

THE DOMAIN OF QURANIC KNOWLEDGE BASED ON THE VERSE "AN EXPLANATION FOR ALL THINGS"

Zeinab al-Sadat Majidi¹

Abstract: *The author explains the scope of Quranic knowledge based on the verse "An Explanation for All Things" (Tibyān li-Kulli Shay'). The paper first presents points from the verse and related Traditions to elucidate it. Then, it discusses and critiques the interpretations of the verse found in Tafsir al-Namuna and Tafsir al-Mizan.*

Keywords: *Domain of Quranic Knowledge; Verse "Tibyān li-Kulli Shay"; Tafsir al-Namuna - Critique; Tafsir al-Mizan - Critique.*

Introduction:

One of the significant topics in divine religious teachings is the knowledge granted by God Almighty to His Prophets. These Prophets possess knowledge that no other servant of God can access, nor can they find a way to it. This knowledge is bestowed by the Creator of all things and the

¹ Researcher in Islamic Studies

Sustainer of all, and therefore, it is free from error, ambiguity, or distortion. No creature can disrupt the reception or transmission of this knowledge, and the recipient is never doubtful about its truth.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), as the Seal of the Prophets, receives this knowledge from the Creator of the universe through the Holy Quran and its complementary revelation. Thus, he becomes fully aware of all created beings in ultimate clarity. However, it should be noted that God Almighty is not detached from the act of creation; He continually exerts His dominion and will over His creation, in such a way that no creature is exempt from this divine decree. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are also subject to this divine order. Based on this, no one can claim that everything that is to happen in this created world has been completely written down without any possibility of change, alteration, erasure, or affirmation, and that nothing new can be added to it nor can anything be removed from it.

According to divine monotheistic teachings, there is no book where the knowledge of creation and their characteristics is fully inscribed without any possibility of change. The Creator of that book, with His writings, is not incapacitated by what is written; He has authority over His writings, and can make changes, add, or subtract from it. Therefore, when the Quran introduces its knowledge as knowledge of all things, it does not mean that all of God's knowledge is contained within the Quran or that God's knowledge is identical with His essence and has been reflected in the Quran and the Prophet's self. It is not correct to say that the Quran and the Prophet's self-contain the essence of God.

Such a flawed view would not only equate the Quran and the Prophet's self with the essence of God, but also suggest that the Quran and the Prophet's self are more complete than the essence of God because it assumes all of God's knowledge is reflected within them. This would imply that the Quran and the Prophet's self are separate from and possess God's essence, which is entirely contradictory to fundamental divine monotheistic teachings.

Thus, in explaining and interpreting the Quranic verses related to the knowledge contained within the Quran and the knowledge of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them), we must always remember that the knowledge present in the Quran, and within the Prophet's and Imams' selves, is knowledge that God Almighty has created by His will. It is created knowledge, not the intrinsic knowledge of God Almighty that precedes God's will and cannot be subject to His will or intention. Because that which is subject to will and intention is brought into existence by will and intention, it does not have existence before will and intention; otherwise, the concept of will and intention would have no meaning.

With this understanding, we examine the scope of Quranic knowledge based on the verse "And We sent down to you the Book as an explanation for all things" and Traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), while critically analysing some interpretations and exploring the views of scholars and thinkers.

1. Verse and Explanation

1.1. Text of the Verse

God Almighty says:

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ جِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَ هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً وَ بُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

"And [warn of] the Day when We will resurrect among every nation a witness over them from themselves. And We will bring you, [O Muhammad], as a witness over them. And We revealed to you the Book as an Explanation for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims." (An-Nahl, Verse 89)

1.2. Notes on the Verse

First Point:

The beginning of this noble verse speaks of the Day of Judgment and explains that on that Day, a witness will be raised from every nation to testify against them. Meanwhile, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) will be brought as a witness over these witnesses and people.

This part of the verse does not specify who these witnesses will be for each nation. In previous nations, the witnesses will be the messengers, prophets, and their successors, not angels, because the verse clearly states that the witnesses of each nation will be from among that nation itself. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) will be a witness over them. However, the verse does not mention who the witnesses will be for the community of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) and whether the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) will be a witness over them just as he is for the previous nations.

In another verse, God Almighty says:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

"So how [will it be] when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, [O Muhammad], as a witness against these [people]?" (An-Nisa, Verse 41)

In the interpretation of this noble verse, it has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said:

نَزَلَتْ فِي أُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ خَاصَّةً، فِي كُلِّ قَرْنٍ مِنْهُمْ إِمَامٌ مِمَّا شَاهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَ
مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ شَاهِدٌ عَلَيْنَا

"This verse was revealed specifically for the nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny). In every generation from among them, there is an Imam from us who is a witness over them, and Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is a witness over us." (Al-Kafi, Volume 1, Page 190)

Second Point:

Continuing from the verse after mentioning the existence of witnesses in every nation, God Almighty explicitly states that "We revealed to you the Book as an Explanation for all things." Given the first part of the verse, it becomes clear that those who are the witnesses of the nation of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny), along with the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny), are those for whom the Quran—with the characteristic of clarifying all things—has been revealed, and they possess all the knowledge of the Quran.

