



## Quranic-Intellectual Recitation of the Truth of the Religion Perfection, Considering the Necessity of Internal and External Compatibility of the Third Verse of Surah Ma'idah, along with a Critique of Sunni Views

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### **Abstract**

The perfection verse (third verse of Surah Ma'idah) is one of the most important verses of the Qur'an in the guardianship and Imamate discussion, in which the sects generally refer to the following interpretive narrations in explaining it while there is a lot of controversies. Shiite narrations consider the verse revelation on the day of Ghadir and about the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH), but the Sunnis deny this. In this article, for the first time, by categorizing the views of the Sunnis and considering the necessity of internal compatibility of the content of the verse and external compatibility with other verses and the intellectual necessities and without quoting narrations, is proven that the perfection of religion is possible only with Imamate and Wilayah with a novel style; and this is the Shiite vote. This research easily refuted all the possibilities mentioned in Sunni sources by the mentioned method and without the need to enter into the usual disputes in the interpretation of the verse. Recognize the time of verse revelation and proving the scope and territory of the Imamate and the Imam's conditions are other results of this research.

**Keywords:** *Imamate; Perfection Verse (Third Verse of Surah Ma'idah); The Islamic Prophet (PBUH), Religion; Perfect; Complete*

### **Introduction**

The Holy Qur'an is the prime source of enlightenment in Islam, and the issue of Imamate is the source of most discrepancies among Muslims. The chief question and basis of the disputes between Shiites and Sunnis on the matter of Imamate are: Has the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) introduced his heir and the leader of the people after him to them or not? Because if the answer is yes, people will no longer have a say. Among the verses discussed in the issue of guardianship, the third verse of Surah Ma'idah is known as the "verse of perfection" or the verse of "ikmal":

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلامِ ذَلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (المائدة، 3)

*“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allāh, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islām as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.” Al-Mā'idah (3)*

The subject of debate in this verse is from «... اليوم يئس...» to «... ديناً» as it becomes apparent later that this part in this noble verse is a parenthesis; whether they have a unity of descent with the beginning and the end of the verse or not. Sunnis, likewise, acknowledge that this part is a parenthesis (Ibn Ashur, 1999, 5:30). It is related that when the Jews came across these expressions, they said, "If such a day were for us, we would make it an Eid" (Suyuti, 1983, 2: 258; Qurtubi, 1944, 6: 61). This reaction of non-Muslims is to the accounts given in this verse, indicating the particular significance of its subject.

The narratives of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) accentuate that the perfection of religion depends only on the Imamate. And the verse of perfection has been descended about the guardianship of Imam Ali (PBUH). But, in the Sunni narrations through the Companions, there is no reference to the issue of Guardianship or the reports indicating it had been dwindled (Suyuti, 1983, 2: 257-259). Now the question emerges: If there was no narration under this verse, can the reason for the perfection of religion be inferred from the verse itself? And can the holy verse alone prove the issue of Guardianship and Imamate? The essence of this matter is that the Holy Quran is both consecutive and the word of God and has the highest value and rank among all Muslims. Additionally, the Qur'anic analysis of the verse and the examination of its meanings will decide the accuracy of the subsequent narrations.

In this article, first, the views of the Sunnis are counted in four categories. Then the phrase

«... اليوم يئس الذين كفروا من دينكم فلا تخشوهم وَاخْشَوْنِ» *"Today, those who disbelieve despair of your religion, so do not fear them and fear me"* is analyzed independently with the help of external evidence and assuming that it is not associated with other components of the discussed verse. Then, the independent analysis of the phrase «... اليوم أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ» *"Today I have perfected for you your religion and ... a religion"* has been done. Next, regardless of the two previous analyzes, considering that they are related to each other, these two terms are re-examined. In all three parts, it has been confirmed that the subject of the holy verse is nothing except the matter of Imamate. This method of presentation is one of the innovations of the present text, and with the method employed in this study, all the possibilities raised by the Sunnis regarding what the perfection of religion is, have been refuted.

