

Baab ur Rehmat

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

It is a matter of pure common sense to enter a house or a premise through its door, yet The Quran chose to assert this in the form of the following ayah:

وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝

- (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 189)

“(And go into the houses by **their doors** and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, that **you may be successful**.”

Why such an ordinary phenomenon had to take the form of a Quranic verse? Was the Almighty Allah wanting us to look for a specific door? A **begger** gets his needs fulfilled through **the door of his donor**. A **person finds entry into a house only through its door**. Thus we may say that the door symbolizes fulfillment.

Thus it seems **that Quran is asking us to seek that door which would lead us to the fulfillment of needs with the limitless bounties of Allah (SWT) and eventually would help us succeed as the above ayah suggests at the end.**

→ In this article let us reflect upon few more ayahs of Quran and ask the Almighty to help us reach the **‘door of success’** which He (SWT) has hinted in the above ayah.

Our Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is the bridge between Allah (SWT) and the *Ummah*. His pious presence amidst us has given access to the limitless bounties of the Almighty. He (pbuh&hp) is the appointee of Allah (SWT) who has guided us to the right path. The Quran has ordered us to obey him in the following ayah:

- “Haan jo tumko Rasool (SAWW) de dein woh le liya karo aur jisse mana karein usse **baaz raho**.” - (Sural-e-Al Hashr, ayah 7)

“(And whatever **the Messenger has given you – take; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from**)”

In order to remain steadfast we are expected to accept whatever the Prophet (pbuh&hp) has given us and should abstain from the forbidden things. Thus obedience to the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is the parameter of a true believer. In the following ayah Allah (SWT) instructs the Prophet (pbuh&hp) to appoint his successor:

- “To jab tum farigh ho jao **to muqarrar kar do** aur phir apne Parwardigar ki taraf raghat karo.” – (Surah-Ash Sharh, 7-8)

“(So when you finish, appoint and return to your Lord)”

Most of the translators of this verse have used the meaning of the word ‘*faansub*’ as ‘*toil*’ or ‘*strive*’ which logically does not make sense. If we use the meaning as ‘*toil*’ the ayah would be – ‘*So when you finish, toil...*’. Why would Allah (SWT) order the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) to toil once he has successfully finished his work?

While the more appropriate meaning of the word ‘*faansub*’ can be ‘*Nominate*’ or ‘*Appoint*’ in this context. Once the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) had successfully finished his job he was asked to ‘appoint’ or ‘nominate’ his successor and a leader after him for the Ummah.

Allah (SWT) further informs the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) on the importance of delivering the message to the *Ummah* in this ayah:

- “*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 Uss 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-Maida, 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 non-believing people.”)

The message was so important that, had the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) not delivered it, it would be as if he had not delivered any of Allah (SWT)’s messages. It is expected from a Muslim to accept this Divine Order to remain a true believer and not to reject it lest he be considered as a ‘non-believer’.

The above ayah was revealed at *Ghadeer-e-Khum* when the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) was returning to Medina after offering 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 Nisaboori, v6 P194*)

After the revelation of this ayah the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) declared to the gathering of around 1.2 lacs pilgrims that Mawla Ali (A.S) as his successor and Imam of the Ummah and announced the message of “*Man Kunto Mawla fa hazaa Ali un-Mawla*”. (Ref: *Sahih Tirmizi, V2, P298, Bukhari, V5, Book 59*).

Belief in the *Imamat* and Divine Guardianship of Mawla Ali (as) is a strong parameter of faith of a believer. Whoever believes in his guardianship is a *momin* and whoever rejects is the non-believer. We might say that love for Imam Ali (as) is the door to the right faith. Hence after the announcement of the above message the following ayah was revealed.

- *Aaj Maine tumhare deen ko kaamil kardiya aur tum per apni ne’mat पूरी kardi aur tumhare iss Deen-e-Islam ko pasand kiya.*” – (Surah-e-Maida, ayah 3)

“(This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.)

Hazrat Abu Sa'eed al-Khidri has narrated that this verse descended upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) at *Ghadeer-e-Khum* when he declared that Ali (as) was the leader of whomever he was the leader. *Abu Hurairah* has also narrated it and further said that it was revealed on 18th of the month of *Dhul Hajj* when the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) returned from *Hajj al Widah* (the last pilgrimage). (Ref: *Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Vol 2, P 14, Egypt, Tafseer Durr e Mansoor, Vol 2, P 259, Egypt*).

