

Aim of sending the Prophets; their miracles

It is narrated through a reliable chain of narrators that an atheist came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and presented a few queries. One of his questions concerned the logic behind the sending of Prophets.

The Imam said, "When we have agreed that we have a Maker and Creator; who is higher than His creatures and absolutely free from the fact that His creatures can see Him, touch Him or converse with Him; we understand that the Maker is Wise. He only does that which is beneficial to His creatures. Then it is necessary to send Prophets and Messengers who would communicate His laws to the people. They would guide the people in the affairs that are beneficial and (prevent them from) those that cause everlasting perdition.

Consequently, it is evident that there must be a particular group, which would convey His message to the people. They are the chosen ones of Allah and His Prophets. They are wise and intelligent. The Almighty has bestowed them with wisdom and knowledge and appointed them as His Messengers.

Their circumstances and characteristics were quite different from those of the common people though in their creation and method they are like ordinary human beings. However, they are sent by Allah, the Wise and the Omniscient, with knowledge, wisdom, arguments, proofs, witnesses and miracles so that they may prove the veracity of their claims.

Like raising of the dead and curing of the blind and lepers etc, they accomplished some tasks that were impossible for ordinary people. The same practice continued in every age and the earth has never been devoid of the Divine Proof (hujjah), who is the bearer of knowledge and has a miracle to prove the authenticity of his claims and (he verifies) the message of the preceding Prophet."

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says in a reliable tradition: "The Almighty with His Luminous Essence and Divine attributes was concealed from His creatures; therefore, He sent the Prophets to give glad tidings of salvation and to warn against His punishment so that those who perish in disobedience must perish with the realization of their error and all arguments must be exhausted for them.

Similarly, those who achieve salvation must do so with knowledge, faith and proof. And they may achieve an everlasting life so that people may learn about their Lord what they did not know. They must recognize Allah as their Cherisher and they confess to His Oneness.

Another reliable report mentions that Fadhl ibn Shadhan asked Ja'far as-Sadiq "When it is obligatory for people to obey the Prophets, why are they also required to recognize them and to confess to their truth?" Imam replied, "This is because the creatures did not have the ability to understand their wisdom fully. Their creator was much higher that He could be perceived by sight. The inability to understand His Divine Essence was apparent. There was no choice except to appoint Prophets as links between people and Allah. This infallible Prophet conveyed the divine commands and prohibitions to the people. He also had to keep the people firm on some affairs whereby they could obtain the benefits and be safe from the perils, because the people cannot decide by their own intellects what is beneficial for them and what is harmful. If the obedience and recognition of Prophets had not been incumbent on people, the sending of Prophets would have been a useless venture. And the wise One, who had created everything with untold benefits, is pure from such vain acts."

Related through reliable chains of narrators is the report where Abu-Basir asked Ja'far as-Sadiq the reason why Allah has bestowed miracles on the Prophets and Imams. The Imam replied, "So that the veracity of their claims is established. Because miracles are from Allah, the Almighty, He gives them to His Prophets, Messengers and Proofs so that the truth of the truthful ones and the lie of the liars are proved."

Another hadith mentions that Husayn al-Sahhaf asked the same Imam whether it was possible for Allah that He changes the heart of a believer from faith to disbelief even after the belief of this person has been authenticated. Imam replied: "The Almighty is Just; He sent the Prophet so that they may invite the people towards faith (belief). Allah never calls anyone towards disbelief."

Then the questioner asked if Allah changes the heart of a confirmed disbeliever from disbelief to belief. The Imam said: "Allah has created everyone with a capacity to believe. They are like a blank tablet neither having faith in any *shari'ah* (code of religious law) nor disbelieving in it. Allah sent the Prophets to them so that they may guide them towards Allah. And in this way, argument could be exhausted for the people. Thus some people receive guidance (faith) by Allah's *tawfiq* (guidance) and some do not achieve guidance."

It is narrated in an authentic report that Ibn al-Sikkit asked Imam al-Ridha or Imam 'Ali al-Naqi why Allah sent Musa¹ (Prophet Moses) with a luminous arm, the Staff and other things to counter magic, 'Isa (Prophet Jesus) with a miracle resembling medical cure and Muhammad al-Mustafa (the Chosen) with an eloquent speech and learned dialogue. Imam replied: "Magic was the prevailing science during the time of Musa. Musa brought miracles resembling magic but much more powerful. Musa nullified their magic with his miracles and exhausted the arguments on them. During the time of 'Isa, there were widespread diseases and epidemics. 'Isa brought the miracle that the doctors of his time could not

match and performed feats that astounded his contemporaries like bringing the dead to life and curing lepers.

Through these miracles, 'Isa completed the proof. The people, in spite of their expertise in medical science, failed to fathom the secret of 'Isa's miracles. Muhammad al-Mustafa was sent in an age of literary advancement and eloquent poetry. People of this age prided themselves upon their speech and poetry. The Holy Prophet brought the book of Allah, teachings and the religious law. Through these, he nullified the words of those people. The people were unable to counter the miracle of the Holy Prophet. The argument was exhausted for them in this manner."

Ibn al-Sikkit says that I had never heard such beneficial words before. Then he asked, "Who is the hujjah (proof) on the creatures during the present time." Imam told him: "Allah has provided you with intellect and you can distinguish between one who is truthful with regard to Allah and those who ascribe lies to Him." Ibn al-Sikkit says, "By Allah! This is correct."

Number of Prophets and their Successors (Awsiya'), Meaning of Nabi (Prophet) and Rasul (Messenger) and Number of Divinely Revealed Books.

Authentic chains of reporters mention from Imam al-Ridha and Imam Zayn al-'abidin that the Messenger of Allah said: "The Almighty Allah created 124000 Prophets and I am the most honored one before Allah. However, I do not pride myself upon it. And He created 124000 Successors, among whom 'Ali is the most exalted."

A reliable tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq states that Abu-Dharr asked the Holy Prophet the number of Prophets sent by the Almighty. The Holy Prophet said, "One hundred and twenty four thousand." And according to some traditions "three hundred and twenty thousand." Abu-Dharr asked how many of them were Messengers. The Messenger of Allah replied, "Three hundred and thirteen." "How many books did Allah send?" asked Abu-Dharr, "One hundred and twenty four and according to another narration, "One hundred and four." And according to the last tradition fifty scrolls (heavenly books) were revealed on Shith, three on Idris and twenty on Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham). Four books: Torah, Injeel (the Gospel), Zabur (the Psalms) and Qur'an were also revealed.

The Messenger of Allah said, "O Abu-Dharr! Four of the Prophets were Syriac: Adam, Shith, Akhnu' and Nuh (Prophet Noah). And Akhnu' who is called Idris was the first person to write with a pen. And four of the Prophets were Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb and your Prophet (Muhammad al-Mustafa). And the first Prophet of The Israelites was Musa and the last 'Isa. Between them were six hundred Prophets." However, in other traditions the number of the Israelite Prophets is mentioned as 4000, though the former tradition is more reliable.

According to authentic reports, Ja'far as-Sadiq told Safwan al-Jammal, "Do you know the number of the Prophets sent by Allah?" "No," he replied. The Imam said, "One hundred and forty four thousand, and as many successors (awsiya'), those who were truthful, trustworthy and unattached to the earthly life.

Allah did not send any Prophet better than Muhammad and neither did He send any successor better than his successor Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali."²

A reliable tradition through Imam Musa al-Kazim and Imam Zayn al-'abidin says that one who wishes to shake hands with all the 124000 Prophets must visit (i.e.. go on Ziyarah—pilgrimage) the grave of Imam al-Husayn on the fifteenth night of the month of Sha'ban (the eighth month of the Islamic Calendar), because the souls of all the Prophets come to visit the grave of Imam al-Husayn by the permission of Allah. Moreover, five of them are Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets: Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad. The narrator asked the Imam the definition of 'Ulu'l-'Azm'. Imam said, "It denotes the Prophets who were sent for all men and jinn from the east to the west of the Earth."³

A trustworthy tradition from Imam al-Ridha and an authentic report from Ja'far as-Sadiq mentions that Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets are named thus because they possessed greatness ('Azm) and brought a new shari'ah. For instance, Nuh was sent with a book and a shari'ah different from that of Adam; and the succeeding Prophets followed his book and shari'ah. This continued until the advent of Ibrahim who came with a book different from that of Nuh and a new shari'ah. He did not deny the book and shari'ah of Nuh but they were abrogated and it was no more valid to act upon them. Prophets contemporary to and succeeding Ibrahim followed his shari'ah and book until the time of Musa. Musa came with Torah. Torah abrogated the shari'ah of Ibrahim.

