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Comparative Study of the Impossibility of Committing Sins by Prophets

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المستخلص

تبحث الدراسة الحالية في ادعاء ما إذا كانت وجهة نظر الشيعة متأثرة أم لا بالمعتزلة في إحدى قضايا النبوة المسماة عصمة الأنبياء. نفترض أن هناك بعض الاختلافات ، وفي نفس الوقت ، بعض الآراء المشتركة بينهما ؛ لكن في بعض الأجزاء ، تكون وجهة نظر الشيعة مستقلة عن وجهة نظر المعتزلة. وهكذا فإن الموضوع قيد التحقيق يُنظر فيه مبدئياً من وجهة نظر المعلقين الشيعة ، وهم الشيخ الطبرسي ، وأبو الفتوح الرازي ، وفىض كاشاني ، ثم التحقيق من وجهة نظر المعتزلة. الخلاصة الموجزة هي كالتالي: على عكس المعتزلة ، يعتقد الإمامية المتكلم (علماء الكلام) المكونة من الطبرسي وأبو الفتوح وفىض أن الأنبياء (عليهم السلام) أبرياء من أي صغير وكبير. الذنوب - لا مقصودة ولا غير مقصودة. وعلى هذا القول ، فإن الأنبياء لم يرتكبوا ذنوب ، ولم يتركوا أي واجبات لأن هذا منافية للأدب ومكروه ، وكل ما هو غير لائق بعيداً عنهم ، ولا يتوافق مع غرض الله وغايته بوحى الأنبياء. من ناحية أخرى ، يقول المعتزلة إنه على الرغم من أن الأنبياء ، لا عن قصد أو بغير قصد ، لم يرتكبوا الكبائر ، إلا أنهم قد يرتكبون عن غير قصد خطايا صغيرة ، وهذا لا يتعارض مع حالة النبوة ورسالتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النفوذ ، النبوة ، العصمة ، الشيعة ، المعتزلة ، الطبرسي ، أبو الفتوح الرازي ، الفىض كاشاني ، مجمع البيان ، روض الجنان ، الصافي

Abstract

The present study investigates the claim whether or not Shiite's viewpoint is influenced by Mu'tazila on one of the issues of prophecy called the infallibility of the prophets. We hypothesize that there are some differences and, at the same time, some common views between them; in some parts, however, Shiite's view is independent of that of the Mu'tazila. Thus, the issue under investigation is initially examined from the viewpoint of the Shiite commentators, consisting of Shaykh Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh al-Razi, and Fayz Kashani, and then investigated from the viewpoint of the Mu'tazila. The brief conclusion is as follows: unlike the Mu'tazilites, Imamiyah mutakallims (scholars of Kalam), consisting of Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh, and Fayz, believe that the prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) were innocent of any minor and major sins - neither intentional nor unintentional. According to this view, the prophets neither committed any sins, nor did they omit any obligatory acts since this is indecent and hated and whatever is indecent is away from them and does not comply with the object and purpose of Allah by the revelation of prophets. On the other hand, Mu'tazilites argue that although prophets, neither intentionally nor unintentionally, did not commit major sins, they might unintentionally commit minor sins, and this does not contradict the status of prophecy and their mission .

Key words : influence , prophecy , infallibility , Shia , Mu'tazila , Tabarsi , Abu al-Futuh al-Razi , Fayz Kashani , Majma' al-Bayan , Rawd al-Jinan , al-Safi.

Introduction and statement of the problem

To advance its goals, every group and community needs an informed, capable leader with competent management skills, who is accepted by the majority of the group. Without a leader, society can be divided, and division is the cause of the disintegration of a society.

The importance of prophecy along with the value of the some tafsirs, consisting of Tabarsi's Majma' al-Bayan, Abu al-Futuh al-Razi's Rawd al-Jinan, and Fayz Kashani's al-Safi, as well as the closeness of the Mu'tazila's view to that of Shia, compared to the other schools of thought, led to investigate the claim that Shiite's viewpoint is influenced by Mu'tazila on the infallibility of the prophets.

In order to investigate the issue, Shia viewpoints offered by Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh and Fayz on the infallibility of the prophets, and the related characteristics, are initially examined; then, the views of Mu'tazila are scrutinized, and finally the results of this study are presented.

