

Chapter 3: Peace be on you, O son of the Commander of the Faithful and the son of the leader of the successors

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَابْنَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ

Peace be on You, O son of the the Commander of the Faithful and the son of the Leader of the Successors

Commentary

يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O **son of** the Commander of the Faithful

The apparent import of this verse signifies that Imam al-Husayn (AS) is the son and offspring of Amir al-Mu'minin (AS). This is a historical fact and we would not like to go into details about the same. However to reveal how brilliant is the origin of Imam al-Husayn (AS) verses 19–20 of Surat al-Rahman come to mind:

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ. بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ

He merged the two seas, meeting each other. There is a barrier between them which they do not overstep. (55: 19–20)

Yahya bin Sa'id narrates:

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ فِي قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ قَالَ: عَلِيٌّ وَفَاطِمَةٌ، بَحْرَانِ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ عَمِيقَانِ لَا يَبْغِي أَحَدُهُمَا عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ، الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ.

I heard Aba 'Abdillah [al-Sadiq] (AS) saying the following about the verse of Allah "He merged the two seas, meeting each other. There is a barrier between them which they do not overstep.": **'Ali and Fatima are two deep seas of knowledge**, none of who oversteps the other. From them emerge the pearl and the coral, who are al-Hasan and al-Husayn (AS).¹

The appellation Amir al-Mu'minin was conferred to Imam 'Ali (AS) by Allah Himself in the higher levels of existence prior to this material world. Consider the following traditions:

1. Shaykh Saduq narrates in his *Al-Khisal*:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ قَالَ: فِي اللُّوحِ الْمَحْفُوظِ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: In the Guarded Tablet under the Divine Throne is [written] 'Ali bin Abi Talib is Amir al-mu'minin (Commander of the faithful) (AS).²

2. Al-Kulayni in his *Al-Kafi* narrates with his chain of narrators:

عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ لَهُ لِمَ سُمِّيَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَالَ اللَّهُ سَمَّاهُ وَهَكَذَا أَنْزَلَ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولِي وَأَنَّ عَلِيًّا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

Jabir reports³: I said to Abu Ja'far [al-Baqir (AS)]: Why was Imam 'Ali (AS) named Amir al-Mu'minin? He (AS) said: Allah is the One who named him, and this is how He revealed it in His Book: "When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness

over themselves, [He said to them,] Am I not your Lord (7:172) and isn't Muhammad My Messenger and **'Ali Amir al-mu'minin (the commander of the faithful)?**.4

3. Furat bin Ibrahim in his *Tafsir Furat al-Kufi* narrates the following tradition:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ: لَوْ أَنَّ الْجُهَّالَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَعْلَمُونَ مَتَى سُمِّيَ عَلِيٌّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَمْ يَنْكُرُوا وِلَايَتَهُ وَطَاعَتَهُ قَالَ فَسَأَلْتُهُ وَمَتَى سُمِّيَ عَلِيٌّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؟ قَالَ حَيْثُ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ...

Imam al-Baqir (AS) is reported to have said: If the ignorant of this nation would know when Imam 'Ali (AS) was named Amir al-mu'minin, they would not reject his guardianship and obedience. The reporter said: I asked him (AS): And when was Imam 'Ali (AS) named Amir al-mu'minin? He replied: **It was when Allah took the covenant with the progeny of Adam...**.5

Some traditions clearly tell us that the Holy Prophet (S) called Imam 'Ali (AS) Amir al-mu'minin (AS) on different occasions during his life time. Consider the following:

1. When Hadhrat Fatima bint al-Asad, the noble mother of Imam 'Ali (AS), comes out of the Ka'ba with her exalted offspring 'Ali (AS), the following is reported to have transpired:

قَالَ عَلِيُّ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَهُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ ثُمَّ تَنَحَّحَ وَقَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ قَدْ أَفْلَحُوا بِكَ أَنْتَ وَاللَّهِ أَمِيرُهُمْ تَمِيرُهُمْ مِنْ عِلْمِكَ فَيَمْتَارُونَ وَأَنْتَ وَاللَّهِ دَلِيلُهُمْ وَبِكَ وَاللَّهِ يَهْتَدُونَ

Imam 'Ali (AS) said: Peace be unto you, O father and may Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you. Thereafter he coughed a little and recited [the following verses of Surat al-Mu'minun]: **In the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful. Indeed the believers have become victorious (23:1)**...

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said: Surely they have gained victory by you; **You are, by Allah, their Amir (commander)**, you provide them from your knowledge, and hence they gain knowledge; and I swear by Allah you are their Guide, and I swear by Allah they attain guidance through you.6

This tradition has so many allusions worthy of contemplation. Not only does the Holy Prophet (S) call Imam 'Ali (AS) as the commander of the faithful, but also informs us the close relationship between one's commandship of the faithful and one's vast knowledge. In clearer words, since Imam 'Ali (AS) is the commander of the faithful he practically serves as the source and treasure trove of their knowledge. And that is why he provides them with the knowledge they require.

