

يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى
 الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن
 كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:59

O You Who Believe!

- Obey Allah.
- And obey the Messenger.
- And those charged with authority among you.
- If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day.
- That is best, and most suitable for final determination.

Commentary

Allamah Tabai (AR)

As you may see, the verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Beginning from the words, *And worship Allah and do not associate any thing with Him [4:36]*, the whole speech is directed towards exhorting people to spend in the way of Allah for strengthening all classes of society and fulfilling the believers' need; and condemning those who refrain, and prevent others, from discharging this obligation. Then comes this call to obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority, cutting out the roots of discord and avoiding dispute and disagreement; advising them to refer all disputes – if there be any – to Allah and His Messenger; they should guard themselves against hypocritical behavior, and must surrendered to the decisions of Allah and His Messenger. This tenor continues until it arrives at verses calling for *Jihad*, explaining its underlying reason and ordering the believers to band together in the way of Allah. All these prepare the believers for fighting in Allah's ways, and put their internal affairs in good shape on a sound basis. Here and there one or two verses have been revealed in a parenthetical style which have not adverse effect on continuity of speech, as was pointed out under the verse, *O you who believe! do not go near prayers when you are intoxicated...*

After calling the people to worship Allah alone, and do good to various groups of believers, and condemning those who cast aspersions on this idea or prevent others from Allah's way, the talk again turns to the basic theme from a different angle, from which grow up other branches. It leads to reinforcing the foundation of Islamic society, as it exhorts and urges the believers to preserve their unity and to remove every type of dispute or discord by referring it to Allah and His Messenger.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that when Allah tells us to obey Him, it means that we must obey Him in all the realities and laws which he has sent to us through His Messenger.

As for His Messenger, his orders emanate from either of his two lawful authorities: First: His legislative authority based on divine revelation other than the Qur'an. By this authority, he teaches the people details of what is mentioned in general terms in the Qur'an, and explains all the related matters. Allah says: *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to them what has been revealed to them* (16:44).

Second: What he, in his wisdom, decides in administrative and judicial matters by the authority given him by God. Allah says: *..... that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught [shown] you;* (4:105). It is the opinion with which he used to judge between people according to the laid down judicial laws; and it is the decision he used to take on important affairs. Allah had told him to consult the people seeking their advice: *and take counsel with them in the affair; but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah* (3:159). Thus the people would participate in consultation; but the decision would be of the Prophet alone.

The above discourse shows that the Messenger's obedience has a connotation distinct from Allah's obedience, although the Messenger's obedience is in reality the obedience of Allah Himself, because it is Allah who has obliged the people to obey the Messenger as He has said: *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission.* People have to obey the Messenger in what he explains by divine revelation and in what he decides and orders by his divine wisdom.

It shows that the people with authority – *whoever they might be* – have no authority to legislate a new law or to abrogate a rule established by the Qur'an or the *sunnah*. Otherwise, it would serve no purpose to order people to refer their dispute to the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, to Allah and the Messenger, as may be inferred from the verse 36 of chapter 33: *And it is not for a believing man or a believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he surely strays off a manifest straying.* Allah decides by giving a law; His Messenger decides by elaborating a divine law, giving an order or pronouncing a judgment. As for the persons vested with authority, they have power, in executive matters, to decide according to their discretion, and in judicial and general matters, to bring to light the decisions of Allah and His Messenger.

Undoubtedly, the obedience, ordered by the words, “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger”, is general, without any condition or restriction. It proves that the Messenger cannot issue any order or prohibition contrary to Allah’s actual order or prohibition. Otherwise, making his obedience compulsory would be a contradiction in terms on the part of Allah; far be it from His sublime presence. It necessarily follows that the Messenger (S) was *ma’sum* (infallible), sinless, free from error.

The same argument applies in case of the persons vested with authority. But the presence of *al-ismah* (sinlessness) in the Messenger is independently established by proofs from the reason and the Qur’an and the *sunnah* without depending on this verse. Apparently, it is not the case with the people vested with authority. Someone therefore could imagine that it was not necessary for these people of authority to be *ma’sum*, sinless, and that the verse could be explained even without believing in their *ismah*.

Suggestion: *Ulul-amr*, who are entitled to unconditional obedience, may be a group – and may thus be referred to with plural sense. It may be an association of many persons each individual counted as a possessor of authority, inasmuch as he has influence over people and his words are obeyed.

