

# AN INQUIRY INTO WALĀYAH AND WILĀYAH

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## Hypothesis

The word “*wilāyah*” of the *wilāyah al-faqīh*, which is also the title of Ayatollah Khomeini’s book, is often translated into the English for guardianship or tutorship. The phrase *wilāyah al-faqīh*, then, means “guardianship or tutorship of the Muslim jurist.” In the Shī’ite tradition of Muslim jurisprudence, the word “guardianship” or “tutorship” of the Muslim jurist is that which is over the community of Muslims.

The theory that well-qualified Muslim jurists have their guardianship over the community of their followers does not have a long history. The theory seems to have been established rather recently.

After the triumph of the Usūlī school over the Akhbārī school early in the Qājārīd age, the Shī’ite jurists of the Usūlī school seem to have developed this theory of guardianship of the Muslim jurist (*wilāyah al-faqīh*) over the Muslim community.

The question of whether Muslim jurists are able to hold their *wilāyah* over the Muslim community or not has long been a subject of

dispute. Basically, the *wilāyah* over the Muslim community was commonly understood to belong only to God and His messengers as well as the Imāms that followed. The common people, including Muslim jurists, are believed to be unable to hold the *wilāyah* over the Muslim community.

Yet, based upon some traditions (*hadith*), which suggest that the Muslim jurists (Ulamā) are able to be the deputy or successor of the prophets, some Ulamā (Usūlī Ulamā in particular) tried to establish the theoretical basis of the Ulamā's *wilāyah* over the Muslim community. This attempt to give a theoretical basis to Ulamā's *wilāyah* over the Muslim community seems to have been accomplished by the efforts of the late Ayatollah Shāhābādī and his disciple, Ayatollah Khomeini. These two people gave a cosmological, as well as a theosophical, framework to the theory of the Ulamā's *wilāyah* which used to be discussed mainly in the field of Islamic jurisprudence.

In his "*wilāyah al-faqīh*," the late Ayatollah Khomeini insists that the *wilāyah* of Ulamā is not the right (*haqq*) of Ulamā but the duty (*wazīfeh*) of Ulamā.<sup>1)</sup> In fact, the concept *wilāyah* used to be considered by the Shī'ite Ulamā as the right of Ulamā before Khomeini's assertion first appeared. As expounded in "The Just Ruler in Shī'ite Islam" by Dr. Sachedina, even Shaykh Murtazā Ansārī regards the *wilāyah* as right, not duty.<sup>2)</sup> The reason why Ayatollah Khomeini insists that this is not a right of Ulamā but rather a duty may be that since each human being has his own *wilāyah* in potentiality, which originated in the cosmogonical drama illustrated in chapter 33, verse 72 of the Qur'ān,<sup>3)</sup> it is man's duty to actualize the potential of the *wilāyah*. As long as the *wilāyah* remains to be one of the rights of the jurists, it

is possible for it to be latent without displaying its real force (because right is not necessarily put into practice, but duty necessarily requires its implementation). Yet, once it becomes the duty of the jurists, it requires them to put it into practice. Khomeini's understanding of the *wilāyah* as the duty of Muslim jurists could be one of the main factors which led Iranians toward their Islamic Revolution.

### **Cosmogonical Understanding of *Wilāyah* in Shāhābādī**

It is believed in the world of the Twelver Imāmī Shī'ites that the universal *wilāyah*, which Prophet Muhammad used to hold (Qur'ān;5: 60), was transferred to Alī at the time of the Prophet's nomination of Alī as his successor at Ghadīr Khom. This universal *wilāyah*, which the Prophet used to have and transferred to Alī could be regarded as one with the divine *wilāyah* which God gave to man.<sup>4)</sup>

There were disputes about the question of whether Ulamā are able to work as the holder of *wilāyah* during the period of the greater occultation in place of Imāms who are the real holders of the universal *wilāyah* which was inherited successively from Imām to Imām. But, after the famous al-Shahīd al-Thānī of the 16<sup>th</sup> century argued that the Ulamā's responsibilities over the Muslim community were identical with those of the Imāms over the Muslim community,<sup>5)</sup> the idea that Ulamā should hold the *wilāyah* over the community of believers in the same manner as the Imāms became prevalent in the world of the Shī'ite jurists.

But, during the Safavid dynasty, the Shī'ite Ulamā had little opportunity to display their *wilāyah* over the community of believers partly because the Safavid rulers were believed to be descendants of the 7<sup>th</sup> Imām Kāzim and partly because a kind of quietism of the Akhbārī school was prevalent in the world of the Ulamā of the Twelver Imāmī Shī'ites.

During the age of social confusion and political instability after the fall of the Safavid dynasty, the Shī'ite Ulamā put aside the Akhbārī quietist position and started to play a more active role in guiding their followers.

With the establishment of the Qājārid dynasty, where the legitimacy for rule was the subject of dispute, the Ulamā became more and more active in both social and political activities partly because the Qājārid rulers needed the Ulamā's support and partly because the people's expectation of the Ulamā's active role increased.

