

The Typology and Criticism of Sunnī Doubts against the Verses on Ahl al-Bayt's Virtues

Abstract

Numerous verses of the Qur'ān discuss the virtues of Imām 'Alī (a) and other Infallibles (a). Shī'a exegetes and theologians have relied on these verses to indicate the importance of the *Imāmat* position and prove the immediate vicegerency and *walāya* of Imām 'Alī (a) after the prophet. On the contrary, some Sunnī exegetes (e.g., Fakhr Rāzī, Ālūsī, Rashīd Riḍā, and Muḥammad 'Izza Darūza) have cast some doubts against the use of these verses by the Shī'a scholars. Due to the significance of this issue, the criticism of the doubts cast by the Sunnī exegetes in this regard is highly important. The results of this study demonstrate that due to the differences between Shī'a and Sunnī principles and premises about *Imāmat*, the Sunnī scholars have suggested doubts in the seven realms of principles of jurisprudence, jurisprudence, theology, history, language, content, and occasion of revelation. The important point and innovation of this study is that although not all of the evidences and proofs given against the Sunnī doubts in this regard are argumentative, they are mostly dialectic and rely on the Sunnī sources themselves to reject them. To present and answer the doubts, this study used the document analysis method to present

viewpoints and the analytical-critical method to examine the data. Moreover, in addition to the presentation of the typology of the doubts, those doubts are examined that have not been investigated in the past or have been inspected scantily.

Keywords: *walāya*, Imām ‘Alī (a), doubt, Shī‘a and Sunnī narrations, Sunnīs

1. Introduction

The vicegerency of the Prophet (s) is one of the most important doctrinal-theological – and of course one of the most challenging and discording – discussions between Shī‘a and Sunnī denominations. Scholars of Islamic denominations have each relied on certain evidences to prove their beliefs. The common point among the Shī‘a and Sunnī scholars is the Qur’ānic verses, and the most important verses revealed about *walāya*, virtues of Imām ‘Alī (a), and virtues of other Imāms (a) are the *Walāya* verse (Qur’ān 5:55), the *Tablīgh* verse (Qur’ān 5:67), the *Ikmāl* verse (Qur’ān 5:7), the *Mubāhala* verse (3:61), and the *Taḥīr* verse (33:33), among others. Shī‘a exegetes and theologians rely on these verses to prove the *walāya* and virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (a). On the contrary, there are some opposing viewpoints held by Sunnī scholars who have tried to cast numerous doubts in order to take away the *walāya* position from Imām ‘Alī (a) and deny many virtues attributed to the lineage of the Prophet (s).

In addition to the verses of the Qur'ān – which have been fully interpreted by the Prophet (s) on different occasions and through which the prophet has made known his vicegerents to people following God's command so that no one can claim lack of knowledge in this regard – there are numerous narrations in the Shī'a and Sunnī sources that reject Sunnī disputes. However, Sunnī scholars have ignored the sound narrations (that exist in their own sources) and have adopted different viewpoints that have blurred the discussion atmosphere. This study examines the main disputes and doubts within a typology and rejects them all.

۱.۱. Literature review

Generally, the disputes and doubts cast by Sunnī scholars against the virtues and *walāya* of Imām 'Alī (a) have been criticized and rejected by Shī'a scholars. Examples of these Shī'a works include *Al-Shāfi fī al-Imāma wa Ibtāl Hujaj al-'Āma* by Sayyid Murtada (in response to Qāḍi 'Abduljabbār Mu'tazilī), *Al-Ghadīr* by 'Allāma Amīnī, *Ālūsī wa Tashayyu'* by Sayyid Amīr Muḥammad Qazwīnī, *Tajrīd al-I'tiqād* by Khāja Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and *Dalā'il al-Ṣidq* by Muḥammad Ḥasan Muzaffar. However, there have been recent studies on this as well, as follows:

- "Pāsukhhāyi naqḍī bi shubahāt-i ahl-i sunnat darbāri-yi Āyiyi *Walāya*" by Ḥāmid Dizhābād, *Pazhūhishnāmi-yi Kalām*, ۲۰۲۰

