



## GUIDING ROLES OF IMAMS CONSIDERING SAJDEH'S 24<sup>th</sup> VERSE AND ANBIA'S 73<sup>rd</sup> VERSE

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### ABSTRACT

*Imam (peace be upon him) is of a lofty position in the universe. In religious teachings, it has also been underlined that the land is never void of proof. According to the noble verses at stake, the idea that the Imams guide people under the supervision of the Lord is that they, by capturing the hearts, pave the way for people's promotion to perfection and a higher position. In the current article, the authors seek to explain the meaning of Imamate and discuss the position of Imam (PBUH) in the guidance of the people of the society. Guidance in these verses mean reaching the desirable conclusion and success. This guidance is the practical reward of those who have accepted the invitation of Divine Essence and the general guidance via revelation. This is a special guidance for the believers and the pious. Actually, every position and grace that everyone gets in this framework is blessed and mediated by Imam (peace be upon him).*

**Keywords:** *Imamate, Remunerative Natural Guidance, Revealed Guidance, Domination Over the Hearts, Medium of Blessing.*

## INTRODUCTION

### **Problem Statement**

In religious teachings, Imam (PBUH) is of a great unrivaled position. Accordingly, there are many verses and prophetic narrations in the religious texts that emphasize the necessity of the existence of the Imam (peace be upon him) in all ages until the Day of Judgment, and insist that the land would never be empty of proof. In some theses verses, the position of Imam has been estimated to be higher than the Prophet. (Chapter 2 Baqara: 124) And a number of the prophetic narrations have described Imam's heart as the abode of Divine Will. In some of the prayers, you may find such statements as "*God bless and guide the righteous and the proofs of Allah Almighty, Allah (the universe of existence) has begun you and ends you too. And it will rain for you because of you, and it is because of you that he will keep the heaven from falling down except for his permission.*" This amount of emphasis alludes to the fact that the issue of Imamate is not a purely historical issue, but also reflects the influential role of Imam in the comprehensive map of the religious system and in the interconnected chain of religious institutions in the universe. It goes without saying that the recognition of this position is based on knowledge.

Based on the testimonies of Qur'an and the noble verses discussed in this paper regarding the retributive natural guidance, Imam (peace be upon him) is the medium of blessing. This guidance specifically belong to the believers and the pious, and basically, every position and

grace that are endowed to someone in this framework is blessed and mediated by Imam (peace be upon him). Thus, the present research seeks to examine the position of Imam in view of the remunerative natural guidance (primordial guidance) based on the verses of the Holy Quran. In the light of the Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations of the rational system, the audience is led to a rational understanding of the basis of the system of Imamate, so that the audience, while reaching a realistic understanding of the position of the Imamate system in view of the remunerative guidance of Imam (PBUH) in practical and behavioral domains as an evidence for their actions and behaviors.

### ***An Outline of the Verses***

The verses that are discussed in this paper are as follows:

*And appointed them leaders to guide by Our Command and We revealed to them to do good deeds, and to establish the prayer, and the giving of charity, and they were for Us worshipers* (Chapter 21 Anbia: 73).

*When they were patient, we made from them leaders, guiding with Our Command and they were certain of Our verses* (Chapter 32 Sajda: 24).

### ***Imamate in the Prophetic Narrations***

To clarify our claim before turning to the questions concerning the content of these two verses, we must first see what Imamate means in the context of these verses and how Imamate should be understood. The discussion of Imamate is one of the most lively theological, jurisprudential and social discussions, because the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has been quoted to have said: "whoever lives his life and does not know his Imam he will die as an ignorant" (Koleini, 2006: 2/21). In the same way that the Knowledge of the Messenger depends on the knowledge of the mission, the knowledge of the Imam is hinged upon the knowledge of Imamate. As Imam Ali (PBUH) stated: "you should know God by God and the Prophet by the Book and the Saint by means of the goodness, justice, and beneficence" (Ibid: 85).

Imamate in this context refers to the high stature of the leadership of the human societies resorting to divine revelation. Imamate in this sense will not only include Imamate in a specific sense, rather it will also include the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family); because he has been in the position of the Imamate by keeping the prophetic missions, and Imam in the age of the Prophet (PBUH) was the Prophet himself.

