The Role of Infallibles' Traditions in Quran Interpretation

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Abstract:*The narrations of the infallible leaders have an important role in explanation of the verses of Quran. This application and importance are stated in some verses and narrations. The author of the present article has highlighted 3 application of the narrations in interpreting Quran.*

A.Inferencing methodological bases and rules of interpreting Quran (The important characteristics of Quran such as guidance, comprehensiveness, internal harmony, multi-dimensionality, its freshness during the centuries, its general and particular meanings , its Muhkam and Mutashabih verses, rejecting interpretation of the verses based on your understanding and judgment, etc;)

B. Setting the bases of Quranic interpretation; It means that a commentator should receive the fundamentals of his (her) religious knowledge from the holy Quran and traditions of the infallible leaders, and then begins to interpret the holy Quran.

C. The role of narrations as a source of interpretation (The reason of revelation of the verse(s), application of a verse in its exact case, removal of superficial contradiction among verse(s), ...).

Keywords: *Quran, Knowledge and concept/Quran, comment by the infallible persons /traditions as explanations to Quran /sources of comment of Quran, narrations /Quran, characteristics /Quran, different kinds of verses /Quran, sciences and history*

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Introduction

The credibility of traditions in Quran interpretation

The Quran interpreters and Quran researchers have different opinions regarding the quality and quantity of using traditions to interpret Quran. Regardless of some extremists, majority of Shia and Sunnite interpreters put special emphasize on the importance of traditions in Quran interpretations.

Concerning the credibility of the words of Prophet in interpretation of Quran, God, the Almighty, stated,

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

"And we sent down to you the remembrance so that you can make clear to people what has been sent down to them" (16:44)

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا

"Whatever the messenger gives you, accept it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain."(59:7)

Likewise, there are some verses which introduce one of the responsibilities of prophets as "***teaching the Book and Hikmah***".[1]

The meaning of teaching the Book was not only reiterating the words of Quran, but teaching the meanings, and truth of Quran were meant. The Prophet and infallible imams did their best to do their duty and to elaborate on the teachings of the holy Book, and their elaborations and explanations reached us under the name of "***traditions***".

To prove the authenticity of these traditions and their reliability in interpreting Quran, we can refer to the verse ***Tathir***

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

"Allah only wishes to distance fault from you, and to cleanse you, and to purify you abundantly." *(33:33)*

and

أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ

"Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those in authority among you." *(4:59)*

فَاسْأَلُواْ أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

"Ask the people of the remembrance, if you do not know" *(16:43), (21:7)*

and the frequently narrated tradition of "***Thaqalayn***".

انی تارک فیکم الثقلین کتاب الله وعترتی ما ان تمسکتم بهما لن تضلوا بعدی: کتاب الله فیهالهدی والنور حبل ممدود من السماء الی الارض وعترتی اهل بیتی وان اللطیف الخبیر قد اخبرنیانهما لن یفترقا حتی یردا علی الحوض وانظروا کیف تخلفونی فیهما

Truly, I leave two precious things, the Book of God, and my Ahlul Bayt…

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According to the mentioned verses, commentators and elites of Quranic science have been emphasizing on the necessity of traditions in order to interpret Quranic verses.[2]

How to use Quranic verses to interpreting Quran

Generally, the role of traditions in interpreting Quran can be studied from three aspects:

1.Understanding the principles and rules of interpretation in terms of methodology

2.Determining and completing the bases of interpretation

3.Traditions as the foundation of interpretation

1.understanding the principles and rules of interpretation methodology-wise

Rules of interpretation are a set of principles for understanding Quran and also familiarizing with those features of Quran which influence interpretation (directly or indirectly).[3]By contemplating on the texts of traditions, we can deduce valuable rules which are necessary for understanding Quran. Some of these principles are as follows:

1.1.Quranic understandability

The first important principle in interpretation is accepting this principle that "Quran is an understandable book". This point has been asserted by various traditions. In the traditions, it has been declared that Quran is a book which people should think about. These traditions can be divided into several parts:

In some traditions asserted the understandability of Quran has been such as this tradition from Prophet on Ghadir day, "oh, the group of peoples! Contemplate on Quran! Pay attention to its verses, look at its fixed rules and leave the unfixed ones. I swear by God, its forbiddance and its interpretation are hidden from people unless this one [this person] that I am holding his hand and pulling him towards myself."[4]

In some traditions, it has been ordered to contemplate on Quran and the importance of putting its orders into practice and revoking to it. For example Zurarah who said to Imam Sadiq,

من اين علمت ان المسح ببعض الراس؟ فقال: لمكان الباءِ[5]

How did you know Mash(touching a part of body by wet hand before prayer) should be done on head? He answered, for the letter "ب" [b] in the tradition.[6]

In another tradition a person asked what should a person do when his nail is bleeding and he is putting a plaster on it

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when he wants to take minor ablution [Wudu]?

Imam 'Ali replied[7],

يعرف هذا و اشباهه من كتاب الله عزوجل: " ما جعل عليكم فی الدين من حرج". امسح عليه".

