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Qur'anic Concept of Wilayah: Theological Foundations and Its Implications in Muslim Societies

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Qur'anic Concept of Wilayah: Theological Foundations and Its Implications in Muslim Societies

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the Qur'anic concept of Wilayah—encompassing guardianship, authority, and spiritual leadership—and its implications for the spiritual, social, ethical, and jurisprudential dimensions of Muslim life.

Employing a multidisciplinary methodology, the paper integrates Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr), linguistic and semantic analysis, classical jurisprudential discourse (fiqh), and contemporary sociological perspectives. A close reading of key Qur'anic verses is undertaken, informed by the interpretations of major Sunni and Shi'a exegetes. The study examines the development of Wilayah in legal theory—especially concepts such as Wilāyat al-ʿĀmmah (general guardianship) and Wilāyat al-Faqīh (guardianship of the jurist)—and analyzes its application in both classical and modern Islamic legal systems. Qur'anic exegesis and juristic discourse demonstrate the impact of Wilayah on key domains such as family law, civil guardianship, political authority, and ethical governance.

The findings reveal that Wilayah functions as a dynamic jurisprudential and ethical principle capable of addressing contemporary issues such as religious pluralism, constitutional authority, and social justice. The study recommends renewed scholarly and policy engagement with Wilayah to promote spiritually grounded and legally sound Muslim societies in a complex global context.

Keywords: Wilayah, Qur'anic authority, Islamic jurisprudence, governance, Shari'ah, Religious Pluralism

1. Introduction & Significance

The concept of Wilayah (وِلَايَة) in the Qur'an represents one of the most foundational and juristically consequential themes within Islamic legal and theological thought. Rooted in the triliteral root w-l-y (و-ل-ي), Wilayah denotes a spectrum of meanings, including guardianship, authority, loyalty, and proximity—each bearing direct implications for the structuring of communal life, ethical obligations, and legal responsibilities within the Sharī'ah framework. The root falls under the category of Mithāl (assimilated verbs). It is typically conjugated under fa'ila yaf'alu forms in traditional Arabic morphology,¹ illustrating its inherent emphasis on relational and administrative functions.

Classical lexicons such as Lisān al-ʿArab², Mufradāt al-Qurʾān³ by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Lane's⁴ Lexicon consistently affirms that the term Walī encompasses not merely affection or alliance, but a binding legal-moral authority (ḥaqq al-taṣarruf) recognized by revelation and ratified by Islamic jurisprudence.

The centrality of Wilayah is established in numerous Qur'anic āyāt, most notably in al-Mā'idah (5:55), which delineates a tripartite hierarchy of authority: "Your Walī is none but Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe, establish prayer, and give zakāh while bowing [in prayer]." This verse, and others like it (cf. 2:257, 42:28, 9:71), form the cornerstone of exegetical and jurisprudential elaboration on the legitimate sources of Wilayah, whether spiritual, familial, political, or judicial. For instance, in the commentary of Abdul Majid Daryabadi under the ayah 5:55:

"(the Wali) one of whom you should look up for help, comfort, and guidance."⁵ Daryabadi's phrase is more expansive and emotive, emphasizing the pastoral dimension of wilayah. and Tabari explains in an even deeper way: "it emphasizes the sequence and exclusivity of Wilayah in this verse: Allah → the Prophet → the believers described in the verse. He interprets "Your Walī is only..." (innamā) as restrictive, implying that no other party holds legitimate religious or moral authority over the believers except these."⁶

He further discusses narrations (aḥādīth and āthār) that link this part of the verse to a specific incident involving ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. One popular narration (though al-Ṭabarī exercises caution in transmission) reports that ʿAlī gave his ring in charity to a beggar while in the posture of rukūʿ (bowing) during prayer. This led many commentators to associate the verse with him, though al-Ṭabarī presents it as part of a broader category of believers.

