

Implications of Urwatel Wusqa from the Perspective of Interpreters: Emphasis on the Ideas Presented by the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir

Hassan Shojae'Bahar

Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies, Department of Islamic Studies, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

*** Seyyed Hosseien Seyed Mousavi**

*Corresponding Author: E- mail: shmosavi@ferdowsi.um.ac.ir

Hassan Naghizadeh

Abstract

Quran is a book of guidance and guides us to bliss and happiness. It is necessary for all Muslims to understand and obey its orders. In this regard, Muslim scholars, particularly interpreters, try to explain and interpret its verses. Explaining the concept and implications of "Urwatul Wusqa" has been a remarkable point of attraction for interpretation scholars so that it is a subject for conflicting views. This article tries to answer these questions: What is the concept and meaning of Urwatul Wusqa? What instances have been introduced for the word by interpreters? What is the idea presented by the author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir? Is his idea consistent or inconsistent with others? The author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir believes that the meaning of Urwatul Wusqa is guardianship (Welayat); but most interpreters have presented other meanings such as faith, Unity, Islam, Quran, Imams (AS), and Ali (AS) for the concept of Urwatul Wusqa. It seems Urwatul Wusqa cannot be limited to one instance and all cases may be true. Some meanings such as guardianship can be the completed and conclusive meanings.

Keywords: Urwatul Wusqa, no force in religion, guardianship, Bayān al-sa'ādah, interpretation.

Introduction

The Importance of Understanding Quran

Divine prophets sent for salvation, prosperity, giving meaning to human life, and representing the supreme ultimate of human efforts. Each prophet has been sent for a nation in a specific time and place. They notified divine religions, guide people, teach them, and found religious civilizations. Then, the last prophet, Muhammad, has been sent and the Holy Quran was revealed.

Undoubtedly, Quran is a book of guidance, guidance, construction, contemplation, action, and knowledge; it has been revealed to recount the great and valuable goals to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for people's use, contemplation, action in order to make individuals and society based on divine education. It prepares human beings for achieving a prosperous life.

Therefore, understanding Quran is necessary and indispensable to each person as either a scholar or a true believer.

It is obvious that contemplation on Quran and its understanding, in order to follow all its orders, requires identification of words of this divine book.

Statement of the problem

The text of Quran requires understanding and interpretation because it is the book of life for pious believers; knowledge and understanding of the verses of this book of life is the requirement for performing its orders. One of the most controversial verses of Quran among scholars and scientists is verse 256 of Al-Baqara, “**لَا إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشُدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَن يَكْفُرُ بِالظَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا أُنْفِصَامٌ لَّهُا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْهِ**”¹.

This verse can be investigated from different aspects. On of the centers for fucus is the meaning of “Urwat el Wusqa” that has ambiguous instances.

In this regard, the following questions are raised:

What is the meaning and implications of “Urwat el Wusqa”? What instances have been presented by interpreters for the word? What is the idea has been presented by the author of bayān al-sādah tafsir? Are other interpreters agreeing with him?

Applications of “Urwat el Wusqa” in Quran

The Holy Quran has mentioned the word in two verses:

First verse: *لَا إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشُدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَن يَكْفُرُ بِالظَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا أُنْفِصَامٌ لَّهُا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْهِ* (meaning: “There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.”) (Al-Baqara: 256)

Second verse: *وَمَن يُسْلِمُ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَايَةُ الْأَمْوَارِ* (meaning: “And whoever submits himself wholly to Allah and he is the doer of good [to others], he indeed has taken hold of the firmest thing upon which one can lay hold; and Allah's is the end of affairs.”) (Luqman: 22).

Terminology

استمساك: This word means to catch (Ibn Manzur, 1414: 10: 488). The letters “ت” and “ت” has been added to the root for emphasis; thus, it means to to adherence to, to catch, to take (Ibn Ashoor, 2/503).

عُرْوَة: on the measure of “فُلْهَ” (Mustafavi, 1989, 9/100) meaning handle and excuse (Ghorayshi, 1992, 4/336); it is a part of an object taking by hand (Raghib Isfahani, 1412: 563) like the handle of bucket and jars (Mustafavi, Mustafavi, 1989, 8/102; Mughri Al-fayoomi, 1414, 2: 406).

وَقْتَى: it is comparative adjective for feminine meaning strongest and most effective tool. Therefore, to catch the firm tool means to be adhered to a firm and strong handle (Bostani, 1906, 976).