In this issue, the verse 78 of Sura Haj should be referred to.

The next group of traditions specified those frequently said traditions which are about evaluating authenticity of traditions based on Quranic verses.[8]All mentioned traditions are emphasizing on the comprehensibility of Quran on one hand and the authenticity of its general understanding on the other hand.

1.2. The book of guidance and self-construction

What a kind of book is Quran? What kind of knowledge and sciences does it include? Is it a reflection from nature? Is it a healing prescription? Contemplating on Quran shows us it is a Book of Guidance.

Quran is to develop human beings and to make a utopia based on heavenly teachings and rules. The source of a lot of Quranic descriptions like "***light***", "***guidance***", "***reasoning***", etc. is this characteristics of Quran which is guidance. According to traditions, Quran is a guide in all times and places.[9]Quran in its guidance is independent and rich [needless of anything].[10]Looking for a guidance wherever out of the territory of Quran is deviation; as the Prophet said,

"Gabriel came to me and said, oh Muhammad! There is going to be sedition among your nation soon. I said, what is the solution? He said, the book of God… anyone who looks for guidance out of it, God will mislead him."[11]

According to what has been said, Quran is a book of guidance. Due to this, it gives the necessary guidelines for human self-construction and salvation, so when Quran speaks about cosmology or something like this, it aims is not cosmological issues but a higher goal, which is salvation of human beings. This point should be in mind as a principle in interpreting Quran.

1.3. Comprehensibility

Another characteristic of Quran is its completeness and comprehensibility, which means it, includes all elements essential for guidance and does not have any shortcoming.

Imam Ali said,

God has sent a Quran to you, which expresses everything. He kept His messenger alive among you to complete His religion for you and for him [the messenger] as He likes and He sent in His book. He announces good deeds and

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bad deeds, permitted and not permitted deeds by his tongue."[12]

Imam Sadiq said[13],

ان الله انزل فی القران تبیان کل شی حتی و الله ما ترک الله یحتاج العباد الیه الا بینه للناس حتی یستطیع عبد یقول: لو کان هذا نزل فی القران الا و قد انزل الله فیه

He did not neglect needs of people and He explained them to people. In this way, no one can claim I wish it was a talk in Quran about this or that; [truly] God has sent a verse about it in Quran.

1.4. Internal consistency and accordance

One of the teachings of traditions about the text of Quran which is directly confirmed by Quran is the internal compatibility and accordance which exists among its verses.

For example, Imam Ali, referring to disputes among verdicts of judges, emphasized on the completeness of religion of God and its comprehensibility of Quran and then said,

"God, the Almighty, says that He did not leave out anything in this book and it includes everything. He says, a part of Quran is asserting the other part and there is no discordance in it."[14]

1.5. Abrogator of previous Books and guardian of them

According to the traditions, Quran is a guardian, and an abrogator which has a higher position regarding the previous holy books. Holy Prophet said,

ان الله جعل کتابی المیمن علی کتبهم الناسخ لها

"God chose my Book as a guardian and an abrogator of the prophets' books before me."[15]

Imam Sajjad said in his supplication,

اللهم انک اعنتنی علی ختم کتابک الذی انزلته نورا و جعلته مهیمنا علی کل کتاب انزلته

"Oh God! You helped me to write down Quran completely, the Book which is sent as a light, and for the other books, it is a guardian."[16]

1.6. Multi-dimensionality of Quran

Some traditions assert that the text of Quran has the potentiality of being understood by all and can be interpreted differently. Imam 'Ali told ibn 'Abbas when he wanted to send him to debate Khawarij,[17]

لا تخاصمهم بالقرآن، فان القران حمال ذو وجوه، تقول و یقولون، و لکن حاججهم (خاصمهم) بالسنه، فانهم لن یجدوا عنها محیصا

Abu 'Abdul Rahman Salmi said, *Imam Ali passed by a judge and said, do you know what **Nasikh** is and what **Mansukh** is? He said, no. Imam said*[18],

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هلکت و اهلکت.

You got yourself to be destroyed and caused others be destroyed.

1.7.Quran in the passage of time

In some traditions, it has been emphasized that the Quranic teachings and regulations do not belong to any specific time or specific tribe but it is true for every time and place. It seems that this principle is an obvious principle in tradition studies which is needless to be proved.

Imam Sadiq has been asked, no matter how many times I recited Quran, why is it always new and fresh [to me]?

He answered,

As God, the Almighty, did not allocate it to a specific time; [in this case it would] seems unusual in the other times. And it is not specifically for a group of people. Therefore, in any time and for every group, it is new until the end of the world.[19]

Imam Muhammad Baqir said about the surface and depth of Quran:

Its surface is what has been sent (Tanzil) and its depth is its interpretation (Ta'wil), a part of its Ta'wil is known and past and a part left. It is ongoing like the sun and the moon[it is ongoing]. Whenever [the time of] interpretation of a part of it arrives, it would be the same to deads as it is to alives [a metaphor which shows the ongoing nature of Ta'wil].[20]

Quran is alive and will not die. Verses are alive and will not die. If verses were only sent for a specific group , when they die, Quran should die as well. But it is not like this. Verses are true for coming generations as it was for passing ones.

