



Koranic Documentation of Imam Ali's Prayers in the Third Chapter of Sahife-ye-Alaviya

Reza Farkhari Graduated from Quranic Sciences, Qom University of Science and Education, Shiraz
Faculty of Quranic Sciences, Iran

Dr. Majid Sadeghi Mazidi Supervisor Qom University of Science and Education Shiraz Faculty of
Quranic Sciences, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present research aims to investigate the Koranic documentation of Imam Ali's prayers, as suggested in the third chapter of Sahife-ye-Alaviya. Studies have indicated that regarding a request for guidance from God, it is obvious that the Koran has originally been revealed to guide human beings. Imam Ali's requests have been compatible with the Koranic verses. For instance, the Imam asks God for a happy and good end of life which is cited in the Koran, where prophet Jacob famously advises his children to remain subservient to God by the time of death. Concerning the request for lawful provision from God, the Imam's call is also compatible with the Koranic verse. It calls on people to eat lawful provision and refrain from satanic commands, for he is the manifest enemy of man. A large number of books have discussed the positive outcomes of lawful provision from a moral perspective. The Imam asks God to make things convenient for him in yet another discussion, reminding us of the prophet Moses in the Koran. Thus, we learn that this call also conforms to the Koranic verses as God tells the prophet that He made things simple for him. Also, regarding the last request examined in this study, the Imam asks God to save him from predicaments; as we read in the Koran, Prophet Joseph asks God to save him from predicaments. Some verses suggest that the residents of the Heavens consider their triumph to be assistance from God.

Keywords: Sahife-ye-Alaviyah, Imam Ali, Koranic documentation, narration

INTRODUCTION

As pioneers of knowledge, all the infallible Imams (AS) have sought to promulgate and interpret the Koran. In their blessed course of life, they have always sought to disseminate the religion in different contexts, aiming to make people aware of the advice and commands provided in the holy Koran. As the first commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (AS), like the prophet (Peace be Upon Him), used to provide the Koranic teachings in prayers and invocation. These prayers are gathered in a valuable book entitled "Sahife Alaviya," with two volumes. The first volume contains 156 prayers gathered by Sheikh Abdullah Samahichi, while the second one is a compilation by Mirza Hossein Noori, a documented book of the former. In the meantime, professor Seyed Hashem Rasouli Mahallati has gathered both books under "Al-Sahife Al-Alaviya Al-Jame'a."

The present research, which deals with the Imam's prayers in the said book, has classified them under various chapters. These prayers include the invocation of God, the Almighty, prayers on faith and religious recourse, and praising God and His qualities. This 147-page book reveals that the prayers are related to Koranic subjects and inspired by Koranic concepts and structure. For example, the prayer "O' God confer blessing upon Mohammad and his household, and have mercy on me when I am not in the world, and keep alive my name among the people" is a

Koranic-document verse that reads: *“Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace”*.

Therefore, the research aims to investigate the Koranic concepts and reveal a content-based relationship between the prayers in the third chapter and the Koranic verses.

Theoretical Foundations of the Research

In his prayers on Friday nights, Imam Ali asks God to turn away every impurity and evil from him, despite being infallible. He used to call on God to forgive his sins, saying: *“O’ God forgive the sins that tear apart the veils, O’ God forgive the sins that culminate in retribution and punishment, O’ God forgive the sins that change the blessings, O’ God forgive the sins that cause calamities. The severity of some sins is as if the sinner has stood up to war with God. The sin man commits in this world will be a fire in the Doomsday which overwhelms him¹”*. This prayer conforms to the Koranic verse which says: *“Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze”*. (Nisa, 10).

Ima Ali asks God for guidance in another prayer and says: *“O’ Merciful and Compassionate, guide me.”* Guidance is divided into two types: specific guidance (Canonized guidance), which is performed by sending down the apostles and the books, etc. and general guidance (Generative guidance), which is performed by God through wisdom, intellect, thinking, conscience, instincts and some properties in the humans and animals².

Generative guidance³ is like bee guidance which reveals how it should suck the nectar of the flower and build a hive for itself, or like bird guidance in winter and summer migration. In this connection, God says: *“Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it].”* (Taha, 50). In the meantime, canonized guidance refers to the sending down of the apostles and holy books for the guidance of mankind⁴.

On Fridays, when Imam Ali prepared for the ablution to say his prayers, he used to ask God for a good end of life, saying, *“O’ God, make my health and wellbeing as well as my end of life good.”*

In the Koran, God says: *“O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him] (Al-Umran, 102)*. Thus, the Koran considers piety and fear of God to be the main factor of a good end of life (believer’s death), reminding us that *“And the [best] outcome is for the righteous”* (Al-Ghesas, 83).