In this research, an effort has been made to have the least reliance on historical reports, and in cases of need, popular topics among the sects have been used.

It should be remarked that before this, the "Al-Mizan" and "Tasnim" interpretations have proposed valuable points that are sometimes referred to in the present study for the Qur'an by Qur'an interpretation of this noble verse. But in comparison with the two, in the present study, in addition to the new way of presentation, reliance on narratives has decreased. Other than the two mentioned works, the author did not find any other work following such a method and fulfilling its purpose without using narrations.

## 1. *Sunni Opinions on the Perfection of Religion*

Before starting the study of the holy verse and the critique of Sunni beliefs, it is essential to have a concise overview of the most salient Sunni opinions, mainly taken from the narrations reported by the Companions and Followers.

Regarding the reason for the perfection of religion, diverse sayings have been cited by Sunnis; Such as the descent of the last verses of the Sharia rules, the conversion of all the Arabs to Islam, the conquest of Mecca, and the absence of the pagans in Hajj, the non-circumambulation of the naked pagan around the house of God, or the defeat of the infidels. Regarding the cause of the infidels' frustration, the Sunnis have also stated that the infidels were disappointed with the return of the Muslims to the harams - especially the return to the haram foods. In the light of the interpretations of the Sunnis, it is clear that these sayings have been used both about the disappointment of the infidels and the perfection of the religion and the completion of the blessings and the divine satisfaction of Islam (Razi, 2000, 11: 286-287; Zamakhshari, 1986, 1: 605; Qurtubi, 1944, 6: 61-64 Tabari, 1991, 6: 51-55; Siouti, 1983, 2: 257-259; Beizavy, 1997, 2: 115).

Based on the statistics of this study, all the views of the Sunnis fall into four divisions: "minor matters", "minor Sharia rules", "completeness" and "comprehensiveness". "Minor matters" refer to matters outside the principle of religion, such as the grandeur of the population. "Minor Sharia rules" also refer to the rulings on the prohibitions of meat or the rulings on Hajj. But the essence of "completeness" is the revelation of the last verses of the Sharia rules, and therefore, the completion of the revelation and the closing of the case of religion, which is the reason for the termination of prophecy. Also, the definition of "comprehensiveness" is the inclusion and inclusiveness of religion over human needs, the maximum responsibility to these demands, and the inclusion of all sciences.

## 2. *Analyzing the Frustration of Infidels and External Agreement with Other Verses of the Qur'an*

«الْيَوْمَ يَيْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْتَنُوا»

"This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me"

Notwithstanding what day is meant by «الْيَوْمَ» "the day", and whether this day is the same as the day of the "perfection of religion" or not, in this section, the frustration of the infidels is interpreted by other verses of the Qur'an in the light of intellectual meticulousness, and the link between the issue of infidels' despair and the completeness of religion is disregarded. According to this sentence «الْيَوْمَ يَيْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ» "This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion" the infidels had hoped concerning Islam before this point. So at this time, something new had happened, provoking the frustration.

In the light of intellectual meticulousness and reflection, it becomes apparent in the verses that when it is said that the infidels were disappointed with Islam, they were frustrated with its deterioration and collapse. Because they had wished the decline of Islam and the apostasy of the Muslims - not to benefit off Islam:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفَئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ .. (الصف، 8) وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَفَارًا حَسَدًا (البقرة، 109) وَ لَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَ لَا النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ... (البقرة، 120) وَ لَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا ... (البقرة، 217)

"They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths..." As-Saff (8), "Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves" Al-Baqarah(109), "And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you

*follow their religion” Al-Baqarah(120), “And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever” Al-Baqarah (217).*

Hence, it is only one thing that can thwart them: to learn that Islam will remain and that their attempts to debase Islam are useless. So, what has been achieved - whatever it is - is the preserver of Islam and the sponsor of its continuation.