For example, army commanders, scholars, rulers and community elders. The author of al-Manar has suggested that this refers to *ahlul halli wal-qd* (= *lit.* those who tie and untie; i.e. people having influence and authority), who are trusted by the *ummah*; including scholars, military commanders, leaders in fields of commerce, industry and agriculture, as well as trade-unionists, political leaders and chief editors of influential newspapers. This is what we mean when we say that *ulul-amr* means people of influence and authority. It is collective body of the leaders of the *ummah*.

COMMENT: The problem is that the complete verse cannot be explained in the light of this suggestion.

As you have seen, the verse proves the sinlessness of the *ulul-amr*; and even those who support the above suggestion, have to admit that the verse confirms their sinlessness.

The question arises: Who among this body of influential persons is sinless? Is each of its members sinless, so that the collective body could be called sinless? Because a group is but the sum total of the individuals. But it is evident that there never was in this *ummah*, even for a single day, a group of influential people who had authority to jointly manage the Muslim’s affairs and whose every member was sinless and free from error. Obviously, it is impossible for Allah to order us to obey a group which had never existed in reality.

Or does it mean that sinlessness, a real attribute, exists in that collective body as an adjective exists in its qualified noun? Although each individual member may commit sins, and in common with all other human beings can indulge in polytheism and disobedience, and although the opinion he forms may be erroneous or may lead to sin and straying, but when the said body collective reaches at a decision it remains safe from mistakes and errors – because the collective body is sinless. But this too is impossible. How can a real attribute, that is, sinlessness, exist in an abstract idea, i.e. the collective body? A real attribute cannot stand in a mentally posited idea.

Or, does it mean that sinlessness of this body is attributable neither to its individual members nor to the collective body? That it only signifies that Allah protects this body in a way it does not order any sin, nor does it arrive at a mistaken decision. Its case is not different from a *mutawatir* [a tradition narrated in every stage by so many narrators as to make their collusion for a lie impossible (*tr.*)] information which is protected from falsity, although none of its narrators or informants is sinless, nor is this freedom from falsity attributed to the chain of narrators when looked at as a composite group.

All that it means is that a habit has been formed which prevents falsehood from seeping in that information. In other words, Allah protects a *mutawatir* information from infiltration of falsehood. In the same way, opinion of *ulul-amr* is protected from mistakes and errors, although neither the collective body nor its individual members are free from sin and mistake. Nor do they have any special quality or attribute. It is nevertheless safe from falsehood and error, like a *mutawatir* tradition. This is what sinlessness of *ulul-amr* means. The verse only shows that their opinion is never confused; it is always right and in conformity with the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. It is a special divine providence for this *ummah*; and it has been narrated from the Prophet (S) that he said: “*My ummah will not unite on errors.*”

The tradition accordingly would mean as follows: Never will the entire *ummah* unite on error concerning any matter; there will always be among them those who would be on right guidance – either all or some of them, at least the sinless one. It will correspond with the verses and traditions showing that Islam; the religion of truth, would never disappear from the earth, would continue up to the Day of Resurrection. Allah says: *therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have (already) entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it (6:89); And He made it a word to continue in his posterity (43:28); Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian (15:9); Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One (41:42).* There are many verses having the same connotation.

There were countless gatherings after the Prophet's death, in which influential and powerful leaders of the Muslims collectively decided whatever they thought correct, and followed what in their opinion was the right path; but all this led them to nowhere; they went on blundering into far-reaching errors; their attempts to bring happiness to the Muslims increased on the *ummah's* misfortune and unhappiness. The society which was based on religion turned soon after the Prophet (S) into an imperialism – oppressive and destructive. Let scholars make in-depth study of the disturbances and mischief that raised their head, since the Messenger of Allah (S) departed from this world; and have a look at what followed. On every page of Islamic history they will find blood spilled, honors defiled, properties looted, religious laws ignored and divinely ordained punishments nullified. Let them look for its origin and discover its roots. Was there any effective cause other than the opinions formed and decisions taken by the powerful and influential leaders, which they had yoked the *ummah* with?

So this is the position of the most important pillar on which they want to build the structure of Islam! This is the effect of the 'opinion' of influential and powerful leaders who, they tell us, are referred to by the words, *ulul-amr* (those vested with authority), and who, according to them, are free from error in their opinion!