According to the prophetic narrations the focus of which is Imamate, at least two tasks have been mentioned for Imam (peace be upon him). The first task concerns the external existence of the Imam, such as the expression of the lawful and forbidden, the community leadership, the administration of the government, and so on and so forth. The second task underlined in these narratives expresses the spiritual qualities and characteristics of the Imam, such as Imam's awareness of the actions of the people and his supervision over them, the presentation of the actions of the people to the Imam every morning and evening, and the Imam's state of being the medium of blessing and the other is that the attainment of others to perfections and favors and authorities is due to the blessing of the Imam. None of these narratives have confined the tasks of the Imam (peace be upon him) to the above mentioned cases, in order to deny each other and to be recognized as contrary; then, the Imam both leads the external affairs of the people through revealed guidance and guides the path through the inward development of the people and governs their hearts. (Javadi Amoli, 2011: 6/520)

### ***Shia Notion of Imamate***



In Shia teachings, the concept of Imamate has been discussed in three levels, and at all these levels, the word Imam has been used.

1. Imam represents the religious authority, the man who have to be followed by others and made the example of actions and behavior, and learn religious teachings from him. (Motahari, 1999: 46) In other words, Imam is the religious leader and authority. Imamate in this sense is of both the ideological and practical aspects.
2. Imam is the person who undertakes the political and social leadership of the Muslims. This office is also considered as one of the tasks of Prophet (peace be upon him) that has been granted to him by the Lord. This office has been inherited by the Prophet's Household after the decease of the Prophet based on firm and undeniable reasons. Imamate in this sense is now of a historical and religious aspect. (ibid: 50)
3. Imamate refers to the spiritual leadership. Imamate in this sense is a kind of supernatural authority and dominance that is related to the hidden capacities of man, the capacities that can be realized and is concerned with the relationship between human beings in this sense. This is to say that man reaches the status of divine servitude through treading the path of servitude and receives this position via the spirituality that fills the world and human hearts, and directs the soul and the hearts of individuals and reveals itself in their actions and behaviors. According to the Shia worldview, the earth is never void of such a person who is known as the Perfect Man. (Ibid: 56 and 57)

Thus, the question regarding the meaning of Imamate is also important in this regard; because for some, the acceptance of the Imamate in this sense (the spiritual leadership) is somewhat difficult and problematic, and requires believing in a supernatural powers and semi-divine nature for humanity that is in sheer contrast with the monotheism. (ibid: 61)

Given this point, the question is raised as to the meaning of the Imamate; and whether the Quranic verses about Imamate reflect on the meaning that the Shi'a believes or not.

To cast light on this claim and move towards answering the main question, i.e. the role of Imam (PBUH) in the domain of the natural guidance, we ask certain questions regarding these two verses: what does exactly mean the guidance that is discussed in these verses? Is it the remunerative primordial guidance or the revealed guidance? If guidance in this context refers to the remunerative natural guidance, how does it work and what kind of guidance is this? The answer to these questions requires us to clarify what does command mean in these verses? And how Imam (PBUH) directs people to perfection. Particularly in view of the noble verses that have conditioned this guidance upon the command, this condition shows that guidance is not absolute guidance, rather it refers to the guidance that is performed upon the Lord's command. These are part of the questions we are facing in this regard.

First, what is the meaning of guidance? What are its different uses and meanings?

### ***The Meaning of Guidance***

Lexically speaking, guidance means showing the right way to someone and this is done in two ways. Firstly, guiding and showing the way to the reach the destination that is called ("orientation"), and secondly, leading the wayfarers to the goal which is called "reaching the desirable". Guidance as term also refers to the attainment of appropriate perfection for the beings, which takes place in a special and correct manner. To put it otherwise, the establishment of a special relationship between beings and their future perfection is called guidance. (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 16/21) Since there is a causal relationship between the object and its perfection



or its ultimate goal, moving towards that ultimate goal requires guidance. (ibid: 33) This guidance is of certain degrees that consist of:

### **1- Natural Guidance**

Natural guidance means endowing all the means of perfection to beings and leading them to their goals. This includes the guidance of all creatures, and God guides his creatures through their primordial nature, instinct, or inner desire for perfection. (ibid: 47) From the natural point of view, nothing in the world is outside the divine guidance. As Moses (PBUH) said in response to Pharaoh addressing him who is your god?: " *Our Lord, ' he replied, 'is He Who gave everything its creation and then guided it'* (Chapter 20 Taha/ 50). Therefore, God has equipped everything with the means of perfection-seeking and primordial guidance so as to move towards its ultimate goal.

