

A Study of the Imam's Knowledge and Infallibility Features with an Emphasize on Nahj-al-Balaghah and with a View to the Scholar's Opinions

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Abstract

All Muslims believe and confirm that the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) have had admirable virtues and attributes which have made them outstanding and specific in their own age. Two most important cases of their attributes are knowledge and infallibility. Of course about the limit of knowledge and the principle of infallibility, there are some differences between the Shiite and Sunni scholars which will be dealt with in this paper.

In his words, Imam Ali (a.s.) has frequently referred to this fact that the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) Because they undertake to guide and lead the society, they definitely must have special divine science and far from error knowledge to be able to succeed in their mission.

sublimity and superiority of knowledge of Imam (a.s.) towards human science, The knowledge of the Unseen and source of all knowledge and being an intermediary for divine graciousness are traits of the household of the prophet's (p.b.u.h.) knowledge which have been mentioned in Nahj-al Balaghah. Another point which is understood from the Imam's words is that the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) receive certain knowledge from the God which brings them to the state of certainty and leads them to infallibility and to be far from error and sin. In fact, Imam (a.s.) has introduced knowledge and infallibility as essentials to Imamate.

Key Words:

Imam's Knowledge, Imam's Infallibility, Nahj al-Balaghah, The opinions of Islamic scholars on Knowledge and Infallibility.

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Introduction:

The first and the most important way to identify an individual and his features is to study his words and speech. According to Imam Ali (a.s.),
المرء مخبوء؛ تحت لسانه

Human is hidden beneath his tongue. (Nahj-al-Balaghah: Wisdom 148). In order to study the features of the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and in particular Imam Ali (or Hazrat Amir (a.s.)), we also will refer to their words. There is no doubt that Nahj al-Balaghah is the first and best collection from Hazrat Amir which has been handed in to us.

Reviewing *Nahj al-Balaghah*, we will face a huge sea of knowledge. It is as if we are opening an encyclopedia of the works of the best and most skilled scientists of the world before our eyes.

From discourse, rhetoric knowledge that may not be captured by the mind of the greatest literary people to modern natural knowledge which looks like the result of long time of research by great scholars in equipped scientific labs. In the domain of human knowledge, he has made speeches which are similar to the many years of scholarly exchange of ideas with different philosophers and scientists in which the most proper and complete theories have been extracted.

Understanding the characteristics of knowledge and infallibility from Imam's words and deeds is not a very difficult job. All friends and mostly the Muslims and even non-Muslims acknowledge the climax of Imam knowledge and more or less his infallibility which has been dealt with in this paper in details.

In this article, these two features of Imam with Nahj al-Balaghah as a pivot has been studied.

Concerning the issue of Imam's knowledge and infallibility, due to the significance and impact which it has on other religious discussions, many researches have been done and each of them have studied and evaluated this issue with a specific approach and angle. Many books and articles in different trends have been written on this issue.

For instance, Mr. Mohammad Hasan Nadem, has authored a book on this very name in which 19 theses and articles in different approaches on Imam's knowledge have been collected and introduced precisely. In the

website of Jihad-e Daneshgahi, there are set of articles which are related to this topic in one way or another.

The difference of the present article as compared with other articles is in its different attitude. This article in fact an intention to extract the subject of Imam's knowledge and infallibility directly from the Imam's words in particular from *Nahj al-Balaghah* after a precise review of other sources. Though in the presented articles, in a few occasions, there is a very small reference to the Imam Ali's words, but none of them have been made with a specific attitude towards *Nahj al-Balaghah*.

1. Imam's Knowledge

1-1. Non-Muslim Scholar Views on Imam Ali's Characteristics

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) is a great and unique character that in the course of history has always been admired by the great people. Even those who do not believe in Imamate of Ali (a.s.), consider him as a unique and unmatched personality.

The discussion which is ahead of you is a sample of words of non-Muslim thinkers about Ali (a.s.) with a focus on two attributes of knowledge and infallibility.

Madam Dieulafoy, the French tourist – says, “The respect to Ali (a.s.) before Shia is at the utmost degree and truly it should be. Because in addition to the struggles and sacrifices he made for the cause of the advancement of Islam, he was incomparable in Knowledge, virtues, justice and good attributes. He also left a pure and sacred generation after himself. (Asad Alizadeh, 2002: 100-101).

Ilya Pavlovich Petrushevsky, the Russian orientalist and historian says, “Ali (a.s.) was trained by Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) and was deeply faithful to Islam. Ali (a.s.) had an intensive passion and faithfulness to religion and was sincere and honest. He was very careful about ethical affairs. He was brave and poet. All attributes necessary for being companion of Allah was accumulated in his being. (Seraj, 1997: 325).

George Jordac, the Arab Christian author says: Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) – used to stand in pulpit fully relaxed and with self-confidence and with a

just word and speak. He was very smart and fast in grasping the ideas. He knew the secrets of people, desires and their inner requests. He had a heart full of affection, freedom, humanity, virtue Ali ibn Abi Tablib (a.s.) was recognized and acknowledged with honesty. (Seraj, 1997: 333).

George Jordac: Ali ibn Abi Tablib was in wisdom a unique figure. He was the pole of Islam and source of Arab knowledge and sciences. There is no knowledge among Arabs which has not been laid down by Ali (a.s.) or being partner in its establishment. (Mazaheri, 1999: 49).

Nevisiyan, a Christian author says:

If Imam Ali (a.s.) this magnificent lecturer and this skilled speaker could sit in pulpit of Kufa today, you would see that the Kufa mosque will be filled in with a great number of people of the west and scholars of the world to use the roaring sea of knowledge of Ali (a.s.). (Abdulmaqsoud, 2011: 15).

Dr. Boules Salama, the great Christian lawyers and literary figure says:

Ali (a.s.) has achieved to a position that one knowledge sees him as the shining star of knowledge and literature sky. One eminent author would take model after his style of writing, one jurispudent will always rely on his researches and innovations. (Samadani, 2004: 15).

Lammens, the well-known orientalist from Belgium states, "For Ali (a.s.), it is sufficient that all Islamic news and knowledge takes roots from him. He had a surprising memory and force. All scientists and scholars make a link to him to grant authenticity to their news and traditions. The scholars of Islam, either for or against him, are proud to document their speeches to Ali (a.s.), because his speech has a definite rationality and he was the gate of city of knowledge and has a full association with the general spirit. (Samadani, 2004: 24).

1-2. The Viewpoint of Muslim scholars about the Prophet's and Imam's Knowledge

There are many differences between Shia and Sunni scholars on the limit of knowledge and its scope. The existing intellectual attitudes towards this subject-matter can be precisely summarized in one of the following trends:

A) Scientists who believe that the Prophet's and Imam's knowledge is limited within the religious and mission needs.

B) Scientists who believe that his knowledge is broad and unlimited.

C) Scientists who are silent on limited or unlimited scope of knowledge of prophet and Imam.

Here we briefly describe each group viewpoints:

A) The first group are scientist who believe that the prophet's and Imam's knowledge is limited to the propagation and mission needs and there is no need for a Imam to know about everything. The mere knowledge to orient and direct the human is sufficient. The viewpoint of some of the Shia scholars on this issue may be observed in the following lines:

1. Sheikh Mofid (336 A.H.)

Sheikh Mofid who is one of first developers of Islamic beliefs and founders of intellectual movement in Shia world, is in the opinion that Imams sometimes were aware of people's hearts and knew the incidents prior to occurrence. However there are not the essential features and conditions for Imamate of the Islamic Ummah. But through this mechanism, God acknowledged them and put them as the most learned people to be an instrument for following and obeying them. Moreover, it is not merit to call them aware of invisible, those who have received knowledge from others or have received it by emanation. Because the attribute of aware of the invisible is merit for the one who innately without taking assistance from the others is aware of the affairs and entity. This view is the viewpoint of many Shia scholars with the exception of a few numbers who believe in emanation and the one who exaggerate and have joined to this group. (Mofid, 1951: 38).

The view of Sheikh Mofid becomes clearer when we could add his other speeches to it. He further states: Imams' awareness on all techniques and languages is impossible but from the aspect of intellect and comparison, it is not compulsory to have believe in it. There are some news confirming that Imams were aware of these issues. If they are correct, the issue will be definite but its definiteness in my view is doubtful... Mafuza(those believe in delegation of affairs to people by God-predestination) and the

Qalat (extremists) are in agreement with these views. (Mofid, 1951: 37)

Imam's knowledge like human knowledge is within the framework of external features and his awareness of secrets is subject to information from God or Prophet of Islam or a sincere dream and as likes. (Mofid, 1413: 70/I).

2. Seyed Murtaza (436 A.H.):

Seyed Murtadha was one of the smart pupils of Sheikh Mofid. The materials which have reached to us from him indicate that he was thinking in agreement with his master on the issue of Prophet's and Imam's issue. We resort to God today that is obligatory for Imam to know all knowledge, Yes, the knowledge which are necessary for leadership and also the religious decrees, he should know them. But knowledge on invisible is neither necessary for leadership and nor related to religious laws. So, it is not necessary for the Imam to know invisible knowledge. (Seyed Murtaza: 188).