In another verse, God Almighty says:

وَقُلْ اِعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

"And say, 'Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do.'" (At-Tawbah, Verse 105)

In the interpretation of this noble verse, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said regarding the term "the believers":

"He meant us."²

Thus, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Imams (peace be upon them) see the deeds of the servants. The Holy Quran also introduces itself as "a explainer for all things," meaning the ultimate explanation and exposition of everything. Therefore, the Imam, who is the bearer of this Quranic knowledge, possesses the ultimate explanation, knowledge, and awareness of all things through the Quran. Consequently, all things, with all their details, are clear and manifest to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and nothing is hidden from them.

Numerous Traditions on the knowledge and awareness of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) clearly state that they have complete knowledge of all matters concerning the servants, and being witnesses over creation is one of the aspects that confirm this knowledge and awareness attributed to the Imams (peace be upon them).

Explanation of This Truth in the Traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and Points from These Traditions

The traditions narrated from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) in the interpretation of this noble verse explain that when God Almighty introduces the Quran as the ultimate explanation and clarification of everything, it means that nothing occurs in creation or enters the world of creation and predestination except that its knowledge is already present in the Holy Quran before it materializes.

First Tradition:

²Al-Amali (by Al-Tusi), Volume 1, Page 409

نَحْنُ وَ اللَّهُ نَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ مَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَ مَا فِي النَّارِ وَ مَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ . قَالَ: فَبِهَيْتُ أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ . فَقَالَ: يَا حَمَّادُ! إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ . قَالَ: ثُمَّ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: «... وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ...»؛ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فِيهِ تَبْيَانٌ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ³

Hammad Lahham narrates that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said:

"By God, we know what is in the heavens, what is on the earth, what is in paradise, what is in hell, and what is between them." He said: "I was astonished and stared at him." The Imam (peace be upon him) said: "O Hammad! Indeed, this is mentioned three times in the Book of Allah." He then recited this verse: "...And We revealed to you the Book as an explanation for all things..." This is from the Book of Allah, in which there is an explanation of everything.

Hammad Lahham was astonished by the Imam's (peace be upon him) knowledge. However, in this noble tradition, the Imam (peace be upon him) emphasizes that this claim is based on the Quran, which all Muslims believe in, and that in this Book, there exists knowledge and awareness of the heavens, the earth, paradise, hell, and everything within them. The Imam (peace be upon him) indicates that the Imam's knowledge is the same as the knowledge in the Book of Allah.

Second Tradition:

قَدْ وَدِدْتِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ، وَ أَنَا أَعْلَمُ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَ فِيهِ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ وَ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. وَ فِيهِ خَبْرُ السَّمَاءِ وَ خَبْرُ الْأَرْضِ وَ خَبْرُ الْجَنَّةِ وَ خَبْرُ النَّارِ وَ خَبْرُ مَا كَانَ وَ خَبْرُ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ. أَعْلَمُ ذَلِكَ كَمَا أَنْظُرُ إِلَى كَفْيٍ. إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ فِيهِ تَبْيَانٌ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ⁴.

³Al-Tafsir (by Al-Ayyashi), Volume 2, Page 266

⁴Al-Kafi, Volume 1, Page 61

In a narration by Abd al-Ala ibn A'yun, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) gave birth to me, and I know the Book of Allah, which contains the beginning of creation and what will occur until the Day of Resurrection. It contains the news of the heavens, the news of the earth, the news of paradise, the news of hell, and the news of what has happened and what will happen. I know this as clearly as I see my hand. Indeed, Allah says in it that it is an explanation of everything."

Third Tradition:

مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ مِنْ الْعِلْمِ بَعْضَهُ، مَا خَلَا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ أَعْطَاهُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ كُلِّهِ. فَقَالَ: «تَبِيلَانَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ»⁵

Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) said:

"God has not sent any prophet without granting him some of the knowledge, except for the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), to whom He granted all knowledge. And He said, 'an explanation for all things'."

Fourth Tradition:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ الرَّسُولَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَ أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ، وَ أَنْتُمْ أُمِّيُونَ عَنِ الْكِتَابِ وَ مَنْ أَنْزَلَهُ وَ عَنِ الرَّسُولِ وَ مَنْ أَرْسَلَهُ... فَجَاءَهُمْ بِنُسَخَةٍ مَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى وَ تَصَدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ تَفْصِيلَ الْحَلَالِ مِنْ رَيْبِ الْحَرَامِ. ذَلِكَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَنْطِفُوهُ وَ لَنْ يَنْطِقَ لَكُمْ؛ أُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنَّ فِيهِ عِلْمٌ مَا مَضَى وَ عِلْمٌ مَا يَأْتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَ حُكْمٌ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَ بَيَانٌ مَا أَصْبَحْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ. فَلَوْ سَأَلْتُمُونِي عَنْهُ لَعَلَّمْتُكُمْ⁶.