With increase in the politicalization of the Ulamā's, they concentrated their discussions on the concept "*wilāyah*". Yet, the discussions were limited within the jurisprudence. The discussions never went beyond the borderline of the domain of Islamic jurisprudence until Shāhābādī and Khomeini gave cosmological basis to the theory of *wilāyah*.

The late Ayatollah Shāhābādī gives his explanations on the concept "*wilāyah*" in his *Rashahāt al-Bihār* (Drops of the Ocean). He also comments on chapter 33;verse 72 of the Qur'ān and explains the word "trust" (Arabic *amānah*) in this verse as the meaning of *wilāyah*.<sup>6)</sup> In this case, he understands the *wilāyah* in the sense of "closeness to God (*qurb*).” Yet, regarding the *wilāyah* as having the selfsame meaning as

the *qurb* seems to be a bit problematic because the word “*walāyah*” (a word of the same spelling but its first consonant “w” takes vowel “a” in place of “i” and which is often translated into English as “sainthood”) is closer to the meaning “*qurb*” in terms of its sense. Anyhow, he divides the *wilāyah* into two kinds; that is, *al-wilāyah al-takwīnīyah* (creative *wilāyah*) and *al-wilāyah al-tashrī'iyah* (legislative *wilāyah*). The *al-wilāyah al-takwīnīyah* is furthermore divided by him into two kinds; that is, *al-wilāyah al-idtirāriyah* (necessary *wilāyah*) and *al-wilāyah al-irādīyah* (voluntary *wilāyah*). And, in his understanding, the necessary *wilāyah* is in the descending course of emanation of being and, on the other hand, the voluntary *wilāyah* is in the ascending course named *qaws al-su'ūd*.

Now, as for the *wilāyah tashrī'iyah*, it is also divided by him into two kinds. In his understanding, the first of the two is knowledge of the closeness to God, which prophets and friends of God have. The second of the two is belief in the matter that prophets and friends are guardians of all the phenomena in the world and they are more appropriate for guardianship.<sup>7)</sup>

On my investigation, the phrase “*al-wilāyah al-takwīnīyah*” seems to be used in his works for the first time in the history of Ulamā literature. I could not find this phrase in the literatures before him. This treatise was written in the year 1940.

The concept *al-wilāyah al-takwīnīyah* could be regarded as a product of Ulamā's long concentration on *al-wilāyah al-ilāhīyah*.

Now, it is clear from the *qaws al-su'ūd* and other wordings that the argument of Shāhābādī on the *wilāyah takwīnīyah* is constructed in the framework of the emanation theory of the School of the Unity of

Existence which was propounded by Ibn Arabī. According to the emanation theory of the School of the Unity of Existence, empirical beings are regarded as the result of self-entification of the single extending being which is the self-manifestation of the Pure Being. Philosophers of this school explain the emanation process of being in various ways resorting to various symbols and allegories. The Pure Being, which is far beyond man's understanding, is called Mystery of Mysteries or the vanishing phoenix or concealed treasure or existence in the level of *Ahadīyah* (absolute oneness) and the Essence of God (*Dhāt Allāh*), which escapes from man's knowledge and so on. And the single extending being is called the absolute (in the sense of being unconditioned) being or the created truth by God or the sacred emanation (*ḥayd muqaddas*) or existence in the level of *Wāhidīyah*, which is beyond man's perception, but conceptually possible to be posited. Finally, empirical beings are called the limited beings.<sup>8)</sup> Therefore, in this school, existence is divided into two kinds; that is, the visible existence and the invisible existence. Furthermore, the invisible existence is divided into the existence in the level of *Ahadīyah*, which completely escapes from man's insight and perception, and the existence in the level of *Wāhidīyah*, which is also beyond man's perception but possible to be conceptually posited. Yet, distinction between the existence in the level of *Ahadīyah* and the existence in the level of *Wāhidīyah* is a theoretical matter. In the School of the Unity of Existence, the ontological transition from the *Ahadīyah* to the *Wāhidīyah* in the process of emanation is regarded to be an instantaneous happening. Therefore, the *Wāhidīyah* is often regarded as the surface of the *Ahadīyah* and the *Ahadīyah* is regarded as the opposite

side of the *Wahidīyah*. These two levels of existence should be regarded as united in the Pure Being or God. This means that God's existence has two layers.

The emanation process from the Pure Being to empirical beings is imagined by philosophers of this school as the descending course (*qaws nuzūlī*). It is believed by these philosophers that the end of this descending course of ontological emanation is the starting point of the ascending journey to the Pure Being which is the source of all beings. This ascending course for the trip to the Origin is called the *qaws su'ūdī* or "*urūjī*". The descending course of emanation is believed to end at the first matter which is the material for the most primordial things like fire, smoke and the elements.

Now, according to Shāhābādī's argument, the voluntary *wilāyah* is in the ascending course while the necessary *wilāyah* is in the descending course.