All the contemporary Prophets of Musa and succeeding ones followed the shari'ah of Musa until the arrival of 'Isa with Injeel. The shari'ah of Musa and Torah were abrogated. All the Prophets during the time of 'Isa and the successors after him followed the shari'ah of Injeel. This continued until the advent of our Prophet, Muhammad al-Mustafa. Thus, these are the five great Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets. They are the best of Prophets and messengers and the shari'ah of Prophet Muhammad shall remain in force until the Resurrection Day. There is to be no Prophet after him. Things permitted by him will remain permissible until Resurrection Day and things prohibited by him shall remain prohibited until Judgment Day. Any person who claims Prophethood after Prophet Muhammad or brings a book after Qur'an, claiming it to be of divine origin, is a liar. Anyone who comes to know of such claims would be permitted to execute him.

Another reliable tradition from Imam al-Ridha says that Imam as-Sadiq states that Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets are called thus because of their confession to the greatness of Prophet Muhammad and his successors including Imam al-Mahdi and their oath of accepting the greatness (Azm) of these divine personalities. As Adam had not remember this vow, Almighty Allah says,

"And certainly We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination (Azm)." (20: 115)⁴

'Ali Ibn Ibrahim explains this ayah (Qur'anic Verse) and says that Ulu'l-'Azm are those Prophets who had precedence over other Prophets in confessing to the greatness of these five Messengers. They also

expressed belief in all Prophets preceding and succeeding them. They were also patient when their people denied their claims.

In an authentic report, a Syrian asked Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali about the five Arab Prophets, Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, Isma'il and Muhammad. Then he asked about the Prophets who were born circumcised. Imam 'Ali said, "They were Adam, Shu'ayb, Idris, Nuh, Sam (Shem) ibn Nuh, Ibrahim, Dawud (Prophet David), Sulayman (Prophet Solomon), Lut (Prophet Lot), Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad." The Syrian then asked about creatures that were born without a mother. Imam said, "Adam, Hawwa' (Eve), the ram of Ibrahim, the staff of Musa, the she-camel of Salih and the bat of 'Isa that flew away by Allah's command." "Who are the six Prophets having two names," asked the Syrian. Imam said, "They are Yusha' ibn Nun (Joshua) 5 also known as Dhu'l-kifl, Ya'qub (Prophet Jacob) also called Israel, al-Khidhr (Elijah) known as Datt, Yunus (Prophet Jonah) is also referred to as Dhu'l-Nun, 'Isa who is called Maseeh (the Messiah) and Muhammad who is also called Ahmad, peace be upon them all."

Another narration mentions the king of Rome inquiring from Imam Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali about the seven creatures who were not delivered from womb. He replied, "They are Adam, Hawaa', the ram of Ibrahim, the she-camel of Salih, the serpent that invited Satan to misguide Adam in the Garden, the two crows that Allah sent to teach the method of burial of Habil (Abel) after he had been murdered by his brother Qabil (Cain) and finally Satan, may Allah curse him."

A reliable tradition from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir quotes the Messenger of Allah as saying that the first person to be appointed as the successor of Prophet was Hibatullah the son of Adam. Each and every Prophet had a legatee. Altogether, there were one hundred and twenty four thousand Prophets, five of them being Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets: Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad. 'Ali is having the same status with regard to Prophet Muhammad as Hibtullah had with Adam. 'Ali was the legatee of Prophet Muhammad and the inheritor of all the previous successors. And Muhammad was the inheritor of all the preceding Prophets and Messengers.

An authentic report from Ja'far as-Sadiq states that Allah the Almighty sent five Prophets among the Arabs. They were Hud, Salih, Isma'il, Shu'ayb and Muhammad; the seal of Prophets—peace be upon them all.⁶

An authentic hadith from Zurarah says that he asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir the difference between Nabi (Prophet) and Rasul (Messenger). Imam said, "Nabi is one who sees the angel of revelation in dream and Rasul is one who sees the angel both in sleep and when awake. He can also hear the angel's voice." "What is the position of an Imam?" asked Zurarah. "He is able to hear the angel's voice but cannot see him."

It is narrated through authentic chains that Hasan Ibn 'Abbas asked Imam al-Ridha to distinguish between Nabi, Rasul and Imam. Imam al-Ridha replied, "Archangel Gabriel descends for a Rasul. Rasul can see him and hear him and sometimes he sees Archangel Gabriel in dream like Ibrahim had seen.

Rasul is the recipient of divine revelation. Prophets can only hear the angel's voice. Sometimes they are able to see the angel, but do not hear the revelation at one and the same time. Imam only hears the voice of the angel. He does not see the form of the Angel."

An authentic tradition from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir states that Prophets are of five types. Some only hear the angel's voice, like a chain. They receive divine revelation through this method alone. Some Prophets receive the divine revelation in their dreams as in case of Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) and Ibrahim. Some were able to see the Angel. Some of the Prophets receive direct inspiration and could hear the voice but do not see the Angel.

Another authentic tradition mentions that Zurarah asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir the difference between Rasul, Nabi and Muhaddath (recipient of revelation). Imam said, "Rasul is one upon whom Archangel Gabriel descends. He could see Archangel Gabriel and converse with him. Nabi is one who only sees Archangel Gabriel in dream as in case of Ibrahim, when he saw in dream that he slaughtered his son.

The Messenger of Allah used to see the aims of his Messengership in dream before the descent of revelation upon him. He received Prophethood and Messengership together. Archangel Gabriel used to come to him and converse with him face to face. There were, however, some Prophets who were bestowed with qualifications of Messengership but they received divine revelation in their dreams. They conversed with holy spirits in their dreams but could not see the angel while awake. A Muhaddath is one who converses with angel but does not see him neither in sleep nor in the state of awaking."

In another tradition, Imam says that Prophets are of four classes. Those who are informed about their own selves (that they are Prophets) without any intermediary. Secondly, those who see the angel in dream but do not hear his voice. They do not see the angel in waking and such Prophets are not sent for guidance of others. They have a guide (Imam) whom they obey like Ibrahim was the Imam for Lut. The third kind is those who see and hear the angel in dream. They are sent for a particular group whether small or large. Almighty Allah says regarding Yunus,

"And We sent him to a hundred thousand, rather they exceeded." 37:147

Imam elaborates that there were one hundred and thirty thousand people referred to in this verse. The fourth kind of Prophets sees the angel in dreams and can hear him too. They see the angel in waking also, and are the Imams (leaders) of other Prophets, like Ulu'l-'Azm Prophets. Ibrahim was a Nabi. He was not an Imam until the Almighty appointed him thus:7

"And when this Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said, surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said, And of my offspring? My Covenant does not include the unjust, said He." 2:124

The Holy Imams are quoted in reliable reports that five Prophets were Syriac and they spoke Syriac;

Adam, Shith, Idris, Nuh and Ibrahim. Originally Adam spoke Arabic, the language of Paradise. But when he committed *Tark al-Awla8*, the Almighty substituted Paradise and its bounties for him with the earth and its crops. Allah also substituted the Arabic language with Syriac. Five of the Prophets were Hebrew but spoke Arabic. They were Ishaq, Ya'qub, Musa, Dawud and 'Isa and five were Arab Prophets: Hud, Salih, Shith, Isma'il and Muhammad. Four Prophets were contemporary to each other, Ibrahim, Ishaq, Ya'qub and Lut. Ibrahim and Ishaq were sent towards Holy Quds in Jerusalem and Syria. Ya'qub was appointed in Egypt. Isma'il was sent to Jurham tribe who inhabited the area surrounding the Holy Ka'bah after the 'Amaliq who were called such as they were from the progeny of 'Imlaq son of Lut, son of Sam son of Nuh. Lut was appointed as a Prophet to four towns: Sodom, Gomorrah, San'a' and Maa. Three Prophets were given kingdoms—Yusuf, Dawud and Sulayman. Four Kings were sovereigns over the entire world, two of them were believers—Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Sulayman; and two were infidels—Nimrod the son of Kosh son of Canaan and Nebuchadnezzar.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says in an authentic tradition that the Messenger of Allah said, "All the Prophets sent before me propagated in the language of their people. But I am sent for people of every race and I am sent with the Arabic language." In another authentic tradition, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says that Allah the Almighty sent every divine book and revelation in Arabic but it was conveyed to the respective Prophet in the language of his people. However, it was revealed to our Holy Prophet in Arabic itself.

