

Speech 2: Relationships of Muslim Nation (Ummah)

Internal and External Relationships

Islamic society has been designed to act as the Nation of Islam and is to be run according to divine thought and laws under the delegated authority of God through enactment and implementation of these laws. If this Islamic society aspires to be driven by Wilayat in the Qur'anic context and wants to manage it as we discussed in the previous speech, then it is imperative that it takes care of two relationships – one: the intra Islamic society and the other: between Islamic society and the other nations of the world.

In regards to the intra relationships the Islamic Nation will be a bearer of Wilayat in the Qur'anic context when it has adhesion and bonding between its ranks; there is total unity and agreement between its various members and groups; there is no disunity and conflict in the Nation of Islam and there are no groupings within the Nation.

If two groups within the Nation of Islam are at loggerheads with each other, Quran says that the remaining Muslims should try their best to create peace and harmony between the warring groups.

If they find that one of the combating groups is ready for peace but the other is not; or one is just and the other is not; and the group at fault is not ready to accept what is right, then at this point the whole World of Islam should unite against the oppressor and fight against it until it throws in the towel.

In the 9th verse of Surah Hujarat¹ Lord of the universe says:

وَإِنْ طَآئَفَتْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ افْتَنْتُمُوا فَاصْلِحُوهَا بَيْنَهُمَا

If two groups of Muslims fight, you make peace between them.

فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِيْ

If one of the two groups has oppressed the other, fight against it.

حَتَّىٰ تَفِيْئَ إِلَيْ أَمْرِ اللهِ

Until it is forced to accept the writ of God.

This order from God of the universe is to preserve unity and harmony within the Islamic society.

In the context of external relationships the Nation of Islam should develop liaison with the non-Muslim world and the people outside the Islamic World in such a way that it is absolutely not under their control and must not be influenced by their ideology; and it must not surrender its independence by accepting even slight influence of their politics.

It is prohibited for Muslims to join their camp and develop ties with them as a nation.

There is a famous legend that has been mentioned in reliable Shi'ah books and belongs to the era of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq or Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir. At that time the coin of Islamic world used to be minted in Rome. In this context Rome made some threats that created a problem for Muslims. At this juncture the Imam guided the khalifa (ruler) of the time. It is odd. We have seen only one or two instances where the Imams have extended cooperation to the rulers. This is one of those occasions where the Imam guided the administration on how to mint the coin as those people did not know how to mint silver coins.

So in the context of external relationships it is prohibited to accept even slight influence from the enemies of Islam. The Islamic society and the Nation of Islam has no right to establish relationships with non-Muslim world except one of dominance over them. In other words if there is such a contact between the Nation of Islam and the non-Islamic government that results in subjugation of the Islamic nation as happened in the tobacco case you have all heard and read about, then the Islamic World does not have the right to establish such an association. Similarly the kings and Mughal Emperors of India allowed foreign countries to come and establish their companies in India; this act was wrong and against the Wilayat of Islamic World. They should have known and everyone should know that when companies like East India Company enter their land what calamities they bring upon the local residents and establish imperialism in the veins of this great continent. The World of Islam has not been allowed to develop this sort of relationships and associations.

We should keep in mind that when we talk about not establishing relationships with the non-Muslim governments and nations it does not mean that the Islamic World should be detached politically from the rest of the world. This is not a matter of political isolation. One should not think that the World of Islam

should neither have trade relations with others nor political nor diplomatic; neither should it send its ambassadors to other countries nor accept theirs. No, this is not it. It should maintain its liaison with others but should not have Wilayat with them; should not have bondage with them; should not have such a relationship that will allow others to have sway over the Islamic World.

So the Qur'anic Wilayat has two manifestations. One is that all elements in the Islamic society should have one purpose, one direction and one path. And the other is that the Nation of Islam should break ties from all external elements and groups opposed to Islam.