An important point in this argument is that the *wilāyah* is equated with *qurb*. As previously mentioned, the arabic word "*qurb*" should be equated with the word "*walāyah*", not "*wilāyah*".

Shāhābādī's argument seems to include in it some slight misinterpretation of the word "*wilāyah*".

Since he started his argument with an interpretation of the word *amānah* in the Qur'ān and equated it with *wilāyah*, the word *wilāyah* in his argument should be used in the sense of guardianship or curatorship, but he has explained in the following sentence that the meaning of the *wilāyah* is closeness (*qurb*) to God. This is quite puzzling to me. From the viewpoint of arabic grammar, the word *wilāyah* does not mean closeness. It has the so-called *fi'alah* form which usually signifies a

function or job. But, when this word is read as *walāyah* (first vowel of *waw* changes from “i” to “a” ), it can express the meaning of closeness. The *fa’alah* form, which this noun takes, usually signifies a state. The word “*qurb*” means the state of being close to something. It does not mean a function or job. Therefore, grammatically, the word “*wilāyah*” does not have the meaning of closeness.

The reason why Shāhābādī equated *wilāyah* with *qurb* must be questioned here. If it is possible that the *wilāyah* is equated with the *qurb*, then it is possible for the *wilāyah* to be equated with the *walāyah* because the word *walāyah* has the same meaning as *qurb*, that is, to be near or close to something.

Grammatically speaking, the word *walāyah* is derived from the noun *walī* (pl. *awliyā*) which means close associate or friend or helper or sometimes saint. The point to notice here is that the word *walī* is one of the beautiful divine names.

On the other hand, the word *wilāyah* should be regarded as derived from the noun *wālī* (pl. *wulāt*) which means governor or ruler or *vālī*. Attention should be directed to the fact that *wālī* is also one of the beautiful divine names.

### **Qushairī’s Comment on *Walī***

Abu al-Qāsim al-Qushairī of the 11<sup>th</sup> century has left us his account on this subject in his treatise on the divine names and attributes. Quoting from his works:



The word *walī* is one of the divine names. God, the exalted, says: God, the lord (*walī*) of those who believe, will take them out of the darkness to the light. In this way, the word *walī*, when qualifying God, means *mutawallī* (guardian) over the activities of His slaves.

And it is said that this word is a *fa'īl* form of the word *walī* as it is said that someone was charged with a mission in a province, therefore he is a *wālin* (governor) as well as a *walī* in its emphasized form. The word *walī* means helper in classical usage, then the phrase *awliyā* of someone means his helpers. And the word *walī* means again that which is near, as God says: "It is near to you and it is near" (*awlā laka fa-awlā*; 75:34, 35). It is said that meaning of this phrase is that what is silent is approaching you and coming near to you, therefore you should pay attention to it. Another meaning of the word *walī* in classical usage is rain that comes after the first rain in spring.

Now, *awliyā* of God mean helpers of His religion as well as adherents of His faith. One part of this subject was solved.

Further, God says "We are your lord both in the life of this world and the next world". It is said that its meaning is that we are your helpers while the word "to be near" (*walāyah*) means here love. "God is lord of believers" means He loves them. . .<sup>9)</sup>

In Qushairī's explanation of the word *walī*, it is regarded as the *fa'īl* form of the word *wālin* (governor or ruler). This means that the

word *walī* is an emphatic form of the word *wālī*. Yet, the word *walī* has the meaning of helper as well as the meaning of love. Therefore, the word *walī* has manifold meanings.

As long as the word *wilāyah* is derived from the word *wālī*, which has the emphatic form of *walī*, the meaning of the word *wilāyah* could be equated with that of the *walāyah* which is derived from the word *walī*. This may be one of the reasons why Shāhābādī used the word *wilāyah* in the sense of the word *qurb*.

The word *wilāyah* does not differ from the *walāyah* from the above-mentioned viewpoint. Yet, these two words differ from each other in another level of meaning.

### ***Wilāyah or Walāyah***

As is well known, the word *walāyah* appears twice in the Caliph Uthmān edition of the Qur'ān. But, the word *wilāyah* itself does not appear in the Qur'ān. One of the two examples of the *walāyah* in the Qur'ān is seen in verse 72 of the chapter Anfāl and the other example is seen in verse 43 of the chapter Kahaf. Yet, almost all the commentators of the Qur'ān report that there is another way of reading the word other than *walāyah*. The second way of its reading is the *wilāyah*. Commentators of the Qur'ān unanimously report that if the word is pronounced with *fathah* on the first "waw" (that is, *walāyah*), it means help, protection or friendship, but if it is pronounced with *kasrah* on it, it means sovereignty or rulership. They report that there used to exist two ways for its reading. No clear reason has been given us as to why

the *walāyah* was chosen instead of *wilāyah* and then decided as the official way of reading this word.

