



Scientific Authority of Ahl Al-Bayt (Members of the Household) and Quran Interpretation Methods from the Viewpoint of Imam Reza (PBUH)

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Abstract

One of the main missions of the innocent imams is scientific, intellectual and cultural direction of the human society. Omayyad and Abbasids caliphs faced this barrier since the early days of their government against this guidance and they knew that they would face main problems among people due to growth of Islamic culture and promotion of thought and culture of society. For this reason, they decided to try to make people unaware against real Quranic and Islamic culture. For this purpose, they promoted foreign cultures in Islamic society and instilled many doubts into mind of the people. Imam Reza (PBUH) who was in peak period of this false culture building and cultural invasion into Islamic and Shiite teachings struggled with this extensive invasion like other imams and trained and expanded Quranic and Islamic thoughts by negotiating with the religious authorities and speakers of religions. Imam Reza (PBUH) as one of the people of Islam's prophet family interpreted verses of Holy Quran as interpreter of Quran as far as cultural and social ground and capacities have permitted. Of course, interpretation of Holy Quran practically started since Islam's prophet and the first interpreter of Quran was Islam's prophet (PBUH) and then members of his household. Attitude of Imam Reza (PBUH) to Quran has been derived from strong fundamentals such as comprehensiveness and apparent and inherent aspects of this divine book. Based on these essential principles, interpretive teachings of Imam Reza (PBUH) which are mostly included in content and conceptual interpretation rely on the methods and attempt has been made in this paper to analyze these methods.

Keywords: *Scientific Authority of Members of the Household, Imam Reza (PBUH), Interpretive Methods, Debates of Imam Reza (PBUH)*

Introduction

Holy Quran, divine book and guidance book and orders of God aim to reach human prosperity and attracted attention of Muslims since the early days of descending from heaven. God's prophet (PBUH) firstly attempted to record verses of Holy Quran by the revelation writers and also to instruct people to recite Quran properly and also teach materials and clarify content of Quran as one of the duties of Islam's Prophet (PBUH) was to perform this important case i.e. interpretation of Quran for people. Holy Quran addresses God's prophet (PBUH): " We have Sent down to you this Holy Qur'an That you

may explain to the people Clearly what is sent down [of the Divine Decrees]in order that they may ponder." (Nahl/44)

In this way, it can be said that there has been need for interpretation of Quran since descending of Quran from the heaven and its first interpreter has been Islam's prophet (PBUH). As Ebn Khaldoon says: although Quran descended in Arabic language and its rhetoric style was coordinated with this language and all Arabic speakers at time of Islam's prophet (PBUH) understood meanings of Quran as words and sentences, Islam's prophet (PBUH) interpreted complex materials of Quran and clarified its abrogating and abrogated contents (Jalalian , 1995, 43-46).

This movement continued after death of Islam's prophet (PBUH) and Islam's prophet (PBUH) delegated his mission in interpretation of Quran to innocent members of household and this heritage was transferred to the eighth innocent imam (PBUH) and he was heir of the divine book and true interpreter of Quran as major part of Imam Reza's speech and conduct in different subjects relates to interoperation of holy Quran.

In this regard, it can be said that many issues which have been narrated in the fields of monotheism, prophecy, imamate, future life, belief and heresy, ethical issues, different parts of Islamic jurisprudence etc explain and detail verses of Quran.

Although we don't have any book entitled interpretation of Imam Reza (PBUH) and his interpretive materials have been narrated dispersedly in Shiite sources and some sources of Sunnite sources, there is no doubt that he and other imams of the household are the first interpreters of Holy Quran after God's prophet (PBUH) and many of the narrations received from him are related to interpretation (for example, we can mention some books of "Mosnad al Imam Reza", "Ouon akhbar al Reza" and "Sahifat al Reza" in which narrations of Imam Reza have been collected and many of these narrations describe and interpret verses of Holy Quran). Many of these issues focus on explanation of problems and expression of similarities among some verses and also expression of instances and interpretation of verses particularly in imamate verses.

The important point is that attitude of Imam Reza (PBUH) toward holy Quran is derived from strong basics and based on innovative methods considering conditions of society at that period.

Scientific and religious authority of members of the household (PBUH) and necessity of their interpretation from the viewpoint of Imam Reza (PBUH)

Members of the household, offspring and family of God's prophet (PBUH) beside Quran are his eternal reminders among nation. God's prophet (PBUH) has interpreted both of them as *Thaqalayn* which is inseparable until resurrection and attendance beside *Hoze Kosar*. *Hadith al-Thaqalayn* is a very successive narration in *Farighin* sources (Sunnite sources: *Moslem Ebne Hajaj Neishaboori*, 7:122; *Ahmad Ebne Hanbal*, 4:367; *Daremi*, 2:432).

These successive prophetic narrations reached the following results: dependence of Quran interpretation on authority of the members of household, accompaniment of the relatives and Quran, unique awareness of the innocent imams with Holy Quran.

Of course, validity of the interpretive tradition of the members of Household has other abundant Quranic and narrative evidence. One of the other verses which can justify this scientific authority on its basis is "*Zekr*" verse: " so ask the learned of The people of the Book if you people do Not know about it" (Nahl/43)

The general content of this verse mentions that the uniformed people should refer to the informed people. By relying on most Shiite and Sunnite narrations, the members of the household are the evident instances of Zekr people (some sources of this interpretation in Sunnite sources: Hakem Haskani, 1:432).

