

Part 2: The Imam should be Infallible (inerrant-sinless) from all sins

We should know that the Imamite scholars have all agreed that an Imam is always immaculate from all small or big sins right from his childhood to the end of his life. He commits no sin either wilfully or by mistake. None except Ibne Babawayh and his teacher Muhammad bin Al Hasan (r.a.) have differed from this opinion. These gentlemen have justified that excepting the Divine Commandments and the propagation of Divine Messages, it is permissible that due to some hidden wisdom they (Imams) can commit a sahv (slight oversight).

For example Sahv is allowed in Prayer and all other worship acts. But while explaining or describing of the orders (divine) and in the propagation of the divine message, they do not admit any kind of mistake on the part of Imam. Excepting the Ismailis all Islamic sects do not consider infallibility as a condition of Imamate.

According to the Imamis there are many logical as well as Naqali (narrative) arguments in support of this belief. Some of them have been described in volume one. Yet we quote some arguments below:

First Argument

The Imam is appointed because the people can make a mistake. So there must be someone to protect them. But if that person were also likely to make mistake then he too will be in need of another Imam, leader or guide. Therefore it will require either continuity of such appointments which is impossible or, ultimately, such an Imam will have to be there who cannot err and then only will he be the Imam.

Second Argument

The Imam is the guardian or protector of the Shariat because the Holy Quran does not contain details of the Shariat rules. Similarly each and every detail of Divine code of conduct cannot be drawn from the

Sunnah and traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) nor can they be known through the Ijma (consensus) of the Ummah. It is so because, in a gathering wherein there is no Imam, and when everyone can err the entire gathering of such fallible persons can also err. The required details cannot be known from Qiyas (analogy) because, in arguments, in principles, deeds done according it have been proved wrong.

Even if it is taken for granted it is impossible to guard and guide all the orders of the Shariat nor of the original clearance (Baraat-e-Asaliyah) because had it been possible to be acted upon it, the appointment of prophet would not have been necessary. Therefore the Shariat cannot be protected without an Imam. If it is believed that he can also make a mistake then his word cannot be relied upon in the matter of worship and responsibility fixed by Allah, and this is against the aim of takleef (responsibility viz. the obedience of Divine Commandments).

Third Argument

That if he can make a mistake then people must deny him, and this is against his obedience being compulsory, vide Divine commandments:

Obey Allah and obey the messenger and the Ulil Amr (those in command) in you. (Sura Nisa 4:59)

Moreover, if he is not Infallible, it is possible that he may order a sin and may prevent from Allah's obedience and the people will have to obey him and by obeying him in a sinful act it will result in one and the same act being a worship on one hand and an offence on the other. This is not possible.

Fourth Argument

That if he can make an offence then the aim of the appointment of an Imam and the obedience of his words and deeds will become invalid and this is against the appointments of an Imam. In short, it is not possible to collect all the arguments based on reason in this book. So whatever has been mentioned in the beginning of this book and also here is enough for the purpose of the subject.

The Ahle Sunnat scholars that do not believe that an Imam must be Infallible and also believe that oppression and wrongdoing cannot nullify Imamate. That is why, they believe in the Imamate of the caliphs of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas despite their tyranny, injustices and oppression. One of their famous scholars even says that an Imam cannot be dismissed due to his oppression and injustice and Mulla Sa'duddin who has written an explanatory book about his beliefs argues that, after the rightly guided caliphs (Khulafaa-e-Raashideen) the Imams committed injustice and tyranny though the earlier people were obedient and submissive to them. Then he further explains that the wise men of the Ummah have agreed upon the eligibility of the caliphs of Bani Abbas.

Then Mulla Sa'duddin writes in *Sharhe Maqasid* that Imamate gets established through force and power

even if he is a wrongdoer and a sinner. Then he writes that if someone becomes an Imam by force and thereafter someone else overpowers him and dismisses him then the latter one (who overpowers the former) will become the Imam. These are senseless words. Which wise one will believe that Imam can be a man of the Hell? Allah has said that a transgressor is a man of Hell. At one place He says:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَا أُوَاهُمُ النَّارُ.