Reliable chain of narrators has recorded that an atheist came to Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali and asked him the explanation of some Qur'anic verses. Then he accepted Islam. One of his queries was related to the exegesis of the ayah:

***"And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases; surely He is High, Wise."* (42:51)**

Actually that person was under the impression that there was a contradiction between this verse and the verses where Allah is mentioned addressing Musa, Adam and Hawaa' etc. Imam 'Ali explained to him that the verse states that Allah has never spoken to any person before nor would He ever do so in the future except by revelations or direct inspiration (Ilham) or in dream or through a voice that he can hear without seeing anything, like one speaking from behind a curtain. Allah also sends an angel and directs revelation for some. Indeed the celestial messengers are a kind of messengers that is the angels of revelation commanded by Allah. Thus, the celestial messengers convey the divine revelation to the terrestrial messengers. Sometimes there is direct conversation between the Almighty and the terrestrial Prophets.

The Holy Prophet asked Archangel Gabriel from where he obtained the divine revelation. "From Israfil," he replied, "From where does Israfil receive it?" "From a celestial angel who is at a higher position than him." The Holy Prophet further asked the source of this angel's revelation. He was told that the Almighty

inspired him directly.

Thus, this is the speech of Allah. It is not of a single type. Sometimes Allah has spoken to the Prophets some of whom He inspired directly. The Prophets get revelation in dreams. Another type of Allah's speech is that revealed by Allah and people recite it. Another kind is that the celestial messengers convey to the terrestrial Prophets. The questioner was pleased to hear the detailed reply and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin: you have untied the knot of my heart. May Allah increase your reward."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir is reported to have said in a reliable tradition that Archangel Gabriel described Israfil to the Holy Prophet that he was the chamberlain of the Almighty and the closest to Him. "And the Divine Tablet (Lawh) which is made of ruby is placed between his two eyes. When the Almighty speaks through revelation, the forehead of Lawh is inscribed with the words. Israfil looks at the Lawh and reads to us whatever is written on it. We convey the message to the heavens and the earth and apply it. He is the closest of all creatures to Allah. There are ninety curtains of light between him and Allah. Their brightness dazzles the eyes and it is impossible to describe their attributes. I am the closest of all the creatures to Israfil. (But) There is a distance of a thousand years' travel between us."⁹

Zurarah asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq how the Messenger of Allah came to know whatever was revealed to him was from Allah, not Satan. Imam said, "When Allah appoints someone as a Prophet, he bestows on him serenity and dignity. Therefore, whatever is revealed to him is as clear to him as if he were seeing it with his own eyes."

It is quoted in a reliable tradition that people asked the Messenger of Allah how the Prophets knew that they were Prophets. He replied, "The veils are lifted from their hearts." That is they are created as the people of perfect faith (belief). They do not harbor any doubts.

Imam al-Ridha says in an authentic tradition that dreams of Prophets are revelations. In the Du'a' (Invocation) of Umm-Dawud related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq to be recited on the fifteenth of Rajab, there are names of some Prophets. Imam says: "May Allah bless Habil, Shith, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Salih, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub, Yusuf, al-Asbaat (the chieftains of the Israelites), Lut, Shu'ayb, Ayyub (Prophet Job), Musa, Harun (Prophet Aaron), Yusha', Mitha, al-Khidhr, Dhu'l-Qarnayn, Yunus, Ilyas, al-Yasa', Dhu'l-kifl, Talut (Saul), Dawud, Sulayman, Zakariyya (Prophet Zachariah), Shayda, Yahya (Prophet John), Turakh, Matti (Matthews), Meya, Haiqooq (Habakkuk), Denial and Uzair and 'Isa and Shamoun and Jirjis and hawariyyun (the Disciples) and Atba and Khalid and Hanzalah and Luqman."

In an authentic hadith, Mufadhhdhal asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq how he (Imam) was aware of all that happened in every nook and corner of the earth while he remained at home with a curtain across his door. Imam said, "O Mufadhhdhal! The Almighty Allah has granted five spirits to the Prophets:

- (1) the spirit of life. He moves and walks with this spirit,
- (2) the spirit of the hearts. He rises with it and does Jihad,
- (3) the spirit of Shahur. He eats and drinks by it and has conjugal relations with women,

(4) the spirit of faith. By which he has faith (belief) and deals justly with the people

(5) the Holy Spirit by which he bears the position of Prophethood.

When the Prophet departs from this world, the Holy Spirit comes to the Imam who succeeds him. This spirit is not concerned with sleep, carelessness, useless pastimes or pride. The other four spirits are sometimes prone to sleep and inattentiveness. They are involved in vain pursuits and have pride also. Prophets and Imams see through the Holy Spirit and know about different affairs.”

According to a reliable narration, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir said that Almighty Allah had taken an oath from Adam that he should not approach the prohibited tree. But he approached it and also tasted its fruit, as mentioned by Allah:

“And certainly, We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.” (20: 115)

When the Almighty sent Adam to the earth, Habil and his sister were born as twins. Then Qabil and his sister were born together. Adam commanded both of his sons to perform a sacrifice for the Almighty. Habil owned a flock of sheep while Qabil was a farmer. Habil sacrificed the best ram from his flock. Qabil on the other hand was careless of his occupation and offered unclean ears of corn and bad quality crop as gifts to Allah. Consequently the sacrifice of Habil was accepted and that of Qabil was not. In the words of Qur’an:

“And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other.” (5: 27)

During those days whenever an offering was accepted by Allah, a fire used to appear and consume it. So Qabil made a fireplace and he was the first person who constructed a place to contain a fire. He said, “I shall worship the fire so that it accepts my offering.” Satan, the enemy of Allah, told him that the offering of Habil had been accepted and his own rejected. “If you let him live, he would beget children who would pride upon your children for the superiority he has gained over you.” Qabil accepted the suggestion and killed Habil. He came to Adam who asked him where Habil was. Qabil said, “I don’t know, you did not entrust him to me.”

When Adam learnt that Habil was murdered, he exclaimed, “O Earth! Curse of Allah be on you! For you have accepted the blood of Habil,” and continued to weep for forty days and supplicated Allah to grant him another son. He was granted a son whom he named Hibtullah because he was a gift (Hibah) from Allah. Adam was very affectionate towards him. When the Prophethood of Adam neared its end and he reached old age, the Almighty revealed to him that time had come for him to transfer the Prophetic knowledge and relics to his son Hibtullah.

“Indeed, We shall never take away from the progeny of Hibtullah the relics and Prophetic science until the day of judgment,” said Allah. “I shall never leave the Earth devoid of a scholar from his progeny.

People will derive religious knowledge and spiritual guidance through this scholar. Anyone who follows Nuh or him will be assured deliverance.”

Adam was reminded of Nuh at this juncture and said, “The Almighty shall send a Prophet who will call the people towards Allah. People will reject him and Allah shall destroy them through the flood.” There was a gap of ten generations between Adam and Nuh. All the ancestors of Nuh were Prophets. Adam made a bequest to Hibtullah and told him that if anyone of them met Nuh should believe in him and follow him in order to be saved from the deluge.

