



## *Mubāhala* from the Perspective of Imam Khamenei



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### Abstract

The *mubāhala* (mutual imprecation) is one of Islam's most important and honorable events, meaning praying and supplicating to God with sincerity and complete attention. If two individuals or groups pray against each other to God, it means cursing. It is the title of a significant event in the early days of Islam, which took place between the Prophet of Islam and the Christians of Najran. One of the primary goals of *mubāhala* is to prove the prophethood of Muhammad and the vicegerency of Ali, as well as the virtues and superiority of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the House). Imam Khamenei has expressed many important points and insights about *mubāhala* and the relevant Quranic verse on various occasions. The results of the research show that *mubāhala* is of great importance from the viewpoint of Imam Khamenei and can be considered important evidence for the unity of God, prophethood, vicegerency, and the virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. The method used in this article is descriptive-analytical and the data is collected through library research.

**Keywords:** *Mubāhala*, Imam Khamenei, vicegerency verses, virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, Hazrat-i Zahrā.

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## Introduction

The Holy Quran contains numerous verses regarding the vicegerency and virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, one of the most significant being the noble verse of *Mubāhala*. This verse, unanimously among Shia scholars and a large number of Sunni exegetes, serves as crucial evidence not only for the confirmation of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam in the face of the Christians but also as strong evidence for the virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the vicegerency of Imam Ali.

In terms of the historical background of this discussion, it can be said that the noble verse of *Mubāhala* has been extensively examined, interpreted, and expounded in various dimensions in most Sunni exegetical sources such as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī*, *Tafsīr al-Durr al-Manthūr*, and *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, as well as in all Shia hadith sources including *Tafsīr al-Qumī*, *Al-Tibyān*, *Majma‘ al-Bayān*, *Al-Burhān*, *Kanz al-Daqā‘iq*, *Minhāj al-Šādiqīn*, *Al-Mīzān*. However, familiarity with the viewpoints of a knowledgeable jurist, sage, exegete, and statesman who also leads an Islamic political system can provide valuable insights. Therefore, the statements and speeches of Imam Khamenei on various occasions regarding this significant and historically influential event have been collected. After a brief discussion about the importance of the revelation of the noble verse from the perspectives of the Shia and Sunni, the discussions of the esteemed Leader in nine main dimensions have been reported, examined, and analyzed.

Although, unfortunately, a comprehensive interpretation of the verse of *Mubāhala* by the esteemed leader is not available, it can be generally stated that a fresh and innovative exposition of the verses of the Holy Quran, such as describing *Mubāhala* as a form of spiritual authority and presenting it as a model for emphasizing the preaching and expression of truth and paying attention to the needs of the Islamic society concerning the Islamic governance, and negating the powers of arrogance, and adapting the verses of the Holy Quran to historical and contemporary issues are among the



exegetical characteristics of the esteemed Leader. This approach is also observed in his views and statements regarding the verse of *Mubāhala*. In some cases, the uprising of Imam Husayn is likened to *mubāhala*, and the Supreme Leader considers his movement and his confrontation with disbelief, by bringing himself, his wife, and his children to the scene, as an example of *Mubāhala*, which has occurred in history. He also views the confrontation of the righteous front in the Islamic Republic with the global front of disbelief as similar to *mubāhala*, and it is hoped that it will continue on this basis.

### The Meaning of *Mubāhala*

In vocabulary, “*mubāhala*” comes from the word “*bahl*,” and Raghīb Isfahani says: “The origin of ‘*bahl*’ means being unsupervised and without oversight. A camel released from its tether or its mark, or a camel whose udder strap has been loosened is called ‘*al-bāhil*.’ ‘*al-bahl*’ and ‘*al-ibtihāl*’ in supplication mean imploring or beseeching, as in the verse ﴿ثُمَّ﴾ ﴿تَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلُ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾: (then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars) (Quran 3:61)” (Raghīb Iṣfahānī 1991, 149). If “*ibtihāl*” is also said to be a supplication, it is because there is a kind of abandoning oneself and turning to the Almighty in it (Muṣṭafawī 2020, 1: 376). Many lexicographers (see: Muṣṭafawī 2020, 1: 375) and some exegetes, such as Ṭabṛasī (Ṭabṛasī 1993, 2: 761), have considered it to mean curse, and Allamah Ṭabāṭabā’ī has stated that *mubāhala* originally means curse, then it has been used in the sense of supplication and entreaty, which is accompanied by insistence and urgency (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1970, 3: 224). It may well be for the same reason that Raghīb Isfahani points out that someone who interprets “*ibtihāl*” as a curse does so because he understands “*ibtihāl*” in this verse to mean curse and condemnation (Rāghīb Iṣfahānī 1996, 149).



