

Kalima Tayyiba

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri

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

While reciting the Holy Quran I came across the following ayah which refers to the term – Kalima Tayyiba. Experts have defined this as ‘Pure and Good’ words.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

- (Surah-e-Fatir, ayah 10)

“(Whoever desires honour (should remember) that all honour is with Allah. All Kalima Tayyiba ascend to Him, and all good deeds He exalts.)”

While explaining the above verse Farman Ali Saheb mentions in his footnote that all good and pure words ascend to Allah (SWT) and they are accepted by Him. There is no further explanation or clarification given by him on this. Hence it can be safely inferred that every pure and correct word that has ability to ascend to Allah (SWT) is a part of Kalima Tayyiba. Simply put we can say that every pure word that gives nearness to Allah (SWT) is a part of Kalima Tayyiba.

→ Kalima Tayyiba encompasses a vast terminology but by way of pondering upon various ayahs we can strive to find those specific pure words in the holy Quran that Allah (SWT) has liked. If we wish to seek His nearness and want our good deeds to be exalted we should embellish our gatherings and conversations with these Kalima. Hence let us begin our search.

In the ayah no. 6-7 of *Surah-e-Hamd*, the first surah of the holy Quran, we urge Allah (SWT) to guide us to the straight path. This is a path taken by the few chosen faithful believers of Allah (SWT) upon whom Allah (SWT) has bestowed His favours. And with this verse Allah (SWT) has left us to ponder and contemplate to find a way to His straight path and be amongst His chosen servants. Thus He says:

- “Ae Imaandaro Khuda se darte raho aur Uss ke (takarrub (kareeb hone) ke) zariye ki joostaju main raho aur Uss ki raah main jihad karo taake tum kamiyaab ho jao.” – (Surah-e-Maida, ayah 35)

“(O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek **the means [of nearness] to Him** and strive in His cause that you may succeed.)”- (Surah-e-Maida, ayah 35)

Here Allah (SWT) wants His believers to strive for the means of His nearness. Relating this with the ayah of *Surah-e-Hamd*, we can say that we might get Allah (SWT)’s nearness if we strive for the **straight path taken by His chosen faithful believers**. Hence we might infer

that **under the guardianship of these chosen believers we may rest assured about remaining steadfast on the straight path and be nearer to Allah (SWT).** But what if we falter in choosing our guardians?:

- “*Aur jin logon ne Khuda ke siwa (auron ko apna) sarparast bana rakha hai **aur kehte hain ke hum to unki parastish sirf issliye karte hain ki ye log Khuda ki bargaah main hamara takarrub badha denge** iss main shak nahin ki jis baat main ye log jhagadte hain (qayamat ke din) Khuda unke darmiyan issmain faisla kar dega beshak **Khuda jhoote na shukre ko manzile maqsud tak nain pahonchaya karta.**” – (Surah-e-Zumr, ayah 3)*

“(And (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying), **We do not serve them save that they may make us nearer to Allah,** surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely **Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful.**)”-

In the ayah no. 35 from *Surah-e-Maida* Allah (SWT) has instructed us to strive to seek the means of His nearness while in the above ayah from *Surah-e-Zumr*, He has cautioned us against choosing our own guardians to seek His nearness. Logically we can say that the **means of His nearness is also chosen by Allah (SWT) Himself** and He hasn't empowered us to choose our own guardians as this might lead us astray. This point can be further proved by the following ayah:

- “*Aur tumhara Parwardigaar jo chahta hai paida karta hai **aur (jise chahta hai) muntakhab karta hai aur yeh intekhaab logon ke ikhtiyar 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.**)”

He has created the chosen believers as the rightful guardians upon us and only through them we can seek Allah's nearness. What remains for us hence is to find and identify these guardians if we wish to remain nearer to the Almighty.

