

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > The Emendation of A Shi'ite Creed > 32. The Belief on Impeccability (Al-'Ismah)

32. The Belief on Impeccability (Al-'Ismah)

*Abu Ja'far says: "Chapter on the belief on al-'ismah (impeccability)"*1 ash-Shaykh al-Mufid, may Allah have mercy upon him, says: The impeccability granted by Allah to His Proofs is the succour and grace by which the Proofs keep themselves free from sin and error in the religion of Allah, the Exalted. The impeccability, in fact, is a grace granted by Allah, the Exalted, to him whom He knows will hold fast by it.

Hence, freedom from sin is the action of him who maintains himself free from sin, and this freedom from sin does not involve being pre- vented from committing a base act, nor does it oblige or compel him who possesses it to act righteously; rather it is a thing which Allah, the Exalted, knows that if He bestows it upon one of His slaves, no trace of fault will be found in him.

Yet, this privilege is not bestowed freely upon all men; rather it is restricted to those who are the chosen and the best. Allah, the Exalted, says:

But as for those unto whom, already, the reward most fair has gone forth from Us, they shall be kept far from it (Hell) [21:101].

And He, the Praised, says:

Certainly We chose them, out of a knowledge, above all beings [44:32].

And He, the Exalted, says:

And in Our sight they are, indeed, of the chosen, the excellent [38:47].

(Also, we are of the opinion) that the Prophet and the Imams after them are free from sin during their prophethood and imamate, whether major or minor. It is arguable that they might omit a supererogatory act, yet without intending to commit disobedience thereby. It is inconceivable that they should omit an obligatory act either before or after their imamate.

Chapter: And whenever perfection is attributed to them in their different states of life, it implies their perfection in all states in which they were Proofs of Allah to His creatures. It has been related that the

Messenger of Allah, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny, and the Imams from his progeny after him were entitled to be the Proofs of Allah, the Exalted, from the time when they achieved years of discretion until Allah took them.

Yet, even before they attained the age of religious responsibility, they were not subject to defects and ignorance since they were of the pattern of Jesus and John, peace be upon them, in that they were endowed with perfection though they were still children, and had not attained the age of discretion. And, in fact, this is a tenable proposition, one which admits of rational proof.

Besides that, there is no justification for declaring false the traditions in this respect: at any rate it is necessary only to maintain their perfection, peace be on them, in knowledge and impeccability during their prophet–hood and imamate, and to hold a non–committal attitude regarding their careers before that, whether it was a state of prophet–hood and imamate or not, and to affirm that impeccability is inevitable from the time Allah, the Sublime, brings them to full discretion .till He, the Almighty, makes them (peace be upon them) die.

1. * * Not found in N.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/emendation-shiite-creed-shaykh-al-mufid/32-belief-impeccability-al-ismah#c omment-0