When Adam was on his deathbed, he summoned Hibtullah and told him to convey his salaams to Archangel Gabriel or any other angel if he happened to see them. “Tell them that your father requests them for a fruit of Paradise.” Hibtullah met Archangel Gabriel and conveyed the message of his respected father. Archangel Gabriel said, “O Hibtullah! Your father has departed to meet his Creator and I have come to perform his prayers (of dead).”

When Hibtullah returned home, he saw that Adam had departed for his heavenly abode. Archangel Gabriel taught him the method of ghusl (ritual bath) of dead body. Hibtullah bathed Adam and when it was the time of prayers of dead, Hibtullah told Archangel Gabriel to stand in front and pray. Archangel Gabriel said, “As Allah had once ordered us to prostrate before Adam, it is not proper that we lead (Imamate) any of his sons.” Hibtullah stood before Archangel Gabriel and offered the Prayer of the Dead. Archangel Gabriel stood behind him with a group of angels and recited thirty takbirs (saying *Allahu Akbar*). The Almighty Allah then commanded Archangel Gabriel to reduce 25 takbirs for the progeny of Adam. Consequently, it is the practice among us to recite five takbirs, although the Holy Prophet has recited seven and nine takbirs for the martyrs of battle of Badr. Hibtullah buried Adam.

Qabil approached him and said, “I know my father has entrusted you especially with the knowledge that he kept away from me and it is the same knowledge with which Habil prayed and made his offering that was honored. I killed him so that he would not have children to pride over my children. If you do not give me a little of that knowledge bequeathed by our father, I shall kill you too.”

Thus Hibtullah and his sons used to fervently guard the Prophetic knowledge and divine relics until the time of Nuh. During the time of Nuh, people were shown the will of Adam and it was learnt that Adam had prophesied the advent of Nuh. The people believed in Nuh, testified to the veracity of his claim and obeyed him. Adam had also commanded Hibtullah to read his will at the beginning of every year and renew their oath. That particular day became the day of feast for them. They continued the ritual year after year. Every succeeding Prophet made similar bequests until the advent of Prophet Muhammad. People recognized Nuh through prior knowledge and that is exactly the meaning of the verse,

“Certainly, We sent Nuh to his people so he said, O my people! Serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.” (7:59)

There were some Prophets between Adam and Nuh but they did not declare their Prophethood to the

people. That is the reason why Qur'an does not mention their names. Some Prophets however declared their Prophethood as their names are stated in Qur'an:

“And (We sent) apostles We have mentioned to you before and apostles we have not mentioned to you;” (4:164)

Imam explains that Prophets mentioned by name were those who declared their Prophethood and Prophets not mentioned by name were those who kept their mission secret. Nuh propagated religion among his people for 950 years. He did not have any assistant Prophet. People rejected all the Prophets between Adam and Nuh, as mentioned by Allah. When the time of Nuh's Prophethood approached its end, the Almighty sent a revelation to Nuh and commanded him to bequeath the Prophetic sciences, the relics and other trophies to his son: “Indeed, We shall never take away from the progeny of Sam the Prophetic inheritance like I had caused it to remain from Adam to your generation I shall never leave the earth devoid of a scholar from your progeny. People will understand religion through him and he shall be the means of their salvation especially for the people who are born between the times of two Prophets.”

Hud became the Prophet after Sam. There were some known as well as concealed Prophets between Nuh and Hud. Nuh had already predicted that Allah the Almighty shall send a Prophet named Hud. “He shall invite his people towards Allah while they will reject him. So, Allah will destroy the people. Therefore, one who lives until that time must believe in and follow him. The Almighty shall deliver you from His chastisement.” Nuh commanded Sam to read this will and renew the vow at the beginning of each year on the day of 'Id.

When Hud arrived the people, he saw the will of Nuh regarding him. So, the people believed in him, confessed to his truth and followed him. They obtained security from divine punishment. Allah the Almighty says,

“And to 'ad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said, O my people! Serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; will you not then guard (against evil)?” (7:65) “And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and (so did) Ya'qub. O my sons! Surely, Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims.” (2:132)

Some from the progeny of Hud were appointed to keep them informed about the advent of Ibrahim and to take oaths regarding him. There was a gap of ten generations between Hud and Ibrahim. All (ancestors of Ibrahim) were Prophets. Thus, it is divine practice that between two great Prophets there is a gap of ten, nine or eight generations. All of them used to be Prophets and they used to prophesize the advent of the coming Prophet. They also took the vow from their legatees that they would believe and obey him. All the Prophets took such oaths of fealty like Adam, Nuh, Salih, Shu'ayb and Ibrahim. This continued until the time of Yusuf.

After Yusuf it was transferred to the progeny of his brothers, al-Asbat. The series reached Musa the son of 'Imran. Between Yusuf and Musa also was a gap of ten generations. Then Allah sent them to the

Pharaoh, Haman and Qarun. The Almighty sent Prophets one after the other to every people. People continued to reject the Prophets and continued to perish due to divine chastisement. This continued until the time of the Israelites. These people murdered as many as two, three or four Prophets everyday. Sometimes as many as seventy Prophets were slain together and the Israelites did not care. They remained busy in their occupations all day. When Torah was revealed to Musa, he gave glad tidings of Prophet Muhammad. Yusha' ibn Nun was the successor of Musa and Qata was the successor of Yusha' ibn Nun, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an,

“And when Musa said to his servant (Qata).” (18:60)

Thus, all the Prophets continued to prophesize the advent of Prophet Muhammad as mentioned by Allah in Qur'an,

“Those who follow the Apostle Prophet, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Injeel, (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things...” (7:157),

and in the words of 'Isa,

“O Children of Israel! Surely, I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of an Apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad.” (61:6)

Thus Musa and 'Isa had clearly prophesied about Prophet Muhammad just as the previous Prophets had informed about the Prophets to come after them. This continued until the time of Prophet Muhammad. When the last moments of the Holy Prophet arrived, the Almighty revealed to him to entrust all the knowledge and relics to 'Ali Ibn Abi-Talib and promised that they should remain in his progeny forever just as they had remained from the time of Adam. The Holy Qur'an says,

“Surely Allah chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the descendants of 'Imran above the nations. Offspring, one of the other; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (3:33–34)

Muhammad and his progeny are included in the progeny of Ibrahim. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says, “Indeed Allah has not made the knowledge as ignorance. He did not leave the question of scholars in dark. He has provided express authentication for each Prophet or Imam. He has introduced them fully to the people. It has never been the case that Allah has created a person to be appointed as a Prophet for people; the people do not accept his authority and that he is not conversant with the divine commands and secrets of creation. Allah has never entrusted the affairs of this religion to a proximate angel or a Prophet. He selects an angel as a messenger through whom he conveys His likes and dislikes to the Prophet. He also conveys through this angel the past and future knowledge. So the Prophets learnt this knowledge through their predecessors, the saints and those who were specially selected by Allah.” Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an,

“Indeed We have given the book and wisdom to the progeny of Ibrahim and gave them a great kingdom.” (4:54)

‘Book’ denotes Prophethood, ‘Wisdom’ indicates the great intellectual position of those personalities, and all of them are from this progeny; some excelling over others. Almighty Allah has appointed Prophethood among them and ordained that His message shall be conveyed and protected by these people alone. After Prophets, come their progeny, their brothers and family. One who acts with faith in the message of these Prophets achieves salvation but one who considers that the bearers of Allah’s message and holders of exalted station are not these personalities but some other undeserving relatives and acts against the divine sciences without the medium of Prophets has actually belied Almighty Allah. They have gone against the will and obedience of Allah. They have not acknowledged the repositories of the Divine message that Allah has appointed. Thus, they are misguided and they misguide their followers. They shall have no excuse in the Resurrection Day. There is no proof except that of the progeny of Ibrahim. Almighty Allah has said,

“Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace? But indeed we have given to Ibrahim’s children the Book and the wisdom, and we have given them a grand kingdom.” (4:54)

The proof is only for the Prophets and their family, and it shall remain so until the day of Judgment, as mentioned in the Book of Allah,