And as for those who transgress, their abode is the fire; (Sura Sajdah 32:20)

At another place Allah says: do not rely on the news given by a transgressor:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنِ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ.

O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done. (Sura Hujurat:6)

and says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ.

Surely Allah does not guide the transgressing people. (Sura Munafiqoon 63:6)

So when it is proved that Infallibility is a condition for an Imam then the Imamate of the first caliph became invalid because all agree that he was not infallible and the Imamate of Amirul Momineen is proved correct indirectly because the entire Ummah agrees that, after the Holy Prophet (S), Imamate was disputed between Amirul Momineen and Abu Bakr and if that of one is not proved, necessarily that of the other is confirmed.

It must be known that those who believe in Infallibility have disputed whether the Infallible has control over his act of Infallibility or not. So those who believe that the Imam has no control, some of them say these is a speciality in the body or spirit of the Imam which demands that it is impossible for the Imam to sin. Some say that to be able to obey and not to be able to disobey (sin) is Infallibility.

Most of the scholars believe that Imam can sin (is able to sin) and some of them have defined Infallibility saying that it is a favor of Allah which brings a servant near obedience because of which a servant

cannot go forward in sinning, provided that it does not extend to the extent of atheism and compulsion and coercion and some have said that it is a spiritual power and that whoever attains it cannot commit a sin and some have said that it is a Divine favor on a servant because of which he cannot entertain a wish to disobey and to sin and that there are four reasons for it:

First: There is such a speciality in his heart or body which gives him power that prevents him from sinning and committing offences.

Second: He gets knowledge of the harms of sinning and blessings of obedience.

Third: Being subordinate to Wahy (revelation) and Ilhaam (inspiration) this knowledge becomes more effective.

Fourth: Allah's arresting him on account of doing an undesirable thing and of avoiding a desirable thing so that he may know that when Allah catches hold of him because of avoiding non-obligatory deeds He would surely not be lenient to him in the matter of obligatory duties, that is, in avoiding compulsory things and indulging in prohibited matters.

In short, when these qualities join together in somebody he will be sinless and it is true that his strength is not wasted in sinful deeds otherwise he would not be worthy of praise for giving up sins. For him there will be neither reward nor chastisement. In such circumstance he will get out of responsibility. This is wrong according to Divine principles and consensus of scholars.

Moreover, in these circumstances Infallibility will not have any distinction or perfection and grace, because, in that case only he will be Infallible whom Allah will put under pressure (no free will). Research shows that it is because of man's intelligence and wisdom and maximum engagement in worship and self-discipline and Allah's guidance that man reaches a stage where his total attention is only to his Lord of Lords; rather his heart becomes totally devoid of personal wishes and desires as has been mentioned in the Divine Verses:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ.

You do not desire anything except what Allah wants... (Sura Insan 76:30)

And, the servant sees through My eyes and hears with My ears and walks with My legs. In this state it is impossible for one to give up worship, indulging in sins and even avoiding a desired thing For example, suppose there is a man who enjoys maximum love and kindness and gifts and reward from the king. At the same time he is also well convinced of the king's power and strength and also loves the king wholeheartedly. In these circumstances it is impossible for such person to do anything against the liking of the king even if that thing is very easy for three reasons:

First – extreme love, because, when a lover reaches the truth of love it becomes totally impossible for him to do anything against the liking of his beloved.

Second – feeling of shame and modesty, which does not allow him to go against the wish of the beloved even in the absence of the latter. How then will he do anything disliked by the beloved in his presence?