It can be said that “*mubāhala*” actually means a supplication that is accompanied by abandoning oneself to reach a state of purity and complete attention, to request curse and condemnation for the liars. Otherwise, the term “*mubāhala*” does not mean curse and condemnation (Muṣṭafawī 2020, 1: 375). This is also evident from the hadith of Imam Sadiq who says: “Al-ibtihāl is raising both hands and spreading them out at the time of shedding tears, then supplicate”<sup>1</sup> (Kulaynī 1986, 2:479). Additionally, the Supreme Leader also regards the day of “*Mubāhala*” as a day of supplication, attention, seeking intercession, and holding onto divine favors (Statements on the Fifth Anniversary of the Departure of Imam Khomeini, 14/03/1373, <https://khl.ink/f/2717>) which is an affirmation of the above-mentioned hadith.

In terms of terminology, the day of “*Mubāhala*” is the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah (Ṭurayḥī 1983, 5: 327). On that day, the Messenger of Allah and his family took the hands of Ali, Hasan, and Husayn, and Fatimah followed from behind. Then he said: “These are our sons, our souls, and our women. Bring your souls, your sons, and your women so that we may engage in *mubāhala*” (Makārim Shīrāzī 2007, 9: 236).

### The Verse of *Mubāhala*

In verse 61 of *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān*, we read:

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَابْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا  
وَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾ (آل عمران /  
(٦١)

١ . امام صادق عليه السلام: «و الإبتيهال رفع اليدين و تمدهما و ذلك عند الدعوة ثم ادع».



“Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, ‘Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls, and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars.’” (Quran 3:61)

### **The Occasion of the Revelation of the Verse of *Mubāhala* from Shi‘ī Sources**

In the Tafsir of *Qummī*, it has been narrated from Imam Sadiq that the Christians of Najran, accompanied by three of their elders named Ahtam, ‘Āqīb, and Seyed, came to the presence of the Messenger of Allah and performed their prayer by ringing the bell. The companions of the Messenger of Allah expressed their concern, saying: ‘O Messenger of Allah, this is your mosque, the mosque of Islam, why should they ring the bell here?’ The Messenger of Allah replied: ‘Leave them be and do not interfere in their affairs.’ After they finished their prayer, they came to the Messenger of Allah and asked: ‘What religion do you invite people to?’ The Messenger of Allah replied: ‘I invite people to testify that there is no god but Allah, and to testify that I am the Messenger of Allah, and to testify that Jesus is the servant and creation of Allah, who eats, drinks, and speaks.’ They asked: ‘If Jesus was a creation and servant of Allah, then who was his father?’ At this point, the Messenger of Allah received a revelation to ask them about their beliefs regarding Adam, whether he was a servant and creation of Allah, and whether he ate, drank, spoke, and engaged in marital relations. The Messenger of Allah asked them these questions, and they confirmed that Adam was, indeed, a servant and creation of Allah, and engaged in all these activities. The Messenger of Allah then asked them: ‘If Adam was a servant and creation of Allah, then who was his father?’ The Christians were astonished and defeated, and Allah revealed the verses: (إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ): “Indeed, the case of Jesus with Allah is like the case of Adam: He created him from



dust” (Quran 3:59), and the verse (فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ): “Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you” until (فَتَجْعَلُ لعنت الله على الكاذبين): “and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars” (Quran 3:61).

The Messenger of Allah told them: ‘Then let us engage in *mubāhala* (mutual imprecation), if I am truthful, may the curse of Allah be upon you, and if I am lying, may the curse of Allah be upon me.’ The Christians said: ‘You have come to a fair proposition.’ They agreed to this, and when they returned home, their leaders and elders consulted each other and said: ‘If he himself comes to *mubāhala* with his family, we will know that he is not a prophet, but if he sends his relatives, we will not engage in *mubāhala*, because whoever puts his family and loved ones in danger at the time of crisis, proves the truth of his claim.’ The next morning, they went to the Messenger of Allah and saw that only the Messenger of Allah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn (peace be upon them) had come for *mubāhala*. They asked: ‘Who are these?’ They were informed: ‘This man is the cousin, successor, and son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah, and that woman is his daughter, Fatimah, and these two children are his grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn.’ The Christians dispersed and presented themselves to the Messenger of Allah, saying: ‘We are willing to satisfy you, exempt us from *mubāhala*.’ The Messenger of Allah made a compromise with them, and the Christians returned to their land (Qummī 1984, 1: 104).