“In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings.” (24:36)

Imam explains, “These are our houses and the houses of the Prophets, the guides and the wise people. This is the rope of faith by catching hold of which people before you achieved success and through the same connection people would attain salvation in the future.” Indeed the Almighty has stated in His book,

“And we gave to him Ishaq and Ya’qub, each did we guide, and Nuh did we guide before, and of his descendants, Dawud and Sulayman and Ayyub and Yusuf and Harun; and thus do we reward those who do good (to others). And Zakariyya and Yahya and ‘Isa and Ilyas; everyone was of the good; And Isma’il and Al-Yasha and Yunus and Lut; and everyone we made to excel (in) the worlds; And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and we chose them and guided them to the right way. This is Allah’s guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His servants; and if they had set up others (with Him), certainly what they did would have become ineffectual for them. These are they to whom we gave the book and the wisdom and the prophecy; therefore if these disbelieve in it we have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it.” (6:84–89)

Imam explained that even if the whole community rejects the Prophet, the people of his house (Ahl al-

Bayt) would remain firm in their faith and the message of the Prophet. They shall also be their legatees and successors. They will be the repositories of the Divine sciences and under no circumstances will they be fallible nor will they be contaminated with falsehood, evil designs or show-off. There is no doubt in whatever Allah has stated regarding the successors of His Prophets.

They are infallible and to love them is to recompense for the Prophet's labor in conveying the Divine message. They are bestowed with Wilayah and Imamate (Guardianship and guidance). They are the legatees of the Prophet. "O people! Derive lessons from this, ponder upon my words, align yourself with the knowledge and Imamate that Allah has bestowed upon us and attain salvation through these means so that on the day of Judgment you would have proof and gain success from it. These personalities are your intercessors with Allah. Your Wilayah shall not reach Allah but through them. Thus, it is incumbent on Allah to befriend and not punish those who act upon this.

On the other hand, it is certain that Allah shall degrade and punish those who do not act upon this. Indeed, the mission of some Prophets was confined to a particular group of people and the Prophethood of other Prophets was general. Nuh was sent for the people of the whole world. His Prophethood was general and included Messengership (Risalah), Hud was appointed specially for the people of 'ad. Salih was given the responsibility of guiding the people of Thamud, a tiny village on the bank of a river consisting of only forty odd houses. Shu'ayb was designated as the Prophet for Madyan, a habitation of less than forty families. Initially the Prophethood of Ibrahim was for the people of Kosariya, a district in Iraq. Later he migrated from there but this migration was not due to war or conflict, as Allah says,

"And he said, 'Surely I fly to my lord, He will guide me.'" (37:99)

Thus, the flight (Hijrah) of Ibrahim was not due to war. Ishaq was the Prophet after Ibrahim. Ya'qub was appointed as a Prophet for the Canaan region. He later moved to Egypt and spent the rest of his life there but after his demise, his mortal remains were brought to Canaan and buried there. As regards the dream of Yusuf wherein he saw eleven stars and the Sun and Moon prostrating before him, it is certain that his Prophethood was for the people of Egypt. He had twelve successors. Later, the Almighty appointed Musa and Harun in Egypt. Yusha' ibn Nun was the vicegerent of Musa for the Israelites.

There are many other Prophets in the Israelites some of whom have been mentioned by Allah in Qur'an and some are not. Then the Almighty sent 'Isa ibn Maryam (son of Mary) for the Israelites. His Prophethood was confined to the area of Jerusalem. 'Isa had twelve disciples and the faith remained concealed in his family members. After 'Isa was raised to the heavens, the Almighty sent Prophet Muhammad for all the creatures. He was the final Prophet. He was also succeeded by twelve successors appointed by Allah. We have seen some of them and some shall come in the future. This is an account of Prophethood and Messengership."

Every Prophet of the Israelites, whether special or general had twelve successors. The practice of 'Isa's twelve successors is replicated in the successorship of Muhammad. (The appointment of) 'Ali was on the

practice of 'Isa. This is a brief account of Prophets and the Divine practice of sending Prophets and Messengers—peace of Allah be upon all of them.”

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq quotes the Messenger of Allah in a reliable tradition as saying, “I am the chief (Sayyid) and the best of Prophets, and my successor is a chief and the greatest among the successors of Prophets. My successors are the best among the successors of Prophets. Indeed Adam implored Allah to bestow him with a noble successor. Allah revealed to him, ‘I have exalted my Prophets with Messengership for testing the faith of the creatures and from the righteous people chose successors of the Prophets. O Adam! Make a bequest to your son Shith.’

He was Hibtullah the son of Adam. Adam appointed him as his successor. Shith appointed Sha'ban as his vicegerent. Sha'ban was born through the huri sent by Allah from Paradise as a wife for Shith. Sha'ban bequeathed the vicegerency to his son Mohhith. Mohhith to Mahooq, Mahooq to Ameesha, Ameesha to Akhnooh. Akhnooh is known as Idris. Idris appointed Nahoor as his legatee, Nahoor's bequest was for Nuh. Sam was the vicegerent of Nuh. Sam delegated to Athamar, Athamar to Bareeshasha, Bareeshasha to Yaafith (Japheth), Yaafith to Baraa, Baraa to Jafeena, Jafeena to 'Imran. 'Imran transferred the legacy to Ibrahim, Ibrahim to Isma'il, Isma'il to Ishaq, Ishaq to Ya'qub, Ya'qub to Yusuf, Yusuf to Bathariya, Bathariya to Shu'ayb. Shu'ayb entrusted the legacy to Musa, the son of 'Imran. Musa to Yusha' ibn Nun. Yusha' to Dawud; Dawud to Sulayman, Sulayman to Asif bin Barkhiya. Asif to Zakariyya, Zakariyya to Sayaa, Sayaa to 'Isa son of Maryam. 'Isa bequeathed to Shamoun, Shamoun to Yahya bin Zakariyya. Yahya bin Zakariyya to Mundar, Mundar to Saleema, Saleema to Burda, Burda entrusted the legacies to me. O 'Ali! I make the bequest to you. You entrust the legacy to your vicegerent and he would pass it to his successors. All of them are from your progeny.

One after the other, this series shall reach the best inhabitants of this Earth. He shall be the last of the Imams. People shall have serious disagreements regarding your successorship. Anyone from the Ummah (Muslim community) who believes in your successorship shall be like one who has a firm faith and one who dissociates with you and does not follow you shall be in Hellfire; the abode of disbelievers.”

Infallibility of the Prophets and Imams

We must know that Imamite scholars (May Allah be pleased with them) are unanimous as regards the infallibility of Prophet's successors and Imams. These divine personages are granted immunity from minor sins. They do not commit any sin, knowingly, unknowingly nor in forgetfulness; neither before their appointment as Prophets nor afterwards; neither in childhood nor in old age. No scholar has disagreed on this except Ibn Babawayh and Shaykh Abu-Muhammad bin al-Husayn bin al-Walid. They believe that the Almighty due to hidden wisdom lets them commit some oversights in some matters that are not related with Prophethood.

Although according to majority of traditions and consensus, the belief in infallibility of Prophets is a cardinal principal of Imamite faith. It is rather a necessity of faith according to Shiite religion. A large

number of books have been compiled to support this belief based on reason and holy texts. Many of the traditions regarding the infallibility of Prophets will be quoted in our discussion on Imamate (Vol. 3). However, we present a few traditions that shall suffice for our discussion.

1) Firstly, the Prophets are sent to people with the intention that people obey them and act upon the divine prohibitions and commands. Hence, if Allah does not make them infallible it would not serve the purpose and it does not befit a Wise one to do something vain. The Prophets are sent with a message for the people to act righteously and to abstain from evil. So, the Prophets first have to practice what they preach to others. How else could their exhortations be effective. This can be illustrated by the example of some preachers and prayer leaders.

In case people find them lacking in high morals and having weakness to minor detestable acts, they do not follow them. So what would happen if these leaders commit sins like adultery, murder and drinking etc? The majority sect allows that a Prophet or his legatee can commit some minor sins. Some eight to ten sins are included in this. Even these people are of the opinion that a person who commits sins like omitting the Prayers and fasting, sexual perversion, listening to songs and useless games is not worthy of the rulership of Muslim community and caliphate. No sane person can condone such types of vices in a person assigned to this important post.