Instances of Urwatel Wusqa by Interpreters

Interpreters have different ideas about the instances of the word “Urwatel Wusqa” as following:

1. Faith

Some has interpreted “Urwatel Wusqa” as *faith* including:

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari argues that “Urwatel Wusqa” is a symbol for faith to which the believers are adhered. God has symbolized the adherence of believer to faith as one who catches the handle of an object (tabari, 1412: 3/14). He mentions the following hadith as an evidence for his claim:

It is narrated from Ibn Abbas in the interpretation of the verse, “فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدُوا ”, that God has said that faith is the firm handle, no duty is accepted without it and hell is given to a person unless by its ignorance (ibid: 443). Abu Ishaq Ahmad ibn Ibrahim Thalabi Neishaboori has the same idea in Al-Kashf wa-l-bayan ‘an tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Thalabi Neishaboori, 1442: 2/237).

Sheikh Tousi writes that the God’s speech “فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُتْقَى” means divine order to the faith in God (Tousi, 5: 2/313).

Muhamood ibn Abolhasan Neishaboori agrees that faith is “Urwatel Wusqa”; he states that Tabari and ibn hatam have the same idea (Neishaboori, 1415: 1/166).

Abd al-Rahman ibn Ali Ibn al-Jawzi Abu'l-Faraj claims that “Urwatel Wusqa” in this verse is an example for faith. Here, God likens the adherence to faith to a firm and strong handle (Ibn al-Jawzi Abu'l-Faraj, 1422: 2321).

Husain ibn Ali Abolfath Razi has noted that the meaning of “Urwatel Wusqa” is astable thread; it is a metaphor narrated by God (Abolfath Razi, 1408: 3/416).

Other interpreters have this perspective include Sheibani, 1413:1/331), Ibn Jazi Gharnati (1416: 1/132), Al-Andalusi, 1420: 2/621), (Kashani, 1957, 2/98), Feiz Kashani, 1418: 1/122), Bahrani, 1: 523), (Amoli, 1422: 3/205), and (Tabatabaei, 2: 344).

2. Quran

Some has interpreted “Urwatel Wusqa” as *Quran* including:

Imam Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn Askari (As) narrated from the Holy Prophet as he sais:

This Quran is the revealing light, the solid rope, and the firm handle... (Ali al-Askari, 1409: 449).

Abd Ali ibn Joma Uroosi Howayzi narrates from Imam Reza in which Imam introduced Quran as the firm handle (Howayzi, 1415: 1/264).

Jalal Al-Din Suyuti quotes from Abi Hatam who has quoted from Anas ibn Malik about the phrase “فَقِدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” that the meaning of “Urwatul Wusqa” is Quran (Suyuti, 1404: 1/330).

Muhammad Javad Mughniya claims that “Urwatul Wusqa” refers to Quran (Mughniya, 1424: 6/166).

3. Islam

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as *Islam* including:

Interpreting the phrase “فَقِدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى”, Maghatel ibn SoleimanBalkhi states that “Urwatul Wusqa” means Islam (Balkhi, 1423: 1/214).

Nasr ibn AhmadSamarqandi writes that “Urwatul Wusqa” refers to Islam (Samarqandi: 1/169).

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari quotes from Saddi that “Urwatul Wusqa” is Islam (Tabari, 1412: 3/14).

Abdol Karim ibn Hawazen Ghoshairi has defined the term “Urwatul Wusqa” in the phrase “فَقِدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” in the path of Muhammad (PBUH) as Islam (Ghoshairi, n.d: 1/198).

Ahmad ibn Abi Sa'd Meibudi Rashid al-Din writes that “Urwatul Wusqa” is the religion of Islam along with its principles and conditions (Meibudi, 1992: 1-696).

Abu Abdollah Muhammad ibn Umar Fakhr al-Din Razi writes the God's words “فَقِدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” is included in the category of metaphorizing tangible for abstract ideas because people take an object's handle to adhere it; if one decides to adhere to this religion, he should appeal to its evidences and proofs. Since there are obvious proofs for Islam, resorting to Islam is likened to adherence to firm thread (Fakhr al-Din Razi, 1420: 7/16).

This idea has been agreed by many interpreters such as (Baghavi, 1420: 1: 350), Ibn Kathir Dameshghi, 1: 522), (Neshaboori, 1416: 2: 17), (Baghdadi, 1415: 1: 191), (Suyuti, 1404: 1/330) (Haqi Bursevi: 1/407), (Ibn Ajiba, 1419: 1/288), and (Huwaidi Baghdadi, 42).

4. Monotheism

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as the phrase “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ” (meaning there is no God but Allah) including:

Abu Hamzeh Thumali narrates from imam Bagher (As) and Zeid ibn Ali that the meaning of “Urwatul Wusqa” is the phrase “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ” (Thumali Thabit Dinar, 1420: 119).