It is necessary to note that "Tathir" verse is efficient in authority of the members of the household in interpretation of Holy Quran. Main contents of this verse refer to absolute purity of the members of the household and their cleanness. Other abundant narrations of God's prophet (PBUH) such as Safinah Hadith¹ in which God's prophet (PBUH) has likened the members of the household to Noah's ship and those who rode on this ship were saved like passengers of Noah's ship. On the other hand, one of the issues which have become necessary almost among all Muslims – except some sects and groups such as Wahhabism² - is issue of the members of the household. In this regard, there have been abundant narrations from God's prophet (PBUH) all ordering friendship with the members of the household.

Truly, we should see secret of this order about friendship of the members of the household. Does it mean only an exclusively emotional interpretation of kindness? Or doesn't it mean a kindness which is effective and links human to those great people to utilize their works, words and teachings and conduct?

Today, 1400 years after beginning of Islam, there is no doubt among the Muslims that Quran is a book which certainly descended from the God on high but what is understood from Holy Quran is disputable among the Muslims. When we get far from that period, when there is a word about a verse of Holy Quran, should we obey it or the narration which has been brought by the innocent imams? Today, one of the very important issues which are mentioned along with discourse of Islamic religions is issue of companions so that importance and sensitivity of this issue for some Sunnite religions are like issue of chastity for imamate.

It is necessary to note that this issue has been considered among narrations of Imam Reza (PBUH) and that great Imam has responded to the doubt about this issue.

One of the documents of theory of Companions justice in some Sunnite books is this narration: my companions are like stars. If you follow them, you will be guided. This narration which apparently has been quoted from God's prophet (PBUH) has many problems so that even Sunnite narration scholars have been forced to make comment about its weakness with certainty. The said narration has not been given in valid narration sources of the Sunnites i.e. Sahihin and other corrections (regarding authorities of this narration and the defects, see Fakhlaei, 2004, 272-275).

A person asked Imam Reza (PBUH) a question about purports of this narration. His majesty assuming acceptance of the narration responded to his question and said: this is true that if the narration is correct, it means the companions who have not changed and converted anything after God's prophet (PBUH).

He asks: how do we know that they have converted and changed them?

¹ Members of my household are like Noah's ship. Everyone who rode on that ship will be saved from drowning and a person who avoided it will be drowned in sea (Firooz Abadi, 2:56-58). in this book, the writer has brought many sources and instances of the Sunnites who have narrated this narration. Safinah hadith is a very successive narration which has been quoted in Shiite sources with different documents.)

² One of the sects which have been against Muslims is Wahhabism. This sect is attributed to its founder, Mohammad Ebne Vahab Soleiman Najdi. he is the one who implemented beliefs and thoughts of Ebne Timieh in Arabia Peninsula by claiming tawhid, or the "uniqueness" and "unity" of God and Ale Saud also executed their thoughts. This sect also remained since century 12 up to now. it is noteworthy that one of the characteristics of followers of this schools which have been derived from thoughts of their heads i.e. Ebne Timieh and Mohammad Ebne Abdolvahab is struggle against members of the household (for awareness with beliefs of Wahhabism, see Sobhani, 1996).

Imam said: God's prophet (PBUH) has quoted that some people of my companions get astray and far from my hoze(pool) as a strange camel gets far from its water in the resurrection day. I say that o' my God! They are among my companions. I receive an answer: you don't know what they have done after you. Therefore, they are considered to be among the companions of Hell and I say at that time: Death to them.³

Then, Imam Reza (PBUH) said: did you understand that we meant the companions who didn't change and convert anything after the prophet? (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H, 87:2, Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 18:28).

As observed above, Imam Reza (PBUH) said that we should first see that who are addresses of this narration (my companions are like stars...)? Can we imagine that God's prophet (PBUH) has addressed all companions and called the nation to follow them? How may God's prophet (PBUH) introduce all companions as guide of the nation while history mentions sins of many of them and as mentioned in Ertedad narrations of companions which were mentioned in Sunnite and imamate sources, God's prophet (PBUH) informs us of collective heresy of companions following his death. It should be mentioned that heresy in these narrations certainly doesn't mean its jurisprudential concept i.e. heresy after Islam but avoidance of some beliefs and religious values and not performing some duties and responsibilities which are regarded as heresy.

Imam Reza (PBUH) in his narration altering theory of companions' justice and with a clear interpretation emphasizes that heresy after death of God's prophet (PBUH) means cutting kindness of members of the household and placing the leadership foundation in unreal position. In other narrations which he has mentioned regarding signs and features of Imam, one of the characteristics of Imam is enjoyment of science and chastity because he thinks that Imam is caliph of God's prophet (PBUH) and on this basis, he should be free of any sin and mistake.

Therefore, scientific and religious authority of the members of the household becomes clear in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH). Imamates of the household can guide and direct people due to their top scientific and religious position and all Muslims should follow them in roots and branches of religion and ethical issues and learn them to perform their duties and responsibilities. On this basis, if Imam Reza (PBUH) relies on narrations such as Alghadir Narration and Thaqaalayn Narration, one of the aspects of implication of this reasoning is based on proof of religious and scientific authority of the members of the household (PBUH) particularly in referring to Holy Quran. One of the concerns of God's prophet (PBUH) and members of the household (PBUH) about Islam's nation is misinterpretation and alteration of religion as prediction of 73 sects of Islam's nation by God's prophet (PBUH) after his death (Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 2:28, chapter of "division of the nation after death of the prophet into 73 sects") is indicative of this claim. In another narration, God's prophet (PBUH) mentions his concern about spiritual alteration of Quran and says: my concern about my nation after my death is that those who held Quran should interpret it but not put it in its main meanings (Majlesi, 1404 A.H. 89:112).

