

Examination of Two Theories Regarding Appointed Heirs of the Holy Quran in Imamite Religious Traditions

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ABSTRACT

Inheritance of the Holy Quran and the tradition of explanation and instruction of the Holy Book employed by the Prophet Muhammad (S) are discussed in Chapter Fatir verses 31 to 33. These verses are utilised as rationales for the finality of the Quran as well as prophethood. According to the apparent meaning of these verses, God has bestowed complete, accurate, and true knowledge of the Quran upon specific individuals, introducing them as appointed heirs (*warithan*) of the Quran. Any person who wishes to follow the path of truth after the departure of the Prophet Mohammad (S) must make use of the knowledge of these appointed heirs regarding the Quran and the Prophet's (S) Sunna. There are two opposing views among Islamic schools of thought about these appointed heirs as referred to in these verses. Relying on personal conjectures and the text of Chapter Fatir, Sunni commentators generally believe that the word *warithan* refers to either the Muslim community, the companions and the followers of the Prophet Mohammad (S) or earlier prophets and communities. This opinion is based on independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) and there are no documented Islamic traditions in this regard. Additionally, this idea imposes a plurality of meanings on the concept of heir. In contrast, the members of the Household of the Prophet (A) (*ahl al-bayt*) have utilized analysis and argument to discredit opposing opinions and prove that the appointed heirs of the Quran refer only to the Family of the Prophet (S) (*'itrah*). They emphasise that knowledge of the Prophet's (S) tradition of Quranic explanation^[1] and instruction^[2] – an essential prerequisite for proper understanding of the Holy Book – is their heritage which has been comprehensively and completely revealed to them by God. Sayings of the Household (A) state that the apparent significance of the verses in Chapter Fatir has been validated in the traditions of the Prophet (S), especially the Thaqalayn tradition. The Household (A) assert that after the passing of the Prophet (S), they inherited his legacy. The Infallibles (A) have stressed that the stated verses refer exclusively to the Prophet's (S) Household, and they utilise these verses as proof against opponents. The unsurpassed intellectual position of the Household of the Prophet (S) regarding knowledge of the Quran and Sunna is a common feature in these traditions, explaining that even outstanding figures among the companions of the Prophet (S) and other Islamic scholars lacked such knowledge. The present research discusses two generally accepted Sunni and Shia opinions about the appointed heirs of the Quran and critically examines the view antithetical to that of the Household (A) utilising Twelver Shia traditions.

KEYWORDS: appointed heirs of the Quran, comparative exegesis, inheritance of the Book, Chapter Fatir (Originator)

INTRODUCTION

The theological teaching regarding inheritance and appointed heirs of the Quran is derived from the Holy Quran itself. The content of this teaching has been discussed in Chapter Fatir.

As for that which We inspire in thee of the Scripture, it is the Truth confirming that which was (revealed) before it. Lo! Allah is indeed Observer, Seer of his slaves. Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom We elected of our bondmen. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are lukewarm and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave. That is the great favour! Gardens of Eden! They enter them wearing armllets of gold and pearl and their raiment therein is silk. (35:31-33)

As per the principle of exoteric validity, according to which the apparent meaning of a text must be considered valid, the Prophet Muhammad (S) is the direct addressee of these verses. Also, in the verses above, 'the Scripture' (*al-kitab*) refers to the Noble Quran which was revealed to the Prophet (S) and then given as inheritance to appointed servants of God. According to Imamite commentators, a number of significant points – including the principle of exoteric validity, the context of the verses, the fact that the *al-* prefix in *al-kitab* functions as a definite article, and the exoteric denotation of the text – demonstrate that '*al-kitab*' in both verses refers to the same book.^[3] Therefore, Imamite commentators reject statements asserting that *al-kitab* could refer

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to the Old Testament, 'book' in the absolute sense, or divine books revealed to earlier prophets (A)^[4] because of the contradiction of these ideas with the apparent meaning^[5] and the context of the stated verses^[6] as well as previous verses.^[7]

The *al-* prefix in *al-kitab* stated in verse 32 functions as a definite article. Therefore, the verse means, 'We gave the same book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (S) as inheritance.' This *al-* prefix is not of the type that renders the noun it is prefixed to a class noun, in which case *al-kitab* would refer to previous divine books revealed by God. Muqatil ibn Sulayman (d. 767 CE), an early Sunni commentator of the Quran, was also of the opinion that *al-kitab* in these verses refers to the Quran.^[8] Other commentators including Baghawi,^[9] Sam'ani,^[10] and Nasfi^[11] agree with this view.

Inheritance in this context refers to comprehensive and unerring knowledge of the entire Quran and the Prophet's (S) Sunna which has been transmitted to the appointed heirs. Exceptional powers of understanding and reasoning as well as infallibility in the heirs are requisites for this type of knowledge. Such mastery is beyond the means of ordinary teaching and learning. The term 'elected' in the translation of the verses above signifies that inheritance through revelation is selective and exclusive; that is, individuals are appointed as the heirs of the Quran by God based on a specific reason or set of reasons. Hence, the heirs are not an all-inclusive group of people, but a predetermined group of select individuals. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the meaning of these verses with regard to the appointed heirs of the Book and the matter of their identity are matters of controversy which have led to the development of two opposing views in Islamic schools of thought.

Main View of Sunni Scholars

There exists a diversity in interpretations and referents of 'heirs' among Sunni scholars. Non-Imamite commentators strive to introduce a comprehensive interpretation of this verse and to generalise it to include the entire Islamic community,^[12] the companions, the followers,^[13] rulers, scholars,^[14] or a subset of these groups. Among the ideas of Sunni commentators, the statement that the entire Islamic community is the heir of the Quran is very popular.^[15] In another view, earlier prophets (A) and nations are considered the heirs.^[16] This thought was not present at the time of Infallible Imams (A) and was expressed later in exegeses based on independent reasoning (*tafsir ijthadi*). There is no evidence in the interpretations of Sunni commentators to prove these ideas, and they are only cited as interpretive opinions and statements of early exegetes.

It seems that Sunni scholars merely considered the appearance and generality of the words in these verses or perhaps relied on their own personal reasoning. Interestingly, some of these professed referents, such as the Prophets (A) and the companions are mutually exclusive or irreconcilable. Allamah Tabataba'i believes that the range of views among Sunni scholars determining the pioneers of good deeds and the appointed heirs of the Quran is astounding. After reporting a number of Sunni ideas, he asserted that the variety of opinions was so great that the number of possible subsets exceeded one thousand.^[17]

The opinion that the entire Islamic community is the heir to the Quran was the dominant view of important Islamic centres, including Iraq and Khorasan, from the period of Imam Sajjad (A)^[18] to Imam Rida (A).^[19] This does not mean, however, that this view was uncommon in Medina, Mecca, Damascus, and other hubs of interpretation and hadith. Medina and Mecca were the origins of this view, which was spread to other areas by some companions and followers who were not friendly toward the Household of the Prophet (S). The opinions related to some of the companions of the Prophet (S) validate this statement.^[20] With the spread of this idea in the Islamic world, two parties emerged: opponents of the Household of the Prophet (S), who spread the view of generality of the heirs of the Quran, and the Infallible Imams (A) who rejected such a general view using methodical reasoning.

