

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE COMPASSIONATE
THE MERCIFUL

Has the verse ‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ been revealed about Imam Ali (peace be upon him)?

The board of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

A question by; Farhad. F

Asking the question

The scholarly and religious authority and standing of Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) specifically, the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) in the holy Qur'an and tradition standpoints is among those issues which has been traditionally set forth among the Moslem religions and constantly has been discussed along with the religious and political authorities .

Now this question will be raised that as the political and religious Imamate and leadership of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) has been emphasized in the Sunnite books then, has the scholarly position and character of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) been defined in the holy Qur'an as well?

And does the verse (قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني و بينكم و من عنده علم الكتاب)

Intends to determine the scientific authority of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)?

The present text makes an effort to find the answer to this question in hand and to probe and investigate the above-mentioned verse via contrastive analysis form the stand points of the Fariqain (Shiite and Sunnite) scholars and commentators and to

find the complete answer to this question. Therefore it is necessary to probe this issue from two viewpoints.

RESPONSE

A, the Shiite standpoint

From the Shiites point of view Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) as their head enjoy an eminent standing and stance from scientific and divine knowledge views in such a manner that the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) has stated pertaining to scientific and scholarly authority of Ahl Al-bayt (peace be upon them) that;

«إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي»

‘I will leave you two precious things as heritage and if you resort to them then you will never be misled’ and His Holiness used the statement of ‘the gate of the city of Knowledge’ pertaining to the scientific authority of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and stated that;

«أنا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها فمن أراد المدينة فليأت الباب».

I am the city of knowledge and Ali (peace be upon him) is its gate and whoever wants to enter the city then he should enter from its gate’ and it is evident that this kind of knowledge and awareness are not a ordinary and common ones which include the errors or mistakes rather than this awareness and knowledge are the divine ones which have been granted by GOD in the aim of mankind leadership and guidance

Thus the opinions of the Shiite scholars imply in this fact that the verse ‘a man who possess the knowledge of the book’ refers to the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and now we are going to make reference to some of them

The probe of the narration

Ali Ibn Ebrahim Qomi has quoted from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) via an authentic narration that;

حدثني أبي عن ابن أبي عمير عن ابن أذينة عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال : الذي عنده علم الكتاب هو أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام

-Tafsir Al-Ghomi, v 1 p 367

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated that;

The man who possess the knowledge of the book is the commander of the faithful
Mohammad Ibn Hasan Safar has quoted from Imam Mohammad Baqer (peace be upon him) in the book Basaer Al-Darajat via a sound narration that; the real intent of this verse is us, Ahl Al-Bayt and the first, the best and the most virtuous after the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) is Ali (peace be upon him)

And he writes pertaining to this case that

حدثنا محمد بن الحسين و يعقوب بن يزيد عن ابن أبي عمير عن بريد بن معاوية قال قلت لأبي جعفر عليه السلام قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني وبينكم و من عنده علم الكتاب قال إيانا عنى و على أو لنا و أفضلن و خيرنا بعد النبي صلى الله عليه وآله .

-Basaer Al-Darajat, p 236

Barid Ibn Moaviah has said that; we said to Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) that; the verse ‘ say GOD and the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ are sufficient as witnesses between you and us. He stated that the real intent of this verse in us Ahl Al-Bayt and after the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) Ali is the first, the best and the most merit of our household

Shkh Saduq has quoted from the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) in the book Amali through an authentic narration that; the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) stated that;

حدثنا محمد بن موسى بن المتوكل قال : حدثنا محمد بن يحيى العطار ، قال : حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى ، عن القاسم بن يحيى ، عن جده الحسن بن راشد ، عن عمرو بن مغلس ، عن خلف ، عن عطية العوفي ، عن أبي سعيد الخدري ، قال : سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله عن قول الله : قال الذي عنده

علم من الكتاب . قال : ذاك وصي أخي سليمان بن داود . فقلت له : يا رسول الله ، فقول الله عز وجل :
قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني وبينكم ومن عنده علم الكتاب ، قال : ذاك أخي علي بن أبي طالب .

