

The Twelve Imams (A.S.)

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What has preceded are concise proofs on the issue of divine leadership in the righteous school of thought. The Shi'ahs believe that the divine leaders of the Muslims after the Prophet (S) are the Twelve Infallible Imams (as) and that the Prophet (S) specified them as:

First: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, Commander of the Faithful [Amir al-Mu'minin] (as)

Second: Al-Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, the Oldest Grandson [al-Sibt al-Akbar] (as)

Third: Al-Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, Master of the Martyrs [Sayyid al-Shuhada'] (as)

Fourth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Beauty of the Worshipers [Zayn al-'Abidin] (as)

Fifth: Al-Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the Splitter of Knowledge [al-Baqir] (as)

Sixth: Al-Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the Truthful [al-Sadiq] (as)

Seventh: Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja'far, the Controller of anger [al-Kadhim] (as)

Eighth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Musa, the Content [al-Rida] (as)

Ninth: Al-Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the Generous [al-Jawad] (as)

Tenth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Muhammad, the guide [al-Hadi] (as)

Eleventh: Al-Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, the Soldier [al-'Askari] (as)

Twelfth: Al-Imam al-Hujjat ibn al-Hasan al-'Askari, the Rightly Guided, the Awaited [al-Mahdi al-Mawud] (as)

Previous proofs on the divine leadership of the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (as) are sufficient. However, a separate discussion on the proofs of the divine leadership of each one of the Imams (as) is necessary regarding his knowledge, acceptance of the prayer and the stipulation of the previous divine leader [Imam].

The objective of this chapter is to state the glad tidings in the Prophetic traditions about the Twelve Imams (as) in Sunni sources, which have been transmitted with the title of 'Twelve Khalifas' and 'Twelve Amirs'. Below are some of them:

It has come in Sahih al-Bukhari: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I heard the Prophet (S) saying: There will be Twelve Commanders. He says that he (S) then said something I did not hear, so my father told me that he said that they will all be from Quraysh.¹

It has come in Sahih Muslim: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I entered the presence of the Prophet (S) with my father. I heard him (S) saying: Surely this command will not end until there will be Twelve Successors [Khalifah]. He says that he then said something quietly, so I asked my father: What did he (S) say? He replied: They are all from Quraysh.²

It has come in both Sahih Muslim and Musnad of Ahmad: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I heard the Prophet (S) saying: The command of the people will not pass until twelve men command over them. He says that the Prophet (S) then said something which I could not hear, so I asked my father: What did he (S) say? He replied: The Prophet (S) said: They will all be from Quraysh.³

It has come in Sahih Ibn Habbab: I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying: There will be twelve successors after me and all of them will be from Quraysh.⁴

It has come in Sunan al-Tirmidhi: There will be Twelve Commanders after me. The reporter says: He then said something I did not understand. Therefore, I asked the one beside me, he said: All of them will be from Quraysh.⁵

It has come in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: There will be Twelve Successors after me and all of them will be from Quraysh.⁶

And it has also come: There will be Twelve Commanders after me. Then I don't know what he said so I asked all the people present, they all said: He (S) said: They are all from Quraysh.⁷

It has come in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: There will be Twelve Commanders after me. Then he said something I could not hear, so I asked someone beside me, and he said: They are all from Quraysh.⁸

It has in Musnad Ahmad: There will be Twelve Commanders after me. Then he said something quietly. The reporter says that I asked someone sitting next to me about what he (S) said? He replied: They are all from Quraysh.⁹

It has come in Musnad by Ibn Ju'd: There will be Twelve Commanders after me. Husayn has reported in his narration that then he said something I did not understand. One reporter said that I asked my father. Another said that I asked the people. The reply was: They are all from Quraysh.¹⁰

It has come in Musnad Abu Ya'la: The Prophet (S) said: This religion will remain till the Day of Judgment and there will be Twelve Successors over you, all of whom will be from Quraysh.¹¹

It has come in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) delivered a sermon to us in 'Arafat saying: This matter will remain honourable, mighty and distinct against the opposition so long as the Twelve have the sovereignty, all of them. Then he (S) said something that I did not understand, so I asked my father about what he said after that. Thus, he replied: All of them are from Quraysh.¹²