By using intellectual meticulousness, and before dealing with the Qur'anic evidence, it becomes apparent that the security and continuation of Islam demand the existence of a person who is a complete scholar of Islam; And the administration and leadership of society must be in the hands of such a person. Else, the disbelievers would not have lost hope. Assuredly, this knowledge and leadership were gathered in the Messenger of God - particularly at the end of his blessed life, when the majority of the peninsula was governed by Islam. But if these features were only within him and Islam was reliant on that person solely, the infidels would have hoped that with the passing of the prophet, they would accomplish their goals (Javadi Amoli, 1969, 21: 581).

The verses of the Qur'an validate the above interpretation, and the following evidence shows that this was a threat: The infidels had exactly hoped for the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The first mark is the issue of the cessation of prophecy, stating that the Qur'an specified the end of prophecy by the Great Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (الأحزاب، 40)

*“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allāh and seal [i.e., last] of the prophets. And ever is Allāh, of all things, Knowing.” Al-Ahzāb (40)*

It is very improbable that the pagans and the People of the Scripture who lived in Medina and Mecca and followed the news of the Muslims were uninformed of the end of the prophecy. Consequently, they naturally thought that with the death of the Prophet, there would be no one to supervise the Muslims as he did. Therefore, they considered the deterioration of Islam to be dependent on the death of the Prophet.

The second evidence cited by Allameh Tabatabai is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not have a son to become his inheritor, guardian, and successor. This made the infidels happy, as they mocked the Prophet and appeared to think of his government as human kingdoms:

إِنَّ شَانِكَ هُوَ الْأَيْتُرُ (الكوثر، 3)

*“Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off” Al-Kawthar (3).*

As a result, they found the death of Islam depending on the death of its prophet (Tabatabai, 1997, 5: 176; Javadi Amoli, 1968, 122).

The third mark is some verses clarifying about this hope of the infidels, (Javadi Amoli, 1968, 121):

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ \* قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَرِبِينَ (الطور، 30 و 31)

*“Or do they say [of you], “A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time”?\* Say, “Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters.”” At-Toor (30, 31)*

The fourth evidence is the verses that foreshadow the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) death as a stimulus for the apostasy of some of Islam and forbade it and rebuked the apostates:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ .... (آل عمران، 144)

*“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed....” Āl-‘Imrān (144)*

This apostasy is what for which the infidels were striving.

Now, if the hope of the infidels was the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), definitely what frustrated them must be linked to the aftermath of this event. That is, the infidels knew that Islam would not fade even with the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). This points at only one thing: the continuation of the path of the Prophet - nothing else.

If it is decided that something is only related to the era of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or cannot substitute him, it is not only not unpleasant for the infidels but also promising. Hence, the revelation of the Sharia rules on Hajj or the ones covering the prohibitions of meat or other minor rulings can never thwart the infidels. Even the conquest of Mecca and the military and political rule over the infidels, as long as Islam is reliant on one person, cannot disappoint the infidels from the decline of Islam.

Hence, on this day, the replacement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was recognized and introduced, and as described, this sequence needs comprehensive knowledge of religion and leadership over the community: this is exactly the Imamate.

### **3. Analysis of the Perfection of Religion and Its External Agreement with Other Verses of the Qur'an**

«الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَ أَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَ رَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا»

*“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islām as religion.”*

Various Shiite and Sunni analysts concur that this phrase is in the unity of descent with the former phrase, and the meaning of «الْيَوْمَ» here is the same as the previous «الْيَوْمَ», and it is not a matter of two days and two times (Motahari, n.d., 4) : 888). Parallel with the infidels being frustrated, the religion is perfected. This is conceivable from the appearance of the verse - especially by repeating the word «دينكم». But some researchers believe in the theory of two different times (Qurtubi, 1944, 6: 60 and 61). Therefore, to be as reliable as possible, it is essential to study the perfection of the religion independently and assume no connection with the despair of the infidels.

Perfecting the religion is one of the things that God attributes to Himself, and He blesses the Muslims with this perfection. Further, he stresses that by perfecting the religion, he has completed his blessings upon us. The perfection of religion cannot be considered a matter without a cause, and this cause cannot be considered a minute and simple thing.

