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Understanding a Passage in the Ziyārāt Texts

ANSWER PROVIDED BY
The Porch of Wisdom Institute

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF



Ayatullah Shaykh Hadavi Tehrani

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Translated by Saleem Bhimji ♦ Edited by Arifa Hudda
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❧ Question

In many *ziyārāt*, including *Ziyārat al-Wārith* and *Ziyārat al-Arbaʿīn*, this phrase appears:

إِنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“Indeed, I believe in you, and I am certain of your return (*rajʿah*), (and I follow you) in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds.”¹

What is the actual meaning of:

...بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“...(And I follow you) in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds,”

and how does it relate to the previous part of the *ziyārah*?

❧ Brief Answer

Belief in the Divinely-appointed Leadership (*Imāmah*) of the twelve Imams of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and belief in their return (*rajʿah* – before the Day of Judgement) are among the foremost principles of Shīʿa Islam. Thus, the phrase:

إِنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“Indeed, I believe in you, and I am certain of your return, (and I follow you) in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds,”

which contains these two fundamental Shīʿa beliefs appears in numerous supplications and *ziyārāt* texts.

¹ This is an approximate translation, as this article will review other possibilities of what this line means. (Tr.)

With that said, based on some interpretations, this line:

بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي

“(And I follow you) in the laws of my religion”

can somewhat vary in its meaning.

According to one interpretation, and considering that the word “*tābi*” (follower) is implied but not expressly mentioned in the *ziyārāt* texts, the meaning of the phrase could be:

إِنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“(I bear witness that) I believe in you, and I am certain of your return (*raj‘ah*), and in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds, I am your follower.”

❧ Detailed Answer

Belief in *raj‘ah* is one of the main beliefs of Shī‘a Islam, to the extent that Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَقُلْ مُمْتَنِعَتَنَا وَ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَجْعَتِنَا.

“That person is not from us who does not believe in our *mut‘ah* (temporary marriage) and our return (*raj‘ah*).”²

It seems that belief in these two (*mut‘ah* and *raj‘ah*) was among the carefully guarded secrets of Shī‘ism. In another narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq ؑ considered these things two to be signs of a believer.³

Mut‘ah, or temporary marriage, is among the disputed rulings between Shī‘as and most Sunnis; and belief in the *Imāmah* of the twelve Imams of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ and the *raj‘ah* are doctrinal matters

² Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Al-Masā’il al-Sarawīyyah*, Pg. 30, Kungrih-yi Shaykh Mufīd, Qum, 1413 AH.

³ Shaykh al-Ṣādūq, *Ṣifāt al-Shī‘ah*, Pg. 30, Intishārāt-i A‘lamī, Tehran, 1403 AH.

specific to Shī‘a Islam. Therefore, they have been emphasized in the narrations.

One of the frequently repeated phrases in supplications and *ziyārāt* transmitted from the immaculate Imams عليه السلام is:

أَشْهَدُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَيَايَاكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am certain of your return, [and I follow you] in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds,”⁴ & ⁵

and this encompasses belief in the Imams عليه السلام, and belief in *raj‘ah*.

Breaking this line down into a few components, along with their translation, we can see that there are three aspects to this line:

a. I bear witness to the fact that I believe in you. (أَشْهَدُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ)

b. I am certain of your return (*raj‘ah*). (وَيَايَاكُمْ مُوقِنٌ)

c. With the laws⁶ of my religion, and the final outcomes⁷ of my deeds [I am certain of your return]. (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي)

Parts “a” and “b” of this phrase are clear and obvious, and what somewhat affects the fluency and clarity of the phrase is part “c.”

Several theories have been proposed for translating the part:

...بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

⁴ Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, Vol. 6, Pg. 114, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, Tehran, 1407 AH.

⁵ This phrase appears in *Ziyārat al-Arba‘īn*, *Ziyārat* of Imam Ḥusayn عليه السلام on the Day of ‘*Arafah*, *du‘ā*’ during travel (part of this phrase), and in other *ziyārāt* and supplications.