Imam Sadiq said, Quran is alive and will not die, it is ongoing as nights and days, like the sun and the moon. In every era it is ongoing as it was for the first one of us and it is the same for the last one of us. [21]

From these traditions, it is deduced that regulations and characteristics mentioned in verses of Quran are not specific to that special case which they referred to but they can be generalized for new cases.

1.8. The levels of knowing Quran

Contemplating on traditions shows that Quran has different levels. This point has been explained in different traditions. In some traditions, the depth and in some, the surface levels of Quran were the subject of talk.

Imam 'Ali,

ان القران ظاهره انیق و باطنه عمیق لا تفنی عجائبه و لا تنقضی غرائبه و لا تکشف الظلمات الا به

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The surface of Quran is beautiful and its depth is profound. Its wonders have no end and its strange parts are endless. Darkness can not be overcome without it.[22]

Jabir said, I asked Imam Baqir about interpretation of Quran. He told me something. I asked him again. He said something else in its reply. I said, you told me something else before; he said,

جابر، ان القران بطنا و للبطن بطنا. و له ظهر و للظهر ظهر...

Oh Jabir! Quran has a depth and its depth has depths. It has a surface and its surface has another surface.[23]

Sometimes we talk about its surface and sometimes its depths. Fudayl ibn Yasar said, I asked from Imam Muhammad Baqir about this tradition

ما من القران ايه الا و لها ظهر و بطن

There is no verse in Quran unless it has a surface and a depth.

He said,

ظهره تنزيله و بطنه تاويله

Its surface is its Tanzil and its depth is Ta'wil.[24]

i.e. The surface of Quran is the reason of it revelation and its interpretation is its depth.

Imam Ali classified Quranic knowledge into three groups:

God, the Almighty, knows that people of ignorance will change the Book, so He classified His words into three parts: a part of it is only revealed to one who has a pure mind and high understanding so God has opened his heart to Islam. A part of it is only reveled to God and His trustees -those who have perseverance in knowledge. …[25]

1.9. Generalities and specifications

From traditions, we can learn that Quran has generalities and specifications. It means some verses are general, applicable in all situations and for all people and some others are not.[26]In the process of interpretation, it is important to notice the generality or specification of the verses.

10.1. Fixed and unfixed

According to the verses and traditions, Quran has fixed (Muhkam) and unfixed (Mutashabah) verses. As fixed and unfixed traditions, each one, should be explained in an special way regarding its own principles, in traditions our duty concerning each group has been declared. By reviewing the traditions, regarding fixed and unfixed verses we can conclude these points: the importance of Faith, putting fixed verses commands into practice, the necessity of

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accepting unfixed verses while noticing their limitations.

Imam Sadiq said,[27]

ان القران محكم و متشابه، فاما المحكم فنومن به و نعمل به و ندين به. و اما المتشابه فنومن به و لا نعمل بهک. و هو قول الله: " فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ في قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ...

Quran has fixed and unfixed verses. We believe in fixed ones and put them into practice. However, about unfixed ones, we believe in them but we do not put them into practice. This is the word of God (ale 'Imran,7) Who says,[28]

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَاب

"It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Some of its verses are precise in meaning they are the foundation of the Book and others obscure. Those whose hearts are swerving with disbelief, follow the obscure desiring sedition and desiring its interpretation, but no one knows its interpretation except Allah. Those who are well grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it, it is all from our Lord. And none remember except those who are possessed of minds." *(3:7)*

The second point is the interpretation of unfixed verses which is on the shoulder of راسخوان فی العلم "rasekhan fil ilm". It means Prophet and Ahlul Bayt. In various traditions, the necessity of neglecting unfixed traditions and interpret them based on fixed verses have been emphasized.[29]

1.11. Quran abrogation

In holy Quran, there are some verses about the possibility of abrogation of some holy verses, but it is not said it happened. From some traditions, we can conclude that in holy Quran, some verses are Nasikh (abrogator) and some are Mansukh (abrogated).

Imam 'Ali said,[30]

خلف... کتاب ربکم فیکم: مبینا حلاله و حرامه و فرائضه و فضائله و ناسخه و منسوخه

The majesty Muhammad left the book of God among you; a book in which Hilal and Hiram laws, obligatory and nonobligatory, Nasikh and Mansukh have been declared.