2) Secondly if a Prophet commits a sin, a queer situation will occur. It would be necessary to obey and disobey him at the same time because Allah the Almighty has said,

“Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (3:31)

When this has been proved for our Prophet it must be true for all the other Prophets too because Allah does not discriminate between them. On the other hand, it is not allowed to follow a sinner in his sinful activities.

3) If the Prophet commits a sin, it would be incumbent to restrain him and exert him to goodness on the basis of the Amr bil Ma’roof and Nahy a’nil Munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil). On the other hand, it is wrong to prevent a Prophet from doing anything because it is assumed that he does everything with Allah’s permission. Allah says in Qur’an, “Obey Allah and the apostle, but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers and for this Allah has cursed such people.”

4) Allah says in Qur’an,

“O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look careful into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done.” (49:6)

5) Allah has further stated,

“And thus we have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearer of witness to the

people and (that) the apostle may be a bearer of the witness to you; and we did not make that which you would have to be the kiblah but that we might distinguish him who follows the apostle from him who turns back upon his heels, and this was surely hard except for those whom Allah has guided aright; and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is Affectionate, merciful to the people.” (2:143)

6) Regarding the curse and wrath Allah says,

“And whoever disobeys Allah and His apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.” (4:14)

If any apostle (God forbid) commits a wrong then he has disobeyed Allah and due to disobedience, he will have a disgraceful chastisement. Allah has declared,

“And who is most unjust than he who forgoes a lie against Allah? These shall be brought before their Lord, and the witness shall say, these are they who lied against their Lord. Now surely the curse of Allah is on the unjust.” (11:18)

7) Allah declares in Qur’an regarding people who asked others to believe and obey Allah but they themselves did not, “

What! Do you enjoin men to be good and neglect your own souls while you read the book; have you then no sense?” (2:44)

To include the Prophet in this matter is wrong. And in the verse of Qur’an,

8) When Satan said, “By God, I will make your people to follow the wrong path except your good believers.” Allah said, “The people who will follow you, will be unbelievers. The righteous people will always follow My apostle and their orders.”

9) It is mentioned that a sinner is unjust and the post of Prophethood can never be given to an unjust person. Allah says,

“My covenant does not include the unjust...” (2:124)

There are countless such arguments that can be quoted to prove the necessity of Prophets’ infallibility however, it is beyond the scope of this book. For detailed discussion, refer to hayat al-Qulub Volume 3.

According to reliable sources Imam al-Ridha wrote to Al-Madman (the `Abbasid caliph) the articles of Imamiyah faith. He wrote that Allah does not make incumbent for the people the obedience of a person who misguides to the wrong path. He does not appoint them as leaders of His creatures when he knows that they would deny Him and His commands, and follow Satan instead of obeying His orders. Imam al-Ridha regularly presented his arguments in the gatherings of scholars in Al-Ma’mun’s court in defense

of Prophets' and Imams' infallibility. The scholars of opposing sects were left spell bound by his arguments

In an authentic report Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq described the principles of faith to Amash. Therein he also mentioned that the Prophet and his descendants do not commit sins as they are infallible and pure and the book of Sulaym bin Qays quotes Imam 'Ali that Allah has ordered obedience of Ulil-Amr (those vested with authority) because they are infallible and they do not command the people for sinful acts.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir is quoted regarding the explanation of Qur'anic verse (2: 124), **"My covenant does not include the unjust."** "A fool cannot be a leader of pious."

The consensus of Muslims is that no omission and forgetfulness can occur by the Prophets as far as the missionary work is concerned. But Sunnis believe that Prophets can commit mistakes in matters of worship and worldly affairs. However, Shi'ah scholars are opposed to this. According to Shi'ah, Prophets and Imams are absolutely free of errors. According to other traditions, we come to know that doubts regarding their infallibility are not based on consensus. Most of the traditions that mention their mistakes are quoted due to dissimulation. Moreover, a vast number of intellectual and textual proofs support the infallibility of Prophets.

Suppose a Prophet were to omit prayer by mistake, forget to fast in the month of Ramadhan, drink wine and mistakenly commit adultery, would anybody rely on him. There are many traditions to prove the infallibility of Prophets but here we have just discussed the matter in brief. For details, refer to the book *The Life and Religion of Muhammad*.

Merits and Virtues of Prophets and their Successors

It is reported that Prophet Muhammad said, "When we the Prophets sleep, our eyes sleep but our hearts do not, and just as we see in front we can see behind."

In another tradition Imam Musa bin Ja'far is reported to have said that Allah did not send any unintelligent Prophet but sent the wise and intelligent Prophets for the guidance. Some Prophets were more intelligent than others. Allah did not make Sulayman and Dawud His representatives until He tested their intellects. Sulayman became the divine vicegerent at the age of 13 years. For forty years, he ruled as a king and was a Prophet as well. Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn assumed the divine office at the age of 12 years and ruled for 30 years.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated that the mosque of Sahlah (in al-Kufah) is the residence of Prophet Idris and he was doing tailoring work in the house. Prophet Ibrahim passed by this mosque to Yemen for the battle of 'Amaliqah. Prophet Dawud also passed by this way for the battle of Jalut (Goliath). There is a green stone in the mosque on which the sign of each Prophet is engraved and they have taken the dust from below the stone. That place is the revelation of Prophet al-Khidhr.

Imam 'Ali said, "Seventy Prophets offered prayer in the mosque of al-Kufah and their seventy successors also prayed, and I am the one of them."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir has stated that one thousand and seventy Prophets have prayed in the mosque of al-Kufah. The staff of Prophet Musa, a creeper of pumpkin and the divine ring of Prophet Sulayman are kept in this mosque. It is the same place where the oven of Prophet Nuh flared up. Prophet Nuh's ark was constructed here and many Prophets are buried in this place. According to a reliable tradition people asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq to explain the verse,

"O apostles! Eat of the good things and do good; surely I know what you do." (23:51)

Imam explained, eating of good things means earn and spend in permissible way.

Another tradition states that a person came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and prayed to Allah for his livelihood. Imam said, "Ah! You are seeker of the strength of the Prophet. Ask Allah for the livelihood that will protect you from divine chastisement in the Resurrection Day." Then Imam recited the above verse.

According to reliable sources Abu-Sa'id has stated that he heard Prophet Muhammad say to Imam 'Ali, "O 'Ali! Allah did not send any Prophet but ordered him of your love and Wilayah whether he liked it or not."

Imam Zayn al-'abidin has narrated that Allah created the bodies and hearts from fine dust and the hearts of the believers are also created from the same dust. There are many traditions that the bodies of believers are created from a dust inferior to this.

Imam al-Ridha has stated that Allah has created the Prophets with cool temperaments.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated that Allah had given the Prophethood to Prophet Muhammad two thousand years before the other Prophets in the state of spiritual existence. Prophet Muhammad invited them towards Allah's worship and belief. He promised them Paradise for this and warned that those who do not believe in Allah will be the dwellers of Hell.

According to other traditions, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated that people asked Prophet Muhammad the reason of his excellence and superiority over other Prophets though he was the last of them. Prophet Muhammad said, "this is because I am the first person to believe in My Lord. Allah took promise from the other Prophets, made them witnesses of their souls and said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They all said, 'Yes.' I preceded all those who believed in Allah.

It is also mentioned in many traditions that at that time Allah took the oath of fealty from all the Prophets in that ethereal world regarding His lordship, Muhammad's Prophethood and the Imamate of 'Ali and the Holy Imams. Then Allah took their oath regarding belief in the Messenger of Allah and to help 'Ali during the time of Raj'ah. (The return before the Resurrection Day).

