

﴿يَتَّيِّبُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ
 أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:51

O You Who Believe!

- Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors.
- They are but friends and protectors to each other.
- And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them.
- Verily Allah guides not a people unjust.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

... As the four verses under discussion (51-54), they speak about the Jews and the Christians. The Qur'an had not talked about them in the Makkan verses, because there was no such need at that time. It however describes their maneuvers in the verses revealed in Madina. Even then, the ones revealed in the early Madinan period are not concerned with the Christians, because Muslims in those days were involved with the Jews. They had to mingle with them, live with them, keep good relations with them, or avert their deceit and neutralize their plot. They were entangled with the Christians in the later half of the Prophet's stay in Madina. Therefore, probably these four verses were revealed in that period; and perhaps the 'victory' alludes to the conquest of Makkah.

In a nutshell, Allah warns the believers against taking the Jews and the Christians for friends, and threatens them most severely; then points in an apocalyptic way where such friendship was to take them and how it would turn into ruins the magnificent structure of religious character; then Allah will bring on scene a people who will manage the affairs and restore the religion's structure to its original splendor.

This is what makes a lover of a group a member of that group and unites him with it. It has been said: Whoever loves a people, he is one of them; also [it is said]: A man is with whom he loves. And Allah has said forbidding to love the polytheists: *O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth,...* (60:1).

The verses go on in the same vein, until it says: *.....and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust* (60:9). Also He says: *You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk;* (58:22). Allah has also said regarding the love of the unbelievers – and the wording is general which includes the Jews, the Christians and the polytheists – *Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing (to do) with Allah, except (when) you guard yourselves against (them) for fear from them; and Allah cautions you of Himself;* (3:28). The verse clearly speaks about the *wilayah* of love and affection rather than that of covenant and pact. Remember that when the third chapter, “The House of ‘Imran”, was revealed; the Prophet (S) had already concluded pacts and truce with the Jews and the polytheists.

In short, the *wilayah* that makes one people attached to another people is that of love and affection, and not that of covenant and help; and it is quite clear. If the cause: *and whoever amongst you takes them as awliya’, then surely he is one of them*, is taken to mean, whoever among you entered into a pact of mutual help after this prohibition, then surely he because of his going against this prohibition would be unjust, and would be joined to those unjust people in injustice, then it would be a vulgar meaning and would need additional conditions to be attached to the speech.

If the Qur’an prohibits something which was hitherto lawful, it always points to it being lawful until then; it does so to preserve the honor of that order which is now being changed; and to keep the sanctity of the Prophetic tradition and practice. Ponder on these verses: *O you who believe! The idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year;* (9:28) *..... Wherefore now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has written for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread (of night)* (2:187). *It is not allowed to you to take women afterwards, nor that you should change them for other wives* (33:52); and many other such verses.

Now, it is clear that the language of the verse, in meanings of words and its context, does not disallow *wilayah* to be taken for lover and affection; if there is any rejection, it rejects other meanings.

Thus, the clause: “do not take the Jews and the Christians for *awliya’*,” clearly forbids loving them or having any affection towards them; because such feelings pull the souls and spirits towards each other and it creates mutual moral effects on both sides; and if Muslims are influenced by un-Islamic behavior, their society will diverge from its religious way (which is based on the felicity of following the truth) to the way of unbelief (which is based on following the low desires and worshipping the Satan); and thus it will go astray from the path of the natural life.

Allah has used for them their names of Jews and Christians, instead of saying, the People of the Book; because the phrase: “People of the Book”, indicates that they are somewhat nearer to the Muslims, which in its turn gives rise to some affection and love which is opposite to what this verse orders that they should not be taken as friends. However, a coming verse mentions them as being given the Book: *O you who believe! Do not take for guardians those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelievers; (5:57)*. They were given the Book and yet they take the divine religion for a mockery and a joke. This mockery and joke turns the good point of their being given the Book into utmost condemnation. When the people who were given the Book which invited to the truth and made it clear, began ridiculing the religion of truth and playing with it, they certainly deserved to be shunned and avoided; they should not be taken as friends; the believers must avoid living with them, mingling with them and having any soft feeling towards them.

“they are friends of each other”: As explained earlier, *wilayah* here means friendship, because their hearts are nearer to each other and their souls have mutual attraction. Consequently, they think similar way; they join hands in following their low desires, and their haughtiness leads them to reject the truth; they strive together to extinguish the light of Allah, and help each other in fighting against the Prophet (S) and the Muslims. It seems, as all of them are one person of one religion. Although actually they are not of one religion, yet they have joined their forces and have become one power against the Muslims, simply because Islam calls them to truth and opposes what in their eyes is the greatest goal: To follow their low desires and licentiousness in objects of desire and enjoyment of worldly attractions.

Thus, those who love the Jews and the Christians, Allah has counted them as belonging to the Jewish and Christian communities, although apparently they were believers. It shows at least that they were proceeding, not on the path of guidance (that is, belief), but on a way used by the said communities, it leads them where they are being led and takes them where they are taken.

That is why Allah has explained the reason of their adherence to them by the clause: “surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.” The meaning: A man from amongst you who takes them as a friend, then surely he is one of them, and he is proceeding on a path other than yours, because the path of belief is the path of divine guidance; this man who befriends them is unjust like them, and Allah does not guide the unjust people.

In short, heart’s disease means its involvement with a sort of suspicion and doubt that pollutes the faith in Allah and removes confidence in His signs; it blends faith with polytheism. That is why such a heart experiences such conditions, and such a man commits such deeds as have affinity with disbelief in Allah and rejection of his communications.

Conversely, heart's health and freedom from disease means its being steadfast in straight nature and its adherence to the right path; it leads man to sincerity in monotheistic belief and reliance on Allah, discarding all things to which his low desires are attracted. Allah says: *The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a heart free* (from evil), (26:88-89).

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

The Jews and the Christians had much in common, and therefore readily formed an alliance against Islam. so anyone who makes them his friends must have some points of identity with them. A believer, in order to keep himself safe from the influence of falsehood, must avoid the company of disbelievers. The doctrines of tawalla (staying attached with the Ahlul-Bayt) and tabarra (avoiding the enemies of Allah, the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt) are the articles of the faith of them followers of Muhammad and ali Muhammad.

The Holy Prophet said:

Do not adopt the style and mannerism of my enemies, lest you may be considered as one of them. He who appears like a certain type shall be identified as of that type.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

To Dissociate from Enemy is the Condition of Faith.

Those Islamic governments who have the relation of friendship and accepting the sovereignty of the infidels are counted among them:

"... And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them. ..."

In foreign relations and policy, mastership and domination of infidels over Muslims is forbidden, because the Holy Qur'an explicitly has absolutely prohibited any domination, of any kind, over Muslims, although it may be under the name of experienced, specialist, expert, attache and tourist. The verse says:

" O' you who have Faith! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of each other. And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people."

In the meantime, mentioning the Jews and the Christians in the verse is for giving examples of this meaning, and no mastership of any infidel should be accepted.

It is understood, of course, from some other verses of the Qur'an that enjoying of the food staff produced by infidels, which are not from the animal flesh, and bargaining with them are allowed, because none of them is rendered into the sence of accepting the sovereignty of infidels.