-Al-Amali, Al-Sheikh Al-Sadugh, p 659

Abi Saeed Khadri has said that; I asked the holy prophet of GOD pertaining to the verse” the man who possess the knowledge of the book” then he stated that; the man who possess a knowledge of the book is the heir and my brother Solomon Ibn David. I said O the holy prophet in another statement GOD the almighty stated that; “ say, GOD will be sufficient as witness between you and me and the man who possess the knowledge of the book” he stated that; that man is my brother Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (peace be upon them)

Of course, there are numerous narrations pertaining to this case and we suffice to these narrations as well

Conclusion

The narration has been quoted by the Shiite commentators pertaining to the real intent of the verse “ and the man who possess the knowledge of the book” is considered as an authentic narration and certain reference thus, we reach to this conclusion that the above-mentioned verse is going to determine the eminent scientific standing and position of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and regards that as an dependent issue to the GOD’s will and decision

B, the Sunnite standpoint

The religious authority of Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) specifically the commander of the faithful standing among the Sunnite religions are an evident and obvious points and have been acknowledged and admitted by the Sunnite great figures and the Sunnite scholars and commentators’ main approach in description of the verse “ the man who possess the knowledge of the book” was the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) as well as they mentioned various narrations below this verse that the real intent and purpose of the above-mentioned verse is the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)

However, there is another approach among the Sunnite commentators pertaining to the interpretation of the real intent of this verse and due to this opinion some

considered Abd Allah Ibn Salam and the others Gabriel as well as Salman Farsi as the real purpose of the verse while these kind of approaches devoid of any authentic and certain proof and the narrations have been presented to prove this approach whether suffer from referral problem or the proof shortcoming. The Sunnite commentators who considered the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) as the real purpose of the verse interpretation employed various narrations and in order to make evident this case we are going to make reference to some of these quotations

The probe of the Sunnite narrations

Thalabi has mentioned a narration from Abi Jafar (peace be upon him) to determine the real intent of the verse which indicates that the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) is its real purpose and writes pertaining to this issue that;

ابن عطاء قال : كنت جالسا مع أبي جعفر في المسجد فرأيت ابن عبد الله بن سلام جالسا في ناحية فقلت لأبي جعفر : زعموا أن الذي عنده علم الكتاب عبد الله بن سلام . فقال : إنما ذلك علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام عنده علم الكتاب .

They asked Abi Jafar (peace be upon him) pertaining to this verse that ‘ ‘ is Abd Allah Ibn Salam the real intent of the verse ‘ ‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ ’? Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) stated that; No, the man who possess the knowledge of the book is Ali (peace be upon him)

-Tafsir Al-Thalabi, v 5 p 303

Hakem Haskani has quoted numerous narrations in the book Shavahed Al-Tanzil that the real intent of the aforesaid verse is the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and now we are going to refer to some of these verses here

Hakem has narrated from Ibn Abbass and Mohammad Hanafiah that the aforesaid verse ‘ ‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ ’ has been revealed pertaining to the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and writes regarding this case that

عن ابن عباس في قوله تعالى : « ومن عنده علم الكتاب » قال هو علي بن علي طالب . عن ابن الحنفية في قوله تعالى : « ومن عنده علم الكتاب » قال : هو علي بن أبي طالب .

It has been asked from Ibn Abbass and Mohammad Hanafiah pertaining to the above-mentioned verse and they said the man who possess the knowledge of the book is the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)

عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام: «أنّ المراد بمن عنده علم الكتاب علي بن أبي طالب و أئمة الهدى عليهم السلام
«

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated that; the real intent of the verse ‘ ‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ ’ is Ali Ibn Abi Taleb and the Shiite Imams (peace be upon them)

روى بريد بن معاوية عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام أنّه قال : « إيانا عنى ، و علي أولنا ، و أفضلنا ، و خيرنا
بعد النبيّ صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم »

Barid Ibn Moaviah has quoted from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) that the real intent of this verse is us, Ahl Al-Bayt and the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) is the foremost and the most merit of us after the holy prophet of GOD

And then he writes that

و يؤيد ذلك ما روي عن الشعبي أنّه قال : ما أحد أعلم بكتاب الله بعد النبيّ من عليّ بن أبي طالب عليه السلام

Moayd Ibn Motaleb has quoted from Shobi that His Holiness stated; no one is more knowledgeable than Ali (peace be upon him) pertaining to the holy book of GOD after the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny)

-Shawahed Al-Tanzil, Al-Hakem Al-Hasakani, v 1 p 402

Solayman Qonduzi has quoted a narration from Saeed Khadri in the interpretation of the verse ‘ ‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’ ’ that the real intent of this verse is Ali (peace be upon him) and he writes pertaining to this case that;

عن عطية العوفي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال : سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم عن هذه الآية « الذين عنده علم من الكتاب » قال : ذاك أخي سليمان بن داود عليهما السلام . وسألته عن قوله الله عز وجل « قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني وبينكم ومن عنده علم الكتاب » قال : ذاك أخي علي بن أبي طالب صاحب المناقب .

Abu Saeed Khadri says that I asked the holy prophet of GOD pertaining to the verse ‘‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’’ and he stated that; he was the heir of my brother Solomon the son of David and I said; O the holy prophet of GOD in another statement Allah the almighty has stated that; say, Allah and the man who possess the knowledge of the book are sufficient as witnesses among you and me’’ His Holiness stated that the real intent of that verse is my brother Ali ibn Abi Taleb.

