

Research Question no. 6

The next question that poses itself to us is:

Does the Taharah and 'Ismah of the Prophets and Imams make them divine individuals whom we cannot relate to, compared to the rest of the people? And does it prevent them from communicating with and meeting the rest of the human beings?

There are many types and ways of dealing and relating between the people, and it is not only one type, as it may be indicated from the question. For example, your way of relating with your parents will differ from the way you relate with your siblings. And the way that you may relate to your school and its Principal, will be different from the way that you relate to your friend or colleague. And the way that you conduct yourself with the President of your country will surely differ from the way that you do so with the boss in your work, or your servant.

Furthermore, the way that you relate to the Sheikh of your Masjid or your religious and spiritual mentor will certainly be different from your relation with your neighbor or son! Thus, for every position, there is a way of dealing that is specific to it, and for every person, there is a certain type of relationship which will differ with the type of person you're dealing with.

The Prophets, Messengers, Awsiya', and Imams (AS) are special individuals who perform divine roles and jobs that are assigned to them by God. Hence, their respect is derived from the respect of Allah (SWT) and their position is derived from the position of Allah (SWT), regardless of whether they are purified and protected, or not. It is not at all expected that your relationship and way of dealing with them will ever be the same as that of your friend, teacher, neighbor, or colleague.

That is because the way that you deal with them will have a special sacredness that is derived from Allah (SWT) whom they represent. For example, do you treat and relate to the messenger of your friend to you in the same way that you do with the messenger of the President of your country to you, or the messenger of the police to you? Of course not!

That is because your way of dealing with the messengers of both the President and police, without a doubt will be affected by whom they represent. You will certainly deal with the messenger of the President with more respect and veneration, while you will deal with the messenger of the police with more fear, safeguarding, and carefulness. This is what people usually do; they change and adjust their way of dealing with others and their type of communication, depending on the person in front of them and whom he/she represents.

Hence, from the very start you will not relate and deal with the Prophets and Imams (AS) the same way that you do with the rest of the people because the relationship here is *very* different, and whom they represent *is* the Great Lord and the King of Kings.

It is rather desired that you keep your relationship with them in a unique and specific form with specific boundaries that differs from the rest of your relationships and communications. It is unacceptable and illogical for you to expect that your relationship with them will be similar to your relationship with your brother or friend. As a matter of fact, this difference in relationship is in itself desired and recommended.

After all, did not Allah (SWT) say in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Hujuraat:

وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ

"Wa la tajharoo lahu bil qawl ka jahr ba'dekom liba'd",

"...Do not speak aloud to him in talk, as you speak aloud to one another.."[49:2],

This basically means that you should not deal with Rasulullah (SA) in the same way that you deal with others. Allah (SWT) willed that there exist a certain distance of respect and reverence between them and us. However, this "distance" will not prevent or hinder the Prophets from carrying out their jobs, for if Allah (SWT) knew that it would, He wouldn't have ordered us to keep that distance.

This "distance" will also not hinder the revelation of the divine message and their instructions and guidance for us. Neither will it prevent them from teaching us, judging over us, and judging on us. It will never impede them from performing their roles which is what is required and desired. It is not their position to be our buddy or entertainer. Does not every king or leader of a country, or manager of workplace, leave a certain distance between him/her and the people or employees?

And does that obstruct them from carrying out their responsibilities and roles? Is it the case that the President of the United States will not be able to perform his job and carry out his responsibilities except if he opened the door of the White House for me so that I can go to him whenever I want, talk to him about whatever I want, to waste his time however I want, and to contact him via phone whenever I want? If he does and allows that, will that make him a good President?

And if he doesn't, will he be considered incapable of performing his duties simply because I am not able to relate and deal with him, and just because I cannot contact and communicate with him the same way that I do with my neighbor, friend, or son? Of course not!!

The nature of your relationship and communication with the Prophets and Imams (AS) *should* differ from others, not because they're purified or not, nor because they're protected or not. Rather, since they represent Allah (SWT), with all His divine sacredness, highness, and greatness.

You yourself will respect and give great regard and veneration to the Sheikh of your Masjid or any 'Alim (scholar), and you will communicate with them in a way that you don't with others. Why?!

It is because they represent and signify the religion and Allah (SWT) in your eyes. Then imagine how you should relate and communicate with the holy Prophets, Messengers, and Imams!!

It is to be noted that the presence of their Taharah and 'Ismah has nothing at all to do with this matter. For example, you give great respect and regard to the police messenger of the Chief of Police to you due to what he represents and whom he represents to you.

It does not really matter to you whether this policeman has a good record or whether he is efficient in his work or whether he is close to the Chief of Police or not, or whether his clothes are tidy or not.

Regardless, you will leave a distance between you and him because of what he represents and not for any other reason.

As for the argument that you will be able to maintain and keep a relationship with the companions of the Prophet (SA) while you will not be able to keep that same relationship with the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (AS) and that is due to their Taharah and 'Ismah, this is absolutely true and is even desired and recommended! Again, the reason here is not because of their purification and protection.

Rather, it is because of their roles and what they represent. The companions of Rasulullah (SA) are not appointed by Allah (SWT) nor are they Awsiya' and Imams, nor do they have divine roles to execute. Therefore, they are not Mutahareen and Ma'sumeen. Thus, there is a big difference between your relationship and communication with them, compared to that of the Imams and Awsiya' who are appointed by Allah (SWT).

It is imperative to keep in mind that there may exist reverence and high regard in my heart for the companions of Prophet Musa (AS). However, my reverence and high regard for Yosha' ibn Noon, the Wasi of Musa (AS), will be much greater, not because of his Taharah and 'Ismah, but rather because of his role and position and what he represents.

Therefore, my relationship and way of dealing with the companions of Musa (AS) will be easier than my relationship with Yosha' ibn Noon, and there is absolutely nothing wrong or shameful in that. It is rather intended that there exist a certain distance between you and the Imam of your time and the rest of the

Imams, more than that which you keep between you and others.

For example, if your son came to you and told you, “I am able to relate and communicate with my friends at school, but I am not able to relate and deal with the Principal of the school with the same easiness and same way because I feel that there exist a distance between me and the Principal that is greater than the one between me and my friend.”

How will you answer your son? The explanation that you will give to your son which will remove his wonder and puzzlement will indeed be the same one as what we will tell you in order to erase your confusion, doubts, and wonder.

Hence, the Taharah and ‘Ismah has nothing to do with this matter. Imagine for a second that you had the honor of meeting Imam Husain (AS) this moment, will the way that you greet, relate, and deal with him make any difference to you, as to whether he is Ma'soom or not?

We leave this question for the reader to answer and make up his mind regarding this matter. Also, it is to be noted that the Christians worship and sanctify Prophet ‘Isa (AS) and they claim that he is God Himself which therefore makes him Ma'soom in their eyes. Rather, he is more than that since according to them, he is God.

However, did that type of thinking prevent them from making and maintaining a relationship with ‘Isa (AS), relating with him and integrating him in all aspects of their lives, whether big or small? This is just a question...so, why then do we then claim that the concept of Taharah and ‘Ismah will hinder with relating, communicating, and dealing?

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