"Wilayah combines loyalty, spiritual authority, and mutual support (maḥabbah wa-nuṣrah). It implies not just affection, but the right to lead, protect, and guide, consistent with Islamic norms of community leadership. Rejection of Hypocrisy and False Allegiance: He contrasts the true believers who fulfill the conditions of Wilayah with hypocrites and external alliances (e.g., with hostile groups), warning against placing loyalty with others over God and His Messenger."⁷

Whereas, Mawlana Maududi in his commentary of 9:71 deals with the sense of wilayat in community and its integration by translating the word "أولياء"

as comrades and explaining the meaning as a tool of distinction between two different allies, because at this very place a comparison has been drawn of hypocrites and the true believers like:

“The contrast between the characteristics of hypocrites in ayah 67 end of the true believers in ayah 71 clearly shows that the two are different from each other.....They are allies to one another and practically disassociate themselves from true words and from a group of their own. In contrast to them, the true believers, men and women, have practically become one community. All of them take interest in what is good, and abhor what is evil.”⁸

In the literature of uṣūl al-fiqh, jurists such as al-Ghazālī in *al-Iqtisād fī al-I’tiqād*⁹ consider Wilayah as a divine amānah (trust) whose exercise is conditioned by maqāṣid al-sharī’ah¹⁰. but, Al-Māwardī, in *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah*¹¹, does not explicitly characterize wilāyah as a divine amānah (trust). His discussion presents wilāyah in institutional, juridical-political terms, particularly in the context of imāmah (leadership as a contractual office) and the appointment of governors (wilāyāt) through ahl al-ḥall wa al-‘aql (councils of choice), with no language invoking moral-theological responsibility as understood in esoteric or Shi‘ī discourse.

Furthermore, the application of Wilayah in derivative legal categories—Wilāyat al-Nikāḥ, Wilāyat al-Ḥaḍānah, Wilāyat al-‘Āmmah, and Wilāyat al-Faqīh—reflects its enduring role in structuring Islamic rulings (aḥkām) across both private and public domains.

Comparatively, the Ḥanafī school emphasizes Wilāyat al-Nikāḥ as a non-absolute guardianship, allowing adult women discretion in marriage decisions, while the Mālikīs stress the father's Wilayah as a condition of validity. The Shāfi‘īs adopt a stricter guardianship model, requiring the walī's consent for the nikāḥ to be legally binding. In contrast, the Ja‘farī (Shi‘ī) legal tradition extends Wilayah into the domain of Wilāyat al-Faqīh, positing that in the absence of the infallible Imam, qualified jurists (fuqahā‘) possess derivative authority in governance—an idea extensively articulated by scholars like al-Khomeini and al-Muṭahharī.

The significance of this study lies in its juristic and theological analysis of Wilayah as a Qur'anic concept with normative legal force. Rather than treating Wilayah merely as a doctrinal element, the study approaches it as a dynamic principle informing both qawā‘id fiqhiyyah (legal maxims) and ṣulūḥāt shar‘iyyah (legal terminologies), with relevance to leadership legitimacy, social cohesion, and communal justice. It investigates classical tafsīr traditions (e.g., al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī) and synthesizes their insights with contemporary Islamic governance models and ethical imperatives.

Considering modern crises of authority, ethical fragmentation, and contested legitimacy within Muslim societies, revisiting Wilayah is a jurisprudential imperative. This concept, as it emerges from the Qur’an and legal theory, holds the potential to re-anchor fiqh in a vision of divine sovereignty (ḥākimiyyah), ethical responsibility (amānah), and principled governance (‘adl), thus making it indispensable to both legal reasoning and spiritual reform.

