

## Divine Identification of The Members of The Cloak

فَقَالَ الْأَمِينُ جِبْرَائِيلُ : يَا رَبِّ وَ مَنْ تَحْتَ الْكِسَاءِ ؟ فَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ : هُمْ أَهْلُ بَيْتِ  
النُّبُوَّةِ وَ مَعْدِنُ الرِّسَالَةِ هُمْ فَاطِمَةُ وَ أَبُوهَا ، وَ بَعْلُهَا وَ بَنُوهَا

**Gabriel the Honest Archangel asked, "O my Lord! Who are those under the cloak?"**

**The Almighty and All-majestic Lord answered, "They are the household of Prophethood and the core of the Message. They are namely Fatima, her father, her husband, and her sons."**

As we mentioned before, the dialogue between Allah (SWT) and Angel Jibrael (AS) is for the purpose of conveying the information which Allah (SWT) wants us to hear. Jibrael (AS) asks Allah (SWT) about the identity of those who are under the cloak and He (SWT) responds back with one brief phrase informing us the identity of the individuals whom He is referring to. This way, no one after this event will ever have doubt of who was under the cloak and who was not. No one can dare to fabricate the facts or add / subtract to the individuals under the cloak.

When Jibrael (AS) asks Allah (SWT) who are under the cloak, Allah (SWT) answers with an interesting expression which further sheds some light on an interesting angle that we should pay attention to. Instead of providing the names of the members of the cloak (as in Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain), Allah (SWT) chooses a different concise and unique method to identify them. He (SWT) says: *"They are the household of Prophethood and the core of the Message. They are namely Fatima, her father, her husband, and her sons."*

First, Allah (SWT) identifies them as a whole – one identity – that is, they are **أهل بيت النبوة** (the Prophetic household) and **معدن الرسالة** (the core of the Message). Why is there the need to identify them as

“AhlulBayt”? As history proves later, there has indeed been a controversy as to who are included among the “members of the Prophet’s household”. Who exactly are the AhlulBayt?

The mainstream Muslim population includes the wives of the Prophet among the AhlulBayt and some even include any blood relation of the Prophet to be from the “AhlulBayt”. However that is false and incorrect and here Allah (SWT) is taking the opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding or misinterpretation until the end of time. He (SWT) Himself is speaking to testify the truth regarding the identity of AhlulBayt who are exclusively Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain (May Allah be pleased with them).

The next question to ask is: What the significance of “AhlulBayt” in Allah’s eyes? The answer to that is conveyed in the second part of Allah’s answer and that is – **معدن الرسالة** (the core of the Message)

As we know, Allah (SWT) has revealed the message of Islam as the final revelation to mankind till the end of time. In the words of the Prophet (SA), he has left behind two weighty things – the Holy Qur’an and his *‘Itrah* (AhlulBayt) – which will always accompany each other and will never separate until they reach the Pool of Hawd. We as Muslims are ordered to adhere to the Qur’an and AhlulBayt which together serve as our lanterns of guidance for salvation.

The Qur’an consisting of the word of God coupled with the infallible teachers and divinely appointed guides represented in the AhlulBayt (AS) and the Imams who will clarify the message of Islam and act as the “speaking Qur’an” and the “walking Qur’an” is the correct formula and prescription for us to abide by if we wish to achieve spiritual success and proximity to God.

The AhlulBayt (AS) is the model for human perfection and the template which we should follow and take our example from. In fact, all of the prophets and messengers before the Seal of Prophets understood their position of Wilayah and superiority over them and that they are the part and parcel of the unified message which Allah (SWT) intended for mankind to embrace. They are the heart of the religion and the core of the message as Allah (SWT) testifies, hence there cannot be any doubt or argument over this fact.

After all, if the whole universe was created for the sake of the Prophet and his AhlulBayt (AS), then we shouldn’t be surprised that they are the core and essence of the religion of Islam. If we have accepted the former after hearing the words of Allah (SWT) in their regards, then accepting the latter is natural and necessary. After all, Allah (SWT) reminds us in the Qur’an that

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

***Allah knows best knows where He places His message. (6: 124)***

After properly introducing their title and significance to the religion, Allah (SWT) then identifies them personally by presenting only one of the five personalities who are under the cloak – and she is Lady Fatima. Allah (SWT) says: *“They are namely Fatima, her father, her husband, and her sons.”*

Wouldn't it have been easier and more transparent for Allah (SWT) to spell out the names of the members of the cloak especially since the angels and inhabitants of the heavens are well-aware of who the Prophet (SA) and his AhlulBayt (AS) are?