A glance through the first two centuries of Islamic history reveals the diligence of the Household of the Prophet (S) in protecting and propagating the truth regarding the verse of inheritance^[21] – protection against opposing views and propagation of their status in terms of the Quran. The constant effort of the Household of the Prophet (S) is a clear indicator of the existence of opposing views. In other words, Shia traditions show that in interpretation of the verse of inheritance, two completely opposite ideas had formed; that is, the view of the Household of the Prophet (S), which was centred in Medina, and a generality view dispersed in other centres of tradition. In 815 CE at a time when this view had great weight among Sunni scholars, Imam Rida (A) challenged it in a heated debate with a group of intellectuals. Doubt about the accuracy of the generality view and the interpretation of the verse of inheritance that was forwarded by exegetes of the intellectual school of the caliphs arose in several centres of tradition such as Basra, Iraq, and Kufa. In order to resolve this doubt, the Household (A) was asked for the correct interpretation of the verse. In response, the Household (A) explicitly rejected the generality view emphasising their own role as the heirs to Quranic knowledge.^[22] The interpretation of the Household of the Prophet (S) was met with silence. This inability to respond is an implicit acknowledgement of the falsehood of the view of the generality and approval of the interpretation maintained by the Household (A).

View of the Household (A)

The Household of the Prophet (S) assert that the phrase ‘appointed heirs to the Quran’ refers to the Infallible Family of the Prophet (S) as introduced in the popular Thaqalayn tradition.^[23] The Family or ‘*itrah*’ of the Prophet (S) consist of the twelve Infallibles (A) presented as Imams by the Shia.^[24] The inheritance in this verse is the comprehensive and unerring knowledge of the explanations and teachings of the entire Quran and the Prophet’s (S) Sunna as a legacy held by the Prophet’s Family (A). Singular powers of understanding and reasoning as well as infallibility in the heirs are requisites for this type of knowledge. Such mastery is beyond the means of ordinary teaching and learning. The term ‘elected’ utilised in the translation signifies that inheritance through revelation is selective and exclusive; that is, individuals are selected or appointed as the heirs of the Quran by God based on a specific reason or set of reasons. Hence, the heirs are not an all-inclusive community or group of people, but a predetermined group of select individuals.

This interpretation of inheritance has been established in traditions by the Prophet (A) and his Family. The Infallible Imams (A) have stressed that inheritance exclusively refers to the Family of the Prophet (S) and utilise this interpretation against the opposition. In addition to evidence based on the Quran and traditions, Imamite theologians make use of reasoning to prove that the Book and the Sunna must necessarily have been inherited by the Family of the Prophet (S). Imamite Islamic theologians consider this to be a cogent argument derived from the Prophet’s (S) Sunna. According to this argument, the Quran and the Family of the Prophet (S) cannot be separated. As long as they exist, there can be no doubt regarding the laws of sharia and there is no need to use analogy to infer religious laws.^[25]

Traditions on the Verse of Inheritance

Many traditions have been reported by the Household of the Prophet (S) which interpret the verse of inheritance. As discussed later in this article, traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance make use of inquiries and dialectics. The atmosphere in which these traditions were issued indicates that the reason behind the declaration of these traditions was existence of doubts and uncertainties. In this type of tradition, the Infallible Imams (A) were asked about the real meaning of the appointed heirs, and the Imams (A) clarified the matter.^[26] Some of these traditions clearly show that the Infallibles (A) utilised their great knowledge of the Quran as proof against opponents.^[27]

It is worth mentioning that all traditions regarding the appointed heirs, verify the great knowledge of the Infallible Imams (A) of the Shia. Therefore, they can also be called traditions of virtue which have been issued in order to explain the parts of the Holy Quran concerning the virtues of the Household of the Prophet (S). The following are some characteristics of these traditions.

1. Extensive Discussion for Two Centuries

Traditions by the Household (A) interpreting the verse of inheritance are common. Based on existing traditions, the historical trend of traditions regarding this verse among Shia traditions generally begins with Imam Ali (A) and ends with Imam Rida (A).^[28] Of course, this does not mean that no traditions have been issued after the eighth Imam of the Shia; rather, in existing documents no tradition remains on this subject after Imam Rida (A). Perhaps subsequent Imams have issued statements on this subject which have not survived the passage of time. Regardless, most traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance have been quoted from Imam Baqir (A) and Imam Sadiq (A).^[29] One tradition from Imam Sajjad (A) and two traditions from Imam Ali (A) have been reported in Sunni sources.^[30] Among these traditions, a saying quoted from Imam Rida (A) in his debate with Sunni scholars in the presence of Ma’mun is the most detailed and clear tradition on the significance of the verse of inheritance of the Book.

2. Transmission in Ancient Imamite Collections of Hadith and Tafsir

As there are numerous traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance, Imamite traditionists of early collections of hadith allocated separate sections to such reports. Ibn Shu’bah Harrani has reported traditions from Imam Rida (A) interpreting this verse under a section entitled ‘His remarks on the subject of appointment.’^[31] In *Basa’ir al-Darajat* there are twenty traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance under a section entitled ‘On the Imams (A); about them God has stated that surely they are the heirs of the Quran and they are the pioneers of good deeds’.^[32] Kulayni has also allocated a section to this subject labelled ‘On those who God has appointed and made the heirs of the Book; surely they are the Shia Imams.’^[33]

In numerous works of hadith including *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’mah*,^[34] *Uyun al-Akhbar al-Rida (A)*,^[35] and *Ma’ani al-Akhbar*,^[36] Shaykh Saduq has reported traditions related to this verse. In his work on Islamic scholastic theology titled *Al-I’tiqadat* – which utilises traditions in discussing Imamite beliefs – he states that inheritance of the Book by the Infallible Imams (A) is a Shia belief, substantiating his assertion using traditions regarding the verse of inheritance.^[37] Some books of traditions have also been recovered recently which contain traditions interpreting this verse.^[38] Many traditions interpreting this verse have also been reported in early traditional exegeses^[39] and have been gathered in a single book by Huwayzi.^[40] In an

independent section reporting traditions on the verse of inheritance, Sayyid Hashim Bahrani maintains that two of these traditions from Imam Ali (A)^[41] have been quoted by the Sunni and the other eighteen traditions have been quoted by the Shia.^[42] In the modern era, Allamah Majlisi^[43] and Shaykh Hurr ‘Amili^[44] have reported in their works all traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance of the Book.