According to an authentic tradition, Prophet Muhammad stated that Allah did not take the soul of any of His Prophets until he had ordered them to nominate their nearest relative as their legatee and I was also commanded similarly. I asked Allah whom I should nominate and He revealed to me, "Nominate your cousin 'Ali Ibn Abi-Talib, whose name I have mentioned in the previous divine Books and stated that he is your successor. I have also obtained the oath of fealty for My Lordship, your Prophethood and Imamate and Wilayah of 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib from all the creatures and Prophets.

A tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq mentions that Allah preferred agriculture and goat-herding as occupations for His apostles. In another tradition, Imam has stated that Allah never sent his apostle but has ordered him to be a shepherd. In this way, He trained them for guiding the people.

Another tradition quoted from the Prophet says that some Prophets used to suffer from hunger and die in that state, some suffered from thirst and died and some did not have clothes to cover themselves and died. Some suffered from disease and pain and died. Sometimes a Prophet used to come to his people and command them to obey Allah while he did not possess any strength. The people did not even allow him to complete his sentence. They did not pay any heed to his words and killed him at once. Allah involves His creatures in difficulties in proportion to their ability and their closeness to Him.

According to another tradition, Prophet Muhammad has remarked that Allah has not sent any apostle but with a pleasant voice.

Imam al-Ridha says that keeping oneself pure and fragranced, having sufficient relationships with women and keeping a lot of wives are the attributes of Prophets.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has said that the last meal of the apostles was after the Night Prayer.

Imam al-Ridha has said, "Each apostle prayed for barley as their diet and blessed it. Barley removes pain and disease from whichever stomach it enters. It is the diet of apostles and righteous people. Allah preferred barley for His apostles and nothing else."

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has narrated that parched barley meal is the diet of the Prophets or the Messengers.

According to a good tradition, meat and curd constitute the curry of Prophets. Another tradition says that vinegar and olive is the diet of Prophets. Imam 'Ali has mentioned the same thing.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has narrated that brushing teeth is the practice of Prophets.

In another tradition, Imam says that Allah appointed the livelihood of Prophets in farming and dairy so that they do not feel averse to rain.

In a trustworthy tradition, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq said, "Allah has not commissioned His Prophets but there is an excellent fragrance in their body. In another hadith, he says that good smell is the practice of the messengers. Imam 'Ali has stated that sweet smelling perspiration is a virtue of the Prophets."

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq mentions that Allah bestowed three things to the Prophets: sweet fragrance, copulation with women and brushing teeth.

In another tradition, Musa bin Ja'far has stated, "Allah has not sent any Prophet and Wasi (legatee) but that they were generous and philanthropists."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir has stated that seven hundred Prophets have performed prayer in the mosque of Khaif, which is in Mina. It is a fact that the vicinity of Rukn, the Black Stone (of the holy Ka'bah) and Maqam Ibrahim is the area of burial of many Prophets. Prophet Adam's grave is in the sanctuaries of Allah.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated that seventy Prophets who died due to hunger, thirst and penury are buried between the Rukn al-Yamani and the Black Stone.

Reliable sources have mentioned that a person said to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, "I feel disgusted to pray in the mosque of Sunnis." Imam said, "Do not be disgusted to pray, because each mosque is built on the grave of a Prophet or his descendants who were martyred, and a few drops of their blood fell on this ground, and Allah wanted the people to remember him at this place. So perform your obligatory, supererogatory, settled and all your prayers in this place."

A hadith says that when Zakariyya was martyred, the angels arrived and gave him the last bath and performed the prayers for three days for him and then he was buried. Similarly, when a Prophet dies, his body does not decompose. The angels perform the prayers for three days and then he is buried.

Prophet Muhammad is quoted in some hadiths as saying, "Allah has made our flesh unlawful to the earth and forbade it to consume any part of our body."

An authentic tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says, "A Prophet or an Imam does not remain on the earth land for more than three days. His bones, his whole body and his soul are carried to the heavens by angels. When the followers go to his grave, the angels carry the salutations of the followers to the Prophet in the heavens. Whether they are recited near the tomb or far from it."¹⁰

According to reliable sources from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, he said, "On Friday nights we have a marvelous affair." The people asked, "what that was?" Imam replied, "On every Friday eve, Allah allows the souls of His apostles and the souls of the good people among you, who are alive, to go to the heavens and reach to the Holy Throne. The souls circumambulate seven times and perform two Rak'ah (units) prayers at each corner of the Holy Throne. Then they return to the physical body before daybreak. The Prophets and their successors derive much pleasure from this and their knowledge increases."

In another tradition, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir states that Prophet Muhammad said, "Our souls and the souls of our successors remain present near the Holy Throne until daybreak and then returns to their body with an increase in their knowledge."

Prophet Muhammad has stated that Allah has bestowed three good qualities on His apostles and no one else except my followers. "First, whenever Allah sent His apostle He revealed to him to struggle in his

religion and he shall not face any straitened circumstances. The same is bestowed on my community, where Allah says that there is no difficulty in religion. Secondly, Allah had instructed all His Prophets to pray to him in case he is faced with adverse conditions and that Allah will answer his prayers. The same command is issued for the people of this community: 'Ask Me that I may bestow.' Thirdly, Allah made every apostle a witness on his people appointed my community a witness on all the creatures. Allah says that Muhammad is a witness upon you and you are witness upon the world."

According to a reliable hadith of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq a Jew came to the Prophet and asked and glared at him in anger. The Prophet inquired, "O Jew! What do you want? The Jew asked, "Who is better, you or Prophet Musa bin 'Imran, upon whom the Almighty sent Torah, held conversation with him, granted him the Staff, split the sea and provided a cloud to shade him?" Prophet Muhammad said, "It is detestable for a person to praise himself but it is incumbent upon me to inform you. When Prophet Adam took false step, he repented for it in the following words: O Allah, forgive by Muhammad and the family of Muhammad" and Allah forgave him.

When Prophet Nuh boarded the ark, he thought he would be drowned. He prayed to Allah for the sake of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad to save him from the storm, so Allah saved him. When Prophet Ibrahim was thrown into the fire, he invoked Allah for the sake of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad. Allah cooled the fire and kept him safe.

When Prophet Musa cast down his staff, he was afraid and he prayed to Allah for the sake of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad make me overcome my fear. Allah told him not to fear, "You have an elevated status." O, Jew! If Musa had been present in my time and had no faith in me and my Prophethood his own Prophethood would not have benefited him. O Jew! Al-Mahdi is from my progeny when he would reappear, Prophet 'Isa Ibn Maryam would descend for his assistance and perform prayers behind him."

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir has stated that the knowledge that descended on Prophet Adam did not go back. No learned person dies leaving his knowledge in vain, because knowledge is bequeathed to his legates and the earth is never devoid of a learned personality. When he dies, his knowledge is inherited by another who is learned or more.

Many authentic traditions mention that there is no Proof of Allah like the doctor of religion whose community is in need of some knowledge that he does not have or that he cannot speak the language of the people.

Many traditions have indicated that the murderer of a Prophet or their children is of illegitimate birth. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated in an authentic tradition that no sin is deadlier than murder of a Prophet or Imam, demolishing the Ka'bah or committing adultery.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim stated that Allah created the Prophets and their successors on a Friday and took the covenant from them on the same day.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir has stated that Allah has created His Apostles and Imams on five auspicious souls etc.

According to another tradition, we come to know that Archangel Gabriel descends upon the Prophets and the Holy Spirit¹¹ always remains with them and their successors. He teaches them knowledge and befriends them on behalf of the Almighty.

Imam 'Ali has stated regarding the verse of Holy Qur'an,

“And the foremost are the foremost, these are they who are drawn high (to Allah),” (56:10-11)

they are the Prophets of Allah whether sent with a new Shari'ah or not.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has stated that Allah's Great names consist of seventy three letters, Allah bestowed twenty five to Prophet Adam, twenty five to Prophet Nuh, eight to Prophet Ibrahim, four to Prophet Musa, two to 'Isa. With only these two letters 'Isa was able to bring the dead to life and to cure lepers. Allah bestowed Prophet Muhammad seventy-two letters and retained one letter with Himself. In another tradition it is mentioned that Allah bestowed six letters to Prophet Ibrahim and eight to Prophet Nuh.