In this research, prophecy is examined through Tabarsi's commentary on verse 159 of Surah Ali 'Imran, 105 of Surah al-Baqarah, 32 of Surah az-Zukhruf, the initial verses of Surah 'Abasa, Abu al-Futuh's commentary on the initial verses of Surah 'Abasa, 83 of Surah Al-Anbya, 121 of Surah Taha, 19 of Surah Al-A'raf, and Fayz's commentary on verse 105 of Surah Al-Baqarah, 32 of Surah az-Zukhruf, and the initial verses of Surah 'Abasa.

Discussion and conclusions

Firstly, the issue of prophecy is examined from the viewpoint of some Shiite mutakallims, consisting of Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh, and Fayz Kashani, and then the view of the Mu'tazilites is examined. And finally, the results of this study are discussed.

Viewpoints of Shiite Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh, and Fayz Kashani on the characteristics of the prophets

Shia viewpoint

Shiites believe that "a Prophet should not have qualities that bring hatred; if he has such features, people won't respect him. A Prophet should make some dignity that people can feel by their hearts. He should be so wise and smart that is not deceived, as the deceived are ridiculed and enchanted by people. On the assumption that people consider the Prophet pure and honest, even if his honesty comes as a result of being simple minded, they would not respect and obey him, unless they know that the Prophet cannot be deceived when making decisions. Thus, he

must be determined and strong in his opinion and what he predicts should come true. We have learned from our experience that even if scholars are characterized by these attributes and enjoy knowledge and piety, they do not have such status in the eyes of the people; thus, prophets, who are appointed by Allah to promote religion, must be dignified so that their purpose is not defeated.

Furthermore, a Prophet should not make an unintentional mistake, because if he makes a mistake once, his action will not be regarded as a proof and his obedience cannot be considered obligatory. That is because of the fact that when Muslims hear that the Prophet once bought certain stuff, made a specific deal, or did something on a journey, they would at least consider a permission to do the same.

Moreover, the status of the prophet's ancestors should not be in a way that people can belittle him because of that; his mother should also be pious. A Prophet should not be arrogant and strict in a way that people hate him. He should not also suffer from some disgusting diseases such as urinary incontinence, leprosy, or vitiligo. A Prophet also needs to avoid nasty habits such as eating on the road and the like. If we want to technically argue with the deniers of the prophets' infallibility, we can refer to the holy verse, "*Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you*" ('Ali Imran, 159). Allah wants people to be attracted by the Prophet; thus, everything that is hateful, such as malice, cruelty, or any other bad attribute mentioned in the Holy Quran, should be kept away from him. The deniers are deeply fascinated by what can be concluded from this verse. This argument, in their own way, is a conclusive proof that can remind them of their erroneous belief in this regard (Sha'rani, Persian Explanation of Tajridol-E'teghad, 1952, pp. 487-489).

Contrary to the distortions of the Torah, to which some writings have been added by some authors and which have attributed improper attributes to the divine prophets, Allah has cherished His prophets in different verses of the Holy Quran and has used the best words to describe them. In what follows, some examples are presented.

Surah Maryam: *And mention in the Book // O Prophet, the story of // Abraham. He was surely a man of truth and a prophet (41); And mention in the Book // O Prophet, the story of // Moses. He was truly a chosen man, and was a messenger and a prophet (51); And mention in the Book // O Prophet, the story of // Ishmael. He was truly a man of his word, and*

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was a messenger and a prophet (54); And mention in the Book // O Prophet, the story of// Enoch. He was surely a man of truth and a prophet (56); And We elevated him to an honorable status (57).

He has described Abraham as a man of truth, Moses as a chosen man, Ishmael as a man of his word, and Enoch as a man of truth, who has been raised to an honorable and high status by Allah.

Surah Sad: *And remember Our servants: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the men of strength and insight (45); We truly chose them for the honor of proclaiming the Hereafter (46); And in Our sight they are truly among the chosen and the finest (47); Also remember Ishmael, Elisha, and Zul-Kifl. All are among the best (48).*

In Surah Sad, Allah has again named them with good and respectful words. They are the possessors of wisdom and insight, and are purified, chosen, and among the best.