Another allusion worthy of consideration is that Imam (AS) upon birth already manifested an ocean of knowledge. Perhaps it alludes to the Muhammadan Light (*al-Nur al-Muhammadi*) where he unites with the Holy Prophet (S). For, any kind of grace, whether knowledge or otherwise, is conferred to the creation through this very reality. This truth is elicited from a tradition narrated from Jabir bin Abdillah al-Ansari:

قُلْتُ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ: أَوَّلُ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مَا هُوَ؟ فَقَالَ: نُورُ نَبِيِّكَ يَا جَابِرُ، خَلَقَهُ اللَّهُ، ثُمَّ خَلَقَ مِنْهُ كُلَّ خَيْرٍ

I asked the Messenger of Allah (S): What is the first thing that Allah created? He (S) said: The light of your prophet O Jabir. Allah created it; **thereafter He created from it every good.**⁷

2. ‘Amr bin Husayb, the brother of Burayda bin Husayb is reported to have said:

بَيْنَا أَنَا وَأَخِي بُرَيْدَةُ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ إِذْ دَخَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ: أَنْطَلِقْ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؟ قَالَ: عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ. قَالَ عَنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ وَأَمْرٍ رَسُولِهِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. ثُمَّ دَخَلَ عُمَرُ فَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَنْطَلِقْ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؟ قَالَ: عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ. قَالَ: عَنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ وَأَمْرٍ رَسُولِهِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ.

While I and my brother Burayda were in the presence of the Prophet (S), Abu Bakr entered and greeted the Messenger of Allah (S), and he (S) said: Go and greet Amir al-mu'minin. *Abu Bakr asked: O Messenger of Allah, and who is Amir al-mu'minin? The Prophet (S) said: 'Ali bin Abi Talib (AS).* Abu Bakr asked: Is this by the command of Allah and the Apostle of Allah? The Prophet (S) said: yes. Thereafter 'Umar entered and greeted, and the Prophet (S) said to him: Go and greet Amir al-Mu'minin (AS). 'Umar said: O Messenger of Allah, and who is Amir al-mu'minin? The Prophet (S) said: 'Ali bin Abi Talib (AS). Umar asked: Is this by the command of Allah and the Apostle of Allah? The Prophet (S) said: yes.⁸

3. Imam al-Ridha (AS) is reported to have narrated from his fathers from Imam al-Husayn bin 'Ali (AS):

قَالَ لِي بُرَيْدَةُ: أَمَرَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَنْ نُسَلِّمَ عَلَيَّ أَبِيكَ بِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ .

Burayda said to me: The Messenger of Allah commanded us to greet your father **with the name Amir**

يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O son of the **Commander of the Faithful**

The appellation Amir al-mu'minin, according to different traditions, has different meanings, all of which aptly befit the exalted personality of Imam 'Ali (AS). Therefore in reality there is no contradiction. The most well-known meaning of this appellation is 'commander of the faithful'. The word *amir* comes from the word *amr* (order, command). Imam 'Ali (AS) manifesting faith in its utmost purity in all the dimensions of his being qualified to be the *amir* of the faithful.

One of the milestones of history that brilliantly manifested this reality is the battle of Khandaq, when after having permitted Imam 'Ali (AS) to fight against 'Amr bin 'Abd Wudd, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

بَرَزَ الْإِيمَانَ كُلَّهُ إِلَى الشَّرِكِ كُلِّهِ

Faith in its totality has come out to fight with polytheism in its totality... 10

The Holy Prophet (S) in calling Imam 'Ali (AS) *al-iman kulluh* (*faith in its totality*) resonated a wealth of information, which only the comprehending ears (*al-udhun al-wa'iyah*) were able to appreciate. It is such epitomization of faith that makes the entity of 'Ali emanate nothing but instructions of faith and makes him worthy of being the commander of the faithful.

Unfortunately those who later branded themselves with this title were oblivious of the simple reality that '*faqid al-shay' la yu'tih*' (one who lacks something cannot confer the same). One who clearly disobeys Allah and usurps the right of others becomes a laughing stock when he names himself Amir al-mu'minin. This is because only one who totally submits to Allah (SwT) and personifies faith can confer injunctions and directions of faith. In an interesting tradition narrated from 'Umar bin al-Khattab we are told:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ إِنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعَ وَالْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ لَوْ وُضِعَتْ فِي كِفَّةٍ وَوُضِعَ إِيْمَانُ عَلِيٍّ فِي كِفَّةٍ لَرَجَحَ إِيْمَانُ عَلِيٍّ

I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say: Surely if the seven heavens and the seven earths were placed in

one of the palms of the scale, and the faith of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib placed on the other, the faith of ‘Ali would be heavier. 11

In another tradition the Holy Prophet (S) vocally informs us that the yardstick of the belief of the believers is the radiant being of ‘Ali. In one of his conversations with Imam ‘Ali (AS), the Holy Prophet (S) says:

لَوْ لَا أَنْتَ لَمْ يُعْرَفِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي...

If you were not there, the believers would not be known after me... 12

Therefore Imam ‘Ali (AS) serves as the scale of faith (*mizan al-iman*).

يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O **the edifice of** the Commander of the Faithful

As explained in the previous verse, the word *ibn* ابن can either refer to the meaning ‘the son of’ or ‘the product of’. Hence, Imam al-Husayn (AS) is both the physical edifice¹³ of his noble father as well as his spiritual artifact. And if we consider the genitive construction *Amir al-mu’minin* to mean ‘commander of the faithful’ then he becomes an edifice of one who deserves to command the faithful, and consequently inherits and acquires the same qualities.

Due to his infallibility in thought, speech, and action, and ability to bear the Divine Leadership (*imama*), Imam al-Husayn (AS) is qualified to command the faithful. In the radiant salutation recital *Ziyarat al-Jami’a* narrated from Imam al-Hadi (AS), we address the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as follows:

...وَعِبَادِهِ الْمُكْرَمِينَ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ..

And His ennobled servants who do not advance Him in speech, and **act according to His Command**... 14

And in another place of the same *Ziyarat* we say:

فَإِنِّي لَكُمْ مُطِيعٌ، مَنْ أَطَاعَكُمْ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَاكُمْ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ...

