

## Ulul Amr

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*In a recent success of the Indian cricket team a lot of credit had been given to their coach. The world record holder of almost 100 centuries in International Cricket, Sachin Tendulkar, attributed his **recent batting success to this coach**. This shows **even he needed somebody to guide him to improve upon his batting performance**.*

*In the business world, **most of the successful managers after spending many years at the top** retire to become business coaches. Their experience and guidance helps small and **upcoming businesses to channelize their efforts in a right direction and move ahead on a success path**.*

*A bright student apart from attending school, still **needs a tutor to make him perform well in his board exams**. The expert **tips given by his tutor** ensure that **he shines in exams and comes out with flying colours**.*

*→ Thus in order to make our efforts meaningful we do require guidance and mentoring of **an expert coach** in various walks of life. These **coaches are from the specific field** where we need to achieve expertise and **they have a successful track record as a proof of their ability**. Let us strive with this article to find out **the right and chosen guides in our lives** who would make our efforts meaningful **to reach the straight path and attain nearness to Allah**.*

As Allah (SWT) says in the following ayah:

- *“**Aur jo shakhs Khuda ki yaad se andha banta hai Hum (goya khud) uske waaste shaitaan muqarrar kar dete hai.**” – (Surah-e-Zakhruf, ayah 32)*

*“(And **whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint for him a Shaitan, so he becomes his associate.**)”*

It is thus mandatory for us to remember Allah to be able to save ourselves from the Satan. If we forget Allah, Allah Himself would appoint a Satan and we would get astray.

And Allah (SWT) again says in the following ayah:

- *“**Agaah raho ye log yaqeenan jhoote hain shaitaan ne unn par qaboo paaliya hai aur Khuda ki yaad unn se bhula di hai. Ye log shaitaan ke giroh hai sunn rakho ke shaitaan ka giroh ghaata uthane wala hai.**” – (Surah-e-Mujadla, ayah 19)*

*“(The Shaitan has gained the mastery over them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah; **they are the Shaitan's party; now surely the Shaitan's party are the losers.**)”*

So if we get tempted by Satan and forget Allah, **we become part of Satan's party of losers**. So **how should we please Allah (SWT)** and avoid getting tempted by the Satan? Let us see the following ayah and contemplate:

- *“Aur na kisi imaandar mard ko ye munasib hai aur na kisi imaandar aurat ko jab **Khuda aur us ke Rasool (SAW) kisi kaam ka hukm dein to unko apne uss kam (ke karne na karne) ka akhtiyaar ho** aur (yaad rahe ki) **jiss shakhs ne Khuda aur uss ke Rasool (SAW) ki nafarmani ki wo yaqeenan khulam khulla gumrahi main muftela ho chukka.**”-* (Surah-e-Ahzab, ayah 36)

*“(No believing men and women have any choice in a matter after God and His Apostle have decided it. **Whoever disobeys God and His Apostle has clearly lost the way and gone astray.**)”*

**Whatever Allah (SWT) has instructed and ordered us and whatever the holy Prophet (pbuh) has ordered us is to be followed and respected.** Failing, we might get tempted by Satan and get astray.

That is the reason Allah (SWT) further says:

- *“Ae Rasool (SAW) kehdo ke **Khuda aur Rasool (SAW) ki farmabardari karo** phir agar yeh log **uss se sartaabi karein to (samajh lein ki) Khuda kafiron ko hargiz dost nahin rakhta.**” – (Surah-e-Aale Imran, ayah 32)*

*“(Say: **Obey Allah and the Messenger;** but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers.)”*

**Thus in order to be a believer and be loved by Allah** it is mandatory for us to not only obey Allah's command but we need to equally **obey whatever the holy Prophet (pbuh) has instructed us**.