In his book called "The Mehr Commentary on the Holy Quran" (2008), while commenting on the above verses, Rezaei Isfahani mentions that "in these verses, six divine prophets and their attributes are mentioned, which can be regarded as excellent patterns by people.

In the abovementioned verses, six characteristics of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are enumerated:

First is the status of worship and servitude to Allah, which is the absolute dependence on Him; that is, they had no will against Allah, were needless of all other than Him, and look forward to His grace; this servitude to Allah is one of the highest levels of human spiritual development.

Second and third, they had strong hands and keen eyes, meaning that they benefited from the forces of both science and power; they were both good at recognizing the situations and doing the best actions.

Fourth, they constantly proclaimed the Hereafter, and their vision was not limited to the worldly life.

Fifth, they were the chosen men by Allah who have been honored with the position of prophecy.

And sixth, they were good people in every sense of the word" (Rezaei Isfahani, 2008, pp. 310-311).

Investigating the culture of Quran in introducing the divine messengers offers a conclusive argument in this regard. It emphasizes that the prophets should have good and outstanding attributes, as they are the representatives of the Almighty. By focusing on the issue, it can also

be concluded that Allah has given special respect to such chosen messengers. However, it is so regretful that some of His servants do not understand the high importance and value of the prophecy and make an unequal deal and a total loss for themselves by doing so. *"To themselves they used to do injustice and killed the prophets unjustly"*.

Tabarsi's viewpoint: on verse 159 of Surah Ali 'Imran: *"It is out of Allah's mercy that you O Prophet have been lenient with them. Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you. So pardon them, ask Allah's forgiveness for them, and consult with them in conducting matters. Once you make a decision, put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust in Him"*, Tabarsi explains about the characteristics of the Prophet (PBUH) (Majma 'al-Bayan, 312):

This verse indicates that our Prophet (PBUH) uniquely enjoyed good morals and good deeds, and one of the wonders about him was that he had the highest moral status among all, as his ancestors were among the best, his status was the highest, and he was the most eloquent and the purest. At the same time, he was the most humble of all. As some instances of his humble behavior, it can be said that he patched his own clothes, fixed his sandals, rode on a donkey, accepted the invitations of the servants and slaves, sat on the ground, and conveyed the message of Allah to people, without anger, frustration and resentment" (Ibid., 315).

In the commentary on verse 105 of Surah Al-Baqarah, the attribute of mercy in Prophet Mohammad is described as follows:

"but Allah selects whoever He wills for His mercy". The real mercy is the blessing; by mercy here, it means the position of prophecy. This means that the Almighty should give prophecy and the book to whomever He wills. Prudence demanded to give prophecy and divine mission to Muhammad (PBUH), as he was the best, the most virtuous creation, the most honest in fulfilling the divine mission, and the farthest from hated deeds. Thus, Allah calls his prophecy as mercy and describes him as all mercy: *"We have sent you O Prophet only as a mercy for the whole world"* (Al-Anbya, 107). Prophecy means mercy as mentioned in Quran, *"Is it they who distribute your Lord's mercy?"* (Al-Zukhruf, 32). This is a reply to those who said, *"If only this Quran was revealed to a great man from one of the two cities?"* (Al-Zukhruf, 31) (Ibid, 98).

Tabarsi's view on the word "mercy" in verses 105 of Surah al-Baqarah and 32 of al-Zukhruf is presented below:

Verse 105 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "but Allah selects whoever He wills for His mercy".

It is narrated from Imam Ali (as) and Imam Baqir (as) that the meaning of "mercy" here is prophecy; the same meaning has been stated by Hassan, Abu Ali, Romani, and other commentators. They have affirmed that the meaning of the sentence is the following "Allah grants the prophecy to whomever He wills of His servants"(Majma 'al-Bayan, p. 299)

Verse 32 of Surah Al-Zukhruf, "*Is it they who distribute your Lord's mercy?*", means that "do the disbelievers want to distribute your Lord's mercy, which is the prophecy, among people? And he states that it is only Allah who distributes prophecy among people; Maqatel states, "are the keys of mission and prophecy in the hands of people in such a way that they can place it wherever they want?" (Ibid., pp. 216-217).

