

An Islamic Perspective on  
**Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah**

by Moḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlullāh

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Preface	3
Silly Notions	4
<b>The Meaning of al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah</b>	<b>6</b>
The First Possibility	6
The Second Possibility	7
The Third Possibility	8
The Fourth Possibility	8
The Fifth Possibility	9
<b>The Position of al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah in Islamic Creed</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Logical Possibility of Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah and the Reason for its Need</b>	<b>12</b>
Is the Literal Interpretation Possible?	13
The Justification or Need for This Concept	13
<b>The Proofs for and against Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Referencing the Qur’ān</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Narrations of al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Qur’ān and Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah</b>	<b>18</b>
1- Establishing Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah from Miracles	19
2- Knowledge of the Book	22
3- Knowledge of the Unseen	23
- The Crux of the Matter	27
<b>The Narrations of the Knowledge of the Unseen</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Evidences Against al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah</b>	<b>28</b>
1. The Messenger is human	28
2. Signs are Only in the Control of Allah	29
3. Human Weaknesses of the Prophets	30
- Summary	32
<b>The Awliyā’ as Intermediaries of Blessings</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>The Narrations of Blessings</b>	<b>34</b>
- Summary	36

## In the name of Allāh the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

### **Preface**

Some scholars are under the impression that Allāh granted His prophets and messengers *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. By means of this, they play a role in the universe, by changing matters and conditions, remove the effects of certain causes and add new causes and means to attain objectives, with the permission of Allah. This is done on account of the control over the universe that Allāh had granted to them. This is no different to the legal authority granted to them in the affairs of the people, passing judgments in their affairs, spreading the laws of the constitution (*sharī'ah*) amongst them and guiding them to His religion.

The theory of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* plays a strong role in many different ways as far as *aqīdah* (beliefs) is concerned. At times, it takes a matter to be extremely constrained so that it could be considered a miracle, whilst on other occasions, it is stretched to the point where it incorporates the entire universe. Some are even of the opinion that Allah handed over to the prophets and Imāms the authority to dictate the apparent and subtle occurrences of the universe. This means that they may change anything in the universe or in a human.

However, it is done by means of the authority or power that Allah gave them and not by means of their own power or abilities. In other words, they are the ones who are in control through the might of Allah and they are the guardians of the universe by His authority. This explanation, according to them (the proponents of the theory) absolves their belief from polytheism, extremism and deviance from the correct ideology.

Believing in this theory could have a great impact on a person's focus in his supplications for the fulfillment of his needs. Hence we find some people turning to the *awliyā'* (Imāms) and seeking from them children, an increase in sustenance, protection from sudden calamities, protection from oppressive enemies etc. Some groups have even added ritual prayers to their lives in which they supplicate directly to the Imāms and *awliyā'*, albeit with the belief that they are the

intermediaries between themselves and Allah. These people even seek from them intercession, emancipation from Hell and so on.

## **Silly Notions**

We have noticed that according to some traditional perspectives, vows carried out for the Imāms or the *awliyā'* could exonerate a person from all the errors, transgressions and sins that he committed in his life. This is based upon the belief that love for the abovementioned is sufficient a reason for a person's entry into paradise. They believe that the fire of hell cannot touch the one in whose heart there is love for Prophet (peace be upon him) or his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). It is as if love for Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) is a personal relationship that falls under a courtesy which is performed in one's common life to attain gifts from people in authority or from the ruler himself.

Furthermore we will be pointing out some of the outcomes of this belief. Analyzing it and discussing it thoroughly would require a separate chapter. Though now, we wish to suffice upon presenting the idea itself, which is the idea or belief that that the prophets and *awliyā'* have authority over the universe and whatever is in it by the will of Allah. It is obvious that if anyone believed that they had authority without the will of Allah, then it (the belief) would be clear-cut polytheism. None would even dispute that it is a fallacy and subscribing to it is a grave sin.

Some people also hold the view that there are creatures among the *jinn*, angels and humans who have super-natural powers. Their abilities are beyond the scope of the rest of creation. As a result, they go on to believe that these beings hold within them secrets of divinity. By using these abilities they access the knowledge of the unseen, super-naturally cover great distances, fly in the air, play a role in the happenings of the heavens or perform other miracles like reviving the dead, curing those who were born blind, curing the lepers and other similar feats which cannot be accomplished without divinity or being a deity.

Divinity cannot be something external. There has to be a physical bond with the one and only deity who is the real protector of all. Thus, there should be some kind of a relationship similar to

that of being a son who inherits characteristics from his father. Nonetheless, all of these delusions have been refuted in the glorious Qur'ān. Allah (the Almighty) says: "Allāh has not taken any son." [al-Mu'minūn: 19]

The notion that Allāh has a son is illogical. Having a son reflects a type of limitation and need (in the father), which is impossible in the case of the one who is self-existing. He is independent of his creation in all aspects and there is no deficiency in His being that needs to be supplemented by these types of relationships. As for the super-natural powers and miracles, it is easy for Allah to grant some of them in their complete form to His slaves, just as He placed unique and amazing features in the nature of some cosmic bodies which are called the laws of nature.

This (granting of miracles and so on) is nothing difficult for Him, as He is the one who has full control over everything. There is absolutely no need for these matters to be dependent upon personal links, in the form of divinity, in order for them to take place. The polytheists, or at least some of them, in the era of Prophet (peace be upon him) believed that the idols had access to secrets of the unknown and they were close to Allah (the Most High). Thus, worshipping them was believed to be an act that draws one closer to Him (the Almighty). The following verse quotes their statement regarding this belief: "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position." [al-Zumar: 3] However, this belief or doctrine was mere conjecture. It had no basis to it.

We will now discuss *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* from the following angles:

1. The meaning of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*.
2. Its position in Islamic creed.
3. The possibility of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* rationally and the reason for its need.
4. The proofs. Here we will present some of the fundamental proofs used to establish *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. Thereafter, we will scrutinize these proofs so that we could reach conclusions which are more accurate and apt as far as this topic is concerned.

# The Meaning of al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah

There are many different ways in which *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* could be explained or interpreted. Some of the interpretations are totally incorrect and impossible, some are undoubtedly established and there are others which are possible but there exists no proof to support them:

## The First Possibility

*Wilāyah* (guardianship) plays a role in administrating and carrying out that which the subject (which/who is need of a guardian) is incompetent to carry out. The example of this type of *wilāyah* is the guardianship of a father over his child. This guardianship is based upon the fact that the child is unable to do what is best for him and that which will keep his affairs in order. Thus, the father (guardian) plays his role by filling this void.