Those who believe that *ulul-amr* refers to the people of influence and power, have no escape from admitting that those people were not sinless, not free from mistakes and errors. That the *ulul-amr*, like all other people could be right in some cases and wrong in the others. But inasmuch as theirs was a distinguished group, experienced in public affairs, the ratio of their mistakes was much smaller. Allah has made their obedience compulsory. Although they could at times be wrong, but Allah has granted indulgence to such mistakes, keeping in view the overwhelming good emanating from their management of affairs. If they issue an order or give a ruling which contravenes the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, and that order or ruling happens to be congruous with the good of the *ummah* – even if it interprets a religious law contrary to what was hitherto done, or changes it to bring it into line with the demands of time or inclinations of the *ummah* or conditions of the modern world – this new verdict will be followed, and religion will recognize it as good.

Why? Because religion aims only at society's happiness and advancement. This attitude is clearly seen in the way the Islamic governments behaved in the early days of Islam as well as later one. Whenever a law prevalent in the Prophet's days was changed or any system established by him discarded, the only reason given was that that law or system was in conflict with one or another right of the *ummah*; and that the good of the nation demanded that a new law should be enforced and a new system established which would satisfy people's aspirations for blessings of life. A scholar [Ahmad al-Amin in *Fajrul-Islam*] has openly written that a caliph has full authority to act contrary to explicit religious laws if he thinks it to be in the best interest of the *ummah*.

Accordingly, the Muslim nation would not be any different from other civilized societies inasmuch as they all have an elected body which decides the laws of the society keeping in view the demands of the situation at a given time.

This opinion, as you see, is held by those who think that religion is a social system presented in the garb of religion. It is governed by the same factors which govern other human societies leading them on the path of evolution step by step. Islam was a high ideal which was perfectly suitable for those who lived during and near the days of the Prophet.

It is now clear that it would be meaningless to interpret the phrase: *those vested with authority from among you*, as ‘the people having influence and power’ (whatever meaning we give to this latter phrase). The only meaning now possible is: Those individuals from among the *ummah* who are sinless, free from error and mistake in their words and deeds, whose obedience has been made obligatory. The only way to recognize is through clear divine affirmation, either in His own words or through His Prophet. This explanation corresponds with what has been narrated from the Imams of *Ahlul-bayt* that it is they.

As for the claim that *ulul-amr* refers to the rightly guided caliphs, commanders of expeditions or religious scholars whose opinions and words are followed, it is rebutted on two counts:

First: The verse proves their sinlessness, and undoubtedly, none of these three groups was or is sinless – except what a group of Muslims believes about the right of Ali (AS).

Second: All these interpretations are just claims without any evidence.

Objections have been raised against the explanation that the phrase refers to the sinless Imams of *Ahlul-bayt* (AS):

First Objection: In case this meaning was correct, it was necessary for Allah and the Messenger to clearly identify them [to the *ummah*]; and if it were done, no two persons would have disputed about them after the messenger of Allah (S).

Reply: It is clearly mentioned in the Qur’an and the *sunnah*, like the verse of Guardianship, Purity and others; and the traditions like that of Ark (The parable of my *Ahlul-bayt* is like the parable of Noah’s Ark; whoever boarded it was saved, and whoever stayed away from it was drowned); and that of the Two Precious Things (Surely I am leaving among you two precious [or weighty] things, the Book of Allah and my off-springs who are my *Ahlul-bayt*; as long as you would hold fast to both of them you would never go astray after me). These have been quoted in the discourse on “Decisive and Ambiguous Verses” in the third [Ar.] volume [Eng. Vol. 5, pp. 46-93].

Second Objection: Their obedience is conditional to their identification, because an order to obey them without recognizing them would be a command to do the impossible. As their obedience is conditional, this verse cannot apply to them because it is unconditional.

Reply: This objection bounces back to the objector. Every obedience [even of the people of influence and power] is conditional to their recognition. The only difference is that we may recognize the people of influence and power by ourselves without referring it to Allah and His Messenger, while a sinless Imam can be identified only through an introducer. However, the condition of recognition is equally present in both cases; so both should be contrary to the verse.

The fact is that although identification is counted as a condition, it is not like other conditions. It only means that when one is obliged to do something, he has to recognize the object of obligation and its other concomitants; but the obligation does not depend on it. If recognition were like other basic conditions which affect the obligation itself, like 'ability' for *hajj* or existence of water for *wudhu*, then nobody would be obliged to do anything at all.

Third Objection: We are unable, these days, to reach a sinless Imam and learn knowledge and religion from him. Therefore, he cannot be the *ulul-amr* whose obedience is obligatory for the *ummah*, because there is no way to have any contact with him.

