

Translator's Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful the Compassionate

One of the most hotly debated topics among the different schools of thoughts of Islam is the concept of Taharah (purification) and 'Ismah (infallibility) of the Holy Prophets, Messengers, Successors, and divine guides. Each of these divine roles have its own scope of responsibility, however, they all share one thing in common and that is, divine selection as the representative of God to the people.

In such critical role for mankind, it is inevitable that those who assume these fateful roles *must* be infallible and purified from committing any sin, error, mistake, or inappropriate act. After all, the prophets, messengers, and successors are sent to the people to set the correct standards for them and serve as exceptional role models and a perfect template for them to emulate.

Hence, Allah (SWT) directs this command in the Holy Quran to all believers,

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority (Ulul-Amr) from among you." (4:59).

This verse indicates the supreme authority given to the prophet and divine guides because they are sinless (Ma'sum) and free from all types of errors and sins. Otherwise, Allah would not have ordered us to obey them unconditionally.

Without the existence of this safety margin for these selected divine guides, there is no guarantee that they deliver the message exactly the way that Allah (SWT) intended, or that our obedience to them would be aligned with the obedience of Allah (SWT). There is no way that one can be assured with complete confidence that these prophets and successors don't order us to disobey God or that they themselves become misguided due to personal or worldly interests.

Also from verse 4:59 it is clear that Ulul-Amr have been given exactly the same authority over Muslims as that of the Messenger, and that the obedience of Ulul-Amr has the same standing as the obedience of the Messenger.

It naturally follows that Ulul–Amr *must* also be sinless (Ma'sum) and free from any type of error, otherwise, their obedience would not have been joined with the obedience of the Prophet and **without** any condition.

Sure enough, the famous narration of the Cloak (Hadeeth Al Kisaa') confirms the fact that Allah (SWT) willed and desired that His beloved Prophet (SA) and his AhlulBayt (AS) be purified a thorough purification as revealed in verse 33 of Surat Al Ahzaab:

“Surely Allah desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O' Members of the Household and to make you pure and spotless.” [33:33]

As we know, whenever the divine Creator wills something, He simply says to it,

“Be, and it is!” [36:82]

In order for us to observe and abide by the command given in this ayah, we must *first* understand the implications of the above–mentioned verses, and that is, the imperative and essential purification and infallibility of the divine representatives on earth. Without instilling and securing this belief within our minds, our devotion, obedience, and love towards these divine guides will be questioned and uncertain.

After all, if we don't have 100% confidence in the infallibility of those whom we follow and take as our role models, then how can we be sure that the path we tread is really the correct one? How can we propagate the teachings of the Imams from the descendants of the Holy Prophet (SA) to our children when we haven't established to ourselves or to them their immaculate personalities and perfect characters?

This paper is a humble attempt to proceed in that path of recognition of the essential attributes of purification and infallibility that **must** be present in all the divinely appointed representatives.

May Allah (SWT) guide us to the conviction and certitude of the great divine status and impeccable positions of the Infallible Imams from the purified household of the Holy Messenger!

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