It has come in al-Mustadrak al-Hakim: It is reported from Masruq that he said: One night we were sitting with 'Abd Allah. He was reading us the Qur'an. One man asked him, "O Abu 'Abd al-Rahman, did you all ask the Messenger of Allah (S), how many caliphs will rule this nation? 'Abd Allah replied, "No one before you have asked me this since I have come to Iraq. Yes, we did ask him and he (S) said: Twelve, the number of the chieftains of the Children of Isra'il."¹³

The traditions regarding this topic are numerous.¹⁴ Their transmissions are from the best of the companions, like Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, Salman al-Farisi, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abu Dharr, Jabir ibn Samurah, Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, Anas ibn Malik, Zayd ibn Thabit, Zayd ibn Arqam, Abu Thumamah, Wathilah ibn al-Asqa', Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Hudhayfah ibn Usayd, 'Imran ibn Husayn, Sa'd ibn Malik, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu Qutadah al-Ansari and others.

Here we number some significant points in these traditions:

The number of the successors (of the Prophet) is restricted to twelve.

These twelve successors will continue till the Day of Judgment.

The honour of Islam and the Muslims is dependent on their obedience.

The religion will be established both intellectually and practically through them, because the intellectual establishment of religion will take place through the commentator of the Qur'an and through the one who explains its realities and cognitions. The practical establishment will take place through the executor of its laws and just rules. These two important goals cannot be achieved except under special circumstances with these twelve divine leaders.

Choosing the example of the chieftains of the Children of Isra'il from all other examples is significant, because their succession was not chosen by people, rather it was specified by Allah. Thus, Allah, the Exalted, said about the chieftains:

And We raised up among them twelve chieftains.¹⁵

These divine leaders [Imams] are from Quraysh.

Are there any caliphs who have these specifications, except for those on the Right Path? Is it possible to define the Twelve Divine Leaders except with our divine leaders (as)? Has the honour of Islam and its aims been achieved during the caliphate of Yazid son of Mu'awiyah and his likes?

Some of the learned researchers of the Sunnis have admitted that the glad tidings of the Prophet (S) cannot be implied onto any but the twelve divine leaders (as). Thus, it has come in Yanabi' al-Mawaddah of al-Qanduzi: "Some of the researchers have said: Surely, the traditions indicating that the successors of the Prophet (S) will be twelve are famous and from many different chains of transmissions. With the passing of time and the change of circumstances, it is known that the intent of the Messenger of Allah (S) from this tradition was the twelve Imams from his Household and Progeny.

For it is not possible to apply this tradition onto the caliphs that came after him from his companions as they were less than twelve. It cannot be applied to the Umayyad kings as they were more than twelve; also, because of their horrible oppression, except for 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Furthermore, they were not Hashimites.

Based on the tradition from 'Abd al-Malik on the authority of Jabir: The Prophet (S) said: They are all from Bani Hashim. This tradition is preferred over the other one because of the claim of the low voice of the Prophet (S), because the other narrators do not like the succession of the Hashimites. It also cannot be applied to the 'Abbaside kings as they were more than twelve as well, and also because they did not abide by the verse: Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives.¹⁶

Thus, this tradition must be applied to the twelve Imams from his Household and Progeny (as), because they were the most learned of their time, the most honourable, the most splendid, the most pious, the most devout, the highest in nobility, the best in family and the best before Allah.

Their knowledge was from their forefathers, which was connected to their great-grandfather the Prophet (S). It was hereditary and directly imparted by Allah. The knowledgeable, the researchers, the mystics and the fortunate have recognised them as such."¹⁷

The intent of the Prophet (S) about the twelve successors is the twelve Imams from his Household (as). The tradition of the Two Weighty Things and other traditions mentioned in this book and elsewhere bear witness to and prefer this fact.

It is reported from al-Suday in his Commentary (of the Qur'an), who is a Sunni scholar and is trustworthy for them, "When Sarah began to dislike the position of Hajar, Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Ibrahim: Leave with Isma'il and his mother for the house of the assigned Prophet (S). For indeed, I will spread your progeny (on Earth) and will give them power over the ones who deny me. I will make from his Progeny twelve great men."¹⁸

The above also confirms what is in the present day Torah: And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.¹⁹

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There are many authentic traditions that stipulate the divine leadership of the Twelve Imams (as) from our (Shi'ah) sources. It suffices to study their transmission to the Infallibles (as) due to its continuous transmission [tawatur]. In this concise work we will only mention two transmissions of the tradition known as the tradition of the Tablet [hadith al-lawh]. It has been transmitted with many chains of transmissions by the greatest experts of traditions. Some of these are reliable:

The First Transmission

The report of Shaykh al-Saduq (ra) from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as), on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari saying: I entered the presence of Fatimah (as) while a tablet was in front of her which contained the names of the successors from her progeny. I counted them to be twelve, the last being al-Qa'im. There were three named Muhammad and four 'Ali, may the blessings of Allah be upon them all.²⁰

The Second Transmission

This transmission contains prophecies of the unseen. The content of this tradition prove it to be issued from the infallible. The greatest of our experts in traditions have reported it, like Shaykh al-Saduq, Shaykh al-Mufid and Shaykh al-Tusi, may Allah increase their status. They have reported it on the authority of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salim, on the authority of Abu Basir from al-Imam al-Sadiq (as) saying: My father (as) said to Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari: I have a matter to discuss with you. When do you have time so that I can sit alone with you and discuss it? Jabir replied to him: Whenever you want. One day my father sat down with him and said: O Jabir, tell me about the tablet which you saw in the hand of my grandmother, Fatimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (as). What did my mother inform you about what is written in that tablet?

Jabir said: I take Allah as my witness that one day I entered the presence of your mother Fatimah (as) during the life of the Messenger of Allah (S). Thus, I congratulated her on the birth of al-Husayn. I saw in her hands a green tablet. I thought it was made of emerald. It had white writing like that of the colour of the sun. I asked her: May my father and mother be your ransom, O daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S). What is this tablet? She answered: This is the tablet that Allah gave to his Messenger (S) as a gift. It contains the names of my father, my husband, my two sons and the successors from my progeny. My father gave it to me to give me the glad tidings. Jabir said: Your mother Fatimah (as) gave it to me. I read it and made a copy from it.

My father said to him: O Jabir, can you show it to me? Jabir replied: Yes. Then my father walked with him to his house. My father took out a fine paper and said: O Jabir, look in your book while I read to you. Therefore, Jabir looked in his copy while my father read to him. Not a single word differed between the two. Jabir says: I take Allah as my witness that that is how I saw it written in the tablet: In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, this is a letter from Allah, the Honourable, the All-Wise to Muhammad, His Prophet, His light, His representative, His veil and His guide. The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down from the Lord of the Worlds.

Muhammad, revere My Names and thank Me for My bounties. Do not reject My blessings. Surely, I am Allah, there is no god but I, the Destroyer of the tyrants, the Granter of victory to the oppressed and the Compensator of all rewards. Certainly, I am Allah there is no god but I. Thus, whoever places hope in the mercy of someone other than Me and fears the justice of other than Me, then I will punish him a punishment that I will not give to anyone in this

worlds. Only worship Me and only rely on Me.

Surely, I did not send a Prophet whose days have completed and his time has finished except that I made for him a successor. I have given you priority over all Prophets and I have given priority to your successor over all successors. I have honoured you with your two young brave grandsons, Hasan and Husayn. I have made Hasan the source of My Knowledge after the completion of his father's period. And I have made Husayn the treasure of My revelation.

I have honoured him with martyrdom and have made his end fortunate. He is the greatest of all the martyrs and the highest of them in status. I have placed My complete word with him and My considerable proof with him. Through his progeny I will reward and punish. The first one of them is 'Ali, the master of the worshippers and the beauty of My previous beloved ones. His son resembles his grandfather, Mahmud. He is Muhammad, the splitter of My Knowledge and the source of My Wisdom.

The doubters in Ja'far will be destroyed quickly. The one who rejects him is like the one who rejects Me. This My word is true that I will honour the place of Ja'far and I will please him amongst his followers, helpers and friends.

After him will be Musa, whose time will see dark mischief, because the thread of My obligation does not break and My proof is not hidden. Indeed, My guardians will drink from the cup of perfection. Whoever rejects anyone of them has rejected My blessing. And whoever changes a single verse from My Book has related falsehood to Me.

Woe onto the rejecting liars of 'Ali, My Guardian and Helper, after the completing period of Musa, My servant, My beloved and My chosen one. I will place the weighty responsibilities of Prophethood with him. I will try him proficiently for it. A mischievous proud man will kill him. He will be buried in a city that the pious servant has built next to the worst of My creation.