At this moment there is a subtle point that tells us that the interpretation of Wilayat according to Qu'ran is the same as what Shi'ahs believe in.

The importance given in Shi'ah to the association with Imam; the way we enforce order of an Imam in all facets of social life; what is it for and what is the basis for it?

Here the Glorious Qur'an tells us that if a society and a nation wants to practice Qur'anic Wilayat; in other words if it wants all its internal powers focused in one direction, one purpose and one path; if it wants all its internal powers ready to combat with the external forces opposing Islam; then it needs to have a central point of power in the Islamic society; it needs a focal point that all the internal powers are linked to and from whom they seek guidance, listen to and follow. Furthermore, that focal point should be mindful of what is good for the nation and what can be harmful to the nation so that as a strong, far-sighted and sagacious commander he can assign his troops on the battlefield for the right tasks.

There needs to be a guardian, a commander and a central power who knows what you can do, what I can do and what others can do, so he can assign responsibilities based on capabilities. As an example, have you seen a carpet-weaving factory? A number of people work in the factory. Every young and old weaves with a thread. If all of them are not in sync with each other; if there is no one authority supervising them, who tells them about the design of the carpet, who issues instructions so they know what thread to use, how to weave and how to move forward, can you imagine what sort of a carpet will come out?

You will see that the right portion will be of Eastern style, the left portion Western style; one side will be Kurdish and the other Turkish. The outcome will be a disorderly ugly thing with strange features. A specific style, balance and order you see in a carpet is because clear instructions were in place for its preparation and there was someone continuously directing the workers towards these instructions.

The Qualities of a Wali (Guardian)

If a society wants to have all its powers focused on one point and does not want its energies wasted, it needs to have one central power – one heart.

However, this focal point or the heart needs to have certain qualities. He should be extremely wise;

should have a strong willpower; should have a certain ideology; should not be afraid of anything in the path of God; and if need arises, be willing to sacrifice his life.

What do we call such a personality?

We call him Imam.

Imam, a ruler and a guardian, who has been appointed by the Lord of the World for this society. It is just like the Sublime Master says about Abraham:

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

I have appointed you Imam for people. [2](#)

When we say that the Imam should be appointed by God, there are two aspects to it. Either He appoints an Imam by name and qualities just the way the Prophet of Islam appointed the Commander of the faithful – Ali –, Hasan, Husayn and others as Imams; or the Sublime Master does not appoint by name but only by qualities. As Imam says:

فَآمَّا مَنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْفُقَهَاءِ صَانِئًا لِنَفْسِهِ حَافِظًا لِدِينِهِ مُخَالِفًا عَلَىٰ هُوَاهُ مُطِيعًا لَا مِرْمَوْلَاهُ فَلِلْعَوَامِ أَنْ يُقْلِدُوهُ

Among the scholars of religion one who controls his inner self, defends his religion, has crushed his carnal desires and obeys God's commands, people should follow him. [3](#)

In this tradition the Imam has prescribed the qualities and signposts of a guardian and a leader; whoever meets this criterion, will be the guardian and the leader.

We wish to explain the meanings of the word, "Imam". Imam is a guide, a ruler, someone people should follow; someone from God; who is just; who is a judge; who is religious; who has a strong willpower; and other similar characteristics pertaining to the Imam that we do not have the time to delve into in detail.

According to the Qur'anic principle of Wilayat the presence of an Imam is imperative. If this great entity called the Nation of Islam needs to stay alive, successful, and always strong and powerful, then it has to have a link with this vibrant, exciting, always strong and resourceful core.

The second aspect of Wilayat is that every member of the Islamic Nation must have a strong link with this nucleus of the nation. This link should be based on ideology and practice. Declaring the Imam as a role model, adopting his ideology and exactly following his footsteps in all matters and activities is Wilayat.