Commenting on the first verses of Surah 'Abasa, Tabarsi states that, "in this, there is a great grace from Allah to His Prophet because Allah did not use frowning for His prophet. After the word "frowning", He addressed the Prophet himself and said, "*But what would make you perceive, O Prophet*" (Ibid., p. 301).

Abu al-Futuh's view: In commenting on the first verses of Surah 'Abasa, he says: "*He frowned and turned his attention away*"

However, there is disagreement among the commentators as to who is described by the word "frowny" and to whom this attribute refers? Some said that it refers to the prophet. However, the researchers argued that this cannot be attributed to the prophet, as this is a negative and hated attribute; even if this can be found in some fuqaha and scholars, this cannot be attributed to the Prophet (PBUH), as Allah removed him from these bad attributes; "*Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you*" (Surah Ali 'Imran, verse 159); Allah describes him with respect, considering him to have good nature; "*And indeed, you are of a great moral character*" (Surah Al-Qalam, verse 4). Successive narrations confirm that the Prophet (PBUH) was so kind not only to the friends and believers, but also to the enemies and disbelievers (Razi, Ibid, p. 47).

In commenting on verse 83 of Surah Al-Anbya about the life story of Job (PBUH), Abu al-Futuh refers to some commentary by Wahb ibn

Munabbih and criticizes them because of their irrationality and inadequacy in describing the prophets. (*"And [remember] when Job cried out to his Lord, "I have been touched with adversity, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful."*)

Some narrators such as Wahb, Ka'b, and some others have said very impossible, improper, and indecent things about the story of Job; what they mentioned is against the rationality of prophecy. They have attributed many shameful things to Allah and Job. We have preserved this book from such improper statements which are against the intellects of the prophecy and the principles of the religion.

Satan (may Allah's condemnation be upon him) was helpless and astonished in defrauding Job; Every time he wanted to tempt Job and ruin any of his worships, he couldn't. Thus, Satan said: O Allah! There is not a servant on earth today more pious and thankful than Job. And his obedience and thankfulness is due to the fact that You have given him wealth and children. I guess if you test him and take them away from him, he won't tolerate it and will disbelieve in you. Allah replied, "he is a good servant of mine both in ease and hardship, and if I turn all the blessing into hardship, he will not disbelieve in me.

Wahb continues:

In that situation, Satan said, "O Allah! Give me the control of his property".

Allah replied, "Go, for I have given you the control of his property". Satan went and destroyed all his properties. Job increased his gratefulness to Allah. Then, Satan said, "make me dominant over his children". Allah replied, "I just did, except over his heart and tongue". It is not acceptable that Allah makes Satan dominant over His prophets and close servants.

And then, they stated many improper things about Job's illness. They mentioned, for instance, that Job's corpse was deserted in one of the temples of the Children of Israel and a worm was inside his body; no one could pass near his corpse due to the very unpleasant smell. This can be said about the prophets only by those who do not know and respect the position of prophets. We mentioned earlier that it is inappropriate for the prophets to have any hated attribute, neither given by Allah nor possessed by themselves. What they stated confirms that the old purpose set by Allah through creating and sending the prophets is void and Allah is definitely away from this.

However, we consider true the severity of Job's illness and the increase of his pains and difficulties, since Allah gives His grace to the prophets and elevates their position through testing them; on the other hand, there are lots of options to complete this grace. It will be acceptable as long as the illness is not so severe that causes people to hate him; such illnesses include vitiligo, leprosy, madness, hated wounds, and circumstances that make a visual ugliness and unpleasant smell (Ibid., p. 260).

Fayz's viewpoint: on verse 105 of Surah al-Baqarah, he mentions: *"The disbelievers from the People of the Book and the polytheists would not want you to receive any blessing from your Lord"*. They don't want any obvious signs and any undeniable reasons for proving the prophecy of Muhammad (PBUH), the dignity of him, and the members of his family sent to them by your Lord.

"but Allah selects whoever He wills for His mercy. And Allah is the Lord of infinite bounty". Allah chooses whoever He wants to follow Islam and to love Muhammad (PBUH).