So indeed I am obedient to you; **whosoever obeys you has obeyed Allah**, and whosoever disobeys you has indeed disobeyed Allah... 15

There are other traditions too that clearly depict that the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are the *ulu al-amr* (those worthy to command) mentioned in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those among you who hold command. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome. (4:59)

Jabir al-Ju'fi narrates: I heard Jabir bin 'Abdillah al-Ansari say:

لَمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، عَرَفْنَا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَمَنْ أُولُو الْأَمْرِ الَّذِينَ قَرَنَ اللَّهُ طَاعَتَهُمْ بِطَاعَتِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: «هُمْ خُلَفَائِي - يَا جَابِرُ - وَأُمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي، أَوْلَهُمْ عَلِيٌّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ، ثُمَّ الْحُسَيْنُ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْمَعْرُوفِ فِي التَّوْرَةِ بِالْبَاقِرِ، سَتَدْرِكُهُ - يَا جَابِرُ - فَإِذَا لَقِيْتَهُ فَاقْرَأْهُ مِنِّي السَّلَامَ، ثُمَّ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ مُوسَى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُوسَى، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَّ سَمِيِّ وَكُنْيِي حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ، وَبِقِيَّتِهِ فِي عِبَادِهِ ابْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ذِكْرَهُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا...

When Allah revealed unto His Prophet Muhammad (S) the verse “*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those among you who hold command*”(4:59). I asked [the Prophet (S)]: O Messenger of Allah, we know about Allah and His Messenger. But who are the *Ulu al-Amr* (those who hold command) whose obedience Allah placed in line with your obedience?

He (AS) said: *They are my successors*, O Jabir, and the leaders of the Muslims after me. The first among them is 'Ali bin Abi Talib (AS), then comes al-Hasan (AS), and then al-Husayn (AS), then 'Ali the son of al-Husayn (AS), then Muhammad the son of 'Ali (AS) who is well-known in the Torah as al-Baqir

(the cleaver). Soon you will meet him, O Jabir! And when you meet him convey to him my salams (greetings). Then comes al-Sadiq Ja'far bin Muhammad (AS), then Musa bin Ja'far (AS), then 'Ali bin Musa (AS), then Muhammad bin 'Ali (AS), then 'Ali bin Muhammad (AS), then al-Hasan bin 'Ali (AS), then one whose name and teknonym (*kunya*) would be like mine, the proof of Allah on the earth and His remnant among His servants, the son of al-Hasan bin 'Ali (AS). He is the one by whom Allah will conquer the easts and wests of the earth... 16

Therefore all the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) qualify in the universal sense to be *Amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the faithful).

يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O edifice of the Commander of ***all the*** Faithful

A grammatical allusion worthy of consideration, can be understood by looking at the article 'al' prefixed in the plural "*al-mu'minin*" (the faithful) above. One the well-known grammatical laws is that when the article 'al' precedes a plural, it signifies that all the extensions of the plural are taken into consideration.

In our case, when we say *al-mu'mininun*, we mean "all the faithful". Therefore, the appellation Amir al-mu'minin signifies that Imam 'Ali (AS) is the commander of *all the faithful*. In a tradition the Holy Prophet (S) after informing Imam 'Ali (AS) how Allah Himself named him Amir al-mu'minin, says:

...فَأَنْتَ يَا عَلِيُّ أَمِيرٌ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَأَمِيرٌ مَّنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَمِيرٌ مَّنْ مَضَى وَأَمِيرٌ
مَّنْ بَقِيَ فَلَا أَمِيرَ قَبْلَكَ وَلَا أَمِيرَ بَعْدَكَ لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُسَمَّى بِهَذَا الْإِسْمِ مَّنْ لَمْ
يُسَمِّهِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ

...Therefore, you, ***O 'Ali, are the commander (amir) of those in the heavens and the commander (amir) of those in the earth, and the commander (amir) of those who have passed, and the commander (amir) of those who remain. Hence there is no amir prior to you, nor is there any amir after you.*** For it is impermissible to name someone with this name whom Allah has not named.¹⁷

Consequently his edifice, Imam al-Husayn (AS), who is *ibnu Amir al-mu'minin* is also the *amir* of all the believers.

Amir Al-Mu'minin – An Exclusive Appellation

It should be known that the appellation 'Amir al-mu'minin' although widely employed by different people in history, is exclusively for Imam 'Ali (AS). The other Imams (AS) would not allow their followers to use it for them. Observe the following narrations:

1. Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَمَّا أُسْرِيَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ كُنْتُ مِنْ رَبِّي كَقَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى
فَأَوْحَى إِلَيَّ رَبِّي مَا أَوْحَى ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ اقْرَأْ عَلَيَّ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَمِيرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامَ فَمَا سَمَيْتُ بِهِ أَحَدًا قَبْلَهُ وَلَا أَسْمِي بِهِذَا أَحَدًا بَعْدَهُ

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: When I was made to ascend to the Heavens, I was at a distance from my Lord that was like the length of two bows or nearer. So my Lord Revealed unto me what He Revealed. Then He said: O Muhammad send your greetings to 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Amir al-mu'minin (AS). *Indeed I have not named anyone with this appellation before him, and will never name anyone with it after him.* 18

2. 'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* narrates:

قَالَ رَجُلٌ لِلصَّادِقِ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَقَالَ: مَهْ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَرْضَى بِهَذِهِ التَّسْمِيَةِ أَحَدٌ
إِلَّا ابْتَلَاهُ بِبَلَاءِ أَبِي جَهْلٍ.