1.1 Exegetical Reflections: Wali (وَلِيّ), Wilayah (وِلَايَة)

The Qur'an employs numerous derivatives of this root to express varying degrees of divine, prophetic, and communal authority. Key derivatives include:

- **al-Walī (الْوَلِيّ):** Often translated as The Protecting Friend or Guardian, this Name of Allah appears in several Qur'anic verses (e.g., 2:257, 42:28) and emphasizes divine care, guidance, and protection. Notably, the term also carries the connotation of waris (وارث) — “heir” — as seen in Qur'an 8:72, where the concept of Wilayah intersects with themes of loyalty, inheritance, and communal responsibility. This lexical overlap underscores a deeper theological connection: just as Allah is the ultimate Walī, He is also the true inheritor (al-Wārith), reinforcing His sovereignty and intimate guardianship over creation.
- **Wilayah/Walāyah (وِلَايَة):** Guardianship or governance (e.g., 5:55), similarly as just mentioned above (8:72), the word Wilayah also refers to Wirasat; inheritance.
- **Yatawalla/Yatawallawna (يَتَوَلَّى / يَتَوَلَّوْنَ):** To take as protector or ally (7:196, 5:80)
- **Tawallā (تَوَلَّى):** To assume guardianship or turn away, depending on the context (4:115)

Exegetically, these terms are elaborated extensively in classical tafsīr works. For instance, Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī and Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī analyze Wilayah in 5:55:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ﴾

“Verily your wali is Allah, His Messenger, and those who establish prayer and give zakah while bowing in ruku’”

as evidence of both spiritual and political authority,¹² With Shi'a commentators—such as al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī in al-Mīzān—interpreting the verse as an affirmation of the Imamate¹³. Linguistic works such as Mufradāt al-Qur'ān by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī distinguish between Wilayah (guardianship and care) and Walāyah (loving loyalty), both grounded in the same root but with distinct theological implications.¹⁴ Lughat al-Qur'ān by 'Abd al-Rashīd Niyāzī further explores these explanations, linking lexical analysis to scriptural usage and jurisprudential meaning¹⁵. Throughout Islamic intellectual history, the term Wilayah has shaped theological doctrines—especially in Shi'a school of thought, where Wilayah is central to the doctrine of Imamate—and legal rulings concerning guardianship in marriage (Wilāyat al-Nikāḥ), custody (Wilāyat al-Ḥaḍānah), and governance (Wilāyat al-'Āmmah). In al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah, al-Māwardī outlines the structure of legitimate authority based on Wilayah. At the same time, al-Ghazālī in al-Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād presents Wilayah as a divine trust (amānah) essential to the realization of maṣlaḥah and 'adl in governance¹⁶. Therefore, understanding the lexical and exegetical layers of Wilayah is not merely an exercise in semantics but a prerequisite for grasping its jurisprudential force and ethical relevance in both private and public spheres of Muslim life.

2. Scope and Limitations

This study focuses primarily on the Qur'anic occurrences and implications of the term **Wilayah** (وَلَايَة) and its lexical family, including *walī*, *mawlā*, *yatawalla*, and related morphological forms rooted in *w-l-y* (و-ل-ي). The analysis gives special attention to verses that directly articulate the concept of Wilayah in contexts of spiritual authority, legal guardianship, divine protection, and sociopolitical leadership. Among the key verses examined are: **2:257**, **5:55**, **5:56**, **9:71**, **33:6**, **42:28**, and **60:13**, each representing a different dimension of Wilayah—whether theological, juridical, or communal. The tafsīr literature surveyed includes both classical and modern commentaries, from **Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī**, **al-Qurṭubī**, **al-Rāzī**, and **al-Baydāwī**, to modern exegetes like **Sayyid Quṭb** (*Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*), **Muḥammad 'Abduh** and **Rashīd Riḍā** (*Tafsīr al-Manār*), and **'Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī** (*al-Mīzān*). Shi'i and Sunni perspectives are both incorporated, particularly where doctrinal interpretations of Wilayah differ, such as in **Qur'an 5:55**, which Shi'i exegetes interpret as an affirmation of Wilāyat al-A'imma (the authority of the Imams), while Sunni exegetes typically read it as a general principle of righteous leadership. The study also draws on primary jurisprudential texts from the major madhāhib, including **al-Māwardī's al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah** (Shāfi'ī), **Ibn Qudāmah's al-Mughnī** (Hanbalī), **al-Kāsānī's Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i'** (Hanafi), **al-Malibārī's Faḥḥ al-Mu'in** (Shāfi'ī), and **al-Ṭūsī's al-Nihāyah** (Ja'farī). These sources are used to trace how Qur'anic notions of Wilayah are transposed into rulings concerning Wilāyat al-Nikāh, Wilāyat al-Māl (financial guardianship), and Wilāyat al-'Ammah (political authority). While the paper references theological constructs like Wilāyat al-Takwīniyyah (ontological authority) and Wilāyat al-Tashrī'iyyah (legislative authority), particularly prominent in Shi'i discourse, this study refrains from taking a position on sectarian doctrinal disputes. Instead, it seeks to map out interpretive trajectories and assess their practical, legal, and ethical implications in contemporary Muslim societies. This research does not extend to an ethnographic treatment of how Wilayah is implemented across all Muslim-majority regions. Instead, it includes selected case studies (e.g., the application of Wilāyat al-Faqīh in the Iranian context, or guardianship laws in Sunni civil courts) as illustrations of theoretical application. Furthermore, the study does not delve into mystical or Ṣūfī interpretations of Wilayah, which, though significant, fall outside its legal-theological focus. In scope, this inquiry is therefore Qur'an-centric, jurisprudentially grounded, and comparatively exegetical, highlighting how the concept of Wilayah serves as both a theological imperative and a structural principle in the formulation of Sharī'ah-based governance, ethical community relations, and legal accountability.