In Majma 'al-Bayan, it is quoted from Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam Ali (as) that, "by mercy, it means prophecy." (Tabarsi, p. 179) (Fayz Kashani, 2007, p. 246)

Fayz's commentary on verse 32 of Surah Al-Zukhruf, *"Is it they who distribute your Lord's mercy?"* (Safi, 2006, p. 14)

Fayz's commentary on the interpretation of the initial verses of Surah 'Abasa:

"He (Uthman) frowned and turned his face, because there entered the blind man (i.e. 'Abdullah bin Umm-Maktûm, who came to the place where Prophet was talking to one or some of the Quraish chiefs).

This verse was revealed about Abdullah bin Umm-Maktum and Uthman. Umm-Maktum, who was a blind man and a muezzin of the Prophet (PBUH), came to the Prophet while the prophet's companions, among whom Uthman was one, were sitting next to him. The Prophet respected the blind man more than Uthman, but Uthman frowned and turned away from the blind man. So, Allah send down these first verse of Surah 'Abasa and said, "he turned his face", that refers to Uthman turning away when the blind man entered (Qummi Commentary, p. 140), (Ibid., p. 280).

Investigating the views of Shiites, Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh, Fayz Kashani, and Mu'tazilites on the infallibility of the prophets

One of the attributes of the prophets is their infallibility, which is studied here because of its importance compared to other attributes.

Ali ibn Babawayh says, "Our belief in the dignity of the prophets, messengers, imams, and angels, may God's blessings be upon them all, is that they are infallible, purified, and away from all filth. They commit no sin, neither minor, nor major. They do not disobey the Almighty; they do whatever they are commanded and commissioned to do. Whoever does not consider them infallible in any state of their affairs, then surely he is ignorant of their position and whoever becomes ignorant of them is a disbeliever."

And we believe in their dignity, infallibility, perfection, completion, and knowledge, from the beginning of their command to the end. In no case are they characterized as flawed, sinful, or ignorant "(Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 1992, pp. 117-118).

In describing infallibility, Mulla Muhammad Mahdi Naraqi says: "know that infallibility means a person doesn't invite and tempt others to commit sins, though he is able to do so. Twelver Shi'ism, which is a righteous branch of Islam, *unanimously* agrees that the prophets must be infallible from all sins. We mention three reasons for the infallibility of the prophets here:

The first reason is that there is no doubt that sending of the Prophet is a blessing from Allah to His servants and the completion of this grace is based on the prophet's infallibility from any error or sin, because if he was not infallible, neither his words nor his deeds would be trusted. If there is no trust in his words and deeds, the followers, as expected, will not obey all his deeds and sayings; in that case, the grace will not be completed, since the grace will be completed when his absolute obedience is carried out. Yet, if it was permissible for him to commit a sin, he would sometimes command people to commit sins and prevent them from obedience, and this is against grace; thus the "prophet" must be away from all sins and errors.

The second reason is that there is no doubt that the "prophet" is the bearer of divine rules and the treasurer of the secrets of divinity; he is trustworthy in sending the revelations of Allah and also he is a bearer of all His laws, including His commands and His prohibitions. He is the authority of Allah over His worshipers and His executor on the earth;

thus, there is no doubt that this position and status cannot be accompanied with committing sins. And how will Allah appoint someone whom He doesn't trust and whom is like the other people, to fulfill all these great responsibilities?

Sometimes an ignorant person who is unaware of the hidden and the heart of the matters trusts a person who is a wrongdoer and unfaithful in his affairs; however, this is due to his lack of knowledge about the inside of that person; otherwise, it is impossible that he does such a thing. Thus, Allah, *who is the Knower of all unseen*, is aware of the conscience and the inside of His servants and is insightful about them. It is impossible for Him to trust a person who is sinful and not trustworthy, dominate such a person over others, and entrust him with the great affairs mentioned above.

The third reason, mentioned by other scholars, is that a person who deserves the prophecy is one whose whole natural and carnal powers obey his intellect; the one whose all powers are subordinate to his intellect is worthy of prophecy. It is impossible for him to commit a sin because all the sins are ugly through the eyes of the intellect. A person commits a sin when one of his powers, such as the power of anger or the power of lust, prevails over his intellect. If that does not happen, it is impossible for him to commit a sin and this is a sound, strong, and sufficient reason (Naraq, 1990, pp. 97-99).