→ Thus we may infer that if we believe in the guardianship of these duly chosen guardians we achieve nearness to Allah (SWT). Their conduct and virtues should be inspirational lessons for us and hence **embellishing our gatherings by mentioning them would be part of *Kalima Tayyiba***. But not choosing the right guardians may lead us away from the Almighty's proximity and towards disgrace and punishment.

The above mentioned inference would be proved as we progress with our article. In the mean time let us try to further ponder upon ayahs to understand the divine guardianship. We would contemplate on the following ayah which was revealed during the gathering of Ghadir-e-Khum:

- “*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-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 unbelieving people.**”)*

After the revelation of the above ayah, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) raised Hazrat Ali (as) and announced “***Man Kunto Mawla ho fa hazaa Ali un Mawla***” at Ghadeer-e-Khum in front of the Haj pilgrims. And with this revelation **Allah (SWT) appointed Hazrat Ali** as **Prophet (SAWW)’s successor** and **‘Vali’ (Guardian)** over the *ummah*.

(Ref: Durr-e-Mansoor, Vol 2, P 298, Egypt, Tafseer-e-Fatah ul Qadeer, Vol 2, P 60, Egypt, Tafseer-e-Fatah ul Bayun, Vol 3, P 89, Egypt, Tafseer Mazhari, Vol 3, P 353, Daarul Isha’t Karachi, Sawaiq e Mohraika, P 40 & 120, Sunan e Tirmidhi, Vol 2, P 298 and many more)

A close observation of the above ayah reveals that it ends with a statement :

- **Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.**

While *Surah-e-Zumr*, ayah 3 ends with the statement:

- **Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful.**

Thus from these two ayahs the result which we get is – **A person who rejects the call of Man Kunto Mawlaho fa hazaa Aliyun Mawla is a non-believer.** To remain a believer he needs to believe in the guardianship of Imam Ali (as). **But if he believes in the guardianship of someone else apart from Imam Ali (as), he is a liar and ungrateful person as per the holy Quran.**

Subsequent to the announcement of the leadership of Imam Ali (as) at Ghadir-e-Khum the following ayah was revealed:

- “*Aaj Maine tumhare din ko kaamil kardiya aur **tum per apni ne’mat poori 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.**”)*

Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri has narrated that this verse was revealed on the day of Ghadir e Khum when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) declared that Ali (as) was the leader of whom ever he was the leader. Abu Hurairah has also narrated this and has said that this verse was revealed on 18th

of the month of Dhul-Haj when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) returned from Hujjat al-Widah (the last pilgrimage).

(Ref: *Durr-e-Mansoor, Jalalluddin Suyuti, V3, P 19, Tafseer Ibn Katheer, volume 2, page 14, Tarikh by Khatib al Baghdadi, V8 P 290, 596, Yanabi-al-Mawaddah from Abu Hureira by Al-Qudoozi Al-Hanafi*).

The holy Prophet (SAWW) said about the guardianship of Mawla Ali (as):

- “Allah is Great on the perfection of religion, **completion of bounties and Allah’s satisfaction with my messengership and Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.)’s mastership after me.**” – (Ref: *Tirmizi, Nisaa'i, Hakim Neshapuri, Ahmad-e-Hanbal, Tabari*)

→ *Kalima Tayyiba* is that which brings honour to us and Allah (SWT)’s nearness. On the guardianship of Imam Ali (as) the religion is perfected and Allah graces us with His limitless favours. The belief in the *wilaya* of Imam Ali (as) is essential for us to remain a believer and a grateful servant of Allah (SWT). Hence acknowledgement of **Mawla Ali’s Wilaya is Kalima Tayyiba which we need to believe in.**

In order to further substantiate our above result let us see the following ayah. But before that let us return to *Surah-e-Zumr - (ayah 3)* which was mentioned in the earlier section which conveys that Allah (SWT) dislikes those who take others besides Allah (SWT) as their guardian, claiming that these guardians would bring nearness to the Almighty. **Thus Allah (SWT) does not like that the believers should consider someone else beside Him as their guardian.** Keeping this in mind let us see the following ayahs:

- “*Ae Imaandaro tumhare vali (malik sarparast) to buss yehi hein Khuda aur uss ka Rasool (SAW) aur wo momineen jo pabandi se namaz adaa karte hain aur haalat-e-ruku main zakat dete hai. “Aur jisne Khuda aur Rasool (SAW) aur unhi Imaadaron 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 55-56)

“(Verily your Vali (Guardian) 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. 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)”

As per the ayah, **Muslims have 3 ‘Vali’ (guardians) above them.** They are Allah (SWT), the Holy Prophet (SAWW) and a Momin who pays the poor-rate while bowing down in a *ruku*. **The momin referred to in the ayah is Ameerulmomineen - Mawla Ali, who gave his ring to a beggar while bowing down in a ruku.** (Ref: *Imam Nasai in Saheeh-e-Nasai, Aljam’a Bain-ul-Sihah-ul-Sittah, Sa’labi*)

Unlike the ayah of *Surah-e-Zumr* where Allah (SWT) shows His displeasure towards those who consider others as guardians alongwith Allah, in this above ayah **He has shown us the appointed guardians beside Him.** They are – Allah (SWT), the holy Prophet (SAWW) and

Mawla Ali (as). **Considering them as our guardians is a passport to enter the triumphant party of Allah.** And this the **great honour that every believer strives for.** Hence our inference is substantiated here that **the acknowledgement of the wilaya of Imam Ali (as) is a part of Kalima Tayyiba as it honours us with the entry into the invincible party of Allah.**

The holy Prophet (SAWW) has said to Imam Ali (as):

- “O Ali, I swear by He who controls my life, verily on the Gate of Heaven there is written **‘There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger, Ali ibn Abi Talib is the brother of the Prophet’** this *Kalima* was inscribed two thousand years before the creation of the Universe”.

Modern day Hanafi scholar Mufti Ghulam Rasul in ‘*Hasab aur Nasab*’ Volume 1 page 116 has recorded the same Hadeeth on the authority of Jabir .

(Ref: *Manaqib Ali bin Abi Talib*, page 91, *Hilayat al Awliya*, Volume 7 page 256, *Tareekh Baghdad*, Volume 7 page 387, *Meezan al Itidal*, Volume 1 page 457, *Zakhair al Uqba*, page 66, *Majma al Zawaid*, Volume 9 page 111, *Tadhkiratul Khawwas al Ummah*, page 26, *Kanz al Ummal*, Volume 5 Page 36)

There are few more ahadith of the holy Prophet (SAWW) which instruct us to follow the path shown by Imam Ali (as) and discuss his virtues in our gatherings:

- “Embellish your gatherings by mentioning Ali (as).”
(Ref: *Mustadrak Al-Sahihain of Al-Hakim Al-Nisabari*, 3/109; *Musnad Ahmad*, 4/368, 5/419; *Al-Khasa 'is of Al-Nisa 'I*, 9; *Ibn Al-Maghazeli*, 16; *Al-Manaqib of Akhtab Khawarizm*, 94; *Tarikh Baghdad of Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi*, 8/290; *Yanabi^ Al-Mawda*).
- “Ali (as) is the Imam of the pious, the prince of believers, and the leader of the resplendent.
(Ref: *Mustadrak Al-Sahihain of Al-Hakim Al-Nisabari*, 3/129; *Kenz Al-Omal*, 6/153.)
- The Caliph Umar also said in the praise of Imam Ali (as) : **“Get to know! No honour reaches the position of excellence without acceptance of Ali as the (Wali) guardian.”** (Ref: *Sawaiq al-Muhriqa*, page 176, published in Egypt)

→ In the introductory section we have gone through an ayah from *Surah-e-Fatir*, let us again reflect upon the same ayah and conclude this article.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

- (Surah-e-Fatir, ayah 10)

- “(Whoever desires honour (should remember) that all honour is with Allah. All **Kalima Tayyiba ascend to Him**, and all good deeds He exalts.)”