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari quotes from Sa'd ibn Jobayr that “Urwatul Wusqa” refers to saying “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ” (Tabari, 1412: 3/14).

Abubakr Atigh ibn Muhammad Soor Abadi states that “فَقِدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” means to adhere really to the strongest handle, which is the phrase “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ” (Soor Abadi, 2001:1/223).

Ubaydullah ibn Ahmad Haskani believes that adherence to “Urwatul Wusqa” means to say “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ” (Haskani, 1411: 1/571).

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا (meaning ‘And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited’) (Al-E-Imran) that holding by the covenant of Allah has three types:

Frist: adhere to monotheism as God says, “the firm thread”.

Second: adhere to Quran as God says, “Hold God’s rope”.

Third: adhere to truth as God says, “Hold to God”. (Meybodi, 1992: 2 / 239-7 / 506)

Abu Abdollah Mohi al-Din Ibn Arabi interpreting ”فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى“ and argues that resorting to “Urwatul Wusqa” means to adhere to the unity of the Divine whose authority and decrees are inherent; there no authentic and reliable object beyond this because it is the base of all firms and authenticity (Ibn Arabi, 1422: 1/84).

This opinion has also been confirmed by many interpreters such as (Suyuti, 1404: 1/330), (Bahrani, 1416: 4/380) (Uroosi Howayzi, 1415: 1/263), and (Haqi Bursevi: 2/47).

5. The Imams(AS)

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as the *Imams* including:

Seyed Heidar Amoli narrates from Imam Reza who states that we are God’s verses on the earth among the creatures, His successors among servants, trustworthy for his secrets; we are the manifestation of piety and firm handle... (Amoli, 1422:3/523).

Seyed Hashem Bahrani narrates from Imam Reza who narrates from the Holy Prophet as he was saying that Imams are sons of Hussain, every body obey them, he obeys God; every person disobeys them, he disobeys God. They are ”عروة الوثقى“ and the path to God (Bahrani, 1416: 4/379).

Other interpreters agreeing this idea are Sadrol Mutalehin (1987: 4/223), (Uroosi Howayzi, 1415: 1/264-5/74), and (Borujerdi, 1987: 1/371).

6. Ali (As)

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as *ImamAli* (AS) including:

Describing the meaning of “Urwatul Wusqa”, Na’man ibn Muhammad Maghrebi Ibn Hayoun states that “Urwatul Wusqa” is Imam Ali (As) and his caliphate, confirming his Imamate, and representing the hatred to his enemies (Ibn Hayoun, 1409:1/240).

Muhammad ibn Muhammad Sheikh Mufid mentions a narrative in which Commander of the Faithful, Ali (As) knows himself the right path to God and the firm thread that will never be cut (Sheikh Mufid, 1424: 202).

Ubaydullah ibn Ahmad Haskani narrates from the Holy Prophet that he likens Ali to survival ship, “Urwatul Wusqa”, and the solid rope (Haskani, 1411: 1/168).

Other interpreters agreeing this idea are (Fakhr al-Din Razi, 1420: 1/181), (Amoli 1422: 1/220), (Fazil Meqdad, 1419: 1/121), (Hosseini Astar Abadi, 1409: 102), (Uroosi Howayzi, 1415: 1/263), (Bahrani, 1416: 1/523), and (Borujerdi, 1416: 1/206).

7. The Prophet’s Family

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as *the Prophet’s family* (AS) including:

Abu Hamzeh Thumali Thabit Dinar narrates from Imam Sajjad that he introduced his family as the meaning of “Urwatul Wusqa” (Thumali, 1420:119).

Abul Ghasem Furat ibn Ibrahim Kufi narrates from the Holy Prophet where he stated that we are the instance of piety, the path of guidance, example of supreme creatures, the great signs, and firm handle; the right ordered servants to obey us (Furat Kufi, 1410: 306; 197-178).

Other interpreters who accept this opinion include (HasaniAbol Makarim, 1381: 82), (Feiz Kashani, 1418: 1/122), (Bahrani, 1416: 1/523), and (Howayzi, 1415: 1/263).

8. *Welayat (Guardianship)*

Some has interpreted “Urwatul Wusqa” as *accepting guardianship* including:

Ali bin Ibrahim Qomi has written that “Urwatul Wusqa” is acceptance of guardianship (Qomi, 1988: 1.84).

