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Part 3: Those who have the knowledge of Quran are the Imams

In the description that those who have the knowledge of the Quran and who are perfect in knowledge and who fear the Quran are the Imams

Ibne Mahyar has, through reliable sources, quoted Imam Baqir (a.s.) explaining the verse:

فَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ.

(As to) those whom We gave the Book before it, they are believers in it. (Sura Qasas 28:52)

In this verse, what is meant by ‘those who are given the book’ are Aale Muhammad (a.s.) who have been given the knowledge of Quran. And some from this group are those who have believed in the book, the Hazrat said that Ahle Imaan means some people of the tribe.

Kulaini and others have, from many sources reported that in explanation of the Verse:

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ.

Nay! these are clear communications in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge... (Sura Ankabut 29:49)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: Some clear signs (verses) of Quran are in the hearts of those who have been given the knowledge, are the holy Imams from Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and in their hearts are both the words and the meanings of the Quran.

In *Basairud Darajat*, through reliable chains of narrators, Abu Baseer reports that Imam Baqir (a.s.) recited this verse and then said: Allah has not said that the Mushaf (text of Quran) is between two hardboard covers. Rather He has said that it is in the hearts of those who have been given the knowledge of it. Abu Baseer asked: are you those people? The Imam replied: Who else can be?

This narration is quoted with nearly twenty chains showing that this verse is describing their greatness. It is also possible that what is meant by the aforementioned verse by the Hazrat is that the clarification of Quran is in the hearts of the Imams and that none else knows its meanings and secrets. Therefore only they must be approached for understanding the Quran properly.

Ayyashi has, quoted Imam Sadiq (a.s.) as saying in the explanation of the verse:

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ.

Those whom we have given the Book recite it as it should be recited and only they are the ones who have faith in it. (Sura Baqarah 2:21)

That those who have been given the book are the Holy Imams (a.s.).¹

Kulaini has, with reliable chains of narrators, quoted Imam Sadiq (a.s.), saying while explaining verse:

وَأَوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ.

This Quran has been revealed to me so that I may warn you through it. (Sura Anam 6: 19)

And in the explanation of “those who” (reach this rank), said that it means those from the Progeny of Muhammad (S) who may reach Imamate. He also warns people through Quran as the Holy Prophet (S) used to warn. Ali bin Ibrahim has narrated that “those who reach this rank” means the Imam. The Hazrat said that Muhammad (S) was warning (about Allah’s anger) and so also do we.²

Ali bin Ibrahim has narrated with reliable chains of narrators from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that the Holy Quran is the warner which creates love for Paradise and make one try to save oneself from Hell. There are clear-cut verses which give clear evidence of the meaning and the aim. And there also are some verses which are not so clear (allegorical) from which many meanings can be derived. Hence it is difficult to know their meanings and aims. But you can act upon the Clear verses and put only faith on the allegorical ones but you cannot act upon them. This is the word of Allah:

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ.

Then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation. But none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge. (Sura Ale-Imran 3:7)

And those who are perfect in knowledge are Aale Muhammad.

Likewise, Ali bin Ibrahim, the author of *Ikhtisas* has, with reliable chains of narrators, quoted Imam Baqir (a.s.) saying that the Holy Prophet (S) was most perfect in the knowledge and he knew what Allah has sent to him in Quran and also its meaning, that is, he knew both the apparent and the hidden of the Holy Quran, it had never so happened that Allah sent him a verse but did not show him its meaning. Similarly his legates who came after him also knew both the revelation and interpretation of the Holy Quran.

In *Kafi* and *Basair*, a conclusion is made that Shias do not know its interpretation but whenever anyone from *those who are firmly rooted in knowledge* tell it to them they say: We have put faith in it; that all of it is from Allah though the Holy Quran contains the special, common, clear, allegorical, abrogator, abrogated, everything and all of it is known to those who are *those who are firmly rooted in knowledge*.³

Kulaini has, with true chains of narrators, quoted the Imam saying: We are the one firmly rooted in knowledge, we know the meaning of Quran and another reliable tradition says that the firmly rooted in knowledge is Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and after him the Imams (a.s.).

In *Basairud Darajat*, it is mentioned with reliable chains of narrators that Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: In the Holy Quran, there is not a single verse which does not have its outward and inward meaning and that there is not a single letter which is not a sign showing what is happening and its happening and appearing is being made known to the Imam of the time and its meaning is known to the living and present Imam and so also to the earlier Imam as Allah says: Its meaning is not known to anyone but Allah and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and it is we who know it.

Ali bin Ibrahim has said that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) while explaining the meaning of the verse:

قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوءَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ.

The people of that group who have been given knowledge will say that today's disgrace and adversity is for the deniers (disbelievers) (Sura Nahl 16:27)

which reads 'the group who have been given the knowledge are the Imams (a.s.).