Some Sunnis have deemed the perfection of religion to mean the totality or completeness of religion; meaning that the revelation of the last verses of the Sharia rules perfected the religion and completed the set of religions, and after that the revelation was interrupted and the prophecy ended. -the last rules are sometimes held as the ones on the prohibitions of meat in this verse, and sometimes as the ones on Hajj. Some Sunnis have interpreted the perfection of religion in minor and non-religious matters, such as the glory of the Muslim population (Razi, 1999, 11: 286-287, Zamakhshari, 1986, 1: 605 Qurtubi, 1944, 6: 61-64 Tabari, 1991, 6: 51-55 Siouti, 1983, 2: 257-259, Ellipse, 1997, 2: 115) and some have held the perfection of religion as the comprehensiveness and inclusion of religion concerning all the rules and sciences demanded by human beings. (Shazli, 1991, 2: 833, Rashid Reza, 1993, 6: 154-166).

The interpretation of the "perfection" of religion as the "completeness" of religion is of higher value than the notions that have interpreted the "perfection" of religion in minor and non-religious subjects - including the vast Muslim population and non-circumambulation of the naked polytheist. But it

has its disadvantages. Perhaps the interpretation of the "perfection" of religion to the "completeness" of religion is due to the closeness of the meanings of "complete" and "perfection" as these two have many semantic similarities (Mostafavi, 1941, 10: 112). And the distinction between the two is essential.

Literally speaking, the "completeness" of anything suggests that its components are present, and it does not require anything else. Hence, every part of the "whole" causes its "wholeness", and without each part, the "completeness" cannot be achieved (Ragheb Isfahani, 1992: 168). But not every element of "whole" is the cause of its perfection; rather the requirement of "perfection" is the fulfillment of the purpose of "whole" (Ragheb Esfahani, 1412: 726). Consequently, regarding "perfection", the discussion is about quality and not quantity: in other words, every "perfect" is "complete" but not every "complete" is "perfect" (Javadi Amoli, 1969, 21: 596, *ibid*, 1968, 253, Motahari, n. d., 4: 890). Accordingly, one method to determine the efficacy of opinions about the "perfection" of religion is to ascertain how the purpose of religion is accomplished. That item is the "perfection" of religion. Religion is "perfect" when it has no defects and does not require anything further.

If the "perfection" of religion means the "completeness" of religion, it is manifest that as long as the Messenger of God (PBUH) is alive, his mission will remain and revelation will continue and religion will be complete. Consequently, the meaning of "*Today*" in this phrase cannot be the day of "Be'sat" (Prophetic Mission) or "Emigration" and even the conquest of Mecca, and the content of the verse indicates that it is one of the last ones (Sadeghi Tehrani, 8:68) and it does not matter that in what surah and what context it is. Nevertheless, the Shiite and Sunni agree that Surah Ma'idah is the last Surah revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) (Tabatabai, 1996, 5: 170; Suyuti, 1983, 2: 259, Alusi, 1994, 3: 233; Feyz Kashani, 1994, 2:10, Razi, 1999, 11: 288; Shazli, 1992, 2: 841). It is also reported that some of the Companions, upon hearing this verse, noticed the imminence of the Prophet's death (Rashid Reza, 1993, 6: 167).

Lastly, it should be regarded that if the "perfection" of religion means the "completeness" of the elements of religion and thus the end of prophecy - such that there is no replacement for the prophet - it is a kind of withholding of blessings and violation of purpose; this is not in line with the tone of granting the Muslims and completing the blessings and satisfaction with religion. As a result, the interpretation of the "perfection" of religion as the "completeness" of religion is denied, except with the exposition that will be given in the next part (Internal Consistency).

Another view of the Sunnis regarding the perfection of religion is the perfection due to the inclusion and comprehensiveness of religion with the explanation that will come. This interpretation is higher than the interpretation of "perfection" to the "completeness" of religion as it refers to the extent of the sciences and the application of religion and the maximum responsibility to human needs. In the light of this sense, the dignity of Islam and the Qur'an has been further recognized. Of course, this interpretation has different expositions (Shazli, 1992, 2: 833; Rashid Reza, 1994, 6: 154-166, Razi, 1420, 11: 2000).