3. Frequency in Transmission (*Tawatur Ma‘nawi wa Istifadah*)

On the validity of the chains of narrations (*sanad*) of traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance, Sayyid ibn Tawus declares that the common components in these traditions have been quoted from the Household of the Prophet (S) in over 20 ways.^[45] Mirza Nuri has also supported this point regarding the plurality of traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance.^[46] At the time of Sayyid ibn Tawus, the number of traditions on this verse were very numerous and after reporting a remarkable number of them, he also introduced some of their sources.^[47] Allamah Tabataba‘i has used the phrase ‘seriously large numbers’^[48] to express the frequency of Shia traditions quoted from the Household of the Prophet (S). Additionally, he stated that this matter has been quoted from Shia Imams (A) in many traditions.^[49] The transmission of these traditions by most of the Infallible Imams (A) and their citations in most Shia Hadith collections are indicators of the abundance of these traditions as well as of the fact that their issuance by the Imams (A) has been verified by early Imamite scholars. Contextual examination of these traditions also shows that among all of them there is semantic unity without variation in meaning.

4. Multiple Types

Overall, traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance can be divided into three types which include rejection of the generality view, identification of the heirs of the Quran, and determination of the characteristics of the heirs.

4.1. Rejection of the Idea of Generality of the Appointed Heirs of the Quran

Some of these traditions criticise and reject the view of the generality of the appointed heirs of the Quran. According to the traditions, the following criticisms apply to the generality view.

4.1.1. Inconsistency with the Last Part of the Verse of Inheritance

In view of the association between verses 31 to 33 of chapter Fatir, the Household of the Prophet (S) reject the idea of the generality of the appointed heirs of the Quran. These verses state that the appointed heirs will enter Heaven. In fact, they give a definite promise of Paradise to the heirs of the Quran. According to traditions as well as opinions of the commentators, this group will enter Paradise without reckoning. The last part of the verse of inheritance (i.e. ‘Gardens of Eden! They enter them wearing armlets of gold and pearl and their raiment therein is silk’) refers to this truth.

As stated by the previous verse, the appointed heirs will enter Heaven as a result of two characteristics: they did not oppress and they surpassed all others in good deeds. Accordingly, they deserve to be appointed as heirs of the Quran. Most members of the Islamic community (*ummah*) lack these two characteristics; therefore, there can be no blanket promise of Paradise for all of them. Of course, this does not mean that they will receive eternal punishment in Hell. Perhaps they may enter Paradise after a short or long sentence in the Hell. Alternatively, God may forgive them of His Grace and through intercession of the saints. Clearly, such access to Paradise is essentially different from a definite guarantee from God to enter Paradise. Additionally, many verses of the Quran point to the possibility of the Islamic community’s deviation, negating the prospect of entering Paradise without being brought to account. In short, the belief of the generality of the appointed heirs is not compatible with the last part of the verse of inheritance of the Book since God’s guarantee of entrance to Paradise definitely cancels out the possibility of generality of the heirs.

This guarantee of Paradise at the end of the verse of inheritance is significant for at least two reasons. First, the appointed heirs do not perform any action that may prevent them from entering Paradise, and this is due to their personal and spiritual characteristics as well as their great knowledge. Second, Paradise here is a spiritual reward for bearing the responsibility of inheritance of the Book for which God has guaranteed that the true heirs of the Quran will receive their reward.

This criticism regarding inconsistency with the last part of the verse of inheritance and generality of the appointed heirs has been discussed by Imam Sajjad (A)^[50] and Imam Rida (A).^[51]

4.1.2. Doubts about Being Heirs of the Book

Both doubt about the accuracy of the generality of inheritance of the Quran and the uncertainty that people have about entering Paradise bring about uncertainty that the Islamic community as an entirety is the heir of the Quran. This dubiety results from the people’s ignorance and lack of sufficient knowledge about the purpose of God. It is completely natural that such persons always harbour doubt and fear within their hearts and find themselves in need of the Family of the Prophet (S) to understand the truth about the verse of inheritance of the Book. The Household of the Prophet (S) refer to this uncertainty as a psychological sign to denouncing the

notion of generality of the inheritance of the Quran. This criticism has been reported in a tradition quoted from Imam Baqir (A) regarding the opinion of the scholars of Kufa.^[52]

4.1.3. Source of the View Opposing Generality

The view of generality of the inheritance of the Quran claims that all the people within the Islamic community (*ummah*) are heirs of the Quran; that is, they have inherited the Quran along with the knowledge to understand and use it. In the same Islamic community, there is an eminent party close to the Messenger (S) that is strongly opposed to this notion of generality. This eminent group is the Family of the Prophet (S) which was continuously against this view from the time of its emergence. The Family of the Prophet (S) is formed of outstanding and righteous figures of the Islamic community endorsed in the Thaqalayn tradition issued by the Prophet (S).

To express their opposition to the view of generality, the Household (A) utilised both implicit and explicit methods. The implicit method includes traditions by the Family of the Prophet (S) that critique the generality view and show its errors. These traditions express the opposition of the Infallible Imams (A) to this view. The explicit method is the clear rejection this view by the Family of the Prophet (S). An example of such clear repudiation is a statement by Imam Rida (A), 'I do not agree with what they say; I say that God means the pure Family of the Prophet (S).'^[53] Thus, when there is an opposing movement such as the Family of the Prophet (S), then the claim of generality of the inheritance of the Quran – i.e. having complete knowledge and understanding of the Quran – is unfounded.

4.1.4. Interpretation Based on Ijtihad and Personal Opinion (tafsir bi-al-ra'y)

There is no valid tradition quoted from the Prophet (S) about generality of the heirs of the Book. Collections of traditions and exegetic works of the school of the caliphs lack even a weak tradition from the Messenger (S) to prove such a claim. Surely during the period of the Infallible Imams (A) had the opposition had access to a valid tradition from the Prophet (S) to prove their claim, they would have used it to challenge the viewpoint of the Household of the Prophet (S). Lack of any tradition quoted from the Prophet (S) as well as the weakness of the theory and superficiality of its advocates indicate that this statement resulted from the personal opinions of some of the companions or commentators who sought to discount the knowledge of the Family of the Prophet (S) regarding the Quran.

4.2. Appointed Heirs, Exclusively the Family of the Prophet (S)

In other traditions as well as in traditions of the previous type, after denying the generality of the heirs, the Imams (A) explain that the appointed heirs of the Quran specifically signify the Family of the Messenger (S). In other words, the chosen heirs are the Infallible Imams (A) starting with Imam Ali (A) and continuing successively until the twelfth Imam. Like the verses of *mubalah* (mutual cursing [3:61]), *tathir* (purification [33:33]), *wilayah* (mastership [5:55]), and *mawaddat* (love [42:23]), this verse does not extend to others, even those who are related to the Infallible Imams (A) by blood or ethnicity. Traditions quoted from the Household of the Prophet (A) both explicitly and referentially indicate the exclusivity of the verse of inheritance of the Book to the Family of the Prophet (S).

4.2.1. Explicit Expression (dilalah mantuqi)

Phrases such as 'this station (heir of the Book) specifically belongs to us,'^[54] 'this verse concerns the children of Ali and Fatimah (A),'^[55] and 'this verse has been revealed about us, the Household of the Prophet (S)'^[56] are explicit expressions of this exclusivity. In some cases, these statements were accompanied with emphasis and repetition such as when Imam Rida (A) stated three times, 'By Allah, this verse has been revealed about us, the Household of the Prophet (S).'^[57]

4.2.2. Referential Expression ('unwan mushir)

Imam Rida (A) stated, 'I do not agree with what they say; I say that God means the pure family...therefore, inheritance of the Quran is exclusive to the pure family, not others.'^[58]

Here, in interpretation of the verse of inheritance, Imam Rida (A) raises several key points. One of these points is that this verse exclusively refers to the Family of the Prophet (S). These points also include rejection of the generality of heirs and assurance concerning God's intent with regard to the verse. The first part of his statement rejected the claims of the Sunni scholars present in the debate who advocated generality of the heirs of the Quran.