Allah (SWT) **perfected the religion** and **completed His favours** upon mankind on the declaration of the **Imamat of Imam Ali (as)**.

Before we conclude this section let us see the views of Islamic scholars on the importance of *Wilayah* of Imam Ali (as) in Islam:

- Imam Rabbani - *Shaykh Ahmed Sarhandi* believed in the exalted rank of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (as) he wrote:

“O Brother! Indeed Imam Ali is the holder of the keys of *Wilayah* of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh&hp) and the training regime for the status of *Aqtaab, Autaad* and *Abdaal* who are from amongst the reserved *awliyah*, is done under the shelter of his *Wilayah*. **Qutbul Aqtaab who is the greatest Qutb and the guide and mentor of others lies under his (Ali (as))’s feet.** His orders are issued under the supervision and support of Ali (as) and he performs his duties under the supervision and support of Ali (as) and fulfills his tasks. **Syeda Fatima (sa) and both of her sons, the Imams (Hasan and Hussein) (pbut) share this rank with Ali (as).** (Ref: *Maktubaat Imam Rabbani, Volume 1, page 438 Letter 251*)

- Deobandi scholar *Shah Ismail Shaheed* says:

“Hazrat Murtuza (pbuh) has a proven edge of merit over the *Shaykhan* namely his **greater number of adherents.** Besides that, the status of *Wilayah*, rather *Qutbiyat*, *Ghauthiat* and *Abdaliyat* and others like these flow from him. **His share in the wealth of the wealthy and lordship of the lords isn’t hidden from the disciples of spiritualism.**” (Ref: *Siraat e Mustaqeem, pages 115-116 (Islami Academy Lahore)*)

➔ The holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) blessed us with the gift of *Imamat* of Imam Ali (as). It is a **door to the perfect religion**. It is a **door to the complete favour** of Almighty Allah (SWT). Thus ignoring and rejecting this divine gift is to be deprived of all these limitless bounties of the Almighty Allah (SWT).

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said that – “*Whosoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the ignorance (Jahiliyyah).*” This makes it important for us to know our Imams and understand their right above us. Let us begin this section with the following ayah of *Surah-e-Baqra*:

- “(Ae Rasool) Bani Israeel ko woh waqt bhi yaad dilao jab ***Ibrahim ko unnke Parvardigar ne chand baaton mein aazmaya aur unhone pura kar diya to Khuda ne farmaya mein tumko (logon ka) Imam banane wala hoon (Ibrahim ne) arz ki aur***

meri aulaad mein se, farmaya (haan magar) Mere iss ahad par zaalimon mein se koi shakhs faayiz nahin ho sakta.” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 124)

*“(And when **his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.)”***

As per the ayah Ibrahim (as) was bestowed upon *Imamat* as a gift of the Almighty once he fulfilled his trial successfully. Ibrahim (as) prayed to have *Imamat* in his lineage which Allah (SWT) accepted but put on a condition that the unjust people would not be included even if they were from his lineage.

Thus the ayah has confirmed that **the Imams would be from the lineage of Ibrahim (as) only.** It further indicates that **they would be successful during trials and would always be just in their action.**

Allamah *Dr. Tahir ul Qadri* in his book ‘*Zibeh-e-Azeem*’ pages 41-42 comments on the supplication of Ibrahim (as) and *Imamat* in the following manner:

- “Ibrahim (as) supplicated twice, firstly of that was ‘**O Allah (SWT) provide the Seal of Prophets from my lineage**’ and second one was ‘**Provide the position of *Imamat* to my *Ummah***’. Thus, the Seal of Prophets appeared in the shape of Muhammad al Mustafa (SAWW). With Prophethood ending on Muhammad (SAWW) **it was obligatory that the station of Muhammad (SAWW)’s Prophethood appear and move forward in the shape of *Imamat* and *Wilayath*.** *Wilayath* then appeared in the lineage of Hazrat Ibrahim (as). **The Prophet (SAWW) did not have a natural son,** which is why it was necessary for it to be continued by a revered and respected family, those that may not be the natural son of the Prophet (SAWW) but should be the body part of the Prophet (SAWW). **Therefore, Allah (SWT) focussed on Hazrat Ali (as) and the beloved daughter of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) – Fatima al Zahra (sa), Leader of the Women of Paradise for the same exalted position .**