- "Radd-i Shubahāt-i Āyi-yi ^o sūri-yi Mā'idi dar rābiṭi ba *walāya*-i Imām 'Alī (a)" by Ḥasan 'Alī Maḥmūdī, *Muṭāli'āt-i Taṭbīqī-yi Kalām*, ۲۰۲۰
- "Nuāwarīhā-yi 'Allāmi Ṭabāṭabā'ī dar pāsukh bi shubahāt-i Fakhr Rāzī bar didgāh-i Shi'a, pīrāmūn-i Āyāt-i *Walāya* (Qur'an ۵:۵۵-۵۶)" by Karīm Mubārakī and Fathullāh Najjārzadigān, *Pazhūhishhā-yi Nahj al-Balāghi*, ۲۰۱۴
- "Naqd wa Barrisī-yi Ishkālāt-i Fakhr Rāzī bi Āyi-yi *Walāya* bā ta'kīd bar Dīdgāh-i Āyatullāh Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat" by 'Isā 'Isāzādī and Nīkzād 'Isāzādī, *Muṭāli'āt-i 'Ulūm-i Qur'an*, ۲۰۱۹
- "Naqd-i Nazārīyyi-yi Fakhr Rāzī dar bāb-i ta'yīn-i Imām dhayl-i Āyāt-i *Walāya* wa Khilāfat" by Zuhri Bābā-Aḥmadī and Ḥamid Dizhābād, *Pazhūhishnāmi-yi Kalām*, ۲۰۱۹
- "Radd-i Shubhi-yi Fakhr Rāzī bar Āyi-yi *Walāya*" by Muḥammad Barārī, *Muṭāli'āt-i Maḥdawī*, ۲۰۱۶
- "Barrisī-yi Shubhi-yi Sīyāq darbāri-yi Āyi-yi *Walāya* (Bā Ta'kīd bar Dīdgāh-i Fakhr Rāzī)" by Ḥamid Dizhābād, *Taḥqīqāt-i Kalāmī*, ۲۰۲۰

However, in these studies, no typology or criticism is given about the doubts cast by Sunnī scholars against the verses of virtues. Therefore, this study tries to provide a typology of the doubts about this issue and criticize the doubts that have not been discussed or have been scantily discussed in previous studies.

٢. Sunnī scholars' premises about the verses of virtues and the typology of the doubts

Although many Sunnī scholars approve of the elevated character and high scientific and spiritual position of Imām ‘Alī (a) and other members of Ahl al-Bayt (a) (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ١: ١٨٠ & ٢١٠), some Sunnī scholars have cast various doubts in different arenas against the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (a). These doubts originate from their principles and premises. The principles of these Sunnī scholars include: denying the superiority of Imām ‘Alī (a) (‘Aḍuddīn Ījī, ١٩٠٧, vol. ٨: ٣٧٣; Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, ١٩٦٢, vol. ٢٠: ٢١٥; Taftāzānī, ١٩٨٨, vol. ٥: ٢٤٦-٢٤٧), denying the obligation in the Qur’ān to determine the Imām (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٨٦, vol. ٢: ٢٩٣), and the authoritativeness of the words of the Companions and Successors to Companions in an absolute manner.

In this study, the opinions of Sunnī scholars are examined, a typology of their doubts is provided, and their doubts are answered through the counter-argumentation method. Their doubts can be categorized into seven directions, including theology, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, content, occasion of revelation, language, and history.

٢,١. Doubt based on principles of jurisprudence

“Imām ‘Alī’s (a) lack of *walāya* during the lifetime of the Prophet (s)” is one of the doubts in which Sunnī scholars use principles of jurisprudence to doubt against the *Walāya* verse (Ālūsī, ۱۹۹۴, vol. ۳: ۳۳۰; Fakhr Rāzī, ۱۹۹۹, vol. ۱۲: ۳۸۰).

Under this verse, Fakhr Rāzī writes:

The outer appearance of the verse shows that the referent of *walāya* is someone who is currently *nāfidh al-taṣarruf* [actual intervener], while His Majesty ‘Alī (a) was not *nāfidh al-taṣarruf* during the lifetime of the Prophet of Allāh (s).