Application of the letter 'lam' denoting specification ('exclusive to the pure family') and the negative 'la' ('not others') denote that 'inheritance of the Book' belongs exclusively to the pure family. The title 'pure family' refers to the Household of the Prophet (S); it represents specific people in the real world. Usage of the adjective 'pure' in this title implies that this quality is not common and that this attribute is a condition for inheritance of the Quran only held by the Family of the Prophet (S).

The phrase ‘I say that God means...’ (cited above) is a clear sign that the Imam (A) is certain about the Divine intention. In response to this claim of certainty about the Divine intention regarding the verse, Ma’mun and the Sunni scholars remained silent and thus validated the Imam’s interpretation thus, ‘May God grant you, the Household of the Prophet (S), the best of rewards since whenever we make a mistake, we cannot find its correct explanation except with you.’^[59]

4.3. Signs of the Appointed Heirs of the Quran

In addition to identification of the appointed heirs of the Quran, the traditions of the Household (A) explain the characteristics of the appointed heirs, indicating that only the Shia Imams (A) can hold this position. These signs are in fact the same conditions and necessities of inheritance of the Book which have been reported descriptively in traditions quoted from the Household (A). The purpose is that the thoughtful audience, contemplating the meaning of such traditions, understand that this station is exclusive to the Family of the Prophet (S).

4.3.1. Surpassing Others in Good Deeds

About the last part of verse 32 of Chapter Fatir, ‘... and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah’s leave’ the Household (A) stated that this group refers to the Infallible Imams and that Ali ibn Abu Talib (A) is the first among those who surpass others through good deeds.^[60] The next are the Imams among the progeny of Ali (A) and Fatimah (A).^[61] In these traditions, the titles *al-Imam* and *al-Shahid* are used synonymously with the phrase ‘those who outstrip (others) through good deeds’. It can be understood by examining these traditions that the title *al-Imam* is used for Imams (A) whose terms of inheritance and spiritual leadership have ended and who had already passed away at the time of the interpretation. Also, the title *al-Shahid* signifies the interpreting Imam (A) as well as subsequent Infallible Imams (A) who assumed spiritual leadership and inherited the Quran in the succeeding periods. Allamah Tabataba’i asserts that based on context and other indicators, the title *al-Shahid* in these traditions is a reference to the Imam (A) himself.^[62]

4.3.1.1. Traditions Explaining those who Outstrip (Others) through Good Deeds

There are two types of traditions explicating the phrase ‘those who outstrip others through good deeds’. Some traditions utilise the term as a universal affirmative proposition to show that the ones who outstrip others through good deeds denote the twelve Shia Imams (A). A textual indicator of this is the conditional phrase ‘from the progeny of Ali (A) and Fatimah (A)’ in these traditions. Other traditions explicitly name the individuals who outstrip others through good deeds, listing the very names of the Shia Infallible Imams (A).

By summing up these two groups of traditions, it can be understood that verse 32 of Chapter Fatir specifically refers to the Imams (A) of the Family of the Prophet (S) from the lineage of Ali (A) and Fatimah (A). It is also understood from the traditions that inheritance of the Book requires that the heirs outstrip others through good deeds and that purity and Divine guidance are prerequisites for this. Thorough purification and being Divinely guided are exclusive characteristics of the Family of the Prophet (S), and no other holds these two specifications. This will be discussed in greater detail further on.

The early history of Islam clearly shows that the Family of the Prophet (S) and above all Imam Ali (A) were first and foremost in all good deeds. According to *sahih* (lit. authentic) traditions agreed on by both Shia and Sunni scholars, Ali (A) was the forerunner of the Islamic community in accepting Islam, in his faith toward God, and in jihad.^[63] Hakim Haskani (d. 1077 CE), a great Sunni scholar, has written a book about this entitled *Surely Ali (A) was the First to Embrace Islam and Outstripped Others in Islam*, and has made reference to this work in *Shawahid al-Tanzil*.^[64]

4.3.2. Extensive Knowledge without the Need for Asking

Naturally and logically inheritance of any material and spiritual thing necessitates that the heir gain a kind of material and spiritual wealth or power as a result of the inheritance to use when necessary. It seems logical that the material and spiritual ability and situation of the heir be different before and after inheritance, empowering them with a special kind of ability or wealth they did not have before. The mere claim of inheritance and carrying the title of heir does not resolve any problems. Such a claim seems more like a mirage than the reality of inheritance because a claim does not prove anything by itself and is in need of evidence. If the entire Islamic community inclusive of major sources of Islamic knowledge such as the companions were the heirs of the Quran, this virtue would have been made so popular throughout history that no one would dare to oppose it. However, history has demonstrated the opposite and has introduced the Family of the Prophet (S) as serious opponents of the claimants to inheritance of the Quran whose false claim has easily been made clear by the Household (A).

The major obstacle for claimants of inheritance was insufficient knowledge of the Quran. Claimants of this inheritance must have such knowledge of the Quran that there is no need for them to ask others in order to understand it. They must have knowledge of the Quran that is comprehensive and everlasting such that there is

no need for them to use speculative and analogical methods for interpretation, and their religious statements must not be inconsistent; otherwise, either they have made false claims of inheritance of the Quran or the Quran is incapable of answering their questions and fulfilling their needs such that they must use speculation and analogy, reaching divergent opinions and views. The hypothesis that the Quran is not comprehensive enough to answer the needs and problems of the people is completely false and unfounded. This is agreed on by the entirety of the Islamic community. The only hypothesis that remains is the first, which bears witness to the absolute reason why the Muslim community as a whole and even many of its outstanding members do not hold the qualified status of inheritance of the Book – they lack comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Quran.

This argument is so obvious that the human intellect can easily understand and validate it. Some traditions from the Household of the Prophet (S) indirectly refer to this logical proof as the sign of the true heirs of the Quran, emphasising that the heirs of the Quran do not need to ask questions about religious issues from anyone; rather, the people refer their questions to them for answers. A tradition states:

Surely Ali [A] was the closer to the Messenger of Allah [S] than anyone else since Ali is the brother of the Prophet both in this world and the next. It was Ali who inherited his (the Prophet's) entire legacy including his weapon, his things, and his horse, Shahba', everything he left behind. And Ali also inherited the 'Prophet's Book after his departure. As Allah states, 'Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom We elected of Our bondmen.' And by the Book, it is meant the Quran all of which was revealed to the Prophet. After the Prophet, Ali taught the people, while no one taught him anything. The people would continuously ask him questions, while he never asked any religious question from anyone.^[65]

Referring to the verse of inheritance of the Book and Ali's (A) knowledge of the Quran, the second part of this tradition states that his great knowledge made it unnecessary for him to ask any religious question, and this is true inheritance of the Quran. As discussed before, the nature of inheritance is itself a criterion to distinguish the true claimants of inheritance from false ones.

