

## Conclusion

A perfect recognition of the Ahl al-Bayt is beyond human capacity. With numerous translations and interpretations of the Holy Quran throughout centuries, every new generation realizes that there are concepts in the Holy Quran, which have not been discussed as yet. The same thing can be said about Ahl al-Bayt.

All throughout the past fourteen centuries, many books and dissertations have been written on them; yet, there are still many things that have not yet been written or said. From narrations related by Ahl al-Bayt, we infer that getting to know Ahl al-Bayt has many stages.

The Holy Prophet has said:

يَا عَلِيٌّ! مَا عَرَفْتَ اللَّهَ وَأَنْتَ: وَمَا عَرَفَنِي إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَا: وَمَا عَرَفْتُكَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَا!

O Ali! No one knows Allah save you and me; no one knows me save Allah and you; no one knows you save Allah and me.<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Prophet has also said:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً.

One who dies and does not know his Imam has died the death of one who lived in the era of ignorance (i.e. has not recognized Islam).<sup>2</sup>

The Holy Prophet has introduced dying without knowing the Imam of the time as dying in the pre-Islamic era of ignorance. On one hand he has counted the knowing of Ahl al-Bayt at a very limited level and the level of knowing Allah and Ahl al-Bayt on another.

From these narrations, we infer that human beings have different capacities of getting to know the Ahl al-Bayt. Salman, the Persian is quite different from Abu-Dharr in terms of knowing Ahl al-Bayt. Abu-

Dharr's knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt is different from that of Miqdad.

Quoting his great grandfather Ali ibn Husayn, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has reported:

وَاللَّهِ، لَوْ عَلِمَ أُبُودِرٍ مَا فِي قَلْبِ سَلَمَانَ لَقَتَلَهُ! وَلَقَدْ آخَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ بَيْنَهُمَا، فَمَا ظَنُوكُمْ بِسَائِرِ الْخَلْقِ؟ إِنَّ عِلْمَ الْعُلَمَاءِ صَعْبٌ مُسْتَحْسَبٌ لَا يَحْتَمِلُهُ إِلَّا نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ أَوْ مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ أَوْ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ إِمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلأَيْمَانِ. وَإِنَّمَا صَارَ سَلَمَانُ مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ لَأَنَّهُ أُنْوَرٌ مِنَ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ فَذِلِّكَ نَسْبَتُهُ إِلَى الْمَاءِ

By Allah (I swear), if Abu-Dharr knew what was in the heart of Salman, he would kill him, though Allah had made a contract of brotherhood between them. How would you then judge about other people? Surely the scholars' knowledge is hard to understand and burdensome! No one can endure it but a Prophet, an archangel or a believing servant whose heart Allah has tested with faith. Only Salman became a man of knowledge, for he was from us, Ahl al-Bayt. That is why I attributed him to the scholars. [3](#)

On one occasion, Imam Ali (a.s.) said to Abu-Dharr:

إِنَّ سَلَمَانَ لَوْ حَدَّثَكَ بِمَا يَعْلَمُ لَقْتَ: رَحِيمُ اللَّهُ قَاتِلُ سَلَمَانَ

If Salman informed you of what he knew, you would say: May Allah have mercy on Salman's killer.[4](#)

It has been reported that faith has ten ranks: Salman was in the tenth rank, Abu-Dharr in the ninth and Miqdad in the eighth.[5](#)

As it is seen, faith is based on knowledge. Therefore, ranks of faith are deeply rooted in the ranks of knowledge.

## **Exaggeration – A Threat To Faith**

Throughout history of Shiism, exaggeration has been a potential danger threatening the Shia faith. We can say that there has never been an epoch in the history of Shia without exaggerators being there. There has never been a time when the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt have not resisted against this destructive current of exaggeration and have not condemned it. Surprisingly, we still witness exaggerators here and there in our time, which is the age of the technology of data and advanced sciences.

Exaggeration has its roots in two factors: lacking sufficient capacity for learning the knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt and overflowing of emotions and its dominance over intellect.