A man called Imam al-Sadiq (AS) 'O Commander of the faithful! whereupon the Imam (AS) said: Stop! For surely no one approves being named so, save that he is tried with the trial of Abu Jahl. 19

3. Shaykh al-Kulayni in his *al-Kafi* narrates the following tradition:

سَأَلَهُ رَجُلٌ عَنِ الْقَائِمِ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ بِأَمْرَةِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَالَ لَا ذَاكَ اسْمٌ سَمَى اللَّهُ بِهِ
أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَمْ يُسَمَّ بِهِ أَحَدٌ قَبْلَهُ وَ لَا يُتَسَمَّى بِهِ بَعْدَهُ إِلَّا كَافِرٌ قُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ
كَيْفَ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ بِقِيَّتِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

A person asked Imam al-Sadiq (AS) about [Imam] Al-Qa'im (AS), whether it is proper to greet him with [the appellation] Amir al-Mu'minin, and he said: No. That is a name that Allah named Amir al-Mu'minin with it, none before him was named with it, and none will name himself with it after him save a disbeliever. The person said: may I be made your ransom, how should one greet him? He (AS) said: They should say: Peace be unto you, O remnant of Allah (*Baqiyat Allah*). Thereafter he A read the verse of Qur'an, "What remains of Allah's provision is better for you..."(11:86)²⁰

يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O the Edifice of **the Provider of the Faithful**

Another meaning of 'Amir al-mu'minin' is the 'one who provides knowledge to the believers'. This is when the word Amir stems from the infinitive مِيرُ 'mir' which means جَبُّ الطَّعَامِ 'jalb al-ta'am' (to draw food). Al-Turayhi in his *Gharib al-Qur'an* says:

يُقَالُ : فُلَانٌ يَمِيرُ أَهْلَهُ إِذَا حَمَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَقْوَاتَهُمْ مِنْ غَيْرِ بَلَدِهِمْ مِنَ الْمِيرَةِ بِكَسْرِ
الْمِيمِ وَسُكُونِ الْيَاءِ طَعَامٌ يَمْتَارُهُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَيَّ يَجْلِبُهُ مِنْ بَلَدٍ إِلَى بَلَدٍ.

It is said: *Fulan yamiru ahlahu* (So and so provides his family) when he carries to them their provisions from another town. It comes from *al-mira* which is food that a person obtains or takes from one town to another.²¹

And food in this case does not only refer to 'physical food' that satisfies one's stomach, but fundamentally to spiritual food that elevates the human being. Under the verse of the holy Qur'an that says '**Then let man look at his food**'(80:24).

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) explains to Zayd al-Shahham²², one of his companions that food here refers to knowledge, and that the human being is told to reflect on his knowledge and its origin. Likewise, as we shall soon see, the 'mir' referred to in this case is interpreted by the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) to mean knowledge. Consider the following narrations:

1. 'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* reports :

عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ: لِمَ سُمِّيَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَمِيرَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؟ قَالَ: لِأَنَّهُ يَمِيرُهُمُ الْعِلْمَ، أَمَا سَمِعْتَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَنَمِيرَ أَهْلَنَا؟

Jabir is reported to have said: I asked Abi Ja'far (al-Baqir (AS)): "May I be made your ransom; why was Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam 'Ali (AS)) known as Amir al-mu'minin?" The Imam (AS) said: 'It is because he provides them (*yamiruhum*) with knowledge; haven't you heard the Book of Allah '*wa namiru ahlana*' (...***we will get provisions for our family...*** (12:65))?'²³

2. 'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* reports:

أَبَانُ بْنُ الصَّلْتِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ: سَمِيَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ مِنْ مِيرَةِ الْعِلْمِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ أَمْتَارُوا وَ مِنْ مِيرَتِهِ اسْتَعْمَلُوا

Aban bin al-Salt is reported to have said that Imam al-Sadiq (AS) said: Indeed naming *Amir al-mu'minin* is from 'the provision of knowledge'; and that is because the knowledgeable ones took knowledge from him, and took advantage of his provision.²⁴

Some esteemed *muhaddithun* like the late 'Allama Majlisi give the probability that the word Amir instead of being a common noun meaning 'commander' is an indefinite verb (*al-fi'l al-mudhari*) meaning 'I provide' (أَمِينُ) that later turned into a proper noun ('*alam*'). In other words, Imam 'Ali (AS) said "*Amiru* (I provide) *al-mu'minina* (the believers)' and thereafter the whole statement turned into a noun referring to Imam 'Ali (AS). They liken this with name تَأَبَّطَ شَرًّا (lit. he put evil beneath his armpit). The well-known poet Thabit bin Jabir was called that because it is said that the sword never left him.²⁵ According to a narration indicated in the *Bihar al-Anwar*, he was known to be so because:

تَأَبَّطَ سَيْفًا وَخَرَجَ فَقِيلَ لِأُمِّهِ: أَيْنَ هُوَ؟ فَقَالَتْ: تَأَبَّطَ شَرًّا وَخَرَجَ.

...he put a sword beneath his armpit (*ta'abbata sayfan*) and went out; and when his mother was asked, 'Where is he?' she said: He put evil under his armpit (*ta'abbata sharran*) and left.²⁶

In short, therefore, *Amir al-mu'minin* (*I provide the faithful*) could be a sentence which later turned into a proper noun.

يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O son of the **Commander of the Bestowers of Protection**

If we carefully consider the meaning of *al-mu'minun* (plural of *al-mu'min*) in the genitive construction

Amir al-mu'minin we may be able to unravel and draw some of the secrets of this radiant verse.