It is very interesting to note that Allah (SWT) chooses Fatima in particular as the core person to identify the rest of the members of the cloak who are her father, husband, and sons.

One must reflect and contemplate why Allah (SWT) mentions Lady Fatima (AS) as the reference point when He could've used the Prophet (SA) and that would have been more expected. Allah (SWT) could've said, *“They are Muhammad, his daughter, his cousin, and his grandsons”*.

This would've have been more acceptable to the mind since the status of the Prophet (SA) is above all ranks and the name of the Prophet (SA) has always been the core identifier as we recite in our obligatory prayers *“Allahuma Sali 'ala Muhammad wa Aali Muhammad”* (Oh Lord send your blessings on Muhammad and his household).

In this example, we begin the recitation of this prayer by mentioning the name of the Prophet and then associating his family to him.

Or Allah (SWT) could've selected Imam Ali (AS) as the reference point by saying, *“They are Ali, his wife, his sons, and his cousin.”* But neither was the case! Surely, this divine selection to present the members of the cloak via Lady Fatima (AS) is an honor and virtue for her and for the purposes of demonstrating her high station and position.

We are to be reminded that the other members of the cloak are very close in blood relation to her; either her own beloved father who is the Seal of Messengers, or her dear husband and the successor and Wasi of the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful, or her beloved sons who are the Master Youth of Paradise. What a great virtue she possesses to be blessed with such pure family whose origins and roots are one and the same and are the most noble and purest that it can be!

If we analyze each personality who has been granted permission to enter the cloak, we will easily recognize that the divine approval for them to become a member of the AhlulBayt was not random or a mistake as they all possess unique and extraordinary characteristics of honor, nobility, and excellence that cannot be matched. In fact, their physical presence under the cloak collectively in the same gathering must be a hint that something grand is about to happen and that their gathering is not just any family gathering.

Furthermore, one may also expect that with the unmatched qualities that each of the members of the

cloak possess, it is not possible to expect another member to join who is not equally qualified in nobility, purity, and excellence, even if he or she is in overall good standing religion-wise, such as Umm Salamah.

It is not surprising that Allah (SWT) choses Lady Fatima (AS) to be the core of the People of the Cloak when she is the one whom Imam Hasan Al-Askari (AS) said: *"We are Allah's Hujjah (proof) over you and Fatima is Hujjah over us"*.

Fatima is the one whom the following supplication is known to be recommended for the acceptance of prayers after sending benedictions to the purified household through her name, as narrated by Ibn Tawoos via the infallible Imam (AS):

اللهم صلي على فاطمة وأبيها وبعلمها وبنيتها والسر العظيم المستودع فيها أن  
تصلي على محمد وأل محمد وتفعل بي ما أنت أهله ولا تفعل بي ما أنا أهله.

*"O Allah, I beseech you in the name of Fatima, her father, her husband, her sons, and the secret she is buried with: shower your blessings upon Muhammad and his Progeny, and do unto me that which is worthy of Your mercy, and not that which is worthy of my actions."*

When asked what is the meaning of **السر المستودع فيها** (the secret she is buried with), our scholars have provided a number of possible interpretations. The "secret" may be referring to the Imams who are from her lineage, or it may refer to her aborted son Mohsin who has become a symbol for the oppression committed against the Imams (AS) and a proof of their right for Imamate.

It may also refer to the 12th Awaited Imam (who is from her sons) who will fill the earth with equity and justice after it will be filled with tyranny and injustice. In other interpretations, the "secret" refers to her position being the connecting point between the Prophethood and Imamate. As we know, Imamate is an extension of Prophethood so if it were not for the connecting point or "link" between them, the Prophethood and Message that was delivered would not have sustained without the institution of Imamate.

In light of this perspective, the commencement of Imamate began in her lap as she accompanied and stood alongside her husband Imam Ali (AS) defending his right for the successorship and raising her sons Imam Hasan and Husain (AS). Thus, she became considered the "mother of the Infallible Imams".

With the grand status of Lady Fatima (AS) in mind, it becomes necessary and inevitable to seek intercession from her and desire her proximity by virtue of that "hidden secret" that is buried in her essence and has become the reason for her distinct position in the *Tradition of the Cloak*.

It is worth noting that Allah (SWT) identifies the sons of Fatima to be **"بنيتها"** (Baneeha) instead of **"إبنيها"**

(Ebnayha), and the difference between the two words is that the former term is the plural form while the latter refers to a pair (two in number). The divine use of the word *Baneeha* indicates that all the sons of Lady Fatima (AS), Hasan and Husain, as well as her grandsons from the lineage of Imam Husain (AS) are included with the members of the cloak, by virtue of their divinely bestowed infallibility.

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