This possibility is out of the question in our discussion, as Allah (the Almighty) brought the universe into existence on the basis of a precise and comprehensive system. Hence, there is no scope for any shortage or deficiency. Allah (the Most High) says: “You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?” [al-Mulk: 3] The prophets – according to the status granted to them by the Qur’ān – are not part of the above-mentioned system. They neither play a role, nor are they tasked with the duty of filling any void, if we assume that a void does exist. Rather, their duty of being the messengers of Allah is more august than that. This is one angle from which we can understand that the theory is flawed. The other angle that begs our attention is: Can there be a deficiency in Allah’s administration of the universe which would make it reasonable for the prophets to plan out for Him matters thereof? There simply cannot be any deficiency, as He is the one who is totally independent of all His creation whilst all the creation is totally dependent upon Him.

In other words, since Allah (the Almighty) is the one who arranged the universe, from its minutest particle to its greatest particle in a precise and prodigious manner without any type of deficiency, where did the need for a guardian (as explained above) arise from? Holding the belief

that the prophets (peace be upon them) and the Imāms (peace be upon them) are the guardians of the universe and of all bounties is, in essence, holding the belief that there is a deficiency in these creations. However, there are no deficiencies which need to be taken care of and thus no need for them to be the guardians.

## **The Second Possibility**

The intended meaning of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is that Allah handed over to the prophets and Imāms the duty of planning the universe and taking care of its affairs. This means that they are the ones who command the sun to rise and plan out for it the way it should rise, they are the ones who instruct the seas to let its waves clash and they physically control the (activities) of the entire universe, including the stars and planets. In a nutshell, Allah placed the universe in their hands and handed over its administration to them.

I say: Some interpretations of *tafwīd* (handing over) are necessarily incorrect. In fact, believing in them could be disbelief and polytheism. One such case is that if a person believes that due to *tafwīd* taking place, they (peace be upon them) act independently of Allah in effecting what they wish. This belief will be polytheism, even though the person believes that the guardians did not initially possess such authority, but rather it was granted to them. Similar to this is the belief that Allah withdrew from implementing anything in the universe. He does not manage any of its affairs, as He handed them over to others. I do not believe that any of the scholars interpret *tafwīd* in either of the two ways mentioned above, as there is Qur’ānic proof as well as other proof that *tafwīd* is baseless.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As for the Qur’ān, there are many verses which prove the fallacious nature of *tafwīd*. Amongst them are the following verses:

“Or have they attributed to Allāh partners who created like His creation so that the creation [of each] seemed similar to them? Say, ‘Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.’” [al-Ra’d: 16]

As well as: “Allāh is the one who created you, then provided for you, then will cause you to die, and then will give you life. Are there any of your ‘partners’ who does anything of that? Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.” [al-Rūm: 40]

As for narrations, there are many in which the rejection of *tafwīd* have been reported. Al-Ṣadūq reports in ‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā with his chain to Yāsir al-Khādim: “I asked al-Riḍā, ‘What do you say regarding *tafwīd*?’ He replied, ‘Allah handed over the matter of His religion to His prophet and said, ‘Whatever the messenger brings to you, hold onto it and whatever he prohibits you from, stay away (from it).’ [al-Hashr:7] As for creation and sustenance, then no.’ Thereafter he said, ‘Allah is the creator of everything,’ [al-R`ad: 16] and He said, ‘Allah is the

There exists a third possibility as far as interpreting *tafwīd* is concerned, which is to believe that Allah handed over the planning of the matters of the universe to the prophets and the Imāms, whilst remaining active in making things occur. However, there is no proof to support this belief. Rather, there is proof that it is false, as will appear shortly. This meaning of *tafwīd* is also similar to other variants which we will discuss next.

### **The Third Possibility**

*Al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* could mean that Allah gave duties to the prophets and Imāms like the angels. In other words, their official duty is to administer all the movements and procedures of the universe. This too has no proof to back it. Instead, it is rejected. It is not the duty of the Imāms and the prophets to administer the universe. Rather, they are above that. Their duty of being messengers is loftier and nobler than such duties. Added to that, the universe exists on the basis of patterns and principles that have been placed in it as well as others by means of which Allah wished to culminate its systems and movements. Humans, in their academic quest, have even managed to unravel some of these principles and link matters thereby realizing some of their secrets and characteristics.

### **The Fourth Possibility**

Allah gave the prophets the ability to carry out super-natural feats the likes of: “I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah,” as well as, “And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah.” [Āl Imrān: 49]

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One who created you, thereafter, He sustained you, thereafter he will grant you death and thereafter he will grant you life. Can any of your partners do any of that? He is pure and exalted from all that they associate.” [al-Rūm: 40]

Al-Ṣadūq also reports in *Kitāb al-I‘tiqādāt* p. 100 that Zurārah said to Abū ‘Abd Allah: “A certain person believes in *tafwīd*. He (peace be upon him) asked, ‘What is *tafwīd*?’ I replied, ‘He says that Allah (the Almighty) created Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) and ‘Alī (peace be upon him) and then handed over to them the matter. Thus, they created, sustained, gave life and gave death.’ He (peace be upon him) responded, ‘The enemy of Allāh has lied. When you return to him, recite to him the verse which is in Sūrat al-Ra‘d, ‘Or have they attributed to Allāh partners who created like His creation so that the creation [of each] seemed similar to them?’ Say, ‘Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.’ [al-Ra‘d: 16] I returned to the man and informed him of that which al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said. It was as if I placed a stone in his mouth,’ or ‘it was as if he went dumb.’” *Al-I‘tiqādāt* pg. 100



Or, (miracles) the likes of (the miracle of) the believer who had knowledge of the book and brought the throne of Bilqīs into the presence of Sulaymān (peace be upon him): “Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture, ‘I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.’” [Al-Naml: 40]

In summary, Allah gave the prophets and Imāms strengths and abilities to act in the universe according to the needs of their prophet-hood and Imāmah. These are restricted to the avenues that are possible to use. Thus, within this restriction, they have an effect on matters and objects move or change with them.

If this is the intended meaning of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* by its proponents, then (it is something that) all Muslim accept, as it is within the scope of what is referred to as a *muʿjizah* (prophetic miracle) or a *karāmah* (miracle granted to a saint). Muslims, by consensus, are fully accepting of the occurrence of these. Even non-Muslims attest to it. It should be noted that as long as it is considered a *muʿjizah*, there is no proof that the Prophet himself was given the ability to create, give life etc, but all of this only happened by the will and power of Allah (the Most High). Due to this, we find it far-fetched that the above is the intended meaning of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* by its proponents. In fact, it is against their clear statements.

We also doubt that what is meant by *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is the acceptance of supplications. Meaning that the prophets and Imāms (peace be upon them) supplicate to Allah for that which is not the norm and He accepts their supplications due to their closeness to Him. These supplications are always for some or other good cause. If this is the interpretation, no Muslim would reject it, but it is far-fetched that this is the intended meaning.

### **The Fifth Possibility**

Allah handed over the reins of the universe to them. He granted them full authority over all the components of the universe, and they may do as they please. If they wish to add anything, they may add it and if they wish to remove anything, they have all the power to do so. They may change sunrise from the east to the west and they may remove the mountains.

