

**Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim Doctrines
&
Proofs of Imamat from The Holy Quran**

**Researched and Compiled by:
Noorallah Juma, Ph.D.**

Researcher's Note

Ya Ali Madad. Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam has asked us to articulate and understand the concept of Imamat. In order to implement the guidance of the Holy Imam, I have prepared this document and sincerely hope that it will stimulate us to deepen our knowledge of Imamat.

Let us supplicate to our beloved Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam to bestow Sunshine in our hearts, light in our foreheads, and the inner vision of the Truth in our intellects. Ameen.

Noorallah Juma
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Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim Doctrines

The first six articles of Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim doctrines presented in the preamble of the constitution are reproduced below:

- (A) The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims affirm the Shahada 'La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulu-Ilah', the Tawhid therein and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Salla-llahu 'alayhi wa-sallam) is the last and final Prophet of Allah. Islam, as revealed in the Holy Qur'an, is the final message of Allah to mankind, and is universal and eternal. The Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) through the divine revelation from Allah prescribed rules governing spiritual and temporal matters.
- (B) In accordance to the Shia doctrine, tradition, and interpretation of history, the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) designated and appointed his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Mawlana Ali Amiru-l-Mu'minin ('Alayhi-s-salam), to be the first Imam to continue the Ta'wil and Ta'lim of Allah's final message and to guide the murids, and proclaimed that the Imam should continue by heredity through Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.) and his daughter Hazrat Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, Khatun-i-Jannat ('Alayha-s-salam).
- (C) Succession to Imam is by way of Nass, it being the absolute prerogative of the Imam of the time to appoint his successor from amongst any of his male descendants whether they be sons or remoter issue.
- (D) The authority of the Imam in Ismaili Tariqah is testified by Bayah by the murid to the Imam which is an act of acceptance by the murid of the permanent spiritual bond between the Imam and the murid. This allegiance unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood. It is distinct from the allegiance of the individual murid to his land of abode.
- (E) From the time of the Imam of Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.), the Imams of Ismaili Muslims have ruled over territories and peoples over various areas of the world at different periods of history and, in accordance with the needs of the time, have given rules of conduct and constitutions in conformity with the Islamic concepts of unity, brotherhood, justice, tolerance and goodwill.
- (F) Historically and in accordance with Ismaili tradition, the Imam of the time is concerned with spiritual advancement as well as the improvement of the quality of life of his murids. The Imam's Ta'lim lights the murid's path to spiritual enlightenment and vision. In temporal matters, the Imam guides the murids, and motivates them to develop their potential.
- (G) Mawlana Hazrat Imam Shah Karim al Hussaini, His Highness Prince Aga Khan, is direct lineal descent from the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) through Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.) and Hazrat Bibi Fatima (A.S.), is the Forty-Ninth Imam of the Ismaili Muslims.

PROOFS OF IMAMAT FROM THE HOLY QURAN

The verse (36:12) reveals that God has encompassed everything – intellectual, spiritual and physical – in the light of the most noble Imam. Therefore, according to the principles of Qur'anic wisdom, it is clear that all subjects are contained in the subject of Imāmat and all words in the word Imām.

With respect to enlightenment, the Imam's Ta'lim lights the murid's path to spiritual enlightenment and vision. In order to understand this role clearly, it is necessary to examine the following 25 tawils from 'A Thousand Wisdoms':

1. Ta'wil of word 'Itā'ah' (Obedience to God, the Prophet and the Imam):

"The holy Prophet said to Hazrat Ali: "He who obeys me, indeed obeys Allah and he who disobeys me, indeed disobeys Allah and he who obeys you, indeed obeys me and he who disobeys you, indeed disobeys me." (al-Mustradrak, III, 121). This Hadith is an exegesis of verse (4:59) about obedience." [Source: Tawil 76: A Thousand Wisdoms]

2. Ta'wil of word 'Uli'l-amr' (The custodians of the Divine commands, the true Imams):

"Verse (4:59) says: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and the ulu'l-amr from amongst you." That is, in addition to Allah and the Prophet, obedience to the Imam from the progeny of the Prophet, whose Imamatus is established from the Qur'an and Hadith, is obligatory. Contrary to this, world kings and rulers cannot be the ulu'l-amr, nor is any example of them found in the age of Prophethood, the ideal age of Islam. In the same surah in verse (4:54) there is mention of giving of the Book, the wisdom and a great kingdom to the Progeny of Ibrahim and here, according to the context of the subject, by progeny of Ibrahim are meant to be Muhammad (s.a.s.) and his progeny." [Source: Tawil 133: A Thousand Wisdoms]

