

Ahl al-Bayt in Holy Qur'an

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Abstract

Goal of the research is to explain the concept of Ahl al-Bayt and its real referents from the view of Holy Qur'an. So we are going to ask who Ahl al-Bayt or People of the Prophet's Progeny are. To answer this question, the hypothesis claims they are the five perfect and infallible human beings, meaning the Holy Prophet of Islam, Imām Ali, Fatima Zahra, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Husain. Bayt (House) in the phrase of Ahl al-Bayt, refers to spiritual resemblance to the Holy Prophet and special generosity, not a physical building. Based on the traditions (*aḥādīth*) the other nine infallible Imāms are included in the Qur'anic term Ahl al-Bayt. Allāh Himself directly has always and absolutely cleansed all of them spiritually and materially. Cleansing them absolutely and comprehensively or their infallibility is a divine tradition (*sunnat'ullāh*). Based on Allāh's Genetic Will, this tradition is permanent and never change. Allāh preserves their purity and does not allow any type of impurity to arrive at their sanctuary. Of course, this purity preservation does not mean they do not have free will and they are determined. They are free, but they can see the special guidance of Allāh (*borhānu rrabb* بُرْهَانُ الرَّبِّ), which keeps them from all kinds of impurity. Necessity of infallibility for Ahl al-Bayt is self-evident, because they are the guides and the role models of people. If they commit sin or make mistake, how people can rely on them. The research method is descriptive analytical.

Key words: Ahl al-Bayt, Holy Qur'an, Infallibility, Perfect Man, Role Model.

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Introduction

There are many strong evidences in the verses of holy Qur'an and the traditions relating to those verses, which strongly prove the authority of Ahl al-Bayt in guiding and managing humanity. Some of them consist of:

The verse of Purification (*Ayat Al-Taṭhīr*)

O Family of the House, Allāh only wishes to distance fault from you, and to cleanse you, and to purify you abundantly. (Qur'an: 33: 33).

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

In this verse, based on the internal style of the verse and the Qur'anic evidences, Ahl al-Bayt can be applied to only five perfect ones: The Holy Prophet of Islam, Imām Ali, Fatima Zahra, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Husain. But based on the traditional evidences (الشواهد من السنة) the verse includes other nine Imāms, whom the Twelver Shia believe in them (Javādi 'Amoli, 2022, vol. 66, page 143). This verse proves absolute and comprehensive infallibility for the fourteen infallibles (the same source, page 142).

In this verse, “distancing fault from them” means prevention from any type of fault; and “purifying them abundantly” means keeping them pure. In addition, Allāh Almighty ascribes these two actions to himself, not angels; it is a clear indication for greatness of the actions. Also the phrase “purifying you abundantly يُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا” indicates that it is a especial purification, not an ordinary one. As well, Allāh's wish (to distance fault from them and to purify them abundantly) is genetic (التكويني). This type of genetic will (الإرادة التكوينية) never leads to any type of determinism, because they always have free will. In fact, they by seeing the special guidance of Allāh (*borhānu r-rabb* بُرْهَانُ الرَّبِّ), never incline to any fault; like what the Holy Qur'an explains regarding the Holy Prophet Yusuf:

And certainly she made for him, and he would have made for her, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord; thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency, surely he was one of Our sincere servants.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلِصِينَ. (٢٤: ١٢)

“The manifest evidence of his Lord” is really the special guidance of Allāh. (the same source, page 172-174).

In this regard the following traditions are important: We were told by my father, may Allāh be pleased with him, that he said: We were told by Sa'd bin Abdullah, that he said: We were told by Ahmad bin Muhammed bin Isā, from Hasan bin Ali ibn Faddāl, from 'Ali bin Abi Hamza, from Abu Baseer, that he said: I said to Abu Abdullāh, peace be upon him: Who are the Al of Muhammed (آل محمد) Allāh's blessings be upon him and his Family? He said: His offspring. Then I said: His Household? He said: The Succeeding Imams. Then I said: Then who are his 'Itra'? He said: The people of the Cloak. Then I said: Who are his nation? He said: The believers who believed in what he brought from Allāh, Exalted and Glorious is He, who adhere to the Two Weighty Things whom they were ordered adherence to: The Book of Allāh, Exalted and Glorious is He, and his 'Itrat, his Household, from whom Allāh has removed all impurity and purified a (complete) purification. They are the Two Successors over the nation after him, peace be upon him.