3. Karjaki (429 A.H.):

God has taught many invisible secrets and future incidents to Imam as much as advisable by Him and not any more. Imams are not always aware of all human's inner secrets and other invisible affairs. They are not aware of all the things which God is aware. (Karajaki, 1410: 245/I).

4. Sheikh Toosi (480 A.H.):

Sheikh Toosi after Seyed Murtaza had undertook the scientific and spiritual leadership of Shia in particular in jurisprudence and theology. Having compiled many books on Islamic knowledge, he has played the greatest role in laying down and giving a system to Shia beliefs.

In his book, Sheikh writes in this way: We do not consider it to be necessary for a Imam to know more than decrees which is not related to religious laws. (Toosi, 1383: 252).

5. Sheikh Tabarsi (Author of Commentary of Majma al-Bayan (548 A.H.):

He says: Some of the commentators in their commentaries blame the Shia that they believe their Imams are aware of invisible. Whereas according to Shia belief, one can be considered as holder of knowledge of

invisible that is aware of all knowledge by nature rather than acquiring it from another person. If one believe that another person is sharing the God in this feature, he will be considered excommunicated. However, there are many unseen news by Shia and Sunni from Ali (a.s.) and other Imams. All contain information which has been transferred to them from the Prophet of Allah and the Prophet has learned them from the Almighty God as well. (Tabarsi, 1408: 313/ v & vi)

We do not know any Muslims who considers a human with unseen knowledge. If a creature has such a belief, he is considered as someone excommunicated and the Imamiya Shia is far from such an idea. (Toosi, 1383: 403).

6. Ibn Shahr Ashoub (588 A.H.):

It is obligatory for the Prophet and Imam to know the knowledge of religion and Sharia but it is not necessary for them to know invisible (unseen) knowledge. Because this would mean that they are sharing the God in all knowledge and their knowledge is infinite. What is obligatory is that they should be scholars. It has been proved that knowledge for them is creatable and the detailed knowledge belongs only to one known. If their knowledge is infinite, it is necessary for them to have an unending knowledge, whereas it is impossible but it is permitted that with the teaching of God, they could be aware of the hidden affairs, the past and future incidents. (Mofid, 1951: 38).

Our old scientists such as Sheikh Mofid, Seyed Mortaza and Sheikh Toosi who are the founders of Shia intellectual system in the age of absence of Imam and have represented the actions of extraction, compilation and framing the Shia beliefs from the Qur-an and Hadith, have some other scholars with similar ideas after them such as Karajaki, Sheikh Tabarsi and Ibn Shahr Ashoub who insist on the same viewpoints and defend it.

Up to this part of discussion, we got familiar with the first viewpoint about Imam's knowledge which were from the outstanding

scholars from the history of theology, jurisprudence and commentary of Shia.

B) The second group are the scientists who believe in broad and unlimited knowledge of Imam.

The previous viewpoint, was discussed and reviewed with regard to the presence of many theological, narrative and commentary books in the beginning of absence of Imam. In reviewing this viewpoint, there is no record of that age with the exception of scientific reports from Sheikh Mofid where he says that Nobakhtiyān (Abour Eshagh Esmail ibn Nobakhti) has considered the Imam's knowledges as something unlimited. (Mofid, 1951: 38).

However, in total, this viewpoint in particular in recent centuries has had its own serious advocates.

1. Mola Mahdi Naraghi(1128 A.H.)

Imam has an in effect intellect. Intellect is in effect whose holder has an in effect awareness of the facts of all objects such that he observes all of them and none of them are removed from his mind and this case was true for Hazrat Ali (a.s.). (Naraghi, 1993: 137).

2. Seyed Abdolhosein Mousavi Shiarazi Lari (1303 A.H.) buried in Jahrom states:

Though belief in Imam's knowledge is not one of the religious necessities but acquisition of detailed knowledge for the elites of knowledge is obligatory to find a heartfelt belief in it. But for the ordinary people, the heartfelt and lingual belief is sufficient. (Shahid Ghazi Tabatabaei, 1393: 45-47).

The divine selected people are always aware of all affairs related to present, past and the future and no incident of the world is hidden to them. (Imam Ali (a.s.) Encyclopedia).

3. Mohammad Hossein Mozafar (1381 A.H.):

An independent book and to some extent in details, is a book which has been published by this author on Imam's knowledge and has supported the in effect and absolute sickness of the infallibles, It was published in 1385 A.H. in Najaf Ashraf. According to the viewpoint of this thinker: Imam has an intuitive knowledge on the details of incident even the resurrection day. He

knows whatever the God knows. The only difference between God's knowledge and Imam's knowledge is that knowledge of unseen in God is innate but in Imams, it is non-essential. (Mozafar, 1960: 120).

4. Seyed Mohammad Hussein Tabatabaei (1360 A.H.)

Allameh Tabatabaei, in the treatise of Imam Knowledge, has defended from the unlimited knowledge in the prophet and Imam and has accepted it mostly in a narrative view. But in Almizan commentary, he has paved a cautious trend which sometimes is not identifiable with the viewpoint of the first group. In the treatise of Imam Knowledge, he writes, "Imam is aware of the facts of universe in any condition with the permit of God, either those which are under the control of senses or those outside the senses such as heavenly creatures, the past incidents and the future events. (Tabatabaei, 1393: 213).

Almizan commentary reads: Some part of invisibles such as the issue of resurrection day is known only to God. It is not limited only to resurrection day but knowledge about its features and attributes is the same too. The real reason for the attribution of invisible knowledge to Almighty God is that anything with the exception of Him will be a limited entity. It is not possible for it to move outside its limit and to become aware to what is outside its limit and to become aware to what is outside its limit and invisible. It is clear that no creature is unlimited, infinite and dominant to all objects with the exception of Almighty God. So, only He is aware of unseen. The knowledge of unseen makes capable a human to all goods and evils and it is not rational for a person who is aware of all goods and evils not to use his information. If a person has not absorbed all goods and repulsed all evils from himself, then we should learn that definitely he has not had the knowledge of unseen world. (Tabatabaei, 1393: 294/xvi).

The messengers will have awareness to any knowledge which the fulfillment of their mission will be subject to knowing that unseen knowledge. (Tabatabaei, 1393:224/ xix).

A view towards the different viewpoints of Allameh Tabatabaei makes judgment about him a little bit difficult., Sometimes he is pro to the first group- the group who believes in

the unlimited knowledge of the prophet and Imam- and sometimes as a person who is advocating the second group- the group believing in the infinite knowledge of the prophet and Imam. It seems that when he has viewed the subject-matter with a Qur-anic view and Qur-an interpretation, he has accepted the limited knowledge of infallibles and when he has viewed the subject-matter based on traditions, he has confirmed their unlimited knowledge.

5. Abdulah Javadi Amoli:

The divine saints can have knowledge about some degrees of unseen knowledge based on their different ranks. But the complete human who is the absolute friend of God and symbol of the Great Name, has an awareness to all unseen treasures. (Javadi Amoli, 2009: 159 /iv).

According to Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, the infallibles Imams as the perfect humans and symbols of divine names and divine symbols becomes confident to the Godly secrets and nothing in the creation universe will be covered to their knowledge.

This viewpoint is the belief of most of the scientists who have dealt with the subject-matter of Imam knowledge in a philosophical-mystical attitude.

C. The third group includes the scientists who have remained silent about limited or unlimited knowledge of Imam and have not expressed any comment.

We are facing with stars in the sky of knowledge and jurisprudence which in a short indication show their agreement with the scholars such as Sheikh Mofid and Sheikh Toos but they do not continue their discussion and leave the awareness of the reality of the subject-matter to the infallible imams themselves.

1. **Sheikh Ansari (1281 A.H.)**. But on the scope of the knowledge of Imam and its quality, with regard to the traditions which are available, we cannot obtain a certain results from them, so it is better to leave knowledge about it to themselves. (Ansari, 2006: 274/I).

2. **Abolhasan Meshkini (1312/1979)**. In the margin of the book “ Annotation to Kefayat al-Usul”, he also has the same viewpoints as equal as Sheikh Ansari. (See: Khorasani, 1365: 374 /i).

3. **Shahid Motaharii (1979)**. It can be said that he has covered all the religious issues of the day. But despite tackling the issue of Imamate and the event of Ashura and etc, he has avoided to enter into discussion about it or has remained silent about it. The only materials which is seen by him is the following phrase in the book of “ Hoseini Epic”.

“Imam is a supernatural (outstanding) human and not above the human. For this very reason, he can be a model. If he was supernatural to human, he could not serve as a model. So, if we attribute the miracle and supernaturally features to humans, then we have put them outside the framework of being in a school of thought and leadership”. (Motahari, 1999: 292 /iii).