⁶ *Sharā’i‘* is the plural of *sharī‘ah* and means ‘Divine laws that are obligatory for human beings to follow.’ Bustānī, Fu‘ād Afrām, Muhyār, Riḍā, *Farhang-i Abjadī ‘Arabī-Fārsī*, Vol. 1, Pg. 525, Intishārāt-i Islāmī, Tehran, 2nd edition, 1416 AH.

⁷ *Khawātīm* is from the root *khatm* and means ‘conclusion and end of work.’

“...in the laws of my religion and the final outcomes of my deeds”

which we will first present with an introductory explanation.

As we know, in the Arabic language, prepositions and the nouns they govern (*jār* and *majrūr*) are not independent, and for their meaning to be clear in a sentence, they must be interpreted with an independent word [that is sometimes intended, but not expressly mentioned in the text].

The phrase “in the laws of” - “*bi-sharāʿi*”⁸ (بِشَرَائِعِ), and consequently “my religion” - “*dīnī*” (دِينِي), as well as the phrase conjoined to it “and the final outcomes of my deeds” (خَوَاتِيمَ عَمَلِي), must be interpreted with an independent word, and according to Arabic grammarians, must be related to an independent word [that is intended, but not expressly mentioned].

Considering this, several theories have been proposed regarding what these prepositional phrases are related to, and consequently, several meanings have been suggested for this sentence:

1. It has been said that “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to the verb “I bear witness” - “*ashhadu*” (أَشْهَدُ), meaning that for emphasis we say: “Not only do I bear witness, but the laws of my religion and the final outcomes of my deeds **also** believe in you and testify to your return along with me.”⁹

⁸ *Bi-sharāʿi*: It is *jār* and *majrūr*, and *dīnī* is *muḍāf ilayh* for *sharāʿi*, and since the next phrase (*khawātīm ʿamalī*) is conjoined to it, any composition and relation explained for the first phrase (*bi-sharāʿi dīnī*) also applies to the second phrase.

⁹ Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, *Malādh al-Akhyār*, Vol. 9, Pg. 306, Kitābkhānih-yi Āyatullāh Marʾashī Najafī, Qum, 1406 AH.

2. The phrase “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to “believe, be certain” - (*mu'min, mūqin*) - (مُؤْمِنٌ، مُوقِنٌ), in which case the meaning is: “With the help of these two (meaning the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds), and by adhering to them, I believe in you and have faith in your return.”¹⁰

3. The phrase in question can be read as follows, considering Arabic grammar, and the pause we create in recitation:

أَشْهَدُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ

“I bear witness that I am a believer in you and in your return.”

Then after a short pause, read the other sentences:

مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“I am certain of the laws of my religion, and the outcomes of my deeds.”

In this case, “your return” - “*iyyābikum*” (إِيَابِكُمْ) is conjoined to “believer” - “*mu'min*” (مُؤْمِنٌ); and “laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to “certain” - “*mūqin*” (مُوقِنٌ); and “*mūqin*” (مُوقِنٌ) itself is the second predicate for “*anna*” (أَنَّ) and is interpreted with it.

With that said, the meaning of the sentence would be: “I bear witness that I believe in you and your return... and I am certain of the laws of my religion, and the final outcome of my deeds (which is either Paradise or Hell).”¹¹

4. It is possible that the “*wa*” (وَ) before “laws of my religion” - (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) has been omitted here, as can be seen in some supplications.

In the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Ḥusayn ؑ on the night of ‘*Eid al-Fiṭr*’, it is stated:

¹⁰ Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, *Malādh al-Akhyār*, Vol. 9, Pg. 306, Kitābkhānih-yi Āyatullāh Mar’ashī Najafī, Qum, 1406 AH.

¹¹ *Malādh al-Akhbār*, Vol. 9, Pg. 307.

وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ وَبِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي

“And I am certain of your return, and the laws of my religion, and the outcomes of my deeds.”¹²

In this case, the probability that a word has been omitted is very high; that is, what the phrase “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to has been omitted, in which case its meaning will be the same as the third meaning offered above.¹³

5. Contrary to the fourth possibility, the conjunctive “wa” (وَ) has not been omitted, but what “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to has been omitted. It seems that the independent word that has been omitted is a word from the root “*tabi‘a*” (to follow) – (تَبَعَ), for which several pieces of evidence and reasons are presented:

Firstly: Considering the meaning of the entire phrase and the meaning that “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) interprets well with, it is better for a word from the root “*tabi‘a*” (تَبَعَ) to come; that is, **I follow** you with the laws of my religion.