3. Discussion

3.1 Grammatical Distinctions in Tafsir Contexts of Wilayah

Arabic Form	Surah: Ayah ¹⁷	Grammatical State	Context / Summary
وَالِيٌ Walī	al-Baqarah (2:257)	Indefinite (نكرة)	Allah as the protector of believers, bringing them out of darkness into light.
أَلْوِي al-Walī	al-Shura (42:28)	Definite (معرفة)	Allah as the definitive Guardian of His servants.
وَلَايَتُهُ Walāyah	al-Kahf (18:44)	Definite construct (إضافة)	Referring to the exclusive guardianship of Allah, post-calamity.
وَلِيَّكُمْ Waliyyukumu	al-Mā'idah (5:55)	Plural definite noun	Defines those vested with legitimate Wilayah: Allah, His Messenger, and those who establish prayer and give zakāh while bowing.
أَوْلِيَاءُ Awliya	al-Tawbah (9:71)	Verb form (past)	Mutual guardianship among believing men and women.

The term Wilayah appears in various forms in the Qur'an—definite and indefinite, active and passive, noun and verb—all of which shape its interpretive significance. The morphological and syntactical rendering of Wilayah plays a critical role in its semantic depth and juristic applicability. Below is a typological table of key Qur'anic usages:

These grammatical distinctions underscore different theological and legal dimensions. For instance:

- Indefinite usage (e.g., walīyyun) signals general protective roles, potentially inviting believers to reflect on Wilayah as an attribute of divine mercy.
- Definite usage (e.g., al-Waliyy) affirms God's exclusive authority, reinforcing ḥakimiyyah (divine sovereignty).
- Construct forms (e.g., walāyatahu) emphasize possessive and relational dimensions, affirming Allah's sole ownership of true Wilayah.

As al-Zamakhsharī notes in al-Kashshāf, definiteness often intensifies meaning:

“فالتعريف يدل على الحصر، إذ لا وليّ بحق سواه.”

(“The definite form signifies exclusivity—there is no true Walī but Him.”)¹⁸

These linguistic features are not merely stylistic choices; they function as vehicles for profound theological messaging. The Qur'anic articulation of

Wilayah, through its grammatical precision, subtly negotiates themes of divine mercy, authority, and relationality. Such distinctions also inform exegetical debates and have implications for legal theory, particularly regarding the nature of legitimate authority and divine-human relationships. Recognizing these nuances deepens one's appreciation of the Qur'an's rhetorical and theological sophistication.

