

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

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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 "Urwatal 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 Urwatal 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 Urwatal 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 Urwatal Wusqa. It seems Urwatal 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: Urwatal 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 إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ”.

This verse can be investigated from different aspects. One of the centers for focus is the meaning of “Urwatel Wusqa” that has ambiguous instances.

In this regard, the following questions are raised:

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

Applications of “Urwatel Wusqa” in Quran

The Holy Quran has mentioned the word in two verses:

First verse: “ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ” (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: “ وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ” (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

استمسك: 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 “فُعلُه” (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).

وُثْقَى: 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 Urwatal Wusqa by Interpreters

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

1. Faith

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

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari argues that “Urwatal Wusqa” is a symbol for faith to which the believers are adhered. God has simbolized 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 اهْتَدَوْا”, 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-bayān ‘an tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Thalabi Neishaboori, 1442: 2/237).

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

Muhamood ibn Abolhasan Neishaboori agrees that faith is “Urwatal 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 “Urwatal 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 “Urwatal Wusqa” is a stable 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 “Urwatal 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 “فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” that the meaning of “Urwatel Wusqa” is Quran (Suyuti, 1404: 1/330).

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

3. Islam

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

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

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

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

Abdol Karim ibn Hawazen Ghoshairi has defined the term “Urwatel Wusqa” in the phrase “فَقَدِ 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 “Urwatel 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 “فَقَدِ 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 (Huwaiti Baghdadi, 42).

4. Monotheism

Some has interpreted “Urwatel Wusqa” as the phrase “لا اله الا الله” (meaning there is no God but Allah) including:

Abu Hamzeh Thumali narrates from imam Bagher (As) and Zeid ibn Ali that the meaning of “Urwatel Wusqa” is the phrase “لا اله الا الله” (Thumali Thabit Dinar, 1420: 119).

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari quotes from Sa'd ibn Jobayr that “Urwatel Wusqa” refers to saying “لا اله الا الله” (Tabari, 1412: 3/14).

Abubakr Atigh ibn Muhammad Soor Abadi states that “فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى” means to adhere really to the strongest handle, which is the phrase “لا اله الا الله” (Soor Abadi, 2001:1/223).

Ubaydollah ibn Ahmad Haskani believes that adherence to “Urwatel Wusqa” means to say “لا اله الا الله” (Haskani, 1411: 1/571).

Ahmad ibn Abi Sad Rashid al-Din Meibudi writes under the verse “وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا” (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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel Wusqa” as *ImamAli (AS)* including:

Describing the meaning of “Urwatel Wusqa”, Na’mān ibn Muhammad Maghrebi Ibn Hayoun states that “Urwatel 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).

Ubaydollah ibn Ahmad Haskani narrates from the Holy Prophet that he likens Ali to survival ship, “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel Wusqa” as *accepting guardianship* including:

Ali bin Ibrahim Qomi has written that “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel 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 “Urwatel Wusqa”, and seeking a tool to move toward God, connection to guardian is enough along with few acts 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 be 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 مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ" (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 knowledgeable, "شيعةنا 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, "أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ" (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.

¹الْيَوْمَ نَبِّئِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ. وَ الْيَوْمَ اكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَ اَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَ رَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا. الْيَوْمَ أَجَلَ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنْ "النِّسَاءِ"; 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- sating- 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 darkneses 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-gummah 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 يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ” (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 بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ” does also confirm that a person reaches “عروة الوثقى” 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-Thaqalayn, “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 “Urwat al-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 “Urwatel Wusqa”. Other weak documented ideas are ‘traddition’ (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 “عروة الوثقي” in the verse “لا اكره في الدين” is guardianship. In other words, the implication of “عروة الوثقي” 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 “عروة الوثقي”.

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 “عروة الوثقي” to definite and exact implications. The correct way is to observe the principle of “الجمع مهما امكن اولي من الترك”. It means we should agree to the collection and say that all items can be the implications and instances of “عروة الوثقي”. 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 “عروة الوثقي”. A true believer in God does really has held to “عروة الوثقي”; one performs the rules of Quran, he has held to “عروة الوثقي”; one accepts Islam, he has held to “عروة الوثقي”; one accepts imamate or the guardianship of Ali (As), Ahl Al-Bayt, and Imams, he has held to “عروة الوثقي”.

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 “عروة الوثقي”.

Conclusion

The ideas presented by the interpreters of Quran about the implication and instance of “عروة الوثقي” 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 “عروة الوثقي”. 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 “عروة الوثقي”.

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

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