This theory is also unsubstantiated. The Qur'ān disproves it, as will be clearly explained. It is for this reason that we do not accept *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, for not only is there no proof for it, but the evidence actually disproves it. If, for arguments sake, we were to say that this is definitely not the meaning intended by the proponents of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, then there could have been some reconciliation between those who accept it and those who reject it. In that case, those who reject it would be doing so on the basis of the interpretation of *tafwīd* and that which resembles it, whilst those who accept it would be doing so on the basis of the interpretation of a *mu'jizah* and that which resembles it. Unfortunately, the proponents build upon the fifth possibility, which leaves no doubt that the difference of opinion is real and definite, and not just differences of expression.

# The Position of *al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah* in Islamic Creed

*Al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is not from the fundamental beliefs of the Imāmī Shī'ah. It is not one of the tenets of faith, rather it is a theoretical subsidiary matter of belief which needs to be scrutinized in the light of proof before it can be accepted or rejected. Therefore, if a person does not believe in it, it makes no difference to the validity and correctness of his Islam and ideology. None of the scholars (even those who accept *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*) ever claimed that it is from the fundamentals or basics of the religion.

Also, there is no consensus<sup>2</sup> amongst our scholars of it being incumbent to believe it or adopt it, especially since it is a new concept. We are unable to find evidences of it in the words of our earlier scholars, let alone the narrations. Hence, this concept needs to be scrutinized in the light of proof. This is the only way to approach the subject. The emotional and publicizing approaches need to be kept far from it, as they have nothing to do with a discussion that is purely academic.

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<sup>2</sup> This was admitted by Imām Khomeini, even though he was one of the proponents of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. He stated that it is apparent that the scholars “took *mu'jizat* and *karāmāt* to be from the category of acceptance of supplications and Allah (the Almighty), is in fact, the actual One who carries out all of the affairs.” *Al-Arba'ūn Ḥadīthan* pg. 602 by Dār al-Ta'āruf, Beirut (edition seven).

It is quite obvious that the result of the above is the rejection of the foundation of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*.

Furthermore, Shaykh Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyyah was adamant that *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is not one of the fundamentals of the religion and there is no proof for it. He stated, whilst refuting those who believed that Allah granted preference to the Imāms (peace be upon them) over all else by means of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*:

“Everything is possible with the will of Allah. It is even possible that He locks together skies and the earth by means of words that His servants say. However, possibilities are not important. What is important is the reality. It does not matter if something can be established; rather what matters is what has been established. There is no doubt that establishing this requires a definite proof, which is clear in its text and has a reliable chain of narrators. Where is this? If it is believed that this type of text is found by some, then it is a proof against him alone, not upon others, as the obligation of believing in *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is neither from the fundamentals of the religion, nor from the fundamentals of the sect.” Refer to *Falsafāt Islāmiyyah* pg. 164.

There are other scholars who also opine that *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* cannot be established.

# The Logical Possibility of Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah and the Reason for its Need

Perhaps we need to pause before the actual discussion and first expound on two crucial factors:

1. The degree of likelihood that the intellect (based on its well-established relationship with the creation, the Creator and His attributes) would accept the concept of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. If the intellect rules that the concept is flawed and impossible, then there will be no point in searching for proofs to back it, which is also referred to as *al-jānīb al-ithbātī* (the angle of establishing) by the scholars of Uṣūl. In such a case, it will be necessary to find an alternative meaning to the concept, since affirming it conflicts with the intellect. This is because it is impossible for a proof to be clearly in conflict with the intellect. The same is our approach to those texts that which allude towards Allah being a body like other bodies, and we interpreted those verses. Like the statement of the Most High: “The hand of Allah is over their hands.” [al-Faḥ: 10] or: “Everything will be destroyed except His Face.” [al-Qaṣaṣ: 88]

We interpret the first verse to mean sovereignty and loftiness and the second to mean the being of Allah. However, it should be noted that these interpretations are accommodated by the language and the usage of these words in the figurative sense is not uncommon.

2. If the intellect rules that this concept - in its literal meaning - is possible, then we will need to complete our study by finding a need or at least a justification for it to be handed over to the prophets and messengers. Is there anything that demands that it should happen? Thereafter we will proceed to look for proofs, as the mere possibility of the concept is not enough of a substantiation to believe that it actually exists. Possibilities cannot be the sole reason for a man to include any concept among his beliefs. The same is said if a matter contains no proofs to establish the concept or negate it. Matters of belief and doctrine are dependent

upon proof, as Allah says: “Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.”  
[al-Baqarah: 111]

### **Is the Literal Interpretation Possible?**

By principle, there is no doubt that it is possible for Allah to grant any of His creation, or all of them the ability to manage the affairs of the universe, just as it is possible for Him to restrict it within specific parameters. Allah, the one who is in control of the universe and everything in existence, can grant some of His creation a few avenues of control as well as their mediums. This is a result of Him being the unrestricted deity.

Allah granted them the ability, within their spectrum of being humans, to perform their general and specific duties. This includes all the duties related to the responsibility placed upon their shoulders as well as the incentives that are connected to their needs. Further, it goes without saying that He has the ability to expand the spectrum in order to enable them to deal with new challenges in the universe. However (in essence), Allah will remain in control and He will take care of all matters. He may allow them to keep it due to some wisdom or he may take it away from them by means of His power.

Holding such a belief is not in any way contradictory to monotheist doctrine, which revolves around the fact that all of the creation and all affairs are at His command. Thus, none possesses anything, except if it was granted to him by Allah. The crux of the matter is that it is a gift from Allah within a special spectrum, the limits of which are outlined by Allah Himself for his servants on account of His unrestricted free will.

### **The Justification or Need for This Concept**

Here, a question begs to be asked, “Why is it that Allah granted them *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*?” Is there any important matter that is dependent upon it to the extent that it demands a personal and physical input from them? Is it such that the objective cannot be achieved without their participation? Or is this a token of honor that they received from Allah? Is

this the reason why they were given this great opportunity - which was not given to anyone else in the universe?

These are the type of questions that come to mind. However, answers in the affirmative - to back the concept - cannot be found. We are well aware of the fact that the role of the prophets is to give glad-tidings (for good deeds), warn (people of the consequences of evil) and convey (the revelation). If they happened to take part in administrative affairs under normal circumstances, they would do so using the conventional avenues available to them.

However, if a challenge arose, which put their position as messengers at risk and the conventional avenues would result in failure or weakness, then miracles would occur to ensure that the primary duty of the messenger is not affected. Thereupon, the disbelievers would be dealt a decisive blow and their plots would be rendered useless, weakening them and defeating them. Examples of such occasions are; the flood of Nūḥ (peace be upon him), the fire of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him), the staff of Mūsā (peace be upon him), the shine of his hand, his splitting of the ocean, the revival of the dead by Īsā (peace be upon him), his curing of those who were born blind and the lepers and the Qur'ān of Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

This is where the matter would end. In other words, it would be occurrences that served specific moments. Thereafter, the messenger would continue his duties normally, using the conventional avenues at his disposal. The fight (between truth and falsehood) would resume once again, leaving the messenger to live through more than just one occasion of difficulty, grief and trial. Subsequently, he would persevere through tough challenges and severe pain, like any other human instead of rushing to any unconventional avenue to escape from them.