So having the Wilayat of Imam Ali implies that in your ideology and actions you are a follower of Ali;

there is a strong and unbreakable bond between you and Ali; you are not detached from Ali; these are the meanings of Wilayat. At this point we can understand the following tradition:

وِلَائِيَّةُ عَلَيْيَ ابْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ حِصْنِي فَمَنْ دَخَلَ حِصْنِي آمِنٌ مِنْ عَذَابِي

The Wilayat of Ali is a fort; whoever gets in will be safe from the wrath of God.

This is an exquisite tradition. If the Muslims and followers of the Glorious Qur'an are attached to Ali in their ideology, actions, struggles and activities, they will be safe from God's punishment.

How can someone who thinks that Qur'an is incomprehensible claim that he has Wilayat of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and is affiliated with Ali's ideology? Imam Ali says in one of his sermons in Nahjul Balagha:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْنَ هُوَ الْنَا صَفْحُ الَّذِي لَا يَغُشُّ، وَالْهَادِي الَّذِي لَا يُضِلُّ، وَالْمُحَدِّثُ الَّذِي لَا يَكْذِبُ، وَمَا جَاءَسَ هَذَا الْقُرْنَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا قَامَ عَنْهُ بِزِيَادَةٍ أَوْ نُقْصَانٍ، زِيَادَةٌ فِي هُدَىٰ وَنُقْصَانٌ مِنْ عَمَىٰ

You should know that Qur'an is such a counselor that does not deceive; is such a guardian who does not make you go astray; is such a speaker who does not lie. Whoever sat with this Qur'an, got up with a boost in guidance and a decrease in ignorance. [4](#)

Ali introduces Qur'an in such a fashion and draws people towards it. If someone says that Qur'an is incomprehensible, does he have Wilayat of Ali Ibn Abi Talib? Of course not.

Ali is ready to sacrifice his life in the path of Allah (swt). Such is the character of Ali. When someone is not willing to sacrifice his wealth, his life, his stature in the society, his comfort and his leadership, does he have Ali 's Wilayat?

An individual who possesses Ali's Wilayat is someone who maintains an unbreakable tie with Ali in both ideology and practice.

If you ponder correctly, the meanings we have provided for Wilayat are the deepest and the most lucid.

We are presenting a few verses from Chapter al-Ma'idah[5](#) for you to reflect on. These verses address the establishment of internal relationships as well the breaking of external relationships as viewed by Wilayat.

Furthermore, these verses describe the bond and connection with the Wali – the hub, the heart, the ruler and the Imam.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَ النَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءٍ

O' believers! Don't make the Jews and Christians your guardians (aulia).

أَوْلِيَّاً أَعْنَبْهُمْ Aulia is the plural form of Wali. The word Wali comes from Wilayat. As explained before Wilayat means a bond. Don't develop a bond with Jews and Christians. Don't connect with them. Don't adopt their ways for yourselves.

بعضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَّاً بَعْضٌ

They are connected to each other.

Don't think that they belong to separate groups. In the language of Qur'an they are one in opposing your religion.

وَ مَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

Whoever affiliates with them, indeed will become part of them.

Tawalla – accepting Wilayat. Whoever will enter the circle of their Wilayat and will connect with them, will become part of them.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

Indeed God will not guide the oppressors

External Relationships

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ

You see these people whose hearts are diseased; they run to join the camp of your religion's enemy.

They do not contend with just a normal walk, they run to it. It is not enough for them to just get close, they join their ranks. If you ask them, "why are you mingling so closely with the enemies of the religion and why are you displaying such affection with them instead of animosity?" They respond with an excuse:

نَخْشِي أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ

We are afraid that there may be hardships for us.

Have we not heard such words before?

God responds:

فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ

There is hope that God will bring victory to the believers or will make some incident happen in their favor.

And when that happens:

فُيَصْبِّحُوا عَلَيْ مَا أَسْرَفُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَدِيمِينَ

At that time these cursed people who joined the enemy will regret.

They will be ashamed. They will say, "What a folly we committed? If we had known that the believers will garner such success and power, we would not have joined the enemies of the religion and God; we would not have disgraced ourselves."