The response is that *walāya* and *Imāmat* are sometimes potential positions and markers of one’s status, and at other times they are actual and concrete positions (Qāsim Pūr, ۲۰۱۰: ۱۳۱). We will provide answers for both forms.

a) Evidences for the *walāya* of Imām ‘Alī (a) during the lifetime of the Prophet (s) (actual *walāya*)

۱. Shaykh Ṭūsī writes about the actual *walāya* of Imām ‘Alī (a):

This verse implies that Imām must be obeyed and he has a right to hold the *Imāmat* position. However, it does not imply that when the prophet (s) exists, it is permissible for Imām to intervene in matters. That is, actual intervention by an Imām is possible [only] after the demise of the Prophet (s). This is like the position of an instituted executor who can actually intervene after the

demise of the testator (Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. ۳: ۵۶۳; Taftāzānī, ۱۹۸۸, vol. ۵: ۲۷۱; Muḏaffar, ۲۰۰۱, vol. ۴: ۳۰۵).

۲. This verse implies this issue because, in addition to proving the principle of *walāya*, it shows that *walāya* is a ranked phenomenon, as it is true for the *walāya* of the Prophet of Allāh (s) because the Prophet (s) does not have any *walāya* in the face of God's *walāya*, but if God does not intervene in an issue and the Prophet (s) intervenes, the Prophet's (s) intervention is actual and obeying him is obligatory. The point that the *walāya* of the Prophet of Allāh (s) comes after God's *walāya* does not mean a temporal succession, because such a situation is pointless for God. Therefore, the succession of the Prophet's *walāya* to that of God must regard ranking. The relationship between the *walāya* of the prophet and his executor is exactly the same (Murtaḏawī, ۲۰۱۱, vol. ۱: ۴۹۳). The evidence for the consideration of Imām 'Alī's (a) intervention as actual is *Ghadīr* tradition because the Prophet (s) said in this tradition:

“He whose mawlā (authority) I am, 'Alī is his mawlā (authority); O God, befriend the friend of 'Alī and be the enemy of his enemy.”

In this narration, the Prophet (s) has not limited the *walāya* of Imām 'Alī (a) to the time after his own demise, and the attendants of the *Ghadīr* event, too, understood present-time *walāya* from the Prophet's (s) words, because when they congratulated His Majesty 'Alī (a), they used present-tense terms (Ibid: ۴۹۶).

b) Exclusive potential *walāya*

The structure of the Qur'ānic language implies that sometimes the title or description attributed to someone has been taken to mean – based on the common usage of the Arabic language – the potential rather than actual meaning. Accordingly, words such as “*walyy*” or “*waṣyy*” in colloquial usage have potential meaning and show one's position (Qāsim Pūr, ٢٠١٠: ١٣٢).

The analysis of the *walāya* term by Fakhr Rāzī and other Sunnī exegetes is purely exclusionary, because based on the premise that *walyy* means “having priority in intervention,” the topic of the Qur'ān ٥:٥٥ is the expression of the authority of *walyy* to intervene in different matters. If the *walāya* of Imām ‘Alī (a) is not actual during the lifetime of the Prophet of Allāh (s), it is because of the existence of the *walāya* of the Prophet (s). However, after the demise of the Prophet (s), there is no reason to postpone Imām ‘Alī's (a) *walāya* up until the end of the ‘Uthmān's *khalāfa* (Najjārzādīgān, ٢٠٠٤: ٦). In the verse “Only God, His Messenger, and the true believers who are steadfast in prayer and pay alms, while they kneel during prayer, are your guardians” (Qur'ān ٥:٥٥) there exist three independent clauses that are connected together using conjunctive *and* (wāw). To observe conciseness, the word *walyy* is removed in the second and third clauses; therefore, the word *walyy* is actual in the first and second occasions and potential in the third occasion. Then, attributing the title *waṣyy* to Imām ‘Alī (a) during the lifetime of the Prophet (s) is in potential

form, just like the occasion when someone determines another person as his executor during his lifetime. An example is when His Highness Zakarīyyā asked God, “Thy presence a successor [*walyy*] who shall inherit of me and inherit (also) of the house of Jacob” (Qur’ān ١٩:٥-٦).