According to traditions, recognizing Nasikh and Mansukhis among the prerequisites of scientific books and steps of interpretation. Imam Ali said to a judge, do you know Nasikh and Mansukh? He said, no, imam said, you are lost and make others lost. Interpretation of each letter of Quran needs different criteria.[31]

In some other traditions, it is emphasized that Quran is immune from abrogation. In the first sermon of *Nahj*

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al-Balāghah while mentioning types of Quranic regulations, Imam ‘Ali said,

There are some regulations in the book of God that are obligatory but in traditions they are abrogated. There are some regulations in sunnah which are obligatory but in the Book it is said they can be left.[32]

Another point regarding abrogation is the complete knowledge of Ahlul bayt regarding Nasikh and Mansukh.[33]

1.12. Forbiddance of interpreting Quran based on one’s opinion

In various traditions, we read interpreting holy verses based on one’s opinions which is not supported by traditions or other verses is forbidden. The holy Prophet said, God the Almighty said, anyone who interprets my words according to his opinion and wish does not believe in me. Anyone who resembles me to my creatures does not know me in fact. And anyone who compares [my Deeds with human beings] my affairs is not on this belief.[34]

In addition to that, it has been narrated from him that

من فسر القران برايه فقد افترى على الله الكذب و من افتى الناس بغير علم فلعنته ملائكه السماوات و الارض

Anyone who interprets Quran based on his judgment, truly puts God in the place of being a liar. And anyone who judges among people while he has no knowledge (about it), the angels of heavens and earth will curse him.[35]

Imam ‘Ali told a zindiq (atheist) who insisted on incompatibility among Quranic verses that “Do not interpret Quran based on your opinion! You should learn it from scholars of it. Because its surface (surface of Quran) is similar to the words of human beings, while it is the words of God and its interpretation is not similar to human beings’ words, as no creatures is similar to God.”[36]

1.13. The necessity of referring to Sunnah while interpreting Quran

One of the laws in understanding Quran which is mentioned in traditions is the necessity of referring to traditions in order to interpret Quran. In fact, Quran as it has been declared by verses and traditions, includes fixed verses, unfixed verses, general verses, and specific verses, brief and extended, surface and deep interpretation. Sufficing to the [literal meanings of] the words is not enough and we should go to the depth of Quran. To benefit from Quran more, God, the Almighty, puts the responsibility of explaining verses on the shoulders of holy Prophet.[37] After the Prophet his successors are in the position of “rasekhun fil ‘Ilm”who are responsible for explaining Quran. In holy Quran, someone is named who is

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the witness of messangership of the Prophet and has 'ilmul kitab (ability to interpret Quran)

قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِندَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

"Say: 'Allah is a sufficient witness between me and you, and whosoever possesses knowledge of the book."*(13:43)*

According to the traditions of Shia and Sunnite, the meaning of وَمَنْ عِندَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ is 'Ali.[38] It is worth saying that only that person can realize the true meaning of God's message who is familiar with all aspects of Quran.[39]

In various traditions, it has been asserted that Ahl al-Bayt have comprehensive knowledge regarding Quran and it is necessary to refer to them whenever its interpretation is desired. Here, we are mentioning an example:

Imam Sadiq told Abu Hanifah, are you the religious scholar of Iraq? He said, yes. Imam said, based on what do you judge among them? He replied, based on Quran and the lifestyle of His Prophet Muhammad. Imam said, do you have comprehensive knowledge regarding Quran? Do you know what Nasikh and Mansukh are? He said, yes. Imam said, you claim you know a lot! Wow to you! God puts that knowledge only in the hearts of Ahlul Kitab (the ones this book has been sent to them). Wow to you! That knowledge is only in the hearts of special people from offspring of Prophet. You do not inherit not even a letter from the Book.[40]

We should bear in mind that necessity of referring to sunnah in interpreting Quran does not reject methods of interpretations but it means in addition to Quran and logic, Sunnah and infallibles traditions should be regarded.

2.setting interpretations' bases

One of the important benefits of traditions in interpretation of Quran is its role in preparing the bases of interpretations. The bases of interpretation mean those foundations, presumptions, beliefs and concerns of interpreters, which influence the interpretation of the words of God directly or indirectly.

Any interpreter cultivates the bases of its interpretation in a special ground and put up his interpretation's tent on those foundations. To show the role of these foundations in interpretation, we can imagine an interpreter who concludes that visiting God by eyes is possible. This person will interpret this verse

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

"On that day there shall be radiant faces, gazing towards their lord."

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(75:22,23)

based on his ideas. And a person who believes in 'Ismah of prophets will interpret the verses against 'Ismah according to his beliefs.

In a suitable interpretation method, an interpreter will base his interpretation based on Ahkam, logical regulations, fixed verses of Quran and proved traditions of Sunnah.

For example,

وَمَا تَشَاؤُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

"And you do not please except that Allah please"*(76:30)*

In this verse, God talks about His Will and the will of human beings. There are several questions in front of the interpreter: what is God's Will? What is its relationship with the will of humankind and His Will? Is His Will His Essence-bound attribute or Action-bound attribute? Is His will incompatible with the will of human beings?

There are suitable answers for these questions in religious texts. Therefor an interpreter should refer to the religious resources first and then based on what he learns, he starts interpreting the above mentioned verse. Or in order to interpret the verses regarding Ma'ad, first an interpreter should refer to fixed verses of Quran and fixed traditions to get a picture from it and then based on this understanding starts interpreting the verses about Ma'ad. The reliability of the principles deduced from Quran and traditions is so strong that when an interpreter establishes his belief on them can not desist even when he faces a verse which is in contrast with his own belief. His principle is so authentic in his mind that he tries to interpret in a way which is confirming his principles. Even to get to his desired interpretation, he puts the surface of the verse aside. Getting principles from Quran and traditions in order to interpret Quran is very important. In the view point of Imamiyah, to interpret fixed verses, basically, we cannot refer to any other sources but Quran and Sunnah; It is always possible that an interpreter willingly or unwillingly builds the bases of his opinions over sources other than book of God and traditions, mixes religious elements with unreligious elements.