Now let us see what the following ayah says:

- *“Ae Imaandaro Khuda ki ita'at karo aur Rasool (SAW) ki **aur jo tum main se ulul amr (sahaban e hukumat) ho unki ita'at karo.**” – (Surah-e-Nisa, ayah 59)*

*“O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those **vested with authority from among you (Ulul Amr)**”.*

→ Again, from the above ayah it seems that there is **one more authority** from among us which needs to be **followed and obeyed the way we obey Allah (SWT) and the holy Prophet (pbuh)**. If we ponder upon the ayah we will observe **that the instruction of obeying the Ulul Amr is unconditional**; hence we need to obey them in whatever condition to remain guided and avoid getting astray. So who are they?

Allah (SWT) is **the Greatest**, the holy Prophet (pbuh) is **His Greatest Messenger** for which Allah (SWT) Himself is the witness; thus **two great authorities to be obeyed and followed**. Logically it seems that Ulul Amr, the third authority, hence should have the following characteristics:

- Ulul Amr must be **appointed by Allah (SWT) Himself**; we don't have any authority in this regard.
- Like the holy Prophet (pbuh) **Ulul Amr must be steadfast on the straight path and similar to him in conduct** as duly testified by Quran.
- They need to be well guided to guide the ummah; **hence they need to be infallible**.

Keeping this in mind let us further go deep in Quran to find them. The following ayah from Surah-e-Airaf will help us in this regard:

- *"Hud ne jawab diya (ke bas samajhlo) ke tumhare Parwardigaar ki taraf se tum per azaab aur ghazab naazil ho chuuka kya tum mujhse chand (buuton ke farzi) naamon ke baare main jhagadte ho **jinko tum ne aur tumhare baap dadao ne (khwamkhwaah) ghad liya hai haalaanke Khuda ne unn ke liye koi sanad nahin naazil ki pus tum (azaabe Khuda ka) intezaar karo main bhi tumhare saath muntazir hoon."** – (Surah-e-Airaf, ayah 71)*

*"(He said: "Punishment and wrath have already come upon you from your Lord: dispute ye with me **over names which ye have devised - ye and your fathers, - without authority from Allah?** then wait: I am amongst you, also waiting.")*

The above ayah mentions the dispute between Hud (A.S) and his community regarding worshipping and following certain names. **He is trying to stop them to do that since there was no authority established by Allah over the genuineness of the names**. Hence we can say that only **the authority** which is **duly appointed by Allah (SWT)** needs to be followed.

And in the following ayah Allah (SWT) further declares:

- “*Aur tumhara Parwardigaar jo chahta hai paida karta hai **aur (jise chahta hai) muntakhab karta hai** aur yeh intekhaab logon ke ikhtiyaar main nahin hai..” – (Surah-e-Qasas, ayah 68)*

*“(Your Lord creates what He will and **chooses (for His tasks) whomsoever He will. It is not for them to make the choice.**)”*

The ayah has said very clearly that it is Allah and Allah alone who chooses whomsoever for His tasks and **we don't have any authority to choose them**. If we do that we might lose the straight path.

And in the following ayah He says it very explicitly that:

- “*(logo) jo tumhare Parvardigar ki taraf se tum per naazil kiya gaya hai uski pairvi karo aur uss ke siwa **doosre (farzi) sarparaston ki pairvi na karna.**” – (Surah-e-Airaf, ayah 3)*

*“(Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and **do not follow guardians besides Him, how little do you mind.**)”*

→ Since it is Allah (SWT) who appoints the authority and guardian above the people to carry His tasks, **He reveals and indicates their presence**. The above ayah thus orders us to look for them and follow them rather than following people for whom nothing has been revealed by Allah (SWT).

Now with this result it is easy to establish that Ulul Amr, as indicated by in Surah-e-Nisa, ayah 59, are duly appointed by Allah (SWT) and there must be indications in form of ayahs regarding them in Quran.