With that being the case, we cannot find any grounds for the need to hand over to them total guardianship of the universe. It is only necessary to grant them the amount which is needed when there are crucial challenges against their duty of being messengers. On such occasions, miracles would come to their rescue. However, it is possible that these miracles were not done on the strength of their own actions, but rather they could have been direct manifestations of the power of Allah.

As for the argument that it was granted to them as a token of honour, it is flawed, as granting power or authority to someone without an occasion wherein he would need it does not serve any purpose. Similarly, granting sovereignty which is not coupled responsibility makes no sense. Allah honoured the prophets by raising their ranks, granting them closeness to Him, granting them His love and bestowing them with lofty statuses in the hereafter. As for the world, it holds no value, neither according to them<sup>3</sup> nor according to Him. It is no surprise then that he did not make it the retribution for His friends. In fact, many a time, He gave the greatest share of it to His enemies.

Further, there is one more question that we would like to ask: What was the point of this guardianship if it had no effect on their lives in any way? It was not brought into play when they protected themselves, they did not use it to dispel threats or enemies and it was not adopted by them to support their cause. All of this is evident to the one who reads their complete and authentic biographies.

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<sup>3</sup> Their statements and biographies bear testimony to this. The following narration is reported from the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him): If Allah wished, when appointing His messengers, to grant them trunks of gold, diamond mines and plantations from heavens, along with making the birds of the sky and the animals of the jungle travel along with them, He would have done it. However, if He done so then no test would remain, there would be rewards, the narratives would terminate, those who accept (the message) would not deserve the reward for being tested, the believers would not be deserving of the reward of those who do good and there would be no meaning to words. Thus Allah made His messengers strength in their resolutions and made them weak in that which meets the eye. They were granted contentment which fills hearts and eyes whilst undergoing poverty which hurts the eyes and ears. If the prophets were people of unrivaled strength, unparalleled greatness and status, and if they were kings who people look out for and travelled to, then the test would be very easy for the creation and they would hardly turn away in pride. They would either believe (the message) on account of overwhelming fear or greed which would drive them (towards the physical rewards). Nahj al-Balāghah vol. 2 pg. 145

# The Proofs for and against Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah

Before commencing the discussion regarding proofs and the interpretations which could be mentioned to support *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, it is imperative for us to mention that the original position is that of those who reject the concept. What I mean by ‘the original position’ is all the proofs – logical and textual – that Allah (the Almighty) is the One who created the universe and He did not leave in it any deficiency. He meticulously stipulated everything and He placed within them their specialties and characteristics. Hence, the negation of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is totally harmonious with monotheist doctrine.

Everything that indicates towards there being only one creator also indicates that guardianship of the universe is the sole right of Allah alone. He is in charge of all bounties and the One who grants all good. He alone is the absolute sustainer. He gives life and death and He has full control over all of His servants. None besides Him is truly in charge of matters. All are His servants. They do not say anything before Him? And they act according to His commands.

As for the miracles which were granted to the prophets, they were part of the plan of Allah. He (the Almighty) is the one who placed certain abilities in the staff of Mūsā (peace be upon him). He is the one who placed within it the ability to move like an animate object. He is the One who turned a brown hand into a white glowing hand, He is the one who made the fire a place of coolness and tranquility for Ibrahīm (peace be upon him). He is the One who flooded the earth with springs in the flood of Nūḥ (peace be upon him). He is the One who granted souls to that which Īsā molded (peace be upon him). The role played by Īsā (peace be upon him) was that he molded a bird from clay and blew into it, whereupon Allah placed in this blowing of his the secret of life, just as Allah placed the secret of life in the blowing of the angel who blew into Maryam (peace be upon her), after which Īsā (peace be upon him) was born.



## Referencing the Qur’ān

At this point, we would like to emphasize upon that which appears in the Qur’ān, as it is our belief that it plays the most pivotal role in lining out the perception that Allah wants humans to have regarding the lives and actions of the prophets. The same will apply, to a greater extent to the *awliyā’* (successors). This perception will shape our approach and understanding of the texts which mention some of their miracles or attribute a degree of guardianship to the prophets and *awliyā’*.

It is imperative to also note that since the Qur’ān disproves *al-wilāyāh al-takwīniyyah*, it is not possible to oppose it by accepting anything from the Sunnah which indicates *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. This is because “whatever opposes the Qur’ān is delusional beauty.”<sup>4</sup> It is necessary to either discard it or interpret it, if the interpretation is acceptable according to the usage of those words in the Arabic language.

## The Narrations of al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah

It should be noted that most of the narrations regarding this topic are transmitted through weak chains of narration. Added to that, they are contradictory. This makes it necessary to firstly subject these narrations to the academic methodology used in solving contradictions, which requires:

Firstly, they should be compared to the verses of the Qur’ān (as we previously stated). Whatever contradicts the Qur’ān should be discarded. In this case, we believe that the narrations which establish *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* are the ones which oppose Qur’ān.

Secondly, if we leave out the aspect of comparing them to the Qur’ān, contradictions between narrations demand that they should be discarded. None of them can be relied upon, as is thoroughly established in its place (books which discuss the subject).

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<sup>4</sup> This statement is related from many Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). As an example, refer to al-Kāfi vol. 1 pg. 69 – The Chapter of Holding onto the Sunnah and the Testimonies from the Qur’ān.

Thirdly, it is important to understand that matters of doctrine (like the topic at hand) cannot be established from narrations, unless they are either *mutawātir* or at least, they are reassuring (in authenticity). However, the narrations that are sometimes mentioned to establish *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* are narrated by one or two people. Neither are the conditions of *tawātur* found in it, nor are the contents of these narrations reassuring. This is more so due to the contradictions and the subject matter of some being bizarre.

If one argued: There are many narrations reported by the scholars in their books regarding miracles that took place at the hands of the prophets and the members of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon him), which reach the level of *mutawātir* or are reassuring, when added up.

I would reply: Those narrations, irrespective of their chains of narration, are mostly regarding miracles of specific prophet or *walī* (successor). These miracles have nothing to do with the concept of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, as we already explained.

### **The Qur’ān and Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah**

Regarding the Qur’ān, we will need to look at three types of proofs:

1. Those verses which are considered proofs, but they are actually regarding the miracles performed in the lives of the prophets.
2. That which speaks about the personalities of prophets or *awliyā’* on certain occasions, or specifies their role in accordance with a principle, or certain words which can be stretched to establish *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* for the prophets and *awliyā’*.
3. That which is regarding certain matters of the unseen. Some of these matters are, at times, revealed to the prophets and *awliyā’*.