Sadrol Mutalehin Muhammad bin Ibrahim writes that Ayatol Korsi has a mere domination over other verses of Quran; it contains the verse of welayat (guardianship); every person resorting to this welayat, he will be saved. It means he will take refuge in “Urwatul Wusqa” and God will be his guardian (Sadrol Mutalehin 1987: 1/5). He also introduces the perfect man as firm thread or the solid rope (*ibid*: 401).

Idea Presented by the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir

From the perspective of the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah, the meaning of “Urwatul Wusqa” is welayat (guardianship). He expresses different documents to prove this claim.

Human freedom from Satan's reign and walking in the direct path of humanity is not possible unless by resorting to the guardianship of its owner, which is “Urwatul Wusqa” (Gonabadi, 1408: 1/265).

If a person does not attach himself and his forces by the handle of guardianship to Almighty God, he will be excluded from human life (*ibid*: 446).

One who is connected to the guardian, taking refuge in “Urwatul Wusqa”, and seeking a tool to move toward God, connection to guardian is enough along with fewacts of organs; it is enough for his survival (*ibid*: 487).

For better understanding of his idea, it is necessary to present his definition of the word guardianship.

For him, guardianship is special allegiance and connection to the guardian, which is not describable because it is a spiritual connection obtained by guardianship. It is a metaphysical affair and cannot be observed by physical eyes, cannot imagined by imagination, and is not reasoning by reason since it has no boundary, picture, quality and quantity.

This definition of guardianship forces us to describe the importance and position of guardianship from his viewpoint.

He believes that guardianship has an important position and role as the source of many effects in the universe, especially in human beings. Some of the effects are as follows:

1. guardianship is peak of an affair, the key of objects and doors, Rahman's satisfaction, the heaven of content, the nature of virtues, and base of goodness. It is the very wisdom to every person it has given, he will be blessed; it is God's mercy. God's bounty is manifested by it.
2. Human manifestation and action gives meaning by guardianship. Man is like the matter of guardianship, thus, as long as performance has not been completed by matter, human actions do not belong to him; when man's activities were performed by guardianship, his humanity can be revealed. Thus, it seems the soul has not been blown in body before guardianship and he is dead as Quran says, "وَمَنْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَا" (meaning, "We raised him to life") (Al-Anam: 122). It means we raised him to life by guardianship. As said by Imam (As) that people are dead and men of knowledge are alive since only Imams, and their Shiites, are competent to knowledge. As it has been said that only Shiites are knowledgable, "شیعتنا هم العلماء" (Gonabadi, 1408: 1/225).
3. The consistency of prophecy and mission depends on guardianship.
4. If a person accepts guardianship, he is appropriate by Malak and Rahman; each action by him is performed by guardianship. If he rejects guardianship, he is possessed by Satan and all his actions are performed by Satan (ibid: 223).
5. Every blessings, goodness, and rightness reaches to man only by guardianship unless his actions are curse, evil, and corruption (ibid).
6. Generation and lands are revived by guardianship; lands will be prospered by guardianship. Rejecting guardianship, generation, and lands will be corrupted; thus, earth will be corrupted.
7. From the nation of Muhammad, every person who recognizes the rightness of guardianship, he will find the pleasure of faith and he will recognize the superiority, gladness, and joy of his belief to Islam.
8. Servant's religion depends on guardianship, to the light of guardianship, and to the blessing of guardianship. Nothing will be permitted without guardianship as the Holy God says, "أُوفُوا بِالْعُهُودِ" "أَلْحِلْتُ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةَ الْأَنْعَامِ" (meaning, "you who believe! fulfill the obligations; Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock...") (Al-Maeda: 1). 'Considering the meat of animals as Halal depends on the contracts' refers to allegiance to Ali (As) and to his caliphate in Ghadir Khom. The verses of Disbelievers' Despair, the Completion of Religion, Finishing Blessings, Satisfaction to Islam, Announcing tayyabat and Pious Women (Al-Maeda: 3).¹ All these depend on the day of allegiance of people to Ali (As) in Ghadir. With all these lines, nothing will be allowed without guardianship.
9. Guardianship is the development, production and results, human life, lights in the darkness, the key to words, and the pillar of Islam.

¹"الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ وَالْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَّتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيَتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ يَبْنَا. الْيَوْمَ أَجْلَلَ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَالْمُحْسَنَاتُ مِنَ النَّاسِ"; meaning "O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allah nor the sacred month, nor [interfere with] the offerings, nor the sacrificial animals with garlands, nor those going to the sacred house seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord; and when you are free from the obligations of the pilgrimage, then hunt, and let not hatred of a people-- because they hindered you from the Sacred Masjid-- incite you to exceed the limits, and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and be careful of [your duty to] Allah; surely Allah is severe in requiting [evil]" (Al-Maeda: 3).