In order to further cement our inference on the rights of the Imam above us let us see the following two ayahs:

- “*Aur jo haq jihad karne ka hai **Khuda ki raah main jihad karo, Usi ne tumko barguzida kiya aur amur e deen main tum per kisi tarah ki sakhti nahin ki tumhare baap Ibrahim (A.S) ke mazhab ko tumhara mazhab bana diya hai. Usi Khuda ne tumhara pehle hi se musalman farmabardar bande naam rakkha aur iss Quran main bhi. To jihad karo taake Rasool (SAW) tumhare muqable main gawah bane aur tum pabandi se namaz padha karo, zakaat dete raho aur Khuda hi ke ahkaam ko mazboot pakdo wahi tumhara sarparast hai to kya achha sarparast hai aur kya achha madadgaar hai.***” - (Surah-e-Al Hajj, ayah 78)

“(And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you a hardship in religion; the faith of your father Ibrahim; He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; therefore,

keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper!)”

- *“Aur usi tarah tum ko aadil ummat banaya taake aur logon ke muqable main tum gawah bano aur Rasool (SAW) tumhare muqable main gawah bane....” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 143)*

“(And thus We have made you a just nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you.)”

The ayah 78 of *Al Hajj* is addressed to the chosen servant of Allah (SWT) other than the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp). He was ordered to strive hard on the path of Allah (SWT). He is Muslim by birth and **born in the lineage of Ibrahim (as). The holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is a bearer of witness to him and he is a bearer of witness to the mankind.**

While the ayah 143 of *Surah-e-Baqra* mentioned above is addressed to a **group of people who are ‘just’ in their conduct.** Allah (SWT) has chosen them to be **the witness to the mankind.** **The holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is the bearer of witness on them.** Allah (SWT) made a promise to Ibrahim (as) that He would place Imams in his lineage provided they were ‘just’ in their conduct. **Thus this ayah is referring to the Imams from the lineage of Ibrahim (as). They are appointed witness on to the mankind.**

It has been recorded by *Salim-bin-Qais* that Mawla Ali (as) has mentioned that – **“We are ‘Ummat-e-aadil’ (Just people) and bearer of witness to the people.** And **the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is our witness”.** (Ref: *Shawahid Tanzil, Hakim Abul Qasim*).

Quran in the following ayah endorses our inference that Imams would be our witness on the day of Judgement:

- *‘Uss din ko yaad karo jab Hum tamam logon ko unke Imamon ke saath bulayenge.’ – (Surah-e-Bani Israel, ayah 71)*

“((Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam.”

In the court of Allah (SWT) we would be called under the guardianship of our Imams. Imams from the lineage of Ibrahim (as) are ‘just’ in their conduct and are the rightful Imams. They have strived hard on the path of Allah (SWT) and have fulfilled all their duties and obligations with Allah (SWT). They are the bearer of witness to the mankind. If we recognize and follow them, we would remain steadfast on the true path while we live and can be hopeful of our salvation after our death.

- Our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp) has explained the importance of *Imamat* by saying this to Imam Ali (as) that: **“O Ali you will be the distributor of Heaven and Hell - you will say to Hell: “This one is for thee and that one for me.”**

The following references would further help us recognize the true Imams and their importance:

- In *Sawaiq al Mohraiqah*, page 513 & 514 a tradition is mentioned by *Hakim* according to which the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said that – “**The stars help prevent the inhabitants of the earth from being drowned, and my Ahlul-Bayt is the protector of my community against disputes.** Therefore, whichever groups among the Arabs opposes my Ahlul-Bayt, shall be split up by dissensions and will become (a party of) Satan.”
- The Islamic scholar *Shah Ismail Shaheed* has written about the importance of Imams in the following manner

“The Imam is the representative of the Prophet, it is through them that the mission of Prophet is completed, so that the people are provided with the opportunity to redeem themselves, otherwise Allah (SWT) would have no grounds for punishing sinners.”