### **The Occasion of the Revelation of the Verse of *Mubāhala* from Sunnī Sources**

The occasion of the revelation of the verse of *Mubāhala* is considered significant in the eyes of Sunnī scholars as well. Many scholars and researchers from the Sunnī tradition have discussed this event in their works, indicating its importance (Mar‘ashī Najafī 1988, 3:46). For example, Ḥākīm Nayshābūrī mentions in his *Mustadrak* that there are



multiple reports from Ibn ‘Abbās and others stating that the Prophet took the hand of Ali, and held Hasan and Husayn, with Fatimah following behind, and addressed the delegation from Najran, saying, “These are our sons, ourselves, our women, so bring your sons, yourselves, and your women, and let us invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars”<sup>1</sup> (Hākīm Nayshābūrī 2006, 3:150).

Similarly, Tha‘labī writes in his *Tafsīr* that at the time of the *Mubāhala*, the Prophet was holding Husayn, while taking the hand of Hasan, and Fatimah was following behind him. At that moment, the bishops of Najran said, “O Christians, I see faces, if they asked Allah to remove a mountain from its place, it would be removed. So do not call down [the curse] lest you perish”<sup>2</sup> (Tha‘labī 2001, 3: 85).

### **The Viewpoints of Imam Khamenei about the Verse of *Mubāhala***

Unfortunately, a comprehensive and complete interpretation of the noble verse of *Mubāhala* is not available from Imam Khamenei; however, on various occasions, profound and precise statements have been made by him regarding the event of *Mubāhala*, indicative of a deep and insightful perspective, which are referred to in this article, and it is hoped that a comprehensive interpretation of his views will be presented at an appropriate time, to quench the thirst of those who seek pure Quranic teachings.

The following subjects present the invaluable points expressed by him:

#### **1. The Significance of *Mubāhala***

<sup>1</sup> . «هؤلاء أبنائنا وأنفسنا ونسائنا فهلّموا أنفسكم وأبنائكم ونسائكم ثمّ نبتهل فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين».

<sup>2</sup> . «يا معشر النصارى أنى لأرى وجوهاً لو سألوا الله أن يزيل جبلاً من مكانه لأزاله فلا تبتهلوا فتهملكوا».



The incident of *Mubāhala* holds significant importance from two perspectives. Firstly, in terms of the individuals who participated alongside the Prophet Muhammad in this event, and secondly, the purpose for which the Christians of Najran were invited to *Mubāhala*. The esteemed Leader's statement on this matter is as follows:

The day of *Mubāhala* is a day when the honored elements of humanity are brought to the scene by the noble Prophet of Islam. The important point about *Mubāhala* is that 'our souls and your souls' (*anfusanā wa anfusakum*) are involved; 'our women and your women' (*nisā'anā wa nisā'akum*) are involved; the noblest of individuals are chosen by the noble Prophet and brought to the scene for a dialogue in which the distinction between truth and falsehood should be made apparent, and a clear sign should be displayed before everyone. There is no precedent where, in the way of preaching the religion and expressing the truth, the Prophet takes his dear ones, his children, his daughter, and the Commander of the Faithful [Imam Ali] - who is his brother and successor - and brings them to the middle of the field; the exceptional nature of the day of *Mubāhala* is in this manner. (Statements made in a meeting with a group of students and clerics, 22/09/1388, <https://khl.ink/f/8513>)

The story of *Mubāhala* is significant from the perspective of those present at the event, as the most eminent figures in the creation and the most unique among them were present in this story. At the forefront were the Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, followed by Imam Ali, his successor and the protector and guardian of the prophethood after the Messenger of God. Then, there was Hazrat Fatimah Zahra, the daughter of the noble Prophet of Islam, known as the Lady of the Worlds (*sayyidat al-nisā al-ālamīn*). After them were Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, who are the leaders of the youth of paradise and the continuation of the prophethood. In addition to the numerous verses and hadiths that have emphasized their status, even their enemies acknowledge their divine and





spiritual status, to the extent that the bishops of Najran admitted to this fact, stating: “O Christians! I see faces, if they ask God to move a mountain from its place, He would do it. Do not engage in *Mubāhala*, for you will be destroyed” (Tha‘labī 2001, 3: 85).