Yet, Tabarī has left us an interesting report about this subject in his commentary on the Qur'ān. In his commentary on the part at issue in the chapter of Cave, he says as follows:

The Qur'ān reciters are different from each other in the way of reading God's word *al-walāyah*. Some reciters of Medina, Basrah and Kufah read the holy phrase (*hunālika al-walāyah li-lliah*) with *fathah* on the waw of the word *walāyah*, implying with this "there the friendship or patronage (*muwālāt*) belongs to God," just as God's remark (God is the patron of those who believe) and also His remark (that is because God is the lord of those who believe). They believe in the friendship or patronage in religion. Yet, majority of the Qur'ān reciters of Kufah read this word with *kasrah* on the waw which means kingship and rulership in the usage of people who say "I undertake such and such activity or such and such city" intending that guardianship or rulership is belonging to him.

Now, the most appropriate way of reading in these two ways is the way of those who read with *kasrah* on the first waw. The reason is that God utters his remark about kingship and rulership after the phrase about those who suffer His revenge on the day of resurrection and never have helpers on the day, so that, the remark which comes after the remark about His uniqueness at kingship and rulership must be more

appropriate than the remark about friendship about which there is no mentioning, . . .<sup>10)</sup>

As is clear from this quote, Tabarī believes that the *wilāyah* is the more appropriate way of reading this word from the viewpoint of this context. And, according to his report, an historical fact became apparent when the majority of the Qur'ān reciters of Kufah adopted the *wilāyah* instead of the *walāyah*. Other commentators, like Ibn Kathīr and Fakhr Rāzī report that among seven canonical reciters of the Qur'ān in the early history of Islam only Hamzah read that word as *wilāyah*.

The reason why the majority of Qur'ān reciters of Kufah preferred the *wilāyah* to the *walāyah* is not clear. But, I suppose that it may have some relation to the fact that Kufah used to be the center of the Shī'ite movement in early Islam because the concept *wilāyah* has special importance in the Shī'ite ideology in particular.

The word *amānah* in the Qur'ān is interpreted as the meaning of *wilāyah* in the Shī'ite exegesis of the Qur'ān and the *wilāyah* is believed to have been transferred to Alī, amīr al-mu'minīn, from the Prophet of Islam at Ghadīr Khom. This *wilāyah* conferred on Alī is one of the bases of legitimacy for Alī's leadership over the Muslim community. Yet, the Shī'ite concept of *wilāyah* has not the Qur'ānic authority as long as that word continues to be read as *walāyah* instead of *wilāyah*. I suppose that the Shī'ite Qur'ān reciters of Kufah chose the *wilāyah* in order to fortify the basis of the Shī'ite assertion of Alī's legitimacy to rule.

If this hypothesis is approved, the word at issue in the Qur'ān must be read *wilāyah* by the Shī'ite people because it constitutes the basis of

their political assertion.

In the level of semantics as well as in the level of political ideology, the word *wilāyah* and the word *walāyah* differ from each other in their meaning. Yet, as I already pointed out, Shāhābādī has equated *wilāyah* with *walāyah* and developed the metaphysics of *wilāyah*. And, if the word *walī* is regarded as the *fa'īl* form of the word *wālī* as Qushairī says, the word *wilāyah* could be equated with the word *walāyah* in this sense.

In this way, these two words are used at a certain place in the same sense but at another place in two different senses.

### ***Walāyah in Sūfī Tradition***

The word at issue is mainly read *walāyah* in the *sūfī* tradition. But, some *sūfī*, like Alā al-Dawlah al-Simnānī insist that *wilāyah* is owned by the friends of God (that is, *awliyā*) while *walāyah* is owned by the prophets. Yet, the history of *sūfism* has shown a brilliant development of *sūfī* philosophy on the *walāyah*, not the *wilāyah*. In the tradition of *sūfī* thought, this word is used mainly in the sense of *qurb* (nearness or vicinity) while its relationship to the *sūfī* concepts of prophethood (*nubūwh*), messengership (*risālah*) and deputyship (*khilāfah*) is always taken into consideration.

The reason why the concept *walāyah* was so enriched in the tradition of *sūfī* thought is that the concept *walāyah* originated in a religious thought in the Qur'ān which is peculiar to Islam. According to the Qur'ānic teachings, God is very near to all things, including man. The idea

that God exists near to man is expressed in the famous verse (*nahnu aqrab ilayhi min habl al-warid*; 50:14). Other than this verse, there are many verses which illustrate that God is very near to man.

As I pointed out before, the word *walāyah* means basically to be near to something or somebody. Therefore, the most appropriate translation of this word is closeness or nearness or vicinity to God.<sup>11)</sup>

Now, the fact that God is near to man means that man is near to God. Yet, this nearness which exists between God and man is not perceived in the level of daily experience. This nearness is perceived by those who have achieved self-perfection like prophets (*anbiyā*) and people called the friends of God (*awliyā*). And, this self-perfection is believed to be accomplished at the end of a journey of tracing the ascending course (*qaws su'ūdī*) to the source of emanation. At the point of accomplishment of the self-perfection, the wayfarer of this ascending course obtains insight into the source of emanation.

