

The “Thaqalayn” Tradition

ALIREZA KARIMI

Abstract: “Thaqalayn” Tradition is a gift from the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), where he has recommended two invaluable truths to the people.

Thaqalayn tradition is a reliable tradition, and there exists a broad consensus among Shiite and Sunni scholars on this tradition. It is narrated by both sects on a very wide scale.

This tradition has been narrated by so numerous people in every era that it is fully decisive that it is the word of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h) and every Muslim must believe in it or else he will fall into infidelity (just as if one denies a verse of the holy Quran because the Almighty Allah says about His messenger in the holy Quran,

“He does not speak from whim; it is merely inspiration that is revealed (to him)” (The holy Quran; 53: 3-4)

“SAY: obey God and the mess messenger. Yet if should turn away, (remember that) God does not love disbelievers.” (The holy Quran; 3:32)

Text of the Tradition

The Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h*) said: Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things, where one is greater than the other; the Book of Allah - a rope stretched from the sky to the earth- and my progeny (i. e. Ahlul-Bayt) [as long as you clutch to them, you will never go astray]. Verily, these two shall never separate from each other till they meet me by the pond (Kauthar) on the resurrection day.

The Goal behind Thaqalayn

In this tradition, the holy prophet Muhammad (*p.b.u.h*) has recommended the people two invaluable things: the first of them being the holy Quran, words of Allah and the other being his progeny (Ahlul-Bayt).

Why the honorable messenger allied these two things i. e. the Quran and Ahlul-Bayt with each other?

This is because the Ahlul-Bayt or the messenger is allied with the holy Quran. They are the teachers and interpreters of Quran after the holy prophet (*p.b.u.h*). In other words, by virtue of Divine grace and selection, they are capable of replying to all human needs because they are the interpreters and associate of a Book wherein is found “description of everything”.

As such, Allah's argument (*hujjah*) is finalized for us only when the Imamate of an infallible and divinely selected person holds continuity and it is in this manner that the holy messenger's warnings and glad-tidings have reached us via the Imams and Allah's argument finalized for us. Thus, if the imamate does not hold continuity and there remains no immaculate Imam in each era and the Imam of our time (Imam-e-Zaman) does not enjoy Imamate in this era, the holy Prophet's mission would turn meaningless for us and with his passing away 1400 years ago, his message would have got wind up too. This guidance and lofty heavenly message of inseparability between Quran and the Prophet's progeny that has come down in hadith-e-Thaqalayn is a warning for all of us.

Imam Holds All the Quranic Sciences

All the twelve infallible Imams (*p.b.u.t*) who are Allah's Caliphs (vicegerents) and His Hujjah (authority) upon the people, are the holy messenger's successors. They are well-versed in the holy Quran and all its sciences. The Quran revealed by the Almighty Allah to His messenger is the biggest sign among the divine signs, and is the eternal miracle of the last Prophet till the resurrection day.

This Book - the holy Quran - holds the concept of everything that prevails in the world of existence and covers various aspects like revelation, esoteric interpretation, exoteric meaning (up to seven inner layers and/or seventy layers that are beyond numeration) just like the book of Creation that comprises the whole world and possesses periods, kinds, creations and parts. Thus, the Almighty Allah while describing the holy Quran says:

“we have sent the book down to you to explain everything” (*The holy Quran; 16:89*)

“We have not neglected anything in the book; then to their lord will they be summoned” (*The holy Quran; 6:38*)

Therefore, just as there exists relationship between all the components of creation in the field of order and regularity that is clear for all (of course proportionate to the level of each one's knowledge and understanding) in the same way, there exists such a relation between the Quran and all its diverse matters (its true and profound meaning cannot be known except by connecting oneself to the Divine Knowledge.) In other words, those whose hearts are treasury of lofty secrets and concepts of the holy Quran are capable of explaining all of Allah's intentions in this Book and the relation between the verses of Quran (those firmly rooted in knowledge).