3.2 Thematic Spectrum of Wilayah in the Qur'an

The Qur'anic presentation of Wilayah reveals a complex theological-legal architecture. It is not merely about divine protection, but about authority, allegiance, legal agency, and socio-political ordering. The following table categorizes select verses thematically:

Qur'anic Verse	Context	Core Theme	Interpretive Notes
al-Baqarah (2:257)	Divine guidance	Allah is the Walī of believers	Contrasted with false deities (tāghūt) who act as pseudo-awliyā'.
al-Mā'idah (5:55)	Juridical authority	Hierarchy of Wilayah	Key verse in both Sunni and Shi'i traditions. Sunnis read it socially; Shi'is as an Imamic authority.
al-Tawbah (9:71)	Mutual obligation	Reciprocal Wilayah among believers	Basis for legal brotherhood and cooperative ethics (ta'āwun 'alā al-birr).
al-Kahf (18:44)	Divine exclusivity	False hope in other protectors	Reinforces tawhīd through negation of non-divine Wilayah.
al-Shura (42:28)	Divine mercy and agency	Allah is al-Waliyy in hardship	Implies divine intervention as the foundation for any human governance.

So, Qur'anic Wilayah merges spiritual authority with legal legitimacy. It reflects both vertical alignment (with God and His Messenger) and horizontal solidarity (among believers), and thereby becomes a normative axis for structuring governance, loyalty, and leadership.

3.3 Lexical and Juristic Distinctions

Beyond grammatical distinction, the concept of Wilayah carries layered meanings that unfold through both its lexical roots and juristic applications. These dimensions are crucial for understanding how Wilayah functions not only as a theological concept but also as a legal and socio-political construct within Islamic thought.

Lexical Source	Definition of Wilayah	Juristic Implication
Mufradāt al-Qur'an	Proximity and authority	Implies moral and legal responsibility, not merely affection
Lisān al-'Arab	Succession in care, priority	Legal right of representation (e.g., Wilāyat al-Nikāh)
Tāj al-'Arūs	Delegated or inherent authority	Basis for institutional forms of Wilayah (e.g., Wilāyat al-Faqīh)

Notably, classical jurists differentiate between Wilayah ‘āmmah (general guardianship) and Wilayah khāṣṣah (specific custodianship). For example:

- Shāfi‘ī school: The Shāfi‘ī madhhab, specifically, al-Nawawī¹⁹ considers **Wilayah (guardianship)** in marriage (especially for a woman) essential for the **legal validity** of the nikāḥ (marriage contract), emphasizing the role of the **wali (guardian)**—typically a male relative—under **familial hierarchy** and legal structure²⁰.
- Ja‘farī fiqh: In **Ja‘farī jurisprudence**, Wilayah extends beyond personal law into **political authority**, especially through the doctrine of **Wilāyat al-Faqīh**, as developed by scholars like **al-Khomeinī²¹** and **Ṭabāṭabā‘ī²²**. This interpretation is based on Qur’anic verses like **5:55** and Hadith al-Ghadīr;

من كنت مولاه فهذا علي مولاه"

“Whoever I am his mawlā, then ‘Alī is his mawlā.”²³, which are taken as affirmations of the **Imamate** and the **jurist’s authority** in the occultation of the Imam.

4. Findings & Results

Contemporary Relevance of Wilayah and Its Ethical Dimensions

While Wilayah is primarily discussed in juristic and political terms, Qur’anic discourse reveals its deep ethical and emotional dimensions. In Surah al-Shūrā (42:23), for instance, the divine command to show Mawaddah toward the Prophet’s kin is often interpreted by classical and sectarian exegetes as tied to the legitimacy of Wilayah. Sunni scholars read it as a general call for communal affection and unity, while Shi‘ī exegesis sees it as grounding the spiritual authority (Wilayah) of the Ahl al-Bayt.²⁴ Contemporary scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Amir-Moezzi argue that Qur’anic love (Mawaddah) is not sentimental but structural, serving as the spiritual ethos that undergirds legitimate Wilayah. In this sense, Wilayah without Mawaddah becomes hollow, and Mawaddah without Wilayah lacks political expression. Together, they function as dual pillars of a Qur’anic social ethic: one representing authority, the other devotion and trust. This has profound relevance in today’s Muslim societies, where crises of authority and community fragmentation persist. Reclaiming a vision of Wilayah infused with Mawaddah presents a model of governance and leadership grounded not merely in legal legitimacy, but in spiritual love, ethical responsibility, and intercommunal unity.