The ayah says that the seekers of honour should remember that all honour is with Allah. He bestows His Honour and Mercy on whomsoever He wishes. Pure and good words (*Kalima Tayyiba*) have the ability to ascend to Him. And by virtue of these words He exalts the good deeds.

When Adam (as) committed a mistake and repented Allah (SWT) turned towards him with His Mercy. The below mentioned ayah conveys this:

فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

- (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 37)

“(Then **Adam received Kalimat from his Lord**, so He turned him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.)”

The ayah says that after Adam (as) received *Kalimat* from Allah (SWT), He (SWT) turned towards Adam (as) mercifully. **Thus Adam (as) was honoured by Allah’s Mercy and was forgiven by virtue of these Kalimat.** So which were these *Kalimat*?

The commentators and Islamic scholars have agreed that **these Kalimat** are the names of *Panjetan Paak (as)* i.e. **Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh), Ali (as), Fatema (sa), Hassan (as) and Husain (as).** (Ref: *Durr-e-Mansur, Suyuti, vol 1 P 16*)

It was because of Zikr-e-Ahlulbait that the mistake of Adam (as) was forgiven and Allah (SWT) turned towards him with His limitless Mercy. We, the children of Adam (as) and seekers of Allah’s Mercy should remember this and **follow his footsteps by indulging ourselves in Zikr-e-Ahlulbait as it is the prominent part of Kalima Tayyiba.**

A prominent Islamic scholar Abu Naeem Isfahani in his esteemed work *Hilayath al Awliya*, Volume 1, Page 66-67, records this Hadeeth on the authority of the Sahabi Abu Burdah:

“There is no doubt that Allah (SWT) has made a promise to me with regards to ‘Ali. I asked my Lord ‘What is it?’ Allah (SWT) said ‘Listen’, to which I replied ‘I am listening’. Verily Allah (SWT) said ‘**Ali is the Flag of Guidance, Imam of the Saints, and the Light of Truth for those that follow me, and is that Kalima that has been made compulsory upon the Believers. Whoever loves him, loves me, whoever angers ‘Ali, angers Me, O Muhammad convey this good news to ‘Ali...**” (Ref: *Hilayath al Awliya, Volume 1, Page 66 & 67*)

Our beloved Imam Ali Bin Musa Al-Reza (as) has also said about the ayah on *Kalima Tayyiba* from *Surah-e-Fatir* (ayah 10) that – **“To Him do ascend the good words (Kalima Tayyiba)”** These are the words – **‘There is no god but Allah, Muhammad (SAWW) is the Prophet of Allah and Ali (as) is the Guardian from Allah, and the rightful Caliph of the holy Prophet (SAWW), and their Caliphs (as) are the Caliphs of Allah.’** – (Ref: *Tafseer Imam Hassan Al Askari (as) – S 184*)

→ In conclusion we may say that:

- The acceptance of the **wilaya of Imam Ali (as) and rest of the 11 Imams from the household of our beloved Prophet (SAWW) is a prominent part of Kalima Tayyiba.**
- It is a passport to enter the triumphant party of Allah (SWT). It makes us eligible to receive His bounties, favours and nearness.
- **It is in our own interest to embellish our gatherings and conversations by Zikr-e-Ahlulbait (as) so that Allah (SWT) always sees us Mercifully.**
- We should be thankful to Him that He guided us to the righteous Imams and perfected our religion.
- Let me end by mentioning that on the day of Judgement we will also be questioned about the *wilaya* of Imam Ali (as) along with being inquired of our belief in the Unity of Allah, the Prophethood, the revealed books and faith as per the hadith of our beloved Prophet (SAWW). May Allah (SWT) bless us and hold us steadfast on the straight path. Aamin