Third – fear and fright, because despite this speciality and ability and free will if he does not care for His pleasure he would certainly be liable to His wrath and he would not be safe from extreme punishment. In the case of such a person which punishment can be more than a change in love and being degraded from the position of nearness. It is quite clear that it is impossible for such a person to do anything sinful. Compulsion (Jabr) is also impossible because compulsion is a state wherein man's power and intention has no scope at all. At this stage such a man's ability and strength is never less than any other's as is the case with all sinners. For example, they can go forward in drinking wine. An Infallible also has this strength (ability) and can do so. Therefore, there is not even an iota of compulsion here. The verses which prove the existence of Imam include the one in which Allah Almighty has addressed Ibrahim (a.s.) saying:

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ.

Surely I will make you an Imam of men. (Sura Baqarah 2: 124)

Ibrahim said: And of my offspring?

My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.

Every sinner is oppressing his own self. Many traditions about Infallibility have been quoted in the first volume of this book.

Ibne Babawayh has, in his book *Khisal*, writes under the Tafsir of the captioned verse that a man who had ever worshipped idols and who had, even for a second, made anything or anybody a partner of Allah is not qualified for being an Imam, even if he had become a Muslim thereafter. The definition of injustice or oppression is to put or place anything at an improper or unfitting place, and the greatest injustice is to make anyone or anything a partner of Allah. Allah Almighty says:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ.

Surely polytheism is the greatest injustice. (Sura Luqman 31: 13)

Similarly, unfit for Imamate is one who had ever committed a prohibited deed, be it small or big; even if he had repented thereafter. And a man who was ever convicted cannot convict anyone else. Thereafter it is essential that an Imam must be Infallible and this Infallibility cannot be known unless it is declared by Allah through a messenger in explicit wording because such declaration (Nass) is not visible in creation like whiteness or blackness etc. rather it is a hidden thing which is unknown except when shown by Allah Who knows the unseen. Traditions relating to this matter have also been quoted in the first volume of this book.

Ibne Babawayh has, in *Uyoon Akhbar Ar Ridha*, reported from Imam Ridha (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

Whoever wants to see and touch the tree of red ruby which has been planted by Almighty's own hand himself should believe in the Imamate of Ali (a.s.) and his sons because they are the Imams who have been, among the creations, selected by Allah and are free from every sin and fault.

Moreover, he has in most of his books, reported from Hasan bin Umair that: During the companionship of Hisham bin Hakam, I have not obtained anything better than this. One day I asked him whether an Imam is Infallible. He replied: Yes. I asked him on which argument should he be considered Infallible? He replied: There are always four reasons for the commitment of a sin and never a fifth one. The four things are greed, envy, anger and passion. An Imam has none of them. It is not possible that an Imam can be greedy of the world because the entire world is under him and he is the treasurer of Muslims so for what will he have any greed? He cannot be envious also because a man envies the one who is higher than him. So when no one is higher than Imam why should he envy anyone?

Thirdly it is not possible that he should be angry about any worldly thing as his anger is only for the sake of Allah because Allah had appointed him to maintain limits (divine commands), that is, no one can ever come in the way of the issuance of divine commands and in the Divine religion mercy does not prevent the issuance of commands (punishments).

Fourth it is not possible that an Imam may submit himself to the worldly pleasures and passions and to adopt the world instead of the Hereafter because Allah has made the Hereafter the most beloved thing in his eyes just as this world is dear to us. So the Imam fixes his eyes only on the Hereafter as our eyes are focused on this world. Have you ever seen anybody who rejects a beautiful face for the sake an ugly one or who gives up eating tasty foods for the sake of bitter things or who may leave soft dress in exchange of coarse clothing and who rejects the everlasting blessing and picks up a passing one?

In *Maniul Akhbar*, Imam Zainul Aabedeen (a.s.) is quoted saying that an Imam is always Infallible and that Infallibility is not an apparent creation which can be seen. So Imam can be only one who has been appointed through a Nass (clear statement) by Allah and His messenger. People asked: O son of the prophet! Then what is the meaning of Infallible? He said: Infallible is the one who is Motasim (immune from sin) and who clings to the rope of Allah and the rope of Allah is the Holy Quran and the Imam. The

Imam and the Quran will not depart from one another till the Day of Qiyamat. The Imam guides people towards the Quran and the Quran directs people to the Imam. The Almighty Allah says:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا.