⁵Tafsir Furat al-Kufi, Volume 1, Page 145; Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 26, Page 64

⁶Al-Kafi, Volume 1, Page 60

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) narrates that Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) said:

"O people! Indeed, God the Blessed and Exalted sent to you the Messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny) and revealed to him the Book in truth, and you were unlettered regarding the Book and the one who revealed it and regarding the Messenger and the one who sent him... So, he brought to them the copy of what was in the previous scriptures, the confirmation of what was before him, and the distinction between what is lawful and what is doubtful in what is unlawful. That is the Quran, so ask it to speak, and it will not speak to you; I will tell you about it. Indeed, it contains the knowledge of what has passed and the knowledge of what will come until the Day of Resurrection, and the judgment between you, and the explanation of what you differ about. If you asked me about it, I would teach you."

Fifth Tradition:

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) speaks about the differences among scholars in issuing legal opinions (fatwas) and criticizes those who rely solely on personal opinions. He says:

تَرُدُّ عَلَى أَحَدِهِمُ الْقَضِيَّةَ فِي حُكْمٍ مِنَ الْأَحْكَامِ، فَيَحْكُمُ فِيهَا بِرَأْيِهِ؛ ثُمَّ تَرُدُّ تِلْكَ الْقَضِيَّةَ بِعَيْنِهَا عَلَى غَيْرِهِ، فَيَحْكُمُ فِيهَا بِخِلَافِ قَوْلِهِ؛ ثُمَّ يَجْتَمِعُ الْقُضَاةُ بِذَلِكَ عِنْدَ الْإِمَامِ الَّذِي اسْتَقْضَاهُمْ، فَيُصَوِّبُ آرَاءَهُمْ جَمِيعاً. وَإِلَهُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَ نَبِيُّهُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَ كِتَابُهُمْ وَاحِدٌ فَأَمَرَ هُمْ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ بِالِاخْتِلَافِ فَأَطَاعُوهُ؟ أَمْ نَهَاهُمْ عَنْهُ فَعَصَوْهُ؟ أَمْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ دِيناً نَاقِصاً فَاسْتَعَانَ بِهِمْ عَلَى إِيْتِمَامِهِ؟ أَمْ كَانُوا شُرَكَاءَ لَهُ فَلَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا وَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَرْضَى؟ أَمْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ دِيناً تَاماً فَقَصَرَ الرَّسُولُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ عَنْ تَلْيِغِهِ وَ آدَائِهِ؟ وَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ يَقُولُ: مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَ فِيهِ تَبَيَّنَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ؛ وَ ذَكَرَ أَنَّ الْكِتَابَ يُصَدِّقُ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضاً وَ أَنَّهُ لَا اخْتِلَافَ فِيهِ. فَقَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ: وَ لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافاً كَثِيراً. وَ إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ ظَاهِرُهُ أُنْبِيقٌ وَ بَاطِنُهُ عَمِيقٌ، لَا تَفْقَى عَجَائِبَهُ وَ لَا تَنْقُصِي عَرَائِبَهُ وَ لَا تُكْشِفُ الظُّلُمَاتُ إِلَّا بِهِ.

"A case is brought before one of them regarding a judgment, and he judges based on his own opinion. Then, the same case is brought before another, and he judges contrary to the first. Then, these judges gather before the leader who appointed them, and he approves all their opinions, despite having one God, one Prophet, and one Book. Did Allah command them to differ and they obeyed? Or did He forbid them, and they disobeyed? Or did Allah send down an incomplete religion, and they are assisting Him in completing it? Or were they partners with Him, so they have the right to say what they wish and He must be pleased? Or did Allah send down a complete religion, and the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) fell short in conveying and fulfilling it? Allah, the Exalted, says: 'We have not neglected in the Book a thing' and in it is the clarification of everything. And He mentions that the Book confirms itself, with no contradiction within it. He says: 'If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.' The Quran is elegant on the outside and profound on the inside; its wonders never cease, and its marvels never end. Darkness cannot be dispelled except by it."

In this noble tradition, Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) states very detailed points about the knowledge of the Qur'an:

1. Despite the fact that the God of this Ummah (nation) is One, their Prophet is one, and their Book and Divine laws are one, why should there be differences among them in their duties? The differences among judges, muftis, and scholars of this Ummah, all of whom aim to deliver God's rulings and explain His religion to the people, stem from what cause? The Imam explains that this difference is neither due to a deficiency in the religion nor due to any shortcoming on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) in conveying it.