Political Implications of Wilayah in Islamic Thought

Sunni & Shia Perspectives

Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi viewed Islam as a comprehensive system encompassing all aspects of life, including politics. He emphasized that Wilayah, as derived from Qur’anic injunctions such as Surah al-Nisā’ (4:59) and al-Mā’idah (5:55), extends beyond spiritual authority to inform social and political structures²⁵. He argued that the Islamic state should be founded on principles of divine Wilayah, promoting justice and unity among its citizens. Dr. Israr Ahmad similarly highlighted the role of Wilayah in fostering societal harmony and political stability, asserting that recognizing divine authority is essential for establishing a just Islamic society.²⁶

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi interprets Wilayah as a foundational principle that should permeate all aspects of Islamic governance. He asserts that political systems must be built upon mutual consultation (*shūrā*) and divine guardianship, ensuring that policies reflect both the spiritual and temporal well-being of the community²⁷. Sayyid Qutb, in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, views Wilayah as a divine attribute that Muslims are called to embody in society, stressing that a true Islamic state must cultivate an ethos of guardianship and collective responsibility to foster unity and resilience against oppression²⁸. Yusuf al-Qaradawi emphasizes the importance of Wilayah in promoting social justice and political inclusivity, advocating for policies that reflect divine stewardship and encourage the protection of rights across all segments of society²⁹.

From the Shia perspective, Allama Tabataba'i, in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, interprets Wilayah in Surah al-Shūrā (42:23) and al-Mā'idah (5:55) as a directive affirming the spiritual and political authority of the Ahl al-Bayt³⁰. Allama Tabrasi, in *Majma' al-Bayān*³¹, and Shaykh al-Tusi³², also interpret Wilayah as a divine command that reinforces the legitimacy of the Ahl al-Bayt's leadership within Shi'a thought. Collectively, these perspectives illustrate how Wilayah is not only a spiritual and ethical ideal but also a principle with tangible political implications, especially in questions of leadership legitimacy, communal unity, and just governance.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This study examined the Qur'anic concept of Wilāyah, revealing that it encompasses far more than a political or hierarchical notion of authority. Instead, Wilāyah emerges from the Qur'an as a comprehensive theological and ethical principle that reflects divine guardianship and shapes interpersonal, communal, and socio-political relationships. Through a close analysis of key verses—such as Surah al-Baqarah (2:257), Surah al-Mā'idah (5:55–56), Surah al-Tawbah (9:71), Surah al-Ahzab (33:6), Surah al-Shura (42:28), and Surah al-Mumtahanah (60:1–13)—the research uncovered the spiritual, communal, and governance-oriented dimensions of Wilāyah. The concept's significance spans various contexts: divine oversight of the righteous, the bond between believers and their spiritual leaders, the collective responsibilities of the believing community, and God's protective relationship with those who embody faith and justice.

Notably, these verses also support the view that Wilāyah is not exclusively an intra-Muslim paradigm; it can reflect broader ethical principles, including just treatment of others and the transformation of hostility into alliance, as hinted in Surah al-Mumtahanah. Additionally, the study highlighted interpretive diversity across Sunni, Shi'a, and modernist traditions. Classical exegetes often focused on Wilāyah in theological or legal frameworks—especially in relation to leadership and allegiance—while contemporary thinkers have begun to explore its ethical and unifying dimensions. Nonetheless, the full realization of Wilāyah as a transformative and cohesive principle in modern Muslim social and political life remains largely underdeveloped, signaling the need for renewed engagement with this foundational Qur'anic concept.