Following are some narratives that define the word *mu'min*:

1. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) was asked why a believer was known as *mu'min* and he said:

لَآئِنَّهُ اشْتَقَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ اسْمًا مِنْ أَسْمَائِهِ تَعَالَى فَسَمَّاهُ مُؤْمِنًا، وَإِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ
لَآئِنَّهُ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَيُؤْمِنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُجِيزُ لَهُ ذَلِكَ.

It is because He (Allah) derived for the believer a name from His Names, and named him *mu'min*. And he was named *mu'min* because he is protected from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, and gives warrant to Allah [for others] on the Judgment Day, and Allah would approve that for him.

2. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) when defining the meaning of the Divine Name *al-Mu'min* is reported to have said:

سُمِّيَ الْبَارِئُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مُؤْمِنًا لَآئِنَّهُ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ عَذَابِهِ مَنْ أَطَاعَهُ

The Maker, Invincible and Exalted, was named *Mu'min* because He protects (*yu'minu*) whosoever obeys Him from His punishment...27

Notice carefully that the aforementioned traditions allude to the following important realities:

- (a) The believer is a manifestation of the Divine Name *al-Mu'min*.
- (b) He enjoys protection (*aman*), and
- (c) He confers protection (*yu'minu*) by seeking the same for others from Allah.

3. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

أَلَا أُنبِئُكُمْ لِمَ سُمِّيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ مُؤْمِنًا؟ لِإِيْمَانِهِ النَّاسَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ

Should I not inform you why a believer was named *mu'min*? It is because he grants security to people in themselves and their wealth.

4. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

وَاللَّهِ مَا سُمِّيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا كَرَامَةً لِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"I swear by Allah, the believer was not named *mu'min* save in honor of Amir al-Mu'minin."

If we study the various derivatives of the word *mu'min* as expounded in the above traditions, we would realize that all of them converge at one single attribute: protection (*aman*). The reason why a believer is called *mu'min* is because he 'enjoys protection' and 'confers the same'.

The fourth tradition however requires deliberation to comprehend. Perhaps it would like to tell us that in order to bestow the honorable appellation Amir al-mu'minin to Imam 'Ali (AS), Allah named the believer as *mu'min*. For the appellation Amir al-mu'minin would have no meaning in the absence of people called '*mu'mininun*'. Obviously this should not be considered a kind of superficial honorification. The Imam (AS) most brilliantly manifesting the Divine Attribute al-Mu'min, qualified to command the believers who manifest this attribute according to their limitations. Therefore Allah bestowing honor to Him called the believer a *mu'min* and named Him Amir al-mu'minin.

In conclusion, the genitive construction Amir al-Mu'minin means 'The commander of those who confer protection'. Therefore Imam 'Ali (AS) is the commander of one who enjoys and confers protection. Consequently, he is the professor and teacher of the lesson of protection (*aman*). He is not merely a theoretical professor, but 'a commander' and thus 'a practical mentor'. And the believers always benefit from his banquet. If we ponder over the abovementioned traditions we would realize that the protection that is spoken about is not always physical protection. A believer fundamentally seeks the spiritual protection of others.

The entire life of Amir al-mu'minin (AS) serves as a lesson for those who would like to learn how to protect themselves and others. The yardstick of such a life, as mentioned in the aforementioned tradition of Imam al-Sadiq (AS), is obedience to Allah. The Imam's thoughts, words, and deeds, all reflect utter submission to Allah's will.

The Holy Prophet (S) describing some of the phenomena of the Day of Judgment to Imam 'Ali (AS) says:

...ثُمَّ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنْ قِبَلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: أَلَا إِنَّ عَلِيًّا وَشِيعَتَهُ الْأَمِنُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

...Thereafter a caller on behalf of Allah would call: Look! Surely 'Ali and his followers are the protected ones (*al-aminun*) on the Judgment Day.²⁸

And in another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) says:

يَا عَلِيُّ، أَنْتَ وَشِيعَتُكَ عَلَى الْحَوْضِ تَسْقُونَ مَنْ أَحَبَبْتُمْ، وَتَمْنَعُونَ مَنْ كَرِهْتُمْ،
وَأَنْتُمْ الْآمِنُونَ يَوْمَ الْفَزَعِ الْأَكْبَرِ...

O 'Ali, you and your followers would quench the thirst of whom you love at the Fountain, and hamper those whom you abhor. **You are the protected ones (al-aminun)** on the Day of the great terror (See 21:103)...29

Some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an also inform us that by maintaining pure faith and observing *taqwa*, 'protection' (*aman*) is a guarantee:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

Those who have faith and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing for such there shall be safety, and they are the [rightly] guided.”(6:82)

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ

Indeed the God wary are in a secure station (44:51)

Imam al-Husayn (AS) who is *ibnu Amir al-mu'minin* is in this sense “the product of the commander of those who confer protection”. Necessarily, then, he likewise enjoys the characteristics of his father. His entire life serves as a lesson of *aman* and protection from Hell Fire.

