in addition to the cause of revelation, has a case of revelation which prevents the application of the principle.

Furthermore, the hadith that was quoted from Imam al-Bāqir (PBUH) was rejected for it was khabar al-wāḥid, it was only narrated in Sunni sources, it was not unanimously accepted by both major sects in Islam, and also had a weak chain of narrators; all of which made this hadith incapable of contradicting multiple hadiths mentioning the cause of revelation of this verse or the hadiths that denoted this verse was revealed about Imam Ali (PBUH). Even if someone assumes that this hadith is authentic, it would be considered as a case of taqīyya (hiding the truth for a greater reason), or a case of primitive conflict with hadiths that narrates the cause of revelation of the verse; a conflict that can be reconciled.

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