4.3.3. Purity and Guidedness

In part of a tradition quoted from Imam Rida (A) in a debate with Sunni scholars, the Imam referred to purity and possessing Divine guidance as two essential characteristics of the heirs of the Book that are held only by the Family of the Prophet (S). The rest of the people in the Islamic community do not have these characteristics. Utilising traditions to explain these two characteristics, Imam Rida (A) asserted that purity and possession of Divine guidance are two Quranic prerequisites for the heirs.^[66] Referring to Quranic verses, he challenged the view of the Sunni scholars and proved that their claim was in conflict with the Holy Quran. In an answer to a question by Ma'mun as to the identity of the pure Family, Imam Rida (A) cited the verse of purification (*tathir*) and the tradition of Thaqalayn and explained the conditions for purity.^[67] He applied the verse of purification to prove the purity of the Household of the Prophet (S) and the tradition of Thaqalayn to demonstrate the use of purity in understanding the Book and Sunna and determining the identity of the Family of the Prophet (S). It is understood from the statements of Imam Rida (A) that purity is a condition for each member of the Family of the Prophet (S) indicated in the Thaqalayn tradition. These individuals are the most knowledgeable people about the Book of God and there can be no separation between the two. It is also understood from the combination of the verse of purification and the tradition of Thaqalayn that purity is a necessary condition for inheritance of the Book and the Prophet's (S) Sunna, without which there is no possibility of inheritance. Unpurified persons may make mistakes in understanding the Quran and need to be guided themselves; therefore, such persons are not reasonably deserving of a status of such importance as inheritance of the Book and Sunna.

Advising the Sunni scholars to put an end to blind imitation and prejudice, and emphasising the importance of Quran-based thought,^[68] Imam Rida (A) then referred to guidedness of the heirs as a prerequisite citing verse 26 of chapter Hadid and verse 46 of chapter Hud. He concluded that prophethood and inheritance of the Book are only for those who have been guided by God, not for evildoers. Even if claimants are blood relatives of a prophet, but are not Divinely guided, they do not deserve to be heirs of the Book. By referring to these verses, the Imam (A) was actually stating that being a blood relative of the Prophet (S) is not sufficient for being an heir of the Quran, and in this way, he rejected all common misconceptions on the subject. He introduced the appointed rightly guided (*al-mustafin al-muhtadin*)^[69] as the true heirs of the Book.

Application of the word *al-mustafin* points to a special kind of appointment by God that is announced by the Prophet (S). Citing the mentioned verses, Imam Rida (A) also referred to the Divine tradition regarding selection of heirs of the previous divine books and prophets (A) and drew an analogy between it and inheritance of the Family of the Prophet (S). The Imam (A) was indirectly asking the Sunni scholars, 'How is it that you are the heirs without having knowledge of this? If you are truly the heirs of the Book, then why do you not know the meaning and intent of its verses?'

4.3.4. Gateway to Forgiveness, Ship of Salvation, and Refuge of the Muslim Community

After asserting the exclusivity of the verse of inheritance of the Book with regard to the Family of the Prophet (S) in some traditions, the spiritual status of the Family of the Prophet (S) in the Islamic community is discussed. These are effects of inheritance of the Book on the Family of the Prophet (A). For instance, in answer to a question by Aba Ishaq Sabi'i about the meaning of the verse of inheritance, after emphasising the exclusivity of this verse about the Household of the Prophet (S), Imam Baqir (A) describes the status of the heirs of the Quran.

Aba Ishaq! Through us, God removes from you imperfections. Through us, He removes from your neck the cords of disgrace. Through us, He forgives your sins. Through us He opens and through us He puts an end, but not through you. We are your shelter like the cave of the Seven Sleepers, and we are your ship to salvation like Noah's Ark, and we are your gate of Hittah like the Hittah gate of the Children of Israel.^[70]

Specifications in these traditions are similar to those in Prophetic traditions including the Ship of Salvation, the Gate of Hittah, and the Cave of the Seven Sleepers which explain the status of the Household of the Prophet (S) in the Islamic community. Here, Imam Baqir (A) indicated the equality between 'those outstripping others in good deeds' and the Family of the Prophet (S). Also, he tacitly interpreted this verse based on Prophetic traditions. The Prophetic traditions referred to all have one thing in common: based on the statements of the Prophet (S) himself, the Family of the Prophet (S), like Noah's Ark, is the source of salvation and guidance of the Muslim community and they should be followed through darkness and deviation. One must, for instance, make use of their knowledge to understand the Quran, especially in cases of disagreement and controversy. These traditions implicitly prove that the Family of the Prophet (S) has complete knowledge and understanding of the Book and the Sunna; otherwise, the Prophet's (S) recommendation to adhere to them would be baseless. Hittah was the gate of Jericho or Bayt al-Muqaddas through which the Children of Israel should have entered humbly asking for forgiveness. The Islamic community should adhere to and seek intercession from the Household of the Prophet (S) with humility in order to enjoy God's blessings and forgiveness.^[71]

4.3.5. Perseverance and Lack of Compromise in Propagation of Islam

The social functions of the heirs of the Quran are referred to in some traditions. This aspect of the mission of the heirs includes responsibilities such as invitation to the Divine Path, commandment to good and forbiddance of evil, opposition to wrongdoers and traitors,^[72] and heroic endeavours in the invitation towards God.^[73] These characteristics as a whole signify the perseverance of the heirs of the Quran in the call to God and their lack of compromise in this path. These are signs by which one can recognise them throughout the history of Islam.

It is clear that the above-mentioned characteristics of the heirs are based on their correct knowledge of the Book and the Sunna; otherwise, the people might be guided in a wrong direction instead of to the Divine Path. Accordingly, Imamite researchers emphasise that these traditions generally indicate that an Imam (A) has full knowledge of everything through the Quran.^[74] Without such knowledge of the Book and the Sunna any so-called call to truth would in fact be a call towards deviation. It is for this reason that Imam Sadiq (A) criticised and rejected the actions of some Fatimites who claimed to be reformers.