Surely this Quran guides to that which is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a great reward. (Sura Isra 17:9)

That is, the path of following and believing in the true Imams. 1

It is also narrated that once Hisham bin Hakam asked about the meaning of Infallible from Imam Sadiq (a.s.). He replied: Infallible is the one who, by the guidance of Allah, prevents himself from all those things which have been prohibited by Allah. Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَعْصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

And whoever holds fast to Allah, he indeed is guided to the right path. (Sura Ali-Imran 3:101)

According to the hidden meaning (Ta'wil) explained by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) the meaning of this verse is: A man who, under Allah's Guidance, keeps himself safe from every sin is doubtlessly guided towards the Right Path,'

Karajiki has, in *Kanzul Fawaid*, reports from the Messenger of Allah that he says: Jibraeel (a.s.) has informed me that the writers (two angels appointed for recording the deeds) of Amirul Momineen say that ever since we are with Hazrat we had found no occasion to write any sin committed by him.

And he has, through the Ahle Sunnat sources, narrated that Ammar Yasir said: the Holy Prophet (S) said: Those angels who are writing the deeds of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) feel proud over all other writers of deeds because they are in company of the one, none of whose deeds which we took to sky was ever to the dislike of Allah.

It is mentioned in *Aqaide Imamiyah* that Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said to A'mash that all the messengers and all the Wasis (legatees) are clean of sins and of all undesirable (lowly) habits.

It is mentioned in the *Aqaide Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)* that Imam Ridha (a.s.) had written to Mamoon Rashid that Allah never makes it obligatory for the creation to obey a man about whom He knows that he will become disbeliever (apostate) and who will worship Him while obeying the devil.

It is written in *Ilalush Sharai* with reliable chains of narrators through Sulaym Ibne Qays Hilali that Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said:

Obedience of only Allah and the Messenger and the Ulil Amr is obligatory and the obedience of the Ulil Amr is ordered only because they are pure of sins and clean of evils, that is, only because they are thus Infallible and never order to disobey Allah.

Shaykh Tabarsi has in *Majalis* and Ibne Maghazali Shafei has, through Ahle Sunnat sources, reported from Ibne Masood that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

I am the supplication (dua) of my father Ibrahim (a.s.).

I asked: O Prophet of Allah! How are you his Dua? The Prophet (S) replied:

The Lord Almighty revealed to Ibrahim (a.s.): 'I am going to make you the Imam of the people. Ibrahim (a.s.) became very pleased to hear this and wishing this rank also to remain in his progeny, he prayed for it. Allah revealed: I will not give you any promise that I may not fulfil? Ibrahim (a.s.) asked: O Lord! What is that promise which You do not wish to fulfil? Allah said: I will not give the word that I will make anyone from your progeny who is a tyrant an Imam. Ibrahim (a.s.) asked: O Lord! Who is that tyrant who will not be an Imam? Allah replied: Anyone who may have prostrated before an idol. I will never make such a person an Imam. Then Ibrahim (a.s.) prayed:

'Protect me and my progeny from worshipping idols. O Lord, these idols have misguided many people. (Sura Ibrahim 14:35-36)

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

Thereafter the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s.) extended upto me and my brother Ali (a.s.) because neither of us have at any time bowed before an idol. So Allah made me the messenger and Ali my legatee.

Ibne Babawayh has quoted Ibne Abbas saying that he said: I have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying:

I, Ali, Hasan, Husain and nine sons of Husain (a.s.) are clean of every defect and are Infallible (clean) of sins.