- The grand Mufti of Constantinople (Qustantinya), and the Chief Justice of Ottoman Caliphate, *Shaykh Suleiman Qundozi al-Hanafi* records this narration in *Yanabi al-Muwaddat*, chapter 76, pages 685-686:

Hamwayni reports from *Mujahid* who narrates from *Ibe Abbas* that a Jew named *Na'thal* came to Prophet (SAWW) and after asking about *Tauhid* and *Nabuwat*, he said: “Let me know about your successor; who is the person? Every Prophet does have a successor. Our Prophet Musa bin Imran (as) had nominated Yoshe' bin Nun as his successor.” Prophet (SAWW) replied: “**My successor is Ali ibne Abi Talib.** After him **my two grandsons Hasan and Hussein.** **And then nine Imams from the progeny of Hussein.**”

The Jew said: “O Muhammad! Let me know their names.” Prophet (SAWW) replied: “When Hussein passes away, **his son Ali will be Imam,** and after him, **his son Muhammad will be the Imam,** and he will be succeeded by **his son Ja'far** and **after him, his son Musa will be the Imam.** After Musa's demise **his son Ali will be the Imam** and after Ali **his son Muhammad will be the Imam,** and after him, **his son Ali will be the Imam,** and **after Ali his son Hasan will be the Imam** who will be **followed by his son Mehdi. These are the twelve.**” The Jew said: “Let me know about the deaths of Ali, Hasan and Hussein.” Prophet [saww] replied: “Ali will be struck on his head and martyred, Hasan will be poisoned, whereas Hussein will be slaughtered.” The Jew asked: “What will be their destiny?” Prophet [saww] replied: **“They will at my status in paradise.”**

- *Mufti Ghulam Rasool* from ‘*Daar-ul-Uloom Qadriya Jilaniya*, London’ is a modern day Hanafi scholar. He writes in one of his books – *Imam Zain-ul-Abdeen*, pages 76-77 (Published in London):

“Among the 12 Imams of Ahlubayt the first one is **Hazrat Maula Ali**, then **Hazrat Imam Hasan, Imam Hussain, Imam Zain-ul-Abdeen, Imam Baqir, Imam Jafar Sadiq, Imam Musa Kazim, Imam Ali Raza, Imam Muhamad Taqi, Imam Naqi, Imam Hasan Askari and then Imam Mahdi** who will come before Qiyamah. **These Imams of Ahlubayt are the Imams of Tareeqat, Wilayat and the religion of Islam**”.

→ In *Ghadeer e Khum*, with the announcement of the sermon of ‘*Man kunto Mawla fa hazaa Aliyun Mawla...*’ our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp) not only blessed us with the *Imamat* of Imam Ali (as) but it was the announcement of *Imamat* of 12 Imams starting from Imam Ali (as) to Imam Mehdi (as). **They are appointed witness above us. Under their leadership we would be summoned in the court of Allah. Hence they are the straight path we need to follow to remain guided.** They are a **door to the right faith** and thus **a door to the guidance.**

I saw a video recently in which a cleric was trying to convince a group of audience that the hadith – “**I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate**” is fabricated by the followers and lovers of Imam Ali (as). He claimed that it is not the authentic hadith since it is not mentioned in any of the 6 books of authentic ahadith (*Sihah Sittah*). But *Jalaluddin Suyuti* in his work *Tarikh-al-Khulefa* p 170 has mentioned the same hadith quoting *Sahih Tirmizi*; which is one of the prominent books from *Sihah Sittah*.

He writes that *Tirmizi* and *Hakim* have quoted on the authority of Ali (as) that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him has said: ‘**I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.**’ This means that hadith was mentioned in the older editions of *Sahih Tirmizi* but was removed from the later editions.

This *hadith* is indeed present with the exact stated wording in al-Hakim's *Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn*, vol. 3, pp. 126-7.

However, the current editions of the *Sahih Tirmizi* p 141 have the *hadith* ‘**I am the house of wisdom and 'Ali is its door'**’.

→ Thus the *Imamate* is **the door to the Divine Knowledge** as well as **the door to Divine Wisdom** and whoever fails to recognize these righteous Imams and their rights, remains an ignorant and dies the death of a ‘*Jahiliyyah*’

The Quran starts with the verse “*Bismillah hir Rahman nir Raheem - In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.*” This is the most repeated verse in entire Quran; it is repeated more than 100 times. With this repetition Allah (SWT) wants us to have faith in His Mercy and Grace which we need for our salvation.