Now, this insight into the source of emanation is explained by the *sūfis* in many ways according to the degrees of their so-called mystical experiences. The source of emanation, which is called the Pure Being in the School of the Unity of Existence, is believed to be beyond man's understanding. Therefore, the question is raised, "how far can the mystical insight ascend toward the knowledge of the source of emanation, that is, God?"

Now, the wayfarer who accomplished the journey of self-perfection in the ascending course to the source of emanation is believed to obtain the nearness or vicinity (*walāyah*) to the source of emanation, God. And the wayfarer who obtained this *walāyah* is called the friend of God (*walī Allāh*). Yet, as I mentioned before, God's existence has

two layers. Therefore, the question of how far wayfarers can step into the realm of the Divine Being is always asked. So, consequently, grading of the *walāyah* (nearness or vicinity to God) comes to be introduced in accordance with degrees of the mystical insight which the wayfarers have obtained.

Now, an unknown commentator of Ibn Arabī's *Tajalliyāt* has left us a very illuminative remark on the *walāyah*, which is found in the supplement of Tirmidhī's *Khatm al-Awliyā* edited by Uthmān Yahyā.<sup>12)</sup> According to this commentator, the *walāyah* is divided into two kinds: first, is the special *walāyah*, and, second, is the general *walāyah*. This distinction originated in the grades of nearness of man's essence to God. After separation of the human essence from worldly attachments and its self-annihilation in the essential light of God, the human essence returns from the bottom of descendance of emanation to the Truth by which it exists. If this return is caused by the internal principles of the level of *Ahadīyah* which includes the essential and primordial keys (*al-mafātīh al-uwal al-dhātīyah*), it means the utmost nearness or vicinity (*al-qurb al-aqrab*). This utmost nearness basically belongs only to the Muhammadan authoritative reality (*al-haqīqah al-siyādīyah al-muhammadiyah*). This utmost nearness which man's essence obtains is the Muhammadan special *walāyah* (*al-walāyah al-khāssah al-muhammadiyah*); that is, the special *walāyah*.

If the return of man's essence to the Truth is caused by the level of the divine existence of the *Wāhidīyah* which includes the united elements for the divine names (*al-ummahāt al-wasīyah*), it means the close nearness or vicinity (*al-qurb al-qarīb*). This is the general *walāyah* which is owned by the elements of man's perfection.

Now, these two *walāyahs* are regarded to be two aspects of the comprehensive authoritative *walāyah* which God has toward Himself and His creatures because God is most near to everything. Therefore, the *walāyah* comprehends everything in the universe. This is the reason why the *walāyah* is called the uttermost heavenly sphere (*al-walāyah hiya al-falak al-aqsā*). This *walāyah* is interpreted by the commentator to manifest its elements in the various forms in accordance with the requirements of the immanent principles of existence. If the inherent elements of the *walāyah* appear with all knowledge about the universal phenomena and divine revelations, it is called the absolute prophethood (*al-nubūwah al-mutlaqah*) which does not bring laws. If the inherent elements of the *walāyah* appears with permission of propagation, they take the level of prophethood (and materializes in the prophets). If the inherent elements of the *walāyah* appear with the mission of propagation, they take the messengership (*risālah*). If they are fortified with power and scriptures, they materialize in authority or kingship (*mulk*). If they are fortified with swords, they materialize in the deputyship (*khilāfah*) of God.

The commentator's argument is very complicated, though it is summarized. Yet, it is clear from his ideas that the basic meaning of the *walāyah* is nearness or vicinity to God's essence; and there are two kinds of nearness, one of which is the utmost nearness (or vicinity) which originated in the *Aḥadīyah* level of the Pure Being and the second is the close nearness (vicinity) which originated in the *Wāhidīyah* level of the Pure Being. The point to notice in his argument is that both the utmost nearness and the close nearness are not realized through the wayfarer's own efforts but through the immanent principles of the Pure



Being. This could be regarded as a kind of determinist view because the matter of whether human perfection obtains the utmost nearness to God or the close nearness to Him is determined by the immanent principles of the Pure Being, not by the achievements of man's efforts for self-perfection. Yet, this idea is deduced from deep insight into the immanent principles of the Pure Being. Since according to the world view of the School of the Unity of Existence, all the phenomena of the universe is the product of manifestation of the Pure Being, the pure-land (*skhavati*) buddhist question of whether salvation is obtained through one's own efforts or through the benevolence of the transcendental Being does not matter any more because individual efforts are manifestations of the Pure Being, too. The utmost vicinity as well as the close vicinity are programmed in the Pure Being and caused by It in this theory.

As long as the utmost vicinity, which is named the special *walāyah*, is programmed in the *Ahadīyah* and the close vicinity, which is named the general *walāyah*, is programmed in the *Wāhidīyah*, it is possible to regard the former as another name of the *Ahadīyah* and the latter as another name of the *Wāhidīyah*. So, it is possible for a relation of the special *walāyah* to the general *walāyah* to be likened to the relation of the *Ahadīyah* to the *Wāhidīyah*. The general *walāyah* could be regarded as the surface of the special *walāyah*.