Ayyashi and others have narrated from Safwan Jamal that he said: We were in Mecca when there began a discussion about the meaning of the captioned verses. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Allah has concluded Imamate by Muhammad (S) and Ali (a.s.) and sons of Ali (a.s.) saying that

Offspring one of the other; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. (Sura Ali-Imran 3:34)

And then said:

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ.

Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He. (Sura Baqara 2:124)

Ibrahim (a.s.) said: O Lord! Fulfil the promise soon which You have given to me about Muhammad (S) and Ali (a.s.) and make haste in aiding and assisting them. This is an indication towards the Lord's words:

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ.

And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. (Sura Baqarah 2: 130)

What it conveys is that who is there who will go against the religion (Millat) of Ibrahim (a.s.) except who makes himself unwise and senseless? Verily We have selected him in this world and, in the Hereafter too, he is among the gentlemen. The Hazrat said: here Millat means Imamate. When Ibrahim (a.s.) made his progeny to live in Mecca he said:

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ.

O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! That they may keep up prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits... (Sura Ibrahim 14:37)

At another place it is mentioned:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ.

And when Ibrahim said: My Lord, make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the last day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the fire; and it is an evil destination. (Sura Baqarah 2:126)

The apparent translation of the first verse is: 'O Lord! I have made some of my family members (progeny) to live near Your Holy House in such a desert where no vegetation grows. O our Lord! So that they may maintain Prayer. So make people's hearts incline towards them and provide fruits to them.

The translation of the other verse is: O Lord! Make this city a place of peace and provide fruits to its inhabitants who may believe in Allah and in the Day of Justice. The Hazrat said: When Ibrahim (a.s.) reserved this prayer in favor of only believers fearing that, like the request about Imamate, this prayer may also not be answered in favor of all residents (of Mecca) as Allah has said: This promise of Mine will not include the oppressor. In short, Allah said:

I will give little provision only in this worldly life to the one who will become disbeliever (unbelievers), then I will torture him through a painful punishment of Hell which is a very bad place of return. (Sura Baqarah 2: 126)

When Allah said this, Ibrahim (a.s.) asked: Who are those whose return will be to Hell? Allah revealed to him that they will be tyrant caliphs and their followers.

Kulaini, Shaykh Mufeed and others have narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that the Lord of the universe has mentioned Ibrahim's (a.s.) servanthood before his Prophethood and called him a Rasool before calling him a Prophet and He made him His Rasool before making him His Khaleel and made him His Khaleel before making him Imam. So, when He gave him these five high ranks then said: I made you Imam of the people.

So as in the sight of Ibrahim (a.s.) this rank appeared very high he wished that this grace should not be detached from his progeny, he said: O Lord! Give this Grace to people of my progeny also. Allah replied: This promise of Mine will not apply to oppressors. Imam (a.s.) said: A fool and a senseless man cannot be the leader of people.

It has also been narrated from the Infallible Imam (a.s.) that there are four ranks of Prophets and Messengers:

First: there is the one who is a prophet only for himself and who does not preach to others. He sees an angel in the sleep but not when awake and hears only the voice of the angel and he is not appointed over others and an Imam oversees him. For example Lut (a.s.) whose Imam was Ibrahim (a.s.).

Second: A prophet who sees the angel both in sleep and when awake. He also hears his voice. He is appointed over a group, be it a big group or a small one. Allah Almighty says about Yunus (a.s.):

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ.

And We sent him towards a hundred thousand or more people. And there was an Imam over him. (Sura Saffat 37: 147)

Third: The prophet who sees in dream and hears the voice also of the angel and himself is an Imam. In the beginning Ibrahim (a.s.) was a prophet, not an Imam until Allah told him: I have made you an Imam of the people, and when he made a request regarding his progeny Allah said: My Covenant shall not reach the unjust: meaning a man who will worship any idol or a picture or a figure (cannot be an Imam).

Thalabi has narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that Allah has, by saying Rijs (impurity), which is doubt and sin, hinted towards Ahlul Bayt's (a.s.) being pure (clean). He has said in the verse of purification:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا.