2. How should disagreements among judges be resolved? The Imam states that to resolve these disagreements, one should refer to the authority

who appointed these judges. However, when referred to, this authority confirms and approves both judgments without considering either as wrong. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) condemns this practice and indicates that such a situation is incorrect and invalid according to divine religion and teachings.

3. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) describes the disagreement in judgments among judges as follows: Discrepancies arise in a single, specific, real-life case, meaning a dispute or claim that has actually occurred, not in two separate incidents from one person, two similar incidents from different people, or incidents at different times or locations.

Disagreement in a case from various aspects may lead to different judgments; however, if the case is the same in reality and two or more different judgments are given for that same case, it is clear that such a discrepancy relates to the judge's understanding rather than the varying conditions of the case.

On the other hand, judges in the nation of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) issue judgments based on the commands of God, His Prophet, and His Book. Since God, the Prophet, and the Book are one and consistent, any disagreement cannot be attributed to God, the Prophet, or the Book. Therefore, these judges have not judged according to the Book of God, or at least one of them has not. Similarly, if someone who appointed these judges and approved both of their judgments is found to be in error, it indicates that this person has also deviated from the right path and the teachings of divine religion.

4. Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) does not consider the differences among judges in a single, specific, real-life case to be attributable to God, the Prophet, or the Quran and related matters and such differences in divine rulings under these conditions are not permissible. The Imam then cites verses from the Quran indicating that the Quran provides a complete

and comprehensive explanation of every event for the people. He reminds that there is no contradiction in the Quranic verses; all Quranic verses confirm each other, and no contradiction can be found among them.

5. Considering the previous four points, it becomes clear that the Holy Quran provides God's judgment on every event with all its details. Someone who possesses the knowledge of the Quran is fully and clearly aware of God's ruling on that matter. Naturally, if two people have this same level of Quranic knowledge, it is impossible for them to have differences in conveying the divine ruling on that event.

6. According to the statement of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), the scope of Quranic knowledge is not limited to general rulings; it is comprehensive enough to cover all relevant details for its scholar. The knowledge of the Quran is such that when someone possesses it, they not only gain complete awareness of God's judgment but also understand God's ruling in every situation with all its specifics and judge accordingly. Therefore, a scholar with knowledge of the Quran is fully and clearly informed about divine rulings in both general principles and specific details.

7. Based on the points previously discussed, the knowledge of the Quran and divine religion cannot be confined to the apparent meanings of the limited words in the Book of God and their interpretations. These words are limited, and their interpretations are also restricted by general public understanding. However, external events have conditions and characteristics beyond human comprehension. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) refers to the "deep inner meaning," indicating that the Quran has meanings beyond the general interpretations of its words—meanings that are not accessible to the general audience.

Thus, the Holy Quran contains many layers of meanings, which God Almighty reveals to those whom He is pleased with. Through these layers,

individuals can access deeper truths through the words and verses of the Quran.

Among this community, there are those who have surpassed others, understood God's will, committed to it, and stood firm in their dedication. These individuals, through their sincere faith and practice of the Quranic and divine teachings that have been clarified to them, receive special divine favour and attain a unique insight and understanding that others do not. Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) states: "The wonders and complexities of the Quran are inexhaustible, and the darkness is dispelled through it." In this statement, he refers to those who attain such insight, indicating that the Quran possesses an enlightening quality that is never exhausted. God continuously reveals new truths to the bearers of the Quran, which were previously hidden from them. God also promises those who adhere to the Quran, act upon it, and remain steadfast that He will provide them with pure, refreshing water to drink.

God Almighty says:

وَأَنْ لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا⁷

"And had they been upright on the way, We would certainly have given them abundant water."

And in another verse, He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ. نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ⁸

"Indeed, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast—the angels will descend upon them, [saying], 'Do not fear and do

⁷Sura Al-Jinn, Verse 16

⁸ Sura Fussilat, Verses 30 and 31

not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised. We are your allies in this life and in the Hereafter."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), in response to Abu Basir regarding the explanation of the verse "We would certainly have given them abundant water," says:

لَأَمُدَّنَاهُمْ عِلْمًا كَيْ يَتَعَلَّمُونَهُ مِنَ الْأَيِّمَةِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

"We would have provided them with knowledge so that they could learn it from the Imams, peace be upon them."⁹

In another tradition, he adds:

لَأَقْدِنَاهُمْ عِلْمًا كَثِيرًا يَتَعَلَّمُونَهُ مِنَ الْأَيِّمَةِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

"We would have imparted to them much knowledge that they would learn from the Imams, peace be upon them."¹⁰

Sixth Tradition:

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ حَتَمَ بِنَبِيِّكُمْ النَّبِيِّينَ، فَلَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا. وَ حَتَمَ بِكِتَابِكُمُ الْكُتُبَ، فَلَا كِتَابَ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا. وَ أَنْزَلَ فِيهِ تَبْيَانَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَ خَلَقَكُمْ وَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ، وَ نَبَأَ مَا قَبْلَكُمْ، وَ فَصَّلَ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَ خَبَرَ مَا بَعْدَكُمْ، وَ أَمَرَ الْجَنَّةَ وَ النَّارَ وَ مَا أَنْتُمْ صَائِرُونَ إِلَيْهِ¹¹

"Indeed, Allah, exalted is His mention, has sealed the Prophets with your Prophet, so there will be no Prophet after him forever. And He has sealed the Books with your Book, so there will be no Book after it forever. And in it, He has revealed the explanation of everything: the creation of you,

⁹ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 24, p. 28

¹⁰ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 24, p. 29

¹¹ Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 269

the creation of the heavens and the earth, the news of what came before you, the judgment between you, and the news of what will come after you, and the matter of Paradise and Hell, and what you are destined to."

In this noble tradition, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) elaborates on the vastness of the knowledge contained in the Holy Quran. He specifies that Allah has detailed in the Quran all aspects of human creation, the heavens, the earth, various peoples, Paradise, Hell, and future events. Thus, a scholar of the Quran has clear and comprehensive knowledge of these matters.

Seventh Tradition:

إِنَّ الْعَزِيزَ الْجَبَّارَ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ كِتَابَهُ وَهُوَ الصَّادِقُ الْبَارُ؛ فِيهِ خَبْرُكُمْ وَخَبْرُ مَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ وَخَبْرُ مَنْ بَعْدَكُمْ وَخَبْرُ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ. وَ لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ مَنْ يُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ لَتَعَجَّبْتُمْ.

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) says:

"Indeed, the Almighty and Compeller has sent down to you His Book, which is the Truthful and the Just; in it is your news, the news of those before you, the news of those after you, and the news of the heavens and the earth. If someone were to inform you about this, you would be astonished."¹²

This noble tradition refers to the information contained in the Quran regarding you, those who preceded you, those who will come after you, and what exists or will exist in the heavens and the earth. Therefore, if someone informs you about this, you would be astonished. This statement by the Imam indicates that not everyone can understand these details from the Quran; hence, those who hear from someone knowledgeable about them would be amazed. The amazement could be due to either the way the Quran conveys these matters or the astonishing nature of the knowledge itself, both of which highlight that not everyone has access to this knowledge.

¹² Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 599

Eight Tradition:

كِتَابُ اللَّهِ؛ فِيهِ نَبَأُ مَا قَبْلَكُمْ وَ خَبِيرُ مَا بَعْدَكُمْ وَ فَصْلُ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ؛ وَ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُ¹³

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) says:

"The Book of Allah contains the news of what came before you, the news of what will come after you, and the judgment between you; and we know it."

In this noble tradition, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) clarifies that the knowledge contained in the Holy Quran is accessible to the Imams. This means that others who are not Imams do not have access to this knowledge from the Quran, indicating that this knowledge is not public but exclusive to the Imams.

3. Explanation of Tafsir Namuna and its Critique and Analysis

In Tafsir Namuna, regarding the utmost clarity of the Quran as mentioned in the holy verse under the title "The Quran is an Explanation of Everything," it states:

"One of the most important discussions presented in the above verses is the concept of the Quran being 'Tibyan for everything.' The word Tibyan (which can be read with a kasrah or fathah on the letter 'T') has a infinitive meaning, that is, to explain or clarify. From this expression, and considering the broad meaning of 'everything,' it can be well-argued that the Quran contains the explanation for everything. However, considering that the Quran is a book of guidance and human development, revealed for the perfection of both the individual and society in all spiritual and material aspects, it becomes clear that what is meant by 'everything' is all matters necessary for traversing this path. It is not implying that the Quran is an encyclopaedic

¹³Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 61

book containing all the specific details of mathematical, geographical, chemical, physical, botanical sciences, and the like. Although, the Quran has made a general invitation to the acquisition of all sciences, and all the mentioned sciences and others are included within this general invitation.”¹⁴

The Critique and Analysis of this Explanation

In this critique of the Tafsir Namuna commentary, several points are worthy of attention and consideration.

First Point: Like all those who accept the authority of the apparent meaning of words in their literal sense, Tafsir Namuna explicitly states that the holy verse indicates that the Quran contains the explanation of everything. This point, considering this and other similar verses that are not few in the Quran, suggests that God has placed the knowledge of all things in the Quran.

Second Point: By referring to the Quran, it becomes clear that each individual, by paying attention to the meanings of words and the way meanings are derived from words, gains only a little knowledge in various fields; and even that is not complete or thorough but rather general and abstract. For example, concerning the reality of the human being, which is one of the central topics in the Quranic discussions, by referring to the verses of the Quran without any other preconceived notions from human knowledge and research related to the human being, an accurate and complete definition and explanation of the reality of the human being cannot be obtained from the Quran.