For this reason and to maintain eternal heritage of revelation, God's prophet (PBUH) has made a decision and introduced his members of the household to the nation in addition to many narrations (in this regard, different books and works have been written such as "Abaghat al Anvar" written by Mir Hamed Hossein and also "Al Ghadir" written by Allameh Amini).

³ This narration which is known as Ertedad Hadith has been quoted by many Sunnite barraters in different forms which are equal in terms of content and is one of the narrations which have spiritual frequency. the reason for naming these narrations as Ertedad Ahadith is that heresy of some companions after death of God's prophet (PBUH) in some texts. Ertedad narrations have been given in Sahih Bakhari, Ketab Altafsir, intreretation of Almaedah Sura, chapter of "and I was witness of their behavior", and also Sahih Moslem, the book "Alfazeal" and chapter of "Esbat hoze Nabiena".

Necessity of interpretation of the innocent imams' sayings by the members of the household is also considerable. As Imam Reza (PBUH) has said in a narration:

They (the innocent imams) are interpreters of Quran. Their saying is saying of God's prophet (PBUH) or its explanation (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 2:122).

Ebrahim Ebne Abbas has interesting interpretation of Imam Reza's saying: sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH) and responses and examples of his majesty had been extracted from Quran (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 2:180).

It is necessary to note that some believe that members of the household have played didactic role in interpretation of Quran. In other words, imams of the household intended to instruct interpretation method and how to utilize the verses in interpretation not to interpret all verses. Imams have wanted to explain principles of interpretation of Quran for their companions and disciples with the examples which they gave in interpretation of verses (Maarefat, 1418 A.H., 1:468-469).

Today, with a new approach, we should try to direct dialogues among religions based on scientific authority of the members of the household because we will be able to achieve more sensible results in this way and without resorting to the stimulating issues.

Interpretive methods of Imam Reza (PBUH)

1- Quran to Quran Method

One of the interpretive methods which have been considered since descending is Quran to Quran interpretation and meanings of Quranic verses are expressed with help of other verses with equal subject and content. As known in narrations, some parts of Quran interpret other parts (Majlesi, 1404 A.H. 29:352). Imam Ali (PBUH) also says: some parts of Quran speak with other parts and witness each other (Nahjalbalaghah, oration 133).

This type of interpretation means getting help from Quran for interpretation of Quran which is the best method of interpretation. Scholars have said that everyone who wants to learn Quran interpretation should search in Quran because its summary has been opened in a place and expanded (Abolfotooh Razi, 1408 A.H., 7:360).

Allameh Tabatabaee in introduction of Tafsir-al-Mizan regards Quran to Quran method as method of imams in instruction and interpretation of Quran after criticizing different methods of interpretation and selecting Quran to Quran interpretation method (Tabatabaee, 1417 A.H., 12:1).

History of this method dates back period of God's prophet (PBUH). For example, God's prophet (PBUH) interpreted oppression as polytheism considering the verse (Moghatel Ebne Soleiman, 1423 A.H., 5:6; Toosi, 4: 190; Tabarsi, 1406 A.H. 4: 506, Tabari, 14012 A.H., 7:168 and other interpretations of verse 82 of Al-Anam Sura).

Some Examples of Quran to Quran interpretation method in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH):

There are many examples of Quran to Quran interpretation in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH). He based verses of Quran on Quran in many cases as follows:

- 1- One of these cases is the detailed narration which has been narrated from the book (عيون اخبار الرضا (ع) and many other books when Imam Reza (PBUH) has presented fundamentals of legality of imamate in Shiite thought by relying on Quran in the best manner and challenged fundamentals of the

opponents in this way. Imam Reza (PBUH) has tried to remove doubts from belief of the Muslims during history with verses of Quran. Imam Reza (PBUH) in this narration interpreted verse 32 of Fater Sura with 12 verses of Holy Quran. Due to importance of the said narrations, we summarize some of them:

Imam Reza (PBUH) attended Mamoon's meeting in which a group of Iraqi and Khorasan scholars gathered. Mamoon said: tell me meaning of this verse: " Finally We appointed the Book a Lasting Inheritance to our selected obedient worshippers [to remain among Them, generation after generation]" (Fater/32)

Scholars said: God means all nations of Islam. Mamoon said" o' Abu-al-Hassan, what do you say? Imam Reza (PBUH) said: I don't say as they told but I say that God means pure family of God's prophet by the elects. Scholars said: o' Abu-al-Hassan, tell us if family is your descendents or not. Imam Reza (PBUH) said: they are our dynasty. Schools said: according to God's prophet, my nation is my dynasty. Thus, they are his companions. Imam Reza (PBUH) said: tell me if alms are prohibited on Mohammad's dynasty. They said: yes. Imam said: it is prohibited on the nation? They said: no. Imam (PBUH) said: this is difference between descendents and nation. Mamoon said: has God preferred descendents in Quran to other people? Imam Reza (PBUH) said: truly, God has preferred descendents to other people in strong verses of His book. Mamoon said: where in the God's book is this preference? Imam (PBUH) said: in this word of the God on high: " Verily, Allah did choose `Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the descendants of Imran over all the people [of their Times], Some of their offsprings were Descended from others; and Allah is The Knowing Hearer" (Ale Emran/32-33).

and God said in another place: " Or are they jealous of the honoured People [such as the Messenger of Islam and his family] for the Grace that Allah Has bestowed upon them? We [also] Bestowed upon the people of Ibrahim the Book and the Wisdom and We gave Them a mighty kingdom [as well]" (Nesa/54).

