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Do the Imams Have Any Authority on the Universe?

The mercenary writers have tried more than one way to insult the followers of the Members of the House of the Prophet Muhammad. Among these shameful ways is the allegation that the Shi'ite Muslims believe that the Imams from the Members of the House of the Prophet Muhammad control the atoms of the universe. These writers declare that such a belief is a belief in the divinity of the Imams.

They tried to prove this accusation by another allegation. They accused the revolutionary Islamic leader, Imam Khumayni, of saying in one of his books or lectures that the Imams from the Members of the House of the Prophet Muhammad control the atoms of the universe.

I have never read such a statement in the books or lectures of Imam Khumayni. However, let us assume that he indeed said this. But let us try to understand his words instead of deliberately trying to misunderstand them.

Did the revolutionary leader mean that the Imams have an independent authority over the atoms of nature separate from the authority of God Almighty? Did he mean that the Imams are able, by their own power, to change the course of nature? Could he not have meant that the Imams are so absolutely obedient to God, and that because of their purity and obedience to Him, He responds to their prayers? Therefore, if they ask Him to change a natural course, their prayers are answered.

There is no doubt that Imam Khumayni does not think that the Imams have power independent from the Almighty. He is too pure and righteous to voice such a thing, write it, or think it. He is one of the most righteous, pure, and obedient to the Almighty.

If Imam Khumayni had said that the Imams can control the atoms of the universe, he undoubtedly meant that the Imams of the House of the Prophet Muhammad had ascended in their obedience and worship to God to such a high degree that they could have asked the Almighty to transform the atoms of one object into the atoms of another, and He would have granted their request. Furthermore, if they had asked Him

to revive a dead person, God would have brought him back to life. Is this a belief in the divinity of the Imams?

Those who attribute such a statement to Imam Khumayni and consider it a deviation from the Islamic course should give the matter serious thought. They should test such a statement with the contents of the Holy Qur'an. The Great Book informs us of the miracles of the Prophets of God.

And what is that in thy right hand, O Moses? He said: This is my staff. On it, I lean, and with it, I beat branches for my sheep, and in it I find other uses.

"God said: Cast it down, O Moses! He cast it down, and behold! It became a snake, slithering. God said:

Grasp it and fear not. We shall return it to its former state.

"And draw thy hand to your side, it will come forth white without harm. That will be another miracle." (20: 17-22).

This means that the dead cells which composed the rod of Moses were transformed into living cells. Then those living cells miraculously went back to dead cells. In chapter *Al-Shu'ara*, we read the following words of the Almighty:

"We revealed to Moses: Strike the sea with thy staff. It parted, and each part was like a huge mountain." (26: 64)

Does this not mean that God made the sea obedient to Moses to such a degree that Moses was able to divide the water of the sea into two solid parts, each of them as huge as a mountain in height and size?

The Qur'an Informs Us Of Jesus

In *Ali- 'Imran*, we read that the Almighty informed us about Jesus:

"And we will make him a messenger to the children of Israel (with this message): I come to you with a sign from your Lord. Lo! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird, by Allah's leave. I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by Allah's leave . . ." (3:49)

Here we see that the Almighty enabled Jesus to transform a piece of clay into a living bird that could fly like other birds. Is this the work of Moses or Jesus? Would the Qur'an invite us to deify someone other than God?

The Qur'an Informs Us Of Muhammad

In regard to the Prophet Muhammad, we read God's word in the chapter of The Moon:

"The hour (of judgement) is near, and the moon has been split. But if they see a sign, they turn away and say: This is prolonged magic." (54: 1-2)

This verse informs us that Allah split the moon in response to His Messenger Muhammad's prayer, and this never happened before the time of Muhammad.

A Tree Walked In Response To The Order Of Muhammad

We find in *Nahj al-Balaghah* that Imam Ali reported that he was with the Prophet when the chieftains of Quraysh challenged him and asked him to order a nearby tree to uproot and walk to him. They said that this would be visible evidence of his prophethood. The Messenger of God spoke to the tree saying:

"Tree, if you believe in Allah and the Hereafter and know that I am a Messenger of God, uproot and walk until you stand in front of me, with permission of God."