10. The meaning of all contracts and obligations is allegiance. Everywhere it is noted contract and obligation, the main idea is contract of allegiance; especially, particular allegiance of guardianship. Everywhere it is noted breach of contract and obligation, it means breach of guardianship contract.

Finally, he makes a conclusion and states:

Man is the purpose of creation of the universe while guardianship is the purpose of creation of man. He employs several hadiths to prove his idea in this regard as following:

1. Islam is built on five pillars (prayer- satting- zakat-Haj- welayat). Welayat (guardianship) is superior to others and the key to others. Guardianship is reason and guide to other duties (prayer-fasting- Haj-Zakat).

2. Although a servant may worship God under the Drain (the golden drain of Ka'ba) for seventy falls (meaning seventy years) while he is awoken at nights and fasting at days while he is not believe in the guardianship of Ali ibn Abi Talib, God will fail him in the fire of hell.

3. one who dies while he does not know Imam of his age, he has died of ignorance. The hardest moment one needs the knowledge of his Imam is the moment of death and separation of soul from body.

4. it is narrated from Ibn Abi Ya'fur: I told Abi Abdollah: I am with people socializing and mixing, I wonder much from groups not having your guardianship and accepting the guardianship of others while they are trustworthy, honest, and faithful. Other groups under your guardianship who are not trustworthy, honest, and faithful. He said: Abu Abdollah turned to me angrily; then answered: one accepting the guardianship one a person not installed by God has not religion; there is no blame for one accepts the guardianship of just Imam. I asked neither have they religion and nor others blame? Said yes. Then, he said remember God's speech as says, "God is Guardian of believers and guide them from darkness to light"; it means the darknesses of sins to the light of repentance and forgiveness because they have the guardianship of a just Imam who has been installed by God. God also says, "those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide" (Gonabadi, 1408: 1/224).

Review and Evaluation of the idea presented by the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir

The author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir have referred to the verses and hadiths mentioned before. In order to evaluate his idea, it is necessary to evaluate the documents of these texts.

Validation of the Hadiths

First Hadith

Traditional sources for this hadith are Al-mahasen vol 11274286; Al-Kafi, vol 1/ 185, vol.2/ 18/329; Al-Amali 353/460; Wasail al-Shia (Ale bayt) vol. 1/13- vol. 1/8/1104; Bahar al-Anwar, vol. 23/294- vol. 34/384- vol. 65/ 332- vol. 79/ 234/1111.

Second Hadith

Traditional sources for this hadith are Kamal al-Din and tamam al-Nema, vol. 2/409/381 Hijri; Kifaya Al-Athar fi al-Nas ala Al-aema al-Athna Ashar/269/400; Elam al-Wari be Alam Al-huda

/422/548; Iqbal Al-Amal, vol. 1/ 460/664; Kashf al-ghummah fī ma'rifat al-A'immah, vol. 2/ 528/692; Wasail al-Shia, vol. 16/246/1104.

Third Hadith

Traditional sources for this hadith are Maani Al-Akhbar 181/381; Mahasen 1/92; Wasail al-Shia (Ale al-Bayt), vol. 1/115/1104.

Fourth Hadith

Traditional sources for this hadith are Maani Al-Akhbar 181/381; Wasail al-Shia (Ale al-Bayt), vol. 1/115/116/1104.

Fifth Hadith

Traditional sources for this hadith are Al-Ayashi tafsir, vol. 1/138/320; Al-Kafi, vol. 1/375-376-329; Al-Ghaybiya 131/380; Bahar al-Anwar, vol. 23/322- vol. 65/104- vol. 69/ 135/1111.

Analysis of the idea presented by the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir

In terms of validity, since these hadiths have been mentioned in the works of earlier and latter Shiite scholars are valid.

In terms of implications, they are undoubtedly instances of “عروة الوثقى”; but one cannot argue that the only implication is guardianship, as used by the author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir because:

Firstly, Appearance and context of the verse “فَمَنْ يَكُفِرُ بِالظَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعَرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” (Al-Baqara: 256) do not confirm his idea as the verse focus on two indexes of blasphemy to idolatrous and belief in God; it expresses that one will reach salvation if he has these two branch.

Secondly, the verse “وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعَرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” if he has full attention to God and he is philanthropist (Luqman: 22). This verse also speaks of two indexes: submission to God and being philanthropist. Therefore, the meaning and the context of this verse also do not confirm the idea of author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir.