And in another narration has been frequently quoted he says that;

روى عن محمد بن مسلم وأبي حمزة الثمالي وجابر بن يزيد عن الباقر عليه السلام . وروى علي بن فضال والفضيل عن الرضا عليه السلام ، وقد روى عن موسى بن جعفر ، وعن زيد بن علي عليه السلام ، وعن محمد بن الحنفية ، وعن سلمان الفارسي ، وعن أبي سعيد الخدري وإسماعيل الهدي أنهم قالوا في قوله تعالى : « قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني وبينكم ومن عنده علم الكتاب » هو علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام .

In another narration has been mentioned that the above-mentioned verse has been revealed pertaining to the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)

-Yanabi Al-Mavedat, Al-Ghanduzi, v 1 p 307

The proofs

In addition it has been mentioned there is another narration pertaining to the scholarly standing of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) in the Sunnite narrative sources and we are going to refer them as the proof and documents of this point that the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) is the certain intent of the verse ‘‘ the man who possess the knowledge of the book’’ and we make reference to some of these narrations

A, I am the city of the knowledge and Ali is its gate

Hakem Nayshaburi has narrated a quotation from Ibn Abbass that the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) stated that; I am the city of the knowledge and Ali (peace be upon him) is its gate and whoever wants to enter the city then he should enter from its gate. Hakem has emphasized the accuracy of this narration and writes pertaining to that;

حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب ثنا محمد بن عبد الرحيم الهروي بالرملة ثنا أبو الصلت عبد السلام بن صالح ثنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن مجاهد عن بن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله : « أنا مدينة العلم و علي بابها فمن أراد المدينة فليأت الباب » . هذا حديث صح يح الإسناد و لم يخرجاه و أبو الصلت ثقة مأمون ...

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbass that the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) stated that I am the city of knowledge and science and Ali is its gate and whoever wants to enter the city then he should enter from its gate and this is an authentic narration but Bokhari and Moslem have not mentioned that in their own narrative books

-Al-Neishaburi, Muhammad Ben Abdullah Abu Abdullah Al-Hakem (died in 405 hejira), Al-Mostadrak Ala Al-Sahihein, Published by: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Elmie, Beirut, 1411 Hejira, 1990, v 3 p 126, First Edition, Researched by: Mostafa Abd Al-Ghader Ata

Abd Al-Bar writes that; Omar Ibn Khatab has said that; Ali (peace be upon him) was the most knowledgeable and well-informed man among the whole companions pertaining to judge and to determine the divine laws

قال عمر بن الخطاب: على أفضانا ...

-Yusef Ben Abdullah Ben Muhammad Ben Abd Al-Ber (died in 463), Al-Estiab Fi Marefat Al-Ashab, v 3 p 1102, Published by: Dar Al-Jeil, Beirut, 1412, First Edition, Researched by: Ali Muhammad Al-Bajavi

Jovainin has narrated a quotation from the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) that His Holiness stated among his own companions that;

قال صلى الله عليه و سلم فى أصحابه : أفضاهم على بن أبى طالب عليه السلام أنا مدينة العلم و علي عليه السلام بابها

Ali (peace be upon him) is the most knowledgeable man among you in terms of judgment and to decide a case and I am the city of the knowledge and Ali (peace be upon him) is its gate

-Abu Al-Maali Abd Al-Malek Ben Abdullah Ben Yusef Al-Joveini (died in 478 hejira), Ketab Al-Talkhis Fi Osul Al-Feghh, v 3 p 12, Published by: Dar Al-Bashaer Al-Eslamiye, Beirut, 1417 hejira, 1996, Researched by: Abdullah Jolam Al-Nabali and Bashir Ahmad Al-Omari

B, ask me pertaining to the holy book of GOD

Belazari has narrated a saying from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) that His Holiness stated that;

Ask me pertaining to the holy book of GOD and swear to GOD, there is no verse unless I know about that whether it has been revealed in the day or in the night whether it has been revealed in the mountain or on the ground

And he narrated from Mosaib as well that;

. سلوني عن كتاب الله تعالى فوالله ما من آية إلا وأنا أعلم أبليل نزلت أم بنهار أفي سهل أو في جبل .

Mosaib has said that; until now there is no man just like Ali (peace be upon him) who says; ask me. and it has been said to Ata that; is there any one more knowledgeable and well-informed than the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) among the companions of the holy prophet of GOD? Ata said; swear to GOD, No.