By merely referring to the literal text, it does not become clear what prior existence, if any, this person, who is an individual of the human species, had before entering this world; how their body was formed; what similarities

¹⁴Tafsir Namoonah, Vol. 11, p. 361

and affinities their organs and limbs have with their ancestors over generations; whether the soul and spirit were created before or after the body; if the human soul existed before the body, what was its nature? If the soul is created after the body and with the body, when and how does it become attached to the body and merge with it? What is the nature of this union with the body? If the soul originates from the body itself, how does this formation occur? What impact do the changes and transformations of the body have on the soul and spirit of a person? Does the soul and spirit undergo change and transformation along with the body or not? And there are many other questions about the reality of human existence.

All those who have contemplated the Quran so far and have carefully examined and researched all its words have not been able to provide clear and convincing answers to any of these questions by limiting themselves to the literal meanings of the Quranic text. In fact, throughout the history of Quranic scholarship, ambiguity and generalization on these matters have only increased.

Third Point: Considering the two previously mentioned points, it can be said that no one with conventional human knowledge can claim that we can fully explain even one aspect of human life—whether individual or social—without referring to specific divine teachings. That is, in a way that, without any ambiguity regarding the entire lifespan of a human being, under various spatial and temporal conditions, it can be completely clear based solely on the general understanding of the words. No one can provide their audience with complete knowledge on such a topic in a manner that leaves no aspect of it unknown.

Fourth Point: The authors of Tafsir Namuna have recognized this problem, but they have sought to solve it by interpreting the phrase "everything" (kull shay') in a way that deviates from its apparent meaning, limiting it to matters related to the ultimate purpose and intention of God in

revealing the Quran. Thus, they have expressed it as: "The Quran is a book of guidance and human development, revealed for the perfection of the individual and society in all spiritual and material aspects." This statement from Tafsir Namuna tries to maintain the generality of "everything" while also addressing the problem of the absence of such generality. They acknowledge that no one can, in the usual sense, clearly and completely understand and convey everything related to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and everything that exists in the heavens and the earth, from the Quran. Therefore, they conclude that the meaning of "everything" is not general in an absolute sense but rather refers to the generality in relation to guidance and human development in both material and spiritual aspects.

However, understanding this issue requires two perspectives. From the first perspective, it can be clearly and openly stated that such clear explanations on various aspects of human life do not exist in the Quran for the general public. From the second perspective, we see that in this very Quran, numerous topics are presented that, at first glance, seem unrelated to guidance and human development. It is impossible for someone to clearly and explicitly explain their connection to these subjects using general understanding alone, without considering other branches of human knowledge—which have undergone significant changes, developments, and evolutions throughout human history.

Fifth Point: The Quran is the book of God, the Creator of humanity and everything else besides God. The Quran was revealed among all these divine creations to an individual in the Arabian Peninsula named Muhammad al-Amin, who, after receiving the Quran, became known as the "Messenger of God" and "Seal of the Prophets." He had not acquired any human knowledge and lived an ordinary and conventional life, just like other ordinary people, before the revelation of the Quran. No words of human knowledge have been recorded from him, yet he lived such a pure and

virtuous life in that society that there are no reports of any immoral or unethical actions from him. On the contrary, in a society where human rights were not valued, he was known as Muhammad al-Amin (Muhammad the Trustworthy).

Such a person, with such a background, became the bearer of a divine book that aims to undertake the guidance, human development, and perfection of humanity in all its dimensions—throughout history until the Day of Judgment, across different times and under various conditions—conditions that are unimaginable for us today, let alone for the people of that time. This book speaks to all people in all ages, with their specific circumstances.

Although this book communicates with people in a common language, it seeks to convey unimaginable knowledge about God, the universe, and humanity's place within this entire creation. It aims to clearly outline the path of guidance and development for each individual, in every region and time, without relying on human knowledge, for the general public. Such a task is beyond our comprehension, and no one can, through their own intellect, derive such knowledge from the Quran and easily present it to everyone.

Sixth Point: Considering the previously mentioned points, the development of a human being and leading them to the peak of perfection in both individual and social dimensions depends on a complete understanding of the person and all the entities that influence their development. Therefore, to accurately and fully accomplish what Tafsir Namuna deems necessary knowledge within the Quran, we inevitably need to access knowledge essential for this purpose, which must be obtained from the Quran. Such a task is certainly beyond the capability of any human being without a connection to divine knowledge.

The Quran is a continuous divine thread stretched between heaven and earth. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) were connected to the Creator of the world and humanity through this divine thread, and all the knowledge and decrees of God reached them through this connection. Hence, the knowledge within the Quran is all-encompassing and limitless, beyond the grasp of any human mind. Only the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) possess this knowledge, and they grant it to the believers and their followers to the extent they deem appropriate.