In this section, we got familiar with different viewpoints about Imam’s knowledge. In the future chapters, we will state which of these viewpoints are closer to the viewpoint of Imam Ali (a.s.).

1-3. Imam’s Knowledge in Verses and Hadiths

Though this article (paper) intends to study the Imam’s knowledge in the valuable book of *Nahj al-Balaghah*, but it would be a good idea to have a short reference to this subject-matter through verses and traditions. So, we will deal with mentioning some traditions on this case.

Imam Sadegh (a.s.) states:

We, the household of the prophet, are the legal guardians of God, treasure of His knowledge and case of divine revelation of God. (Koleini, 1969: 192 /i).

It has been quoted from Hazrat Bagher (a.s.) who said:

God granted all prophets’ knowledge to the Messenger of Allah (a.s.). As Ali (a.s.) was also the inheritor of the Prophet, so he was the inheritor of the knowledge of all prophets and messengers too. (Majlesi, 1983:229 /vi).

In addition to the Shia scholars, most of the Sunni scholars confirm this subject-matter.

Fakhr Razi, in the interpretation of the verse of “ Mobahela” says, “ This verse is used that by Ala Nafs, it means the Prophet of God and as the Messenger of God is superior to all prophets, so Ali also should overpass the Prophet of God and to be superior to all prophets”. He further

continues, "Anybody who wish to see the Adam in his knowledge, Noah in his obedience and Noah in his prayer and Ibrahim in his creature and Moses in his magnificence and Christ in his selected feature and sincerity, he should see Ali ibn Abi Talib and then he adds, "This Hadith signifies that all perfections which is attributed to the prophets in a separate manner have been gather in Ali ibn Abi Talib and this confirms that Ali has been superior to all prophets whereas since old time up to the present, the Shiite reason on this verse of "Mobahala" that Ali is superior to all prophet's companions, since this verse signifies that Ali (a.s.) is like the Mohamamd's breath. (Fakhr Razi, 1404: 86/vii).

Sadir, one of the Imam Sadegh(a.s.)'s pupils, while discussion on a long tradition asks Imam Sadegh(a.s.) about the unseen knowledge:

Imam Sadegh replies: Have you seen this verse in the Qur-an.

قال الذى من عنده علم من الكتاب انا اتيك به قبل ان يرتد اليه طرفك
Naml (Verse 40)

Said one who had knowledge of the Book: I will bring it(Belqeis bed) to thee before ever, thy glance returns to thee.

I said, "Yes, I have read this verse". Imam said, "The size of his knowledge was as equal as a water drop as compared with Akhzar sea... Then Imam Sadegh (a.s.) stated:

O, Sadir, have you read this verse in the Qur-an in which God states:

قل كفى بالله شهيدا بيني و بينكم و من عنده علم الكتاب
Ra'd, Verse 43:

Say: Enough for a witness between me and you is Allah and such as have knowledge of the Book.

I replied, "Yes, I have read it: He said," who has a higher knowledge: The one who has the knowledge of the Book or the one who has a part of the knowledge of the Book? I said, "Of course, the one who has the whole knowledge of the Book:.

At this time, Imam Sadegh(a.s.) pointed out to his chest and once again said: "I oath on God that all the knowledge of the Book is before us" (Koleini, 1969: 257/i).

It is interpreted from the set of verses and traditions that the knowledge of the

household of the prophet (p.b.u.t) is below divine knowledge and above the human knowledge by the divine permit and will.

1-4. Imams' Knowledge in Nahj al-Balaghah

There is no doubt that the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) have enjoyed knowledge more than other people. As he said about them: (Koleini, 1969: 294).

لا تعلموهم فانهم اعلم منكم

In particular, the Emir of Believers(a.s.) who had been trained since childhood before the Prophet of God (p.b.u.h.) and was his companion up to the last moments of the life and was always seeking to learn knowledge and facts from the holy prophet (p.b.u.h.). He stated about him:

انا مدينة العلم و على بابها

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gates.

It has been quoted from the Emir of Believers (a.s.) who said, "

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله علمنى الف باب و كل باب يفتح الف باب فذلك الف باب ، حتى علمت ما كان و

ما يكون الى يوم القيامة و علمت علم المنايا و البلايا و فصل الخطاب

(Koleini, 1969: 296/i)

The Prophet of God (p.b.u.h.) taught me one thousands chapters (gates)of knowledge. Each chapter is opened by other one thousand chapters. Totally it amounts to one thousand one thousand chapters to the extent that we learned whatever which has existed up to the resurrection day and knowledge on death and catastrophes and the judgment of the Truth.

Here, referring to *Nahj al-Balaghah*, we will observe the specific approach of Hazrat Amir (a.s.) on this case and we will learn how Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has portrayed the scientific position of himself and the household of the holy prophet (p.b.u.h.).

1-4-1. sublimity and superiority of knowledge of Imam (a.s.) towards human science

Having a brief review over human knowledge, we could easily understand that

human's knowledge is limited, incomplete and subject to distortion and accessible to everybody. However, the specific outstanding feature of divine knowledge which has been to Imam (a.s.) is that this is beyond the human access and more complete and broader which a human could achieve it.

Hazrat Amir (a.s.) in various phrases has pointed out this type of knowledge in the side of the infallibles (a.s.).

١. ينحدر على السيل ولا يرقى الى الطير

The flood of knowledge is flowing from the foothill of my mountain and the far flying birds of ideas are unable to fly as equal as my height values. (*Nahj al-Balaghah*: Sermon 3).

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in this phrase states that the flood of divine knowledge are flowing down from the high mountains of the existence of household of the prophet(a.s.) toward the people who are thirsty to receive those knowledge and causes their life. Like the water which gives life and freshness to the nature, there flows from the household of prophet (p.b.u.h.) the knowledge and give life to the human life and if they do not flow, then the human will be annihilated. That Hazrat Amir(a.s.) uses the word "flood" for his own knowledge solely signifies the climax of expansion and greatness of his knowledge.

In the continuation, Hazrat (a.s.), expressing the phrase: *لا يرقى الى الطير* divulges another dimension of the knowledge of the infallibles. (a.s.). In addition to that part of knowledge which has been revealed to humans gradually and have enjoyed it, a part of the knowledge is inaccessible to ordinary people which in the words of Imam, even the bird of imagination of human cannot fly to those high peaks. Since those knowledge have been granted to the infallibles through God and this has made them to be distinguished from other humans and has given them superiority. These phrases, solely shows the broadness and inaccessibility of a part of their knowledge. This phrase of Hazrat (a.s.) which is in the beginning sentences of Shaqshaqiyeh Sermon, in fact has been stated as a reasoning for the Imamate and guardianship of the Imam. This clearly states that the position of Imamate and guardianship is merely belonging to a person who

has the divine knowledge in his heart to bring the human to its destination who needs connection to such as link to this specific type of knowledge.

٢. تالله لقد علمت تبليغ الرسالات و اتمام العادات و تمام الكلمات و عندنا اهل البيت ابواب الحكم و ضياء الامر

(*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 120)

"Oath to God that I have known the conveyance of all messages and completion of all promises and speeches (the whole interpretation of the Qur'an) and the gates of wisdom and illumination of the commands are before we as the household of the prophet".

Definitely, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and his pious family are the containers of the knowledge of prophet and conveyors of the secrets and protectors of religious laws and administrators of His promises to the Islamic nation. Most of the dissemination of decrees and spread of judgment on lawful and unlawful issues and opening the gates of knowledge has taken place at the age of the infallibles.

Imam Ali (a.s.) in the beginning of this Sermon, speaks about some knowledge which has been learned from the prophet (p.b.u.h.). The publicizing of missions: refers to this fact that not only the divine messages, but the method of transferring the divine messages from the God to the prophet has been taught to them. Also in the phrase of "اتمام العادات", he states that the method of meeting the promises which has been referred to the prophet has also been taught to him. The holy prophet (p.b.u.h.) told to Ali (a.s.),

"أنت وصيبي و ارثي و قاضي ديني و منجز عدتي.."

Thus, he taught Ali (a.s.) the method and quality of meeting his promises.

In the explanation of the phrase "اتمام الكلمات", annotators have made different interpretations. Some have stated it as the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses and some others hermeneutical description of the Qur'anic verses. Dr. Mohammad Mehdi Jafari, has stated a noticeable and contemplating views about it. He states:

By *اتمام كلمات*, in fact it means what has been stated in verse 124 of Baqara Surah.

إذا ابتلى إبراهيم ربه بكلمات فاتمهن قال اني جاعلك للناس امام

And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord, with certain commands which he fulfilled. He said, "I will make thee an Imam to the people:

In fact, the same completion of the words which brought Abraham to the degree of Imamate, the same was granted and submitted to Imam Ali (a.s.), indicating the high scientific position of the household of the prophet and in particular Hazrat Ali (a.s.).

Furthermore, Hazrat states:

عندنا اهل البيت ابواب الحكم

We, the household of the prophet are the gates of all knowledge and knowledge.