Now, according to this unknown commentator, the special *walāyah* is believed to be monopolized by the Muhammadan authoritative reality. The Muhammadan authoritative reality could be regarded as the Muhammadan reality (*al-haqīqah al-Muhammadiyah*) in Ibn Arabī's theosophical cosmology.

In his *al-Futūhāt al-Makkīyah*, Ibn Arabī explains the cosmogonic process of realities. According to his understanding, in the beginning there was the ontologic dust called *al-habā* and in this *habā* the merciful Muhammadan reality (*al-haqīqah al-Muhammadiyah al-rahmānīyah*) was created. Yet, this does not own a place nor accept any definition. And this merciful Muhammadan reality was created from the lucid reality (*al-haqīqah al-ma'lūmah*) which is beyond the characteristics of existence and non-existence. Furthermore, this merciful Muhammadan reality was created in Ibn Arabī's ideas on the basis of the lucid form of God, the Truth for the sake of showing the divine realities.<sup>13)</sup>

*Al-habā* is, in other words, the universal material (*al-hayūlā al-kull*) in which the universe exists in potentiality. God is believed to have illuminated this ontologic dust with the flush of His light. Things which existed in this dust, in potentiality, are actualized owing to the flush of the divine light. Yet, the degrees or grades of their actualization are dependent on the degree of the luminous intensity of the divine flush. That which was shone with the brightest flush of the divine light is the Muhammadan reality.

Now, in the *sūfi* vocabularies, the lucid reality (*al-haqīqah al-ma'lūmah*) from which the Muhammadan reality was created is often called the reality of the realities (*haqīqah al-haqā'iq*), which is equated with the level of *Ahadiyah* as well as the rank of astringency or concentration (*jam'*) in Jurjānī's *Ta'rīfāt*.<sup>14)</sup> On the other hand, the ontologic dust (*al-habā*) is often equated with the "vanishing phoenix" which means a state in which God has not yet manifested Himself as God.

Previously I mentioned that the vanishing phoenix is one of the

various names of the *Ahadīyah*. Yet, the ontologic dust (*al-habā*) which precedes the *Ahadīyah* is also equated with the vanishing phoenix. The *al-habā* precedes *Ahadīyah* from a cosmogonical viewpoint. Yet, both are called the vanishing phoenix. The vanishing phoenix should be understood as the metaphor of that which transcends man's understanding.

Now, the phrase "*haqīqah al-haqā'iq*" could be divided into two concepts, that is,  $\langle haqīqah \rangle$  and  $\langle haqā'iq \rangle$ . Grammatically, the word *haqīqah* is possessed by the word *haqā'iq*. Yet, this construct state is used to show that the *haqīqah* (reality) is a source of the *haqā'iq* (realities). In other words, the word *haqīqah*, in the so-called *muzāf* state, is the originator of the *haqā'iq* in the *muzāf ilaihi* state. Since it is said that the *al-haqīqah al-ma'lūmah* from which the *al-haqīqah al-Muhammadīyah* is created is called *haqīqah al-haqā'iq*, the *haqīqah* in the *muzāf* state must be the *al-haqīqah al-ma'lūmah* and the *haqā'iq* in the *muzāf ilaihi* state must be the *haqīqah Muhammadīyah* as a matter of course.

Now, the theoretical relationship between the *walāyah* theory and the ontologic cosmogony becomes clearer. In the *walāyah* theory, the utmost vicinity, which is the special *walāyah*, is monopolized by the so-called Muhammadan authoritative reality, that is, the Muhammadan reality in Ibn Arabī's philosophy. The Muhammadan reality is said to be created from the lucid reality to show the divine realities. This means that the Muhammadan reality includes the divine realities which could be regarded as one with the intellectual forms of the divine names and attributes (*al-suwar al-ilmīyah fī asmā wa sifātihi*). Therefore, the Muhammadan reality is in the level of the divine names, which

means the level of the *Wāhidīyah*, not the level of the *Ahadīyah*.