Upon going to and entering the mosque, Imam Ali said prayers and asked God, *“Confer upon me lawful provision.”* Looking at the Koran, we learn that the holy book has never invited us to ignore God’s blessings, not considering poverty as a value or blessing, but inviting man to make efforts to find lawful provisions. Thus, we read in the Koran: *“mankind! Eat of what is lawful and pure in the earth, and do not follow in Satan’s steps. Indeed, he is your manifest enemy”* (Al-

¹ Sahife Alaviya, 371

² Mohammadi, Moslem, "Dictionary of Terms of Theology", Qom: Representation of the Supreme Leader, first edition 2011, p. 230

³ Hashemi Rafsanjani, Akbar, "Dictionary of the Quran", Qom, Qom Book Garden, second edition, 2004, vol. 33, page 38

⁴⁴ Noor Interpretation, vol. 1, p. 33



Bagharah, 168). Chapter An'am of the Koran says those who kill their children out of poverty are mistaken because God is the sole provider "*and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them.*" (An'am, 151).

These verses suggest that God is the only provider, and it is He who provides all the creatures with the provision. These verses are clear examples of a generative reality.

To make things easy and make the affairs more convenient, Ima Ali used to say: "Make for me easy and convenient all that I fear is difficult." Easiness and convenience in work are achieved when no barrier exists to its fulfillment. In other words, simplicity and convenience help man achieve his goals in life without difficulty. God uses the word "Yosr" (which translates to easiness) as one of God's Unseen assistances, conferred upon the faithful. For the Koran, "Yosr" stands against "Usr" (which translates to difficulty), which has been very important even in the lives of the great apostles such as the prophet Moses who called on God to make his affairs easy and convenient. God has repeatedly used the word "Yosr" against "Usr." As stated, prophet Moses called on God to make his prophethood against the pharaoh easy and convenient. "*Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed*" (Taha,24).

Before asking God and saying his prayers, Ima Ali asked God to confer a blessing on His prophet and give him a lawful provision.

The word "*Salawat*" (blessing) is an Arabic term derived from *Salat*, denoting salutation, prayer and praise. The word also means pray, which also includes prayers. In religion, a blessing is infusing something with holiness, spiritual redemption, or divine will. It also denotes pray, praise and salutations⁵. Koranic verses suggest that blessing the prophet Mohamad creates comfort and peace of mind. Conferring blessing on the prophet creates closeness to God, the Almighty, drawing the attention of God and attracting His mercy and compassion⁶. In Zobda Al-Bayan, Mohaghegh Ardabili cites verse 65 of Chapter Al-Ahzab (*Abiding therein forever, they will not find a protector or a helper.*) and says the obligation to confer a blessing on the prophet may be due to the obligation in *Tashahhod* in saying the prayer⁷. This means that in praying Tashahhods, it is required to confer a blessing on the prophet and his household. However, this obligation does not only refer to prayer, as the faithful are almost always required to confer blessing upon the prophet. The point here is that this blessing did exist even before the creation of the prophet's Household, and there are numerous narrations about it. Imam Ali says: "God made Abraham his friend, for he used to confer a blessing on the prophet and his household repeatedly."

Blessing on the prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is not only a sign of faith and piety but also creates love and affection for the prophet and his ultimate satisfaction. This also makes God be pleasant over His servants. This is because whoever wants to become a friend of God must first be a friend of the prophet (*Already there has been for you a sign in the two armies which met - one fighting in the cause of Allah and another of disbelievers. They saw them [to be] twice their [own] number by [their] eyesight. But Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Indeed, that is a lesson for those of vision.*) (Al-Umran, 13). In the meantime, expressing love and compassion towards the prophet using conferring blessing is a way towards this end. Imam Ali Ibn Mosa (AS) says:

⁵ Fakhreddin Tarihi, "Bahrain Assembly", Vol. II, Tehran, Islamic Culture Publishing Office, 1988, vol. 1, p. 266.

⁶ Ibn Ashour, Muhammad Tahir, "Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir", Tunisia, Dar al-Tanumiyah, 1984, vol. 6, part 11, p. 51

⁷ Zobda Albayan, 131



“The one who is incapable of veiling his sins must abundantly confer a blessing on the prophet, for the blessing will remove the sins.” The late Kooleini says: “Whoever says a hundred times O’ God send a blessing on the prophet; God will answer a hundred prayers of him⁸.” Another benefit of conferring blessing is that it makes gatherings and assemblies beautiful and embellished. Citing a document attributed to Ayshe, Sayouti says: “Make the assemblies embellished with conferring the blessings” because the blessing removes the sins.”

In saving from predicaments, Ima Ali asks God to help him come out of suffering. Regarding what the people of Paradise say, it is said that they owe their paradise to the pleasure of God and the help of the Almighty, and they are happy that God saved them from dangerous and deadly places, which is why the Imam also referred to this important issue. In his request for saving from dangerous places, the Imam asks God for salvation, saying: "O' God have mercy on me and save me from the evil ending."

Also, the Imam’s prayer refers to Chapter Toor, verse 26, where God says: “*They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allah],"* as the residents of the Heavens owe their blessing to fear of God.