For sure, the gates of wisdom and knowledge is before the household of the prophet. As the holy prophet (p.b.u.h.) in the famous Hadith has introduced them as a peer to himself and the holy Qur-an:

انامدينه العلم و على بابها

"I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate."

وانى تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتى

I leave you two weighty things: The book of God and my Itrat(progeny)

And this indicates the lofty scientific glory of the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.)

Hazrat further adds, "ضياء الامر". Describing this phrase, Meysam Bahrani says:

Anvar (lights) are the sciences which the world and hereafter affairs have been based on them. (Bahrani, 1985: 204/iii). These sciences are before the infallibles (a.s.).

1-4-2. The knowledge of the Unssen As it was mentioned, the infallibles' sciences is not only superior to and beyond human knowledge, but in some cases , it has entered into a realm which the human's science of non-infallible person has no right to access to it and that is the unseen world science.Of course, by knowledge of the unseen world in the side of the household of the prophet (a.s.), it means that according to Shia belief, basically the science of the unseen is not innate and without intermediary, as it has been assumed Sunni scholars in particular Wahabi ,and for this reason they have charged the Shia to profanity. But, as it is used from the divine verses and also the words of the infallibles, the innate unseen sciences is

exclusive of God and God gives any rate which finds it necessary to His saints.

عالم الغيب فلا يظهر على غيبه احدا الا من ارتضى من رسول

Verse Jin, 26

He alone knows the Unseen, nor does He make any one acquainted with His secrets And of course, this concept has been emphasized in Hazrat Amir(a.s.)'s words. In the Sermon 128, Hazrat says:

ليس هو بعلم غيب و انما هو تعلم من ذى علم

This is not the unseen science but it is a teaching from the holder of science.

This is a reference to the fact that the innate science is exclusive of God and my science has an acquired aspect and I have learnt these affairs from the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the Almighty God.

١. فاسالونى قبل از تفقدونى فو الذى نفسى بيده لا تسالونى عن

شىء فيما بينكم و بين الساعه و لا عن فء) تهدى مائه و تضل

مانه الا انا بكم بنا عقها و قائدها و سائقها و مناخ ركابها و محط

رحالها و من يقتل من اهلها قتلا و من يموت منهم موتا

Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 93

Ask me before you lose the sight of me. Oath to the one which my life is under His control(God), if you raise a question about the affairs which is between you up to the resurrection day or a group which orients one hundred person or misleads one hundred person ,I can give you a news about it, about the one who calls them towards it, the one who is leading them, the one who is directing them, the place where they reside, the place of their camels and where they discharge the cargos ,the one who is murdered among them and the one who dies.

According to the researchers, nobody has an ability to present such a speech, since his awareness to the issues of the past, present and future was to the extent that he had the response to every question about knowledge, decrees and various incidents and it was this kind of knowledge which he had learned from the prophet and the prophet in turn had acquired it from the source of divine revelation. These divine revelations and confirmations of the holy spirit on the pure heart of the Emir of Believers (a.s.) were spreading and emphasizing on it. (Makarem, 1978: 221/iv). History also confirms this claim that who have failed in responding to some questions and had not any way but to refer to the

science of that great personalities (a.s.) and had accepted that their science is beyond the human knowledge and connected to the divine science.

In these phrases, Hazrat states that not only I know all incidents up to the resurrection day but also I am aware of all insignificant details.

These types of talks are not equal to a human unless he has connection to the source of divine revelations and enjoy the infinite science of the creator. This position fits only the infallibles (a.s.).

٢. يا ايها الناس شقوا امواج الفتن بسفن النجاه. .. بل اندمجت على مكنون علم لو بحث به لاضطربتم اضطراب الارشيه فى الطوى البعيده

Najj al-Balaghah (Sermon 5).

O People: Break the waves of conspiracy by the saving ships... I have awareness of hidden incident and if I tell about that, you will be distressed like shaking of a rope in deep wells.

In this sermon, Hazrat Ali (a.s.), prevents people from adding fuels to disputes and differences and in the beginning of speech asks them to break the waves of conspiracy by obeying the saving ships which are the very household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.). In fact, the above and below of this speech is the cause and effect or reason and claim that as I am equipped with the unseen science by the God, so that obey me and prevent from any quarrel.

It is clear that by the hidden science, it means the science which the prophet (p.b.u.h.) make Ali (a.s.) aware of it on all affairs up to 35 years after Higrā. (Khoyea 1979: 141/iii).

The speech of the Hazrat specifically states that the science of unseen has been granted to him by the prophet of God or directly by God.

٣. ولو تعملون ما اعلم مقا طوى عنكم غيبه اذا لخرجتم الى الضعادات تبكون على اعمالكم

Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 116

If you had been aware of what is hidden lime me, you would have migrated from your houses and would have become wandering about in deserts and would have cried on your deeds.

Imam has presented this part of sermon in Kufa while encouraging his own companions to fight against Sham and expressing sadness

for their infirm position. So, first he reminds them about awareness of the conspiracy and revolts which will take place in the future, something which is beyond the circle of their power and then he notifies them that his science has been taken from the God and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). If they knew what he knows, they would have been trying to find a solution to release themselves. As we see, Hazrat(a.s.) speaks of a specific type of science which other people are unable to achieve it. Hazrat Amir (a.s.) states: As I am aware of your future through my science of unseen, and I know what is good for you, so I call you to fight against the enemies, so that you will not be faced with the consequences and bad things.

٤. والله لو شنت ان اخبر كل رجل منكم بمخرجه وو مولجه وجميع شاناه لفلعت

(Nahj al-Balaghah: Sermon 175).

Oath to God that if I intend to make you aware of the beginning and end of your work and all aspects of your life, I can do it.

Hazrat (a.s.) has been aware to the news of Unseen which he has received from the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and some of these sciences have been given to him in part and individually and sometimes in a general form. That is to say, the general principles have been inspired to Hazrat, so that his mind could be able to grasp the small affairs which are emanated to him by God. (Ibn Meysam, 1996: 638/ii).

1-4-3. Source of all Knowledge and Being an Intermediary for Divine Graciousness

As it was mentioned, in various phrases, Hazrat has had some references to human feature of his knowledge and awareness of the Unseen sciences received from the God. This science led to chastity and judgment far from any error in them. With a greater carefulness in Hazrat's words, we learn to a newer and more different reality about his knowledge. In addition to all these cases, the infallibles (a.s.) are the source of all sciences which have been entrusted in them by God as divine sciences and they disseminate these sciences among the God's servants.

١. نحن شجرة النبوه. ومعادن العلم و ينابيع الحكم

(*Nahj al-Balaghah* :Sermon 109).

We are from the green tree of mission ... We are mines of knowledge and springs of divine wisdom.

That Hazrat Amir (a.s.) introduces the prophet household as the mines of science, means that all sciences are compiled in them and may not be found in any other places. Each science without any additions is before them. Anyone who wants to achieve a noble and pure science, he/she should refer to them and receive the sciences from the source of sciences.

Describing this speech by Hazrat Ali (a.s.), Ayatollah Makarem states, "By mines of sciences, it means that Imams and prophet's household were inheritors of the prophet, protector of the Book and Tradition. The Hadith of Ali is with the Qur-an and the Hadith of I am the city of science and Ali is its gate, are among the famous Hadiths that have been mentioned in Shia and Sunni books. All these confirm that this household are the mines of knowledge and source of wisdom". (Makarem, 1978:613 /iv)

٢. فانهم عيش العلم و موت الجهل هم الذين يخبركم حكمهم

عن علمهم

They are the life of knowledge and death of ignorance. Those which their sagacity will make you aware of their knowledge.

As they are the mines of science and all sciences are radiating from them, so it is very natural that sciences to become alive through them and ignorance to be annihilated because of their presence. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, the Mu'tazila commentator of *Nahj al-Balaghah* has mentioned a similar concept.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid has an interesting interpretation in annotating this phrase that they are the life of science and death of ignorance, it is for this reason that they are (a.s.) are the cause of the presence of science and science has found life based on them. (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1961:317 /xiii).

2. Imsam's Infallibility

The meaning of infallibility

Infallibility semantically means prohibition and avoidance. Concerning the terminological

meaning of infallibility, there are different opinions. The Asharites says that by infallibility of prophets, it means that God does not create sin in them and consequently, they do not pursue sin. But the wise and philosophers believe that infallibility is an internal state and a permanent disposition of mind which prevents from the sin and rebel. The Mu'tazilla considers infallibility as a kind of grace from the side of God. (Ibn Faris, 1404: 779).

From the viewpoint of Shia, infallibility means cleanness from lesser and capital sins and distance from error and forgetfulness. Some theologians have defined infallibility as a grace (that is to say that the divine grace necessitates that to select prophets and Imams with the feature of infallibility to direct the human to introduce Islam) and avoidance.