5. Critique of Fatimites

It is worth mentioning that some internal Shia groups at the time of the Infallible Imams (A) sought to extend the meaning of the verse of inheritance to Fatimites (i.e. the entire progeny of Fatimah (A)). This view also encountered the rejection of the Infallible Imams (A). This notion was raised by the Zaydiyyah after the period of Imam Sajjad (A). In a discussion with Sulayman ibn Khalid,^[75] a former supporter of Zayd ibn Ali who believed this verse had been revealed exclusively about all Fatimites, Imam Sadiq (A) rejected this claim and identified the characteristics of the appointed heirs of the Quran, thereby ruling out the Fatimites.^[76] The Imam told Khalid, 'It is not as you imagine. This verse does not cover a person who unsheathes their sword and calls the people to oppose.' Exegetists believe that this statement indicates that the verse of inheritance has not been revealed about all the children of Fatimah (A). One exegete explains:

It seems that the Imam (A) meant that if this verse covers absolutely all the progeny of Fatimah (A), then this verse must cover even those who draw their swords and call the people astray. However, this is not the case; the verse above has been revealed about those who call the people to God and the right religion by Divine command. These are Ali (A) and some of the descendants of Fatimah (A).^[77]

Considering what has been discussed earlier, Imamite traditionists emphasise that the above-mentioned traditions indicate that the verse of inheritance of the Book has been exclusively revealed about a select group of descendants of Fatimah (A),^[78] who are the appointed heirs of the Book.^[79] Imamite Akhbaris also understand the same exclusivity from this verse,^[80] and based on these traditions they refer to this verse as proof that inference of rules from the Quran that are not explicitly stated is not permitted.^[81]

Conclusions

1. The most important argument utilized by the Household of the Prophet (S) to prove the authority of their traditions, especially in Quranic science, is the argument of inheritance of the Book. As a result of this inheritance, knowledge and infallibility are also essential for them. The principle of inheritance was originally reported in the Holy Quran and was then elaborated on in traditions of the Household of the Prophet (S). In this context, inheritance signifies comprehensive and unerring knowledge of the entirety of the Quran and the Prophet's (S) Sunna for explanation and teaching of the Quran as transmitted to the Family of the Prophet (S) through inheritance. Singular powers of understanding and reasoning as well as infallibility in the heirs are the necessities for this type of knowledge. Such mastery is beyond the means of ordinary teaching and learning. The term 'appointed' means that inheritance through revelation is selective and exclusive; that is, individuals are selected as the heirs of the Quran by God based on a specific reason or set of reasons. Hence, the heirs are not an all-inclusive group of people, but a predetermined group of select individuals.

2. The teachings of the Family of the Prophet (S) regarding inheritance of the Book influence the components of Imamite interpretive theory especially the components of interpretation source (authoritativeness of the Sunna of the Household (A)), method, and assessment of the results of interpretation. These teachings have such a wide range of influence that they affect the practical principles of interpreters in different ways, setting them apart and even making them antithetical to one another. They create a completely different range of interpretive sources, interpretive methods, and criteria for evaluation of interpretive opinions of the exegetes, and necessitate a series of limits in components for commentators. To put it differently, acceptance of the Family of the Prophet (S) as the true heirs of the Quran includes some rational stipulations which exegetes should consider as criteria for interpretation of the Quran, including agreement with exegetical statements of the Household (A) and utilisation of their methods in explication of Quranic verses.

3. Relying on rational proof, Imamite theologians have proven that the heirs of the Book and Sunna are the Family of the Prophet (S) as determined through Divine revelation. Imamite theologians term this principle 'Family of the Prophet (S) as repository of knowledge of the Book and the Sunna' and regard it as a logical argument based on the Prophet's (S) Sunna, according to which there is no separation between the Quran and the Family of the Prophet (S). Also, as long as the Family of the Prophet (S) exists, there will be no doubt about Divine law and there will be no need to use analogy in order to infer religious laws.

4. There are many characteristics of traditions interpreting the verse of inheritance of the Book including prevalence in the statements of the Household of the Prophet (S) over a period of two centuries; transmission in ancient Imamite collections of Hadith and exegesis; frequency in transmission; use of inquiry and dialectical methods; and identification of necessary virtues. These traditions can be divided into three types including traditions rejecting the view of generality of the appointed heirs of the Quran, traditions exclusively determining the appointed heirs as the Family of the Prophet (S), and those that identify characteristics of the appointed heirs of the Quran.

5. According to the Household of the Prophet (S), there are a number of problems with the notion of generality of the appointed heirs of the Quran including lack of conformity with the last part of the verse of inheritance, doubts regarding the Muslim community being inheritors of the Quran, the fact that the Family of the Prophet (s) were the source of the opposition within the Islamic Ummah, and the fact that this idea is based on independent reasoning.

6. The appointed heirs of the Quran possess special characteristics. They outstrip others in good deeds and have comprehensive knowledge without the need for asking others. They are purified and Divinely guided. They are the gateways to forgiveness, arks of salvation, and shelters for the Islamic community. They are forbearing and never compromise in spreading Islam. Such characteristics apply only to the Family of the Prophet (S).

7. The Fatimites attempted to attribute the verse of inheritance of the Book exclusively to descendants of Fatimah (A). This viewpoint was raised by the Zaydiyyah after the period of Imam Sajjad (A); however, Imam Sadiq (A) rejected this claim.

Terms without Diacritics	Terms in Arabic	Terms with Diacritics
'itrah	عتره	'itrah
'unwan mushir	عنوان مشير	'unwān mushīr
al-kitab	الكتاب	al-kitāb
al-muhtadin	المهتدين	al-muhtadīn
al-mustafin	المصطفين	al-muṣṭafīn
dilalah mantuqi	دلالة منطوقى	dilālah manṭūqī
Hittah	حطه	hiṭṭah
Istifadah	استفاضه	istiḥāḍah
Mawaddat	موده	mawaddat
Mubalahah	مباهله	mubāhalah
Sanad	سند	Sanad
tafsir bi-al-ra'y	تفسير بالرأى	tafsīr bi-al-ra'y
tafsir ijthadi	تفسير اجتهادى	tafsīr ijthādī

Tathir	تطهير	taṭhīr
tawatur ma'nawī	تواتر معنوی	tawātur ma'nawī
Warithan	وارثان	wāriṭhān
Wilayah	ولاية	wilāyah