Below, we will discuss these proofs in detail.

## 1- Establishing Al-Wilāyah Al-Takwīniyyah from Miracles

There are some verses in which the miracles of the prophets were mentioned, but they could be used by some as proof of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. We will start off with the verse which was revealed regarding the story of Nūḥ (peace be upon him). Allah (the Most High) says: “The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, ‘A madman,’ and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, ‘Indeed, I am overpowered, so help.’ Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined.” [al-Qamar:9-12]

These verses clearly point out that it was a matter of the supplication of Nūḥ (peace be upon him), which was answered by His Lord, who subsequently drowned the disbelievers by means of a flood. Nūḥ (peace be upon him) had no physical role to play in it.

Regarding Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him), we find the following verses: “They said, ‘Burn him and support your gods – if you are to act.’ We [i.e., Allah] said, ‘O fire, be coolness and safety upon Ibrāhīm.’ And they intended for him a plan [i.e., harm], but We made them the greatest losers.” [al-Anbiyā: 68-70]

As is apparent, these verses have nothing to do with *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. It is only regarding the divine compassion shown to His prophet when the people wished to burn him. Allah saved him from the fire and made it coolness for him.

Next, we look at the request of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him), when He asked Allah to show him how He revives the dead. Allah says: “And [mention] when Ibrāhīm said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied.’ [Allah] said, ‘Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them – they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.’” [al-Baqarah: 260]

We see here that that the request of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) was to see how Allah revives the dead. Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) only captured the birds, slaughtered them and divided

them into portions. Thereafter, he called them to him so that he could personally witness a demonstration of Allah reviving the dead. Hence, Allah is the one who Himself revived the dead, without any input from Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).

Next, we look at Mūsā (peace be upon him), who was first given a miracle in the courtroom of the Pharaoh. Allah says: “[Pharaoh] said, ‘If you have come with a sign, then bring it forth, if you should be of the truthful.’ So he [i.e., Mūsā] threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent, manifest. And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white [with radiance] for the observers.” [al-A‘arāf: 106-108]

He was once again granted a miracle when the challenge reached its peak and he had to face the magicians. Allah says: “And We inspired to Mūsā, ‘Throw your staff,’ and at once it devoured what they were falsifying.” [al-Aa‘rāf: 117]

We do not see any effort from Mūsā (peace be upon him) in effecting the miracles. In fact, he was affected by it. Allah turned his hand from brown to white and changed the staff that he was holding into a snake. He himself was afraid of the tricks of the magicians and he was anxious as he did not know what they might present as a challenge. He awaited the intervention of Allah in a way that was against the norm so that the matter could be solved. Allah relates to us: “And he sensed within himself apprehension, did Mūsā. We [i.e., Allah] said, “Fear not. Indeed, it is you who are superior.” [Ṭāhā: 67-68]

Next, we read about Sulaymān (peace be upon him), “He said, ‘My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.’” [Ṣād: 35]

Allah accepted His request and said: “So We subjected to him the wind blowing by his command, gently, wherever he directed. And [also] the devils [of jinn] – every builder and diver. And others bound together in shackles. [We said], ‘This is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account.’” [Ṣād: 36-39]

The above story is nothing more than a supplication and the acceptance of the supplication by Allah. In no way does it indicate that Sulaymān (peace be upon him) had any physical role to play in bringing the miracle to reality.

Thereafter, we look at Īsā (peace be upon him) – regarding whom it is sometimes claimed that miracles were manifested at his hands due to his own efforts, albeit with the permission of Allah. The verse states: “I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses.” [Āl‘Imrān: 49]

Here, we see that he attributes the acts of creating, curing the naturally blind and lepers, reviving the dead and informing people regarding the hidden matters of their personal lives to his own actions and effort. However, he clearly states that it is by the permission of Allah. The proponents of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* may believe that this verse serves as definite proof for the concept. However, we deduce from the words ‘by the permission of Allah’ in this verse or “by My permission” [al-Mā‘idah: 110] that Īsā (peace be upon him) played the role of an instrument which is used to produce effects. In the case of the bird, he molded and blew into it, but it was Allah who placed life in it. As for the blind, the lepers and the dead, he would pass his hand over them whereby they would be cured or granted life by the will of Allah.

Thus, the word ‘permission’ here is not used in its literal sense. Rather, it refers to that power which is activated in order to bring into existence the desired results. Īsā (peace be upon him) did not personally have this kind of power. Further, the reviving of the dead was a miracle that Allah granted to Īsā (peace be upon him) to emphasize the validity of his prophet-hood. It is a miracle that no Muslim will deny. However, it does not establish any kind of *wilāyah* beyond being a miracle.

Thus far, we have ascertained that none of the established proofs in which the miracles of the prophets are mentioned lend any support to the doctrine of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. Instead, these miracles were connected to the will of Allah. They came into existence when He answered

supplications (of the messengers) or when there was a serious challenge facing the mission of the messengers.

It should also be noted that these miracles were not a fundamental portion of prophet-hood. The essence of prophet-hood was the arrival of messenger with logical speech and advice. Thereafter, when the messenger was strongly challenged and conventional avenues could not be relied upon for defending the cause, miracles would be used decisively and secure the success of the mission.

## **2- Knowledge of the Book**

Some people attempt to establish *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* from an incident which is related in the story of Sulaymān (peace be upon him), regarding the one who had “knowledge of the book” that had the ability to bring the throne of the queen of Saba in the blink of an eye. Allah says: “Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture, "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.” [al-Naml: 40]

They substantiate their claim by saying that the cause behind this kind of power was knowledge of the book and the prophets and *awliyā'* possess knowledge of the book, so they are more entitled to being guardians. However, we would like to comment on this substantiation in the following way:

Firstly, we cannot see in this any proof of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, since there is no indication as to which book is being referred to here. Thus, to generalize and stretch this ability to one who has knowledge of the book to a greater extent is unacceptable.

Secondly, it is unknown whether this ability of his was on account of his knowledge of the book. It could be said that the description “who had knowledge of the book” is no different to the description “a powerful *jinn*”. Thus, it is merely a reference to an individual by describing him. The description in this case is not mentioned as the cause of the special ability. Rather, there is another cause for that ability.

Thirdly, if we say that it does indicate towards *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*, then the same needs to be said regarding the powerful *jinn*. The only difference between the two of them would be the amount of time. The *jinn* offered to bring the throne before Sulaymān (peace be upon him) could stand up whereas the knowledgeable one brought it before Sulaymān could blink.