In any situation, infallibility does not mean that the individual has no power to do an unfavorable action but infallibility means that the infallible person, while having power, does not pursue to commit any sin. In other words, avoidance of sin depends on the degree of faith of human. To the extent that the faith is greater, to the same extent the degree of infallibility will go higher. Each human finds infallibility much his faith. As the divine prophets and saints enjoy certain state and perfect faith, so that their infallibility is also perfect. Infallibility means having firm faith on the presence of risk and avoiding it as the rational person does not throw himself down from a multi-floor building or does not throw himself into fire, since the danger of such an action has been proved to him and it is certain. But a child might tough fire or thrown himself down from a high position.

2-2. The infallibility of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) from the viewpoint of Shia and Sunni

2-2-1. The viewpoint of the Sunnis

Imam Abu Hanifeh states, "Prophets are immune against all lesser and capital sins and they are infallible". Some of the companions of Imam Abu Hanifa believe that committing a lesser sin prior to prophetic mission is authorized. (Allameh Helli, 2007: 152 s).

The Khawarij (The Outsiders): They have considered an authorization to commit sin by the prophets, though any sin before them is considered a blasphemy.

Hashwiyan: They have prescribed committing capital sins and some of them, have prohibited the intentional sins but they have authorized committing lesser and unintentional sins. (Allameh Helli, 2007: 152 s).

Asharits: They consider all capital sins absolutely forbidden (either intentionally or unintentionally) but they have permitted the cases of lesser sins if they are unintentionally. (Allameh Helli, 2007: 152 s).

Mu'tazila: They believe it is not merit for the prophets to commit capital sins but they see no prohibition for committing lesser mistakes, provided that it does not cause the public hate. In other words, the prophet (p.b.u.h.) should not commit a lesser sin which could bring about defame. (Marefat, 2009: 102).

In describing the Nasfi beliefs, it has been mentioned that the prophets are immune against lie in particular in propagating the decrees of the infallible. However, about other types, it has been said that consensually, before and after receiving divine revelation, the prophets are immune against blasphemy and also the majority of scholars believe that they are immune against committing the capital intentional sins. (Opposite to the belief of Hashwiyeh group). However, to commit a sin unintentionally has been permitted by most of the scholars. Also committing lesser sins is permitted but prior to divine revelation, there is no reason to prevent from the capital sins. (Taftazani Saduldin: 221).

Thus, the viewpoint of the scholars of Sunni about infallibility (Isma) is not the same, because most of them permit committing the sin if it is unintentionally and a lesser sin. Also there are some others who disagree with authorization of committing a lesser sin. A number of researchers on beliefs believe that committing what could bring about hate among people towards the prophets, either a lesser sin or another thing is not permitted. Thus, they justify and interpret the verses and traditions which indicate committing a sin by the prophet and says by these external issues,

it means a better avoidance and not that the prophet have told a lie or committed a sin.

2-2-2. Shia Viewpoint

In the viewpoint of Shia, prophets are infallible both in understanding and propagating the divine revelation and also in beliefs and actions before and after prophetic mission and they will not commit any kind of sins either a lesser or a capital, an intentional or unintentional ones. On this case, Sheikh Mofid writes, "From the viewpoint of Imamiya, all prophets are immune from committing capital sins either before prophecy or after that. They are also immune against doing lesser sins whose perpetrator might feel a sense of lightness. However, the lesser sins which might not bring about discount and lightness, they would be permitted before prophecy but after that, they will be prohibited. From the viewpoint of Imamiya, our prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) since his creation up to the time he moved to the proximity of God, has not committed any sin neither intentionally nor neglectfully as the Qur-an and news of the household of the prophet consecutively signifies it. (Mofid, 1951: 68).

2-3. Infallibility of Household of the Prophet from the Viewpoint of Shia and Sunni

2-3-1. Considering the infallibility of the household of the prophet (a.s.), Shia exactly consider the same infallibility that has been in the prophet. In fact, the household of the prophet like himself are far from any ugliness and uncleanness. Because they are the protectors of the prophet's religious laws and the same necessity which necessitates the infallibility of the prophet, proves the necessity of infallible and immunity of his successors too.

As for the infallibility of himself and the household (a.s.), Hazrat Ali (a.s.) states,

“ان الله تبارك و تعالی طهرنا و عصمنا و جعلنا شهداء علی خلقه و حجته فی ارضه و جعلنا مع القرآن و جعل القرآن

معنا لا نفارقه ولا یفارقنا” (Koleini, Hadith 5)

Verily, the Almighty God has made us pure and infallible and made us a witness towards his creatures and a proof in the earth and put us beside the Qur-an and the Qur-an besides

us, neither we will separate from it nor that will distance from us.

Here we will remind some of the views of the Shia researchers about the infallibility of the household of the prophet (a.s.)

1. **Mohammad Reza Mozafar** has stated, "It is obligatory for Imam like the prophet to be immune from any devils, external and internal ugliness from the childhood to the death. Because, the Imams are the protectors of Sharia and they stand it, so their status is like the status of the prophet. (Khalkhali, 2001, 88)

2. Alameh Helli has said the same idea that is obligatory that the Imam should be infallible, since he is the protector and guard to the religious laws. The Almighty God says," لاينال عهدى الظالمين (Surah Baqara: Verse 144).

But my promise is not within the reach of evil-doers (Alameh Helli, 2007: 167).

2-3-2. Viewpoint of the Sunni

The viewpoint of Sunni scholars and researchers on this issue is different. , Most of them do not consider infallibility for the household of the prophet(a.s.) but some of the Sunni scholars like Ibn Abi al-Hadid Mu'tazila who is one of the great persons in Mu'tazila consider infallibility for the prophet household (Itra) in describing the *Nahj al-Balaghah*. He quotes from Abu Mohammad Motaviya that he was also considering infallibility for Ali (a.s). (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1961: 131/ii, Sermon Annotation 87)

In addition to it, Sheikh Akbar Mohi al-Din Arabi who is one of the greatest mystical personality among the Sunni people also believes in the infallibility of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and Hazrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). He has talked about Hazrat Ali (a.s.) as (اقرب الناس and امام العالم و سر الانبيا اجمعين) (Ibn Arabi, 2002:119 /i).

Of course, oppositely, there are some of the authorities among the people of Sunni who are against this belief. One of the hard opponents of the infallibility of the household of the prophet (a.s.) is Ibn Timiyeh. The fame of his enmities and malevolence has remained on the history like a dishonor stink.

In a part of his book, Ibn Timiyeh has dealt with the Hadith of Kasa and verse of Tathir. He neither has reiterated about the authenticity of Hadith nor its allocation to Itrat, but he has claimed that the wives of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) are also members of the prophet household. He writes:

"But on the verse of Tathir, there is no news on the purity of the household of the prophet and repulsion of uncleanness from them, but in it the household of the prophet have been instructed to do certain affairs by which, cleanness occurs to them and uncleanness will be repulsed from them. So in the verse:

(اراد انما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس اهل البيت و يطهركم تطهيرا)
is like the following verses:
(ما يريد الله ليجعل عليكم من حرج و ليكن يريد ليطهركم) (يريد الله
ليبين لكم و يهديكم سنن الذين من قبلكم و يتوب عليكم والله عليم
حكيم) (والله يريد ان يتوب عليكم و يريد الذين يتبعون الشهوات ان
تميلوا ميلا عظيما)

Thus, (اراد يريد الله ان يخفف عنكم و خلق الانسان ضعيفا) in all these verses indicates the demand, interest and satisfaction of God towards cleanness and not that the divine desire should be accompanied with the occurrence of cleanness. Because, if it is so, all people of whom the God has asked them cleanness, they should be clean. It is better to say that this discourse is the discourse of "fatalistic" school of thought in Shia, because they believe that God has willed a cleanness which does not exist and has not desired the cleanness which exists. This does not mean that is it necessary to happen, because if it is so, all the people which God has asked their cleanness will become really clean. This interpretation is in agreement with the foundations of the fatalistic Shia, because in their view, God make a will for the things which does not occur and occurs what He does not wish.

So, in the verse:

انما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس اهل البيت و يطهركم تطهيرا
If it means to do the religious obligations and to leave the unlawful issues, being distance from uncleanness and to be clean will depend on the will and act of the household of the prophet. So, if they practice what has been

instructed, they will become clean otherwise not.

At the same time, the Shia says, “ God does not create their deeds and is unable to clean them from uncleanness. But those who prove the fatalistic idea, believe that God is able to do it and if He inspires them to do obligations and to leave the unlawful, cleanness and repulsion of uncleanness will be obtained.

Among the affairs which clearly indicate that the household of the prophet have been instructed to repulse the uncleanness and not that God has informed them about the occurrence of that news, is a Hadith which is presented in Sahih. There it says that the prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) pulled a garment (Kasa) over the face of Ali, Fatemeh, Hasan and Hosssein (a.s.) and said:

Oh my God, these are my household, so distance uncleanness(evil)from them and clean them fully”. This Hadith has been narrated by Moslim in Sahih from Ayesheh and authors of Sunnan from Omeh Salmeh (Ibn Teymiyeh 1978: 240/vii). Though in rejecting these words by Ibn Taymiyeh, many reasons have been presented by the Shia scholars, but in this article, there is no time to pay to them in details, however, in the next chapter, we will refer to these two reasons precisely.