This My word is true that I will please him with Muhammad, his son and his successor after him and the inheritor of his knowledge. He is the source of My Knowledge, the repository of My secrets and My proof over My creation. No servant will believe in him except that I will make the Paradise his place of rest. I will accept his intercession for seventy of his family members for whom the Hell would have become obligatory.

For his son 'Ali, My Guardian, My Helper, My witness over My creation and My trustworthy over My revelation, I will end with fortune. I will bring forth from him the caller to My path and the treasure of My Knowledge, al-Hasan.

I will complete that with his son M u h a m m a d, the mercy for the universe. He will have the perfection of Musa, the magnificence of 'Isa and the patience of Ayyub. My beloved ones will be humiliated during his period. Their heads will be given as gifts like the heads of Turks and Daylamis. They will be killed, burnt, will be frightened, terrified and fearful. The Earth will be coloured with their blood. The afflicted sounds of their women will circulate.

Those are My true beloved Gurdians. Through them I will remove every dark mischief. I will remove the earthquakes through them and remove the burdens and chains through them. They are upon whom is blessing and mercy from their Lord. And they are the rightly-guided. 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salim says that Abu Basir said, "If you only hear this one tradition during all your life then it is sufficient for you. Preserve it from all those who do not deserve it."21

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The proofs regarding the divine leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) are more than can be counted in this concise book. We will end this brief section with a noble sermon from Imam al-Sadiq (as) describing the status of infallibility and the divine leadership. The master of the experts of the traditions, Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni has transmitted it from Muhammad ibn Yahya,22 on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa,23 on the authority of al-Hasan ibn Mahbub,24 on the authority of Ishaq ibn Ghalib25 from Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (as), a sermon in which the status and the attributes of the Imams (as) has been described: Surely, Allah, the Mighty and High, elucidated His religion through the Imams of guidance from the Household of our Prophet (S). He has made His path shine through them. He has opened the hidden sources of His Knowledge through them. From the Ummah of Muhammad (S), whoever recognises the obligatory right of his Imam has found the sweetness of the faith. He has also come to know the brilliance of his Islam, because Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has appointed the Imam as a banner for His creation.

He has made the Imam a proof over His bounties and His universe. Allah has dressed him with the crown of honour and has covered him with the light of the Almighty. Due to this the Imam has support from the heavens. The bounties are never disconnected from him. No one can reach what is with Allah except through the Imam. Allah does not accept the deeds of

His servants without the recognition of the Imam. He knows what may come to him of the obscurities of the darkness, the puzzles of the practices and the doubts of the temptations. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, always chooses an Imam for His creation, one after the other from the sons of al-Husayn. He selects them. He is pleased with His creation through them and approves of them. Whenever an Imam passes away from them then Allah appoints for His creation another one as a clear sign, illuminating guide, right leader and learned proof. The Imams are from Allah. They guide to the righteousness and judge with justice. They are the proofs of Allah and they call towards Him. They are His custodians in His creation. The people owe them their guidance. They give light to the civilisations. The inherited possessions grow due to their blessing. Allah has made them a means of life for mankind. They are lights in the darkness, the keys of speech and the pillars of Islam. Due to them, the extents of Allah flow in them for that which is ordained.

Therefore, the Imam is the chosen and the selected. He is the saviour guide. He is the awaited one who will rise. Allah has chosen him for that. When He created the Imam, He created him as His special creation. Before He created the creation, He created the Imams under the right side of His throne in a state that He granted them the wisdom of His unseen knowledge. He chose them for His Knowledge due to their purification.

The Imams were to remain from Adam (as) and they were the best of the children of Nuh (as). They were the chosen ones from the progeny of Ibrahim (as) from the children of Isma'il. They are the chosen ones from the progeny of Muhammad (S). They are always observed by Allah's vision. They are protected and preserved by Allah's cover. The tricks of Iblis (Satan) and his army are pushed away from them.

The hollow darknesses and the effusions of every unjust are kept away from them. The evil loathers are diverted from them. They are free from all imperfections and protected from all (spiritual) calamities. They are infallible of all errors and protected from every indecency. In their young age they are known for their forbearance and goodness. In their old age they are ascribed with chastity, knowledge and virtue. They support the command of their fathers, while keeping quiet during the lives of their fathers.

When the period of their father ends and the Divine Will ends with him, and the Divine Intent comes to him for His love and his father departs from this world, then the command of Allah transfers to him. Allah then makes His religion follow him and makes him the proof over His servants. Allah raises the Imam in His land and endorses him with His spirit. He gives the Imam His Knowledge and informs him of His conclusive explanation. He entrusts His secret with the Imam and assigns him the greatest command.