وحدثنا أبي - رضي الله عنه - قال: حدثنا سعد بن عبد الله، قال: حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن الحسن بن علي بن فضال، عن علي بن أبي حمزة، عن أبي بصير قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: من آل محمد صلى الله عليه وآله؟ قال: ذريته. فقلت: أهل بيته؟ قال: الأئمة الأوصياء. فقلت: من عترته؟ قال: أصحاب العباء. فقلت: من أمته؟ قال: المؤمنون الذين صدقوا بما جاء به من عند الله عز وجل، المتمسكون بالثقلين اللذين أمروا بالتمسك بهما: كتاب الله عز وجل، وعترته أهل بيته الذين أذهب الله عنهم الرجس وطهرهم تطهيرا. وهما الخليقتان على الأمة بعده عليه السلام. (<https://thaqalayn.net/chapter/28/1/34>)

In 'Uyūn al-Akhhbār: In the chapter on ar-Ridā's discussion with al-Ma'mun on the difference between the progeny and the Ummah, in a long *hadith* in which it says:

Al-Ma'mun said: Who are the pure progeny? So al-Ridā (as) said: Those whom Allāh Almighty described in His Book, for He says, "Surely, Allāh only wants to remove uncleanness from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification" (33: 33), and they are the ones [regarding whom] the Messenger of Allāh said: "Surely, I leave among you the two weighty things: The Book of Allāh, and my progeny, my Ahl al-Bayt. Surely, they will not part from one another



until they return to me at the Pond. Be careful how you treat them after me. O people, do not teach them, for they know more than you.

في عيون الأخبار في باب ذكر مجلس الرضا عليه السلام مع المأمون في الفرق بين العترة والأمة حديث طويل وفيه فقال المأمون: من العترة الطاهرة؟ فقال الرضا عليه السلام: الذين وصفهم الله تعالى في كتابه فقال تعالى: (انما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيرا) وهم الذين قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: انى مخلف فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل الا وانهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما، أيها الناس لا تعلموهم فإنهم أعلم منكم.

Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (1959). vol. 1, (pages 228-229).

-Also there is a tradition regarding the commentary of the verse 33: 33 as following:

“In the "Jami al-Bayan" Muhammad bin Jarir Tabari has quoted Shahr ibn Ḥawshab Ash'ari (d 100 A.H.) as saying: "When Ummu Salamah heard news of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn bin `Ali (`a), she cursed the people of Iraq and said: `May Allāh kill the people of Iraq who deceived him and left him alone. May Allāh curse them. Verily, I saw Fātimah while bringing a stone bowl of sweet paste for the Holy Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) stated: `Where is your cousin?' She said: `At home.' The Prophet (s) said: `Go bring him here with his two sons.' Fātimah returned while holding the hands of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. `Ali also followed them, and they came to the Holy Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) embraced Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and made `Ali sit on his right and Fatimah on left. He then the cloak as the carpet on which we slept in Medina and placed it over Fātimah, `Ali, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. He held the two sides of the cloak with his left hand. He raised his right hand toward the sky addressing Almighty Allāh by saying: `O Allāh, purify them of any uncleanness. O Allāh, these are the members of my Household. Purify and cleanse them of any vice, wrong, and sin,' (He repeated this twice)." This tradition has been related by Ahmad bin Muhammad ibn Hanbal in "*Musnad*" 292/6; Tahāwi in "*Mushkil al-Āthār*" 335/1; and Muhib Tabari in "*Zakhāir al-Uqbā*" 22/1. The *Kisā* hadith has been narrated in different forms by the Shias and the Sunnis.” (Jalāli, Fall & Winter 1995-1996, pages 4-5)