As stated clearly in the traditions related to this verse, this concept has been well explained.

Therefore, the Quran indeed contains the knowledge of all creation, but this knowledge is not made available to everyone in the conventional sense; rather, it is bestowed upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) through divine grace. This is the clear message of the holy verse, which states that the Quran explains everything in the utmost clarity, but not for everyone—only for those who have been chosen by God Almighty for this knowledge.

4. Tafsir al-Mizan's Explanation

4-1. The late Allameh Tabataba'i believes that if we look only at the conventional linguistic interpretation of the knowledge within the Quran, what can be derived is a limited understanding, focused on the conventional purpose of guiding the general public towards the origin and the afterlife. Additionally, through this method, it is not possible to grasp all the details and conditions of these matters, but only generalities can be obtained in these discussions. However, he connects the concept of the Quran being an explanation of all things with the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his

progeny) role as a witness and by linking this with the verses of testimony in the Quran. He points out that the intended meaning of "the Book" refers to the Lawh al-Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet). Ultimately, he concludes that the supreme level of knowledge in the Quran, which transcends the literal meanings of words, is not specifically for the guidance of creation. He writes:

"Since the Quran is a book of guidance for all people, and this is its characteristic, the meaning of 'everything' refers to all things related to the guidance of creation—that is, everything people need for their guidance, including true knowledge about the origin and the afterlife, superior morals, divine laws, stories, and exhortations. Thus, the Quran is the utmost explanation of all these matters."

This statement by the commentators, based on the apparent meaning of "Tibyan" (explanation), is understood as a conventional linguistic explanation, which means revealing the intended meaning through verbal indication. Because from the verbal indication of the Quran, we only find guidance in generalities of what was mentioned.

However, in the narrations, it is indicated that the Quran contains the knowledge of what has happened in the past, what will happen, and what will happen until the Day of Judgment. If these narrations are correct, it implies that the meaning of "Tibyan" is broader than what can be derived through verbal indication. Therefore, it is possible that there are indications beyond conventional verbal communication, revealing secrets and hidden matters that cannot be accessed through the usual means.

What appears from the context of these verses, which revolve around the three fundamental principles of monotheism, prophethood, and the afterlife—these being the focus of these verses—is that the statement of God, "And We have sent down to you the Book," to the end, is not an independent clause; rather, it serves as a state of the pronoun in "We brought you."

Thus, the meaning of the verse becomes: "And We make you a witness over them, while previously in the world We had sent down to you a Book that explains everything necessary for the guidance of the people, by which the truth is distinguished from falsehood." Therefore, the Prophet bears witness to the deeds of the people and on the Day of Judgment, will bear witness against the wrongdoers for their injustices and for the Muslims regarding their adherence to Islam.

A subtle point that confirms this meaning is that in some verses of the Quran, testimony is mentioned alongside the Book, such as in the statement of God: "And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the Book will be placed, and the Prophets and witnesses will be brought forth."

Soon, God willing, it will be explained that the intended meaning of this Book is the "Preserved Tablet" (Lawh al-Mahfuz). The testimony of the Preserved Tablet, although different from the testimony of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), agrees with him in the title of the 'revealed book'.¹⁵

4-2. Critique and Analysis of This Explanation

In this interpretation, the noble verse has been considered in four ways:

1. The first approach is the same as mentioned in Tafsir al-Namuna—that is, from the perspective of conventional verbal indication, the Quran provides general guidance concerning its purpose, including generalities about guiding people towards the origin, prophethood, the afterlife, superior ethics, divine laws, stories, and admonitions. The previous discussion on this matter is sufficient.

¹⁵Al-Mizan, Vol 12, p. 324-325

2. The second approach is presented by the late Allameh Tabatabai, who, based on narrations, interprets "Tibyānān likulli shay" (an explanation of everything) as relating to knowledge of the past and future until the Day of Judgment. Allameh Tabatabai states that if these narrations are authentic, they imply a non-conventional, allusive and symbolic interpretation, which is a special type of knowledge. It is clear from Allameh Tabatabai's statements that he is not fully convinced of these narrations, as he uses the phrase "if authentic."

However, numerous traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have indicated both in the interpretation of Quranic verses and independently, that the Imams (peace be upon them) are aware of all that has occurred and all that is decreed for the future by God. Therefore, it would be evident to Allameh Tabatabai that this knowledge is clear and definitive. This knowledge of the Imams (peace be upon them) is attained through and by means of the Quran, and the Imams have reached such a level of knowledge due to their comprehension of the Quran.

Thus, Allameh's assertion that this knowledge and interpretation are not part of conventional, general linguistic teaching is accurate; rather, it is another form that God has designated for them—meaning the multiple layers of the Quran that contain divine objectives provide an unimaginable knowledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them). Therefore, the verse cannot be limited to a narrow interpretation, restricting it to a few cases without details, but should be understood in its apparent general sense of encompassing all knowledge within the Quran.