Allah informs the Imam with the virtue of the explanation of His Knowledge. He raises the Imam as a banner for His creation and makes him a proof over the inhabitants of His universe. He makes him a light for the followers of His religion and a custodian over His servants. Allah is pleased with him as the Imam for them. He entrusts His secret with the Imam and places His Knowledge with him.

He reveals His Wisdom to the Imam and observes him for His religion. Allah revives the courses of His path, divine duties and the divine law through the Imam. The Imam rises with justice with dismay of the ignorant and baffle of the controversial. He stands with radiant light, practical cure, shining truth and flourishing explanations. He stands on the right path, upon which his forefathers, the truthful, passed.

None but the mischievous ignore the right of such a learned Imam. None but the misled reject them. No one turns away from them except that he rebels against Allah, the Mighty and High.²⁶

Indeed, every sentence of this noble sermon requires detailed explanation. We suffice with a few points:

(a)

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) made 'the Imams of guidance' the topic of his sermon to clarify the necessity of the existence of the Imam for the people: (Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam.²⁷

The divine leader of the people must be the leader of guidance. As Allah, the Exalted says: And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command.²⁸

You are only a warner and (there is) a guide for every people.²⁹

The recognition of the Imam of guidance is based on the recognition of guidance. Recognition of guidance requires contemplation upon the verses of the Book that have come about this topic, which exceed two hundred and ninety verses. This short book does not allow us to explain them.

The guidance is perfection for the creation: He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).³⁰

Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who

makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal).³¹

The guidance of every created being is in accordance with its creation. Therefore as the human being is the best of creation, then his guidance is the highest level of the perfection of all creations.

The Imam (as) has explained the greatness of the status of divine leadership by describing them as the Imams of guidance. In fact, he has clarified the specific characteristics of the Imam and what are the requirements of this status for those who observe and reflect.

After a brief summary the Imam (as) goes into detail. He explained the position of the divine leader [Imam] in the divine religion. The Imam is the interpreter of the principles of faith and its branches, because Allah, the Exalted, has not endorsed the views of the creation, which are open to error and dispute. Error and dispute in religion are two calamities that invalidate the purpose of divine law and these two engulf the people into the darkness of misguidance. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has not left a single iota of ambiguity and discrepancy about the principles of His faith and its branches which the Imams of guidance have not explained. As the Imam (as) said: Surely, Allah, the Mighty and High, elucidated His religion through the Imams of guidance from the Household of our Prophet (S).

(b)

The human being, in accordance with his nature, seeks his Exalted Creator. The goal of this nature is not achieved except by sincerely reaching the path to Allah, which is the right religion: Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain.³²

The factors that led astray from the religion of Allah, the Exalted, are present in every age, like human error and desire, and the misleaders from Allah's path from the jinn and man: And follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way;³³ They have taken a small price for the communications of Allah, so they turn away from His way; surely evil is it that they do.³⁴ Thus, the presence of an Imam is necessary to fulfil the purpose of creating this nature—that is to reach Allah—and legislating the right path—that is the religion and the way to Allah—when he (as) said: He has made His path shine through them.

(c)

The purpose of creating the human intellect is to make him realise the reality of knowledge and recognition. The human being demands with the tongue of his nature, from the Giver of wisdom and perception: O Lord, show me the things as they are. Give me self-recognition and make me realise my origination, my presence in this world and my end.

The thirst of human perception is not quenched except by the spring of life of divine knowledge. Otherwise, the result of the human philosophy is also confusion of the perfect beings, which is that they should know that they do not know.

Hence, it is necessary that there be a human being who has access to the spring of life and sources of knowledge and wisdom to quench the thirst of reaching the reality by his own hand. Only thus the purpose of creating wisdom and perception is fulfilled. For this reason, the Imam (as) has said in a reliable citation: Whoever believes that Allah protests through a servant in His land, but hides from him all that which he requires then he has related falsehood to Allah.³⁵

Undoubtedly, the belief that Allah has made a human being a proof over His servants, that He has covered from His proof what His servants are in need of and that He does not teach him, is an accusation upon Allah, the Exalted. This notion has originated from their not knowing the endless Knowledge, Power and Wisdom. Thus, the Imam (as) said: He has opened the hidden sources of His Knowledge through them.