In addition, it should be mentioned that Umm Salama wanted to enter under the *kisā'*, but the Prophet (s) prevented her. She asked: 'Am I not one of the Ahl al-Bayt?'. The Prophet (s) said: 'you are on the path of righteousness and goodness, you are one of the wives of the prophet of Allāh.'" (Muḥammadi Reiyshahrī, Ahl al-Bayt dar Qur'ān wa hadīth, vol. 1, p. 38.) (https://en.wikishia.net/view/Hadith_al-Kis%27)

Hadith *Thaqalayn* (Arabic: حَدِيثُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ)

Hadith *Thaqalayn* is narrated a little differently in different sources, but the content is the same. Al-Kāfi which is one of the Four Books of Shi'a:

"Indeed I am leaving two things among you, to which if you hold yourself, you will never astray: the book of Allāh –who is all mighty and great- and my Ahl al-Bayt (household), my *'itrat* (family). O people hear! And I have announced to you that: indeed, you will enter my presence and I will ask you about what you did to the *thaqalayn* (two weighty things) and the *thaqalayn* are the book of Allāh and my Ahl al-Bayt."

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ إِنْ أَخَذْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا- كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَ أَهْلَ بَيْتِي عِثْرَتِي أَبِهَا النَّاسُ اسْمَعُوا وَ قَدْ بَلَّغْتُ إِيَّاكُمْ سِتْرَدُونَ عَلَى الْحَوْضِ فَأَسْأَلُكُمْ عَمَّا فَعَلْتُمْ فِي الثَّقَلَيْنِ وَ الثَّقَلَانِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ وَ أَهْلَ بَيْتِي. (Al-Kulayni, al-Kāfi, vol.1, p.294)

Sunan al-Nasā'i, one of the six *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) books of Sunnis:

"Looks like I have been called, and I answered (my time of death has come), indeed I have left the *thaqalayn* (two weighty things) among you, one of them is greater form the other, the book of Allāh and my *'itrat* (family), my Ahl al-Bayt (household). So look after how you will behave with them after me, indeed they will never separate from each other until they enter my presence by the pool [in the paradise]."

كَأَنِّي قَدْ دُعِيتُ فَاجِبتُ، اني قد تركت فيكم الثقلين احدهما اكبر من الآخر، كتاب الله و عترتي اهل بيتي، فانظروا

كيف تخلفوني فيهما، فانهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض.

(Al-Nasā'i, al-Sunan al-Kubrā, hadith: 8148)

(https://en.wikishia.net/view/Hadith_al-Thaqalayn)

في كل خلف من امتي عدل من اهل بيتي. (Al-Sawāeq al-Muhriqa, p. 90.)



In every generation of my community, there is a very just person from my progeny.

وعن محمد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن محمد بن خالد، عن أبي البخترى، عن أبي عبدالله (عليه السلام)، قال: إن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء، وذاك أن الأنبياء لم يورثوا درهما ولا دينارا، وإنما أورثوا أحاديث من أحاديثهم، فمن أخذ بشيء منها فقد أخذ حظا وافرا، فانظروا علمكم هذا عن تأخذه، فإن فينا أهل البيت في كل خلف عدلا، ينفي عنه تحريف الغالين وانتحال المبطلين وتأويل الجاهلين.

(Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (1959). vol. 1, page 221)

And from Muhammad ibn Yahyā, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isā, from Muhammad ibn Khālid, from Abu al-Bakhtary who has narrated the following:

Abu Abdullāh said: 'Surely, the scholars^{-asws} are the inheritors of the Prophets^{-asws}, and that the Prophets^{-asws} do not leave the inheritance of Dirhams nor the Dinārs, and they leave behind their^{-asws} Hadith from among their Ahādith. Whoever takes anything from these has taken a colossal measure. Look at your knowledge and see where you have taken it from. From among our posterity the People of the Household, there is a just person, who denies the alterations of the exaggerators, uncovers the impersonations of the wrongdoers, and the interpretations of the ignorant'.