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- [2]. *The Holy Quran*, chapter Al-i 'Imran, verse 164; chapter Jumu'ah, verse 2; and chapter Baqarah, verse 129.
- [3]. Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ahmad Habīb Qasīr al-'Āmilī, (Qum: Maktab al-'Ilām al-Islāmī, 1989), vol. 8, p. 429; Shaykh Tabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, (Beirut: Mu'assisah al-'Alami Li-al-Matbū'āt, 1994), vol. 8, p. 224; Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*, (Qum: Manshurat Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisin, n.d.), vol. 17, p. 44; Fath Allah Kāshānī, *Tafṣīr Minhāj al-Sādiqīn fī Ilzām al-Mukhālīfīn*, introd. Abū al-Hassan Murtaẓawī, (n.p.: Intisharat 'Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, n.d.), vol. 7, p. 447.
- [4]. Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'an*, ed. Al-Shaykh Khalil al-Mis & Sidqi Jamil al-'Attar, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995), vol. 22, pp. 159-163.
- [5]. Shaykh Tabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 8, p. 244.
- [6]. Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 14, p. 44.
- [7]. Ibid.
- [8]. Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafṣīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. Ahmad Farid, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2003), vol. 3, p. 77.
- [9]. Hussain ibn Mas'ūd al-Farrā' al-Baghawī, *Tafṣīr al-Baghawī*, ed. Khālid 'Abd al-Rahmān al-'Ak, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 570.
- [10]. Mansūr ibn Muhammad al-Sam'ānī, *Tafṣīr al-Sam'ānī*, ed. Yasir ibn Ibrahim & Ghanim ibn 'Abbas ibn Ghanim, (Al-Riaz: Dar al-Watan, 1997), vol. 4, p. 358.
- [11]. 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Nasafi, *Tafṣīr al-Nasafi*, (n.p.: n.d.), vol. 3, p. 343.
- [12]. Mujāhid ibn Jabr, *Tafṣīr Mujāhid*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Surti, (Islam Abad: Majma' al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 38; Ibn Abī Hātam al-Rāzī, *Tafṣīr Ibn Abī Hātam al-Rāzī*, ed. As'ad Muhammad al-Tayyib, (Sayda: Al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah, n.d.), vol. 10, 2002; Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, *Samarqandī Interpretation*, ed. Mahmūd Matrajī, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 102.
- [13]. Mahmūd Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf*, (Cairo: Shirkah Maktabah wa Matba'ah Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī wa Awlādih, 1966), vol. 3, p. 308; 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Nasafi, *Tafṣīr al-Nasafi*, vol. 3, p. 343.
- [14]. For some of the views, see: Shaykh Tabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 8, pp. 246.
- [15]. Mansūr ibn Muhammad al-Sam'ānī, *Tafṣīr al-Sam'ānī*, vol. 4, p. 358.
- [16]. For more information, see: Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'an*, vol. 22, pp. 159-163.
- [17]. Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, p. 46.
- [18]. Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī was quoted thus, 'I was sitting with 'Alī ibn Hussayn (A) when two Iraqi people came to him and said, "O Son of the Messenger of Allah! We came into your presence in order to be informed of the interpretation of Quranic verses." 'Alī ibn Hussain (A) asked, "Which verse do you mean?" They replied, "The meaning of this verse, 'Then we gave the Scripture as inheritance into those whom ...'" 'Alī ibn Hussain (A) asked, "O people of Iraq, first tell me what Iraqi people say about this noble verse." They replied, "They say this verse has been revealed about the Ummah of Muhammad (S) who are the heirs of the Quran." Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī, *Tafṣīr Abī Hamzah al-Thumālī*, pp. 277-278.
- [19]. Imam Riḍā (A) came to Ma'mūn in the city of Marv. A group of Iraqi and Khurasani scholars were present there. Ma'mūn told them, 'Inform me of the interpretation of this verse: "Then we gave the Scripture as inheritance into those whom We elected of our bondmen" (35:32).' The scholars said it refers to the entire Islamic Ummah. Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Nashr al-Islami, 1984), pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Bi'thah, 1996), pp. 615-617.
- [20]. Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'an*, vol. 22, pp. 159-163.
- [21]. From here on verses 31 to 33 of chapter Fatir are referred to as the verse of inheritance of the Book or the verse of inheritance.
- [22]. Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī said, 'I was sitting in *Masjid al-Harām* (the Sacred Mosque in Mecca) in the presence of Imam Bāqir (A) when two people from Basra came to him and said, "O son of the Messenger of Allah. We want to ask you a question." He stated, "There is no problem. Ask your question." They said, "Inform us of the interpretation of this verse, 'Then we gave the Scripture...'" Shaykh Sadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, Section 'Ma'nī al-Zālim Li-Nafsih wa al-Muqtasid wa al-Sābiq,' p. 105, tradition 3; Sulaymān ibn Khālid said, 'I asked Imam Sādiq (A) about the words of God, "Then we gave the Scripture as inheritance into those whom We elected of our bondmen." He stated, "What do you say about that?" I replied, "We say this verse is about the children of Fātimah (S) [It seems that he meant the children of Imam Hassan (A)]." He stated, "This is not as you imagine." Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 215.

- [23]. 'Verily, I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*) among you: the Book of God and my Kindred (*'irrat*), my Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), for indeed, the two will never separate until they come back to me by the Pond (of *al-Kawthar* on the Day of Judgement).' Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, ed. Al-Sayyid Ibrahim al-Mianaji & Muhammad al-Baqir al-Bihbudi, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1983), vol. 23, p. 108.
- [24]. Although Fātimah (A) is considered infallible by the Shia, she is excluded from our discussion here, because she is not an Imam.
- [25]. Ja'far Subhānī, *Tatawwur al-Fiqh 'Ind al-Shī'ah fī al-Qarnayn 4 wa 5*, (Qum: Mu'assisah 'Al al-Bayt Li-Ihya' al-Turath, 1986), p. 26.
- [26]. Shaykh Sadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, p. 105, tradition 3; Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 215; Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī, *Tafsīr Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī*, pp. 277-278.
- [27]. Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [28]. Of course, as far as we investigated no tradition was found quoted from Imam Hassan (A) and Imam Hussayn (A) on this subject.
- [29]. Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Saffār al-Qummī, *Basā'ir al-Darajāt*, ed. Haj Mirza Hassan Kuchih Baqi, (Tehran: Manshurat al-A'lamī, 1984), pp. 64-68; Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 214-215.
- [30]. Sayyid Hāshim Bahrānī, *Ghāyat al-Marām wa Hujjat al-Khisām fī Ta'in al-Imām min Tarīq al-Khas wa al-'Ām*, ed. Sayyid 'Alī 'Ashūr, (n.p.: n.d.), vol. 4, p. 36.
- [31]. Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426.
- [32]. Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Saffār al-Qummī, *Basā'ir al-Darajāt*, pp. 64-68.
- [33]. Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 214-215.
- [34]. Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Nashr al-Islamī, 1984), pp. 97-99, 117.
- [35]. Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Uyūn Akhhbār al-Riḍā (A)*, ed. Shaykh Hussayn A'lamī, (Beirut: Mu'assisah al-A'lamī Li-al-Matbū'āt, 1984), vol. 2, p. 234, tradition 5.
- [36]. Shaykh Sadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, Section 'Ma'nī al-'Āl,' p. 104, tradition 1, p. 105, Section 'Ma'nī al-Zālim Li-Nafsih wa al-Muqtasid wa al-Sābiq,' tradition 2.
- [37]. Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-'Itiqādāt fī Dīn al-Imāmiyyah*, ed. 'Isām 'Abd al-Sayyid, (Beirut: Dar al-Mufīd, 1993), p. 112.
- [38]. Group of Narrators, *Al-Usūl al-Sittah 'Ashar*, (Qum: Dar al-Shabistari Li-al-Matbū'āt, 1984), p. 30.
- [39]. Muhammad ibn Mas'ūd al-'Ayyashī, *Tafsīr al-'Ayyashī*, ed. Sayyid Hashim Rasuli Mihallati, (Tehran: Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah al-Islamiyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 70, vol. 2, p. 264; 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. Al-Sayyid Tayyib al-Mūsawī al-Jazāyirī, (Qum: Mu'assisah Dar al-Kitab, 1984), vol. 2, p. 209; Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, ed. Muhammad al-Kazim, (Tehran: Wizarah al-Thiqafah wa al-Irshad al-Islami, 1990), pp. 145, 347-350.
- [40]. 'Abd 'Alī ibn Jumu'ah 'Arūsī Huwayzī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, ed. Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī Mihallātī, (Qum: Mu'assisah Ismā'īliyyān, 1370), vol. 4, pp. 361-365.
- [41]. Interpreting the meaning of 'appointed' in these two traditions the Imam stated, 'It means us.' See: Sayyid Hāshim Bahrānī, *Ghāyat al-Marām wa Hujjat al-Khisām fī Ta'in al-Imām min Tarīq al-Khas wa al-'Ām*, vol. 4, p. 36.
- [42]. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 36-43.
- [43]. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 23, pp. 214-218, vol. 46, pp. 180-185.
- [44]. Shaykh Hurr 'Amilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, (Beirut: Mu'assisah Āl al-Bayt Li-Ihya' al-Turath, 1993), vol. 18, pp. 49, 139.
- [45]. Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, (Qum: Manshūrāt al-Razī, 1984), pp. 107-108.
- [46]. Mirzā Hussain Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, (Beirut: Mu'assisah Āl al-Bayt Li-Ihya' al-Turath, 1988), vol. 17, pp. 332-333.
- [47]. Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 79-80, 107-108.
- [48]. Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, p. 50.
- [49]. *Ibid.*, vol. 17, pp. 44-45.
- [50]. 'Alī ibn Hussayn (A) stated, 'If it is so then the entire Ummah of Muhammad (S) must enter Paradise and must be righteous and no one must be punished.' Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī, *Tafsīr Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī*, pp. 277-278.
- [51]. Imam Riḍā (A) stated, 'If it refers to the entire Islamic community (Ummah), then all must enter Paradise since following that God states that a group of them are oppressor to themselves, a group of them are average, and a group of them outstrip others through good deeds by the authorisation of God; this is the great favour. Then he gathers all of them in the Paradise and states, "They enter them wearing armlets of gold..."' Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [52]. Abā Ishāq Sabī'ī was quoted thus, 'I left town to go to Hajj pilgrimage. I met Imam Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Bāqir (A) and asked him about verse 32 of chapter Fatir. He asked me, "What do the people of Kufa say about the interpretation of this verse?" I answered, "They say this verse is about them." He stated, "Then what do they fear as they are the people of Paradise?" I said, "What is your opinion?" He stated, "This verse has been revealed exclusively about us." Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 107-108.
- [53]. Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [54]. Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 107-108.
- [55]. Muhammad ibn Hassan Saffār Qummī, *Basā'ir al-Darajāt*, p. 65.