Thirdly, As Quran alone cannot guarantee human happiness but it needs the existence of an imam who explains, interprets, and performs God's orders. In addition, since Imam or guardianship is the operator Allah's orders, he needs the presence of Quran and divine instructions. As the Prophet said in The Hadith al-Thaqualayn, “I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it. He exhorted (us) (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and then said: The second are the members of my household I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family” (Qomi, 1988: 1/173).

Summarizing and comparison of other opinions to the idea presented by the Author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir

Determination of the implication of “Urwatul Wusqa” is the subject of many debates among scholars, jurists, and interpreters of the Holy Quran. In general, all the ideas are classified in

eight groups. Faith, monotheism, guardianship, Islam, Quran, Ali (As), Ahl Al-Bayt (As), Imams (As) are all implications having been mentioned for “Urwatul Wusqa”. Other weak documented ideas are ‘tradition’ (Tustari, 1423: 123), piety (Jurjani, 1992: 1/179), desire to right and disclaimer of vain (Sadrol Mutaalehin, 1987: 4/205), Abi Bakr and Umar (Suyuti, 1404: 1/ 330). Comparing these ideas to the idea of the author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir, the author of Bayān al-sa'ādah Tafsir believes that the purpose of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ” in the verse is guardianship. In other words, the implication of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ” for him is guardianship. Nevertheless other interpreters have regarded faith, monotheism, Islam, Quran, Ali (As), Ahl Al-Bayt (As), and Imams (As) as the implications of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”.

Indeed, there is no contradiction between the idea presented in Bayān al-sa'ādah and the idea of others. The only problem rising in this regard relates to all ideas (especially the author of Bayān al-sa'ādah) is the fact that they are trying to specify the general subject of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ” to definite and exact implications. The correct way is to observe the principle of “الجمع مهما امكن اولى من الترک”. It means we should agree to the collection and say that all items can be the implications and instances of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”. Obviously, man is either under the guardianship of Allah or Satan; the person supervising by God, he believes in God, having faith in God at the age of the Holy Prophet has no way but submission to Islam, submission to Islam requires monotheism and belief in Muhammad. Faith is realized by obedience to God's orders in Quran, performance of its rules. This requires knowledge of the rules; it is possible only through identification of the prophet and his successors by true believers. Therefore, all the mentioned implications can be a true instance of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”. A true believer in God does really have held to “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”; one performs the rules of Quran, he has held to “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”; one accepts Islam, he has held to “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”; one accepts imamate or the guardianship of Ali (As), Ahl Al-Bayt, and Imams, he has held to “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”.

Considering the hadiths mentioned by the author as well as many other verses and hadiths about the position and place of guardianship, imamate, and Ahl al-Bayt in addition to several rational reasons on the duties of Imam for explaining and interpreting Quran, guardianship is one of the most close and exact instances of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”.

Conclusion

The ideas presented by the interpreters of Quran about the implication and instance of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ” have been categorized in eight group. The author of Bayān al-sa'ādah tafsir as well as some other interpreters, has regarded guardianship as the instance of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”. Nevertheless, other interpreters have introduced other instances such as faith, monotheism, Islam, Quran, Ali (As), Ahl Al-Bayt (As), and Imams as the implications of “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”.

However, despite the apparent and literal differences among interpreters, there is in fact no contradiction and conflict among them since all are instances for “عِرْوَةُ الْوَقْنَىٰ”; but guardianship is the most complete instance.