3. Ta'wil of word 'Imām' (Guide):

"The following hadith is about the virtues of the Qur'an: "Indeed, everything has a heart and the heart of the Qur'an is Yâ-Sin (Surah 36)" (Trimidhi, V, 162). One main reason for this title of Yâ-Sin is that the Treasure of the treasures of God is mentioned in it, which is: "And We have encompassed everything in the manifest Imam." (36:12). That is, God enfolds the universe in the living and present Imam and also unfolds it from him." [Source: Tawil 106: A Thousand Wisdoms]

4. Ta'wil of word 'Kullu shay'in' (Everything, all things):

"The wise Qur'an is the perfect and complete Book in whose exoteric and esoteric aspects there is explanation of everything (16:89). The magnificent and unique principle which is the treasure of its heart cannot be praised by us human beings and that universal principle full of quintessence (i.e., the pure, highly concentrated essence) of wisdom is: "And We have encompassed everything in a manifest Imam." (36:12). That is, all spiritual and intellectual subtle things of the kingdom of God can be found gathered and enfolded in the manifest Imam, provided someone recognizes himself or herself." [Source: Tawil 732: A Thousand Wisdoms]

5. Ta'wil of word 'Ayat' (The luminous personality of the Imam in which all signs are encompassed):

"Mawlâ Ali has said: "Anâ âyâtu'llâhi wa aminu'llâh, i.e. I am Allah's signs and I am the trustworthy of Allah." (Kawkab, p.208). Âyât in the sense of the signs of Divine power or miracles, are in four places: (i) The higher world, (ii) the wise Qur'ân, (iii) the external universe and (iv) the personal world, but according to the Qur'ân (36:12) all these âyât (signs) are encompassed in the light of the Imâm-i Mubin. That is, his light is the higher world, he is the speaking Qur'ân, the quintessence of the universe and a luminous personal world in true sense." [Source: Tawil 10: A Thousand Wisdoms]

6. Ta'wil of word 'Ahsâ' (He has encompassed them):

"It is said in verse (78:29): "And We have encompassed everything in (the form of) a book." The meaning of everything cannot be complete without intellects and souls, nor can a merely silent book possess all intellectual and spiritual (moving) things. Therefore, it is true to say that this is a description of the speaking book, i.e., the Imâm-i mubîn" [Source: Tawil 33: A Thousand Wisdoms]

7. Ta'wil of word 'Ma'a'l-Qur'ân' (With the Qur'ân):

"Externally Ali (Imam of the time) is a pure personality and internally a light. Externally, the Qur'ân is a glorious heavenly Book and internally (in the Prophet and the Imam) it is light. This shows that externally Ali and Qur'ân are separate from each other, but internally they are not only together, they are one light." [Source: Tawil 820: A Thousand Wisdoms]

8. Ta'wil of word 'Ma'a'l-Qur'ân' (With the Qur'ân):

"It is said in Hadith: "Ali is with the Qur'ân and the Qur'ân is with Ali, they will never separate from each other until they come to me at the pond (of Kawthar)." (Yanâbi, p. 103). The wisdom of this is that Ali (i.e., every true Imam) in his spirituality and luminosity is with the Qur'ân and the Qur'ân in its spirituality and luminosity is with Ali. Thus, the Qur'ân and Ali are one light in spirituality and this oneness will continue until the resurrection takes place and they come to the pond of Kawthar." [Source: Tawil 819: A Thousand Wisdoms]

9. Ta'wil of word 'Hâdin' (Guide, Imâm):

"It is said in verse (13:7): "Verily you are a warner, and to every nation (qawm) there is a guide." (See Shi'i translations and commentaries of the Qurân and the books on the Manâqib of Mawla Ali). From the time of Âdam till the Resurrection of resurrections, the people of every age are a nation and for every nation God has appointed a guide, who is the Imam of the time." [Source: Tawil 940: A Thousand Wisdoms]

10. Ta'wil of word 'Yastanbitûna' (They deduce, discover, they do istinbâat):

"Istinbâat primarily means "to dig a well and bring out water for the first time". Secondly it is used in the sense of thinking, reflection, to penetrate deeply (Qâmûs, p. 77). For instance, istanbata'sh-shay' means to reveal a thing from its hidden state.