## 2. Mubāhala and Monotheism

Verses 35 to 60 of the *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* are about the Prophet Jesus. In these verses, discussions about the birth and status of the Prophet Jesus, the personality and virtues of his mother, the Virgin Mary, and his conversation with the angels and the heavenly table, as well as other issues, are mentioned. After lengthy discussions about the Prophet Jesus, Allah instructs the Prophet of Islam that if the Christians do not accept the true monotheism after all these arguments and logical discussions, they should engage in *Mubāhala* (mutual imprecation) so that the truth becomes clear. The esteemed Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, regarding the importance of this event in relation to the unity of God, states:

The third decade of Dhu al-Hijjah is a period in which important events take place, including perhaps the most important, the event of *Mubāhala*, where the issue is also the issue of unity. I mean the debate between the Prophet and the Christians of that day, the Christians of Najran, which led to *Mubāhala*, was a discussion about the Prophet Jesus, whom the Prophet stated that he is a servant and prophet of God, and they said other things; it was agreed to engage in mutual imprecation, and then, in the events of *Mubāhala*, that you have heard about, they were forced to retreat. (Statements in a televised speech on the occasion of Eid al-Aḏḥā, 10/05/1399, <https://khl.ink/f/46146>)

The statement of Imam Khamenei signifies that the basis and foundation of *Mubāhala* are based on two different perspectives regarding the reality of Prophet Jesus: The first perspective is the belief of the Christians in Prophet Jesus, whom they considered to possess the status of



divinity, and their argument was based on his miraculous birth, as Prophet Jesus, unlike other humans, was born without a father. The Christians believed in the divinity of Jesus and considered him as one of the three persons of the Trinity. However, according to the Quran, the belief in the divinity of Prophet Jesus is incorrect, and his creation is similar to that of other creatures, and the absence of a father is not evidence of someone's divinity. The Quran uses the creation of Prophet Adam as an example to refute this theory and states:

﴿إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾ (آل عمران/ ٥٩)

“Indeed, the case of Jesus with Allah is like the case of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.”  
(Quran 3:59)

This verse illustrates that the commonality between Adam and Jesus is their creation, as like all other creations, they are also the creation of the Almighty God.

Therefore, the basis of the event of *Mubāhala* is to prove the unity of God and negate polytheism and trinity. Despite having evidence, the Christians of Najran insisted on their claim. Therefore, God commanded His Prophet to engage in *Mubāhala* to prove the truthfulness of the matter, and thus He said:

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَ نِسَاءَنَا وَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَ أَنْفُسَنَا وَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾ (آل عمران/ ٦١)

“Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, ‘Come! Let us call our sons



and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.” (Quran 3:61)

### 3. *Mubāhala*, Prophethood and Guardianship (*wilāya*)

The esteemed Leader considers the event of *Mubāhala* as proof of the prophethood of the noble Prophet of Islam, as well as proof of the *wilayah* (guardianship) of Imam Ali. The Leader states: "The day of *Mubāhala* is a very important day; it is the day of prophethood, and it is the day of *wilayah*. The story of *Mubāhala* is both proof of prophethood and proof of *wilayah* and leadership. For this reason, this day is very important. We hope that, God willing, the Almighty will keep us steadfast on these blessed paths." (Statements made during a meeting with Friday prayer leaders from across the country, 05/05/1401, <https://khl.ink/f/50689>)

In another speech, the Leader also regards the event of *Mubāhala* as a reference to the issue of *wilāyah* similar to the significance of the event of *Ghadīr Khumm*, stating: "The reason for the importance of Eid al-Ghadir is the issue of *wilayah*. In this month of Dhu al-Hijjah, we have both 'Eid al-Ghadīr and the day of *Mubāhala*, which also signifies the issue of *wilāyah*. Due to these two memories, both related to *wilayah*, some of the great figures have called this month 'the month of *wilāyah*' and the best of months" (Speech during a meeting with the officials and agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the occasion of Eid al-Ghadir, 20/04/1369, <https://khl.ink/f/2335>).

In explaining the statements of the esteemed Leader, it should be said: Firstly, the event of *Mubāhala* was a clear demonstration of the faith and honesty of the invitation of the noble Prophet Muhammad. Because if a person does not have complete faith in his relationship with his Creator, he would never enter such a field. It is certainly very dangerous as if their prayers are not answered and the punishment of the opponents is not



evident, the outcome would be nothing but embarrassment for the inviter. From this perspective, it is said that the Prophet's invitation to *mubāhala* is one of the signs of the sincerity of his invitation and his unwavering faith (Refer to Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 2: 581).