2-4. Infallibility of the Household of Prophet in Verses and Hadiths

From the perspective of Shia, there is no rational reason for the lack of possibility of infallibility of individuals apart from the prophets. But the rational reasons and religious reasons signify the infallibility of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra(s) and the twelve Imams (a.s.)for example, the verse: لا ينال عهدى الظالمين and the famous Hadith of Thaqlain and many other traditions.

Here, two reasons will be explained:

١. واذا بتلى ابراهيم ربه بكلمات فاتهمن قال انى جاعلك للناس

اماما قال و من ذريتى قال لا ينال عهدى الظالمين

And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands which he fulfilled: He said ,” I will make thee an Imam to the people “ He pleaded,” and also (Imams) from my offspring”. He

answered: “but my promise is not within the reach of evil doers” (Baqrah Surah: Verse 124).

With reasoning to this verse, it can be said that firstly, the position of Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s) is superior to his prophecy, because there is no doubt that when God tested Abraham with tests such as burning in the fire, slaughtering the child and so on, he was the prophet of God and this verse shows that the Imamate of that Hazarat after appointment to the mission and success in many tests have been granted to him.

Secondly, Imamate is a divine position which God grants to whoever He wants. According to the Qur-an, God grants this promise to those who are from the descendants of Abraham, those who are not afflicted with any despotism. Thus, with regard to the fact that any kind of false belief and any kind of sin is tyranny, so that the one finds the merit to be Imam who is infallible. The infallible people should not have committed any sin before and after prophecy or Imamate, also before maturity or after it. Because committing a sin is committing a tyranny towards God and the position of prophecy or Imamate will not be granted to a tyrannical person. What has been told is confirmed with the traditions which have been presented below this noble verse.

2. Hadith of Thaqlain which has been narrated by both Shia and Sunni:

انى تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتى اهل بيتى ما ان تمسكتم بهما لن تضلوا ابدا:

I leave you two weighty things: The book of God and my Itrat (progeny) which if you stick to them, you will not go astray.

In this Hadith, three materials have been expressed:

A) The Itrat of the holy prophet is just and along with the Qur-an.

B) Resorting to the Qur-an is not solely saving but in order to have access to orientation, we should resort to the Qur-an and household of the prophet.

ما ان تمسكتم بهما لن تضلوا ابدا

C) Itrat and the Qur-an are not separated from each other, in order to be able to arrive in the Kowsar Pool in the resurrecting day to the prophet.

Using these three materials, the infallibility of the household of the prophet is well proved. Because, the Qur-an itself is immune against any false and consequently, the one who is with the Qur-an and is not separated from it should be infallible. The human whose hands are afflicted with sin, cannot be along with the Qur-an and justice. Also, if the household of the prophet commit sins and error, resorting to them and considering them as the leader will not cause of saving. With such a hypothesis, it is likely that resorting to them will cause misleading. Of course with regard to this point, it is necessary that proving the infallibility for a person, is not a necessity to prove prophecy for that person, because it is possible that someone not to be prophet but to be an infallible person.

In addition to what was said, the Shia believes that as the Islam is the last religion and the prophet of Islam is the last divine prophet, and no other prophet will come after that Hazrat, so there should be some individuals who could interpret the divine religion without any personal distortion and exegesis and far from the view to the people, so that they will not go astray. This mission cannot be accomplished but by the infallible person. As the prophet of Islam has emphasized on obeying his household and the Qur-an also has placed the reward of that Hazrat on affection and friendship with the Itrat, so the household of the prophet (a.s.) should be infallible.

قل لا اسئلكم عليه اجرا الا الموده فى القربى:

Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of my kin (Shora: Verse 90).

2-5. Religious Intellectuals' Views on Knowledge and the Infallibility of the Prophet

2-5-1. Mojtabeh Shabestari

In his recent speech in seminary, Mr. Shabestari has said about infallibility in this manner:

1. Prophet has infallibility and immunity only in conveying the divine revelation not in other parts of the life.
2. It is likely that prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the infallibles(a.s.) also have committed sins in

hidden, because in prayers, we observe they ask for forgiveness by the God.

3. The science of prophet and the infallible(a.s.) is the one that have been expressed by them. For example, if the prophet does not have any book on medical sciences, this means that he had not had any science of it.

In such a thinking atmosphere in which Mr. Shabestari is located, firstly, he names what religious people call divine inspiration (revelation) and the speech of God as the internal reflections of the prophet himself. Secondly, suppose he considers the divine revelation as the speech of God, he not only condemned the commentators of divine revelation but also the prophets (a.s.) to the Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic. On this basis, the very understanding of prophet of divine revelation is only one of the understandings and is not preferred to other understandings. It is clear that with this basis, the argument of the discourse and interpretation of the prophet from the divine revelation will be also nullified. Also, following that, there is no need for him to be infallible. Basically with his foundation, correctness and incorrectness will have no meaning and the case of infallibility or lack of infallibility is not applied.

He says that the in performing his duty which is to orient humans and to call to the unique God, prophet (p.b.u.h.) has had infallibility and he has never summoned people towards something apart from the unique God. However, doesn't infallibility have a meaning more than this. Is such an interpretation of the infallibility of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) correct ?

Our first question from him is that is your claim an assumption or you have some evidences for it. If it is an assumption, it is a false assumption, because how it is possible that a human from the ontological point of view reaches to the highest rank of perfection to receive the divine inspiration and to establish link with the celestial world, then he would be able to know the daily life priorities and make a mistake. It is as if we could say that a person is a full professor

mathematics but he is unable to solve a first rank one-unknown equation. If the prophet has been able to grasp the entity with an intuitive knowledge, there is no room left for error, since the intuitive knowledge does not make any error. In the intuitive knowledge, the known is present in the universe and there is no room left for error or forgetfulness. In addition, if people see that the prophet commits mistake in his daily life, don't you think that they might think that he will make a mistake in divine inspirational and vital issues ? On this connection, even the reasoning of the discourse and deed of the prophet also is exposed to doubtfulness. If there is the possibility of an error to a person, there is the high possibility of occurring another error. If the being of a person is such that he makes mistakes in ordinary affairs, then he will make mistake in unseen and supernatural affairs beyond the regular human. There is a tradition which is narrated by the Sunnis. It is said that a group of Arabs went to see the prophet and were asking about palm tree from the prophet Concerning the act of pollination which they used to make for trees, they asked should we do them for our trees. The prophet (p.b.u.h.) said not to that. Accidently, that year the trees were not fertilized and they had a great damage. Then came back to the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and said: "We obeyed your recommendation and faced damage". Then the prophet told that, " you know the world affairs better than me and you should not have asked me.: Does the prophet who knows the angelic world and divine power, how is that he does not know a simple question which any Arab child might know? This tradition is not possibility right and its document is not authentic, but some of the new thinkers put forth discussion in denying the infallibility of the prophet (p.b.u.h). Which rational mind could accept that the one who has the possibility of mistake in a simple addition and deduction, then he could be immune from mistake in solving the mechanical complex equations of quantum ? Now, how can we accept that the prophet makes error in what a desert residing Arab does not make that error, but he does not make a mistake in what the regular human cannot understand it? So, the common sense instructs that the argument of discourse and actions of the prophet necessitates his full-fledged infallibility, otherwise

none of his discourse would be rationally acceptable. Also Mr. Shabestri has referred to the state of seeking forgiveness in the side of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and household of the prophet (a.s.)and has concluded that he had committed sins. That is to say, not only, there is the possibility of sin, but certainly they had committed sins, otherwise they would not have asked for forgiveness. As the prophet had been asking for forgiveness every day for hundred times, so that according to his reasoning, the prophet has committed hundreds of sins daily. He also says if we state that these asking for forgiveness has been because of teaching us and make us to learn, then they are false. That is to say that the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Imams(a.s.) had been asking forgiveness falsely.

Another discourse about the infallibility is that whether or not with the foundations of Mr. Shabestari, basically, do correct or incorrect, truth or false have any meaning, so that in the light of them, sin and error and mistake could find a meaning?. If any kind of interpretation of a text is valid, so any action is also permitted, because any action can be referred to that interpretation. So, according to the mental foundations of Mr. Shabestari, basically sin and error has no meaning and if sin and error does not have meaning, then the infallibility will not have a meaning too, either for the prophet or any other else.

