

Question 6: Why do you regard your Imams as “infallible” {ma‘sum}?

Reply: There are numerous proofs which confirm the infallibility {*‘ismah*} of the Imams who are all members of the Prophet’s Household {*Ahl al-Bayt*}. We shall mention only one of them: According to a narration related by both Shi‘ah and Sunni scholars, during the last days of his life the Prophet (S) said:

"إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وأهل بيتي وإنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا عليّ
الحوض".

Verily, I am leaving among you Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah (the Qur’an) and the members of my Household {*Ahl al-Bayt*}, and they will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond {*Al-Hawd*} (of *Kawthar* on the Day of Resurrection).¹

Here is an interesting point: without an iota of doubt, the Glorious Qur’an is free from any form of deviation and error. How could an error approach the divine revelation when the Sender is God, the messenger is the Angel of Revelation (‘a) and the receiver is the Prophet of God (S)?

Since the infallibility of these three is as crystal clear as the sun; the Muslims of the world regard the Holy Prophet (S) as immune from committing error with respect to receiving, preserving and conveying the revelation and it is clear that the Book of Allah has such a constant and veracious immunity, then the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Messenger of Allah (S) are also immune from any sort of lapse and error. For, in this *hadith*, the progeny {*‘itrah*} of the Prophet have been described as equal to the Glorious Qur’an in guiding and leading the *ummah*, which means that they both are equal in terms of infallibility {*‘ismah*}.

In other words, it is absurd to regard a person or persons who are not infallible as equal to the Book of Allah.

The most explicit testimony to the infallibility of the Imams (‘a) is the following expression of the Prophet (S):

"وإنهما لن يفترقا حتى يرادا عليّ الحوض."

“And they will never separate from each other (in guidance and leadership) until they meet me at the Pond {*Al-Hawd*} (of *Kawthar* on the Day of Resurrection).”

Once the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (S) were not free from lapses and errors, they would be separated from the Qur’an which is free from error and they would go astray, whereas the Holy Prophet (S) has emphatically negated it.

Of course, the “*Ahl al-Bayt*” according to the statement of the Prophet (S) does not refer to all his consanguineous and affinitive relatives for not all of them were free from lapses.

Therefore, only a specific group of his progeny has such an honor and this station and status is applicable to a limited members of his relatives, and these are the very Imams from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) who, throughout history, have been the light of the path of the *ummah*, the preservers of the Prophet’s *Sunnah* and the guardians of the *Shari‘ah*.

1. Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol. 3, p. 148; As-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah, Book 11, Chapter 1, p. 149. There is also a similar text in Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 1, Bab “Al-I’tisam bi’l-Kitab wa’s-Sunnah”, p. 44; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. 5, pp. 182, 189; and others.

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