Fourthly, we could ask the question, “Why would Sulaymān (peace be upon him) seek the help of others when he was a prophet?” It is obvious that a prophet has knowledge of the entire book. Thus, he should have been the one who had *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* – if we accept the claim. Our questions only increase when we study the verses which inform us that this vast kingdom was granted to Sulaymān (peace be upon him) upon requesting it from Allah: “He said, ‘My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.’” [Ṣād: 35]

Allah granted his request and made the wind, *jinn*, birds, etc. all subservient to him. This proves that these abilities were not granted to all the prophets and it is not a role that comes with being a prophet. It was a special favor that Allah bestowed upon Sulaymān (peace be upon him) after answering his supplication.

### **3- Knowledge of the Unseen**

*Al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is sometimes substantiated by the fact that the Imām had knowledge of the unseen. The logic behind it is that the one who knows the secrets of the creation is able to have control over it. The least that he should be able to do is to avoid negative aspects and their effects on the universe.

However, having knowledge of the unseen has nothing to do with *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. The existence of one does not necessitate the existence of the other. Many a time, a person has full knowledge regarding a matter, yet he has no ability to change it, like a doctor knows that a certain sickness has affected the patient, but he simply cannot treat it. Having knowledge of the unseen is one of the specialties of Allah (the Almighty). None share this specialty with him.

There are exceptions – in an extremely limited manner – where some of the unseen is shared with His prophets and *awliyā'* in the form of a miracle or *karāma*.

Perhaps the most emphatic verse which proves that the prophets did not possess knowledge of the unseen is: “And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth, and no harm would have touched me.” [al-Aa‘rāf: 188]

The verse clearly indicates that a prophet neither possesses knowledge of the unseen, which could save him from the difficulties of existence, sicknesses, calamities, etc., nor does he have any such knowledge thereof which could direct him to all the occasions and places of benefit.

The Qur’ān mentions this denial (by the Prophet of knowledge of the unseen) more than once. Below are a few more verses in which this is mentioned: “Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.’ Say, ‘Is the blind equivalent to the seeing? Then will you not give thought?’” [al-An‘ām: 50]

As well as: “Say, ‘I am not something original among the messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me...’” [al-Ahqāf: 9]

And: “And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him.” [al-An‘ām: 59]

These verses explain that the only way that a prophet would learn about matters of the unseen was through revelation. This is irrespective of whether these matters were regarding the past, present or future. Allah says: “That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muḥammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens...” [Āl‘Imrān: 44]

This is what the Qur’ān speaks about when it informs regarding future events. Look at the following verses: “Alif, Lām, Mīm. The Byzantines have been defeated. In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome. Within three to nine years.” [al-Rūm: 1-4]



He also says: “Indeed, [O Muḥammad], He who imposed upon you the Qurān will take you back to a place of return.” [al-Qaṣaṣ: 85]

He also says: “You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, if Allah wills, in safety.” [al-Faḥ: 27]

There are many other similar verses as is discussed in the prophetic biography.

Nonetheless, these verses do not imply that a prophet is below the level of unseen knowledge, which he’d receive what Allah grants through His celestial capabilities and godly blessings. However, at times this is totally unnecessary as far as his mission is concerned, especially since the mission emphasizes he is a normal human. However this does not contradict the nature of his prophet-hood and it is not considered to be inconsistent with being of an extra-ordinary level as far as knowledge and spirituality is concerned, as an appointed messenger should be. This is because perfection in this matter is relative in the sphere of the human domain and is judged by the natural capacities within it. Thus, to establish a super-human quality in this case would require a definite divine text for us to believe in this special domain.

On the other hand, there are verses in which it is stated that Allah discloses to His messengers the unseen. Allah says: “[He is] Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone. Except whom He has approved of messengers, and indeed, He sends before him [i.e., each messenger] and behind him observers. That he [i.e., Muḥammad (saw)] may know that they have conveyed the messages of their Lord; and He has encompassed whatever is with them and has enumerated all things in number.” [al-Jinn 26-28]

This verse is used as proof by those who believe that Allah granted His messengers and *awliyā’* the knowledge of the unseen. Some believe that the messengers have been given all the knowledge and it is all present in their minds whilst others believe that they have the potential, meaning if they want to know anything then they will know it. They state that the apparent meaning of the exception in this verse: “He sends before him [i.e., each messenger] and behind him observers” is in its most general sense, without being restricted in any way. This means that it includes everything that the messenger wishes to know from the unseen. As for those verses in

which it is stated that the messenger does not have knowledge of the unseen, they interpret them to mean that he does not possess or acquire this knowledge independently. He only acquires that which Allah teaches him.

We hold the view that the verse does not indicate in any way that Allah discloses the knowledge of the unseen to the messengers as the correct one. Rather, it refers to the revelation that He sends down to them, as revelation is also from the knowledge of the unseen – as is apparent. Our view is supported by the same portion of the above verse: “He sends before him [i.e., each messenger] and behind him observers”. This portion of the verse points out the type of knowledge of the unseen that Allah discloses to those who He approved of from the messengers. “Observers” or the ambiance of angels who protect the messenger from the devil and chase it away, thereby protecting him from their whispers and confusion, in essence, means guaranteeing that the revelation reaches the masses in its purest form. The Messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny) is protected until he conveys what is revealed to him.

Therefore the subject matter of the verse is not the knowledge of the unseen possessed by a messenger, rather it is the protection of the messenger through unseen sources. It is as if a new topic was brought into the discussion by means of the exception, wherein the duty of the messengers as far as conveying the message of their lord and His awareness and protection of them is highlighted. This, in Arabic grammar, is referred to as an unrelated exception.

According to the proponents, this exception is inconsistent with the rest of the Qur’ān, which emphasizes that the prophets did not possess knowledge of the unseen. The negation of possession of knowledge of the unseen by the prophets in the Qur’ān is not confined to them acquiring it independently, as explained. Rather it establishes that they simply did not possess it or have access to it in their normal day to day lives and whilst they were fulfilling the usual tasks of their mission.

One who ponders over the Qur’ān will notice that revelation is always used in verses to distinguish between the prophet and the masses. Another aspect that is implied in the verses is that the messenger is unable to stand up to all the super-natural challenges in his personal

capacity. It is only when the challenge becomes severe, then he is granted a divine miracle so that his position of being a messenger and his mission are upheld and protected in society. Before we conclude, it is worth mentioning that he (the Prophet) did not speak about the aspects of the unseen related to mundane personal and public matters of the Muslims. This is because his prophet-hood did not demand this, as opposed to the prophet-hood of Īsā (peace be upon him) – as mentioned in the Qur’ān.

### **The Crux of the Matter**

There is a huge difference between a prophet intrinsically having knowledge of the unseen as an ability that is an ingredient of his prophet-hood and him being bestowed – by means of inspiration from Allah - with a little bit of knowledge due to the demands of specific occasions. This is negated by the apparent meaning of the verses of the Qur’ān, especially that which is related to the narratives of the previous nations and could be considered as knowledge of the unseen. There are many clear indications in the Qur’ān that he (the Prophet) only learns of them through revelation from Allah. This is very different from the other theory that their knowledge of the unseen is tied to specific circumstances in which it is needed, and thus revelation is received by Allah (the Most High), and this doesn’t conflict with the Qur’ānic text.