Then, He addressed other believers and said: " O, you who believe [in Allah's Oneness]! Obey Allah and obey The Messenger and those governors Among you who have received Divine Authorities" (Nesa59).

It means that those who inherited God's book and wisdom and due to these two heritages, they were envied (while it is compulsory to obey them)....scholars said: has God interpreted election in Quran? Imam Reza (PBUH) said: He has interpreted election (Predilection) in apparent form of Quran not inner part of Quran in 12 cases: 1- Word of God: " And warn your tribe and near Kinsmen" (Shoara/214) 2- " Verily, Allah's Will is to remove away impurity from You, the people of the Messenger's Household and to purify you with a Thorough purification" (Ahzab/33) And this is the virtue which no one but enemy denies because it is a clear virtue. 3- When God distinguished between the pure people and his creatures and ordered His prophet in Al-Mobahelah verse: " say:" Come Now, let us call our sons, and your Sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves [for Mubahalal] and then let us invoke and Lay the Curse of Allah on those who Lie." (AleEmran/61) Then, Islam's prophet brought Ali, Hassan and Hossein and Fatemeh and accompanied them. Imam Reza (PBUH) emphasized on this point in the holy verse that " ourselves" certainly is Ali (PBUH) of whom no person went ahead and this is the point which no one had taken because Ali (PBUH) has been regarded as soul of God's prophet. (Based on another narration of Imam Reza (PBUH), Mobahelah verse, the greatest virtue of Amiralmomenin is in Holy Quran)(see: Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 10: 350-351). 4- When the Islam's prophet (PBUH) discharged all people but his descendents from his mosque and this indicates saying of the Islam's prophet (PBUH) to Ali (PBUH) who said: your status toward me is like status of Haroon toward Moses). 5- Word of God: " Give to the relatives their due Right" (Esraa/26) The point which God has granted to them and selected them for nation. When this verse descended to the Islam's prophet (PBUH), he said : call Fatemeh to me and when Fatemeh came to him , the Islam's prophet (PBUH) said: o' Fatemeh! Verily, Fadak was not

achieved with horsemen and camel riders of the army and that is special for me not other Muslims. Due to order of God, I put it for you. Take it for you and your children. 6- Word of God: " Say [O, Messenger!]:" No wage I ask you for my Mission, [Messenger's reward is with Allah] but all I expect is The affection to my near kin." (Shoora/23) This special point belongs to Islam's prophet not other prophets and it is a characteristic of the prophet's descendents not others. 7- Word of God: " Verily, Allah bestows Grace and Greetings on the Messenger, and so do His Angels. O, you who believe! Pray that Allah's Grace be on The Messenger and salute him Wholeheartedly and with full respect" (Ahzab/56) All know that even enemies also knew that when this verse descended, Muslims said: o' God's prophet! How can we utter the formula of praise to you? God's prophet (PBUH) said: tell: our Lord! Utter the formula of praise to Mohammad and his descendents as you uttered the formula of praise to Abraham and descendents of Abraham. Verily, you are praiseworthy and exalted. 8- Word of God: " And know that whatever of the war- Spoils that you [O, Muslims] may gain, One fifth of it is assigned to Allah's Way And to the Messenger and to the near Relatives of the Messenger" (Anfal/41) God set aside the relatives' share with His share and share of God's prophet (PBUH) and this separates between the family and nation because God placed them in a position and placed all people in lower position. 9- We are the zekr which God said in strong verses of His book: " so ask the learned of The people of the Book if you people do Not know about it" (Nahl/43) Scholars said: God means the Jewish and Christian scholars by Zekr people. Imam Reza said: is such saying correct and proper? In this case, they call us to our religion and say: our religion is better than Islam. Mamoon said: O' Abulhassan, can you say against the scholars? Imam (PBUH) said: yes, Zekr is God's prophet (PBUH) and we are his family and this saying is evident in God's book according to God in Al-Talaq Sur: " O, you men of reason who have accepted Islam! Indeed Allah has sent down to you a Reminder And also Allah has sent a Messenger Who recites to you Allah's Words of Revelation which are Clear (Talagh/10-11) 10- saying of the God on high in Tahrim verse: " Forbidden to you [for marriage] Are: Your mother, your daughters, Your sisters..." (Nesa/23) Tell me if it was proper for God's prophet (PBUH) to marry my daughter or daughter of my son or every person from my generation in case he was live. They said: no. Imam (PBUH) said: tell me if it was proper for God's prophet (PBUH) to marry your daughter? They answered: yes. Imam (PBUH) said: it is clear that we are from his descendents and you are not from his descendents and if you were from his descendents, your daughters would be prohibited for you. 11- Saying of God in Al-Momen Sura is about a man: " Meanwhile a believing man of Firown's Family who used to hide his Faith out of Fear intervened saying:" Will you slay a Man with the charge that he says:" My Creator is Allah, the One," though he Has brought you Signs and Miracles from your Creator?" (Ghafer/28) Imam (PBUH) said: the person who told this word was cousin of Pharaoh and God regarded him as family of Pharaoh in terms of lineage and didn't relate him to his religion. As we are from family of God's prophet (PBUH) and this is not due to his religion because we share with all people in religion but we are his children and the descendents due to his lineage, 12- Word of God: " Advise your family to establish prayer Regularly, and yourself be a constant Performer of it" (Taha/132) God distinguished us with this characteristic because He ordered you to obey us in addition to prayer and distinguished us from the nation. God's prophet (PBUH) having descended this verse came to home of Ali (PBUH) and Fatemeh when he wanted to say his five prayers for 9 months and said: hasten to prayer. God will have mercy on you. God didn't honor any children of the prophets like descendents of God's prophet and this is the difference between descendents and nation (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 228-240).