Another doubt which is put forth by Mr. Shabestari is the discussion of prophet' knowledge.(science). He claims that the knowledge of the prophet and the infallible Imams(a.s.) has been the same that they have stated. For example, if the prophet does not have a book on medical science, this means that they had not had any knowledge about it. We also says that the knowledge of the prophet and household of the prophet (a.s.) is the very things which exist in the Qur-an. The household of the prophet (a.s.) themselves in many traditions have reiterated that their knowledge is nothing more than what is in this very Qur-an. But apparently, when Mr. Shabestari speaks about this case, he ignores the verses which introduces the holy Qur-an as the carrier of the first and last knowledge

and from the tens of traditions from the household of the prophet in which they have introduced themselves as people who are aware of all affairs and have added that we have these knowledge from the holy Qur-an. Yes, the knowledge (sciences) which have been presented by Imams (a.s.) is the very things that they have stated and one of their statements reads, "We are aware of all facts of the creation". The Almighty God states,

“و نزلنا عليك الكتاب تبيانا لكل شيء و هدى و رحمه و
بشرى للمسلمين”

And we have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a guide, a mercy and glad tidings to muslims (Al-Nahl: Verse 89).

It also states, “ما فرطنا في الكتاب من شيء”

Nothing we have omitted from the Book (Al-Anam: Verse 38).

2-5-2. Soroush

Another new thinker who has had a different comment in the domain of religious sciences on science (knowledge) and infallibility in comparison with other Muslim scholars is Seyed Abdolkarim Soroush.

In an interview on the nature of divine revelation, he has said that the soul of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) is a divine soul like every other humans but with this difference that the divine aspect of his spirit(soul) has been converted from potential into effect and has been connected to the Truth. This connection does mean that the prophet has become a God but it means that he has become a godly individual. It is a type of spiritual unity with the Truth.

This unity will serve as a ground by which he will receive the divine inspiration, a lofty and senior motif of shape and image which is proportional with the understanding of an earthly mind. Whenever this divine motif and content enters into the domain of awareness and understanding of the prophet, a garment is pulled over it by the existing system and singles in the human awareness of the prophet and in the words of the Muslim philosophers, in fact a form is drawn on a formless issue.

From this aspect, that the form of the divine revelation – not its motif and contents) appear in the prophet's awareness world and in the same

manner that the existing materials in prophet's like the words, images, and knowledge have a role in the creation of form of divine revelation (not its contents), his internal contraction and dilation and spiritual statues show themselves in this external form of divine revelation.

According to this theory, in general, the prophet was aware of two types of awareness. The first was awareness related to the nature world including plants, objects, humans, history, earth, universe, ... whose origins have been the collective awareness of the people of his age with the same human features, i.e. subject to mistake and error, for example- his awareness of the date tree. This domain of his awareness – according to this theory- is in lack of infallibility. The second type, is that special irregular awareness which he has gained about the attributes of the God, hereafter life, rules of praying, and on the whole world beyond the earth and creatures with a divine revelation source. In order to give a form to the formless content of divine revelation, certain images and expressions have been used which are related to the first awareness. That is to say, for example – for the power, wisdom and other attributes of God, certain examples, similes and allegories have been borrowed from the world of the nature which are related to their praying and regular awareness, the awareness obtained from the culture and knowledge of the people of that age.

That special and irregular awareness (knowledge) is innately a divine revelation and beyond the human which has been inspired in form of infinite spirit- but understandable – in the body of worldly texts and phrases, and thereby has been transferred to the humans. Here, infallibility is special of irregular, innate and divine revelation awareness of the prophet and his regular awareness which is of the nature of the other awareness of the people does not enjoy this feature.

Taking into consideration, the views of Mr. Soroush and Mr. Shabestari, the prophet's knowledge is very limited and at the limit of the people of his age along with mistakes and errors.

2-6. Infallibility of the Household of the Prophet in Nahj al-Balaghah

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, the Shia scholars and some of the Sunni scholars consider the position of infallibility for Hazrat Ali (a.s.). In this section, we will discuss the view of

Hazrat Amir (a.s.) about the infallibility of the household of the prophet with *Nahj al-Balaghah* as the pivot of the study.

Though *Nahj al-Balaghah* is not all statements and views of the Hazrat but merely a part of his discourses which in eloquent rhetoric has been selectively expressed by Seyed Razi, and even in some cases, the historical bed ground of the discourse is not clear, but despite all of these issues, in a close review of the discourses of Hazrat, we will face many phrases which refers to the position of infallibility of the household of the prophet (a.s.). Though in most cases, the statements of Hazrat is such that it is not possible to extract the subject-matter of infallibility from it directly but anyway, the expression is in a way which is associated with infallibility or sometimes expresses a very specific virtue indicating infallibility. Though Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in many cases has not intended to express the position of infallibility, but this feature is understood from his discourse directly or indirectly.

We would like to refer to some cases of it in the following lines:

١-٢. نظروا اهل بيت نبيكم فالزموا سمتهم و اتبعوا اثرهم فلن يخرجوكم من هدى ولن يعيدوكم في ردى فان لبدوا فالبدوا و ان نهضوا فانهضوا و لا تسيقوهم فتضلوا و لا تتاخروا عنهم فتهلك و ..

Sermon 97

Look at the household of your prophet (p.b.u.h.). Go on that side that they move. Follow them. They will never mislead you and do not return to humiliation and annihilation. If they are silent, then you also be silent and if they rebelled, then you stand to rebel as well. Do not overpass them which will be misled and do not lag behind them, since you will be annihilated.

This message is in fact a reference to the same Theqlain Hadith which the prophet (p.b.u.h.) in consecutive traditions has referred to it.

If you keep following the Qur-an and the household of the prophet, you will never be misled. It is clear that by the household of the

prophet, it means the infallible Imams which according to the noble verse:

انما يريد الله ليذهب عليكم الرجس اهل البيت و يطهركم تطهيرا

And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, the household and to make you pure and spotless. (Ahzab: Verse 33) (Makarem, 1978:314 /iv)

In this sermon, Hazrat Amir (a.s.) has a direct refer to the presence of the faculty of infallibility in the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.). He recommends to his companions and all humans of the world that in order to find a correct way and paving it, to obey them and follow their step not a step farther or earlier, so that they will achieve salvation and reach the final destination.

In fact, the Imam's discourse has the same meaning with the famous prophetic Hadith which reads:

مثل اهل بيتي فيكم مثل سفينة نوح من ركبها تجى و من تخلف عليها هلك

The example of my household before you is like the Noah ship, one who get in will be saved and one not join it will be annihilated.

This Hadith which has been narrated in different versions in both Shia and Sunni books, shows that the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h.), whose knowledge take source from the holy Qur-an and life of the household, is the only tool to save from this stormy world. As at the time of occurrence of Noah storm, there was no tool to save but Noah ship.

٢-٦-٢. الله لو اعطيت الاقاليم السبعة بما تحث افلاكها على ان اعصى الله فى نمله اسلبها جلب شعيره ما فعلته

اعصى الله فى نمله اسلبها جلب شعيره ما فعلته

Sermon 224

Oath to Allah, if the seven-fold lands on the earth with what exists under their skies are granted to me to disobey God in ignoring the right of an ant to steal a crust of barley, I would not do that. With no doubt your world in my view is lower than a leaf which a grasshopper is taking in its mouth.

Hazrat Amir (a.s.) states that he is not ready to rebel and disobey against the God even through a slight tyranny. In these phrases, though Hazrat has not referred to the

attribution of infallibility directly, but this idea is interpreted from his discourse.

The one who is at the climax of knowledge to God and everything with the exception of Allah is in his view low and priceless, and all the world in his view is like a half-chewed leaf in the mouth of a grasshopper, then there is no reason to commit rebel against the creator. (Makarem, 1978:421 /viii).

Hazrat Amir (a.s.), while taking an oath to the Divine Majesty, says that he is not to satisfied to do a rebel against God as much as a very small despotic attitude towards a small creature, not to mention capital tyranny, the very fact of avoiding this tyranny has a direct reference to the presence of faculty of infallibility in him. This kind of avoidance from a very trivial tyranny necessitates his distance from any kind of tyranny.

٣-٦-٢. ولقد علم المستحفظون من اصحاب محمد (ص) انى

لم ارد على الله ولا على رسوله ساعه فط

Sermon 197: The companions of the prophet Mohamad (p.b.u.h.) who are the protectors of his secrets know that I have never been against God's and Prophet's command even for a moment.

In his annotation on this speech by Hazrat, Mr. Khoyea exactly states the reference of Hazrat(a.s.) to the subject-matter of infallibility:

That Hazrat Ali(a.s.) has never been in disagreement with the God and His prophet is known and proved and there is nothing hidden about it but it is one of the necessities of the religion because it is due to the presence of faculty of infallibility in his being which prevents from disagreement with God and His prophet. (Khoyea, 1979:217 /xii).

In this sermon, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in order to make the listeners obedient towards the commands which he issues, remind the ranks of his dignity and superiority that he has never disobeyed the God and His prophet. (Ibn Meysam, 1996:797 /iii).