From the above-mentioned consideration, the special *walāyah* (the utmost vicinity) which is monopolized by the Muhammadan reality is the vicinity which the level of *Wāhidīyah* has in relation to the level of *Ahadīyah*. On the other hand, the general *walāyah* which is caused by the immanent principles of the level of the *Wāhidīyah* is regarded as the vicinity which the intellectual forms of the empirical beings have in relation to the level of the *Wāhidīyah*, that is, the level of the divine names and attributes. This vicinity could be regarded as the vicinity which the Prophet of Islam experienced in his night journey and called it the two bows' length or nearer (*qāb qawsain aw adnā*). Yet, on the other hand, the Muhammadan reality is called the Perfect Man who is a transcendental personality. Therefore, it is possible to say that the special *walāyah* belongs to the Perfect Man. In *sūfī* vocabularies, the Perfect Man has manifold meanings. It means sometime the metaphysically posited personality called the great man (*al-insān al-kabīr*) and sometime means the Prophet Muhammad as the ethic paragon of the Muslims. Although the meanings of the Perfect Man differ from each other in the level of usage of the word, there is no difference between the metaphysically posited Perfect Man and Muhammad the Prophet, who had experienced the utmost vicinity of *qāb qawsain aw adnā* to God in his night journey because in his experience of the *qāb qawsain aw adnā* he experienced the utmost vicinity which the *Wāhidīyah* (that is, the Muhammadan reality) has in relation to the *Ahadīyah* and which means the vicinity of the Perfect Man to the divine essence, that is, the *Ahadīyah*. Therefore, Muhammad the Prophet could be regarded to have held the utmost vicinity of the Muhammadan reality, which is

caused by the immanent principles of the level of *Ahadīyah*.

## ***Wilāyah* in Khomeini's Thought**

As mentioned before, Shāhābādī divided the *wilāyah* into two kinds: the *wilāyah takwīnīyah* and the *wilāyah tashrī'īyah*. In addition, he has understood the word *wilāyah* to have the same meaning as the word *walāyah* has in the *sūfī* tradition, that is, the vicinity to God. According to Shāhābādī's understanding of the *wilāyah takwīnīyah*, a wayfarer, who attained the rank of the *wilāyah takwīnīyah* after his accomplishment of the journey in the ascending course toward the Great Source of all the beings, is believed to act faithfully to the divine principles and laws. In other words, such a person works always as God wishes.

Now, Khomeini has expounded his ideas on the *wilāyah* in his "Misbāh al-Hidāyah ilā al-Wilāyah wa al-Khilāfah". This is a very important book from the viewpoint of historic development of the concept *wilāyah* in the world of the Twelver Imāmī Shī'ite world.

According to Khomeini's ideas expounded in this book,<sup>15)</sup> God is concealed behind the divine mist called '*amā*' because of the intensity of His brightness which is too bright to be seen by man's perception. Yet, God manifests Himself in the mirrors called deputies (*khulafā*'). The basis of the deputyship (*khilāfah*) is grasped to be the Mystery of Mysteries or the unknown ipseity (*Ghayb al-Hūwīyah*) which is also regarded to be the marrow of the *wilāyah*. In Khomeini's ideas, which are based on Ibn Arabī's theosophy, the essence of God is always concealed behind the veils of divine lights. Yet, God informs man of His

existence through His deputies. The divine essence is informed by its deputy though it is always beyond understanding and perception, but information only is given of its existence due to its deputy. In this case, the divine essence is the *Ghayb al-Hūwīyah* which is informed by the divine names. The *Ghayb al-Hūwīyah* is, in other words, the *dhāt* or the *Ahadīyah* and the divine names constitute the level of the *Wāhidīyah* which is regarded by Khomeini as the deputy of the *Ghayb al-Hūwīyah*. Therefore, the level of *Wāhidīyah* has the primordial deputyship of the *Ahadīyah*, that is, the *Ghayb al-Hūwīyah* which never manifests Itself but informs Its existence through its deputy. And, since the empirical beings are regarded to be the results of self-entification or self-limitation of the simple extending existence which is the level of the *Wāhidīyah*, they could be regarded to be the deputies of the *Wāhidīyah*. In this way, deputyship is grasped as the ontologic principle of the universal phenomena.

On the other hand, he says that the deputyship (*khilāfah*), to which rank, power and meaning are already given, is identical with the *wilāyah* which sometimes means nearness, sometimes means intimacy, sometimes means rulership and sometimes means lordship.<sup>16)</sup> Khomeini includes in the *wilāyah* the original meanings which the word *wilāyah* and the word *walāyah* have in spite of the fact that they differ from each other in another level of their meanings.

Not only by Khomeini but by the School of the Unity of Existence, things which are invested with deputyship from their lord are regarded to be under the supervision of the investor of their deputyship. The *Ahadīyah* has invested its deputyship in the *Wāhidīyah* and the *Wāhidīyah* has invested its deputyship in the empirical beings. So, the

*Wāhidīyah* is under supervision of the *Ahadīyah* while the empirical beings are under the supervision of the *Wāhidīyah*. This supervision is a part of the concept “guardianship” (*wilāyah*). So, in other words, the *Ahadīyah* has the *wilāyah* over the *wāhidīyah* and the *wāhidīyah* has its *wilāyah* over the empirical beings. The role and significance of the *wilāyah* in the world of existence are quite similar to those of the *walāyah* in it.

As I mentioned before, the *walāyah* in the sense of its nearness appears between two things. So, the *walāyah* appears between God and man. And also, it appears between the *Ahadīyah* and the *Wāhidīyah* while the *walāyah* appears between the *Wāhidīyah* and the empirical beings.