As observed above, Imam Reza (PBUH) in this narration has used other interpretive methods as narrative method and also Theological Method which we will say for interpretation of the verse.

- 2- A person asked Imam Reza (PBUH) about verse: " They have forgotten Allah; so He hath forgotten them" (Tobeh/67) Imam (PBUH) said: the God on high neither forgets nor neglects but the creatures which are created forget. didn't you hear that the honored and glorified Lord said: " and thy Lord never doth forget" (Maryam/64)

Of course, He punishes a person who forgets God and forgets meeting day with Him so that he keeps them unaware of themselves as He said: "And do not be like those who forgot Allah's Remembrance, so Allah caused Them to forget themselves; such are Indeed the rebellious transgressors" (Hashr/19) and he said: "so this Day [of Resurrection] We shall forget them as They forgot the Meeting of this Day " (Aaraf/51).

It means that we release them as they were not prepared for such day (Sadoogh 1378 A.H., 1:125; Sadoogh 1398 A.H., 159-160; Sadoogh 1982, P 14-15).

As observed above, Imam (PBUH) has interpreted forgetfulness as abandonment in this holy verse and this verse means that God abandons those who have forgotten Him and will make them far from good reward and will condemn them to chastisement and fire of the hell.

3- Imam Reza (PBUH) in the holy verse: " Then A Crier shall cry between them:" Allah's Curse, be upon The disbelievers" (Aaraf/44).

He said: Crier is Ali (PBUH) and announces in the Judgment Day. For The other verse: " And this is a proclamation from Allah and His Messenger" (Tobeh/3) as Ali (PBUH) said: I was among the people at time of proclamation (Ataradi, 1:334).

2- Narrative Method

Narrative interpretation can be regarded as the most ancient and the deepest form of Quran interpretation. Sunnites have special method in this interpretation type. They regard prophetic narrations, sayings of the companions and some of them even sayings of the followers as reason but Shiite scholars such as Allameh Tabatabaei express: Shiites regard saying of God's prophet (PBUH) as reason in interpretation of Quranic verses based on text of Holy Quran and don't regard saying of companions and followers as reason unless through narration of God's prophet (PBUH). In addition, based on the successive Thaqalayn news, they regard saying of the family and members of the household as the saying of God's prophet (PBUH) and believe that such saying is the final reason. For this reason, they have only relied on narrations from God's prophet (PBUH) and the members of the household in quoting the interpretative narrations (Tabatabaei, 1997, 57).

The first school which is start of the narrative interpretation is school of the members of the household and its point is relation to God's prophet (PBUH) and being free of any deviating judgments.

The innocent imams have based their interpretation on sayings of the God's prophet (PBUH) or other imams while utilizing Quran to Quran method and quote interpretation of verses from their sayings.

This interpretive method is one of the methods which are found in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH) in interpretation of verses of Holy Quran.

Note: in this regard, it should be noted that many narrations of the innocent imams have been mentioned by their great fathers to God's prophet (PBUH) and the reason is that they wanted to prove their special relation with God's prophet (PBUH) and that they are household of God's prophet (PBUH) such as important Hadith al-Silsilah al-Dhahab (Hadith of the Golden Chain) from Imam Reza (PBUH). in this narration, it is known that Imam Reza (PBUH) has narrated from God's prophet (PBUH) through his fathers that God said: "There is no god but Allah" is my fence and everyone who enters that fence will be safe against my chastisement. Then, he said: with its conditions one of which I am (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 2:135; Sadoogh, 1983, 235; Sadoogh, 1398 A.H., 25).

Important feature of Hadith al-Silsilah al-Dhahab is that emphasis has been placed on narrators of the Hadith who are the innocent imams to God's prophets (PBUH) and this indicates importance of the subject and more emphasis on subject of imamate in addition to emphasis on subject of monotheism and guardianship (vilayat).

Many narrations of Imam Reza (PBUH) from the doctrine narrations to their interpretive narrations in the verses have been quoted through their fathers from God's prophet (PBUH) which we mention as follows:

Examples of Narrative interpretative method in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH):

1-Imam Reza (PBUH) was said: what is the meaning of "Boons" in verse: "Then on that day, you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons" (Takasor/8)? Does it mean cold water or clean food or good and clean sleep? Imam (PBUH) said: God doesn't ask His servants about what He bestowed them and doesn't twit them for favor. However, Naeem means kindness of the members of the household. For this reason, if the God's servant remains faithful to our friendship, he will go to paradise and my great grandfather has narrated from my pure ancestors and God's prophet (PBUH) that God's prophet (PBUH) said: o' Ali!verily, the first thing which the servant is asked to do is to utter formula of " There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of God". Therefore, it means uttering faith in your guardianship. Thus, a person who confesses it and believes in it, he will be given a boon which is endless (Sadoogh , 1378 A.H., 2:129).