The verse “Indeed, we used to supplicate Him before. Indeed, it is He who is the Beneficent, the Merciful.” (Toor, 28) is a cause of the preceding verse which discusses the dialogue of the residents of the Heavens who tell each other “So Allah conferred favor upon us” (Toor, 27), “, because” we used to pray God in the world.” Thus, we can suggest that divine blessing includes guidance and direction, success and conferring the light of faith on the believer’s heart and protection from Satan, darkness and disbelief, and protection from caprice⁹. By “blessing,” means success, guidance, and assistance from God. Here, the word “Mohzarin” comes from the word “Ehzar,” meaning punishing the offender, which, if the word “Ehzar” is used in an absolute sense, denotes evil and punishment. The entire meaning of the sentence is: if the Lord did not assist me with this, and if He did not guide me, I would be overwhelmed with the fire of Hell¹⁰. In one of his prayers, the Commander of the Faithful asks God and says, "And join me - my Lord - with the righteous (Salehin)."

Regarding the meaning of the word “Salehin” (the righteous), if it refers to an individual’s quality, it denotes the one who deserves the endless divine grace and blessing and His mercy and compassion. This sense is also noted in the prophet Abraham (AS), where he says: “[*And he said], "My Lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous."*” (Shoara, 83). If the sense is taken for an action, it denotes the conduct which renders in nobility, righteousness, and quality and characteristics of the human being to benefit from divine blessing¹¹. It is also clear from the above that “Salehin” refers to the individual’s characteristics.

In another narration from Imam Hossein, he says: “O’ Lord, the beginning of the creation is yours, the will is yours, and the authority is yours, please join me with the righteous (Salehin).” Interpreters disagree over the meaning of Salehin. However, narrations suggest that the word Salehin, it is meant the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his successors, and the Saleh (the righteous) is the one who is a good doer and has achieved transcendence in the knowledge of

⁸ Usool Kafi, vol. 2, p. 164

⁹ Teib al-Bayan vol. 15, p. 156

¹⁰ Almizan, vol. 17, p. 209

¹¹ Teib al-Bayan vol. 2, p. 203



the religion; it refers to the one who has all the qualities of good and grace and is immune from all impurities and evil. It is narrated that the first people who enter the Heavens are the prophet, the commander of the faithful and the prophet Abraham ¹².

In his prayers, Imam Ali (AS) prays for the believers and asks God for forgiveness and grace, saying, "O' Lord, have mercy on the believing men and women."

Praying for others and giving priority to the wants and needs of others over oneself is a great deed in the sight of God, the Almighty. That praying of this kind is very beneficial for the one who prays because, for this, God shall turn away from us all the evil, give us much provision and have mercy and compassion on us.

No doubt, one of the most important parts of night pray is a prayer for others and asking for forgiveness for 40 believers. This kind of prayer turns away from the believer all the envy, animosity, and suspicion and creates kindness and grace for him.

Man sometimes prays for himself, such as the one by the prophet Solomon who said: "*He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'*" (Saad, 35). The man usually prays for himself and others: "*And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.'*" (Hashr, 10). In his prayers following the construction of the Ka'be, Prophet Abraham said: "*Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.*" (Ebrahim, 41). Also, prophet Noah said: "*My Lord, forgive my parents and me and whoever enters my house a believer and the believing men and women. And do not increase the wrongdoers except in destruction.*" (Nooh, 28). Prophet Joseph prays for his children and says: "*He said, 'I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'*" (Yousef, 98).

The Koran reveals over twenty types of prayers from the prophet Abraham, including prayers for his son, which fall under three doctrinal, practical and moral categories, as verse 124 of the Koran reads: "*And [mention, O Muhammad] when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands, and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.' [Abraham] said, 'And of my descendants?'" [Allah] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."* (Bagharah, 124), and "*Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.*" (Bagharah, 129).

Imam Ali (AS) calls on God to place his prayers among the accepted and answered prayers, saying: "O' Lord place my prayers among the answered prayers," which refers to prophet Abraham in the Koran who says: "*And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep my sons and me away from worshipping idols.*" (Ebrahim, 35).

Thus, it is concluded that Imam Ali's prayers conform to the Koranic verses and are documented based on them.

Conclusion

The present research aims to investigate the Koranic documentation of Imam Ali's requests, as suggested in the third chapter of Sahife-ye-Alaviya. Studies have indicated that with regards to

¹² Teib al-Bayan vol. 14, p. 47



the request for guidance from God, it is obvious that the Koran has originally been revealed to guide human beings. Imam Ali's requests have been compatible with the Koranic verses. For instance, the Imam asks God for a happy and good end of life (believer's death) cited in the Koran, where prophet Jacob famously advises his children to remain subservient to God by the time of death. Concerning the request for lawful provision from God, the Imam's call is also compatible with the Koranic verse. It calls on people to eat lawful provision and refrain from satanic commands, for he is the manifest enemy of man. A large number of books have discussed the positive outcomes of lawful provision from a moral perspective. The Imam asks God to make things convenient for him in yet another discussion, reminding us of the prophet Moses in the Koran. Thus, we learn that this call also conforms to the Koranic verses as God tells the prophet that He made things simple for him. Also, regarding the last request examined in this study, the Imam asks God to save him from predicaments; as we read in the Koran, Prophet Joseph asks God to save him from predicaments. Some verses suggest that the residents of the Heavens consider their triumph to be assistance from God.

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