### **The Narrations of the Knowledge of the Unseen**

In light of the above, the many different types of narrations regarding the possession of knowledge of the unseen by prophets and *awliyā’* – without paying attention to their chains of narration and the fact that they are contradictory – need to be checked in light of the Qur’ān. Those narrations which contradict the Qur’ān will then be re-interpreted so that they could conform to its miraculous and eloquent format. However, these interpretations should easily conform to the apparent meaning of the verses, without any exaggerations and stretching, whereby a word will be understood beyond its normal meanings. Interpretations which do not conform to the laws of eloquence applied in the Qur’ān cannot be accommodated as they will lead to a mockery of it as well as its verses. It will also create a space for those who wish to change and misinterpret the Qur’ān in a way that is totally incoherent with its original meaning.

## Evidences Against al-Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah

Based on the above, there remains no doubt that the Qur’ān does not contain any verse which establishes *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* for the prophets and *awliyā’*. In fact, we find strong indications that they did not have it. This is found in verses which clearly state that the prophets did not have any such abilities, and their sole concern was to fulfill the duty of being messengers. They concentrated upon conveying the message, giving glad-tidings, warning with compassion and guiding people towards the pathways peace in the journey towards Allah. The Qur’ān even goes on to emphasize the prophets were overcome by certain human weaknesses – which do not impact the fact that they were protected from infallibility. Here are some verses in which *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* is ruled out:

### 1. The Messenger is human:

In Sūrah al-Isrā, the Most High says: “And they say, ‘We will not believe you until you break open for us from the ground a spring. Or [until] you have a garden of palm trees and grapes and make rivers gush forth within them in force [and abundance]. Or you make the heaven fall upon us in fragments as you have claimed or you bring Allah and the angels before [us]. Or you have a house of ornament [i.e., gold] or you ascend into the sky. And [even then], we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read.’ Say, ‘Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a human messenger?’” [al-Isrā: 90-93]

We notice that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), according to the verse, did not speak about his refusal to carry out the ludicrous miracles proposed to him as a challenge by the disbelievers. The reason for this is that it was not the duty of a prophet to occupy himself in trying to carry out these demands, especially after proof of their prophet-hood was established. If we look at his statement in this instance, it spells out to us that miracles were not part of the role of prophet-hood, just as it indicates that on account of him being a human and having certain human weaknesses, did not have this kind of power.

Some people will contend that the proponents of *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* emphatically state that the Prophet did not intrinsically have any unnatural ability, as he was human. Instead, Allah personally bestowed this upon him. Hence, he may not have possessed it in his own capacity, but

he did possess it – as a result of Allah bestowing him with it. The above verse rejects the first possibility but not the second one. Our answer to that is; the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) spoke about his inability to carry it out, which in essence means that he was not granted this ability by Allah. Yes, Allah granted him those capabilities which enabled him to propagate his message among the people, but He did not grant him these extra-ordinary abilities.

## **2. Signs are Only in the Control of Allah**

Among the verses of the Qur’ān which indicate that the prophets did not possess any ability to control the creation is: “The signs are only with Allah.” [al-‘Ankabūt: 50]

This verse clearly states that signs and miracles are in the control of Allah and that Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has no say in the matter. The Most High says: “But they say, ‘Why are not signs sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say, ‘The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a clear warner.’” [al-‘Ankabūt: 50]

We get the impression from some of the verses quoted above as well as others that the only real miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was the noble Qur’ān. This is in opposition to that which is transmitted regarding the Prophet performing other miracles such as splitting the moon which, if occurred, would be a greater response to the challenge presented by the polytheists, as it would have been more difficult to produce than their requests.

The polytheists would speak about the fact that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) did not present miracles like that of the previous messengers. The Most High says: “And they say, ‘Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say, ‘Indeed, Allah is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know.’” [al-An‘ām: 37]

He also said, “And those who disbelieved say, ‘Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?’ You are only a warner, and for every people is a guide.” [al-Ra‘d: 7]

It is obvious, in light of the above verse, that the sending of signs or miracles is not an integral part of prophet-hood. They are only necessary on occasions of major challenges which threaten

its reputation in the moments of contention. This is why no signs came upon the Prophet, as the challenge did not reach this critical stage. This is alluded to in the Qur’ān as well: “And nothing has prevented Us from sending signs [i.e., miracles] except that the former peoples denied them. And We gave Thamūd the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And We send not the signs except as a warning.” [al-Isrā: 59]

The apparent purport of this verse is that signs were not sent even though the polytheists consistently demanded them. The Most High says in another verse: “And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if a sign came to them, they would surely believe in it. Say, ‘The signs are only with [i.e., from] Allah.’ And what will make you perceive that even if it [i.e., a sign] came, they would not believe.” [al-An‘ām: 109]

Thus, there was no real need for it and it was not part of the duties of prophet-hood.

### **3. Human Weaknesses of the Prophets**

We see in other verses displays of definite human weaknesses by the prophets. One such example is the story of Mūsā, who left whilst fearing and being vigilant. He lived with the fear that Pharaoh and his people may kill him: “And they have upon me a [claim due to] sin, so I fear that they will kill me.” [al-Shu‘arā: 14]

He once again feared when he was put up against the magicians: “And he sensed within himself apprehension, did Mūsā. We [i.e., Allah] said, ‘Fear not. Indeed, it is you who are superior.’” [Ṭāhā: 67-68]

We find the same in the story of Ibrāhīm, when the angels entered upon him: “And he felt from them apprehension. They said, ‘Fear not.’” [al-Dhāriyāt: 28]

We also see it (the frailty of man) in the verse wherein Allah instructs His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) to present himself to the people: “Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor

do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.’ Say, ‘Is the blind equivalent to the seeing? Then will you not give thought?’ [al-An‘ām: 50]

The same message appears in Sūrat Hūd: “And I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel, nor do I say of those upon whom your eyes look down that Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is most knowing of what is within their souls. Indeed, I would then be among the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust].” [Hūd: 31]

This verse clearly emphasizes that the Messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny) was a human and that everything that he had was from Allah (the Most High), who would bless him with it according to the need of prophet-hood in impacting life. The verse also implies that the knowledge of the unseen which Allah sometimes informs His prophet of is only transferred to him by means of revelation. This is explicitly stated in another verse: “That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muḥammad].” [Āl-‘imrān: 44]

Another verse also states: “Say, ‘I hold not for myself [the power of] benefit or harm, except what Allah has willed. And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth, and no harm would have touched me. I am not except a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe.’” [al-Aa‘rāf: 188]

This verse indicates that there was no intrinsic strength by means of which harm was warded off and goodness was brought about. There were no such inherent abilities, so that the prophet could use them as they pleased. Instead, it was granted to them by Allah in stages. This is further backed by statements he would make about real situations where he was afflicted by different types of difficulties or prevented from abundant good. It is as if he was trying to highlight the fact that these matters have nothing to do with his role, which was to give glad-tidings and warn a nation who believed. This does not require any knowledge of the unseen except that which was related to the duty of being a messenger from the history of previous nations. Allah revealed upon him this in the noble Qur’ān and informed him about that history that neither he nor his people knew about.