Secondly, although the verse of *Mubāhala* generally speaks about sons, women, and souls, Prophet Muhammad only took Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, his daughter, Fatimah, and Imam Ali to participate in the event of *Mubāhala*. Among “sons, women, and souls,” only these four individuals were deemed worthy to participate in *Mubāhala*. If any other individual or group, among the children of the Muslim community in Medina, women, wives, companions, or supporters, had the qualifications to participate, it was appropriate for the Prophet to bring at least three individuals from each category to fulfill the collective term “our sons, our women, ourselves.” However, the Prophet chose only two from “our sons” (*abnā'*), one from “our women” (*nisā'*), and only one from “our souls” (*anfus*), which is evidence that apart from these four individuals, no one else was deemed worthy of participating in *Mubāhala*.

Another point in the term “ourselves” is that the individual who qualifies for this term must possess excellence and qualities to the extent that he can be considered as “*nafs al-nabi'*” (the soul of the Prophet). Therefore, the words and phrases in the verse indicate the level of excellence of those who accompanied the Prophet in the event of *Mubāhala*. This verse not only refers to the excellence of Hasan and Husayn as the Prophet's sons and Fatimah as his daughter but also refers to Ali as “ourselves.” It considers this great personality of the human world as being at the level of the Prophet's soul, and what excellence is greater than a person reaching a level of spirituality and virtue that the Almighty God calls him the same as the soul of the Prophet. Therefore, this verse is undoubtedly evidence of the superiority of Imam Ali over all Muslims in the world (Subhānī Tabrīzī 1970, 7: 105). If we had no other evidence to prove the *wilāyah* (guardianship) of Imam Ali and his children except for



the event of *Mubāhala*, where he was mentioned as the soul of the Prophet, it would have been sufficient.

Fakhr Rāzī also, in his exegesis, points out that the implication of “our souls” refers to Imam Ali being the soul of the Prophet. Since the Prophet Muhammad is the best among all nations, indeed superior to all divine prophets, Imam Ali should also hold a similar position. Then, he refers to a Shia individual named Maḥmūd ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan Ḥimmaṣī<sup>1</sup>, who believed that Imam Ali was superior to all prophets except Prophet Muhammad. Fakhr Rāzī further states that the evidence that can be established for this belief is precisely the word “our souls.” Then, he adds that the implication of “ourselves” cannot be the Prophet himself because a human being does not call himself to a matter; rather, the implication must be someone other than himself. Scholars unanimously agree that the one referred to is none other than ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Therefore, the noble verse indicates that the life of Ali is like the life of the Prophet. Ultimately, it can be concluded that Imam Ali is equal in all virtues and perfections, except that due to consensus and narrations, no prophet will come after the Prophet Muhammad. (Refer to Fakhr Rāzī 1981, 8: 248)

#### 4. The virtue of Lady Fatimah in the verse of *Mubāhala*

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<sup>1</sup>. Maḥmūd ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan Ḥimmaṣī Rāzī, known as Sadid al-Dīn Ḥimmaṣī Rāzī, was a theologian of the Imamiyyah school in the sixth century AH. His student, Muntajab al-Dīn Rāzī, considered him a prominent scholar in the fields of theology and principles of jurisprudence (Muntajab al-Dīn Rāzī 2020, 107). Another student, Warām ibn Abī Firās, described him as the unique and brave protagonist of debates (Sayyid b. Ṭāwūs 1948, 146). Fakhr Rāzī, the prominent Sunnī theologian, has also been counted as one of his students (Muntajab al-Dīn Rāzī 2020, 429). Ḥimmaṣī has been associated with the Ḥillī theological school and is considered one of the rationalist theologians (Aṭā’ī Nazārī 2018, pp. 29-30). Ḥimmaṣī’s works are mostly in the field of theology, and his only book, “*Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlīd*,” is available and has been published by the Society of Qom Seminary Teachers.