3.traditions as the source of interpretation resources

The sources or Masadir of interpretation are those documents or resources which interpreters refer to directly to interpret Quran. They embark their interpretations on them. The traditions of infallibles along side other sources of interpretation is a highly useful resource. Some of the most significant

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usages of traditions for Quran interpretation are outlined in the following. This list is not complete.

3.1. Reports on the reasons of revelation of verses

Knowing the reasons of revelation of verses is a suitable way to understand a verse. If we know the reason of revelation of a verse, we can understand it better. Part of the traditions are about the reasons of revelation of the verses. For example, we read in the traditions and history of Shia and Sunnite that the meaning of وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ in the verse إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ[41] is Ali who gave his ring away in his Salah.[42]

3.2. Making Examples

One of the important usages of traditions in interpretation of Quran is citing examples. For example in interpreting "Hasanah" in the verse

وِمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

"But there are others who say: 'lord, give us a merit in the world and good in the everlasting life, and save us from the punishment of the fire."(2:201)

We read that imam Sadiq said, (Hasanah is) the heaven of God in Hereafter and wellbeing and being good-tempered in this word.[43] In fact, the heaven of God, well-being, and being good-tempered are all examples of Hasanah.

Sometimes we see that in interpreting a verse, there are various verses which seem to have incompatible meanings. It means accepting one necessitates rejecting the other one. If we look deeper, we will realize all traditions are to explain different general Quranic contents. For example in interpreting the verse وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا[44] we have various traditions that each one interpret the verse differently. In a tradition from Imam Musa, he said, وَتَبَتَّلْ is التبتل ان تقلب كفيک فی الدعا اذا دعوت *"when you pray, you turn the palm of your hand"*.[45]

In another tradition, imam Sadiq said in its interpretation, "*Pray while you are pointing by a finger*."[46]

Some contemporary interpreters wrote in this regard, there is no incompatibility among interpretations regarding this verse. Because incompatibility exists between a negative and a positive thing. According to Qamus, which means تبتلas discontinuity and release, these traditions are not incompatible. These traditions mean this.

3.3 citing the special meanings of verses

In addition to explaining the general meaning of some words or expressions

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based on some traditions, some verses of Quran have been explained. For example, imam Jawad was asked about the meaning of Samad. He said,

السید المصود الیه فی القلیل و الکثیر[47]

That Master Who is meant and aimed in everything, big or small.

Another example is a tradition that Sheikh Saduq mentioned in interpretation of Sura Al-Tawhid.[48] Likewise, in various traditions, the meaning of الصادقین in the verse اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ وَكُونُواْ مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ[49] has been declared.[50]

3.4. Solving the surface controversy among verses

Sometimes we confront some controversies among verses. By the help of some traditions, we can solve this problem. For example, it can be assumed there is incompatibility between these verses:

فَانكِحُواْ مَا طَابَ لَكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاء مَثْنَى وَثُلاَثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ تَعْدِلُواْ فَوَاحِدَةً

"Then marry such women as seem good to you; two, three, four of them. But if you fear that you cannot do justice, then one only," (4:3)

وَلَن تَسْتَطِيعُواْ أَن تَعْدِلُواْ بَيْنَ النِّسَاء وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ

"You will not be able to be just between your women, even though you are eager" (4:129)

While according to traditions the meaning of justice in the first verse is to be just in life expenses and nafaqa while in the second, justice in loving them is the aim.[51]

3.5. outlining conditions for Quranic rules

The conditions of some absolute rules and regulations mentioned in Quran have been outlined in traditions. For example, the rule about will in the verse,

فَإِن كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ

"If they have a child, a quarter of what they leave shall be yours after any bequest she had bequeathed, or any debt." *(4:12)*is absolute and according to this verse, a person can decide about his wealth…. While according to traditions, a person can decide for a third of his possession after him.[52]

3.6. General allocation

Some generalities of Quran have been explained in details in traditions: for example, in the verse, ***وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ***[53] the word ***أَزْوَاجُكُمْ*** refers to a general type of marriage, temporary or life- long. This verse has been explained by traditions and it says only life-long marriage is meant. According to the tradition of Tahdhib al-Ahkam, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr said, I asked imam Sadiq about temporary marriage, he

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said, *it is halal for you from God and his messenger. I said, what is its limitation?* He answered*, of its limitation is you can inherit from her and she can not inherit from you*.[54]

3.7. Brief explanation

A lot of Ahkam, moral or theological issues, and stories have been mentioned in Quran briefly, but their details have been mentioned in Sunnah. In Quran we read, وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُواْ مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ[55]

But the condition and details of (Salat) pray and Zakat have been mentioned in Sunnah. The explanations of Quranic stories like the biography of prophets, i.e. Kahf story or the birds of Abraham have been included in traditions. In Quran, we read, ***وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا***