Let us try to find out those references regarding Ulul Amr in Quran then:

- “*Aur Shaitaan ne apne khayal ko jo unke baare main kiya tha sach kar dikhaya to un logon ne usski pairvi ki **magar imaandaron ka ek giroh na bhatka.**” – (Surah-e-Saba, ayah 20)*

*“(And certainly the Shaitan found true his conjecture concerning them, so they follow him, **except a group of true believers.**)”*

The ayah clearly indicates that there was **one specific group of believers who did not get lured by Satan** but it does not say this for every believer. This group **remained steadfast on straight path always** and **hence was sinless and purified**. It means that every believer needs to strive to find them and follow them to remain steadfast on the right path.

Now let us see the following ayah from Surah-e-Baqra:

- *“(Aur) ae hamare paalne wale Tu hamein apna farmabardaar banda bana aur **hamari aulaad se ek giroh paida kar jo Tera farmabardar ho.**” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 128)*

*“(And make us submit, O Lord, to Your will, and **our progeny a group submissive to You.** Teach us the way of worship and forgive our trespasses, for You are compassionate and merciful)”*

While raising the foundations of the House (Ka’aba) Ibrahim (A.S) and Ismail (A.S) used to recite the above mentioned prayer. As per the prayer there is **a group from within the progeny of Ibrahim (A.S) submissive to Allah (SWT)’s Will and hence steadfast on the straight path**. We can infer that this group is the same group which is being referred in ayah 20 Surah-e-Saba which we discussed above.

And the following ayah from Surah-e-Aale Imran says:

- *“Tum kya achhe giroh ho ke logon ki **hidayat ke waaste paida kiye gaye ho.** Tum logon ko **achhe kaam ka to hukm karte ho aur bure kaamon se rokne ho** aur Khuda per **Imaan rakhte ho** aur agar ahl-e-kitab bhi isi tarah imaan laate to unke haq main bahot achha hota un main se kuch to imaandar hai aur aksar badkaar”. – ( Surah-e-Aale Imran, ayah 110)*

*“(You are the best of the **nations raised up for (the benefit of) men;** you **enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong** and believe in Allah; and if the followers of the Book had believed it would have been better for them; of them (some) are believers and most of them are transgressors.)”*

This group of people is raised for the benefit of mankind. They are best in conduct and character. **They guide people to the right path.**

On the explanation of the above ayah Ibn-e-Abi Hakim has quoted Hazrat Abu Ja'far that **they are Ahl-ul-bait of Rasool (SAW)**. (Ref: Tafseer-e-Suyuti, Vol 2, P 64)

→ Thus we can infer that the **Ahl-ul-bait are the duly appointed Ulul Amr**, and **we need to obey them** the way we obey holy Prophet (pbuh).

In the earlier section we had inferred 3 things about Ulul Amr; **first that they are duly appointed by Allah** - which we have already established. Second, that **they should be steadfast on the straight path like the holy Prophet (pbuh) and similar to him in their conduct** and this needs to be verified now and hence let us see the following two ayahs:

- *“(Ae logo) beshak tumhare liye pairvi karne ko achhe se achha namoona khud Rasulallah (SAW) mawjood hai ya’ani us shakhs ke liye jo Allah aur qayamat ke din ki ummeed rakhta ho aur Allah ki bahot si yaad karta ho.” – (Surah-e-Ahzaab, ayah 21)*

*“(Certainly you have in the **Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar** for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and **remembers Allah much**.)”*

- *“Humain seedha raasta dikha, un logo ka raasta jin per Tu ne inaaam farmaya...” – (Surah-e-Fateha Ayah 6-7)*

*“(Show us the straight way, **the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace...**)”*

The first ayah informs us that the holy Prophet (pbuh) is the **great example for us to follow**. While the second ayah from Surah-e-Fateha is the prayer **to seek guidance to the straight path the way certain chosen and blessed people of Allah have treaded**.

