

Research Question no. 2

Now, we come to the second question in our research and that is:

When we speak of Taharah and 'Ismah for the Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya' (executors of will), and the Imams (AS), we ask ourselves...Taharah and 'Ismah from what exactly?

In other words, what will they be purified from and what will they be protected from? Thus, the question here is composed of two parts:

a) What will they be purified and cleansed from?

b) What will they be protected from?

In the end of our 1st research question, we identified the relationship between Taharah and 'Ismah, and we reached the conclusion that 'Ismah is the protection of something from being polluted again and from losing its clean state after its purification. Based on that, we can logically deduce that 'Ismah will be from the same thing that Tat-heer (purification) is from.

For example, if you sanitized something from the germs and microbes, you will also try to protect it from contamination with germs and so on and so forth. Therefore, 'Ismah will be from the same thing that Tat-heer is from, and it will be subsequent to it. Based on this idea, the answer to question (a) will be the same as the answer to question (b). So, our question is really one:

What will the Prophets, Messengers, and Imams (AS) be purified from?

In answering this question, the Imamiya scholars and Fuqaha' (jurists) of the AhlulBayt School of Thought have differed and every group has its own opinion and support for it. It is to be noted that our U'lama are all respectable and honorable, and they don't speak except with what they think to be closest to the truth, and they don't fear except Allah (SWT).

Therefore, it is not appropriate for us, neither is it our goal to ridicule their ideas or opinions. Rather, we

aim to make an effort by thinking and using our God-given intellect and this will not at all decrease their rewards and high rank, even if we disagree in some opinions and thoughts.

We return to our question which we would like to answer in a logical and reasonable manner; Taharah for the Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya' and Imams is from what exactly? We should take a closer look at our daily routine in life in order to apply the human logic that will enable us to answer this question.

For example, if you want to clean the clothes that you will wear to meet an important personality or to attend a wedding or an inauguration ceremony, what exactly will you clean that outfit from? There is no doubt that you will clean and purify it from dirt, spots, wrinkles, odor, and its like so that the outfit will be ready and in the best shape possible.

Another example: If you want to clean a knife or a pair of scissors that will be used in a surgical operation on a human body, what will you clean that knife or scissors from? In this case, you will be sanitizing it from germs, microbes, and viruses. This will be your main concern so that the wound of the patient does not get contaminated and lead to death of the patient due to his contaminated wound.

Thus, after the process of sanitization and purification, the knife or scissors will become qualified to perform its duty, which requires a great amount of efficiency and care as possible. We can present lots of similar examples from our daily lives from which we can draw the conclusion that there is a definite and direct relationship between the task that will be carried out by the *Mutahar* and the things that it will be purified from.

In other words, the process of Tat-heer is essentially for the purpose of making the *Mutahar* more fit and proficient in carrying out its task in the best form possible. This is logical, reasonable, and very clear as we use it many times in our daily lives. We clean and purify an object from the things that may hinder its performance, and therefore, it will be more successful at doing its job.

Let us now apply this same logic to our proposed question, as we will find that the purification of our Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya', and Imams (AS) should be from the things that may prevent or hinder their performance of their God-given roles. This purification should result in them being more proficient and capable of successfully fulfilling their jobs and responsibilities.

So, in order for us to know what they will be purified from, we must first identify and specify their jobs and responsibilities. We must know what its consequences and implications are so that we can logically deduce the answer based on our expectations. Now, what exactly are the roles and responsibilities of the Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya', and Imams?

First: Relay and convey the orders and commands of Allah (SWT) to the people.

Second: Advise and urge the people to follow and obey the orders of Allah (SWT) and to carry out the instructions and teachings of the divine message.

Third: Obey and carry out the orders of Allah (SWT) with absolute care in the individual and specific roles that are assigned to each one of them, in addition to their general responsibilities, without any addition or subtraction.

Fourth: Set a good example and become roles models for the people in obeying the rules of Allah (SWT) and not disobeying Him under any circumstances (such that the people imitate and follow their example).

Fifth: Rule justly between the people according to what Allah (SWT) revealed and His orders, and thereby set the example to the people how to judge between others in that same manner.