"nor backbite one another" *(49:12)*

but the definition of Ghaybah (backbiting), its limitations, the permitted cases… all are explained in sunnah. In Quran, it is said after the Prophet, there is a leader who should be followed and his characteristics have been said. But this leader has been introduced by the Prophet. In a tradition, Jabir Ansari said, when God sent the verse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ

"Believers, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those in authority among you"*(4:59)*

I said, oh the Prophet! We know God and His Messenger! However, who are the اولی الامر that God puts their obedience besides His obedience? He answered, oh Jabir! They are my successors and leaders of Muslims after me. The first one of them is 'Ali ibn Abi Talib,…[56]Likewise the details of names and attributes of God, eschatology,…

3.8. Explaining the internal meaning of verses (Ta'wil)

The meaning of ta'wil is understanding the internal meaning of Quran which is not understandable by looking at its surface. A part of traditions of Shia regarding Quran interpretation is about this. In the verse وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّيْنَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُم مِّن كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنصُرُنَّهُ...

"and when Allah took the covenant of the prophets: 'that I have given you of the book and wisdom. Then there shall come to you a messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you, …"(3:81,82)

There are some verses explain this verse. For example, Fayd ibn Abi Shaybah said imam Sadiq said after reciting that verse,

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You believe in the Prophet and help 'Ali. I said, do youhelp Ali? He said, yes, after Adam till the end of the world. And God will not choose any Nabi or Prophet unless he comes to this world to fight for Ali.[57]

The author of *Tafsir* Manahij al-Bayan wrote about these traditions, these traditions are about internal meaning and not for the purpose of interpretation. *Tafsir*and *ta'wil* are both true in their own place and it is clear that ... so proving a thing which is in surface of Quran with a thing in ta'wil which belongs to internal meaning of Quran is not in contrast. …"[58]

In the following tradition, you can see the meaning of this verse (Ta'wil) by Imam Ali:

Salam ibn Mustanir narrated from imam Sadiq who said, the opponents chose some epithet for themselves that God only gave it to 'Ali ibn Abitalib. The meaning of it (its ta'wil) has not sent down yet. I said, when will it be sent? He answered, when it is the very time, God will gather prophets and infallibles in front of him to help him. And this is what God says, on that day, the flag of holy Prophet will be given to 'Ali ibn Abitalib and he will be the leader of all people. All people will be under his flag while he is their leader. This is the meaning of this verse."[59]

3.9. The interpretation of Mutashabih verses

Regarding these verses, the surface of them should be unfolded and their Ta'wil should be studied. Traditions which are about interpretation of Mutashabih verses can help us to understand meaning. For example, in interpreting the verse

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

"On that day there shall be radiant faces, gazing towards their lord."*(75:22,23)*imam Rida said, "*it means faces are shinny and ... looking at the blessings of their Lord*"[60] and also imam Ali said in a tradition, *"This is what God says: ناظره الی ربها" the meaning of looking at God is looking at the blessings of God, the Almighty"*.[61]

3.10. subject-based interpretation

In some interpretational traditions, by putting related verses aside and a topic related to them besides that topic has been explained. For example, imam Sadiq said about different aspects of Kufr: Kufr in the book of God has five aspects: one aspect is denying Kufr. And it is of two types; kufr in ignoring what God commands which is Bira'at kufr and not valuing God's blessing[62] then he continued explaining the other types of Kufr by the help of Quranic verses.

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3.11. inferencing the religious concepts from verses of Quran

In a group of traditions, some religious concepts have been defined according to holy verses of Quran. For example, imam Ali said, all piety is gathered in two sentences of Quran. God the Almighty says,

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ

"So that you will not be saddened for whatever does not come to you, nor be overjoyed in what has come to you"(57:23)."[63]

In another tradition imam Sajjad said, "*piety has 10 parts: the highest level of piety, is the lowest level of Wara' ... be aware that piety is in a verse from the book of God:* لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا"[64]

3.12. Interpretation based on words

In some interpretations, words are the pivot of interpretation. An example from these kinds of tradition is the one in which imam Baqir explained the meaning of sabh **سبح** in the verse ***إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا*** [65]It means for sleep and …you have a long time.[66]

In fact, in this tradition, the literal meaning of sabh which is rest has been explained[67].

3.13. Different realization

The role of traditions in this regard is very important. Sometimes the meaning of a tradition highlights one meaning of a verse over the others. For example, about the meaning of **عظام** in this verse

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىَ يُحْيِي هَٰذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِئَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَل لَّبِثْتَ مِئَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى العِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"or of him, who, when passing by the ruined village that was fallen on its roofs, remarked: 'how can Allah give life to this after its death? ' thereupon Allah caused him to die, and after a hundred years he revived him. He asked: 'how long have you remained? "A day, ' he replied, 'or part of a day. 'Allah said: 'rather, you have remained a hundred years. Look at your food and drink; they have not rotted. And look at your donkey (that had died). We will make you a sign to the people. And look at the bones (of your donkey) how we shall revive them and clothe them with flesh. 'and when it had all become clear to him, he said: 'I know that Allah has power over all things." (2:259)

We have two opinions about it: some say the meaning of it is the bones of

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beasts and the other the bones of a resurrected person[68].

