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Allah's Knowledge and the Infallibles' (peace be upon them) Knowledge of the Unseen

Question:

Shed some light on the knowledge of the unseen of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the pure Imams (peace be upon them). And in this regard, considering the principle that Allah has no partner in His knowledge and other attributes of perfection and beauty, explain the difference between Allah's and the Imam's knowledge and between the Imam's and the Prophet's knowledge.

Answer:

Anyone who studies the books of history, traditions, and biographies will not doubt the fact that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the pure Imams (peace be upon them) made known many unseen matters, most of which took place in the world within a short period.

These reports, especially what has come down from the person of the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), are great in number, and each one of them is considered a part of the major miracles of this house.

In fact, as affirmed by individuals like Ibn Khaldun, in many instances Imam Ja'far al-as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) would give news about unseen matters. Of course, the difference between Allah's knowledge of the unseen and that of these personages is that Allah's knowledge is by essence, while the knowledge of the Prophet or Imam is outside of their essence, that is, it has been granted them by Allah.

Allah is unique, peerless, and independent of others in all His attributes of perfection, but the Prophet and Imam are in need of Allah with respect to their knowledge and all other attributes of perfection which

they possess; and in a word, everything they have, whether from the aspect of existence or attributes, is from Allah. They are existent through Him and knowledgeable and possessed of power through Him.

However, the difference between the Prophet and Imam with regard to awareness of unseen matters is from the aspect that in the Prophet's knowledge, no human being is an intermediary between him and the unseen world, while the Imams (peace be upon him) have acquired a portion of this knowledge through the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family).

In any case, what is certain is the knowledge of those personages and their giving news about unseen matters, which is as clear and sure as the sun shining in the center of the sky.

In this regard, if one wants to find out in more depth about the reports of the unseen, he should refer to books of the lives and history of the Imams (peace be upon them).

According to the level of my own understanding, I have offered explanations, though concise, in the books *The Radiance of Wilayat*, *Commentary on Dua' al-Nudbah*, and *Creational and Legal Wilayat*.

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