From these traditions and the similar traditions we can conclude that the title Ahl al-Bayt was not especial to some especial people living at the age of revelation, but it will be lasting till resurrection. In fact, the phrase "indeed they will never separate from each other until they enter my presence by the pool [in the paradise] على فانهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على", shows this continuation. Meaning since the other nine Imāms have spiritual similarity with the Holy prophet, they are among Ahl al-Bayt. (Javādi 'Amoli, 2022, vol. 66, pages 212-213)

- **Condition of being from Ahl al-Bayt**

And Noah cried unto his Lord and said: My Lord! Lo! my son is of my household! Surely Thy promise is the truth and Thou are the Most Just of Judges. * He said: O Nūḥ! surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) other than good deeds, therefore ask not of Me that



of which you have no knowledge; surely I admonish you lest you may be of the ignorant. (11:45-46)

وَتَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ * قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلنَّ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ. (11:45-46)

"Ahl al-Bayt" literally means people of the house and it refers to the family or children of a person. The term "family of the Prophet" can be applied on three kinds of relationships:

- Those who are related to the Prophet by blood or marriage ties only.
- Those who are related to the Prophet by soul and spirit only.
- Those who are related to the Prophet by blood or marriage ties as well as by soul and spirit.

When the Qur'an or the Prophet uses the term "Ahlul Bayt", it could not be the first or the second group.

The first group is only physically related to the Prophet but not spiritually, like the son of Prophet Nūḥ or the wife of Prophet Lūṭ or Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle. Allāh clearly says to Prophet Nūḥ about his son: "*Innahu laysa min ahlik* إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ - He is not of your family."

That is, he is not one of your spiritual family; he is only physically related to you. Lūṭ's wife and the Prophet's uncle, Abu Lahab, both are counted as people of the Hell-Fire.

The second category is considered "Ahl al-Bayt" only in a metaphorical sense, not in the real meaning; for example, Salmān al-Fārsi about whom the Prophet said, "Salmān is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt." This leaves us with the third group. (Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi. (n.d.))

Mubāhalah verse

Sixty chiefs and *Ulamā of Najrān*, headed by Sayyid, Aqib, and Usqf (religious personalities) of the region in the 10th year A.H. came to Medina to clarify their religious and political stance vis-a-vis Islam which had spread over the Arab peninsula and to engage in discussions with the Messenger (s) of Allāh to realize the essence and truth of Islam.

After lengthy discussions which have been presented in details in Ibn Hisham's "Sirah" 573/1, no agreement was reached on the position and standing of Jesus. The Christians of Najrān believed in the divinity of



Jesus and considered him as the son of God. This is while, based on the explicit wording of the Holy Qur'an,

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ. (3: 59)

The Messenger (s) of Allāh considered him as a Prophet and the servant of God. At the end of the discussions, the Prophet (s) suggested that the two sides engage in "*mubāhalah*", in other words, to invoke divine malediction for the lying side. The following verse was descended in this regard:

"But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allāh on the liars."

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ. (3: 61)

The 10th (and some say the 24th) of Dhul-Hajjah was chosen for "*mubāhalah*". The Messenger of Allāh ordered that in a field outside Medina a thin black "aba" (men's loose sleeveless cloak open in front) be used as a shade between two trees. The Christian chiefs and dignitaries of Najrān stood in orderly ranks on one side of the field, on the other side, the Prophet, together with `Ali, Fātimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn came from the direction of Medina to the shade. Along this path, the Prophet (s), holding the hand of `Ali (a), Ḥasan and Ḥusayn walked in front with Fātimah behind them (c.f. "*Majm'ā al-Bayān*". Interpretation of the Mubāhalah Verse). With such simplicity and grandeur, they reached the shade and stood below the "aba". The Holy Prophet (s) recited the verse "*tathīr*" and addressed the "Ahl al-Bayt" by saying: "I will invoke malediction for them and you say *`āmin*'." Seeing such glory and grandeur, the Najrān chiefs lost their self-confidence and felt that they were very puny and could not stand against Prophet Muhammad (s) and his Household. They, therefore, accepted to pay "*jizyah*" and offered to give in to peace. On behalf of the Holy Prophet (s), the commander of the Faithful, `Ali (a), signed a peace treaty with the Christians.