### **2- Revealed Guidance**

Revealed guidance refers to providing directions and showing the way. In this kind of guidance, God provides the mankind with the emancipating law and informs him of the virtues and vices in order to choose the path to bliss willingly. Since revealed guidance is pure scientific guidance and is merely a type of way-showing, it cannot be violated in practice. (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 16 / 47\_58)

*As for Thamood, we (offered) them Our Guidance, but they preferred blindness to guidance. So a thunderbolt of the humiliating punishment seized them because of what they had earned* (Chapter 41 Fussilat: 17).

### **3- Remunerative Natural Guidance**

This guidance implies achieving the intended goal. This guidance is the practical reward of those who have accepted the invitation of justice and the revealed guidance. In other words, if someone believes in the eternal law of the Quran and stands firm in this path, Allah will choose him and endow him the guidance as his reward, insofar as the illuminating verses will enlighten his existence, and promote him to the meeting of Allah. (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 1/195). Then, the path to achieving the remunerative natural guidance is benefiting from the revealed guidance and converting to it, and then following and obeying it. Contrary to the revealed guidance in the remunerative natural guidance, there is no longer any word of religion and scientific guidance; rather, everything is about winning and going and becoming and practical guidance. Consequently, it is interpreted as the natural guidance, i.e. practical and external guidance. (ibid: 192)

In these verses, God has described guidance as one of the characteristics of the Imams. Therefore, after mentioning some of the examples of the righteous from the family of Ibrahim, "We gave him, in excess, Isaac, and Jacob (for a grandson); and We made each righteous" (Anbia/ 72). God bless the righteous in fulfilling the prayers of Abraham and expressing his faith in the promise of the coming of the covenant to the righteous: *and appointed them leaders to guide by Our Command and We revealed to them to do good deeds, and to establish the prayer, and the giving of charity, and they were for Us worshipers* (Anbia: 73).

Now, we turn back to the question we raised to the effect that what is meant by the guidance used in these verses? And to which one of the discussed triple types of guidance does this refer? It should be said in response that the guidance that God has assigned to the Imamate is not the revealed guidance in the sense of orientation and way showing, because God appointed Abraham (PBUH) as Imam in his old age and after serving as the prophet for many years. "And when



*Abraham was tested by His Lord with certain words and he fulfilled them, He said: 'I have appointed you as a leader for the nation.' (Abraham) asked: 'And of my descendants? "My covenant, ' said He, 'the harmdoers shall not receive it" (Chapter 2 Baqara: 124).*

It is evident that prophecy is not separated from guidance in the sense of direction and way showing. (Tabatabai, 2004, 1/428), rather the position of prophecy is one and same with guidance, way showing and orientation. While Abraham (PBUH) had the right to guidance based on the verse, *(Remember) when Abraham, said to his father and his nation: 'I am quit from what you worship (Chapter 43 Zukhruf: 26)* At that time, Imam Abraham, peace be upon him, despaired of his idolatry, proclaimed his monotheism, and this is guidance in the sense of presenting the way or showing the way. It is evident that the guidance that God has promised him that will soon give him is another type of guidance. On the other hand, in guidance in the sense of way presenting, i.e. the revealed guidance provided by all the prophets that is also shared by their disciples, and there is no need for the authority of the Imamate and it is not allocated to the Imams, because even the pious believers also guide others to the path of the Lord and showed them the way, insofar as the believer of the Pharaoh clan, served as a spiritual leader and guided the people toward the God. *"He who was a believer said: 'Follow me, my nation, so that I may guide you to the Right Path" (Chapter 40 Ghafer: 38).*

Therefore, guidance in these two verses does not refer to direction and way presenting. (Javadi Amoli, 2011: 6/462). This guidance is the very remunerative natural guidance, or the particular guidance, not guidance in the sense of path illustration that is conditional and relative. Likewise, this guidance is not a natural guidance in the general sense.