When they had debased themselves by conspiring with the enemies of God:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ امْتُوْاهُؤُلَائِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ

The faithful will say, "Were they those believers – the good appearing and good looking people – who had sworn big time that they were with us?" Or whenever we said something, they would say, "We are with you; we have no difference of opinion with you. We say the same thing as you do." These people make such statements but later it becomes apparent that their hearts were sick. Their appearance looks good but their hearts are polluted, black and tainted with hypocrisy. That day the faithful say, "How bizarre? How these people used to vow? Are they the same people?"

أَهُؤُلَائِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ

Are they the same people who swore so strongly in the name of God?

إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ

Verily we are with you.

They used to swear that they were with you – in thought and ideology.

بِطَاطَاتٍ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَاصْبَحُوا خَسِيرِينَ

Their deeds are destroyed and they are among the big losers.

So far these verses⁶ were about the external relationships.

Internal Relationships

In continuation of the same verses ponder over the internal relationships:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ

O' believers! If some of you revert from your religion

You had accepted the responsibility of propagating God's religion when you accepted faith in God; if you want to renege and avoid carrying this responsibility to its destination, don't think that this consignment will not reach its destination. This is a misconception you have; this honor will go to some other nation.

مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسُوفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

If someone among you regresses from the religion and becomes an unbeliever, God will create such people who will be loved by God and they will love God.

Are we among those who love God?

Many times we utter such words that express our love for God. Do these words prove that we love God?

In this context the Glorious Qur'an makes a point. Exalted Allah says,

فُلُونْ كُوْنُتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّكُمُ اللَّهُ

"O' Prophet! Say, "if you love God, obey me so that God will also love you." ⁷

يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

He loves them and they love Him.

They will show their love to God by being completely subservient to the commands of Allah and Allah will also love them; it will go both ways.

أَذْلَّةٌ عَلَيِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

They are humble towards the believers.

One of the qualities of these people is that they show humility towards the believers. This is a sign of their extremely deep bond and relationship with the believers. These people do not have any vanity, eccentricity and undue pride in front of Muslims. When they come to the people, they become a part of them; they stand shoulder to shoulder with them; they become their companions and do not isolate from them. It is not like they keep a distance and show occasional sympathy.

أَذْلَّةٌ عَلَيِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

They are humble towards the believers.

أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَيِ الْكُفَّارِ

They stand up to the enemies of Islam and Qur'an.

In other words they are not impressed by them. They keep their heads high in front of them and they have drawn such a circle of Islamic ideology around them that they are never awed by the non-believers.

يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ

They fight in the path of Allah.

One of their qualities is that they fight in the path of Allah with extreme valor and bravado. As the verse says:

وَ لَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَا إِيمَانَ

They are not afraid of someone censuring them.

ذلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُوْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

This is a blessing from Allah that He bestows upon whoever He pleases; He encompasses all and He knows everything. [8](#)

The latter verse addresses the relationship between different parts of the Islamic society and the nucleus – the Imam and the leader.

Ponder hard so you know that the issues considered not Qur'anic, are being articulated by Qur'an in such eloquence and clarity.

The Glorious Qur'an discussed the external and internal relationships. Now it talks about the core of the internal relationships – the Imam, the Leader and the Guide.

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ

Most certainly Allah is the Guardian and Owner of commandments.

Allah has to be the Hub of all activities of the Islamic nation and society and all instructions related to the Islamic society and the nation should be sought from Him. There is God but God cannot acquire a body and come in the middle of people to stop them from doing evil and exhort them to do good. Then who is this nucleus?

وَرَسُولُهُ

And the Prophet

It is obvious that there is no strife between Allah and the Prophet. The Prophet is the representative of Allah.