References

- Ibn Abi Zeinab Al-Namani. Al-Ghaibiya. Faris Hasun Karim, First, Manshorat Anwar Publications, Iran, Qom, 1422.
- Ibn Juzayy al-Gharnati, Muhammad ibn Ahmad. Al-Tashīl li-'ulūm al-tanzīl. Beirut, Daralaraghām bin Abi Alaraghām Company, 1416.
- Ibn al-Jawzi Abu'l-Faraj, Abd al-Rahman ibn Ali. Zad al-masir fi 'ilm al-Tafsir. Beirut, Dar al-Kitab Arabi, 1422.
- Ibn Hayoun, Na'man ibn Muhammad Maghrebi. Sharḥ al-akhbār fī faḍā'il al-a'immah al-āthār. Qom, Seminary Teachers Society, 1409.
- Ibn Tawus, Ali ibn Musa. Iqbal Al-Amal (T-Ghadimiya). Islamiya Library, Tehran, 1409.
- Ibn Ashoor, Muhammad Taher. Tafsir al-tahrīr wa-al-tanwīr: al-maruf. Beirut, Lebanon, Arab history Institute, n.d.
- Ibn Ajiba, Ahmad ibn Muhammad. Bahr al-madid fī tafsir al-Quran al-Majid. Cairo, Dr. Abbas Zaki, 1419.
- Ibn Arabi, Abu Abdollah Mohi al-Din. Ibn Arabi's Interpretation. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1422.
- Ibn Kathir Dameshghi, Ismail ibn Amr. Interpretation of the Great Quran. Beirut, Dar al-Kitab Elmiya, Muhammad Ali Bedhoon Publication, 1419.
- Ibn Manzur, Muhammad ibn Mukram. Arabic Language. Beirut, Dare Sar, 1414.
- Abolfath Razi, Husain ibn Ali. Ruz al-jinan va rohol jinan fi Tafsir Quran. Mashhad, Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi, 1408.
- Irbili, Ali ibn Isa. Kashf al-ghummah fī ma'rifat al-A'immah. Rasouli Mahalati, Seyed Hashem, Bani Hashemi, Tabriz, 2002.
- Amoli, Seyed Heidar. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir Quran. Tafsīr al-muḥīṭ al-a'zam wa-al-bahr al-khiḍāmm. Tehran, Publications of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1422.
- Al-Andalusi, Abu Hayyan Muhammad ibn Yusef. Bahr al-muḥīṭ fī al-tafsīr. Darolfekr, 1420.
- Bahrani, Seyed Hashem. Al-Borhan Fi Tafsir Quran. Tehran, Be'sat institute, 1416.
- Burghi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khaled. Al-Mahasen. Mohadeth, Jalal al-Din, Islamiya Library, Qom, 1371.
- Burghi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khaled. Al-Mahasen. Al-Husaini (Al-Muhadeth). Seyed Jalal Al-din, Tehran, Islamiya Library, 1991.
- Borujerdi, Muhammad Ibrahim. Jame' Tafsir. Tehran, Sadra Publication, 1987.
- Borujerdi, Seyed Husain. Tafsir Sirat Mostaghim. Qom, Ansarian Institute, 1416.
- Bostani, Foad Afram. Abjadian Dictionary. Mahyar, Reza, Tehran, Islamic Publication, 1906.
- Baghdadi, Alaidin Ali ibn Muhammad. li Bab at Ta'weel fi Ma'anī at Tanzeel. Beirut, Dar al-Kitab Elmiya, 1415.
- Baghavi, Husain ibn Mansoud Maalem. Al-Tanzeel fi Tafsir al-Quran. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1420.
- Balkhi, Maghatel ibn Soleiman. Maghatel ibn Soleiman's Tafsir. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1423.
- Tustari, Abu Muhammad Sahl ibn Abdollah. Tustari Tafsir. Beirut, Dar al-Kitab Elmiya, 1423.

- Thalabi Neishaboori, Abu Ishaq Ahmad ibn Ibrahim. Al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ‘an tafsīr al-Qur’ān. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1422.
- Thumali Abu hamzeh, Thabit ibn Dinar. Tafsir of The Holy Quran (Thumali). Darul Mufid, 1420.
- Jorjani, Abolmahasen Husain ibn Ali. Jala’ al-az’han va jala’ al-ahzan. Tehran, Tehran University Press, 1998.
- Al-Hur Al-Amili. Wasā'il al-Shī'a. Qom, Alel Bayt Institute for Revival of Heritage, 1414.
- Haskani, Ubaydullah ibn Ahmad. Shawāhid al-tanzīl li-qawā'id al-tafqīl fī al-āyāt al-nāzilah fī Ahl al-Bayt. Tehran, Publications of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1411.
- Hasani, Abol Makarim Mahmood ibn Muhammad. Daqa'iq al-ta'vīl va ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl. Tehran, Publication of Written Heritage, 2002.
- Hosseini Astar Abadi, Seyed Sharaf al-Din Ali. Ta'wīl al-āyāt al-ẓāhirah. Qom, Islamic Publications Office of Qom Seminary Teachers Society, 1409.
- Haqi Bursevi, Ismail. Ruh Al-Bayan Haqi Tafsir. Beirut, Darolfekr, n.d.
- Khazaz razi, Ali ibn Muhammad. Kifaya Al-Athar fi al-Nas ala Al-aema al-Athna Ashar.
- Hosseini Kohkamari, Abdol Latif. Qom, Bidar Publication, 1401.
- Raghib Isfahani, Hossein ibn muhammad. Mu'jam mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'ān. Davodi, Safvan Adnan. Deirut-Damascus, Darol Ghalam, Al-DarolShamiya, 1412.
- Samarqandi, Nasr ibn Ahmad. Bahr Ul-Oloom. N.d.
- Soor Abadi, Abubakr Atigh ibn Muhammad. Tafsir Noor. Tehran, Nashre No Culture, 2001.
- Suyuti, Jalal Al-Din. Al-Durr al-Mansur Fi al-Tafsir Bi al-Ma'sur. Qom, Ayatollah Marashi Najafi, 1404.
- Sheikh Sadouq. Maani Al-Akhbar. Ali Akbar Al-Ghafari, islamic publication affiliated to Qom Seminary Teachers Society, 2000.
- Sadrol Mutalehin, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim. Tafsir Quran al-Karim. Qom, Bidar Publication, 1987.
- Tabatabaei, Seyed Muhammad Hossein. Al-Mizan fi Tafsir Quran. Qom, Islamic Publications Office of Qom Seminary Teachers Society, 1417.
- Tabarsi, Fazl ibn Hasan. I'lām al-warā bi-a'lām al-hudā. Islamiya, Tehran, 1390.
- Tabari, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir. Jame Al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran. Beirut, Darol Marefa, 1412.
- Tousi, Muhammad ibn Hasan. Al-Tebyan fi Tafsir Quran. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, n.d.
- Uroosi Howayzi, Abd Ali ibn Joma. Noor al-Thaghalein Tafsir. Uroosi, Qom, Ismailian Publication, 1415.
- Askari, Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn Ali. Tafsir afilliated to Imam Askari. Qom, Imam Mahdi School, 1409.
- Ayashi, Muhammad ibn Masoud. Al-Ayashi Interpretation. Rasouli Mahalati, Seyed hashem, Scientific Matbaa, Tehran, 2001.
- Fazil Meqdad. Jamal al-Din Meqdad ibn Abdollah. Kanz al-'irfan fi fiqh al-Qur'an. Sharif zadeh, Muhammad Bagher. The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, 1419.

