

Introduction

In 1980 we celebrated the 1400 anniversary of the Hijri Calendar and published a short biography of the 14 Ma'sumeen (infallibles). As this was just a one page biography of each Ma'sum, we thought that this time we should make an effort to give the biographies of Ma'sumeen in detail. Our first effort was highly popular and the 3000 copies of our first print were sold out quickly. We had to reprint and even all copies of the second edition were also sold out.

Demand came from all countries from all five continents. Time passed but people still remember our effort and from time to time a call on the phone from Auckland New Zealand or Los Angeles USA reminds us that the need for some detailed biography is still there. Recently many more people asked about the book and we thought that the time has come to make an effort.

Indeed Sheikh Mufid's Al-Irshad is there, but this is, although authentic, tedious to read and understand. The book appears to be for research scholars only, ordinary people, especially the youth in the West who wish to know about the Ma'sumeen do not have a suitable, extensive, or authentic enough book which tells them who these Ma'sumeen were, what they did and what influence they left on the Muslim society of today.

With this idea in the forefront, the following book is in your hands to read and understand about the 14 Ma'sumeen without taking too much of your time in understanding it. It is a simple, concise biography in simple English with all the necessary references at the end of each biography. Why were these Ma'sumeen called "Ahlul Bayt" ?

Qur'an in 42:23 tells us in the words of Prophet Muhammad,

"I do not ask you for any recompense for this (communication of the revelation) except the love of the near kinship." (Mawaddata fil-Qurba).

Asking the believers to love the Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt.

In 33:33 there is further elaboration of the Ahlul Bayt and their status.

This state of purity, which distinguished Muhammad (S) and his family (Ahlul Bayt) from the common Muslims, agreed with the elevated ranks of the families of the earlier Prophets, but this elevation was not unconditional, they had to be rightly guided to achieve that status. This guidance was confirmed by the following verses, Verse 33 goes like this:

"God desires only to remove any impurities from you, o people of the House (Ahlul Bayt) and to purify you completely."

Who are the people of the House (Ahlul Bayt)? The pronoun referring to them is in the masculine plural, while the preceding part of the verse is in the feminine plural. This change in gender has evidently pointed the finger to the Five people of the mantle (Ahl Al-Kisa) i.e. Muhammad-'Ali-Fatima-Hasan-Husayn.

For this Verse was revealed when the Prophet (S) was in the house of his daughter Fatima under a Kisa. She is the narrator of this Tradition. When these Five persons were under the Kisa she used a sentence "Fa Lamma Aktamalna" And when we were complete (Under the Kisa).

She did not use the word Ajtam'ana, i.e. when were all gathered or assembled together for it would show the possibility of addition or subtraction from the Five. The word 'Aktamalna' clarified the position that these Five had completed the assembly without further additions.

Tabari in his commentary and Imam Fakhruddin Razi in his Tafsee-e-Kabir in their commentaries on this verse support this interpretation and the names of Five people with the exclusion of the wives of the Prophet.

The Ahlul Bayt of Muhammad (S) meant, as was consistent with the general usage of the term at the time, primarily his blood relations, the same people who were also forbidden to receive Alms (Sadaqa) in order that their state of purity not be soiled or questioned. This also elevates them to the status of infallible (Ma'sum), that is, free of mistakes in all avenues of life.

To further confirm the names of these Five persons, in 3:61, the Verse of Mubahela clarifies this position in front of the large audience of Muslims as well as Christians. This Verse goes like this:

" If one disputes with you in this matter (concerning Jesus) after the knowledge which has come to you, come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then let us swear an oath and place the curse of God on those who lie."

And the personalities Muhammad (S) took with him were the same Five people of the Kisa.

He himself as Prophet of God, his Daughter Fatima (sa) as the women of the family, his two grand sons as the sons and his cousin 'Ali (as) as the "Self" of the Prophet.

When the Bishop of Najran saw these faces he realized the truthfuof the Prophet and refrained from

verbal confrontation of curse on those who lie. Qur'an's logic plays a great part in understanding what God wanted us to know and what to do when matters are under dispute or subject to various interpretations. 3:31 tells us,

“ Say (O’ Muhammad) if you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins.”

In this Verse, the Prophet is introduced as an exemplar to whose behaviour and morality people should conform their own behaviour and morality, and whom they should take as their precedent. This in itself is a proof of the Prophet's immunity from sin and error, because, if it were possible for sin and error to proceed from him, there would be no purpose in God, introducing him as a leader and a precedent.

This position then after the Prophet, passed to the Household (Ahlul Bayt) and according to a Hadith, which many Sunni and Shi'i scholars have narrated in their books on the life of the Prophet, in histories and in their own books on Hadith from nearly thirty companions of the Prophet. The Prophet chose his Household (Ahlul Bayt) for the leadership and Imamate. He said,

“ I leave among you two precious things: the Book of Allah and my Ahlul Bayt. These two will not be separated until they encounter me at the pool of Kawthar (in paradise). Do not run ahead of them, for you will be ruined, do not neglect them, for you will be ruined and do not seek to instruct them for they are wiser than you.”

Looking at the above Verses of the Holy Book, let there be no doubt in the minds of any readers, believers or non believers, that the Prophet on orders of the Qur'an was a Ma'sum and so were his Ahlul Bayt.

Hence the lives of The Fourteen Ma'sumeen (as) for you to read, understand and follow, because following their footsteps will lead us to Love God. This should be the aim of every Human being on earth to achieve salvation.

The Present book is my life's ambition which is to give authentic and correct information about the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet in the language that today's youth understands. I pray that the Imam Sahib'uz-Zaman (aj) will accept this small offering from one of his humble servants.

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