-Ansab Al-Ashraf, Ahmad Ben Yahy Ben Jaber Balazari, (died in 279), v 1 p 279

When Moavia was informed of the martyrdom of the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) said pertaining to the personality of His Holiness that;

و قال ابن المسيب ما كان أحد من الناس يقول سلوني غير علي رضي الله عنه و قيل لعطاء أكان أحد في أصحاب رسول الله □ أعلم من علي كرم الله تعالى و جهه قال والله.

In fact the knowledge and jurisprudence have been disappeared

Ibn Tofayl has quoted a narration from the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) that His Holiness stated that;

ابن يونس أخبرنا أبو بكر بن عياش عن نصير عن سليمان الأحمسي عن أبيه قال قال علي عليه السلام : و الله ما نزلت آية إلا و قد علمت فيما نزلت و أين نزلت و على من نزلت إن ربي و هب لي قلبا عقولا و لسانا طلقا .

No verse has been revealed unless I know the exact time it revealed and pertaining to whoever it has been revealed and in fact my Lord granted me an informed heart and fluent tongue

In the narration quoted from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) by Ibn Tofayl, the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) has stated that;

أخبرنا عبد الله بن جعفر الرقي أخبرنا عبيد الله بن عمرو عن معمر بن وهب بن أبي دبي عن أبي الطفيل قال قال علي عليه السلام : سلوني عن كتاب الله فإنه ليس من آية إلا و قد عرفت بليل نزلت أم بنهار في سهل أم في جبل .

Ask me pertaining to the holy book of GOD in fact there is no verse that I am not informed about it whether it has been revealed in the night or in the day in the mountain or on the ground

-Al-Tabaghat Al-Kobra, Muhammad Ben Sad Ben Mani Abu Abdullah Al-Basari Al-Zahari, (died in 230), v 2 p 338, Published by: Dar Sader, Beirut

Yahya Ibn Moin writes that;

حدثنا يحيى قال حدثنا سفيان بن عيينة عن يحيى بن سعيد عن سعيد بن المسيب قال ما كان في أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أحد يقول سلوني غير علي بن أبي طالب .

Ibn Moin narrated a saying from Ibn Saeed that there was no one among the companions of the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) except Imam Ali (peace be upon him) who says that; ask me whatever you like

-Tarikh Ibn Moin ((Ravayat Al-Dovari)), Yahya Ben Moin Abu Zakaria, (died in 233), v 3 p 143, Published by: Markaz Al-Bahth Al-Elmi and Ehya al-Torath Al-Eslami, Mecca, 1399, 1979, First Edition, Researched by: Tarikh Ibn Moin , Ravayat Al-Dovari

Ibn Hanbal has quoted a narration as the same as the above-mentioned saying that;

حدثنا عبد الله بن عثمان بن أبي شيبة نا سفيان عن يحيى بن سعيد قال أراه عن سعيد قال لم يكن أحد من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول سلوني الا علي بن أبي طالب .

-Ahmad Ben Hanbal Abu Abdullah Al-Sheibani, (died in 241), Fazaal Al-Sahabe, v 2 p 646, Published by: Resalat Institute, Beirut, 1983, First Edition, Researched by: Vasiollah Muhammad Abbas

Ibn Jozi has presented some theories pertaining to the interpretation and the real intent of the verse “ the man who possess the knowledge of the book” and in one of his theories the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) was the real intent of this verse and it has been said that;

أنه علي بن أبي طالب ، قاله ابن الحنفية.

The real intent of this verse is the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)

Those who regarded Abd Allah Ibn Salam as the real intent of this verse write that;

هو عبد الله بن سلام ؟ قال : و كيف ، و هذه السورة مكية ؟ و أخرج ابن المنذر عن الشعبي قال : ما نزل في عبد الله بن سلام رضي الله عنه شيء من القرآن .

This verse has been revealed in Mecca and does not deal with Abd Allah Ibn Salam. Shobi narrated that no verse has been revealed pertaining to Abd Allah

-Ibn Al-Jozi, Abu Al-Faraj, 508- 597, 6- 1201, Zad Al-Masir, v 4 p 16, Al-Siuti Jalal Al-Din, 849- 911, 1445- 1505, Al-Dor Al-Manthur, v 6 p 30

The final conclusion and sum up

With respect to the Sunnite commentators' approach in interpretation of the verse which has been referred and reasoned below this verse then we reach to this final summing-up and conclusion that; the aforesaid verse has been revealed pertaining to the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him) and it makes really obvious the religious authority and the scientific, spiritual and political standing of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) among Moslems after the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) and in addition to that there are some proofs of the narrations pertaining to this point that in some cases the holy prophet of GOD (peace and bless of GOD be upon him and his progeny) has explicitly emphasized the scientific standing of Ali (peace be upon him)

GOOD LUCK TO YOU

The board of addressing the religious doubts

The research institute of His Holiness Imam of the age (GOD may precipitate his reappearance)