According to reliable sources, Prophet Muhammad has stated that there are three types of Tinah (clay) (1) Tinah of Prophets (2) Tinah of believers and (3) Tinah of Nasibis (enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt). The believers are like the Prophets but the Prophets' Tinah is of a better quality. They are having high station and honor. The believers are created from the fruits of this Tinah (which is like wet sticky clay.) Therefore, Allah never separated their Shi'ah from them. Enemies of Ahl al-Bayt are created from dirty, black and offensive smelling Tinah.

Imam al-Ridha has stated that, “When Prophet Nuh was about to drown, he prayed to Allah to save him and he was saved. When Prophet Ibrahim was thrown into the fire, he prayed to Allah by reciting the names of the Holy Five, so Allah saved him from the fire. When Prophet Musa cast his staff on the water by reciting our names and prayed, so Allah split the sea and made a passage for him. When Jews decided to murder 'Isa, he prayed to Allah for the sake of the Holy Five. Allah saved him from them and raised him to the heavens.”

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq stated that when Imam al-Qa'im will reappear, the Prophet will raise the flag and nine thousand three hundred and thirteen angels will arrive to help. They are the same angels who were in the Prophet Nuh's ark and they were also with Prophet Ibrahim when he was cast into the fire. They will be the same angels who were with Prophet Musa when the water of Nile split and they were also with 'Isa when he was raised on the heavens.

Another tradition quotes the strength of angels as thirteen thousand three hundred and thirteen.

From the reliable reports, Imam 'Ali stated that the difficulties of the Prophet are more severe than all the

people. After them are their successors' difficulties and then a righteous person has to face the difficulties.

Imam 'Ali mentioned in the sermon of al-Qasiyah which is his famous sermons that "Praise be to Allah who wears the apparel of Honor and Dignity and has chosen them for Himself instead of for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great self, and has hurled a curse on him who contests with Him concerning them. Then He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who are modest from those who are vain. Therefore, Allah, who is aware of whatever is hidden in the hearts and whatever lies behind the unseen said,

"Verily I am about to create man from clay, and when I have completed and have breathed into him of My spirit, then fall ye prostrating in obeisance unto him. And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together, save Iblis..." (38:71-74)

His vanity stood in his way. Consequently, he felt proud over Adam by virtue of his creation and boasted over him on account of his origin. Thus, this enemy of Allah is the leader of those who boast and the forerunner of the vain. It is he who laid the foundation of factionalism, quarreled with Allah about the robe of greatness, put on the dress of haughtiness and took off the covering of humility. Do you not see how Allah made him low on account of his vanity and humiliated him for his feigning to be high? He discarded him in this world and provided for him burning fire in the next world. If Allah had wanted to create Adam from a light whose glare would have dazzled the eyes, whose handsomeness would have amazed the wits and whose smell would have caught the breath, He could have done so; and if He had done so, people would have bowed to him in humility and the trial of the angels through him would have become easier.

But Allah, the Glorified, tries His creatures by means of those things whose real nature they do not know in order to distinguish (good and bad) for them through the trial, and to remove vanity from them and keep them and keep them aloof from pride and self-admiration. You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely, He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years—whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him license for an undesirable thing, which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.

Therefore, you should fear lest Satan infects you with his disease, or leads you astray through his call, or marches on you with his horsemen and footmen, because, by my life, he has put the arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow strongly, and has aimed at you from a nearby position, and He (Satan)

said,

“My Lord! Because Thou hast left me to stray, certainly will I adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly will I cause them all to go astray.” (15:39)

Although he (Satan) had said so only by guessing about the unknown future and by wrong conjecturing, yet the sons of vanity, the brothers of haughtiness and the horsemen of pride and intolerance proved him to be true, so much so that when disobedient persons from among you bowed before him, and his greed about you gained strength; and what was a hidden secret turned into a clear fact, he spread his full control over you and marched with his forces towards you...

Certainly, if Allah were to allow anyone to indulge in pride, He would have allowed it to his selected Prophets and vicegerents. But Allah, the Sublime, disliked vanity for them and liked humbleness for them.

Therefore, they laid their cheeks on the ground, smeared their faces with dust, bent themselves down for the believers and remained humble people. Allah tried them with hunger, afflicted them with difficulty, tested them with fear, and upset them with troubles. Therefore, do not regard wealth and progeny the criterion for Allah’s pleasure and displeasure, as you are not aware of the chances of mischief and trials during richness and power as Allah, the Glorified the Sublime, has said, ***“What! Think they that what We aid them with of wealth and children; We are hastening unto them the good things? Nay! they (only) perceive not.” (23:55-56)***

Certainly, Allah the Glorified tries His creatures who are vain about themselves through His beloved persons who are humble in their eyes.

When Musa son of ‘Imran went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honor if he submitted; but he said, “Do you not wonder at these two men guaranteeing me the continuity of my honor and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?” He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and considering wool and its cloth as nothing.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His Prophets, if He had wished to open for them treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He could have done so. If He had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words would not have retained their meanings. But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determination and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care freeness, and with want that pains the eyes and ears.

If the Prophets possessed authority that could not be assaulted, or honor that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity. They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different. Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His Prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger.

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1. All the proper names mentioned in the book have been transliterated from Arabic.
 2. The number of Prophets mentioned in this tradition differs with other well-known traditions and commonly accepted belief. There are two possibilities—either there had been an error in the transmission of the report or the previous traditions does not include some Prophets and successors.
 3. This hadith implies that Musa and ‘Isa were sent for all humanity. But other traditions indicate that they were sent particularly for the Israelites. We shall discuss this point in forthcoming pages. As regards ‘Ulu’l-‘Azm’ title for the above five Prophets, we have many other traditions that prove it. In Sunni tradition, however, there are different opinions in this regard. It was well known among the Sahabah (companions of the Prophet) that Ulu’l-‘Azm was that Prophets whose shari’ah abrogated the shari’ah of the previous Prophet.
 4. The first number denotes the Surah (Chapter) and the second the ayah (Verse).
 5. The equating of Yusha’ ibn Nun with Dhu’l-kifl is against common belief.
 6. The two traditions prove that Isma’il was an Arab whereas the tradition of Abu-Dharr disagrees in this regard. It is possible that the previous tradition means Prophets who spoke Arabic language and this tradition is speaking about those who were of Arab race. Also, the four Prophets could not speak any language other than Arabic whereas Isma’il was also fluent in other tongues. Many writers have quoted the same tradition from the same reporter and like the tradition of Abu-Dharr, the name of Isma’il is not included.
 7. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as regards the distinguishing characteristics of Nabi and Rasul. According to some scholars, there is no difference between the two. Some however maintain that Rasul is one who comes with miracles and a Divine book. Nabi does not have a book revealed on him. He merely invites the people according to shari’ah of other Prophets. A group is of the opinion that Rasul connotes one whose shari’ah abrogates the shari’ah of the previous Prophet. Nabi is a more general position. The Rasul hears the angel and also sees him at the time of revelation. This is evident from many other traditions that we chose not to quote for the sake of brevity. Thus, Nabi is one who does not see the angel at the time of revelation or he sees him in dream. He may even receive divine inspiration directly (Ilham). He hears the voice of the angel of revelation but does not see him. However, he sees the angel at other times. A group of learned scholars have classified Nabi and Rasul in the same way.
 8. Abandoning the preferable option
 9. The veil mentioned in this tradition is spiritual—a veil that prevents Israfil from comprehending the true essence of the Almighty or it could mean that there is such a vast distance between Israfil and the Divine Throne from where the revelation originates. As mentioned in another tradition, there are two extremities of the protected Tablet (al-Lawh al-Mahfuz) one of them is at the Divine Throne and the second is at the forehead of Israfil. When Allah speaks through revelation, the tablet touches the forehead of Israfil and he looks at the tablet and whatever he sees, he relates to Archangel Gabriel.
 10. Detail of salutations is mentioned in traditions. More details shall be provided in the book of Imamate, Volume 3.
 11. The higher-most Angel

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