Undoubtedly, the word “*walyy*” in this verse means a guardian for matters related to him after his death (Makārim Shīrāzī, ١٩٩٥, vol. ٤: ٤٣٠; Jawādī Āmulī, n.d.: ٤٠-٤٣). Moreover, the use of the word “*walyy*” in Qur’ān ٤:٥٩ that implies the obligation of obeying “*Ulul-Amr*” after the Prophet (s) is another evidence for the point that “*walyy*” in the Qur’ān has been used as potential *walyy* as well. Therefore, there is no problem with using the word *walyy* for someone who will be a ruler and intervener in future (Jawādī Āmulī, n.d.: ٤٣).

٢,٢. **Doubt based on jurisprudence**

The doubt of “bestowing the ring as a grave deed” is one of the jurisprudence-based doubts suggested by Sunnī exegetes under the *Walāya* verse. If *rukū’* (bowing) means *rukū’* of prayer, the payment of *zakāt* (alms tax) is not permissible, because it is an instance of a *fi’l kathīr* (grave deed).

This doubt is not so important and does not need a response. It is answered here only to remove doubt in its generic form:

١. A grave deed is one of the actions that invalidate prayer. It has not been addressed in verses and narrations, but it has been examined by jurists. Many Shī‘a jurists have defined it as an excessive action whose perpetrator cannot be said to be saying prayers at the time of its occurrence (Ḥusaynī ‘Āmilī, ١٩٩٨, vol. ٨: ٨١; Muḥaqqiq Thānī, ١٩٩٣, vol. ٣: ٢٨٩ & vol. ٢: ٣٥).

Sunnī scholars have defined the grave deed as follows:

An action whose viewer imagines that its perpetrator is not saying prayers, and this is the definition of a grave deed that is considered a prayer-invalidating action (Jazīrī, n.d., vol. ١: ٤٣٠).

In response to this doubt, ‘Allāma Ma‘rifat writes:

Scholars have stipulated that His Highness ‘Alī (a) did not do anything extra in his prayer: the ring that was on his small finger fell on the ground with a small shake and the beggar took it (Ma‘rifat, ٢٠١٠: ١٨٢).

٢. The “grave deed” doubt in the *Walāya* verse is not acceptable in the eyes of Sunnīs themselves, and many Sunnī exegetes have relied on this action of His Highness ‘Alī (a) to permit the *fi’l qalīl* (trivial deed) in the prayer, as they have taken his action to be a trivial deed (Zamakhsharī, ١٩٨٦, vol. ١: ٦٤٩; Nasafī, ١٩٩٥, vol. 1: 418).

٣. Jurisprudents have also pointed out some similar actions by the Prophet (s) such as his use of a hand movement during a prayer to ask somebody to pick up Amāmā the daughter of Abī al-‘Āṣ b. Rabī‘ (Bukhārī, ١٩٨٦, vol. ١: ١٣١); Abū Dāwūd Sajistānī, n.d., vol. ١: ٢٠٩; Muslim, n.d., vol. ٢: ٧٣). Likewise, according to Sunnī reports, the Prophet (s) killed a scorpion while he was saying prayers (Ṭabarānī, ١٩٩٤: ٣١٨; Ibn Māja, n.d., vol. ٢: ٣٩٥). Moreover, there are reports that the Prophet (s) ordered believers to do so during their prayers (Ibn Ḥanbal, ٢٠٠٠, vol. ١٢: ٣٣٥; Ibn Māja, n.d., vol. ٢: ٢٩٩).

٤. At the beginning of his discussion, Fakhr Rāzī relies on the *Walāya* verse and says that the trivial deed does not invalidate prayers, and he takes bestowing the ring as an instance of the trivial deed. Moreover, even if this verse is not about Imām ‘Alī (a), it is about believers, and they do not invalidate their prayers, especially the ones whom God praises (Dizhābād, ٢٠٢٠: ١٠٦).

٢,٣. **Doubt based on theology**

Superiority or non-superiority of Imām ‘Alī (a) is one of the theological doubts. *Imāmat* is one of the main beliefs of the Shiites, and it has some attributes and conditions. Most Twelver Shī‘a theologians have deemed superiority as one of the required conditions for the Imām (Rāwandī, ١٩٩٨: ٣٨). Sunnī scholars have cast two doubts in their discussion of His Highness ‘Alī’s (a) superiority / non-superiority under the *Mubāhala* verse (Qur’ān ٣:٦١):

١. In their explication of the term “*anfusanā*” in the *Mubāhala* verse, some completely refrain from naming the referent (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d., vol. ٣: ١١٣; Qurṭubī, ١٩٨٥, vol. ٤: ١٠٤) or make disputes when they name His Highness ‘Alī (a) as the referent of this term (Ālūsī, ١٩٩٤, vol. ٢: ١٨٠-١٨٢).