(d)

Allah has dressed him with the crown of honour. The crown of dignity, which is on the head of the Imam (as), is knowledge and power. Thus, it has been reported from Abu al-Hasan al-Rida (as) that when asked about the signs of the Imam (as) he replied: His knowledge and the acceptance of his prayer.³⁶

This sign is because the origin of disarray and insignificance in human beings is ignorance and incapability. Since the Imam is the teacher of the Book of Allah, and he does not separate from it on the basis of the stipulation in the tradition of the Two Weighty Things, and the Book explains everything in accordance with the Word of the Exalted: And We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything;³⁷ therefore, no knowledge from the knowledge of the Divine Book escapes him.

This point can be derived from a reliable tradition: It is reported on the authority of Ibn Bukayr from Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq (as) that, "I was with the Imam when Sulayman was mentioned to him and the knowledge he was given and the kingdom he was bestowed. Thus, the Imam (as) said to me: What was given to Sulayman ibn Dawud? Surely, he only had one word from the great names. And as for your master for whom Allah has said: Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the entire

Book.38

By Allah, 'Ali had the knowledge of the complete Book. I said: By Allah, you are saying the truth. May I be your ransom!"³⁹

Thus, due to the connection with Allah's affair, the Imam has every prayer granted to him. With this knowledge and power, he is dressed with the crown of honour.

(e)

Allah has covered him with the light of the Almighty. The word 'light' is annexed to the Holy Name 'Almighty'. The annexation to any divine name acquires its qualities simply due to the annexation.

Allah is the Almighty who restores every broken thing: O Setter of broken bones.⁴⁰

The Imam is covered with the light of the Almighty so that he can restore every break or defect regarding Islam and the Muslims.

(f)

The Imams are from Allah. They guide to the righteousness and judge with justice. The Imam is the chosen human being from Allah, the Exalted. He is the selected one by Allah's selection and raised by Allah for the divine leadership and guidance. Thus, when an Imam passes away then Allah appoints another one in his place as a clear sign, illuminating guide, right leader and learned proof to serve the purpose of human creation and the sending of the Prophets (as). That purpose can be summarised in two expressions: guidance to the righteous and justice for the righteous. These two are the outcome of the theoretical and practical wisdom, and the conclusion of human perfection in intellect and intent.

These two matters are ascertained through intellect, that understands things as they are, and through intent that rises for every action as it should. This is the status of intellectual and practical infallibility, and why the Imam (as) said: The Imams are from Allah. They guide to righteousness and judge with justice.

(g)

Allah has chosen him for that. When He created the Imam, He created him as His special creation. Allah made the intrinsic nature of the Imam under the right side of His throne. Allah nurtured him with His vision and grants him the wisdom to His unseen knowledge. There is no course for anyone to it: Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle.⁴¹

In this origination, as for lineage, the Imams are from the best of the progeny of Nuh (as), from the chosen ones of the children of Ibrahim (as), from the selected ones of the offspring of Isma'il (as) and the most sincere from the progeny of Muhammad (S). In their physical form, the Imams are free from all deficiencies, and in their spirit they are infallible from all errors and protected from all sins.

Iblis (Satan) has been kept away from their holy beings as he has been quoted: Then by Thy Might I will surely make them all live an evil life, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones.⁴²

This is due to the honour that has come their way under the shadow of Allah's service: Surely, as regards My servants, you have no authority over them.⁴³

The speech of the Imam (as): then the command of Allah transfers to him indicates that the command of Allah transfers from the former Imam to the subsequent one. This command is that which has come in an authentic tradition from al-Sadiq (as): Surely, Allah is One, Unified in Oneness. He is Peerless in His Command. Thus, He created a creation to whom He gave power over that command. O son of Abu Ya'fur, we are that creation. We are the proofs of Allah over His servants. We store His Knowledge and we are firm with it.⁴⁴

(h)

Allah endorses him with His spirit. The spirit that Allah has endorsed the Imam with is explained in the authentic tradition reported on the authority of Abu Basir saying: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (as) saying: And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord.⁴⁵

The Imam (as) said: This (soul) is superior to (the angels) Jibra'il and Mika'il. It was not with anyone who has passed away except Muhammad (S) and it is with the Imams (as). It directs them. It is not that whatever is demanded is found.⁴⁶

(i)

