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The Allegorical Verses of the Qur'an

After explaining the meaning and importance of *'ismah* for the prophets and messengers of Allah which is also supported by the Qur'anic verses we quoted above, some people become confused when they come across verses which give an impression that Adam and other prophets committed some sins.

This confusion will only be clear if we realize that the Qur'anic verses, according to the Qur'an itself, are of two types:

He is the one who sent upon you the book: some of its verses are clear (*muḥkamât*)—these are the basis of the Book, while others are allegorical (*mutashâbihât*).

“As for those in whose hearts is perversity, they follow the allegorical verses, seeking to mislead and seeking to give (their own) interpretation. None know their (i.e., allegorical verses') interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge...” (3:7)

Those who do not differentiate between the clear and the allegorical verses will surely get confused when they apparently find two conflicting messages from the verses of the Qur'an. The issue of *'ismah* is one of those issues in which people have become victim of confusion.

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The situation, at this stage of our discussion, is as follows:

Our earlier discussion concluded that the divine guides must be immaculate and above reproach. Many verses of the Qur'an support this view, as mentioned above.

But there are some verses of the Qur'an that apparently attribute sins and wrongdoings to some prophets.

What should be done?

We must accept those verses that are supported by our reason as the clear (*muhkamât*) verses. And the other verses should be considered allegorical (*mutashâbihât*) and their true meaning must be sought in the light of the *muhkamât*, the teachings of the Prophet, and the Imams of Ahlul Bayt who are the twin of the Qur'an by virtue of the famous saying of the Prophet that "I am leaving two precious things among you [for guidance]: the Book of Allah and my Ahlu 'l-bayt."¹

In the next lesson, we will study those verses and see how can we interpret them and, at the same time, hold on to our belief in the infallibility of the prophets.

1. Ibn Hajar al-Makki, as-Sawa'iqu 'l-Muhriqah, chapter 11, section 1.

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