٢. Some accept the superiority of His Highness ‘Alī (a) in the *Mubāhala* verse without any disputes (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ٢: ١٨٨; Abū Nu‘aym Iṣfahānī, ١٩٩١, vol. ١: ٣٥٣; Bayḍāwī, ١٩٩٧, vol. ٢: ٢١; Tha‘labī Niyshābūrī, ٢٠٠١, vol. ٣: ٨٥; Ḥākim Ḥaskānī, ١٩٩٠, vol. ١: ١٨٢). Still another group accepts his superiority in an implied manner and rejects the doubt “His Highness ‘Alī’s (a) is not superior to prophets.”

Under the *Mubāhala* verse, Fakhr Rāzī refers to the words of Maḥmūd b. Ḥasan Ḥumṣī (a Twelver Shī‘a theologian), and seemingly accepts the point that the *Mubāhala* verse implies the superiority of His Highness ‘Alī (a) over other Companions. Thus, in his commentary, he has not cast doubt against this part of Ḥumṣī’s argument and has cast doubts only against the first point, i.e., the superiority of His Highness ‘Alī (a) over all prophets except for the Prophet of Islam (s). He says in this regard:

First, the consensus agrees on this point that a prophet is superior to a non-prophet. Second, Muslims’ consensus is that ‘Alī (a) was not a prophet.

Therefore, based on these two premises, it is certain that ‘Alī (a) is not superior to prophets (Fakhr Rāzī, ۱۹۹۹, vol. ۸: ۲۴۸).

In response to Fakhr Rāzī’s words, we can say:

a) Consensus is an instance of quintessential evidence rather than a verbal one, so it could not be used for generality (Muzaffar, n.d., vol. ۲: ۱۰۰). Using the quintessential evidence, a certain portion of something is achieved, and the certain portion of the argument here is that every prophet is superior only to his own nation (Sā‘idī, ۲۰۱۰: ۳۳۷).

b) Muslims’ consensus about this issue is not at the level that Fakhr Rāzī claims, because the Shī‘a scholars before (Ṣadūq, n.d.: ۹۳; Mufīd, ۱۹۹۲: ۷۰-۷۱) and after (Majlisī, ۱۹۸۲, vol. ۲۶: ۲۹۷) Shaykh Maḥmūd Ḥumṣī believe that after the Prophet (s), Ahl al-Bayt (a) are the most superior creatures and even superior to other prophets and angels (Sā‘idī, ۲۰۱۰: ۳۳۷). Even Sunnī scholars have stipulated such a superior position for Ahl al-Bayt (a): “No creature has appeared in the world of existence to be at the same level as Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (s). They are worthy of superiority and chiefdom; showing enmity toward them is the real loss and showing affection toward them is the true act of worshipping” (Ibn ‘Arabī, n.d., vol. 4: 139).

c) Moreover, based on the Qur’ān ۲:۱۲۴; *Imāmat* means the excellent position that has been given to His Highness Abraham (a) after various trials and afflictions.

In addition, *Imāmat* has been deemed as superior to prophethood, as His Highness Abraham (a) was a prophet before all those afflictions (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, ۱۹۹۶, vol. ۱: ۲۶۷; Ṭabrisī, ۱۹۹۳, vol. ۱: ۳۸۰).

d) How is it that, according to Fakhr Rāzī, a prophet is definitely superior to a non-prophet, but when it comes to the caliphate of an Imām, the superiority condition is not important at all?! When there exists a superior Imām, why does he believe in a non-superior Imām? Why does he believe that when there is a superior Imām, a non-superior person can be the vicegerent of the Prophet of Allāh? (Fakhr Rāzī, ۱۹۹۹, vol. ۲: ۲۹۶).