Sixth: Specify the guidelines and foundations which the human society will be built on including its relation with its surroundings and its interior (exactly as Allah commanded), and to execute it out to the best of their abilities.

Seventh: Teach the people the wisdom, the lessons, and the laws of the religion as Allah (SWT) commanded, with what Allah (SWT) instructed, and with what they received from Him.

After quickly and briefly displaying the roles and responsibilities of the Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya¹, and Imams (AS) on Earth, what do *you* think are the things that they should be cleansed and purified from in order for them to perform their jobs in the best way possible?

And if their responsibilities is of highest degree of importance and vitality...and certainly it is of great and critical importance since it deals with the fate of a person in his Hereafter and his life of this world...then there is nothing more important and vital than that!

Therefore, it is incumbent and necessary that their success in their responsibilities and roles is guaranteed to a percentage that might very well reach 100%. And for that to happen, they must be cleansed and purified from anything that might cause their failure or hinder their success. Furthermore, this purification must reach almost or equal to 100%.

Now, if the responsibilities and work that they will carry out is for the Great Creator, and is by the order and assignment from Him, it becomes logically necessary that He becomes the *Mutahir* in a direct way, due to the critical importance of the responsibilities and because it is for Him and from Him. And if Allah, the Almighty, the Knowledgeable, the Capable, and the Creator is Himself the *Mutahir*, then there is absolutely no doubt that the purification will be completed and accomplished with a guarantee of 100%.

This purification will also be constant and continuous so long as the Prophet is still a Prophet, the Messenger is still a Messenger, the Wasi is still a Wasi, and the Imam still assumes his role as an Imam. And if this purification is constant and continuous, it then becomes necessary (as mentioned in the end of the 1st research question) that there exist a '*Asim* who protects, maintains, and guarantees the persistence of that purification state, which thereby indicates the presence of '*Ismah* (protection from

loosing its Taharah).

So long as the *Mutahir* is Allah (SWT), it becomes logically necessary that the *‘Asim* too, is Allah (SWT). Thus, He alone with His absolute ability have purified and protected in order to maintain the state of Taharah and to guarantee its persistence. The Taharah and *‘Ismah* here is guaranteed 100% without any doubt since the *Mutahir* and *‘Asim* is Allah (SWT).

Therefore, the purified individuals have become Ma’sumeen since the certainty of achieving successful completion of *‘Ismah* has been established!

We now return to our rephrased question: What are the things that Allah (SWT) should purify and protect His divinely-appointed guides with 100% guarantee such that their performance of their roles can be ensured in the best way possible? Let us use our brains, focus, examine, and make a sound judgment to answer this question.

If we take a closer look at the seven responsibilities mentioned earlier, we will find that the common ground or factor between all of them is: the command of Allah (SWT). Hence, the Tat-heer and *‘Ismah* should be from the thing(s) that may interfere, hinder, or obstruct the meaning of this word. Naturally, what interferes with a word is always its opposite and what hinders it is always what's against it.

An order is an action that can be responded to with either obedience *or* disobedience. If the response to an order is obedience, then the action and order will be accomplished. And if the response is disobedience, then the action will be prevented and opposed. Whoever counters or contradicts the orders of Allah (SWT) is really opposing the order and thereby disobeying it.

If we realize and understand this point, it will become easy for us to draw the conclusion that the most important thing that the Prophets, Messengers, *Awsiya'*, and Imams *MUST* be purified and protected from is: **disobedience of the orders and commands of Allah (SWT).**

This is exactly what Allah (SWT) mentioned in the Qur'an Al-Kareem,

بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ

"Bal 'ebadun mukramoom. La yasbeqoonaho bil qawl wa hom bi amrihi ya'maloon."

"Nay! They are honored servants. They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His Commandment do they act." (21:26-27)

So, Allah's testimony for them regarding their inability to disobey Him, is equivalent to the meaning of purification and indicates that He is the *Mutahir*. This also indicates the presence of *‘Ismah*, which makes Him the *‘Asim* as well since the tenses used in this verse are continuous present tense. Furthermore, it is from Allah (SWT) which means eternity. Hence, Tat-heer and *‘Ismah* are essentially from the

disobedience of Allah (SWT) in anything.