He gives the Imam His Knowledge. It has come in an authentic tradition from Abu Ja'far (as) saying: Surely, Allah has Knowledge that no one knows other than Him and He has knowledge that He has given to His angels, His prophets and His messengers. Thus, we have all that. He then pointed to his chest.⁴⁷

(j)

He entrusts His secret with the Imam. It has come in an authentic tradition reported on the authority of Mu'ammarr ibn Khalad from Abu al-Hasan (as) that: The knower cannot inform of what he knows because it is a secret of Allah. He gave the secret to Jibra'il (as). Jibra'il

brought it to Muhammad (S) and Muhammad (S) gave it to whomever Allah willed.⁴⁸

(k)

Allah is pleased with them as the Imams for them. Undoubtedly, the Ummah needs an Imam. The Imam must be one with whom Allah is pleased. However, who is the Imam with whom Allah is pleased?

Between knowledge and ignorance, Allah is pleased with knowledge: Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike?⁴⁹

Between safety and calamity, He is pleased with safety: With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety.⁵⁰

Between wisdom and foolishness, He is pleased with wisdom: He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good.⁵¹

Between justice and injustice, He is pleased with justice: Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good.⁵²

Between truth and falsehood, He is pleased with truth: And say: The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing).⁵³

Between right and wrong, He is pleased with right: They shall not speak except he whom the Beneficent permits and who speaks the right thing.⁵⁴

Therefore, Allah would only be pleased with an Imam for the Ummah who has the attributes which Allah is pleased with. Amongst those attributes are knowledge, justice, safety, wisdom, righteousness, truth and guidance.

From another angle, we see that choosing the best is liked by Allah, the Exalted: Therefore give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it.⁵⁵

Allah also orders to take hold of the best: And enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof.⁵⁶

He commands for the best speech: And say to My servants (that) they speak that which is best.⁵⁷

He commands to have disputations—if need be—in the best manner: And have disputations with them in the best manner.⁵⁸

When it is necessary, repel and reject in the best way: Repel evil by what is best.⁵⁹

Allah rewards for the best deeds: And We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.⁶⁰

He reveals that which is best: Allah has revealed the best announcement.⁶¹

Now then, is it possible that He would choose someone for divine leadership who is not the best, the most perfect, the most virtuous, the most learned, the most just, etc. and someone who does not contain the noble characteristics mentioned in the tradition?

The necessity of commanding to follow the best is that the best be followed. Then how can it be logical that Allah would be pleased with the leadership and obedience of someone who is not the best?

And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure?⁶²

Hence, the Imam (as) has said: Allah assigns him the greatest command. He informs the Imam with the virtue of the explanation of His Knowledge. He raises the Imam as a banner for His creation and makes him a proof over the inhabitants of His universe. He makes them a light for the followers of His religion and a custodian over His servants. Allah is pleased with them as the Imams for His creation.

Notes:

1. Sahih al-Bukhari: Kitab al-Ahkam, vol. 8, pp 127; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 93.
2. Sahih Muslim: vol. 6, pp 3.
3. Sahih Muslim: vol. 6, pp 3; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 98.
4. Sahih Ibn Habban: vol. 15, pp 43.
5. Sunan al-Tirmidhi: vol. 3, pp 340.
6. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 92.
7. Ibid.
8. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 99.
9. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 108.
10. Musnad by Ibn Ju'd: pp 390, no. 266.
11. Musnad Abu Ya'la: vol. 13, pp 456.
12. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 93.
13. Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn: vol. 4, pp 501.
14. Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn: vol. 3, pp 618; Sunan Abu Dawud: vol. 2, pp 309; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 1, pp 398, & 406, vol. 5, pp 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 97, 100, 101, 106, 107 & 108; Musnad Abu Ya'la: vol. 8, pp 444, vol. 9, pp 222; Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir: vol. 2, pp 196, 197, 199, 206, 207, 208, 214, 215, 218, 223, 226, 240, 248, 253, 254 & 255, vol. 10, pp 157, & vol. 22, pp 120; Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat: vol. 1, pp 263; Al-Ahad wa-al-Mathani: vol. 3, pp 128;

Al-Tarikh al-Kabir by al-Bukhari: vol. 3, pp 185, vol. 8, pp 410; Tahdhib al-Kamal: vol. 3, pp 223, & 224, vol. 33, pp 272; Al-Thiqat by Ibn Habban: vol. 7, pp 241; Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin in Isbhan: vol. 2, pp 89; Musnad Abu Dawud al-Tiyalisi: pp 105 & 180; Ta'jil al-Manfa'at bi-Zawa'id Rijal al-A'immat al-Arba'ah: pp 538; Tarikh Baghdad: vol. 14, pp 354; Tarikh Madinah Damishq: vol. 21, pp 288, vol. 32, pp 303; ...; Siyar A'lam al-Nubala': vol. 8, pp 184; and other many more Sunni sources.