۲,۴. **Doubt based on history**

Discussing the *Walāya* verse, Ālūsī presents a historical doubt:

The doubt of “certainty in leadership”: the content of the term “*Innamā*” that expresses exclusivity can be used when there is the possibility of partnership and conflict. However, the consensus is on the point that when the *Walāya* verse was revealed, there was no conflict about the leadership of the nation and the authority in intervention, but rather, the disagreement in *walāya* was in its meaning as affection and assistance (Ālūsī, ۱۹۹۴, vol. ۳: ۳۳۵).

In response to this doubt, it should be said that the determination of *walāya* has been concerned by the Prophet (s) from his Appointment time. In the year 3 AH,

after the *Indhār* verse was revealed, the Prophet stated in his overt invitation to Islam:

“This is my brother, executor, and successor among you. Listen to him and obey him” (Ibn ‘Asākir, ١٩٩٤, vol. ٤٢: ٤٩; Tha‘labī Niyshābūrī, ٢٠٠١, vol. ٦: ١٣١; Ṭabarī, n.d., vol. ١٩: ٣٢١).

The word “*Innamā*” (only) in the Arabic language is considered an exclusivity term and shows true exclusiveness. This usage (using the word “*Innamā*” to show exclusivity” causes the word “*walyy*” in the *Walāya* verse to mean supervision and leadership. The reason is that *walāya* in its meaning as friendship and assistance (as used in the Qur’ān ٩:٧١) is not limited to God, the Prophet (s), and Imām ‘Alī (a), but rather it is a general ruling that involves all Muslims. All Muslims should love each other (Ibrāhīmī rād, ٢٠٠٧: ٣).

Ālūsī and other Sunnī scholars have reached out for consensus in this regard. The valid consensus for the Shī‘a and Sunnī scholars entails having equivocation in line with semantic distinction. Sunnī scholars deem consensus as a stand-alone evidence, while Shī‘a scholars do not consider it to be at the same level as the Qur’ān and *sunna*. In fact, consensus per se that is not taken from the words of an Infallible has no validity in the eyes of the Twelver Shī‘a. Therefore, consensus is authoritative

when it is definitely derived from the words of an Infallible (Muzaffar, n.d., vol. ۳: 103 & 111).

۲,۵. Doubt based on language

One of the linguistic doubts cast by Sunnī scholars is “the inaccuracy of taking a plural form to refer to a singular referent.” This doubt is suggested when they discuss the Qur’ān ۴:۵۹ and Qur’ān ۵:۵۵ (Ālūsī, ۱۹۹۴, vol. ۶: ۱۶۹; Fakhr Rāzī, ۱۹۹۹, vol. ۱۰: ۱۱۴; Khafājī, ۱۹۹۶, vol. ۳: ۵۰۰). Moreover, this same doubt is cast when discussing the Qur’ān ۷۶ to dismiss the Household of the Prophet (s) as referent of *abrār* (the righteous) (Fakhr Rāzī, ۱۹۹۹, vol. ۳۰: ۷۴۷). In addition, under the *Mubāhala* verse, this doubt is cast to remove Her Highness Fāṭima (s) as the referent of the term *nisā’anā* (womenfolk) and generalize the verse to others (Ibid., vol. ۸: 246).

In response to this doubt, it should be said that first, there are numerous cases in the Qur’ān where a word is plural but – according to the viewpoint of all exegetes – a singular referent is intended. ‘Allāma Amīnī has listed ۳۰ cases of such verses that have plural form but have been revealed for a singular person – and their cause of revelation has been an individual – along with the sources that have discussed this issue (Amīnī, ۲۰۰۸, vol. ۳: ۲۳۱-۲۳۸). Second, in some verses, due to the existing indications, it is certain that a singular meaning is intended while the word is plural.

In such cases, the plural form cannot be extended to include multiple referents, because there is not in fact a general concept that could be generalized to many people.

٢,٥,١. Exclusion of the word “*Innamā*”

In order to remove the individuals named in the *Walāya* verse from the meaning of the word “*Innamā*,” Fakhr Rāzī takes this word as not being exclusive (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ١٢: ٣٨٦). However, it is proved in the principles of jurisprudence that the word “*Innamā*” is an exclusivity marker (Muzaffar, n.d., vol. ١: ٢٦).