The Holy Prophet has said:

لَوْلَا أَنْ يَقُولَ الضَّالُّونَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي مَا قَالَتِ النَّصَارَى فِي عِسَى بْنِ مَرِيمَ، لَقُلْتُ فِيكَ قَوْلًا لَا تَمُرُّ بِمَالِ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا  
أَخَدَدُوكُمْ أَتْرَابَ مِنْ تَحْتِ قَدَمَيْكَ يَسْتَشْفُونَ بِهِ.

Were it not for fear that exaggerators of my ummah say about you what Christians said about Jesus, son of Mary, I would say something about you that you would not pass by any people unless they would take the soil under you feet to be healed therewith.[6](#)

A man by the name of Sa'd asked Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), "Who is an exaggerator?" The Imam said,

الْغَالُونَ قَوْمٌ يَقُولُونَ فِينَا مَا لَا نَقُولُهُ فِي أَنفُسَنَا. فَلَيْسَ أُولَئِكَ مِنَّا وَلَسْنُنَا مِنْهُمْ

"They are people who say something about us which we do not say about ourselves. They are not from us and we are not from them either."[7](#)

Imam al-Sadiq has said:

شِيعَتُنَا مَنْ لَا يَمْدُحُ بَنَى غَالِيًّا.

Our followers are those who do not eulogize us exaggeratedly.[8](#)

In another narration, Imam al-Sadiq is reported as saying:

وَأَحِبُّوا أَهْلَ بَيْتِنَا حُبًّا مُقْتَصِدًا وَلَا تَغْلُوا

Be moderate in loving the Household of your Prophet and do not exaggerate.[9](#)

Evidently, the young generation who are the great support of every school of thought, every society and every culture, if exposed to exaggerators inroad, the biggest blow will be dealt to the Muslim society, the school of thought and culture.

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, with their Divine insight have warned the new generations against the blight of exaggeration. In this relation, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

إِحْذِرُوا عَلَى شَبَابِكُمُ الْغُلَاءَ لَا يُفْسِدُوهُمْ، فَإِنَّ الْغُلَاءَ شَرُّ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ

Beware of exaggerators who might ruin the youngsters, for exaggerators are the worst creatures.[10](#)

In another *Hadith*, after speaking about Allah's attributes, Imam al-Ridha says:

نَحْنُ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّمَطُ الْأَوْسَطُ الَّذِي لَا يُدْكُنُهُ الْغَالِي وَ لَا يَسْبِقُنَا الْتَّالِي.

We, the family of Muhammad, are moderate people. Those who overstate our position do not understand us. And, those who understate our position fail to supersede us. Know that the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt have made the right path distinct from the wrong; no excuse is accepted from anyone.

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْبِنَا حَيَاةً مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَمْتُنَا مَمَاتَ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَارْزُقْنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا زِيَارَةً مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ،  
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ شَفَاعَةً مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَلَا تُفَرِّقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَاجْعَلْنَا مِنْ شِيعَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.

O Allah, make me live like Muhammad (S) and his household lived. And, make me die like Muhammad (S) and his household died. And make the visitation of the grave of Muhammad (S) and those of his household, the intercession of Muhammad (S) and his household in the hereafter available to us. And make no separation between us and Muhammad (S) and his household and place us among the followers of Muhammad (S) and the household of Muhammad (S).

- [1.](#) Interpretation of Manifest verses; 139/1, H. 18
- [2.](#) Al-Kafi: 19/2
- [3.](#) Al-Kafi: 401/1, H. 2
- [4.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: 373/22, Chapter: 11, H. 2
- [5.](#) Al-Khisal, Tadiths: 48–49
- [6.](#) Yanabi al-Mawaddah: 200/1
- [7.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: 101/67, Chapter: 47, H. 6
- [8.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: 164/65, H. 16
- [9.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: 269/25, H. 12
- [10.](#) Al-Amali: 650, H. 1349

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