In one of the supplications of the Holy month of Sha'ban we express the following about the Ahl al-Bayt (AS):

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْفُلْكَ الْجَارِيَةَ فِي اللَّجَجِ الْغَامِرَةِ يَأْمَنُ مَنْ
رَكِبَهَا وَيَغْرَقُ مَنْ تَرَكَهَا

O Allah bless Muhammad and his progeny, the moving ark in the covering depths [of the sea],
whosoever boards in it is protected and whosoever leaves it drowns.30

Recitation & Realization

Reciting this verse after having known its comprehensive meaning undoubtedly fills the heart of the loving *za'ir* with awe and veneration for the *mazur*. However, as we had mentioned in the very beginning of this commentary, the most important and fundamental purpose of our recitation must be unity and coherence with the *mazur*. If we address Imam al-Husayn (AS) with *ibnu Amir al-mu'minin*, and believe that he is fit to command the believers, then we must resolve to practically follow his commands.

Believing someone to be *amir* is practically realized when one follows him. And when we understand Amir al-mu'minin (AS) as the commander of those who confer *aman* and safety, then we must practically seek and follow the lesson of conferring safety from Imam (AS) and apply the same in our lifetimes.

And if we comprehend the appellation Amir al-mu'minin as the provider of knowledge to the believers, then we must practically draw our fundamental knowledge from authorities like Imam 'Ali (AS) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). And if we understand the meaning of Amir al-mu'minin (AS) as the Commander of those who have faith, then we should resolve in following his footsteps and drawing closer to him so that we are entitled to be the bearers of iman and faith.

يَا بْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O Son Of The **Commander Of Those Who Confer Tranquility**

The word *mu'min* is conventionally translated as 'faithful' or 'believer'. Its literal import however is worthy of consideration. It comes from the word 'amn' which according to leading lexicographers like al-Isfahani, means 'tuma'ninat al-nafs' (tranquility and contentment of the heart). And the word *iman* which we translate as faith actually means 'to place in oneself or another [the state of] amn (tranquility)'. And when we say آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ 'amana billah' which we conventionally translate as 'he believed in Allah' we literally mean 'he attained contentment and tranquility by Allah'.

Principally when we speak of *iman billah* we mean to agree and have tranquility that God exists, He is the overwhelming One, and to Him belong the Attributes of Beauty and Majesty. However, such tranquility which is limited to the belief in the existence of God is substantially different from the tranquility and serenity attained in Allah.

Perhaps the most apt example of tranquility one can cite in the life of the commander of the tranquil ones (Amir al-mu'minin) is what transpired on the well-known *laylat al-mabit* when Imam 'Ali (AS) rests with utter peace and tranquility on the blessed bed of the Holy Prophet (S) while the Prophet (S) sets for his well-known migration to Madina. Indeed I feel it is only the Holy Qur'an that can properly narrate the

nature of this historic incident. Almighty Allah says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants. (2:207)

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (AS) is reported to have said:

نَزَلَتْ فِي عَلِيٍّ حِينَ بَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

This verse was revealed about 'Ali (AS) when he slept on the bed of the Messenger of Allah (S).³¹

In another tradition which shows the extent of *itmi'nan* and tranquility of 'Ali (AS), we are told:

...فَبَاتَ عَلِيٌّ مُوْطِنًا نَفْسَهُ عَلَى الْقَتْلِ

So Imam 'Ali (AS) slept while he stationed his soul to be killed...³²

The phrase '*muwattinan nafsahu 'ala al-qatl'*' reveals so much. It shows the Imam's readiness to be martyred in the way of Allah. The word '*muwattinan*' literally connotes that Imam 'Ali (AS) had stationed his spirit in the *watan* (hometown) of martyrdom.

Ayatullah al-Rayshahri quoting *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* among other historical texts writes in his *Mawsu'at al-Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib (AS)*:

...فَاقْتَرَحَ عَلَى عَلِيٍّ أَنْ يَبِيْتَ فِي فِرَاشِهِ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ، فَسَأَلَهُ: أَوْ تُسَلِّمَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. فَرَحَّبَ الْإِمَامُ بِهَذَا الْإِقْتِرَاحِ مُوْطِنًا نَفْسَهُ لِلْقَتْلِ عِنْدَ مُوَاجَهَةِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ صَبَاحًا، وَسَجَدَ سَجْدَةَ الشُّكْرِ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْمَوْهَبَةِ الْعَظِيمَةِ وَالتَّحَفَ بِالْبُرْدِ الْيَمَانِيِّ الْأَخْضَرِ الَّذِي كَانَ يَلْتَحِفُ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ عِنْدَ نَوْمِهِ، وَنَامَ مُطْمَئِنًّا فِي فِرَاشِهِ

...So the Prophet (S) suggested to 'Ali (AS) that he sleeps that night in his bed, and 'Ali (AS) asked him: Would you be protected thereby O Messenger of Allah? He (S) said: Yes. So the Imam (AS) welcomed

this suggestion while stationing himself to be martyred when he confronts the polytheists in the morning, and he prostrated in thanks to Allah for this great gift, and wrapped himself with the green Yemenite cloak that the Messenger of Allah would cover himself with when he slept, *and he slept in the state of tranquility...*33

The phrase '*wa nama mutma'innan fi firashihi*' (*and he slept in the state of tranquility in the Prophet's bed*) is worthy of reflection. It shows how Amir al-mu'minin having sold his soul to the only beloved is overwhelmed and overtaken with utmost composure and tranquility.

Bearing the aforesaid understanding of the appellation Amir al-mu'minin in mind, the meaning of *ibnu Amir al-mu'minin* confers the implication that Imam al-Husayn (AS) who is the edifice of the commander of the tranquil spirits also exemplifies the same attribute of tranquility.