As mentioned, the Verse of *Mubāhala* establishes the authenticity of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad while also highlighting the elevated status and position of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Furthermore, it confirms the leadership and caliphate of Imam Ali. The presence of specific individuals in this event signifies their exclusive competence and suitability to prove these three significant and pivotal matters. Among them is the presence of Fatimah Zahra. The Supreme Leader, in extensive remarks about her, has mentioned her role in the event of *Mubāhala*, considering it as one of her unique virtues. He stated:

In the verse of Mubahala: ‘And our women and your women,’ while there were many women around the Prophet - they were either his wives or close relatives, and perhaps some of the other daughters of the Prophet were also present - but ‘our women’ refers specifically to Faṭīmat al-Zahrā’, for what reason? It was for confronting the front of truth against the front of falsehood; this is the case. Faṭīmat al-Zahrā’ is the embodiment of these lofty and extraordinary truths. The virtues of Hazrat Zahrā’ are these... The issue in the verse of *Mubāhala* is the confrontation of the front of truth and the front of disbelief and falsehood; these are the important signs of Faṭīmat al-Zahrā’. (Statements in the meeting of the eulogists of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, 03/11/1400, <https://khl.ink/f/49448>)

In these remarks, two prominent virtues of Lady Fatimah are highlighted. One unique quality of her character was that she was the only woman present on the scene, despite the presence of other women. Another virtue was her unwavering commitment to truth, which placed her alongside her father, the Messenger of God, her husband, Imam Ali, and her two pure and infallible sons, who are the two Muslim Imams and divine proofs.

## 5. The Concept of *Mubāhala* and the Power of Faith



The Supreme Leader describes *Mubāhala* as a symbol of confidence, authority, and reliance on the truth. He states: “*Mubāhala* - which must be revered and is very important - is, in fact, a manifestation of the confidence and authority of faith and reliance on the truth” (Remarks in a meeting with the members of the Assembly of Experts at the end of the fifth term of the Assembly of Experts, 15/06/1397, <https://khl.ink/f/40421>).

The best explanation for this statement can be found in the words of Allamah Ṭabāṭabā’ī regarding the verse of *Mubāhala*, which can somewhat depict the harmony of both perspectives:

While *Mubāhala* is a challenge between the Prophet and the Christian leaders, extending the invitation to include children and women is aimed at making the protest more convincing. When someone curses his own family, the opposing party understands that he truly believes in his claim. This is because God has placed love and compassion for women and children in everyone’s heart. This is evident in the Quranic verse, where children are mentioned first, followed by women, and then one’s soul, as a reflection of the stronger and more enduring love for children.... The detailed enumeration of these points is another indication that the proposer is firm in his invitation and has complete faith and trust in the truth. It is as if he is proposing, ‘O Christians, let us all curse each other so that the curse of liars includes all of us or you, and thus encompasses our women and children as well.’ As a result, the offspring of liars will be eradicated from the earth, and the people of falsehood will be uprooted. (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1970, 3:223).

## 6. *Mubāhala* and the Declaration of Truth

One of the important points emphasized by the esteemed Leader from the verse of *Mubāhala* is the significance of expressing and declaring the truth. He has stated, “*Mubāhala* indicates the importance of expressing and declaring the truth. It brings the truth to the forefront by inviting others to



engage in *Mubāhala*, stating that whoever is on the right path will remain, and whoever is on the wrong path will be eradicated with divine punishment.” (Statements made during a meeting with a group of students and clergy on 22/09/1388, <https://khl.ink/f/8513>)

This understanding of the Leader’s statement is well explained by another statement he recently made regarding propagation, where he has proposed propagation as the foremost issue for scholars and seminaries, stating:

Today, the prevailing view in seminaries is that propagation is in second place. The first place is for other things [such as] scholarly positions and the like; “propagation” is in second place. We must pass through this view. Propagation is in the first place; I want to express this. Why do we say this? Because what do we know about the ultimate goal of religion? What does God’s religion do with us humans? Well, we have an ultimate goal, which is to elevate and raise us in the path of the vicegerency of God, in the path of becoming a complete human being, now whatever potential we have, this is the ultimate goal of religion. There are also intermediate and initial goals; for example, establishing justice: ﴿لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾ : “so that mankind may maintain justice” (Quran 57:25) or the formation of the Islamic system: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ﴾: “We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah’s leave” (Quran 4:64). The center of obedience, religion, this means the formation of the Islamic system; these are among the goals of religion; these are intermediate goals. Or suppose that the establishment of the famous, the dissemination of the famous, the removal of evil, the promotion of the good word and righteous deeds: ﴿إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ﴾:

﴿يَرْفَعُهُ﴾ “To Him ascends the good word, and He elevates righteous conduct” (Quran 35:10). Well, these are the goals of religion; each of these, if you look at them, the means and tools to achieve them is





propagation; it cannot be done without propagation. Now yes, there is an exceptional time when one person enters with a divine signal, a light in his heart, that is another word, it is an exception, but God's religion with these goals and similar goals for people, only comes to fruition through propagation; so propagation is in the first place, the first degree. Therefore, you see in the Quran that the issue of propagation is emphasized... (Statements in a meeting with preachers and seminary students from all over the country 21/04/1402, <https://khl.ink/f/53333>).