From both the ayahs mentioned above, we can infer that the path treaded by these chosen and blessed people and the holy Prophet (pbuh) needs to be same. Thus **Quran testifies** here about **their steadfastness on the straight path** and **their conduct and character similar to the holy Prophet (pbuh)**.

While commenting on the above mentioned ayah from Surah-e-Fateha, Sa'labi writes in his tafseer, a tradition from **Abu Hureira that the 'straight path' means the path taken by Mohammed (SAW) and the children of Mohammed (SAW)**. (Ref: Sa'labi in his Tafseer, Waki ibn-e-Jarrah in his commentary).

And that is the reason the holy Prophet (pbuh) has displayed his closeness to Ali (A.S) and Hussain (A.S) in following words:

- "He created **me and Ali** from the **same light**".

*(Ref: Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Fadail, volume 2, p 663, Tradition #1130, from Abdur-Razzak, from Mu'amar, from al-Zuhri, from Khalid ibn Mu'dan, from Zadan, from Salman al-Farsi, Mizan Al-Ei'tidal, by al-Dhahabi, v1, p235, al-Riyadh al-Nadhirah, by al-Muhib al-Tabari, v2, p164, v3, p154, History of Ibn Asakir)*

- He has also said that "**I am from Husain and Husain is from me**"

*(Ref: Sahih Tirmizi, vol 6, P 307, Kanzul Ammal, vol 4, P 221, Masnad Ahmed, vol 4 P 972)*

**Our third inference was that they need to be infallible to be a perfect guide.** Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi, a grand Islamic Scholar writes in his tafseer while referring to ayah 59 of Surah-e-Nisa:

"The type of obedience that Allah (SWT) has ordered is unconditional obedience. **It must relate to that individual who is infallible.** If he was fallible and could do mistakes, then would Allah (SWT) be telling us to follow such a person and adhere to him? Allah (SWT) tells us to follow the Ulul Amr unconditionally. **He must be infallible, a fact that is testified to by this verse**". *(Ref: Tafseer al Kabir Volume 3 page 243)*

And Quran confirms about their piety in the following words:

- "**Ae Paighambar ki Ahl-ul-bait Khuda to buss yeh chahta hai ke tum ko har tarah ki burai se door rakkhe aur itna paak rakkhe jitna paak rakhne ka haq hai**" - (Surah-e-Ahzab, Ayah 33)

*("Verily, Verily Allah intendeth but to **keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O ye people of the House, and purify you with a thorough purification.**")*

Thus it is **Allah's Will that the people of household (Ahl-ul-bait) remain purified** from all kind of uncleanness and thus **they are ofcourse infallible** as per the above ayah. *(Ref: Tafseer Durr-e- Mansoor, Mulla Jalaluddin Suyuti, Vol 5, P 198-199).*

We were able to establish all the 3 inferences about the Ulul Amr and we have rightly recognized them now. Let us see few more ayahs that would support and substantiate our claim.

**In the ayah no. 3 from Surah-e-Airaf** – which has been mentioned in the earlier section - **Allah (SWT) has given clear instructions to follow whatever has been revealed** and not to follow other guardians. Now let us see the following ayah and try to contemplate on both the ayahs:

- *“Ae Rasool jo hukm tumhare Parvardigar ki taraf se tum per naazil kiya gaya hai pahoncha do. Aur agar tum ne aisa nahin kiya to samjhlo tum ne Us ka koi paigham hi nahin pahonchaya aur tum daro nahin Khuda tum ko logon ke shar se mahfooz rakhe gaa aur Khuda hargiz kafiron ki qaum ko manzil e maqsood tak nahin pahonchata.” – (Surah-e-Maeda, ayah 67)*

*“(O Apostle! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.)”*

This ayah was revealed at Ghadeer-e-Khum, when the holy Prophet (pbuh) was returning from his last Hajj. (Ref: Tafseer al Kabir by Fakhr al Din Mohammed ibn Umar al razi (1357/1938), Umdatul Qari fi Sharh Sahih al Bukhari - by Al Ayni, Tafsir al Nisaburi, v6 P194)

And at this point he announced **“Man Kunto Maula fa hazaa Ali-un Mawla”** in front of the huge gathering of 120000 Muslims. (Ref: Sahih Tirmizi, V2, P298, Bukhari, V5, Book 59).