To describe the subject and the connection between "completeness", "finish" and "comprehensiveness" and "perfection" of religion, it is essential to pay more attention to the verses of the Qur'an along with intellectual meticulousness. The Qur'an regards religion to be the one thing that has been revealed to all the prophets, and the difference has been in the Sharia and the rules, and the prophets are the medians of delivering religion to human beings:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ... (آل عمران، 19) شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى.. (الشورى، 13)

*"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allāh is Islām..." Āl-‘Imrān (19) "He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus...." Ash-Shūra (13)*

While the human demand for prophecy is constant;

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (الأحزاب، 40)

*“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allāh and seal [i.e., last] of the prophets. And ever is Allāh, of all things, Knowing.” Al-Ahzāb (40)*

Consequently, the finality of prophecy is admissible only if the final religion satisfies all human needs at all times. Otherwise, God's wisdom will be questioned, and people will have a reason before God for their misguidance:

رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنذِرِينَ لئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَ كَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا (النساء، 165) ... رَبَّنَا لَوْ لَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ .. (طه، 134) (القصص، 47)

*“[We sent] messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against Allāh after the messengers. And ever is Allāh Exalted in Might and Wise.” An-Nisā (165) “Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger so we could have followed Your verses...” Tā-ha (134) and Al-Qasas (47)*

Accordingly, the end of revelation and prophecy cannot be counted as the perfection of religion, and everything that is needed for human happiness in this world and the hereafter needs to be communicated and completed by the the last prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him). Because until the Day of Judgment, his halal will be halal, and his haram will be haram; his religion must satisfy all the religious needs of the people until the Day of resurrection:

وَ مَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ.. (آل عمران، 85)

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him...” Āl-‘Imrān (19)*

Thus, the extent and comprehensiveness and response to all human needs until the Day of Judgment is a necessity and requirement for the end of prophecy; And the end of prophecy without this comprehensiveness calls into question divine wisdom and is a crude violation of the idea of prophecy and divine mission, which is the very purpose of creation:

وَ مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَ الْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات، 56)

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” Adh-Dhāriyāt (56)*

The comprehensiveness of religion in the sense mentioned is a definite and essential thing of divine wisdom, and some verses of the Qur'an show the meaning of comprehensiveness:

... وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ... (النحل، 89) مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ .. (الأنعام، 38) وَ لَا رَطْبٍ وَ لَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (الأنعام، 59)

*“... And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things...” Al-Nahl (89) “We have not neglected in the Register a thing...” Al-An‘ām (38) “and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.” Al-An‘ām (59)*

These verses indicate that all sciences - the first and the last - are assembled in the Qur'an.

Some have viewed the perfection of religion in the same sense as comprehensiveness and have considered the comprehensiveness of religion based on the Qur'an or the sum of the appearance and interior of the Qur'an or the sum of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Rashid Reza, 1994, 6: 154-166). And some maintain that the Qur'an does not need the Sunnah (Ibn Ashur, 2000, 5:32). The background of this view refers to some of the Companions who said that the Book of God is sufficient for us and with this approach, they prevented the writing of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will. After the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they further halted the compilation of the hadiths and Sunnah of the Prophet (Bukhari, 1990, 7: 94; Ibid., 9: 115; Muslim, 1992,

3: 1260). The outcome of both approaches is the absence of the need for an immaculate Imam. On a higher note, according to the second view, despite the presence of the Qur'an, Muslims do not require not only the replacement of the Prophet but also the Sunnah of the Prophet and even the Prophet himself.

Now, can the "perfection" of religion be considered the result of the "comprehensiveness" of religion? According to the literal meaning, the answer to this question will be positive only if the purpose of religion is realized through this comprehensiveness because the requirement of perfection is the achievement of the goal and the absence of defect and need, provided that some terms are met.