This statement and explanation clarify that the expression of truth and its conveyance is of such importance that it is fitting to have *Mubāhala* for it. As the Supreme Leader has referred to, *Mubāhala* signifies this very issue, and the event of 'Āshūrā' also occurred on this basis and for this purpose, as will be referred to in the statements made by him on this matter.

## 7. *Mubāhala* and the Uprising of Imam Husayn

The Quran is silent about the occurrence of *Mubāhala*, and one cannot use the verses of this divine book to determine whether the event of *Mubāhala* took place or not. However, in Islamic history, it is well known that on the appointed day, the chief priests of the Christians, upon seeing Prophet Muhammad holding the hands of Hasan and Husayn, along with Ali and Fatimah avoided *Mubāhala* and announced to the Muslims that they are willing to live alongside them as a minority in peace and pay the necessary taxes. The Prophet Muhammad accepted their request and refrained from *Mubāhala*.

The principle of *Mubāhala* for proving the truth of a claim in the realm of beliefs remains valid and enduring, and this invitation is still in place. The late Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī about *Mubāhala* states: "Any individual with faith can engage in *Mubāhala* with his opponents to prove the truth of Islamic beliefs, relying on the example of the first leaders of Islam, and



can request God to punish the one who is lying. Individuals from Christian and other faiths who wish to witness this divine miracle themselves can also challenge believers of Islam to *Mubāhala* regarding the truth of Islam and observe the outcome with their own eyes” (Subhānī Tabrīzī 1970, 3: 365). Imam Sadiq also instructed his followers to invite their opponents to *Mubāhala* (See: *Bāb al-Mubāhala*, Kulaynī 1986, 2: 513).

Ayatollah Khamenei regards the event of ‘Āshūrā’ as one of the instances of *Mubāhala* in the history of Islam, which occurred as a practical demonstration for the affirmation of the truth of the religion and its propagation. He states:

[*Mubāhala*] indicates how important it is to express the truth, to convey the truth. It brings the issue to the field with the call to engage in *Mubāhala*, saying let’s engage in *Mubāhala*; whoever is on the right path will remain, and whoever is on the wrong path will be eradicated with divine punishment. This issue [*Mubāhala*] has occurred practically in Muharram; meaning Imam Husayn brought forth his dearest ones to the field to elucidate the truth throughout history. Imam Husayn, who knew how the incident would conclude, brought Zaynab, his wives, his children, and his dear brothers. Here, the issue is the propagation of religion; propagation in the true sense of the word; delivering the message, shedding light on the situation. Understanding the dimensions of the propagation issue makes clear how important it is. The sermon, “Whoever sees a tyrant ruler making lawful what has been forbidden by God, violating the covenant of God, and does not oppose him either by deed or word, then it is the right of God to put him in the same position as the unjust ruler”<sup>1</sup> (Abū Mikhnaf 1977, 85) means that when he [a tyrant ruler] is polluting and

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١. «من رأى سلطاناً جائراً مستحلاً لحرم الله ناكثاً لعهد الله... ولم يغير عليه بفعل ولا قول كان حقاً على الله ان يدخله مدخله».



destroying the atmosphere, it is necessary to enlighten [people], either through action or word. And Imam Husayn does this, even at a heavy cost; his family, his wives, his dear ones, the children of Ali, Zaynab Kubra, he brings them all to the field. (Statements in the meeting with a group of students and clerics, 22/09/1388, <https://khl.ink/f/8513>)

He further states,

The movement and uprising of Imam Husayn at that time was to break this authority, not to seek power: “I did not arise as a wrongdoer, a transgressor, a corruptor, or an oppressor”<sup>1</sup> (Majlisī 1982, 44: 329). People rise, fight, and kill to seize power, but the uprising of Imam Husayn was not for this, but for enjoining good and forbidding evil. For this action, two consequences could be predicted: one is that he would be victorious, and the other is that with the terrible situation that was imaginable for him -even without the knowledge of Imamate- he would be killed. Well, it is clear that they had no consideration. In such conditions, Imam Husayn does the same thing that the Prophet did on the day of “*Mubāhala*” with the Christians: he brought his dearest assets and all his belongings to the field to defend the truth and the uprising for Allah and then exercised patience. The patience of Imam Husayn is very important. (Excerpts from statements at the end of a session of the highest level of jurisprudence in the month of Muharram, 21/12/1380, <https://khl.ink/f/46253>)

