



Question:

Why dose Shia interpret the verses of the Holy Quran?

Answer:

The Holy Quran divides its verses into two groups and states that: {هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ: مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ }

[1]“He it is Who has revealed the (divine) Book to you; some of its verses are decisive [definite and clear], they are the basis of the Book (and any kind of complexity in other verses will be explained by referring to these verses), and others are allegorical [the verses that there are different possibilities in them for having the high rank of subject and other aspects in the first look, but by referring to decisive verses, their interpretations will be cleared]; then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation. but none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord; and none do mind except those having understanding”.

This verse divides the verses of the Holy Quran into two parts: 1- decisive 2- allegorical.

The meaning of “decisive” is some verses that are clear and stable from their significations, and there are never two possibilities in them, while “allegorical” is a verse that its appearance is uncertain, to clear that, it is necessary to pay attention to the contents of the verse and the relevant verses to find signs for gaining the intended meaning, finally the uncertain appearance be disappeared, and the correct interpretation of the verse will be obvious.

Scholars have difference opinions about “allegorical”, but they are unanimously agreed about the necessity of interpreting that. The interpretation of allegorical verse is absolutely done by seditious people whom the Holy Quran criticizes them who want to misuse, and sometimes interpretation is done by those who are firmly rooted in knowledge who accurately and impartially find some signs in the exact verse and the related verses, and finally they will realize the divine meaning.

Allegorical interpreting definitely has some rules and conditions that an interpreter should be qualified for them. [2]

Here, we mention an example of accepted interpretation that is in fact the explanation of a verse by another verse:

The Holy Quran always conveys a series of exalted knowledge in the level of understanding of common people so that all of them can become familiar with such knowledge. Such a conveying of these kinds of knowledge helps to increase the level of the public understanding, puts the clothes of sense on rational matters, and causes to appear a series

of possibilities in the contents of the verse that some of these possibilities are not in accord with the definite principles of the Holy Quran, for example the Holy Quran says about the control of Allah over cruel and oppressive people and that they have no power to escape from His dominion that: {إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ}

[3]"Most surely your Lord is watching".

Or for explaining the appearance of Majesty and Mightiness of Allah in the resurrection day the Holy Quran says that: {وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا}

[4]"And your Lord comes and (also) the angels in ranks".

The meaning of these verses is showing the power and dominion of Allah, and in fact it wants to express the control of Allah over the resurrection day in the figure of observable matters, thus we should consider both the signs in above verses and in the related verses for realizing the real meaning of these verses to coordinate the allegorical verses with the decisive verses. Although some of the verses of the Holy Quran are decisive, they can be interpreted, and interpretation of decisive verses refers to mention the most complete and perfect instance of matter. For example, the Holy Quran states that: {اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ}

[5]"Keep us on the right path".

Interpreters have stated different interpretations for "صراط المستقيم" "the right path", but it has been interpreted to the path of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his successors in our traditions. Surely, this kind of interpretation is in the rank of expressing the most complete and perfect instance, because all prophets and saints were in the right path and all of them have followed the true way, but the perfect people whom his behavior and saying is the obvious instance of "the right path, they are the infallibles of this nation, that is, the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his household (a.s.).

Interpreting in this meaning is acceptable, if it is documented by the correct tradition.

Elsewhere, the Holy Quran states that: {إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ}

[6]"You are only a warner and (there is) a guide for every people".

It has been written in our traditions that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said to Ali (a.s.) that: [7]

انا المنذر و انت الهادي

"I am the warner, and you are the guide".

Surely, the meaning of "و لكل قوم هاد" "and (there is) a guide for every people" is all high characters who carry the flag of guidance and guide men to the right path during the time, but the most complete and perfect person among these guides is Amir al- Muminin (a.s.). [8]

The result is that:

1- For abstaining from falling into the trap of embodying and likening [of Allah], and

disagreeing with definite principles of the Holy Quran in decisive verses, there is no way except the interpretation of allegorical verses.

2- The scholars of Islam even consider interpreting the allegorical verses to be necessary and allowable, although they provide different interpretations for these verses.

3- Interpreting allegorical verses has its own principles, and it shouldn't interpret an allegorical verse contrary to a decisive one; these verses should be interpreted by means of decisive verses, proved and absolute tradition, Quranic, traditional and lexicological sciences.

4- Interpreting the decisive verses is also correct, and it means providing a deeper, more complete and perfect meaning by clearer concepts and instances, and it does not mean providing a meaning contrary to the appearance of the verse. Reference:

[1] - Quran, Al- E- Imran, verse. 7.

[2] - Refer to the book "Al- Manahij al- Tafsiriyah", p. 19 - 45.

[3] - Quran, Al- Fajr, verse. 14.

[4] - Quran, Al- Fajr, verse. 22.

[5] - Quran, Al-Fatihah, verse. 6.

[6] - Quran, Al- Rad, verse. 7.

[7] - Tafsir Burhan, by Muhadith Bahrani, vol. 2, p. 282, with the interpretation of the verse.

[8] - The Guide of the Truth, Shaykh Ja'far Subhani, p. 274 - 277.

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