From some traditions we can conclude that the meaning of the resurrected person's bones are meant. According to 'Ayashi, imam Sadiq said, the first body member that God created were eyes which were like the thin skin of eggs. Then he was told, how long did you wait? He answered, a day. Then when he saw the sun did not set, he said, part of a day. God said you waited 100 years, so look at your food and drink which are not spoilt…" then he looked at the bones, which were joining to each other and saw how blood started running in his veins. When he stood up, he said, I knew God is Able to do anything.[69]

3.14. Interpreting Quran according to Quran

Some traditions try to give us another meaning of Quranic verses by the help of other Quranic verses. As the interpretational relations of verses are not clear for us, for example, we can not say the word **ظلم** in verse

الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُواْ إِيمَانَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمُ الأَمْنُ وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ

"Those who believe and have not confounded their belief with harm security belongs to them; and they are guided" (6:82)means the same as in this verse luqman,13

يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

"My son, associate none with Allah, to associate others with Allah is a tremendous wrong."(31:13)

The reason of this ambiguity for us is the various examples of this word. In order to be able to choose, one should know the reasons, which are not in the verse. And also the word **شرک** has various realization.

As the holy Prophet and his successor have comprehensive knowledge about Quran, they can give a suitable interpretation. About the above mentioned verses Prophet provided us with their true interpretation.[70]

3.15 determining Nasikh and Mansukh

In the first part, we said that Quran includes Nasikh and Mansukh. Knowing them needs having knowledge about the time of their revelation. Naturally, first an abrogator verse should be sent down, and then a verse can be nullified. This point is understandable from traditions and not Quran.

For example, according to the traditions, the verse

فَاعْفُواْ وَاصْفَحُواْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

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"So pardon and forgive until Allah brings his command. Allah is powerful over everything."(2:109)

which is known as 'Afw verse, is rejected by the verse

قَاتِلُواْ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّهِ وَلاَ بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَلاَ يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلاَ يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُواْ الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

"fight those who neither believe in Allah nor the last day, who do not forbid what Allah and his messenger have forbidden, and do not embrace the religion of the truth, being among those who have been given the book (Bible and the Torah), until they pay tribute out of hand and have been humiliated."(9:29) which is known as Sayf verse.[71]

Regarding text of Quran, the importance of this knowledge is more; as Quran in addition to the general aspects common among all texts, enjoys some specialties which are specific to it. The secret of the Quranic characteristics is being from God, which shows Him. A book which is endowed to the heart of the Prophet as the last messenger which takes the responsibility of guidance in all eras and places. (imam Ali encyclopedia, vol.1,Quranic Studies, Ali Naqi Khudayari)

[1] Refer to: Qurān, 2:129,151; 3:164;62:2

[2]Refer to: *Majma' al-Bayān*; vol.1,pp.39,40; Mutishabih al-Quran va mukhtalafa, vol.2,p.148; al-bayan fi *Tafsir* al-Qurān, p.397; Tabarsi,*Majma' al-Bayān*, vol.1, pp.15, 18; al-Burhan, vol.2, p.156; al-Itqan, vol.2, p.351; Manahil al-'Irfan, vol.1,pp.480,481.

[3] No doubt to understand anything and to be able to interpret it is essential to have a kind of knowledge even very general to it. It is subject of misunderstanding if we deal with interpretation without knowing the bases. The more this knowledge, the better understanding.

[4]*Al-Ihtijaj*,vol.1,p.146; *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol.27,p.193,tradition,43)

[5]*Kafi*, vol.3,p.30.tradition 4; al-faqih, vol.1, p.102, tradition 212)

[6] In this case the verse ma'idah, 6 has been referred to.

[7]*Kafi*, vol.3,p.33,tradition 4; Tahdhib al-Ahkam, vol.1, p.363, tradition 27)

[8]*Al-Bayan*, p.365

[9]*Kafi*, vol.2, p.216, tradition, 2)

[10]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 175

[11]*Tafsir 'Ayashi*, vol.1,p.3

[12]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 86

[13]*Tafsiral-Qumi*, vol.2, p.451; al-Mahasin, vol.1,p.266, tradition 352; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol.92, p.81, tradition 9)

[14]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 133

[15] Al-Ihtijaj, vol.1,p.57; *Bihar al-Anwār*, tradition 9, p.292

[16]Sahifah Sajjadiyah, pray, 42

[17]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 77; Avael al-Maqalat, p.401

[18]*Tafsir 'Ayashi*, vol.1,p.12,tradition 9; *Wasa'il al-Shia*, volo.27,p.202,tradition 65

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[19] ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol.1,p.93; Tusi, *Amali*, p.580

[20] Basair al-Darajat, p.216; *Wasa’il al-Shia*, vol.27, p.96, tradition 49

[21]*Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.2,pp.2,3, tradition 6; refer to, *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol.92, p.83, tradition 14