From the viewpoint of the emanation theory, the special *walāyah* which the *Wāhidīyah* has in relation to the *Ahadīyah* originated in the *Ahadīyah* as states the commentator of the Ibn Arabī’s *Tajalliyāt*, while the general *walāyah*, which wayfarers in the ascending course to self-perfection have in relation to the *Wāhidīyah*, originated in the *Wāhidīyah*. This theory could be interpreted to suggest that the *Ahadīyah* has nearness in itself to the *Wāhidīyah* while the *Wāhidīyah* has in itself nearness to the wayfarers as well as the empirical things.

Khomeini’s theory of the *wilāyah* seems to be constructed after the model of the *sūfī* theory of *walāyah*. The *wilāyah*, which he conceives in his ontology, is a relational concept which appears among the existential layers of emanation of being just as the *walāyah* is so in *sūfī* ontological epistemology. Therefore, the *wilāyah* could be regarded as a primordial principle of being. As long as the *wilāyah* is grasped as a principle of being, it does not remain “right”, but becomes “duty”. I

suppose that this may be one of the reasons why Khomeini argues that the *wilāyah* is not a right but a duty in his "*wilāyah al-faqīh*".

Now, in the Shī'ite *sūfī* tradition, the word *wilāyah* and the word *walāyah* are often used in one meaning as seen in Khomeini's and Shāhābādī's understanding of the two words although there is some semantic difference between the two words as commentators of the Qur'an have explained as already seen. Yet, this should not be regarded as a confusion of the *wilāyah* with the *walāyah*. To use the two words in one sense seems to have originated in the theory of divine names in the School of the Unity of Existence. As I mentioned earlier in my talk, the word *wilāyah* originated in one of the 99 divine names, *wāḥid*, while the word *walāyah* also originated in another divine name, *walī*.

According to the School of the Unity of Existence, the divine names are regarded as belonging to the existential level of the *Wāhidīyah* in which plurality exists in the form of unity (*kathrah fī-l-wahdah*). In this level of being, the conceptual differences which man experiences in his ordinary life do not matter any longer. Because all the divine names are united in the *Wāhidīyah*, distinction among them becomes meaningless. This may be the reason for the confusion of the Shī'ite Ulamā with a *sūfī* tendency in their usage of the word *wilāyah* and the word *walāyah*. And their understanding of the divine names in this manner enabled them to make up their *wilāyah* theory after the model of the *sūfī walāyah* theory.



## NOTES

- 1) Ayatollah Khomeini, *Wilāyat-e Faqīh*, Tehran, 1357 in Iranian calendar, pp. 58-68.
- 2) Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shī'ite Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 215.
- 3) According to this Koranic story, God offered trust to the heavens and the earth and mountains, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! he has proved a tyrant and fool. The word "trust" (Arabic amānah) here is interpreted to signify al-wilāyah al-ilāhīyah in the tradition of the Shī'ite theology.
- 4) E.g. the 6th Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq has interpreted the trust which God offered to man in the cosmogonical story in the Qur'ān to be the same as the wilāyah which Alī, Amīr al-mu'minīn, used to have. See Tabātabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, Vol. 16, Tehran, 1362 in Iranian calendar, p. 376.
- 5) Shahīd Thānī, *Masālik al-afhām, kitāb al-salāt*, Volume 1, 2 Vols., Litho., 1276/1859.
- 6) Ayatollah Shāhābādī, *Rashahāt al-Bihār*, Tehran, 1358 in Iranian calendar, pp. 38-39.
- 7) *Ibid.*, pp. 44-48.
- 8) S.J. Ashtiyānī, *Hasht az nazar-e Falsafeh o 'irfān*, Nahzat-e Zanān-e Mosalmān, undated, p. 179.
- 9) Al-Qushairi, *Sharh Asmā Allāh al-Husnā*, Beirut, 1986, p. 195.
- 10) Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Vol. 9, Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1984, p. 251.
- 11) Dr. Izutsu, in his "Key philosophical concepts in Taoism & Sufism," The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1966, has used the word sainthood for the walāyah for the sake of convenience, but he himself says that whether this translation is appropriate or not is another question. Henri Corbin is also hesitant to translate this word into French sainteté (l'intériorisation du sens) *Eranos*, 1958.
- 12) Al-Tirmidhī, Othmān Yahyā (ed.), *Kitāb Khatm al-Awliyā*, Beirut, Mulhaq Ta'rīkhī 1965, pp. 499-500. Brockelmann attributes it to Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī.
- 13) Ibn Arabī, *Al-Futūhāt al-Makkīyah*, Vol. 1, Beirut, Dār Sādir, p. 118.

- 14) Al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifāt*, Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1357/1938, p. 80.
- 15) Ayatollah Khomeini, *Misbāh al-Hidāyah*, Tehran, 1360 in Iranian calendar, p. 15.
- 16) *Ibid.*, p. 74.

**Key Words:** *Walāyah, Wilāyah, Al-wilāyah al-takwīnīyah, Qurb, Haqīqah al-haqā'iq*