Recommendations: For Future Research

Future studies should adopt interdisciplinary approaches by integrating sociological, psychological, and anthropological methods to investigate how Wilāyah is understood and embodied in contemporary Muslim communities. Such approaches can illuminate the lived experience of divine guardianship, ethical leadership, and communal solidarity as informed by Qur'anic teachings. Scholars are also encouraged to explore conceptual parallels between Wilāyah and similar notions in other religious traditions—such as shepherdship in Christianity or dharma-based stewardship in Hinduism—to foster deeper interfaith dialogue on moral responsibility and spiritual authority.

Further research is needed to examine how Wilāyah informs Islamic perspectives on leadership, gender dynamics, caregiving, and collective responsibility across diverse cultural and social contexts. Qualitative studies, including ethnographic research, can help document how individuals and institutions interpret and apply Wilāyah in real-world contexts—such as community leadership, conflict resolution, social justice work, and ethical decision-making in public life.

On a practical level, Islamic educational institutions should incorporate the concept of Wilāyah into their curricula not only as a theological construct, but as a dynamic moral and civic principle that emphasizes accountability, mutual care, and justice-oriented leadership. Mosques, NGOs, and community organizations can center Wilāyah in their programming to foster social trust, strengthen collective resilience, and address sectarianism and marginalization within and beyond Muslim societies.

Lastly, in the sphere of public discourse, religious scholars, educators, and policymakers should promote Wilāyah as a unifying and constructive principle. Rather than reducing it to political or sectarian narratives, Wilāyah should be advanced as a framework for ethical governance, inclusive compassion, and shared moral stewardship across diverse social and ideological divides.

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- ² Ibn Manẓūr, M. ibn M, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1956), 15: 400.
- ³ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Nadwī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2007), 534.
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- ⁶ Al-Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, vol. 6 (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 2001), 287.
- ⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 6:287.
- ⁸ Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Lahore: Islamic Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2005), 215.
- ⁹ Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Al-Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād*, ed. 'Iṣām Fārūq (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2000), 114.
- ¹⁰ the preservation of dīn, nafs, 'aql, nasl, and māl
- ¹¹ Al-Māwardī, Abū al-Ḥasan. *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*, ed. Aḥmad Mubārak al-Baghdādī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996), 5.
- ¹² Al-Qurṭubī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī. *Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2006), 6:219.
- ¹³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1997), 6:6.
- ¹⁴ Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'ān*, 534.
- ¹⁵ Niyāzī, 'Abdul Rāḥmān. *Lughat al-Qur'ān*. Vol. 3. Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2001, 600.
- ¹⁶ Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād*, 143.
- ¹⁷ Al Quran 2:257

﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۚ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾

Al Quran 42:28

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُزِيلُ الْعَذَابَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ﴾

Al Quran 18:44

﴿هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا﴾

Al Quran 9:71

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

¹⁸ Zamakhsharī, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad. Al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2009, 624.

¹⁹ Al-Nawawī, Yahyā. Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2000), 7:33.

²⁰ Shāfi‘ī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs. Al-Umm (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1990), 5:5.

²¹ Khomeinī, Ruhollāh. Wilāyat al-Faqīh: Ḥukūmat-e Islāmī (Qum: Mu‘assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1979), 27.

²² Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, 6:6.

²³ al-Ṭabarānī, Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad, al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr. Edited by (if applicable), Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2009. Vol. 5, 166.

²⁴ For more details about Mawaddah, see my paper <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=X2nIV0sAAAAJ&hl=en&authuser=1>

²⁵ Maududi, Sayyid Abul A‘lā. The Islamic Law and Constitution (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1960). 211

²⁶ Ahmad, Ishtiaq. Islamic Renaissance: The Real Task Ahead (Karachi: Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur’an, 2001). 176

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²⁹ Al-Qaradawi, Yūsuf. Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2009). 196

³⁰ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, Tafsīr al-Mīzān. 345

³¹ Al-Ṭabrasi, Fāḍil ibn Ḥasan. Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2008). 259

³² Al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, 1970). 423