Furthermore, Fayyaz Lahiji describes infallibility as follows:

Infallibility is a grace devoted by Allah to a group that pursue a divine aim and achieving this aim depends upon the grace of Allah; prophecy can be taken as an example here. The purpose of sending the prophets is conveying the message of Allah and this is not achieved except by obtaining absolute knowledge of the honesty of the prophets. And the attainment of certain knowledge is dependent on avoiding lies, and avoiding lies is dependent upon infallibility. Therefore, the infallibility of the prophets becomes obligatory in three ways:

One is that infallibility is a grace to the prophets in conveying the message, which is a special duty for them. One kind of grace is to be obligated to perform the duty. And infallibility is also required to perform the special duty, which is delivering the message.

Infallibility is a grace given to the prophets in delivering the message, which is their specific duty. Grace is a blessing given by Allah to His servants in order to help them fulfill their duties; Infallibility is also given

to the prophets to help them fulfill their specific duty, which is conveying the message of Allah.

Secondly, the infallibility of the prophets is a grace, and this causes the followers to affirm the prophets; when prophets are infallible, the followers will get closer to the affirmation of the prophets.

And in explaining these two aspects, we use the same way applied in the first part:

The infallibility of the prophets is a grace and every grace is obligatory. It can be concluded that the infallibility of the prophets is obligatory.

Thirdly, achieving the divine purpose pursued by sending the prophets depends on their infallibility. So if there is no infallibility, the divine purpose will not be achieved.

And the obligation of the prophets' infallibility means the absolute avoidance from committing sins, neither major sins nor minor ones, neither intentionally nor unintentionally, neither before their prophecy nor after their prophecy"(Lahiji, 2003, pp. 90-91).

The science that we call infallibility differs from the other sciences in that this science, whose effect is preventing human from doing ugly deeds and forcing him to do good deeds, is permanent and definite, and this is never violated; it is unlike the other sciences that have non-permanent and even higher effect on human inhibition (Ibid., p. 221).

This knowledge means the permanent presence of infallibility, with its definite and permanent effect. However, does it change the main human nature, which is being free in doing any action voluntarily? Doesn't it force him to be infallible? How can it do that while this awareness itself is one of the principles of free will? In fact, this awareness cannot merely let the avoidance of committing sins, but the awareness will strengthen the will. For example, when a person who seeks his health is convinced that something is an instant killer, no matter how strong his conviction is, it does not force him to avoid taking the poison, but rather forces him to avoid drinking the poisonous liquid by his own free will. In fact, a cause forces a person to do an action or to give it up when it takes the person out of one of the two sides, i.e. doing the action or abandoning it, and makes the possibility of doing or abandoning the action into the refusal of the other. This means that the prophets are aware of the devil of the sins and that causes them to give it up. That is to say that it is not the infallibility given by Allah, but one

which is the result of their awareness of the consequences of committing sins.

The witness for this fact is verses 87 and 88 of Surah Al-An'am: "*and We chose them and We guided them to a straight path*". This implies that ascribing of a partner to Allah is possible to be done by prophets, though Allah chose them and guided them. In other words, being selected and guided by Allah did not force them to believe. And this is also implied in some other verses, including verse 67 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, "*O Messenger! Convey everything revealed to you from your Lord. If you do not, then you have not delivered His message.*"

Therefore, the infallibles give up sins by their own will, and if we attribute their avoidance to their infallibility, it is like attributing the avoidance of the non-infallibles to the power granted to them by Allah (Ibid., p. 221). In Al-Bab al-Hadi 'Ashar, Allamah Al-Hilli mentions that, "infallibility is a hidden and invisible grace that Allah gives to his servants (Allamah Al-Hilli, 1986, p. 175).

The reason for the superiority of the prophets is that they had lust, anger, and other powers against the power of reason and they made those powers subjugated and obedient to reason; in this way, they remained infallible; however, the angels, who are infallible, do not have powers like lust and anger and their infallibility is like the innocence of children. On the other hand, the infallibility of the prophets is like that of a healthy, strong young man with lust and anger.