[22]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 18; Al-Ihtijaj, vol.1, p.390; refer to, *Kafi*, vol.2,p.598,tradition 2

[23]Al-Mahasin, vol.2, p.300, tradition 5; *Wasa’il al-Shia*, vol.27,p.192,tradition 41

[24] Basair al-Darajat, p.216; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol.92, p.97, tra.64

[25] Al-Ihtijaj, vol.1,p.376; *Wasa’il al-Shia*, vol.27, p.193,trad.44

[26] Refer to: *Kafi*, vol.1, p.213, tradition 2; *Tafsir ‘Ayashi*,vol.1,p.164,trad.6; Basair al-Darajat, p.223,trad.4

[27]*Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.1, p.162

[28] Refer to: *Sahifah Sajjadiyah*, prayer. 42; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol.23,p.191

[29] Refer to: *taghir al-Burhan*, verse 7 ale ‘Imran, ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol.2,p.290; for the meaning of referring unfixed based on fixed verses refer to: *Manahij al-Bayan*, vol.1,pp.27,28; compared with *al-Mizan*, vol.3,p.43

[30]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon.1; *Kafi*, vol.1,p.64,trad.1; *Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.1,p.14,trad.1

[31]*Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.1, p.12; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol.92, p.110, trad.9

[32]*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 1

[33] Refer to: *‘Ilal al-Sharayi*‘, vol.1, p.90, *Khisal*, p.576, Ḥarāni, *Tuḥaf al-‘Ughul*, p.349

[34]*‘Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, vol.1,p.116

[35]*Kamal al-Din*, vol.1,p.256; refer to *Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.1,p.17,18.

[36] Al-Tawhid,p.262

[37]*Holy Quran*, Nahl,44; refer to Jumua, 2

[38]Refer to *Kafi*, vol.1, p.229,tradition,6; *Tafsir ‘Ayashi*, vol.2,p.220,tradition 76; *Bishart al-Mustafa*, p.194; *Tafsir* Qurtubi, vol.9,p.336

[39]*Manahij al-Bayan*, part.1,p.60

[40] *‘Ilal al-Sharayi*‘,p.89

[41]your guide is only Allah, his messenger, and the believers; those who establish the prayer, pay their obligatory charity, and bow down (in worship).(5:55)

[42]*Al-Kashaf*, vol.1,p.347; *Tarikh Damishq*, vol.42, p.357, no.8950; *Al-Badayah va al-Nahayah,* vol.7,p.358; *Marifah ‘Ulum al-Hadith*,p.102,no.25; *Shawahid al-Tanzil*, vol.1,p.226,no.233; *Dur al-Manthur*, vol.3, p.105, p.580, no.1;al-Yaqin,p.348,no.127;*al-Shafi fi al-Imamah*,vol.2,p.217; *al-Iqtisad*,p.198.

[43]*Tafsir ‘Ayashi*,vol.1,p.98

[44]dedicate yourself devoutly to him(73:8)

[45]*Nur al-Thaqalayn*,vol.5,p.449

[46]*Kafi*,vol.2,p.48,no.3,p.481,no.5

[47]*Kafi*,vol.1,p.123

[48] Refer to *Al-Tawhid*,p.88,chapter interpretation of Sura Tawhid.

[49]fear Allah and stand with the truthful.(9:119)

[50] Refer to *Kafi*,vol.1,p.207-

[51]*Tafsir ‘Ayāshi*,, vol.1,p.207,refer to. *Manahij al-Bayan*,vol.4,p.185

[52] Refer to. *Kafi*,vol.7,pp.10,11

[53] 4:12

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[54] *Tahzib al-Ahkam*,vol.7,p.265,no.68

[55] Establish your prayers, pay the obligatory charity, and bow with those who bow. (2:43)

[56] *Kamal al-Din*,p.253;*Kifayat al-Athar*,p.53;*Manaqib Ale Abi Talib*,vol.1,p.242

[57] *Tafsir 'Ayashi*,vol.1,p.181;*Kanzul Fawaid*,vol.1,p.54,55; *Mukhtasar Basair al-Darajat*,p.32

[58] *Manahij al-Bayan*, vol.3,p.290

[59] *Tafsir 'Ayashi*,vol.1,p.181

[60] *Al-Tawhid*,p.116,no.19

[61] *Al-Tawhid*,p.262

[62] *Kafi*,vol.2,p.389

[63] *Nahj al-Balāghah*,Hikmat 439.

[64] *Kafi*, vol.2,p.128,no.4

[65] you have by day prolonged occupations.(73:7)

[66] *Tafsiral-Qumi*,vol.2,p.392

[67] Refer to *al-Sihah*,vol.1,p.372;*Lisan al-Arab*,vol.2,p.470

[68] *Majma' al-Bayān*,vol.2.p.174

[69] *Tafsir 'Ayashi*,vol.1,p.140

[70] *Majma' al-Bayān*,vol.4,p.327

[71] Refer to: *Manahij al-Bayan*,vol.1,p.308-312

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