2- Imam Reza (PBUH) interpreted the holy verse: " and enter the gate prostrating (with humility), and say:" Forgive (us)"; We shall forgive you your faults and increase(the portion of)those who do good." (Baghareh/58) with saying of Imam Bagher (PBUH) who said: we are your gate (Ayashi, 1380 A.H., Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 23:122). it means that as the Jews were obliged to exit from gate of the city and asked God to throw their sins, the members of the household are door of remission of the Muslims' sins and everyone who follows them and calls God through them and resorts to Him will be blessed by God.

3- Theological Method

This interpretation method defends beliefs and removes Theological doubts. Application of reasonable argument beside narrative arguments changed attitude of Muslims toward sciences and knowledge and expanded mental and doctrine disputes.

Until period of Imam Reza (PBUH) , there have been narration methods and reasoning methods but discussions were given with more detail and in more reasonable form at time of Imam Reza(PBUH) considering abundance of his disputes and Imam (PBUH) and Imam (PBUH) mentioned reasonable and narrative knowledge about imamate which have been given in different narrative books(For example, "ouon akhbar al reza" , and also "msnad al imam reza" in which there have been abundant narrations of imamate).

Imam Reza (PBUH) in a narration referred to reasoning method through narration and reason; as Hassan Ebne Jahm narrates: I attended Mamoon meeting and Ali Ebne Mossa Alreza went to him and jurisprudents and rhetoricians from different sects attended that meeting. One of them asked Imam (PBUH): o' son of God's prophet (PBUH), with what reason is imamate proved for its claimant?

Imam said: for narrative and reasonable reason (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 2:200).

Shiite speakers during history attempted to present narrative and reasonable evidence with verses of Holy Quran and narrations of the innocent imams to prove imamate and identify and follow the Imam.

Examples of Theological interpretation method in speech of Imam Reza (PBUH):

1- One of the meetings of Mamoon with Imam (PBUH) was about innocence of the prophets. In this meeting, Mamoon asked question about order of God in holy verse: " thus `Adam disobeyed his Creator and Nurturer and fell into error" (Taha/121) and its relation with innocence of the prophets. Imam (PBUH) interpreted and justified the verse such that God prohibited Adam and Eve from getting close to the desired tree and Adam and Eve obeyed the divine order to avoid that tree. However, Satan misrepresented reality to them and asked them to eat fruit of another tree and swore them that God has not prohibited them from eating any fruit which is of the same type with fruit of that tree and he is benevolent toward them. Adam and Eve trusted in his swear and ate fruit of another tree of the same type with that tree and this action was performed before Adam was elected as prophet and descended to the world and what he had committed was not a mortal sin with which he was condemned to hell fire but it was Leaving the priority which is permissible and remissible before their prophetic mission. Imam Reza (PBUH) responded to Ali Ebne Mohammad Ebne Jahem about this verse that this disobedience has occurred in paradise on the earth with Adam as caliph of God. Paradise was not place of duty to prove disobedience against duty but the earth is place of duty.

It is clear that there is no difference between two answers of Imam (PBUH).

Mamoon asked Imam (PBUH) about Abraham (PBUH) and his reasoning method in the verse: " When the night covered him over With the darkness, he saw a star; he Said:" This is my Creator and Nurturer!..."(Anam76-79) Imam (PBUH) answered: Abraham (PBUH) didn't take step in place of doubt. He lived when there have been three types of worship: worshipping Venus, worshipping Moon and worshipping Sun. Step by step tendency of Abraham (PBUH) to these religions has been apparent before clarifying his faith in God so that corruption of faith can be clarified to another person in this way not accepting their faith in any stage and this reasoning method has been inspired by God.

Then, Mamoon asked question about despair toward the prophets in the holy verse: " [The disbelievers denied The Messengers] to the extent that The Messengers despaired, thinking That they had been belied by their People; then Our Aid would come down to them" (yousof/110). Imam Reza (PBUH) answered that despair in the holy versedidn't belong to help of God which was promised to the prophets but related to despair about faith of people. Therefore, the verse is interpreted as follows: after the prophets despaired about faith of their tribe and that tribe thought that the prophets were told lie, it is time for us to help them (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H. , 1: 195-202).

2- Abu Ghorreh told Imam Reza (PBUH): they have narrated for us that God shared meeting and saying among two prophets. He granted His saying to Moses (PBUH) and his meeting to Mohammad (PBUH). Imam (PBUH) said: how can a man tell all people that he has come from God and call them to God and say: eyes don't perceive God. Therefore, this man says: I saw God with my own eyes and gained scientific knowledge about Him and He is similar to human!

Abu Ghareh said: God says : " For indeed he saw His Presence at a Second descent" (Najm/13) Imam (PBUH) rejected this perception and denied seeing God generally and said: before this verse is a verse which indicates what Mohammad (PBUH) has seen: " The Messenger's heart did not deny What he saw[with his eyes" (Najm/11) informed and said: " And he indeed saw some of the Great Signs of his Creator and Nurturer" (Najm/18) verses of God are other than the God Himself and God says again: " they have no Access to His Knowledge" (Taha/110) in case if eyes see Him, they will gain knowledge about Him and know God.