The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*) is the interpreter and commentator of Quran. He recited the Quran for the people and whenever the people faced problem or needed explanation they referred to the prophet (*p.b.u.h*). The

Quran too narrates that Prophet's task was to explain and interpret the Quran:

“We have merely sent the book down to you so you may explain to them what they are differing over, and as a guidance and mercy for folk who believe.” *(The holy Quran; 16:64)*

This task and honor for interpretation is in the Prophet's hands till the time he lives in this world. However, after the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*), this divine command (“Make clear to them the revealed verses”) must be implemented by some interpreter who possesses the status held by the holy Prophet, and the Quran will be explained and interpreted by such a personality thereafter.

As the holy Prophet's successor, the immaculate Imam explains and implements the commands and prohibitions laid down in the Quran. In short, the holy Prophet's successor is responsible for this task and he is the only one who possesses the required conditions. By Allah's command, the holy Prophet has entrusted this responsibility upon him and that person (or persons) are the Prophet's Ahlul-Bayt (offspring) and none others have competency for this job. The people of all eras are always in need of an immaculate interpreter, teacher, and guide of the holy Quran and it is not that this need applied only to the people living during the Prophet's time. Right from the time of revelation of the very first verse, the interpreter of Quran has always been alongside the Quran and would remain so till the resurrection day. On that day, both the divine weighty things would join the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*) at the fountain of Kauthar. Thus they must be such people who after the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*) have been entrusted with the vital task of interpreting the Quran and this honor is exclusive only to the immaculate Imams while others are devoid of it.

Of course, this does not imply that nobody can read and translate the Quran since the Almighty Allah says,

“We have made the Quran easy to memorize; yet will anyone (bother to) memorize it?” *(The Holy Quran; 54 /17)*

This verse signifies the need of people for an interpreter of Quran and an immaculate Imam. Till the time Quran exists, the immaculate Imam too exists and rather should exist and these are the Prophet's words that the Quran and "Itrat" (progeny) shall never separate from each other and would continue to coexist.

Therefore, the first interpreter and teacher of the holy Quran is the one upon whom Allah has revealed the Quran; the one who Allah has trained so that he can teach others and Allah has entrusted him with the duty of explaining the divine words.

"The Mercy-Giving has taught the reading, created man, taught him self-expression." *(The Holy Quran; 55:1-4)*

In the above verse, by man is meant the perfect man i. e. , the holy Prophet, whom Allah taught of Quran, so that he teach them to the people and guide them and thereafter, by divine command entrusts all its sciences to his 'Wasi' (legatee) [Ali Ibn Abi Taleb]. In this noble book, the Almighty Allah has praised this 'Wasi' by such words:

"As well as anyone who has knowledge about the book" *(The Holy Quran; 13:43)*

Thereafter, Amir-ul-Mu'minin (*p.b.u.h*) has entrusted this knowledge to the subsequent Imams one after the other till the twelfth of them Hazrat Baqiyat'ullah, Muhammad Ibn Hassan Al- Askari (*a.t.f.s.*).

With the above explanation, it becomes clear that during our time, too, there should exist one of the Prophet's successors, in whose hands lies the guidance of the people whether just like the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*), apparent among the people, or like Joseph (*p.b.u.h*) who during a part of his life was concealed from the peoples' eyes, but was present amongst them.

Today on the earth, the one who possesses the knowledge of all the Quranic sciences just as the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*) and preceding Imams is none other than Imam-e-Zaman and none can fill this till the resurrection day.

Few vital points one can derive from hadith-e-Thaqalayn:

1. We shouldn't forget that the holy messenger's words are 'hujjah' (authoritative) to every Muslim and must be accepted by all.

2. The Quran and Ahlul-Bayt (The Prophet's progeny) have both come down together in the Prophet's testament and he had in mind both of them.

3. The Quran and 'Itrat' (prophet's progeny) are together with each other.

4. By 'Itrat' is meant the Prophet's progeny where the verse of 'Tatheer' (purity) has been revealed in their honor and serves as proof of their infallibility.

5. Holding fast to 'Itrat' (prophet's progeny) leads one to guidance and success, and refrains one from going astray.

6. Just as the Quran exists among the people till the resurrection day; similarly, one of the prophet's immaculate Ahlul-Bayt should coexist with the Quran so that he may guide them to the true path.

7. During our time, except Imam Mahdi there exists nobody from the Prophet's progeny who can be immaculate and who has been selected by Almighty Allah for peoples' guidance.