**The message of “Man Kunto Mawla...” was revealed to the holy Prophet (pbuh) which was needed to be delivered.** Thus **Mawla Ali (A.S) is the Ulul Amr** and for establishing his authority the ayah was revealed and Allah (SWT) has given lots of indications in Quran in this regard.

That is why Allah says in the following ayah:

- *“Ae Imaandaro tumhare **malik sarparast** to buss yehi hain **Khuda** aur uss ka **Rasool (SAW)** aur **wo momineen** jo pabandi se namaz adaa karte hai **aur haalat-e-ruku main zakat dete hai...**” – (Surah-e-Maeda, Ayah 55)*

*“(Verily your leader is only Allah and His messenger and those who believe; those who establish worship **and pay the poor-rate while they bow down in prayer.**)”*

Thus Allah (SWT) confirms that there is the third authority that needs to be followed explicitly in the above ayah.

There are various references available of prominent Islamic commentators who are unanimous in their opinion that the above ayah refers to Mawla Ali when he gave his **ring to a beggar while bowing down in the ‘ruku’**. (Ref: Imam Nasai in Saheeh-e-Nasai, Aljam’a Bain-ul-Sihah-ul-Sittah, Sa’labi)

Tradition from Hazrat Abu Dharr al Ghaffari says that one day he was praying with the holy Prophet (pbuh) when a beggar approached them in the mosque. No one responded to his pleas. Beggar then raised his hands towards heavens and said, **“Allah! Be a witness that I came to Thy Prophet's mosque and no one gave me anything”**. At that time Mawla Ali (A.S) was bowing in *Ruku*, he pointed his little finger, which had a ring on it, towards the beggar who came forward and took the ring. The holy Prophet (pbuh) raised his hands towards heaven and prayed then in following words:

"O Lord! my brother Moses had begged of Thee to open his breast and to make his work easy for him, to loose the knot of his tongue so that people might understand him, and to appoint from among his relations his brother, as his successor, and to strengthen his back with Aaron and to make Aaron his partner in his work. O Allah! Thou said to Moses, 'We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother. No one will now have an access to either of you!' **O Allah! I am Muhammad and Thou hast given me distinction**. Open my breast for me, make my work easy for me, and from my family **appoint my brother Ali as my vizier**. **Strengthen my back with him**".

It is mentioned in the tradition that even before the holy Prophet (pbuh) could finish his prayers the above mentioned ayah was revealed by Gabriel (A.S) establishing **Mawla Ali (A.S) as a guardian over the Muslim World**.

In the beginning of this article we referred ayah 19 from Surah-e-Mujjadala which has said that **the party of Satan is the party of losers**. Now let us see ayah no. 56 from Surah-e-Maeda, which is a subsequent ayah to the above mentioned ayah which we just discussed:

- *“Aur jisne Khuda aur Rasool (SAW) aur unhi Imaadaro ko apna sarparast banaya to Khuda ke lashkar main aagaya aur issme shak nahin ke Khuda hi ka lashkar ghalib rehta hai.” – (Surah-e-Maeda, Ayah 56)*

*“(And whoever takes Allah and His apostle and **those who believe for a guardian**, then **surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant.**)”*

Along with Allah (SWT) & our holy Prophet (pbuh) if we consider **Mawla Ali (A.S) as our guardian we enter Allah's triumphant party**. If someone does not follow all of them, **he is at risk of joining the Satan's party of losers**.

