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## Chapter 24: The Reasons Behind The Infallibility Of The Divine Leaders

Concerning this issue the scholars have dealt with numerous reasons two of which we shall present here:

It should be stated however that these two reasons are related both to the Prophet and to the Imams. This is because in the view of Shiites Imamate is a continuation of prophethood with the exception of the fact that the Prophet has direct relations with divine inspiration but the Imam lacks such a privilege. Except for this fact, both the Prophet and Imams share identical qualifications.

Now let us explain those two reasons:

## 1. Education in the light of action

Without doubt, the reason behind prophethood is to train and to educate people.

One of the influential factors for such education is for the educator to possess the necessary qualities. For instance if a speaker was fluent and eloquent in his speech but because of some undesirable traits he could not attract people; under such conditions, the objectives of prophethood would not have been satisfied.

The most discounting factor in a leader is for his acts and speech to be in contrast. In such cases his guidance loses its validity and the foundations of his prophethood become shaky.

The great Shiite scholar Seyyed Murteza, explains the above reason in the following manner:

We would never peacefully listen to a person who is double-minded in his faith and therefore, is not consistent and stable in his religion. In the same way, the speech of the one who does not carry out his thoughts would not have any effect on us.

If a physician writes a book on the dangers of alcohol and even shows us a documented film on this topic, but he himself is a drunkard, nobody will care to listen to him or to his advice.

Or suppose a leader stood everyday on a stage and delivered a speech on justice and equality but in practice, confiscated people's assets, his preaching contradicts action.

To solve this problem Allah has provided his prophets with a strong faith and perseverance so that they are immune against sins.

For this reason the Prophets and the divine leaders should not go near sins since their pre-prophethood era should have been bright and flawless. This is because a man whose life has been full of sins and wrongdoings and is known among people as a sinner can not influence people properly.

God's supreme wisdom causes Him to bring forth in His messenger a special charisma, to keep him safe against any abhorrent factors.

It is obvious that one's destructive past would drastically decrease one's influence over people. They would protest that they would not follow a man whose past has not been brilliant and flawless.

## 2. Attracting people's confidence

One of the pre-requisites of education, which has always been the objective of the Prophets and the divine leaders, is for the people to believe in their educator. This is because one's attraction towards an act depends on the originality and authenticity of that act. A hygienic or economic program would attract people if it is approved by a group of experts. This is because the probability of error in a group of scientists is very low.

In the same way the probability of committing errors by our religious leaders would weaken our belief in them and the very objective of prophethood, which is man's guidance, would never take place.

It might be said that, to attract people's confidence it would suffice the religious leaders not to lie and even go close to this appalling sin, that it is not imperative for them to abstain from other sins because immunity or the lack of it concerning other sins are not related to the issue of people's confidence.

This is obviously wrong. How can a person go without telling lies, but can easily engage in homicide, treason and obscene acts? How can a person abstain from telling lies while he is after the transient lusts and whims of the material world?1

We should note that the inhibitor for any person against sins is an internal God-led instinct which secures him against any wrongdoing, then how can an inhibitor exist which works against telling lies but is ineffective with other kinds of crimes and sins?

Besides it would be extremely hard for people to distinguish between these two wrong actions.

Furthermore, the commitment of sins causes both hatred on the part of people and their lack of confidence in the speaker; such as the saying2

Only makes sense for those who can distinguish between a person's personality traits and his statements.

This statement requires infallibility to exist in a religious leader both before and after his involvement in such a position. This is because if a person has passed his life in vandalism and treason he would be a suspect to people even if due to some unexpected revelation he could have purified his soul against further wrongdoing. People would never forgive or forget his past wrongdoings. They could even accuse him of hypocrisy. This affair is even more evident in the religious issues.

The texts of Shariah (the divine law) are not formed in such a way that a philosopher or a teacher could advance their case through reasoning.

Rather Shariah is based on the heavenly inspiration and revelation with which man has become familiar in history. And in order for the followers of these leaders to accept and adopt such teachings and instructions, they should have perfect confidence in their religious leaders and in the revelations which they receive. It is obvious that a religious leader with a dark past could not create such confidence3.

These two reasons not only lead us towards the infallibility of the Prophets but also confirm the fact that the Prophet's successors should be flawless and innocent like himself.

This is because the position of an Imam, contrary to what the Sunnites believe, is not a usual leading position; rather as we have previously emphasized 4, an Imam's position is a heavenly and divine position and an Imam shares with the Prophet all positions (except for the position of prophethood and the receiving of revelation). An Imam is the protector of religion and is the interpreter of the Holy Quran and the announcers of those heavenly commands which the Prophet did not have the chance to explain.

Therefore, an Imam is the governor, the leader of Muslims, and the protector of their lives. He is also a heavenly instructor for Shariah.

Such an individual should be equipped with infallibility. This is because the commitment of any sin, either small or big nullifies the effects of education and does away with people's confidence altogether.

- 1. Furthermore, to abstain from telling lies the sinner should at times confess to that fact that he has lied. And an loon and this happens. People would doubt his authority and would hate him. As a result he would face the previous problem i.e. lack of prestige and authority among people.
- 2. Observe the truth of speaker's expression and disregard, his personal characteristics in the recognition of right versus wrong.

<u>3.</u> The requirement for the attraction of the people's confidence is for the prophet to have been pure and clean of all sins both before and after he got the position of prophethood. This is because a complete confidence is brought forth when the prophet has absolutely no sins. Those people who have wronged some part of their lives and then repent can never earn people's confidence.

We could conclude that the leaders should be clean of both accidental and intentional sins because intentional sins go away with people's confidence and the accidental ones would not demolish confidence but has drastic consequences for the sinner. Accidental or unintentional sins although forgiven by the religion and wisdom, would smear one's reputation and would cause people to a bandon the sinner. This is more hazardous if unintentional homicide takes place.

4. . See chapters 3/4 and 5 of this book.

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