Reply: This problem is created by the *ummah* itself, not by Allah or the Messenger. The *ummah* opted for wrong ways and was untrue to itself. Thus the responsibility and obligation to obedience stays unchanged. Suppose a nation killed its prophet. Can they claim that now they were unable to obey him because he was no more? Moreover, the objection may be directed to the objector himself, because nowadays there is not a single *ummah* in Islam in which the people of influence and power from among themselves could enforce what they would decide for it.

Fourth Objection: Allah says, *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allah and the Messenger*. If *ulul-amr* means a sinless Imam, it was necessary to say, refer it to the Imam.

Reply: Its reply has already been given in the Commentary; and it shows that it actually means referring to the Imam.

Fifth Objection: The believers in a sinless Imam say his obedience rescues the *ummah* from darkness of strife and evil of disagreement. But evidently the verse ordains a law related to quarrel – in spite of the existence of Imam and obedience of the *ummah*. It points to disagreement among the *ulul-amr* themselves in reaching at a decision about some event or occurrence. But according to those who believe so, it is not possible to quarrel or dispute in presence of a sinless Imam, because in their views he is like the Messenger (S). Accordingly, this sentence would without any purpose or benefit.

Reply: Its reply too is clear from the preceding Commentary. The quarrel mentioned in the verse refers to the believers' disagreement concerning rules of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, not concerning executive orders issued by the Imam in various events and happenings. It was mentioned earlier that no one has any right to legislate a law other than Allah and His Messenger. If the quarreling parties are capable of inferring its law from the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, they have the right to do so, or they could ask the Imam about it, because he is free from error in his opinion. But if they are unable to infer it, then the only way is to ask the Imam. It is just the days of the Messenger of Allah (S) when his contemporaries had the option of inferring the law from the Qur'an (if they could) or asking the Messenger of Allah (S) about it; but in case they could not infer it, the only remedy was to ask him (S).

All this proves that the word, *ulul-amr*, in this verse refers to some men from among the *ummah*, each of whom is similar to the Messenger in two aspects: He too is free from sin and mistake, and his obedience too is obligatory and compulsory. However, we do not say the phrase, *ulul-amr*, does not have a wider connotation according to language, or that it may not be used in a more general way if one wants to. But meaning of a word is one thing, and applying it to appropriate objects is another. For example, meaning of messenger is general, and it is used in the same meaning in this verse; yet the intended personality is of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S).

Ibn Babawayh has narrated through his chain from Jabir ibn Abdillah al-Ansari that he said:

“When Allah, the Mighty, the Great, sent to His Prophet Muhammad (S), the verse, *O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*, I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! We know Allah and His Messenger; but who are those vested with authority whose obedience Allah has conjoined to your obedience?’

(The Prophet) said: They are my caliphs, O Jabir! And the Imams of the Muslims after me.

The first of them is Ali son of Abu Talib; then al-Hasan; then al-Husayn; then Ali son of al-Husayn; then Muhammad son of Ali who is mentioned as al-Baqir in the Torah; you will surely meet him, O Jabir! When you see him convey my *salaam* (greetings) to him. Then as-Sadiq Ja'far son of Muhammad; then Musa son of Ja'far; then Ali son of Musa; then Muhammad son of Ali; then Ali son of Muhammad; then al-Hasan son of Ali; then Muhammad (whose name and patronymic will be the same as mine) son of al-Hasan son of Ali, the proof of Allah on His earth and *Baqiyyatullah* (the one kept safe by Allah) among His servants; he is the one by whose hands Allah, Sublime is His remembrance, will conquer the whole world from the east to the west; he it is who will remain hidden from his followers and friends for such a long period that no one will remain firm on the belief of his *imamah* except he whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith.

Jabir says: I said:

O Messenger of Allah! Will his followers get any benefit from him during his occultation?

(The Prophet S) said:

Certainly, by Him Who has sent me with prophethood! They will be guided by his light and benefit from his *wilayah* (love, mastership) during his occultation as people benefit from the sun when it is hidden in cloud. O Jabir! This is part of the hidden secrets of Allah and the treasured knowledge of Allah. So keep it hidden except from the people who deserve to know.