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (Sura Ahzab 33:33)

Muhammad Bin Abbas and Ibne Mahyar have, in their Tafsir, narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: The Lord of the Worlds does not leaves us to our own condition. If He leaves us to ourselves, we also may become like others in the matter of sin and error. But Allah has said about us:

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ.

Call upon Me, I will answer you. (Sura Ghafir 40:60)

That is, Allah answers whatever supplication we make.²

1. The writer says: The explanation of Ismat which has been mentioned as clinging to the rope of Allah is to show that Allah is to save him from sins due to his clinging to the Quran or it means that the Infallible about whom Allah has said that he is clinging to the Holy Quran, that is he acts according to the whole Quran and knows the meaning and purport of the entire (whole) Quran.

2. The writer says: It must be understood that Scholars of the Imamiyah have unanimously agreed about the Infallibility of the pure Imams from all kinds of sins. But in many prayers, especially in the supplication of Sahifa Kamilah, confession of Imams about sins has been mentioned and in some traditions also there is a mention of some matters similar to sins. This can be explained with some reasons:

First: Sometimes committing a detestable deed and giving up of recommended (Mustahab) deed is also called a sin. Rather sometimes doing some admissible deeds, due to the high rank of the doer and the lowliness of that deed, is considered a sin. Hence the author of Kashful Ghummah has said that most of their (Imam's) time is passed in the remembrance of Allah and in Maraqaba-e-Ilaahi (watchfulness) and their hearts are attached to the residents of the heavens and so, when they get lowered from this rank and indulge in acts like eating and drinking and copulating and all other admissible things their deeds are called sins and so they do Isteghfir (seek forgiveness). Do you not see that when slaves incline towards such things before their masters it results in the condemnation by the latter and therefore they will beg pardon for it.

Second: When they engage themselves in social affairs and family member's education etc. activities, which, of course, is a God-given responsibility, and thereafter they turn towards remembrance of Allah with prayers and supplication etc., which indeed is a higher thing, they imagine it as a shortcoming and hence they again indulge in seeking forgiveness and pardon by weeping. Again this state too develops with Allah's permission. This condition is, for example, like that of servant who remains always in the court of the king who is sent, by the king himself for some work away from him, which naturally results in being distanced from his beloved king. Thereafter, when he returns to the king, he thinks himself guilty of being away from his king.

Third: As their knowledge and distinction and sinlessness is entirely due to the Grace and blessing of Allah, they duly feel that, had it not been for the kindness of Allah, they too might have slipped into sins and errors. So they say from the depths of their hearts: O Allah! Had it not been for Your mercy we also would have erred.

Fourth: Since the stages of knowledge (Ma'rifat) are countless and as the Prophets, saints, Walis and legatees are always progressing constantly towards perfection, whenever they, even for a moment, engage in any other work, they consider it their shortcoming in the matter in their constant worship and thereafter seek forgiveness. The Holy Prophet's (S) assertion that he seeks forgiveness seventy times a day, hints towards this state of mind and heart.

Fifth: Since the Imams have a perfect understanding and awareness of Allah and they, more than all others, find themselves grateful to Allah for His blessings and bounties, they, despite all their continuous worships and prayers, find themselves defective and below the desired level of obedience and so they go on seeking pardon from Him imagining their shortcoming as sin. [Except the cause number one above, all other explanations are the result of my own defective reasoning (Author)]. I believe that anyone who has tasted even a drop of the drink of love will testify to them. Ibne Babawayh has in Risala Aqaid, said that the prophets, messengers and Imams are totally sinless and faultless and they can never indulge in any big or small sin. They never disobey Allah's command and do only their duty imposed by Allah. The one who does not accept their sinlessness has not recognized them. It is our firm belief that, from the beginning to the end, in their conditions they are perfect in their knowledge and that they have no defect like ignorance, shortcomings and disobedience etc.

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