#### ***The nature and type of Natural Guidance (Remunerative Natural)***

This type of guidance gets manifested in the outside world in the following forms and types:

##### ***1. Realization of the Conditions of Success:***

This guidance is sometimes in the form of the realization of the conditions of success (ibid: 72). *"Believers, if you help Allah, He will help you and strengthen your feet" (Chapter 47 Mohammad: 7).*

##### ***2. Blessings from the Lord that facilitates the path initiation***

This guidance is accompanied by success, and paves the way for virtues and good deeds, and not only this path is not associated with hardships rather it is accompanied by the sense of comfort " *For him that gives and fears (Allah)/ and believes in the finest, we shall surely ease him to the Path of Easing;" (Chapter 92 Al-Lail: 5-7).* In other words, good deeds are done with utmost comfort with divine blessings. (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 1/194)

##### ***3. Turning Other People's Hearts towards the Faithful Man***

Sometimes, God turns the hearts of others towards the believer, and places his love in the hearts of others as a reward by means of natural guidance. *"Those who believe and do righteous deeds, the Merciful will assign for them love", (Chapter 19 Mary/ 96).* This guidance is also given to man when he decides to pursue the path of righteousness following the revealed guidance.

##### ***4. Inspirations, Spiritual Guidance and Enlightenment***

In this type of guidance, God bestows the man a particular vision and special enlightenment, and by creating an inner passion and enthusiasm brings about a particular motive for observing the divine teachings and pursuing the path of primordial nature, which is the very path that leads to the meeting of Allah. (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 1/191)



*Those who struggle in Our cause, we will surely guide them to Our ways; and Allah is with those who do good* (Chapter 29 Al-Ankaboot: 69).

In the story of Men of Kahf God states: "In truth We tell to you their news. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance" (Chapter 18 Al-Kahf: 13). Here there is a discourse on guidance, enlightenment and movement in the path of God (Motahari, 1999: 74; Javadi Amoli, 2010: 16/194).

### ***Knowledge and Awareness of Imam of People's Heart***

The internal guidance of the individuals and leading them requires one to know and understand people from within. Because the man who guides via the inner path and capturing their hearts and bless them must be aware of the scope of the thing that he is in charge of, i.e. the people's heart, and this requires the Imam to be witness to the actions of human beings and monitor them. Therefore, the Prophet Ali ibn Musa al-Reza (PBUH) interpreting the following verse: "*Say: 'Allah will see your works and so will His Messenger and the believers; then you shall be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the visible, and He will inform you of what you were doing.'*" (Chapter 9: 105), notes that believers in this verse refers to us the Imams. (Javadi Amoli, 2011: 1/154)

From the prophetic narrations which are focused on Imamate one can well conclude that the Imams not only are in charge of the external affairs of society including leadership and the administration of the state, the expression of the lawful and the forbidden, rather they are intuitively informed of the soul of the people as well as the beliefs and ethics and actions of others. This group of prophetic narrations that show that Imam is aware of the actions of the people and the presentation of their actions to Imam every morning and evening. These indicates that Imam (peace be upon him) is the source of blessing and the spiritual perfections and authority of other people are acquired through the blessing of Imam (ibid: 154\_158)

## **CONCLUSION**

Imamate in the noble verses of Quran discussed in this paper refers to spiritual leadership. This is to say that through servitude man reaches spirituality and spiritual influence over mankind and the world. Thus guidance in these verses is also the remunerative natural guidance. This guidance means the attainment of the desirable and success and is the reward of those who have accepted the invitation of the revealed guidance. Arguing that Imams are guiding people under the command of Allah is tantamount to the idea that they are the manifestation of the Lord who changes the hearts and governs the souls and promotes them. Accordingly, the internal guidance is an inherent blessing that comes from God and illuminates the hearts of the believers. In other words, every grace that is endowed to someone in this framework is blessed and mediated by the Imam (PBUH).

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