## Summary

After our lengthy discussion regarding the fact that messengers were human, they were affected by the frailty of humans and they did not possess knowledge of the unseen, we can conclude that *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* did not exist in respect of the prophets and Imāms. There is no proof that establishes it. In fact, there are proofs which establish that it did not exist. Yes, there remains one more point, which is that Allah would bless the prophets with miracles when they needed it, especially on occasions when challenged by disbelief. However, the implications of these miracles have nothing to do with *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* – which is our topic of discussion. And Allah is the One who knows.

## The Awliyā' as Intermediaries of Blessings

There is another subject which in one way or the other is related to *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*. It is the belief that the *awliyā'* and prophets are the intermediaries of blessings and they are the guardians of bounties. This stems from a belief, the crux of which is; Allah does not personally grant bounties to His slaves, but rather the bounties reach the slaves through the medium of those who are close to Him. Therefore, they are the intermediaries between Allah and the people as far as sustenance, protection, life, etc., is concerned. This is why some people turn directly towards them in supplication, seeking from them sustenance and cure from sicknesses.

Those who oppose this line of thought, which is far away from the purity of monotheistic doctrine, contend that Allah wished for His *awliyā'* to be the leaders, who will work towards guiding people towards pure monotheism and belief in the last day. Similarly, he will exhort people to hold onto the avenues of guidance revealed upon the prophets during the course of their lives, thereby drawing them closer to Allah and further away from His wrath. Consequently, it will bring about safety and stability in all aspects of their lives. Allah (the Most High) also granted His *awliyā'* from prophets and Imāms the ability to intercede in the matters of the people. He honors them by granting their requests and taking care of the needs of those slaves of His. Therefore, these *awliyā'* are intercessors in the court of Allah and they call towards Him, in accordance with the position that He granted to them.



As for the view that the prophets and *awliyā'* are intermediaries as far as bounties are concerned, this opposes the apparent meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān which speak about Allah bestowing bounties to his servants, sending for them sustenance, granting them safety and placing guidance in their minds. The apparent meaning of these verses is that there are no intermediaries between Allah and His creation. He personally bestows His favors by means of the natural causes that He placed in life. None of His slaves, irrespective of their closeness to Him have any role in granting favors. Here are some verses which support this view: “[Allah] said, ‘O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty?’” [Ṣād: 75]

This verse emphatically states that Allah (the Most High) created the creation with His hands, which is an expression to establish that He personally created the creation without any intermediaries, as it is known that Allah is free from having a body and all that goes with it.

Similarly, many other verses of the Qur'ān clearly state that Allah is the One who personally creates, sustains, sends rain among other activities relating to the outward occurrences of the universe. Opposing the apparent meanings of these verses would require a proof, which does not exist.

The Most High also says: “Say, ‘Who is Lord of the heavens and earth?’ Say, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Have you then taken besides Him allies not possessing [even] for themselves any benefit or any harm?’ Say, ‘Is the blind equivalent to the seeing? Or is darkness equivalent to light? Or have they attributed to Allah partners who created like His creation so that the creation [of each] seemed similar to them?’ Say, ‘Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.’” [al-Ra‘d: 16]

He also says: “[Allah] said, ‘What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?’ [Satan] said, ‘I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth].’” [al-Aa‘rāf: 12]

In another verse, He says: “Indeed, Allah [alone] has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” [Luqmān: 34]

We also read Him say, “Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.” [al-A‘arāf: 54]

There are many other verses in which it is emphasized that Allah personally grants bounties to His creation, without any mediums, except the natural systems of the universe.

In light of all of this, we reject the attempts to interpret or subject the Qur’ān, despite its clear and emphatic meanings, to philosophical conundrums which were pushed forward by some, due to their ultra-philosophical approach.

### **The Narrations of Blessings**

Those who believe in the theory that the *awliyā’* serve as intermediaries take support from narrations like: “By means of you Allah opens and seals, and by means of you rain is sent, and by means of you the skies are kept from falling upon the earth except by His permission, by means of you worries are dispelled...”<sup>5</sup>

They also take solace from the famous Qudsī report: “Had it not been for you, I would not have created the universe.”<sup>6</sup>

Along with these are narrations which appear under the title “If it was not for the Imām, the earth would have devoured its occupants.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This is narrated regarding the famous visitation known as al-Jāmi‘ah. Refer to *al-Khiṣāl* by al-Ṣadūq vol. 1 pg. 406

<sup>6</sup> *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol.16 pg. 406

The explanation is that the life of the universe is connected to the life of the Imām. If it was not for him, the world would come to an end and cease to exist. Similar to this is the sacred signature which is famously attributed to the Imām of the era: “The manner of benefitting from me in my absence is the same as benefitting from the sun when the clouds keep it out of sight. I am a means of protection for the people of the earth, just as the stars are a means of protection for the occupants of the sky.”<sup>8</sup>

It is also related that al-Imām al-Bāqir said: “If the earth remained for one day without one of us Imāms, it would have devoured its occupants and Allah the Most High would have sent His most severe punishment. Allah, the Most Blessed and High, made us the proof in His earth and a means of protection on the earth for the people of the earth. They will always be in safety as long as we remain between them. If Allah wishes to destroy them without giving them grace and respite, He will take us away from them and raise us to Him. Then he will do with them whatever he wishes.”<sup>9</sup>

This is the type of narrations that are used by them. However, we will comment, without paying attention to the weak chains of some of them, and the fact that they are singular reports which disqualifies them from being used for matters of doctrine (as it requires definite proofs), these narrations imply the same meaning as the verse: “But Allah would not punish them while you [O Muḥammad] are among them.” [al-Anfāl: 33]

Allah held back the punishment of the nation of Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) on account of him being in their midst. This does not prove anything besides the extent of divine mercy that this nation has been specifically granted. Nothing can be proven in the case of the infallibles beyond them being the means of this divine mercy. There is no indication that he is the intermediary as far as acquiring bounties is concerned.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to *al-Iḥtijāj* by al-Ṭabṛasī vol. 2 pg. 48 and *al-Kāfī* vol. 1 pg. 179

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid* vol. 2 pg. 284

<sup>9</sup> *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Itmām al-Ni‘mah* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq pg. 204

**In Summary**

Our study of the Qur'ān which is the primary source regarding matters of doctrine and establishing miracles, does not indicate towards any of that which the proponents have painstakingly tried to establish despite not having any proof on the subject matter. Their arguments are mere theories which emphasize the possibility of their concept. However, there are many other interpretations that could also be applied.