

The Verses of Wilayah

Learning Objectives:

- To study the verses of *wilāyah*
- To memorise the verses of *wilāyah*

VERSES ON WILAYAH

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ
رَاكِعُونَ

Your guardian is only Allah, His Messenger, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down. [5:55]

Occasion of Revelation:

A beggar entered the mosque (Masjidun Nabawi) and asked people for charity. Nobody gave him anything. Imam Ali (AS) pointed his finger to him while he was bowing (*rukū*) in the prayer and gave his ring to that beggar. And this verse was revealed.

After this verse was revealed, Ammar b. Yasir reports that the holy Prophet (SAW) said: *“The one upon whom I am Master, then this Ali is his Master.”* The holy Prophet also said this in Ghadeer Khum in order to state the position of Imam Ali (AS).

Abu Dhar, who himself witnessed the event in the sacred mosque explained what occurred in detail for the people.

Unlike the interpretation of our Sunni brothers/sisters, the term *“wali”* mentioned in this verse does not mean ‘friend’ and ‘helper’, since befriending and helping one another is the duty of all Muslims, not specifically those who give charity while bowing down in prayer. According to traditions, the person intended in it is only Imam Ali (A), and the usage of the plural form of the word (the faithful) *“aamanuu”* for a singular subject is to show the importance of the one mentioned, i.e. Imam Ali (A). A similar case is found in the “verse of Mubahila” when it says *“anfusanaa wa anfusakum”* (ourselves and yourselves, i.e. in plural). Many Islamic scholars and commentators of the Qur’an have said that the meaning of the word *“wali”* mentioned in this verse, is *“wilāyah”* in the sense of “guardianship” and “leadership”.

Therefore, this verse is one of the verses that indicate to Mastership and Imamate of Ali b. Abi Talib (AS).

Explanations

1. In this verse, we are commanded to take and follow Allah (SWT), His Messenger (SAW) and Imam Ali (AS) as our Masters.
2. The essence of the Mastership of Allah (SWT), the Messenger (SAW) and Imam Ali (AS) is the same, and it is essentially one in nature as well as in effect. That is why the verse says *“waliyyukum”* (your guardian) in a singular form, not *“awliyaakum”* (your guardians) in plural form.
3. The terms of prayer and zakat (charity) are usually mentioned in the Qur’an besides each other, but in this verse, they are mixed together with, (giving zakat while is Ruku).

4. Those who did not give zakat, while in prayer do not have the guardianship and leadership over people.
5. This verse mentions the qualities and the characteristics of a particular person without mentioning his name, and it is up to the readers and audience to find out as to who fits in these qualities.

Verses of Wilayah Part 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ۖ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ۖ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome. [4:59]

Explanations:

The discussion of this verse is one of the most important matters of Islam, the subject of leadership. They determine the true source of guidance for Muslims for the different social and religious affairs that they may have.

1. The first part of the verse commands those who believe to “Obey Allah”. For a believing person, all obedience must led to the obedience of Allah. For example, we obey our parents because this is in line with the obedience to Allah (SWT).
2. The second stage it says: “....and obey the Messenger.....” Obey the Prophet (SAW) who is immaculate and never speaks out of desire: “*Nor does he speak out of desire.*” [53:3]. An Apostle appointed by Allah amongst the people whose word is the word of Allah and whose rank and position have been bestowed to him by Allah (SWT).
3. And for the third stage, it says: “...and those charged with authority among you...” Obey those who are from the *Ummah* and protect both the divine religion and worldly affairs of the people.

Who are ‘Those charged with Authority’?

All the shi’ah commentators are on the same opinion on this matter that the purpose of the phrase ‘*ulil-amr*’ mentioned in this verse is the immaculate Imams to whom the physical and spiritual leadership of the Islamic society, consisting of all affairs of life, have been given by Allah and his messenger and doesn’t include any other than them.

Commentary

It is irrational and senseless to accept any ruler as 'Ulil Amr' otherwise men like Yazid and Muawiya will have to be included in the category of 'Ulil Amr' and no sane person would say that Allah has enjoined to obey men like Yazid, just as one obeys Allah (SWT) and the Holy Prophet (SAW).

As from the time of *Da'wat dhul asheera* (feast of near relatives) to the Day of Ghadeer Khum, our Holy Prophet (SAW) repeatedly announced the successor ship of Imam Ali (AS). Therefore, the first step a true Muslim must take to obey the Messenger of Allah is to obey and follow Ali ibne Abi Talib (AS).

The Messenger's obedience is in reality Allah's obedience because it is Allah who has obliged the believers to obey the Messenger.

1. As far as "Ulil Amr" is concerned they do not have the privilege of the revelation for the "Message of Islam" ended with the Holy Prophet (SAW) who was the last Prophet, there were no new laws after that. That is why the verse says "then if you quarrel about anything refer to Allah and His Messenger". Allah has ordered the believers to obey "Ulil Amr".
2. If they give an order contrary to Qur'an or sunnah, it would be invalid and would not be obeyed. Hadith of the Prophet (SAW): "No creature is obeyed in disobedience of the Creator".
3. When Allah (SWT) ordered people to obey their parents and He said in sura Al Ankabut 29:8 "...and if they tell you that you should associate others with Me, of which you have no knowledge do not obey them...." but in this verse, Allah (SWT) did not put any such conditions, therefore the "Ulil Amr" were Ma'sum, sinless in the same way as the Messenger.
4. Jabir ibne Abdullah asked the holy Prophet (SAW) who are the "Ulil Amr", Prophet (SAW) replied: "They are my khalifs, the Imams of the Muslims after me. The first of them is Ali, son of Abu Talib and he went on until 5th Imam and said that Jabir you will meet him so convey my salaams to him". Then he went on with the Imams' names until 12th Imam and he said he will be the proof of Allah on this earth and "Baqiatullah" ,(the one who is kept safe by Allah) among His servants, he will conquer the whole world from east to west, he will be kept hidden from his followers for such a long time that no-one will remain firm on the belief of his Imamah except he whose heart has been tested by Allah (SWT) for faith. Then Jabir asked if they will benefit while he is in occultation and he said they will be guided by his light and benefit from his "Wilalah" as people benefit from the sun behind the cloud. Ref: Al Mizan