Verse (4:83), in which it is used, clearly means that after the holy Prophet, it is the ulu'l-amr, the Imams from the progeny of the holy Prophet, who bring out the inner meaning of

the Qur'anic verses, because it is they who know the ta'wil (inner meaning) of the Qur'ân." [Source: Tawil 980: A Thousand Wisdoms]

11. Ta'wil of word 'Muslimah' (The community of the pure Imams):

"A true Muslim is the one who submits himself to God. In this sense, Hazrat Ibrâhîm and Hazrat Ismâîl prayed: "Our Lord! Make us submitters to You and of our progeny a submitting community (ummatan muslimah) to You (by true obedience)." (2:128). This shows that ummatan muslimah is the community of the pure Imâms who are the progeny of Hazrat Ibrâhîm and Hazrat Ismâîl (See Daâ'im, I, 33). " [Source: Tawil 812: A Thousand Wisdoms]

12. Ta'wil of word 'Madînat al-ilm' (The city of knowledge):

"It is stated in Hadith: " I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate, so whoever wants knowledge let him come through the gate." (Sharh, I, 89). That is, whoever wants the treasures of the knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty, and the truth of certainty, then it is necessary and imperative for him to enter the city of knowledge of the Prophet by walking in the light of the unprecedented guidance of the Ali of the time." [Source: Tawil 804: A Thousand Wisdoms]

13. Ta'wil of word 'Ism a'zam' (Supreme Name of God):

"Imâm Jafar as-Sâdiq has said "Allah has concealed one name, i.e., the supreme Name and He has 360 names." (Lughât, Sîn, p. 175). The supreme Name or the great secret is in two forms: as a word and as a person. As a word, it is "al-hayyu'l-qayyûm" (the Everliving, the Everlasting) (2:255; 3:2) and as a person it is the True Guide, i.e., the Prophet and the Imam of the time (see Wajh, p. 124-129)" [Source: Tawil 64: A Thousand Wisdoms]

14. Ta'wil of word 'Asmâ' (The luminous personality of the Imam in which all signs are encompassed):

"It is mentioned in a Hadith: "Indeed, Allah has ninety-nine names. He who memorises their number (and recites them), enters paradise." (Sarâ'ir, p. 69).

It is not possible to understand the meaning of this Hadith without ta'wil, and the ta'wil is that all other names of God are encompassed in His supreme Name and that supreme Name is the Imam of the time. A mu'min who knows this enters paradise, because this knowledge is tantamount to enumerating His ninety-nine names." [Source: Tawil 65: A Thousand Wisdoms]

15. Ta'wil of word 'Awliyâ Allah' (Chosen friends of God):

"In verse (10:62) God says about His friends: "Lo! verily for the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve." These friends of God are the progeny of the holy Prophet whom God has exalted by granting them the ta'wili miracles of the glorious Qur'ân, because the greatest miracle of the holy Prophet which is intellectual, permanent and in the form of knowledge, is indeed the wise Qur'ân. The Qur'ân has two aspects: tanzil and ta'wil. Tanzil or exoteric aspect was conveyed to the people by the Prophet himself and for ta'wil or esoteric aspect, he appointed his successor." [Source: Tawil 137: A Thousand Wisdoms]

16. Ta'wil of word 'Ahl adh-dhikr' (The Pure Imâms):

"Dhikr is one of names of the holy Prophet (65:10-11). The people of dhikr therefore, are the family of the holy Prophet. Dhikr is also one of the names of the Qur'ân (21:50), and so the people of dhikr, are the people of the Qur'ân. Dhikr is also the ism-i azam (supreme Name), i.e., the asmâ'ul-husnâ (the beautiful Names) and therefore, the people of dhikr are the people of ism-i azam, the pure Imâms. Thus, by the people of dhikr are meant the Imâms who guide the people and are enriched with the given knowledge (ilm-i laduni), and therefore, they are able to answer every difficult question related to knowledge." [Source: Tawil 154: A Thousand Wisdoms]

17. Ta'wil of word 'Ta'wil' (Hikmat: Wisdom):

"Regarding the Qur'ân, Mawlâ Ali has said: "Its zahir or exoteric aspect is an obligatory act, its bâtin or esoteric aspect is hidden and veiled knowledge which is known to and written with us." [Source: Tawil 195: A Thousand Wisdoms]