The word “*Innamā*” shows that in the *Walāya* verse, only the named individuals have guardianship. If in another sentence it is found that “*Innamā*” is used to show relative and comparative exclusivity, this word is certainly accompanied by an indication. However, in the *Walāya* verse, there is no indication of relative exclusivity; rather, the attributes mentioned in this verse that emphasize exclusivity show that *walāya* is only for someone who has been given the station of bestowing alms tax during *rukū*’ and whose act has been accepted by God (Nasafī, ١٩٩٥, vol. 1: 288).

Elsewhere in his commentary, Fakhr Rāzī himself has taken the word “*Innamā*” to indicate exclusivity (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ٢٢: ١٩٤).

٢,٦. Doubt based on content

One of the doubts cast by Fakhr Rāzī is the determination of the referent of “Ahl al-Bayt” in the *Taḥhīr* verse (Qur’ān ٣٣:٣٣). The majority of Sunnī scholars take the Prophet’s (s) wives as involved in the referents of the word “Ahl al-Bayt.” Discussing the *Taḥhīr* verse, Fakhr Rāzī writes:

There is a disagreement over the determination of the term “Ahl al-Bayt”; However, the better viewpoint is to say that this verse involves the Household of the Prophet (s) and his wives. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a) are among the referents of the verse because they are considered to be among the Prophet’s household. ‘Alī (a) is a member of Ahl al-Bayt because he was the Prophet’s son-in-law and his companion (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ٢٥: ١١٨).

This viewpoint can be criticized from different viewpoints.

١. In the eyes of Shī‘a exegetes, the *Taḥhīr* verse, without removing the exclusivity of the occasion of revelation, refers to the Five People of the Cloak (and with deduction to other Imāms (a)) (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, ١٩٩٦, vol. ١٦: ٣١٠-٣١٢; Ṭabrisī, ١٩٩٣, vol. ٨: ٥٦٠ & ٥٩٩; Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. ٨: ٣٣٩-٣٤٠). Undoubtedly, the occasion of revelation of the *Taḥhīr* verse – according to widely transmitted narrations of both Shī‘a and Sunnī denominations – is the Five People [of the Cloak] (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, ١٩٩٦, vol. 16: 311).

٢. The majority of Sunnī scholars interpret the *Taḥīr* verse based on the linguistic context before and after it, so they involve the Prophet's wives among the referents of "Ahl al-Bayt." However, the use of linguistic context has some conditions that all need to be fulfilled for such interpretation to be correct. However, the two conditions of "unity of articulation" and "unity of topic" are not clearly met with regard to this verse.

٣. Whenever there is a disagreement between linguistic context – which is the quintessential evidence – and verbal evidence, the verbal evidence has priority over linguistic context (Najjārzādīgān, ٢٠٠٤: ٦٣).

٤. Although some Sunnī scholars have used other referents for "Ahl al-Bayt" such as the pious (Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, ٢٠٠٠, vol. ١١: ١٦٠), followers of the Prophet until the Resurrection Day (Ibn Qayyim Jawzīyya, ١٩٨٦: ١١٠; Nawawī, ١٩٧٢, vol. ٤: ٣٦٨), and members of Quraysh (Nawawī, ١٩٧٢, vol. ٧: ١٧٦), many Sunnī scholars believe that Ahl al-Bayt are the People of Cloak.

'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes about the term "Ahl al-Bayt":

The term "Ahl al-Bayt" in the qur'ānic convention is the exclusive term for these five people: the Prophet (s), 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn, and it is not attributed to other relatives of the Prophet (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, ١٩٩٦, vol. ١٦: 312).

٢,٧. Doubt about the occasion of revelation

When discussing the verses of virtues, Sunnī scholars have at times called the occasions of revelation as forged and at other times they have cast doubts against the revelation. Allūsī writes under the *Tathīr* verse (Qur’ān ٣٣:٣٣):

Shī‘as have mentioned a narration that declares this verse was revealed after the Prophet of Allāh (s) said in *Ghadīr Khum*, “He whose mawlā I am, ‘Alī is his mawlā.” It is evident that this narration is one of their fabrications (Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 6: 195).

In response to this doubt, it should be asserted that not only Shī‘a sources but also the majority of Sunnī sources have mentioned the narrations corroborating that the *Tathīr* verse was revealed about the Five People of the Cloak.