Abu Ghareh said: do you deny the narrations? Imam(PBUH) said: in case the narrations are against Quran, I will deny them and what Muslims agree is that scientific knowledge will not be gained about God and eyes will not perceive Him and there is nothing like Him (Koleini, 1986, 1:95-96).

4- Interpretive Method, Determining Proof and Comparing the Verse

It should be noted that meanings of the Quran verses are not exclusive to implications of letters and words of the verses but some concepts in Holy Quran have been given with general title and should be explained and justified and to know these instances and explanations, those who know Quran interpretation should be referred and they are Mohammad (PBUH) and members of the household who explain and justify order of God in the holy verse: "But none knows its hidden meaning save Allah. And those who are firmly Grounded in knowledge" (Ale Emran/7). On this basis, major part of interpretation by the members of the household has been focus of the interpretation and explanation of the verses. The innocent imams return many of the Quranic verses to their presence or their friendship and this is due to comparison of the verses to the most evident and perfect evidence.

Imam Reza (PBUH) has compared many verses of Holy Quran to the members of the household and members of the household are only the distinguished and perfect evidence of the verse in many cases.

It is worth noting that such interpretation can be mentioned from the mentioned issues in addition to verbal interpretation method but we mention it independently due to its importance and expansion.

Some Examples of the Interpretive Method and Explanation of the Verse in Sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH):

- 1- Under the verse: " Allah [Himself] bears witness that There is no God, but Allah, and also The Angels and the men of knowledge, Standing firm for justice, bear witness" (Ale Emran/18) Imam Reza (PBUH) said: God means Imam (Ayashi, 1380 A.H., 1:166).
- 2- Imam was asked about the verse: " O, you who believe! Fear from The disobedience of Allah's Commands and be with the truthful" (Tobeh/119) He answered: God means Imams by the trustful (Koleini, 1986, 1:208).
- 3- Hossein Ebne Mahjoob says: I asked Imam Reza(PBUH) about this saying of the God on high : " To everyone We have appointed Heirs to property left by parents and Relatives. And [also] with whom you Have made a covenant, give to them Their portion" (Nesa/33). He answered: God means the imams with whom the honored and glorified God has concluded your agreement(Koleini , 1987, 1:216).

Explanation: considering that there is relation of guardianship, allegiance and obedience between Imam and follower, therefore, the God on high says: perform this Imam's right. Obey and follow him.

- 4- Imam (PBUH) said about this holy verse: " Verily, Allah does command you: To deliver back the trusts to their Owners" (Nesa/58) imams mean descendents of Mohammad (PBUH) and Imam delegates the trust to Imam after him (Koleini , 1986, 1:276).
- 5- about this holy verse: " And He appointed landmarks on The earth and [by night]people find their Way by the stars" (Nahl/16) Imam (PBUH) said:We are the landmarks we are members of the household (Koleini, 1986, 1:207).

- 6- about this holy verse: "O, you who believe [in Allah's Oneness]! Obey Allah and obey The Messenger and those governors Among you who have received Divine Authorities" (Nesa/59) Imam (PBUH) said about Ali Ebne Abitaleb (PBUH) and imams after him (Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 23:210).
- 7- about this holy verse: "The mosques are worshipping places for Allah, so do not worship others besides Allah at all" (Jen/18) Imam (PBUH) said: mosques are imams (PBUH)(Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 23:307).
- 8- Noor verse:" Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass" (Noor/35) interpretation of Mohammad (PBUH) and the members of the household (Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 23:307).

And many other cases which have been mentioned by Imam (PBUH) in interpretation of the verses and determination of their evidence regarding the members of the household.

- 9- In some cases of the interpretive method, Imam (PBUH) has changed the word and presents inherent concept of the verse. For example, the verses which apparently indicate that God has organs like human have been changed into inherent verses by Imam Ali (PBUH). we explained this part in the verbal interpretation and mention another example:

Mohammad Ebne obeideh asked Imam Reza (PBUH): o' the son of Mohammad! what does God mean by this holy verse when He refers to Satan? (Allah stated:" O, Ibliss! What prevented You from bowing down before a being Whom I have created with My Hand of Power?) (Sad/75) Imam(PBUH) said : He means power by hand(Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 1:120).

5 - Jurisprudential Method (Clarifying Orders and Commandments Through Verses of Quran)

The verses which include jurisprudential orders and commandments are called Verses judgments.

Imam Reza (PBUH) who is source and reference of clarifying orders and commandments has documented his view on Holy Quran in expression of the orders and commandments.

Some examples of the jurisprudential interpretation method in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH):

- 1- Abu al ghasem farsi told Imam Reza (PBUH): God says in His book: " The divorce[shall be lawful]only twice. Then you,[the husband]should either Keep the wife on reasonable terms or Release her with kindness" (Baghareh/229) what is its meaning? Imam (PBUH) said: it means holding well and not bothering wife and paying her alimony and divorcing her properly as stipulated by God (Ayashi, 1380 A.H., 1:117).
- 2- It has been narrated that a person asked Imam Reza (PBUH): a man has willed that all of my old slaves are released in the way of God, what is the religious rule? Imam (PBUH) said : yes, the God on high has said in his Book : " until it becomes like an old palm leaf" (Yasin/39) each of his slaves has been enslaved for 6 months is free and arjoon is an arched wood which connects date branch with blossom to date palm and becomes dry and old after elapse of 6 months(Ali Ben Ebrahim Ghomi, 1988, 2:215).