One of these requirements is the continuance of the religion and the continuation of its comprehensiveness until the Day of Judgment (Shazli, 1992, 2: 833). In the nonexistence of this continuity, the problem of target violation is repeated exactly. For, first, if religion reaches comprehensiveness but then vanishes, or loses comprehensiveness, it is as though it has not fulfilled comprehensiveness. Secondly, in this event, the comprehensiveness of religion will be null and void, which is similarly contrary to wisdom. Thirdly, God has guaranteed that the religion of Islam will govern the earth as it is perfected and pleasing to God; This is both God's promise and His will:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَ دِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ... (التوبة، 33) (الفتح، 28) (الصف، 9) وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَ لِيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَ لِيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يُعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَ مَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (النور، 55)

*"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion." Al-Fat'h (28), At-Tawbah (33) and As-Saff (9) "Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient." An-Noor (55)*

The requirement for the survival of a comprehensive religion, while being comprehensive, is that the last divine book is protected from falsification, not only the Qur'an but all the principles and sub-principles of the religion manifested by the Prophet must be saved:

وَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ... (النحل، 44) وَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ... (النحل، 64) ... وَ مَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَ مَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ... (الحشر، 7) وَ مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى \* إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى (النجم، 3 و 4) قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَ الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ (آل عمران، 32) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَ أَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَ لَا تَبْغُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ (محمد، 33) لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (الأحزاب، 21)

*"And We revealed to you the message [i.e., the Qur'ān] that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them" An-Nahl (44) "And We have not revealed to you the Book, [O Muḥammad], except for you to make clear to them that wherein they have differed" An-Nahl (64) "...nd whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..." Al-Hashr (7) "Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination \* It is not but a revelation revealed." An-Najm (3, 4) "Say, "Obey Allāh and the Messenger. But if you turn away - then indeed, Allāh does not like the disbelievers." "Āl- 'Imrān (32) "O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds." Muḥammad (33) " There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern..." Al-Ahzāb (21)*

Because the statements of that Imam are also part of religion. Consequently, claiming the adequacy of the Qur'an and the absence of need for tradition, or the substitution of the Qur'an for tradition, is a gross mistake. Because the tradition of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a component of the religion. Hence, if religion is to remain comprehensive, it is essential for the expression of the Prophet and his manners and tradition to remain intact.



Sustaining a comprehensive religion in all its aspects has no solution except for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to have a replacement at any time who, like him, is an absolute scholar of religion and preserves religion with all its generalities, details, principles and sub principles and be the religious authority of the Muslims and satisfy their needs until the day Islam rules the entire earth. It is further necessary that this path is without interruption; otherwise, if at some point this association is eradicated and the replacement does not have the mastery of all the principles and sub-principles of religion, the comprehensive religion will no longer reach the government of the earth. Because after the stop, there will be no revelation or prophecy to perfect the religion again. Accordingly, this successor must be both learned about the whole religion and immaculate. Otherwise, the religion will progressively fade, and this successor cannot be the Qur'an itself or the Sunnah or the Qur'an and the Sunnah as a whole.

Accordingly, the requirement for the end of prophecy is the comprehensiveness of religion and its continuation; And the requirement of this flow is the existence of an immaculate person with perfect knowledge as the replacement of the Prophet. Without these provisions, the meaning of religion and prophecy will not be obtained, and as a result, the perfection of religion will be forfeited. Hence, what can perfect the religion and fulfill the purpose of the religion is the being of an immaculate person with absolute knowledge of the religion at all times.