(Tafsir al-Burhan)

Jabir al-Ju'fi has said: "I asked Abu Ja'far (AS) about the verse, *obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*. He said:

The Imams.
(at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi)

Ibn Shahrashub narrates: al-Hasan ibn Salih asked as-Sadiq (AS) about it and the Imam replied:

The Imams from the ***Ahlul-bayt*** of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Abdullah ibn Ajilan has narrated from Abu Ja'far (AS) that he said about this verse of obedience:

It is about Ali and the Imams; Allah has put them in places of prophets except that they do not make anything lawful or unlawful.

(at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi)

Burayd ibn Mu'awiyah has narrated that Abu Ja'far (AS) recited: "*Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*; then if you fear a dispute about anything, refer it back to Allah and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you." Then he said: 'How can it be that He orders their obedience and then allows disputing with them? He (Allah) has said it to the rebellious ones who were told, *obey Allah and obey the Messenger.*" (al-Kafi)

Abu Basir has narrated from Abu Ja'far (AS) that he said: "It (i.e. the verse of obedience) was revealed about Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS)." "I said to him: 'People say to us, "What was to prevent Him from naming 'Ali and his **Ahlul-bayt** in His Book?'" Abu Ja'far (AS) said:

Tell them:

Verily Allah revealed (the order of) prayer to His Messenger; but he did not name three (*rak'ah*) or four, until it was the Messenger of Allah who explained it;

and He revealed (the order of) *Hajj* and did not reveal 'circumambulate seven times', until the Messenger of Allah (S) explained it.

[Likewise] Allah revealed: '*obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*'; and it was revealed about Ali and al-Hasan and al-Husayn (AS); and he (the Messenger of Allah S.) said about Ali:

'Whoever's master am I, Ali is his master.'

Also the Messenger of Allah (S) said: 'I admonish you concerning the Book of Allah and my **Ahlul-bayt**; verily I have asked Allah not to let them be separated from each other until He brings them to the *hawdh* (reservoir [of al-Kawthar]), and He has granted it to me.'

And he said: 'Do not teach them because they are more knowledgeable than you; verily they shall never take you away from the gate of guidance and shall never let you enter the gate of misguidance.'

If the Messenger of Allah had remained silent and not identified the people (of his *Ahlul-bayt*), surely the progeny of Abbas, and the progeny of Aqil and someone else's progeny would have claimed (to be among them); but Allah revealed in His Book: *Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! And to purify you a (thorough) purification [33:33]*.

And Ali and al-Hasan and al-Husayn and Fatimah (AS) were the interpretation of this verse; so the Messenger of Allah (S) took the hands of Ali and Fatimah and al-Hasan and al-Husayn (AS) and entered them under the mantle in the house of Umm Salamah and said: 'O Allah! Every prophet had had his precious things and his people; and these are my precious things and my people.' Umm Salamah said: 'Am I not from your people?' He said: 'Verily you are (proceeding) to good but these are my precious things and people of my (house).' ...
(at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi)

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

The command to obey is infinite-total obedience in all material, religious and spiritual matters, therefore, as this verse clearly signifies, the ulil amr must also be as just, wise and merciful as Allah and the Holy Prophet are, and he who administers the affairs of mankind should be the khalifatullah (vicegerent of Allah) and the wali-Allah (representative of Allah whom He chooses after equipping him with His wisdom). Please refer to the commentary of al-Baqarah: 30 to 39 and 124; and al-Ma'idah: 55 and 56 and 3 and 67 with reference to the event at Ghadir Khum; and al-Rad: 43; and al-Hud: 17.

A careful study of the above references discloses that Ali, and after him, the remaining eleven Imams, in the progeny of the Holy Prophet, Ali and Fatima, are the true successors of the Holy Prophet who have been referred to as ulil amr in this verse. So the Shias obey and follow the Holy Prophet and the twelve Imams.

It is irrational and senseless to accept any ruler as ulil-amr, otherwise men like Yazid bin Mu-awiya will have to be included in the category of ulil-amr; and no sane person would say that Allah has enjoined to obey men like Yazid (prototypes of whom were and are many and in abundance since the departure of the Holy Prophet till today) just as one obeys Allah and the Holy Prophet.

From the event of Ashira (feast of the near relatives to carry out the divine command of "warn your tribe of near relatives") to the day at Ghadir-Khum, the Holy Prophet repeatedly announced the successorship of Ali, therefore, the first step a true Muslim must take to obey the messenger of Allah is to obey and follow Ali ibn Abi Talib. Also refer to the "Right Path" and "Peshawar Nights", published by the Peermohammed Ebrahim Trust or Zahra Publications, because the issue of ulil-amr and wali has been discussed in depth in these books with authentic references from the well-known books of tafsir (exegesis) and hadith (traditions) written by the Muslim scholars.