By pondering upon various ayahs, the holy Quran has helped us in identifying the true Ulul Amr – Mawla Ali (A.S) and Ahl-ul-bait. Let us now see some of the hadith and other references by leading Islamic Scholars in this regard:

- It is narrated by Mawla Ali (A.S) that when he asked the holy Prophet (pbuh) about who were Ulul Amr, the Prophet (pbuh) replied that: "**You (Ali) are the first of them**". (Ref: *Shawahid Tanzil, Vol. 1, p. 148*)
- The ayah no. 59 Surah-e-Nisa, referring to Ulul Amr was revealed to establish the **authority of Mohammed wa aale Mohammed** as per the tradition of Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari (Ref: *Rowzatul Ahabab page 134-135, Vol II*).
- The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: "The Ulul Amr from the Ahl-ul-Bait (as) are **pure and inerrant. They never disobey any of Allah's (SWT) order and are always guided and supported by Him**. Their deeds are free from all forms of deviation, and their feet are firmly planted on His Straight Path. **It is through the blessed existence of these great ones that Allah's (SWT) servants receive their sustenance, cities become prosperous, and the rainfall descends**. The Ruh-ul-Qudus (A.S) always accompanies them, and there is never any separation between them and the Qur'an". (Ref: *Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi, Vol. 23, p. 19.*)
- In the 77<sup>th</sup> chapter of Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah of al-Hafiz Sulaiman ibn Ibrahim al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi, the author quotes many traditions to the effect that the holy Prophet (pbuh) has said: "**I, Ali, Hassan, Hussain and nine of the descendants of Hussain are pure and sinless.**"

The author in the same book writes that the holy Prophet (pbuh) has told this to Hussain (A.S) that "You are a chief, brother of a chief; you are an Imam, son of an Imam, brother of an Imam; **you are Proof (of Allah), son of a Proof (of Allah), brother of a Proof (of Allah), and father of nine Proofs (of Allah), the ninth of whom will be al-Mahdi.**"

With all the inferences and references we can conclude that **Ulul Amr are Mawla Ali (A.S) and 11 other Imams from his lineage**. They are **the authority above us** and we need to follow them to be guided.

When we follow the advice of coaches and tutors we improve our performance in that specific field and at times we might attain expertise if we diligently obey them. So let us see what we gain if we follow and obey Ulul Amr? As Quran says in the following two ayahs:

- "**Beshak jo log imaan laye achhe kaam karte rahe yahi log bahtereen khalayaq hain.**" – (Surah-e-Bayyina, ayah 7)  
 "((As for) those who believe and do good, surely **they are the -best of men.**)"
- "**Khuda un se raazi aur wo Khuda se khush.**" - (Surah-e-Bayyina, ayah 8)  
 "**(Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him)**"

The above two ayahs talk about few chosen believers **who are good in their deeds**. They are **the best people** and are pleased with Allah and even **Allah is pleased with them**.

It is mentioned in Durr-e-Mansoor that the above **two ayahs were revealed in the praise of Mawla Ali (A.S) and his followers**. (Ref: Durr-e-Mansoor, vol 6, P 379)

Thus if we want that our deeds be accepted by Allah (SWT) and wish to seek **His nearness we need to follow and obey Ulul Amr – Imam Ali (A.S) and be guided the way Allah (SWT) wants us to be**.

Here I am tempted now to mention a couplet from a well-known Qawwali written by Hazrat Amir Khusro:

***“Ali imam-e-manasto manam ghulaam-e-Ali”***

*“(Ali is the master of all, I am the slave of Ali)”*

***“Hazaar jaan-e-giraami fidaa-e-naam-e-Ali”***

*“(Thousands lives are to be sacrificed in the name of Ali)”*

And with the beautiful excerpt of a dua of Sahifa-e-Kamila, let me pray for all of us :

“O My Lord! Bless Muhammad (SAW) and his Household with a permanent, ever-growing blessing, whose perpetuity has no cutting off and whose term knows no limit, and make that a help to me and a cause for the granting of my request!

Thou art Boundless, Generous” Aamin.