The tree, obeying the Prophet, uprooted and walked to him while making a loud noise like the wings of a flying bird.

When the chiefs saw the tree standing in front of the prophet, they asked him to make half the tree come forward and keep the other half in its original place. When he did that, they said: "Let the half that came to you go back to the other half. He did." (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, part 2, pp. 158–9)

Ibn Hisham reported similar to this:

"Rukanah Al-Muttalibi was the strongest man in Mecca. He met the Messenger outside Mecca and the Messenger invited him to Islam. Rukanah said: "If you can prove that you are a true messenger, I will follow you." The Messenger said: "What do you say if I wrestle you down? Will that make you believe that I am a true prophet?" Rukanah said: "Yes." The Prophet wrestled him down twice. Rukanah said: "Muhammad, this is really amazing. Did you really wrestle me?" The Prophet said: "I will show you more amazing things than this if you obey God and follow my way."

Rukanah said: What is it? The Prophet said: "I will call this tree which you are looking at, and it will come to me." Rukanah said: Call it, and the Prophet called it. The tree came until it stood in front of him. The Prophet said to it: "Go back to your place," and it went to its original place. (Ibn Hisham, *Al-Seerah al-Nabawiyah*, part 1, page 391)

These miracles which occurred in response to prayers of the Messenger of God testify, as documented in the Qur'an, that Allah empowers His great servants to perform miracles by His permission. In other

words, He responds to the prayers of His Messengers by creating miracles.

What happened through the prophets does not indicate that they had any touch of divinity. On the contrary, it testifies that those prophets were true servants of God. They ascended to the highest degree of servitude to Him, and that their obedience to Him was absolute. Had they been otherwise, they would not have been able to perform any miracles, and no prayer by them would have been answered. They obeyed God completely and He responded to their prayers.

Are The Imams Like The Prophets?

It may be said that miracles are conceivable when they are attributed to messengers of God. However, the Imams of the Members of the House of the Prophet are not prophets. They were men of knowledge and righteousness, but none of them ascended to the degree of prophethood.

This is true, but the Imams from the House of the Prophet were non-prophets because the prophethood was concluded by the Messenger of God, the Prophet Muhammad. Had the Messenger not been the last of the prophets, it would have been possible for the Imams, or some of them, to be prophets. Probably other people could have become prophets as well.

The evidence of this is that the prophet said to Ali:

"You are to me like Aaron was to Moses except that there shall be no prophets after me." (al-Bukhari, his *Sahih*, part 5, page 24).

This means that Ali was like Aaron in everything except the prophethood.

If any of the Sunnite scholars think that we are exaggerating by saying that Ali and the Imams from his children were qualified for the prophethood if the Messenger had not been the last of the Prophets, they should remember that prominent Sunnite scholars reported similar to this concerning 'Umar.

The hadith-recorder Ahmad Ibn Hajar Al-Haythami in his book *Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah*, page 96, documents that Imam Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Hakim, and Al-Tabarani reported that 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir said that the Messenger of God said:

"Had it been possible to have a prophet after me, that prophet would have been 'Umar."

Why should anyone think that it would be an exaggeration to say that Allah would make nature and the atoms of the universe obedient to the Imams of the House of the Prophet Muhammad when we do not consider it an exaggeration to say that 'Umar could have been a prophet if Muhammad had not been the final prophet.

Ibn Hajar, in his *Al-Sawa'iq*, page 102, reported that when Egypt was conquered by the Muslims, there was a custom to throw a girl in the Nile River on the 11th night of one of the non-Arabic months in order

that the Nile would continue to flow. It was believed that without throwing a girl into it, the Nile would not flow. Amr Ibn Al-'As wrote to the Caliph 'Umar concerning this custom. 'Umar sent a message to the Nile saying:

"If you were flowing before by your own power, we do not want you to run; and if Allah is the one who makes you flow, we ask the Almighty to make you flow."

Amr Ibn Al-'As threw the letter of 'Umar into the Nile one day before the Christian commemoration of the crucifixion. The following morning they woke up to find the river flowing stronger and had gone up 48 feet in one night.

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