The Quran has a deeper level of interpretation, and only those firmly rooted in knowledge understand it. This reveals that complete knowledge of the Quran is not public, although the general populace benefits from a certain level of Quranic knowledge.

Thus, it is clear that this verse and similar ones in the Quran can be understood in their apparent general sense, but the complete knowledge is confined to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and his successors. In this way, the general populace is restricted to the clear verbal indications of the Quranic verses, while some companions, under the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and his successors, have reached certain layers of Quranic knowledge.

The third view is the one chosen by the late Allameh Tabatabai, which states that these verses are used to argue the three principles of monotheism, prophethood, and resurrection. Accordingly, the verse aims to convey that God has made His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) a witness over the witnesses of the nations. This is linked to the sending down of a book that is the ultimate expression of all matters. In other words, God has sent a Quran to His Prophet in this world that possesses this characteristic, and on the Day of Judgment, He will have the Prophet testify about the witnesses of his nation regarding their fulfilment of their duties.

According to Allameh, the Quran is indeed a complete explanation of monotheism, prophethood, and resurrection, but not of everything that exists in creation. However, it seems that he connects the Quran's being a "complete explanation of everything" with the Prophet's being a witness. Thus, he must believe that the Quran's completeness in terms of monotheism, prophethood, and resurrection is specific to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny). Yet, in his discussion on "interpreting the Quran by the Quran," which he addresses in the first volume of *al-Mizan*, he refers to this verse to support a general understanding of the Quran. It appears that his view on this verse differs from the one he presents in the introduction of his commentary.

In the introduction, after mentioning this verse as evidence for interpreting the Quran by the Quran, he writes:

"How can it be that the Quran is an explanation of everything, but not an explanation of itself?"¹⁶

Reflecting on Allameh's perspective on this verse shows that, because the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has been chosen by God to be a witness on the Day of Judgment, God has sent him a book that is a complete explanation of everything. This suggests that this characteristic of the Quran is specific to the Prophet and the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). However, in the introduction to his commentary, Allameh considers the Quran to be a complete explanation for the general public.

Another point of reflection regarding this interpretation is that, even if we accept that the Quran ultimately provides clarity for its general audience concerning monotheism, prophethood, and resurrection, all those who refer to the Quran on these matters should not have any disagreements about these three principles. This is because the Quran is supposed to be complete and without deficiency in its explanation of these topics. However, we observe that disagreements about these principles and other aspects of divine religion among Muslims are extensive and numerous.

This indicates that scholars and researchers in the field of Quranic understanding have strayed from the clear guidance that the Quran should provide to the general public. Instead, the apparent meaning of the Quran has not managed to guide the general public to the truth. Therefore, the Quran, even in matters like monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, and other religious issues that should be clear to the general public, has not relied solely on its own explanation but has instead referred people to its Prophet and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them).

¹⁶Al-Mizan, Vol 1 p. 10

Certainly, this does not mean that the Quran has provided no knowledge to its general audience regarding religious matters. Rather, the Quran has established the foundational clarity for the general public on the fundamental principles of religious knowledge. The Book of God, considering human nature's inclination toward monotheism, directs people's attention to their Creator, makes them aware of themselves, introduces their neediness to their Lord, and reminds them of His blessings.

Given this framework, the Quran has clarified the duties of its representatives to the people and has called them to follow the teachings of His Prophet. Additionally, it has established that stability in religion is achieved through complete adherence to the teachings of the Prophet and his successors, rather than providing exhaustive explanations of all religious matters for everyone.

Fourth View: This view is essentially not separate from the third one but rather complements it. To support his interpretation of the Quran's being a "complete explanation of everything" and its connection with the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his progeny) witnessing role, he has considered other verses of the Quran and examined the relationship between testimony and the book. For instance, based on the verse "The Book was placed, and the prophets and witnesses were brought" (Quran 7:8), he believes that the "Book" in this verse refers to the Preserved Tablet, which contains all human actions in a very clear form and itself will bear witness on the Day of Judgment. He then notes that the testimony of the Preserved Tablet is distinct from that of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), but he considers them related in terms of the judgment and decree of the revealed book sent to the Prophet.

From Allameh Tabatabai's statement— which needs to be fully examined in another discussion—it appears that the knowledge contained in the Preserved Tablet is not limited to religious matters alone but encompasses

all aspects of creation with all its details. Therefore, if the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has access to this Preserved Tablet, it would not be accurate to claim that he lacks knowledge of non-religious matters. If the Quran is also related to the Preserved Tablet, then the knowledge of the Preserved Tablet would be reflected in the Quran. However, if we consider the Preserved Tablet to be a book other than the Quran, then the Prophet and the divine leaders (peace be upon them) access it through the Quran. This topic requires further elaboration, which should be addressed in its appropriate context.

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