Both his words as well as his deeds reveal this reality. In his well-known supplication of 'Arafa, Imam al-Husayn (AS) is narrated to have said:

مَا ذَا وَجَدَ مَنْ فَقَدَكَ وَمَا الَّذِي فَقَدَ مِنْ وَجَدَكَ؟

What has he who has lost You found? And what has he who has found You lost?34

And Imam al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

اقْرَؤُوا سُورَةَ الْفَجْرِ فِي فَرَائِضِكُمْ وَنَوَافِلِكُمْ، فَإِنَّهَا سُورَةُ الْحُسَيْنِ وَارْغَبُوا فِيهَا
رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو أُسَامَةَ وَكَانَ حَاضِرَ الْمَجْلِسِ: كَيْفَ صَارَتْ هَذِهِ
السُّورَةُ لِلْحُسَيْنِ خَاصَّةً؟ فَقَالَ: أَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ
الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي إِنَّمَا
يَعْنِي الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمَا، فَهُوَ ذُو النَّفْسِ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةِ الرَّاضِيَةِ
الْمَرْضِيَّةِ...

Read *Surat al-Fajr* in your obligatory and supererogatory prayers, for indeed it is the chapter of al-Husayn (AS), and have a liking to it, may Allah have mercy on you. Thereupon Abu Usama, who was present in the gathering asked him (AS): How did this *sura* become specifically for al-Husayn (AS)? The Imam (AS) said: Do you not listen to Allah's word "O contented spirit (*ya ayyatuha al-nafs al-mutma'inna*), return to your Lord, while you are pleased with Him, and He is pleased with you, and enter the company of My servants, and enter My paradise". It refers to Imam al-Husayn bin 'Ali (AS), for he is the contented spirit who is pleased with his Lord and his Lord is pleased with him...35

Al-Bahrani narrates a beautiful tradition from Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (AS) which describes the situation of Imam al-Husayn (AS) and his brilliant companions before their departure from this world when the situation intensified as follows:

...وَكَانَ الْحُسَيْنُ وَبَعْضُ مَنْ مَعَهُ مِنْ خَصَائِصِهِ تُشْرِقُ أَلْوَانُهُمْ، وَتَهْدَأُ
جَوَارِحُهُمْ، وَتَسْكُنُ نَفُوسُهُمْ...

...while the situation of al-Husayn (AS) and some of those with him, would be such that their colors would shine, the parts of their bodies would be composed, and their spirits would be in the state of serenity...36

Having known the subtle meaning of *ibnu Amir al-mu'minin* as the edifice of the possessor and bestower of tranquility, our aspiration should be to uplift ourselves and realize the characteristics of a tranquil soul.

'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* narrates:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ : الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
أَلَّا يَذْكُرَ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ : أَتَدْرِي مَنْ هُمْ يَا ابْنَ أُمَّ سَلِيمٌ؟ قُلْتُ : مَنْ هُمْ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ : نَحْنُ أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ وَشِيعَتُنَا.

Anas bin Malik is reported to have said: The Messenger of Allah recited "***And those who have faith and their hearts are tranquil by the remembrance of Allah...***" (13:28) and said: Do you know who they are, O son of Umm Sulaym? I said: Who are they, O Messenger of Allah? He (S) said: They are we and our Shi'a.37

...وَأَبْنُ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ

...and the son of the **Leader of the Successors**

Here, as in the previous cases, 'ibn' bears two different messages: Imam al-Husayn (AS) is the son of *sayyid al-wasiyyin*, as well as his spiritual product. And because he is the spiritual product of the master of all the past successors of the prophets of Allah, he likewise excels them and is embellished with the attributes of his father. The word 'sayyid' literally means 'leader'. Its correlatives are the verbs *sada-yasudu* (he led, he is leading). That which makes Imam 'Ali (AS) to be *sayyid al-wasiyyin* is his

capability to succeed the Leader of the Apostles (*sayyid al-rusul*), who bore the most comprehensive message of Allah, the Qur`an, which is introduced as *al-Muhaymin*. Consider the following verse of the Holy Qur`an:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ
فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ...

We have sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it of the Book and as a guardian (muhayminan) over it. So judge between them by what God has sent down, and do not follow their desires against the truth that has come to you. (5:48)

No Divine Messenger (*rasul*) or Successor (*wasi*) can bear the message of the Holy Prophet (S) save Imam 'Ali and his successors, for every Prophet (S) enjoys the station of the Book that was revealed unto him. Therefore because the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are the bearers of the Qur`an (*hamalat kitabillah*) they excel the other prophets and their successors and are rightly known as *sadat al-awsiya'*. Consider the following narrations:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: أَنَا سَيِّدُ النَّبِيِّينَ وَوَصِيِّ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ وَأَوْصِيَاؤُهُ سَادَةُ
الْأَوْصِيَاءِ

The Apostle of Allah, upon whom and whose immaculate progeny be peace, said: 'I am the leader of the Prophets and **my successor is the leader of all the successors, and his successors are the leaders of all the successors**.³⁸

وَعَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: أَنَا سَيِّدُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ وَأَفْضَلُ مِنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَأَوْصِيَائِي سَادَةُ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ وَذُرِّيَّتِي أَفْضَلُ
ذُرِّيَّاتِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ...

Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said: The Holy Prophet (S) said: 'I am the leader of the Prophets and Apostles, and better than the angels nearest to Allah, **and my successors are the the leaders of the successors** of the other prophets and apostles, and my lineage is the best of the lineages of the Prophets and Apostles of Allah.³⁹

And in the proximity of the radiant dome of Imam al-Husayn (AS), Imam al-Sadiq (AS) tells his

companion Safwan that all the Divine prophets and their successors visit Imam al-Husayn (AS), including the Imam (AS) himself. He (AS) says:

...وَمُحَمَّدٌ أَفْضَلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَنَحْنُ أَفْضَلُ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ...