Secondly: Given that “certainty” (مُوقِنٌ) and “believe” (مُؤْمِنٌ), which appear in the previous phrases, are active participles, it is better for that omitted word - which is from the root “*tabi‘a*” (تَبَعَ) - to also be of the same form and context.

Thirdly: Considering the numerous contextual evidence we have in supplications and *ziyārāt*, this omitted word could be “*tābi‘*” (تَابِعٌ) (follower); because in these supplications and *ziyārāt*, which are numerous, “in the laws of my religion” (بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to a word from the root “*tabi‘a*” (تَبَعَ).

For example, we refer to several cases:

¹² Āmilī, Muḥammad ibn Makkī (Shahīd al-Awwal), *Mazār*, Pg. 158, *Intishārāt-i Madrasih-yi Imām Mahdī* (عبدالمجید), Qum, 1410 AH.

¹³ *Malādh al-Akhhbār*, Vol. 9, Pg. 307.

1. In the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Ḥusayn ؑ, we recite:

أَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَكُمْ تَابِعٌ فِي ذَاتِ نَفْسِي وَشَرَائِعِ دِينٍ وَخَاتِمَةِ عَمَلِي
“I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am your **follower** in my own self, in the laws of my religion, and in the final outcome of my deeds.”¹⁴

2. In another *ziyārah* for Imam al-Ḥusayn ؑ, we recite:

أَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَيَايَاكُمْ مُوقِنٌ وَلَكُمْ تَابِعٌ فِي ذَاتِ نَفْسِي وَشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَاتِمَةِ عَمَلِي
“I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am certain of your return, and I am your **follower** in my own self, in the laws of my religion, and in the final outcome of my deeds.”¹⁵

3. In the *ziyārah* in which we send salutations and blessings upon both Imam Ḥasan ؑ and Imam Ḥusayn ؑ, we recite:

أَشْهَدُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِمَنْزِلَتِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ وَلَكُمْ تَابِعٌ بِذَاتِ نَفْسِي وَشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي
“I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am certain of your status, and I am your **follower** in my own self, in the laws of my religion, and in the final outcomes of my deeds.”¹⁶

In all these cases and similar ones, “in the laws of my religion” (شَرَائِعِ دِينِي) is related to “*tābi*” (تَابِعٌ), which makes its meaning clearer and more fluent. Considering that “*tābi*” (تَابِعٌ) is implied, the meaning of the phrase is as follows: “I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am

¹⁴ Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 4, Pg. 573, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, Tehran, 4th edition, 1407 AH.

¹⁵ Ibn Qūlawāyḥ, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, Pg. 202, Dār al-Murtaḍawīyah, Najaf Ashraf, 1st edition, 1397 AH.

¹⁶ Ibn Tāwūs, ‘Alī ibn Mūsā, Pg. 488, *Jamāl al-Uṣbū‘ bi-Kamāl al-‘Amal al-Mashrū‘*, Dār al-Raḍī, Qum, 1330 AH.

certain of your return (*raj'ah*), and in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds, I am your **follower**.”

IN CONCLUSION:

The phrase *إِنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي* is a fundamental declaration in Shī'a Islam, affirming belief in the Imams ؑ and their return (*raj'ah*). This article explored various interpretations of the latter part, *بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي*, with particular focus on its grammatical structure and implied meaning.

After examining multiple possibilities, the most favoured interpretation suggests that the word “*tābi*” - follower - is implied, but not explicitly stated. This interpretation is supported by similar phrases in other supplications and *ziyārāt*. Thus, the complete meaning can be understood as:

“I bear witness that I believe in you, and I am certain of your return (*raj'ah*), and in the laws of my religion, and the final outcomes of my deeds, I am your follower.”

This interpretation emphasizes the devotee's commitment to following the Imams ؑ in religious matters and personal conduct, as well as reinforcing the central role of the Imams ؑ in Shī'a Islamic beliefs and practices.¹⁷



O Allah! Send Your prayers upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad!

¹⁷ This summary was provided by the Translator.

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