Allamah Al-Hilli mentions that most Muslims believe in this and some of them consider the angels to be superior; earlier, however, the previous scholars considered the angels to be superior. Here, Allamah meant the Greek philosophers believed neither in angels nor in prophets to consider one superior to the other. On the other hand, by angels they might mean the prophets. Angel might also mean the same thing as universal intellect and heavenly souls or creatures. In mutakallims' viewpoint, superior means the more noble in the sight of Allah and in fact, one is more honored and noble who is more righteous with more rewards (Sha'rani, ibid., pp. 506 -507).

Imam Ridha (as) defending the infallibility of the prophets

Abasalt Heravi says, "when Ma'mun gathered the scholars of different Islamic branches, together with the scholars of Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Mandaeism and other theologians, in a meeting with Imam Ridha (as), anyone who stood up, and raised a

question, received a decisive answer and remained silent as if a stone had been stuck in his mouth. At the end of the meeting, Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Jahm stood up and asked, "O Ibn Rasoul Allah! Do you believe in the infallibility of the prophets?"

Imam replied, "Yes, I do". Ali (ibn Jahm) continued, "then, what do you say about these verses: So Adam disobeyed his Lord, and $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ so $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ lost his way (Taha, 121); And $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ remember $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ when the Man of the Whale stormed off $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ from his city $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ in a rage, thinking We would not restrain him (Al-Anbya, 87); And she certainly desired him. And he had desired her (Yusuf, 24); Then David realized that We had tested him (Saad, 24)."

Imam said, "O woe! Poor Ali (ibn Jahm)! Fear Allah and do not attribute ugliness to His prophets! And do not interpret Allah's book with your own opinion. Allah said, *"but none grasps their $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ full $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ meaning except Allah. As for those well-grounded in knowledge"* (Ali 'Imran, 7); Now, about Adam and the verse that says, *"So Adam disobeyed his Lord, and $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ so $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ lost his way* (Taha, 121). Allah created Adam as his authority on earth and his deputy in the cities; Allah did not create Adam for paradise, and this action was done by Adam in paradise, not on earth. Infallibility on earth is essential to complete the measures and duties appointed by Allah. When Adam was brought to the earth and became Allah's authority and deputy, he became infallible, as mentioned in this verse: *"Indeed, Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imrân above all people $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ of their time $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ "* (Ali 'Imran, 33).

And about the verse that says, "And $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ remember $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ when the Man of the Whale stormed off $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ from his city $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ in a rage, thinking We would not restrain him" (Al-Anbya, 87). The word "thinking" here means "certainty", not the mere suspicion. Also, "We would not restrain him" doesn't mean we cannot restrain him. Have you not heard the verse that says, "But when He tests them by limiting their provision" (Fajr, 16)? It means Allah straitens his provision, and if Jonah had thought that Allah had no power over him, he would have certainly become a disbeliever.

And now the verse about Joseph: *"And she certainly desired him. And he had desired her* (Yusuf, 24)", Zuleikha was determined to seduce him to sin, and Joseph decided out of grief that if Zuleikha forced him to do so, he would kill her; then, Allah would save him from murder and a wrong deed. Verse 24 of Surah Yusuf, saying *"This is how We kept evil and indecency away from him"*, refers to this issue; in this verse, evil means murder and indecency means fornication.

And the verse about David; David thought that Allah had not created anyone wiser than him, so Allah sent two angels to him, and they climbed up the wall of the altar and appeared before David and said, *"Have no fear. We are merely two in a dispute: one of us has wronged the other. So judge between us with truth—do not go beyond it—and guide us to the right way. This is my brother.¹ He has ninety-nine sheep while I have only one. Still he asked me to give it up to him, overwhelming me with his argument."* Saad, 22 & 23). David hurried and ruled against the defendant, saying, *"He has definitely wronged you in demanding to add your sheep to his"* (Saad, 24). He didn't ask the plaintiff to appeal any witness or evidence. Even the defendant did not complain about the judgment. This error was an error of judgment, not the error that you suppose. Have you not heard that Allah says: *"We instructed him: 'O David! We have surely made you an authority in the land, so judge between people with truth. And do not follow your desires or they will lead you astray from Allah's Way...'"* (Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 2003, vol. 1 pp. 388-394).