In the praise of our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp), the holy Quran says that *he has been sent as a Mercy to the Worlds* - (*Surah-e-Ambiya, ayah 107*):

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

We can infer after reflecting on above ayahs that **Allah (SWT) bestows His Mercy on both the worlds through the intercession of our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp)**, whoever had loved the Prophet (pbuh&hp) and followed his path would become worthy of his intercession and reach Allah's Mercy. Let us see the following ayah from *Surah-e-Sa'afat* now:

- *Khuda ko chhod kar jin ki parastish karte hain unko sabko ikattha karo phir unhain Jahannum ki raah dekhao aur haan zara unhain thehrao to un se kuch poochna hai.* – (Surah-e-Sa'afat, ayah 23-24)

*“(Gather together those who were unjust and their associates, and what they used to worship besides Allah, and lead them to the Way to the (Fierce) Fire! **“But stop them, for they must be asked.”***”

The ayah is divided into two parts. The first part is the instruction to gather together those who were unjust and indulged in 'Shirk'. **They were to be shown the way to the Hell fire.** But in the second part Allah (SWT) changes His Decision to lead them to Hell fire and instead He **wanted to ask them something.**

Our reflection on the above ayah might lead us to the following questions & inferences:

- ✓ The sinners **who have indulged in 'Shirk' are not worthy of Allah (SWT)'s attention.** Their destination is Hell so what made Allah (SWT) to change His decision of punishing them straight away? **And what is so important that Allah (SWT) is ready to talk to such unworthy sinners?**
- ✓ If they answer correctly to whatever is being asked to them? **Would their punishment be revoked or eased out?**
- ✓ Whatever Allah (SWT) wanted to ask **must be one of the most important aspect of faith** since the sinners have indulged in 'Shirk'.

Abu Saeed Khudri on the authority of *Ibn-e-Abbas* has quoted a tradition that the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said that on the day of Judgment **people would be questioned about Wilaya of Ali Ibne Abi Talib and love for him.** (Ref: *Sawaiqe Mohraiqa P 503, Allama Ibn-e-Hajar, Riyadh al Nadira Volume 2 page 116, Mohib Tabari*).

Shah Ismail Shaheed in his *Mansab e Imamat* says: “Imam has such authority in this world and the next that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) had said ‘Don't I have more rights over the people than they have over themselves, to which the people replied in affirmative. **The Prophet then said ‘Of whomsoever I am Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.’** And this is why Allah (SWT) says in the Quran that on the Day of Judgment **you will be summoned with your**

Imam and questioned (Surah-e-Sa'afat) and the Prophet said that you will be asked about the Wilayat of Ali. (Ref: Mansab-e-Imamat, Page 109-110, Shah Ismail Shaheed).

The Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said about the followers of Imam Ali (as) and his pious household:

- “**My intercession will avail those people from my community who love my household.**” - (Ref: Kanz-ul-ammal, hadith no. 39057)
- “**My Ahlulbayt (as) is the Gate of Hitta (repentance) of Bani Israel. Whoever entered that door got salvation** and who did not enter was destroyed.”
- “**Behold! My Ahlulbayt (as) are like the Ark of Noah. Whoever embarked in it was saved,** and whoever turned away from it was perished.”
- “**Followers of Ali would surely succeed**” – (Ref: Yanabe-ul-mowaddat, vol 2 P 312, Kareeb Minal lafaz fi tazkirtul khawaas, P 56)
- “O Ali! As per the order of God, I give these tidings that **your friends will be rewarded in Heaven and your enemies are doomed for Hell.**” - (Ref: Yanabi-al-Mowaddat (Bombay Edition, P 107)

➔ Allah (SWT) is the Most Merciful while the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is Mercy to the Worlds and hence the appointed intercession for Allah's Mercy. *Imamat* of Imam Ali (as) is such an important aspect of the faith that the *Ummah* would be questioned about it on the day of Judgement. **Intercession** of the holy Prophet **would benefit** only to those **who have loved Imam Ali (as) and rest of the Imams from his household.** Thus the **Imamat is the door for the Mercy - Baab ur Rehmat** which was shown to us in *Ghadeer e Khum* by our Prophet in his last and final sermon.

➔ Finally we may conclude that **the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is the Source of limitless bounties** of Allah (SWT) and **Imamat of Imam Ali (as) and the rest of the 11 Imams is the Door to this Source.** When we love them and follow their teachings we come nearer to Allah's Bounties and **hence Imamat is the door to Success.** In the *ayah no 189 of Surah-e-Baqra*, which has been mentioned in the introductory section, Allah (SWT) wants us to strive to find this door and be worthy of his Bounties and succeed in both the worlds.