5- Scientific interpretation method

Holy Quran in some verses refers to the evident scientific phenomena such as creation of human, sphericity of the earth, force of gravity, couples in creatures and new scientific explorations have unveiled scientific miracles of Quran.

Imam Reza (PBUH) has interpreted some important scientific points in verses so beautifully that endless depth of the miracles of Holy Quran (scientific miracles) is clear.

Some examples of scientific interpretation method in sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH):

1- Abu Asalt Heravi says: Mamoon asked Imam (PBUH) question about this verse: " Allah is the One Who created The heavens and the earth in Six Days and Allah's Throne stayed over The water that He might try which of you is best in conduct" (Hood/7) Imam (PBUH) said: God created throne, water and angels before creation of the heavens and the angels argued for the presence of God by paying attention to Him, throne and water. Then, God put His throne on water to show His power to the angels so that the angels can understand that God is omnipotent for every affair. Then, He transferred throne with His power and put it on the seven heavens and while He was dominant over His throne, He created heavens and the earth in 6 days though He was able to perform it in the twinkling of an eye, however, He created them in 6 days to show what He creates in heavens and the earth one by one to the angles so that creation of each of them can be a reason for power of God in any rank for the angels and God has not created the throne for need because He doesn't need throne and all creatures. Regarding His Imperial Majesty, it cannot be said that He has sat on the throne because He is not material. God is very better and higher than traits of the creatures.

But regarding this part of the verse " that He might try which of you is best in conduct", He says: it means that God has created them to try them with worshiping and performing their duties but not as a test because He has known everything (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 134-135).

2- In a narration ,the narrator has quoted from Imam Askari (PBUH) and he has quoted from his great fathers to Imam Reza (PBUH) and he has also quoted from his great fathers to Imam Sajjad (PBUH) that His majesty has said about the verse: " Your Creator and Nurturer is the One Who Spread the earth as a carpet for your Rest and has built the sky above you as A ceiling; and sent down the rain from The sky and thereby produces fruits for Your sustenance; then do not set equals To Allah the One[and the Creator of all These blessings]when you know[about The uselessness of your stony idols;]" (Baghareh/22) it means that God has created the earth based on your nature, habit and bodies. He didn't make it too burning to burn you and too cold to chill you. Wind is not so flagrant that you have a headache and not so fetid that it bothers you. the earth is not so soft like water that it drowns you and not so hard that you cannot build a house in it and dig a grave but God has made it so hard that it is useful for you and you can hold your building on it and He has given a characteristic it to be useful for house building and digging grave and many of your benefits. For this reason, he has created the earth for you as bed. Therefore, God says: " and has built the sky above you as A ceiling" ceiling of which moon, sun and stars have been moved and rotated due to your benefits. Then, he says: " and sent down the rain from The sky" it means the rain which He sends to reach tops of mountain, hill and bottom of valleys. Then, He turned rain into different fine, sharp, coarse and violent and drizzling forms to encompass these rains and didn't descend this rain uniformly, otherwise, all of your lands, trees, farmlands and fruits would be destroyed. God continues: " and thereby produces fruits for Your sustenance" He gave you sustenance and livelihood from what grows from the earth.

It means that don't obey the idols which don't have reason, don't hear, don't see and are not able to work while you know that those idols cannot bestow these abundant and great blessings on you (Sadoogh, 1378 A.H., 1:137-138).

Of course, it is evident that in the said narration, Imam Reza (PBUH) is narrator of the narration from his great fathers which we mentioned here.

Conclusion

As observed above, more than one interpretive method has been used in major part of the sayings and narrations of Imam Reza (PBUH) under verses of Holy Quran. For example, about the holy verse "but Enter the gate of the temple prostrating And say: " O, our Creator and Nurturer! Forgive our sins." And [then] We shall Forgive your sins and increase to The reward of the good-doers." (Baghareh/58) Imam Reza (PBUH) narrated and quoted from Imam Bagher(PBUH): we are your gate (Ayashi, 1380 A.H., 1:45; Majlesi, 1404 A.H., 23:122), Gnostic, explanation(justification), comparison and Theological methods have been used in the verse. Therefore, the separation which we made among the examples below each of the methods was only due to dominance of that interpretive method in the said narration.

At the end, we mention that era of Imam Reza (PBUH) is era of Theological sects and religions. Some sects created many doctrinal deviations by misinterpreting verses of holy Quran. Imam Reza (PBUH) played effective role in rejecting the deviations and misinterpretation of Holy Quran and correct explanation of similarities and performed his mission in explanation of Quran and clearing God from human illusions at proper times and made new innovations in interpretive method considering characteristics and conditions of his era. Cultural and scientific work is found more than political actions in life of Imam Reza (PBUH) like other great ancestors because he knows that every positive or negative movement is rooted in belief and attitude of people and their thought should be corrected.

What was presented in this paper was a representation of the interpretive methods of His majesty (PBUH) in interpretation of verses of Holy Quran. Of course, we never claim that we have extracted all interpretive statements from narrations of Imam (PBUH) because such activity is not included in a paper and the said subject requires study and collection of a detailed and independent collection considering expansion of Imam Reza's narrations in this regard.

Recommendation: the project of "Holy Quran interpretation taken from works and sayings of Imam Reza (PBUH)" in which different issues and subjects which have been mentioned by Imam (PBUH) in interpretation of verses of Holy Quran should be collected, analyzed and studied.

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