- [56]. Shaykh Sadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, p. 105, tradition 3.
- [57]. Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī, *Tafsīr Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī*, pp. 277-278.
- [58]. Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [59]. Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 617.
- [60]. 'Pioneers of good deeds are Imam 'Alī ibn Abītālib (A), Imam Hassan (A), Imam Hussain (A), and the martyr of our family.' Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 107-108.
- [61]. 'The Imam is the pioneer of good deeds. And only the children of 'Alī (A) and Fātimah (S) are Imams.' Muhammad ibn Hassan Saffār Qummī, *Basā'ir al-Darajāt*, p. 65.
- [62]. Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, p. 49.
- [63]. Sayyid 'Alī Mīlānī, *Tashyīd al-Murāji'āt wa Tafnīd al-Mukābirāt (15)*, (Qum: Mu'assisah Āl al-Bayt Li-Ihya' al-Turath, 1999), vol. 59, p. 62.
- [64]. Sayyid 'Abd al-'Azīz Tabātabā'ī, *Ahl al-Bayt (A) fī Maktabah al-'Arabiyyah*, (Qum: Mu'assisah Āl al-Bayt Li-Ihya' al-Turath, 1996), p. 58.
- [65]. Lujnah al-Hadīth Ma'had Bāqir al-'Ulūm (A), *Sunan al-Imām 'Alī (A)*, (Qum: Nur al-Sajjād, 2001), p. 52.
- [66]. 'Alas for you! Where are you taken? Do you turn your face back from the Quran or are you extravagant? Don't you know that inheritance and purity exclusively belong to the appointed people, but not to others?' Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [67]. 'The Family of the Prophet (S) are those who God has characterised in the Quran stating, "Verily, God wills to remove impurity away from you and purify you a thorough purification." And they are the same people about whom the Messenger of Allah stated, "Verily, I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*) among you: the Book of God and my Kindred, my Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), for indeed, the two will never separate until they come back to me by the Pond (of *al-Kawthar* on the Day of Judgement). Be careful how you treat them after me. O people! Do not teach them, because they are more knowledgeable than you.'" Ibn Shu'bah Harrānī, *Tuhaf al-'Uqūl*, pp. 425-426; Shaykh Sadūq, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 615-617.
- [68]. Ibid.
- [69]. Ibid.
- [70]. Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 107-108.
- [71]. Muhammad Taqī Sharī'atī, *Khilāfat wa Wilāyat az Nazar Qur'ān wa Sunna*, (Tehran: Hussainiyyah Irshad Press, 1972), p. 223.
- [72]. Shaykh Sadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, Section 'Ma'nī al-Zālim Li-Nafsīh wa al-Muqtasid wa al-Sābiq,' p. 105, tradition 3.
- [73]. Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī, *Tafsīr Abū Hamzah al-Thumālī*, pp. 277-278.
- [74]. Mirzā Muhammad Taqī Isfahānī, *Mikyāl al-Makārim*, ed. Sayyid 'Alī 'Ashur, (Beirut: Mu'assisah al-A'lami Li-al-Matbū'āt, 2000), p. 323.
- [75]. He has been described by Najjāshī thus, 'He is a Quran reciter, an Islamic jurisprudent, and an outstanding figure. He has quoted the traditions both from Imam Bāqir (A) and Imam Sādiq (A). He made an uprising along with Zayd ibn 'Alī and no one among the companions of Imam Bāqir (A) joined Zayd ibn 'Alī except him. His hand was cut off by Yūsuf ibn 'Umar in this uprising. He died in the time of Imam Sādiq (A) who grieved for his death and prayed for his children and made recommendations to his companions about them.' Abū al-'Abbās Ahmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ahmad ibn al-'Abbās al-Najjāshī, *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Nashr al-Islamī, 1995), p. 183. The same words have been repeated in other Imamite Rijāl authorities: Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqī, *Rijāl al-Barqī*, (Qum: Al-Qayyūm Press, n.d.), p. 32.
- [76]. Sulaymān ibn Khālīd said, 'I asked Imam Sādiq (A) about the words of God. "We gave the Scripture as inheritance into those whom We elected of our bondmen." He stated, "What do you say about this?" I said, "We say this verse is about the children of Fātimah (S)." He stated, "It is not as you imagine..." Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 215.
- [77]. Mulā Muhammad Šālih Māzandarānī, *Sharh Usūl al-Kāfī*, ed. Mirza Abu al-Hassan Sha'rani & Sayyid 'Alī 'Ashur, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 2000), vol. 5, pp. 281-282.
- [78]. Sayyid ibn Tāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, pp. 107-108; Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, pp. 44, 45, and 50.
- [79]. Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, pp. 44-45.
- [80]. Muhaqqiq Bahrānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Nāzirah*, (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Nashr al-Islami, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 27-28.
- [81]. See: Muhaqqiq Bahrānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Nāzirah*, vol. 1, pp. 27-28; Shaykh Hurr 'Amīlī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 18, p. 49; Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khū'ī, *Al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Zahra', 1975), pp. 267-270.