Now, if the comprehensiveness of religion is only the comprehensiveness of the Qur'an, we must inevitably consider the comprehensiveness of religion other than its perfection. The interpretation of the perfection of religion to the comprehensiveness of religion, and the interpretation of the comprehensiveness of religion to the comprehensiveness of the total appearance and interior of the Qur'an, and the claim of the sufficiency of the Qur'an from the immaculate Imam is similarly incorrect. Because the fact that all sciences are in the Qur'an, but there is no scholar of the Qur'an in society, annuls the perfection of religion, and definitely, the complete knowledge of the appearance and the heart of the Qur'an is also exclusively for the immaculate:

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ \* فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ \* لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (الواقعة، 77-79)

*“Indeed, it is a noble Qur’ān. \* In a Register well-protected. \* None touch it except the purified [i.e., the angels].” Al-Wāqi‘ah (77-79)*

Who are the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of God:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً (الأحزاب، 33)

*“Allāh intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.” Al-Ahzāb (33)*

But if we consider the immaculate Imamate as a component of religion and consider the comprehensiveness of religion as the comprehensiveness of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Imamate, we can maintain that the perfection of religion is the comprehensiveness of religion. In any case, what perfects the religion and achieves its purpose, with which religion has no defects or needs, is the existence of the immaculate Imam.

A perfect and comprehensive book is like a whole pharmacy: it may contain the drug for all ailments, but as long as it does not have a specialist who can diagnose the disease and give it to the patient, this pharmacy will be ineffective and imperfect. Worse, if a non-specialist prescribes medication, it will compromise the health of patients. Hence, the comprehensiveness of pharmacy drugs does not eliminate the need for a pharmacist. While with such an expert, it can be said that this pharmacy is perfect because it satisfies the needs of all patients.

Eventually, as stated about the completeness, if the perfection of religion means the comprehensiveness of religion, it can be good news and a blessing for Muslims when religion is

associated with a teacher and leader of the perfect religion. However, if the religion and the Qur'an are introduced as perfect, but there is no teacher or explanation for it, the absolute benefit of the religion will not deliver to the Muslims. And since the knowledge of Muslims about religion is not the same, there will be discrepancies, and this beginning of a striking threat and danger to the Islamic society is not in line with the tone of the good news in the verse. Consequently, if this verse is one of the last ones, and it was revealed at the end of the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), the teacher and interpreter suggested is assuredly not the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Because in this case, the good news is only for a few days and is not good news indeed. Accordingly, another person must be proposed as the successor to solve all the problems.

#### **4. Internal Consistency of the Verse: The Link between the Perfection of Religion and the Discouragement of Infidels**

In an independent breakdown of each of the two phrases, «الْيَوْمَ يَسَّ الدِّينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ» "Today those who disbelieve despair of your religion" and «الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ» "Today I have perfected your religion for you" we saw that even if these two phrases were in two different verses or even Surahs, they correspond to each other. This is while they are in one verse, and according to Allameh Tabatabai, the commentators unanimously declare unity and connection (Tabatabai, 1997, 5: 168). In the previous segments, the connection between the frustration of infidels and the perfection of religion was neglected. Now, on the contrary, by disregarding the past analysis and ignoring the result, and accepting the unity of the revelation of these expressions, we will reflect once more.

Whereas in the previous analysis, external pieces of evidence were used, now they are ignored and only the verse of perfection interprets itself. The perfection of religion, then, interprets the despair of the infidels, and vice versa. The need for coherence and internal consistency of the holy verse is something that makes it easy to judge the opinions expressed. This is also the criterion in criticizing Sunni opinions. That is, any opinion presented regarding the perfection of religion must be compatible with the frustration of the infidels, and vice versa. It has been stated earlier that this discouragement means despair over the decline of Islam.

But in the relationship between the two, either the perfection of religion is the cause of the despair of the infidels or vice versa, or both are the consequence of a single cause. But the despair of the infidels cannot perfect the religion, because first of all, the question emerges, "what disappointed the infidels?" Did they despair for no reason, or was there a cause? So, we move to that cause, and that is what perfects the religion, not the frustration of the infidels. Secondly, it has been mentioned before that the hope or despair of the infidels is something outside of religion itself, and what is not inside religion cannot perfect religion. Thirdly, according to Allameh Tabatabai, how can the despair of the infidels perfect the religion while the foremost enemy, the hypocrites, are present among the Muslims?

... هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ... (منافقون ، 4)

"... They are the enemy, so beware of them..." *Al-Munāfiqūn* (4)

When the chief enemy is active, the frustration of other ones cannot perfect religion. Consequently, it must be assumed that a single thing has caused both issues. Or if we are to hold one as the cause of another, we must maintain that the perfection of religion has caused the despair of the infidels - not the other way around (Tabatabai 1997, 5: 198; Javadi Amoli, 1968, 21: 595).

Now, if the perfection of religion is the cause of hopelessness of infidels and we recognize the perfection of religion in minor Sharia rules such as the prohibitions of meat or the rules of Hajj or

secondary matters outside the principle of religion - such as the vastness crowds or the non-circumambulation of the naked polytheist and the like - such things definitely do not discourage the infidels from the deterioration of Islam; So, they are not perfecting religion either.

If we interpret the perfection of religion as the completeness of the Sharia rules and the conclusion of the case of religion, and as a result, the completion of prophecy, the problem arises that this completion encourages the infidels instead of discouraging them. Because the end of the prophecy of any prophet, automatically announcing the imminence of his death, is good news for the enemies. Then, how can the conclusion of the religion of the prophet, who is the end of the prophets, not be good news for the infidels? We now see that, while speaking of the perfection of religion, this verse warns of the despair of the infidels, gives hope to the Muslims, and forbids the fear of the infidels. Accordingly, the perfection of religion does not mean the completeness of religion and the end of prophecy. On the other hand, as stated, the concept of the integrity of religion can still be inferred from this verse. Thus, the perfection of religion is something that frustrates the infidels despite the completion of the religion.

A very significant point that denies all the probabilities of the Sunnis is that even if the perfection of the religion means the completion of the exposition of the religion and the revelation of the last rules and duties - which is necessary for the end of the prophethood and the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) - this last decree and duty can disappoint the infidels from the deterioration of Islam. Only then can this interpretation be accepted. Nothing has such a capacity except Imamate and Wilayah.

If the perfection of religion means the comprehensiveness of religion owing to the inclusion of all matters needed by human beings and all sciences in the Qur'an and Sunnah, but no one who has knowledge of this book and has the power to extract sciences, this will not be a source of discouragement for infidels. If the perfection of religion is owing to the comprehensiveness of the book and there is a person or persons in the society with the knowledge of this book, but do not have the provisions to guide people and express science - such as the case where the social administration of the people is not in their hands - this further would not frustrate the infidels.

Furthermore, if such a person as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is in the society and power and leadership are in his hands, but there is no one after him to direct the people, this will also be a source of hope for the infidels.

Accordingly, the infidels' disappointment with the decline of Islam has no justification except that they knew that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had determined the duty of his followers and had proposed his replacement to them. Hence, the verse of perfection informs that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) introduced his successor as the Imam of the people before his death. This is the text that testifies to the Imamate, and the perfection of the religion is possible only with the Imamate of an immaculate person.

According to this report, the mentioned Imamate includes both religious and secular administration. This is the common and famous definition of Imamate (Fazel Meqdad, 1992, 319).

As for the time of the revelation of the verse, in brief, the coordinates gathered from this verse do not correspond to any day but the Ghadir. Nevertheless, after proving these characteristics, it is not improbable to compare it with another day from the end of the glorious life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), such as the day of 'Arafah. Another point is that just as the administration of the immaculate Imam over the Muslim community causes the despair of infidels from the decline of Islam, the lack of this administration by the immaculate Imam gives the infidels hope.

## Conclusion

Paying attention to the content of the verse of perfection showed that the infidels' frustration of Islam and the perfection of the religion is related to the issue of Imamate, and the holy verse informs that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delegated his successor as Imam before his death. The leader of the Islamic community presented him to the people. And this is the evidence of Imamate, which is the basis of discrepancies between Islamic factions. It was also confirmed that the realm of this Imamate and Caliphate covers both earthly and religious leadership, and the requirement of this caliphate is faultlessness and comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

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