Another doubt cast by Sunnī scholars is the doubt about the revelation of the *Ikmāl* verse (Qur’ān ٥:٣). Fakhr Rāzī writes about this verse:

In this verse, the discussion is about a day when enemies are disappointed, religion is perfected, God’s favors are completed, and He is satisfied (Fakhr Rāzī, ١٩٩٩, vol. ١١: ٢٨٧).

Shī‘a and Sunnī scholars disagree about which day is this day. Fakhr Rāzī takes “*al-yawm*” (the day) in the *Ikmāl* verse to be the ‘*Arafā* day (Ibid).

In response to this doubt, it should be said that the Shī‘a and Sunnī scholars have presented only two suggestions about the time of the revelation of the *Ikmāl* verse: its revelation on the ‘*Arafa* day and its revelation on the *Ghadīr Khum* day. Therefore, the events that happened on these two days should be investigated so that the day intended by the verse is clarified.

a) In all Shī‘a texts (‘Arūsī Ḥuwayzī, ۱۹۹۴, vol. ۱: ۵۸۸; Fayḍ Kāshānī, ۱۹۹۴, vol. ۲: ۱۰; Baḥrānī, ۱۹۹۵, vol. ۲: ۲۲۵) and most Sunnī narrations, the *Ikmāl* verse is tied to the announcement of the *walāya* of Imām ‘Alī (a) during *Ghadīr* event. Ḥākim Ḥaskānī is among the people who believe in the revelation of the *Ikmāl* verse on the *Ghadīr Khum* day and deem that it is related to the vicegerency of Imām ‘Alī (a) (Ḥākim Ḥaskānī, ۱۹۹۰, vol. ۱: ۲۰۰-۲۶۱). He writes:

This verse has been revealed on the *Ghadīr Khum* day about His Highness ‘Alī (a) and his *walāya* (Ibid).

b) Khaṭīb Baghdādī narrates from Abū Hurayra that it was after the *Ghadīr Khum* day that the *Ikmāl* verse was revealed (Khaṭīb Baghdādī, n.d., vol. ۸: ۲۹۰).

Moreover, in the book *Iḥqāq al-Haqq wa Izhāq al-Bāṭil*, the revelation of this verse in the *Ghadīr Khum* event has been narrated from Abū Hurayra from two chains of transmission. Moreover, it has been narrated from Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī through several chains of transmission (Tustarī, ۱۹۸۴, vol. ۶: ۳۵۳-۳۵۷).

Essentially, in the text of the narrations that exist in the Sunnī sources and announce the revelation of the *Ikmāl* verse on 'Arafa day, the cause of revelation of this verse is not expressed. That is, they have not delineated what happened in 'Arafa that led to the revelation of this verse (Najjārzādīgān, ٢٠٠٤: ٣٣٧).

٢. Conclusions

Due to their different doctrinal principles and premises about *Imāmat*, Sunnī scholars have a different approach to this issue compared to that of the Twelver Shī'a scholars. This approach is completely evident in the interpretation of the verses of *walāya* and verses. Thus, Sunnī scholars have cast numerous doubts in their discussion of the verses of *walāya* and virtues. Their doubt based on principles of jurisprudence revolves around "the lack of *walāya* of His Highness 'Alī (a) during the lifetime of the Prophet (s)." This doubt was negated by two answers:

- a) Exclusive potential *walāya*
- b) Actual *walāya* and actual intervener

In the doubt based on jurisprudence, the bestowment of alms tax in prayer is deemed as a grave deed. In the doubt based on theology, the doubt "His Highness 'Alī's (a) lack of superiority over prophets" is suggested, and in the doubt based on history, "certainty in leadership" is mentioned. The linguistic doubts include (١) lack of exclusivity of the word *Innamā* and (٢) inaccuracy of using a plural form but

intending a singular referent. In the doubt based on the content of the *Taḥhīr* verse, the Prophet's (s) wives have also been considered among the referents of the term Ahl al-Bayt. In the doubt about the occasion of revelation of the *Ikmāl* verse, concerning the term "*al-yawm*," the occasion of revelation of this verse has been doubted (i.e., if the revelation of this verse has been on the 'Arafa day or *Ghadīr Khum* day). In all these cases, in addition to providing the responses given by Shī'a exegetes and theologians, the best dialectic (*jidāl aḥsan*) method based on Sunnī sources is also employed to answer these doubts.

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