The Christians were to annually offer twelve thousand exquisite clothes, a thousand *mithqal* of gold, and some other items to remain Christians under the umbrella of Islam.

On the basis of the verse *mubāhalah*, Sunni interpreters (such as Zamakhshari, Baydāwi, Imām Fakhr Rāzi and others) regard `Ali, Fātimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (peace be upon them all) superior to all other people and argue that Hassan and Ḥusayn are the sons of the Messenger (s) of Allāh .

The term "*anfusinā* أَنفُسَنَا" in the verse *mubāhalah* proves the unity of the heart and soul of Prophet Muhammad and `Ali. The Holy Prophet (s) stated: "`Ali is of me and I am of `Ali." ("Fadāil al-Khamsah" 343/1). The hadith *mubāhalah* has been recounted in different books of "sirah" and history with various wordings. These include those of Tirmidhi ("Sahih" 166/2) which quotes S`ad ibn Abi Waqqās as follows: "When the verse *mubāhalah* was recited, the Holy Prophet (s) summoned `Ali, Fātimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn and said: `O Allāh, these are the Members of my Household." This tradition has been narrated by Ḥakim Nishābūrī in "*al-Mustadrak*" 150/3 and Bayhaqī in "*Sunan*" 63/7. (The same source, pages 5-6)

The verse regarding calling on the members of the house to keep up prayer

Ibn `Abdul-Bar in "*al-Isti`āb*" 598/2; Abū Dāwūd Tiālisi in "*Ṣaḥīḥ*" 274/8; and Firoozābādi in "Fadāil al-Khamsah" 236/1 have put at forty the number of mornings when the Prophet (s) went to the house of `Ali (a) and Fātimah (a). In *Tafsir Jami al-Bayān*, Tabari has said that this was done for seven months. Siyuṭī (in *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 199) has quoted Ibn `Abbās as saying that after the verse "And enjoin prayer on your household ..." (وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ) (20: 132) was revealed, the Holy Prophet (s) for nine months went to the house of `Ali (a) five times a day at the time of daily prayers and called on the members of the house to keep up the prayer. Each time, he recited the verse *taḥhīr*. (The same source, pages 8-9)

Conclusion

In the Holy Qur'an Ahl al-Bayt(as), are considered as infallibles, but some cannot understand this transcendent issue, because they either

mix the Allāh's genetic will (الإرادته التكوينية) with His statutory Will (الإرادته التشريعية) or do not differentiate between preventive removal (إذهاب الدفعى) and eradicated removal (إذهاب الرفعى). The most controversial issue is the way of determining the real referents of Ahl al-Bayt(as). The Twelver Shia take advantage of the Holy Qur'an, the related traditions and intellect and through a certain method proves definitely the Ahl al-Bayt's infallibility. But unfortunately some deceived by the political deviations, which happened during the Islamic history (and paved ground for the cruel rulers and caused backwardness of the Islamic *Ummah*) try to include people that the verses of the Holy Qur'an do not mean. Meaning they are going to impose their illusions upon the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an as the most prominent source should be the scale of all scales. If we manipulate this scale, we will lose all scales. The Holy Qur'an should be commented by itself, not the illusions of so and so. The Holy Qur'an must be criterion for all traditions and sayings, not vice versa. The people's sayings must be evaluated by truth (الحق), not people themselves are considered as truth creator. Therefore, in fact, our epistemology, humanology, sociology, histeriology, axiology and of course ontology has many problems. We believe in many presuppositions, which we never can justify them. Then in order to explain what we believe, we deny the role of intellect or claim that politics is separate from religion, and simultaneously we claim that people must follow the cruel ruler, because we need those anti securities for keeping security!

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