...[including] Muhammad **the best of the Prophets and we, the best successors**...40

In the first volume of his well-known thematic exegesis of Qur`an, the grand Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli (may the Almighty protect his noble self) says:

‘Inasmuch as the Noble Qur`an is *muhaymin* (supervisor and protector), the Seal of the Apostles is also *muhaymin* over the prophets, for every Apostle invites his community to the station of his book, and the station of every prophet is the same as the station of his book, and the station of the Messenger of Allah (AS) is the same as the station of the Message that he brought.⁴¹

And when trying to establish how Imam al-Husayn (AS) is the Leader of martyrs, Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli in his *Shekufaieye ‘Aql* says:

Husayn (AS) is the leader and superior to all the martyrs of the universe. And this station is due to his company with the reality of the Holy Qur`an which is a guardian over all other heavenly scriptures. In other words:

- 1- The reality of the Prophet (S)’s progeny is at par with the Holy Qur`an.
- 2- The reality of Qur`an, apart from verifying the previous books has a supervisory role over them.
- 3- Every prophet is at par with the heavenly book given to him.
- 4- When the Progeny of the Holy Prophet (S) is equal to the noble Qur`an, they [obviously] are guardians over the great divine men of the past.

This same evidence can be employed to prove that Imam al-Husayn (AS) is among the leaders of all the successors of the previous prophets of Allah (*sayyid al-wasiyyin*).

...وَأَبْنُ سَيِّدِ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ...

...and the son of the **Leader of the Successors**

The word *wasiyyin* is the plural of *wasi* and it literally means [the] ‘trustee’ to whom one entrusts his will

(*wasiyya*). In the present context, however, it refers to the Divine Trustee who is entrusted with a Divine Will, which is to govern the Islamic state and rule according to the Divine Laws. And Imam ‘Ali (AS) was entrusted with this Divine Will before the demise of the Holy Prophet (S) on several occasions, the fundamental of which was in *Ghadir Khumm*, where he (S) announced Imam ‘Ali (AS) as his successor and sought confirmation from others too.

Therefore, when we say that Imam al-Husayn (AS) is the edifice, product, and inheritor of the Leader of the Divine successors and trustees, we are also implying that he has inherited the qualities of such successorship. And in rising against an illegal government that would ruin and demolish the material and spiritual felicity of the believers, he practically manifested his trustworthiness and successfully undertook his mission of Divine leadership.

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1. Shaykh Saduq, *Al-Khisal*, v. 1, p. 65
 2. Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus, *Al-Yaqin*, p. 152
 3. Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, v. 1, p. 412
 4. It should be noted that Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام wanted to inform Jabir about what is not apparently indicated in the verse, but is a reality that exists in the higher realm. Therefore one should not misconstrue and conjecture that the exposition of the Imam عليه السلام is a physical part of the Qur’an.
 5. Furat bin Ibrahim al-Kufi, *Tafsir Furat al-Kufi*, p. 147
 6. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.35, p. 17
 7. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.25, p.21
 8. Shaykh al-Tusi, *Al-Amali*, p. 289
 9. Shaykh al-Saduq, ‘*Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha* عليه السلام, v. 1, p. 73
 10. Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus, *Al-Tara’if fi Ma’rifati Madhahib al-Tawa’if*, p. 60
 11. Haji al-Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa’il*, V. 15, p. 337
 12. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.37, p. 272
 13. In his well-known Treatise of Rights, Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin عليه السلام specifying the rights of the father alludes to his fundamental mediation of the existence of his offspring. He says: And as for the right(s) of your father, you should know that he is your source (fa’lam annahu asluk), and that was it not for him you would not have existed; so whatever you find in yourself that pleases you, then know that your father is the source of the blessing (fa’lam anna abaka asl al-ni’ma), then praise and thank Allah. (Shaykh al-Saduq, *al-Amali*, pp. 453–454)
 14. Shaykh al-Kaf’ami, *Misbah*, p. 505
 15. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.99, p. 133
 16. Al-Bahrani, *Tafsir al-Burhan*, v.2, p. 103
 17. Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qummi, *Mi’at Manqaba*, pp. 52–53
 18. Shaykh al-Tusi, *Al-Amali*, p. 295
 19. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 37, p. 334
 20. Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, v. 1, p. 411
 21. Al-Turayhi, *Gharib al-Qur’an*, p. 279. Also check his *Maj’ma’ al-Bahrayn* v.4, p. 253
 22. Shaykh al-Bahrani, *Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*, v.5, pp. 584–585
 23. ‘Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.37, p.293
 24. Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 37, p. 334
 25. E.W.Lane, *E.W.Lane Arabic-English Lexicon*, see under the root word ‘abata’
 26. *Ibid.*, v. 35, p. 133
 27. Shaykh Saduq, *Al-Tawhid*, p. 205

28. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 37, p. 75
29. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 65, p. 45
30. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 87, p. 19
31. Al-Bahrayni, Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur`an, v. 1, p. 442
32. Ibid., v. 1, pp. 442-443
33. Al-Rayshahri, Mawsu'at Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib, v. 1, pp. 158-159
34. Al-Rayshahri, Mizan al-Hikma, v. 1, p. 502
35. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 24, p. 93
36. Al-Bahrani, Al-'Awalim, pp. 350-351.
37. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 35, p. 405
38. Shaykh al-Tusi, Man la Yahdhuru al-Faqih, v.4, p. 174
39. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.8, p. 22
40. Ibid., v.101, p. 60
41. Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, Qur`an dar Qur`an, p. 292

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