In many cases and different phrases in his discourse, Hazrat Amir (a.s.) expresses his absolute obedience towards the divine commandments which is in fact the very

faculty of infallibility. The one who does not disobey any of the divine commandments, in fact has attained a rank upper than infallibility.

In other diverse phrases, Hazrat has some references to the internal purity and self-spiritual cleanness but perhaps attributing these phrases to the subject-matter of infallibility not to be proper.

For example, Hazrat Ali in Sermon 185 says:

انما مثلى بينكم مثل السراج فى الظلمه، ليستضى به من ولجها

The outstanding feature of "سراج" (lamp) is to

shed light and direct humans in the darkness. Definitely one can orient the others who himself has not go astray of the right path. (Ibn Meysam, 1996:326/iv). Below the Sermon 229

Comparing his being to a illuminating lamp, Hazrat clarified his own virtue and this virtue can be nothing but knowledge and infallibility, and that he is aware of the path of salvation and is immune against any kind of sin and mistake. Mr. Khoyea also in description of this phrase says, " Hazrat Ali (a.s.) releases humans from misleading and darkness with the light of science and orientation. (Khoyea, 1979: xi, 14).

Definitely, the one for whom there is a possibility of error and ignorance, can not serve as a light to others.

In another phrase, Hazrat Amir (a.s.) states a similar motif:

فان اطتمونى فانى حاملكم ان شاء الله على سبيل الجنه

If they obey me, If God wishes it, I will bring you into the paradise. (Sermon 156).

Calling to absolute obedience towards oneself, in fact means confirming the immunity against any error and deviation. Thus, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has pledged to ring them to the destiny provided that they obey him". (Khoyea, 1979: /268ix).

As we know, the noble Hadith of Theqlain which is one of the most creditable Hadith and among the first hand evidence to prove the infallibility of the household of the prophet states exactly the same idea. Resorting and being committed towards the household of the prophet will prevent from any deviation and falling into darkness of human due to agreement with the Qur-an and brings him into the paradise. This phrase of *Nahj al-Balaghah* (فان اصعتمونى) has a delicate reference to that

Hadith that the condition of salvation and achieving the paradise is to obey the Hazrat.

Emir of Believers (a.s.) in another phrase says:

ان الكتاب لمعى ما فارقتہ مذ صحبتہ

The Book of the Qur-an is constantly with me from the same day which I was associated with that and I have never separated from it. (Sermon: 122).

In this phrase, Hazrat also directly states that he and the Qur-an are two inseparable companions” (Exactly in agreement with Theqlain Hadith).

As the holy Qur-an is immune against any kind of distortion and error, I am also the same. Whatever I behave is in agreement with the Qur-an.

This discourse was stated by Hazrat after the incident of “حکیمت” (Arbitration): “Take an oath to Allah, If I had refused it, I would not have been responsible for those consequences and God would not have added its sin in my file. Oath to God that if I had accepted arbitration, I would have been more merit to be followed, because the Qur-an is with me. Since I became the companion of the Qur-an, I have not separated from it.

Sermon 122

That Hazrat says in any manner which he behaves, he is worth to be obeyed due to agreement with the Qur-an and has no behavior but the Qur-an, definitely can have no other meaning but infallibility.

Thus, as it was observed, though among the statements of Hazrat Amir (a.s.) which have been gathered in the valuable book of *Nahj al-Balaghah*, no direct phrase which could confirm the reality of infallibility was not found, but in many phrases, there are many direct and clear references to the presence of this feature in household of prophets and in particular Hazrat Ali (a.s.).

3. Knowledge and Infallibility

In the previous sections, we got familiar with the viewpoints of Hazrat Amir (a.s.) about two features of “science “ and “ infallibility”. Having a closer notice to the statements of the

Hazrat, the specific relationship between these two are observed. In many cases, Hazrat Amir (a.s.) refers to a specific type of science which is not only different with the sciences of other people but also it is a science by which, it is followed by a type of certainty and distance from error which is in fact the very “ infallibility”. In other words, the divine specific science which is inhibited in the household of the prophet (a.s.) is essential for their infallibility. As Shia believes infallibility in all discourse and behavioral dimensions, so the unseen science in in fact the introduction and necessity of infallibility. In the following lines, some cases of the speeches by Hazrat (a.s.) are mentioned which states this idea explicitly or implicitly.

۱... و ان معى لبصيرتى ما لبست على نفسى ولا ليس على

Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 10

I enjoy sufficient awareness to the affairs. I have not hidden the truth and the truth has not remained hidden to me.

In this Sermon, Hazrat firstly refers to the soldiers of Satan who are preparing themselves to deceit human. Then he reminds his insight and awareness which causes to be immune from the deceit of the Satan, a kind of awareness whose fruit is infallibility and distance from the trickery of the Satan.

In fact, the source of misleading of everybody is one of the following three cases:

1. Firstly, he/she might not have sufficient insight and information about the work which he/she intends to do and enters into a case unconsciously which is in conflict with the God’s satisfaction and command of the Truth.
2. Sometimes despite being aware, the sensual desires might involve a human to commit a mistake.
3. That he/she permits the Satan of Jin and mankind to penetrate in him and show the truth to him. (Makarem, 1978:482 /i).

In respect of Hazrat Amir (a.s.), due to that insight and awareness which had been entrusted in him by the God and Prophet, all these routes of misleading was closed to him. In fact, in this phrase, Hazrat (a.s.) introduces his immunity against various types of misleading as his insight and awareness. So, it is natural that type of science and insight can prevent from any

misleading that could take origin from the source of divine infinite knowledge.

٢. و انى لعلى يقين من ربي وغير شبه من ديني

There is no doubt I am firmly on the certainty which has been granted to me from my God and I have no doubt in my religion and belief. (Nahj al—Balaghah: Sermon 22).

In the first sentence, Imam (a.s.) refers to his position of certainty, the same thing which has been presented in the Hadith attributed to him is the climax of that manifestation:

لو كشف الغطاء ما ازددت امانا

If all the curtains between me& God are removed, my belief in God will not increase a bit. (Makarem, 1978:39 /ii).

In fact, Imam (a.s.) points out that he is aware of all secrets of the universe sufficiently and as a result of this awareness, he has no doubt on religion and belief. As awareness towards all affairs of the universe is at the high level, so there is no room left for error in the being of such an individual. In this discourse, Hazar implicitly confirms that due to certainty, he is far from any error.

٣. عزب راي امرى تخلف عنى ما شككت فى الحق مذايرته

A person who violates from me, the correctness of view will be distanced from him (or their wisdom light would be off) when they showed me the truth and removed the curtain from that face, I did not cast any doubt on it. (Nahj al-Balaghah:Sermon 4).

Hazrat Amir (a.s) states,” from the time that they showed me the truth, I did not had any doubt about it”. In this discourse, he introduces the reason for obeying and lack of opposition to his commandment as a result of a specific cause and that is because” I was granted a divine sciences, so I am far from any error, so it is necessary for you to obey my commands to be directed”.

In describing this speech of Hazrat Ali(a.s), Ayatollah Makarem has stated, “ As Imam (a.s.)(has been grown up at the lap of the truth and bosom of the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and has always been the scribe of the divine revelation and witness to

miracles, and in addition to the external world, has find a way into the world of institution and inner side. This speech is not an exaggerated claim.

ما شككت فى الحق مذايرته

I have not had doubt since the truth was displayed to me. (Makarem, 1978:546 /i).

Thus, taking into consideration the statements of Hazrat (a.s.), in many cases, we face the description if a specific type of science which not only is exclusive of them but also is an preliminary and necessity of infallibility. In other worlds, God has granted divine sciences to the household of the prophet (a.s.) to the extent that they have reached by the position of certainty and have made them far from any error or sin.

Conclusion:

As we saw, most of the Shia and Sunni scholars and even non-Muslims consider outstanding features for the prophet and his pure household which they do not consider it for the other persons. “Science” is one of the specific attributes which both enemy and friend have admitted about the broadness of their sciences. Even many of the leaders of the religious schools of Sunni have had the honor to be the pupil in the classes of teaching by Shia Imams. But the difference which is among the Ulma (religious scholars) on Imam's science seems to be more a verbal difference on the domain of the unseen science. In summary, all Shia scientists believe that the household of the prophet (a.s.) are aware of a set of unseen science by the permit of God. Among the Sunni scholars, there is also much dispute about it. Some in general have closed the chapter on unseen sciences but some others have considered for the prophet and some other individuals awareness to very limited unseen sciences.

Concerning the feature of “ infallibility”, most of the Shia scholars consider infallibility for the prophet and his household (a.s.) against the sin and error. This belief has a less advocates among the Sunni people.

Reviewing the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, it was specified that in many cases, Hazrat Ali(a.s.) has talked about the broadness of his science and that they are the sources of science and knowledge and they have given news about many unseen world affairs from the prophet and the God.

As for the infallibility, though Hazrat does not have a direct reference to this issue, but in many cases, he has stated some materials which proves the feature of infallibility in them directly or indirectly.

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