But as Qur'an says:

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

O' Prophet! You are going to die and verily they are all going to die. [9](#)

Prophet will not be there forever. So it should be made clear who will be responsible after the Prophet. The Lord of the World introduces those personalities:

وَالَّذِينَ امْنَوا

And those who believe.

Is it enough to declare faith? The answer is in the negative. He must have other qualities.

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ

Those who establish prayer.

وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكُورَةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

Those who pay alms while kneeling (during prayer).

Imam Ali, the Role Model

Based on the sum of the above-mentioned signs, Imam Ali has been appointed as the Guardian (Wali). However, if there is a doubt that Ali is not the intended personality in the verse and the verse points to all believers who possess these qualities, then the question arises, "who among them can be chosen as the role model for this school of thought?" In Islamic society we cannot find any personality other than Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Let us suppose that the verse is not referring to Ali, even then there was no example of such strong faith other than Ali Ibn Abi Talib in the Islamic society of the time.

It is important to point out at this point that when we talk about Wilayat with Shi'ah in mind, we are looking at the positive aspect and not the negative one. And as we have stated several times, we consider it important that Shi'ahs recognize themselves; get to know their ideology and fortify their belief. At the same time we believe that Shi'ahs should stop confronting with Sunni brothers as there exists an external enemy of Muslims.

In this conversation we want to support Shi'ah but do not intend to negate others. We do not wish to advance the differences in beliefs and practices for no reason. However, it is important for you to understand how you know Shi'ah. The Shi'ah we are talking about is not an entity separate from Islam. Shi'ah is not alien to Islam. The viewpoint Shi'ah holds about Islam and Qur'an is correct, logical, just and sensible.

Please pay attention to the fact that we are describing an Islamic principle and our conversation is about Islam's ideological principle. We don't think that you would have a different opinion and we are focusing only on the positive aspect of the issue. We are describing Islam the way the School of Shi'ah understands it. There may be other groups of people who may have different ideas and we are not

concerned about that and we are not interested in discussing that; we have no quarrel with them. We are all brothers and we extend a hand of friendship towards them. Why? Because we have a common enemy in front of us; because the enemy is upon us. In such circumstances we have no right to insult each other. This is also our creed that we wanted to relate.

The purpose of conversation about Shi'ah is due to its truthfulness and virtue; because we are believers in Shi'ah and look at Islam through the lens of Shi'ah. It is not to invent differences between Shi'ahs and Sunnis; absolutely it is not our purpose; we consider promoting differences unlawful (haram).

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذْنَنَا يُقْبِلُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكُوَةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

Your Guardian and Owner of commandments is God, His Prophet and the believers who establish prayers and give alms while kneeling in prayers. [10](#)

This verse has been explained in detail and here it has been reproduced again.

Now we should see that if we keep Wilayat in our mind what is going to happen; is it going to have an impact on us?

We have recounted three features of Wilayat – protecting internal relationships, breaking affiliation with the opposing external centers of power and guarding the everlasting and deep bond with the heart of the Islamic body and nation – the Imam and the Guide.

If we stick to these characteristics, what may happen? The Glorious Qur'an in the next verse responds:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَلِيبُونَ

Those who will accept the Wilayat of God, His Prophet and the believers; take care of this relationship and defend it; they will succeed and dominate; and they are the most successful of all and they will subdue other groups. [11](#)

[1.](#) Al-Hujurat, Ch.apter 49.

[2.](#) Ch. 2 Sura Baqara, verse 124.

[3.](#) Wasayl ush-Shi'a, vol 18, p 95.

[4.](#) Nahjul Balagha, sermon 174.

[5.](#) Ch.apter n. 5.

[6.](#) Ch. 5 Ma'idah, verses 51–53.

[7.](#) Ch. 3 Aale Imran, verse 31.

[8.](#) Ch. 5 Ma'ida, verse 54.

[9.](#) Ch. 39 Zumar, verse 30.

[10.](#) Ch. 5 Ma'idah. verse 55.

[11.](#) Ch. 5 Ma'idah. verse 56.

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