Kashf al-Ghita': vol. 1, pp 7; 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 1, pp 49, ch. 6, hadith no. 9; Al-Khisal: pp 467...; Al-Amali by al-Saduq: pp 386, ch. 51, hadith no. 4, pp 387...; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mat: pp 68 & 271, ...; Kifayat al-Athar: pp 35, 49, &...; Rawdat al-Wa'izin: pp 261 & 262; Dala'il al-Imamat: pp 20; Sharh al-Akhbar: vol. 3, pp 400; Kitab al-Ghaybah: pp 103, 117, 118, 120 &...; Al-Ghaybah by al-Tusi: pp 128 &...; Manaqib Al Abu Talib: vol. 1, pp 295; Al-'Umdah: pp 416 &...; Al-Tara'if: pp 169 &...; and other Shi'i sources.

15. Holy Qur'an, 5: 12.

16. Holy Qur'an, 42: 23.

17. Yanabi' al-Mawaddah: vol. 3, pp 292.

18. Kashf al-Ghita': vol. 1, pp 7.

19. Genesis: 17.

20. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah: 269.

21. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 527, ch. The Twelve Imams.

22. Al-Najashi says in his praise: He was the Shaykh of our teachers in his time. He was trustworthy and eminent. He reported some six thousand traditions.

23. He is the Shaykh of the residents of Qum. He is distinguished from them and is their jurist. He needs no defence. He is from the companions of al-Rida, al-Jawad and al-Hadi (A).

24. He is one of the four that were the pillars of their time. He is one of the companions of the consensus [ashab al-ijma], on whom all the schools of thought (of the Shi'ah) have a consensus that whatever is transmitted from them with an authentic chain is correct. He is among the companions of Imam al-Kazim and Imam al-Rida (A).

25. He has specific narrations in his authentication from the likes of Safwan ibn Yahya.

26. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 203, Kitab al-Hujjah: Fadl al-Imam wa Sifatuh, hadith no. 2.

27. Holy Qur'an, 17: 71.

28. Holy Qur'an, 32: 24.

29. Holy Qur'an, 13: 7.

30. Holy Qur'an, 20: 50.

31. Holy Qur'an, 87: 1-3.

32. Holy Qur'an, 12: 108.

33. Holy Qur'an, 6: 153.

34. Holy Qur'an, 9: 9.

35. Basa'ir al-Darajat: pp 143, part 3, ch. Nadir, hadith no. 4.

36. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 2, pp 200, ch. 46, hadith no. 1.

37. Holy Qur'an, 16: 89.

38. Holy Qur'an, 13: 43.

39. Basa'ir al-Darajat: pp 232, part 5, ch. Knowledge of the Imam (A).

40. Tafsir al-'Ayyashi: vol. 2, pp 198, hadith no. 88 ch.12; Misbah al-Mutahajjid: pp 228.

41. Holy Qur'an, 72: 27.

42. Holy Qur'an, 40: 82-3.

43. Holy Qur'an, 15: 42.

44. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 193, hadith no. 5.

45. Holy Qur'an, 17: 85.

46. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 273, hadith no. 4.

47. Basa'ir al-Darajat: part 2, pp 130, ch. The Imams (A)... hadith no. 5.

48. Basa'ir al-Darajat: part 8, pp 398, ch. The Imams (A)... hadith no. 6.

49. Holy Qur'an, 39: 9.

50. Holy Qur'an, 5: 16.

51. Holy Qur'an, 2: 269.

52. Holy Qur'an, 16: 90.

53. Holy Qur'an, 17: 81.

54. Holy Qur'an, 78: 38.

55. Holy Qur'an, 39: 18.

56. Holy Qur'an, 7: 145.

57. Holy Qur'an, 17: 53.

58. Holy Qur'an, 16: 125.

59. Holy Qur'an, 23: 96.

60. Holy Qur'an, 16: 97.

61. Holy Qur'an, 39: 23.

62. Holy Qur'an, 5: 50.