Similarly, while explaining the verse:

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ.

Those who have been given knowledge know what, O Messenger, has been revealed to you from your Lord. (Sura Saba 34:6)

The Hazrat said that it means Amirul Momineen (a.s.) who has testified to whatever Allah sent to the Holy Prophet (S).

Kulaini has, with reliable chains of narrators, quoted Imam Baqir (a.s.) saying that no one has ever claimed but falsely that he knows the entire Quran as it has been revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) and that he has collected it and that he has remembered (learnt) it by heart except Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) and the Imams after him (they only have made such a claim truly).

In another narration it is said that no one except the legatee of the Prophet can claim that he has both the inward and outwards meanings of the whole Quran.

In yet another tradition, it is mentioned: Among all the knowledge given to us by Allah is the explanation and the commandments of the Holy Quran and that we have also been given the knowledge of the changes taking place in every time and age or era. And then added: We used to tell it whenever we found any writer who would not reveal our secrets or to any such person who could be informed of the secrets.

Likewise, with reliable chains of narrators, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted that he said: By Allah, I know the Book of Allah from beginning to end so thoroughly as if they are the two palms of the hand. In the Holy Quran are the news of the earth and the heavens and the past and the future. The Almighty Allah says that it has:

تَبَيَّنَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ.

A distinct explanation of all things. (Sura Yusuf 12:111)

It is mentioned in yet another tradition that: Allah said in praise of Asif bin Barkhiya, the vizier of Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.) that the person who had knowledge of the Book said: I will bring for you the throne of Bilqis before your eye twinkles. Then the Imam placed his Holy hand on his heart (the treasure of truths) and said: By Allah, we have the knowledge of the entire Book.

It is also mentioned from true sources that Imam Baqir (a.s.) said that Muawiyah bin Ammar asked him the explanation of the verse:

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. (Sura Ra'd:43)

The Imam replied: After the Prophet, they are we and the one who is better than us (Ali a.s.).

It is mentioned in *Basair* that a man came to Imam Kazim (a.s.) and said: You are giving such explanation of Allah's Book the like of which we have never heard before from anyone else. The Hazrat replied: The Holy Quran came to us before all others and we got its explanation before it reached anyone else.

Therefore it is we who know the Halaal (legal) and Haraam (illegal) and Nasikh (abrogator) and Mansookh (abrogated) of the Quran and we know which verse was revealed while in journey and which at home and which at night and which in the day. Hence we are the possessor of wisdom and intelligence from Allah and we are the witness of Allah on the creation and this is according to the words of Allah:

سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ.

Very soon we will write down their testimony and they will be asked. (Sura Zukhruf 43: 19)

The Hazrat said: the testimony is for us and questioning is for those who include the entire Ummah (community). Therefore, this is the knowledge of which you have been made aware and proof has been completed which was incumbent on me. So if you accept it, be thankful and if you reject, then Allah is witness to everything.

1. The writer says: Some commentators have said that 'Kitab' (book) is Taurat and that those who have been given its knowledge are those among the Jews and Christians who had faith in the Holy Prophet (S). Some say Kitab means the Quran and those who are given the Book are the believers of this Ummah. The Tafsir given by the Hazrat is based on this and is according to sequence of the verse because the right of recitation depends on its knowledge along with its secrets and mysteries and this is reserved only with these gentlemen. Hence faith in Quran cannot be perfect but only through them.

2. The writer says: Many commentators have said that it means: Because I am warning everyone to whom the Quran reaches till the Day of Judgement and on the basis of what has been mentioned in tradition the pronoun will be connected with the subject.

3. The translator says: These verses begin with “He, Allah, who has sent this Quran to you” (wherein) are clear-cut verses and they are original Quran, and there are some other verses which are similar to one another and their meanings are not quite clear. So those whose hearts are inclined towards untruth they cling only to these allegorical meanings so that they may lead people astray and make them fall in doubts and give meanings to them according to their desires. And no one knows the meanings of the allegorical verse but Allah and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and the base of whose knowledge is conviction. There is a difference in recitation. Some stop at Allah and consider it the beginning of the Divine words and they regard ‘and they say’ as its object, that is, ‘the firmly rooted in knowledge say: We have put faith in the allegorical; that all of this is from our Lord though we do not know their meaning. Some commentators do not stop at (after) Allah and connect ‘and those firmly rooted in knowledge’ with Allah meaning the ‘firmly rooted in knowledge’ also know the meaning of the allegorical verse of the Holy Quran. There are many traditions supporting the derivation of ‘firmly rooted’ that it means the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams. In some narrations it is mentioned that ‘they say’ is the appellation of the ‘dialogue’ and its subject are the Shias which means that when the Shias hear from their Imams who are perfect in knowledge the meaning of the allegorical verses, they testify to it and say: all this is from our Lord.

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