"The Book and the wisdom are mentioned together in numerous verses of the Qur'ân such as (2:129). In such cases by the Book is meant tanzil (zahir, exoteric) and by wisdom ta'wil (batin, esoteric), as is implied in verse (2:151): "(O the group of Imams!) as We have sent among you a messenger from among you who recites to you Our verses (in spirituality), purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom." [Source: Tawil 187: A Thousand Wisdoms]

18. Ta'wil of word 'Ta'wil' (Esoteric Wisdom):

"The day its ta'wil comes, those who were previously forgetful of it will say: "Indeed, the Messengers of our Lord brought the truth (haqq)." (7:53). By the haqq (truth) is meant the walâyat of Ali. Thus, those who had forgotten the ta'wil and the custodian of ta'wil, namely Hazrat Ali, will feel great remorse. (al-haqq = walâyat of Ali, see Sharh, II, 237; Al-Mustadrak (in which is mentioned that the truth is with Ali), III 135)." [Source: Tawil 198: A Thousand Wisdoms]

19. Ta'wil of word 'Marifah' (Recognition of God):

"It is said in a Hadith: "Recognize Allah by Allah" (Lughât, Ayn, p. 82; Ahadith-i Mathnawi, pp. 2, 106). That is, the recognition of God is possible in the illumination of His light and His light is the holy Prophet and the Imam of the time." [Source: Tawil 835: A Thousand Wisdoms]

20. Ta'wil of word 'Law lâka' (If it were not for you):

"It is said in a Hadith-i qudsi: "If it were not for you (O Muhammad), I would not have created the heavens (i.e., universe)." Thus a Prophet so beloved of God has said to Mawlâ Ali: "You are from me and I am from you." [Source: Tawil 788: A Thousand Wisdoms]

21. Ta'wil of words 'An Aliyy' (Narrated by Ali):

"Mawlâ Ali reports that the holy prophet said: "I am the house of wisdom and 'Ali is its door. (Tirmidhi, V, 637).

Question: Which wisdom is mentioned in this Hadith?

Answer: The wisdom of the Qur'ân, the Hadith and spirituality, whose house is the Prophet and whose door, the Ali of the time." [Source: Tawil 629: A Thousand Wisdoms]

22. Ta'wil of words 'Qâla Rasûl Allâh' (The Messenger of God said):

"The holy Prophet said: "I have left behind among you two weighty things as a rope reaching the earth from heaven, one of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allâh and my itrat (progeny), the people of my house. They will never separate until they will come to me at the pond (of Kawthar)." These two unprecedented and magnificent things, each of which is weightier than the heaven and the earth, or rather the entire universe, are the Qur'ân and its Teacher (the Imam) whom the Prophet appointed as his khalifah or successor. It is they who are the rope of God which is stretched from the heaven to the earth to lift the people of the earth to the heaven (Sharh, X, 481)." [Source: Tawil 669: A Thousand Wisdoms]

23. Ta'wil of word 'Nafs' (Soul):

"Mawlâ Ali has said: "He who recognizes his soul, indeed recognizes his Lord." However, it should be noted that the treasure of recognition does not exist in the ordinary human soul until the Holy Spirit is attained from the True Guide. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is in the Imam of the time and he, in reality, is your own soul. If you have recognized the Imam of the time, then you should know that you have recognized yourself and your Lord." [Source: Tawil 889: A Thousand Wisdoms]

24. Ta'wil of word 'Ati'ni' (Obey me):

"It is said in a Hadith-i qudsi: "O My servant! Obey me, I will make you like My Image (mithâl = sûrat-i Rahmân) everliving that you will never die, mighty that you will never be humiliated and rich that you will never be needy." (Arba rasâil Ismâ'iliyyah, p. 15). This is the teaching of the paradise of knowledge and the greatest glad news." [Source: Tawil 77: A Thousand Wisdoms]

25. Ta'wil of word 'Ali' (Vision of Ali):

"The holy Prophet said: "To look at the face of Ali is worship." (al-Mustadrak, III, 152-153; Sharh, IX, 381; Kawkab, p. 161). Ali's vision is worship because of the fact that he is the speaking Qur'ân, the supreme Name, the mazhar of the Divine light, the mirror which shows God and he is the legatee of the holy Prophet. This is why the true lovers yearn for the sacred vision of the Ali of the time with heart and soul." [Source: Tawil 621: A Thousand Wisdoms]