## 8. *Mubāhala* and Supplication

On the day of *Mubāhala*, the purest act of the purest servants of God took place. If it had occurred, undoubtedly the purest supplications would have been made, and undoubtedly they would have been answered. Perhaps for

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<sup>1</sup>. «أَنْتِي لَمْ أَخْرُجْ أَشْبْرًا وَلَا بَطْرًا وَلَا مُفْسِدًا وَلَا ظَالِمًا».



this reason, one of the characteristics of this day is the acceptance of supplications. Imam Sadiq has mentioned a specific prayer for that day (Tūsī 1990, 2:759) which is of great importance. Ayatollah Khamenei, in proportion to the significance of this day, has called on everyone to pray for the elevation of the rank of the late Imam Khomeini on the anniversary of his passing, emphasizing the greatness of this day. He states: “Today is the day of *Mubāhala*. The coincidence of the anniversary with the day of *Mubāhala* requires us to ask more from God to elevate the rank of this great man [Imam Khomeini]. Since it is a day of supplication and prayer, we should increase our attention, supplication, and reliance on divine favors as much as possible” (Statements on the fifth anniversary of the passing of Imam Khomeini, 14/03/1373, <https://khl.ink/f/2717>).

## 9. *Mubāhala* as a Perpetual Model

A notable characteristic of the esteemed Leader’s speeches is his skill in applying and adjusting Quranic teachings to modern-day concerns while tackling the difficulties and obstacles faced by society. The revered Leader has referred to the noble verse of *Mubāhala* as a demonstration of the confidence and strength of faith. He encourages the Islamic community to emulate the dignified day of *Mubāhala* and place their trust in their own integrity as a reflection of their faith and honor. He states:

*Mubāhala* -which must be respected and is very important- is, in fact, a manifestation of the assurance and power of faith and reliance on truthfulness, which we always need. Today, we also need this power of faith and this reliance on our truthfulness because we are moving in the path of truth, and in this regard, the Iranian nation, public thoughts, and the general tendencies of our people are that they are moving in the right path and there is a general assurance, by the grace of God, for being right. (Statements at the end of the fifth session of the fifth term of the Assembly of Experts, 15/06/1397, <https://khl.ink/f/40421>)



In another speech, the Leader attributes the remarkable successes and victories of the Islamic Republic to an example of the successes during the time of the Prophet, and states:

Just as in *Mubāhala*, all faith stood against infidelity, today, all faith is positioned in support of the Islamic Republic system against disbelief. And just as the spirituality, purity, and spiritual power of the Prophet and his family were able to drive the enemy out of the field, by divine favor and divine assistance, the Iranian nation with its own dignity and its own spirituality will drive the enemy out of the field. (Statements in a meeting with the commanders and staff of the Navy of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and their families, 15/07/1394, <https://khl.ink/f/31024>)

Surely, what has been able to nullify all these enmities is nothing but the power of faith and belief in the Almighty God. The pivotal events and influential occurrences from the dawn of Islam, such as *Mubāhala*, Badr, Uḥud, Şifḥīn, and ‘Āshūrā’, have shown that in all these arenas, faith has always stood against disbelief.

## Conclusion

The event of *Mubāhala*, around which verse 61 of *Surah Āl-‘Imrān* was revealed, is one of the important events that was revealed to affirm the oneness and unity of God, and it holds significance for both Shia and Sunni traditions. While a comprehensive interpretation of this noble verse by the esteemed Leader is not available, various points and details have been issued by him on different occasions regarding this verse and the event of *Mubāhala*, which are very precise, delicate, and profound. He has emphasized points such as the affirmation of the prophethood and message of the noble Prophet of Islam, the authority and leadership of Imam Ali, and the virtues and superiority of Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and Lady Fatimah. Additionally, he has mentioned unique points that are less

observable in other exegetical sources, such as the role of *Mubāhala* in emphasizing the importance of propagation and the connection between *Mubāhala* and the uprising of Imam Husayn, and the assertion that the uprising of Imam Husayn is a realization of *Mubāhala*. Furthermore, he has highlighted that the incident of *Mubāhala* provides lessons in faith, assurance, and empowerment, and can serve as a model for all generations, including our current one.

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