If their *1st responsibility* is to pass on and convey the orders and commands of Allah (SWT), then it becomes logically necessary that they be purified and protected from lying, unfaithfulness, treason, and forgetfulness. Forgetfulness here means forgetting the contents of the Message and its details, **not** the normal human forgetfulness that is indicated in Prophet Musa's statement to Al-Khidr (AS):

قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ

"Qalla la to-akhedhni bema naseet."

***"Blame me not for what I forgot."* (18:73)**

This is an example of typical human forgetfulness and is not relevant to the topic of 'Ismah.

If their *2nd responsibility* is to incite and urge the people to follow and obey the orders of Allah (SWT) and His Message, then it becomes logically necessary that they be purified and protected from negative and indecent behavior and anything that may contradict good manners, ethics, etiquette, and decent behavior. Hence, the people develop a liking towards them and so these divine guides become accepted by them and so they will be able to encourage and urge the people to obey Allah (SWT) and carry out His orders.

If their *3rd responsibility* is to obey and carry out Allah's orders in their individual and specific roles that has been assigned to each of them, without addition or subtraction, then it becomes logically essential that they be purified from disobedience to Him in any way or form, no matter what role they're assigned even if it looks strange, deviant, or rejected by the people of this world, and no matter how much they suffer because of it. It also becomes necessary that they be purified against laziness, boredom, naivety, recklessness, negligence, cowardliness, stupidity, obliviousness, weakness, fragility, lack of wisdom, lack of insight, and lack of reflection.

If their *4th responsibility* is to serve as good examples and role models for the people in observing the rules of Allah (SWT), then it becomes logically essential that they be purified and protected from foolishness, inferiority, solicitation, having ignoble roots and shameful ancestry, bad and nefarious origin, severe poverty, physical defect, ugly appearance, chronic illness (except in obedience to the orders of Allah just like what happened to Prophet Ayoob [Job]), ignorance, and anything that may belittle their reverence or sully their reputation.

If their *5th responsibility* is to rule justly among the people with what Allah (SWT) revealed, then it becomes logically necessary that they be purified and protected from injustice and unfairness, the love of oneself, arrogance, hastened judgment, deviating from the orders of Allah (SWT), following their own desires and personal thoughts in making judgments, using personal opinion (except within the limits that

Allah Himself has allowed), flattery, hypocrisy, ignorance, lack of knowledge, seeking the opinion of those who are not Ma'soom, bribery, weakness of the heart, and lack of experience and wisdom.

If their *6th responsibility* is to establish and specify the guidelines and foundations which the human society will be built on (by the command of Allah) and to execute it if they're capable of it, then it becomes logically necessary that they be purified and protected from the lack of presence of political and military skills that is needed, lack of eloquence in speech, lack of coordination and organization, lack of concentration, love of carnal desires and ornaments of this world, lack of seriousness, lack of honesty, weakness in front of the people, love of appearing and appearance, conceitedness, self-admiration, arrogance, lack of smartness and knowledge and experience, lack of intelligence and cleverness and wisdom, carelessness, recklessness, lack of confrontation, lack of strength, and from betrayal and evil.

If their *7th responsibility* is to teach the people the wisdom, lessons, and laws, then it becomes logically necessary that they be purified and protected from everything that has been previously mentioned, especially ignorance, foolishness, lack of patience, lack of clemency, lack of insight, hiding the truth, excessive care for the Dunya, forgetting the remembrance of Allah (SWT), lack of worship and worshipping, fruitless and endless talk, lack of linguistic eloquence, exaggeration and magnification, de-emphasizing and embellishment, ambiguity, vagueness, complication, and complexity.

However, the most important thing here is the purification and protection against the disobedience of Allah (SWT) in what He orders them with. This is the judgment of the mind and the human logic in what these divine guides should be completely purified and always protected from by Allah (SWT) who is both the *Mutahir* and *'Asim*. This will be the case so long as they are appointed in their roles in order for their performance of their responsibilities be complete and successful. After all, the fate of humans in this life and the Hereafter will depend on their performance and fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities.

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