Today the Muslim ummah (from Indonesia to Morocco) is in a quandary, because the theoreticians who directly or indirectly served the interests of the despotic rulers, have presented "the obedience to ruler" (even if he is an usurper, a rogue or a ruffian) as a fundamental of religion (known as the theory of ghlu and ghalba-violence and conquest) by misinterpreting this verse. Such theoreticians are their Imams. There is no way leading to emancipation from terror and exploitation if this theory is not rightly rejected once and for all. It is not possible unless the sincere Muslims submit to the teachings of the Ahl ul Bayt.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

This verse, together with a few verses next to it, discuss about one of the most important matters of Islam, that is, the subject of leadership. They determine the true source of imitation of Muslims for the different social and religious affairs that they may have. At first, it commands those who have faith, saying:

" O' you who have Faith! obey Allah..."

It is obvious that, for a believing person, all obediences must be led to the obedience of Allah. Then, any form of leadership must originate from His pure Essence and be adopted to His command, because it is He Who is the Ruler and the genetic Owner of the world of existence, and every sovereignty and ownership should be under His command.

For the second stage it says:

"... and obey the Messenger ..."

Obey the Prophet who is immaculate and never speaks out of desire (Sura An-Najm, No. 53, Verse 3) , an Apostle appointed from the side of Allah amongst people, whose word is the word of Allah, and whose rank and position have been bestowed to him by Allah.

And, for the third stage, it says:

"... and those charged with authority among you..."

Obey such ones who are from the inside of the Islamic society and protect both the divine religion and worldly affairs of people.

After that, it says:

*"... Then, if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is better and very good in the end."
Who are 'Those Charged with Authority'?*

All the Shi'ite commentators have the same attitude on this matter that the purpose of the phrase /ulil- amr /, mentioned in this verse, is the immaculate Imams to whom the physical and spiritual leadership of the Islamic society, consisting of all affairs of life, have been given from the side of Allah and His Apostle (S) , and it does not conclude any other than them. This meaning is said according to the contents of 33 authentic traditions cited in At-Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol.1, pp. 381-386 (second edition) .

Of course, under some conditions, the obedience of those who are appointed to a rank and charge a position in the society, is necessary. This obedience is not for that they themselves are 'those charged with authority', but for that they are agents of 'those charged with authority'.

Explanations:

1. Absolute obedience from the Messenger of Allah and 'those charged with authority' is a token for inerrancy of those magnanimous ones. Thus, any denotation expansion which is stated for 'those charged with authority' is not valid, if the one is not infallible.

2. The repetition of the word /'ati'u / 'obey' is the secret of the kind of orders. The holy Prophet (S) sometimes stated the ordinances of Allah, and sometimes gave the governmental commands, since he had both offices of 'prophecy' and government.(Allah addresses the Prophet (S) in the Qur'an both for the rank of statement (Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, Verse 44) and for the rank of government (Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, Verse 105) .

3. The name of 'those charged with authority' is mentioned next to the names of Allah and the Apostle, accompanied with an absolute obedience. This is a sign to show that the one in charge of Islamic government should be qualified with a high saintliness. Based on many traditions, as was mentioned in the commentary of the verse, the purpose of the phrase 'those charged with authority' is Ahlul-Bayt (AS) .

4. People ought to accept the Islamic system and support its godly leaders by their words and deeds.

"... Obey Allah and obey, the Messenger and those charged with authority among you ..."

5. In obedience, hierarchical order should be observed, that is: Allah, the Messenger, and those charged with authority.

6. One of the ways of: acknowledgement is comparison with opposites and contraries.

7. When speaking of mischief-makers, the extravagant, the misguided, the ignorants, the tyrants and so on, the Qur'an's command is: " Do not Yield..." and " Do not follow ...". The conclusion is that the aspects of the word /'ati'u/ 'obey' must be those whose obedience have not been prohibited of.

8. To obey false deities is forbidden.

9. If all groups assume the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet (S) as reliable testimonies, discords will be removed and unity will govern.

10. A complete religion must have a solution for discords. The Qur'an says:
"... refer it to Allah and the Messenger, ..."

11. Those who are opponent to the orders of Allah, the Messenger, and 'those charged with authority' should doubt in their own religion, if they want to believe in truth.
"... if you believe ..."

12. Farsightedness and being careful of the interests of long future time is the standard of value.
"... This is better and very good in the end."