- Fakhr al-Din Razi, Abu Abdollah Muhammad ibn Umar. Mafatih Al-Gheib. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heriitaage, 1420.
- Farahidi, Khalil ibn Ahmad. Al-Ain. Qom, Hejrat, Publication, 1409.
- Feiz Kashani, Mola Mohsen. Asfa fi tafsir al-Qur'an. Qom, Center for Islamic Publications Bureau, 1418.
- Ghorayshi, Seyed Ali Akbar. Qamoos Quran. Tehran, Islamiya Library, 1992.
- Ghoshairi, Abdol Karim ibn Hawazen. Latayef Al-Isharat. Egypt. Egyptian Authority for General Books, n.d.
- Qomi, Ali ibn Ibrahim. Qomi Tafsir, Qom, Darolketab, 1988.
- Koleini, Muhammad ibn yaqoub. Al-Kafi. Ghafari, Ali Akbar 7 Muhammad Akhondi, islamiya Library, Tehran, 1407.
- Kufi, Abul Ghasem Furat ibn Ibrahim. Furat Al-Kufi Tafsir. Tehran, Publications of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1410.
- Gonabadi, Soltan Muhammad. Tafsir bayan al-Saada fi Muqadamat al-ibada. Beirut, Scientific Institute of Publication, 1408.
- Majlesi, Muhammad Bagher ibn Muhammad Taqi. Al-Bahar Al-Anwar. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1403.
- Mustafavi, Hasan. Al-Tahqiq fi Kalamat al-Quran Al-Karim. First edition, Tehran, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 1989.
- Mughniya, Muhammad Javad. Al-Kashif Tafsir, Tehran. Islamiya Library, 1424.
- Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad. Tafsir Quran. Qom, enter for Islamic Publications Bureau, 1424.
- Mughri Al-fayoomi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad. Al-Misbah al-Munir fi Gharib Al-Sharh al-Kabir al-Rafei. Qom, Darol Hejra, 1414.
- Meibudi Rashid al-Din, Ahmad ibn Abi Sa'd. ashf al-asrār wa-'uddat al-abrār. Tehran, Amir Kabir Publication, 1992.
- Neishaboori, Abu Ishaq Ahmad ibn Ibrahim. Al-Kashf wa-l-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān. Beirut, Revival of Arab Heritage, 1422.
- Neishaboori, Muhamood ibn Abolhasan. Ījāz al-bayān 'an ma'ānī al-Qur'ān. Beirut, darol Ghoraba al-Islamiya, 1415.
- Neishaboori, Nezam al-Din Hasan ibn Muhammad. afsir GharaabilQuranwa RaghabilFurqan. Beirut, Dar al-Kitab Elmiya, 1416.
- Huwaidi Baghdadi, Muhammad. Tafsir Al-Moin Lelvaezin val Mutaazin. Qom, Zavel Qorba Publication, n.d.