Tabarsi's view on the infallibility of the prophets: *"And He is the One Who, I hope, will forgive my flaws on Judgment Day"* (Ash-Shu'ara, 82).

Prophet Muhammad said the above sentence on behalf of the other servants; otherwise, in our opinion and the opinion of Mu'tazilites, the prophets are infallible and do not need to be forgiven on Judgment Day. Although Mu'tazilites consider it possible for the prophets to commit minor sins, they believe the prophets' minor sins are forgiven and vanished in this world. Therefore, there is no sin left on them needed to be forgiven on Judgment Day" (Majma 'al-Bayan, p. 18).

Elsewhere, it is asked, "whether eating that fruit was a sin or a failure to do better? In fact, there is disagreement on whether this prohibition was Haram (forbidden) or Makruh (disapproved).

And we, considering the prophets infallible who do neither minor nor major sins, take this as makruh and believe that it was better for Adam not to eat that fruit, and by doing so, he didn't commit a sin, but he failed to do the better.

According to the Mu'tazilites, eating that fruit was a minor sin for Adam, and he committed that minor sin either intentionally or unintentionally, which is approached differently in various commentaries.

The reason we say that prophets do not commit sins at all is because the sins, we believe, are all major, and when they consider a sin to be minor, it is regarded so in comparison with a greater sin. And the one who commits a sin deserves blame and punishment.

We believe that the issue of "vanishing" of the sin is not true, since the status of the prophets is far from blame and punishment; then, they inevitably will not commit any sin.

Obviously, if a Prophet commits a sin, others will refuse to accept his command and prohibition, because the human soul accepts to obey someone who is not likely to commit a sin; since the purpose of sending the prophets is to save human beings, the prophets should be free of whatever causes people to stay away from them, including a mental or physical illness that causes hatred so that people gather around them and benefit from the light of their guidance" (Majma 'al-Bayan, pp. 133-134).

Abu al-Futuh's view: He also considers infallibility as a grace from Allah: The Prophets (PBUT) did not commit any sins and didn't fail to do the obligatory deeds; In order for one to be accepted among people, it was obligatory for them to be pure from any hated so that the old purpose of prophecy required by Allah would be achieved. That is because the purpose of sending the prophets was that they must be accepted and followed by people. Whatever that interrupts their acceptance and obedience by people should be away from them; this is called infallibility (Razi, p. 149).

Also under the commentary on verse 121 of Surah Taha: "*So Adam disobeyed his Lord, and [] so [] lost his way*".

They would ask, "You consider neither minor nor major sins committed by prophets; if so, how has Allah attributed rebellion and disobedience to Adam?" In addressing this question, we state that: "rebellion is opposition to the will; and obedience to All-Knowing includes both wajib (obligatory) and mustahabb (recommended) commands. We know, from the intellectual arguments, that opposition to obligatory command is not accepted to be done by Adam; then, we would have no choice to consider it as a violation of a recommended command.

It may be said that, according to this rule, the prophets should be always disobedient, since they may always fail to do the better; in addressing this issue, we say that we should not consider such a thing for the prophets; although attributing such features to the prophets have become customary to some scholars, it is so improper and ugly to use

them for the prophets. This is called denunciation, but we are allowed to say, under some conditions, that if, by committing a sin, it is meant that the prophets failed to do the recommended action, this can be true; and if, by saying so, it is meant doing a forbidden or hated action, it is not true.

"Then his Lord chose him [for His grace] , accepted his repentance, and guided him [rightly] ." (Taha, 122). Then the Lord chose him; when He chose him, He also accepted his repentance and guided him.

They may say, "according to what you believe, if Adam did not commit a sin, why did he repent? And why did Allah reply, "I accepted his repentance"? In addressing this question, we say: in our opinion, [Repentance] is obedience; its benefit is to obtain reward for him, and it has no effect on the abortion of the punishment; it means this action is vanished and with His mercy, Allah will abort the punishment. Thus, accepting the repentance is a guarantee for the reward and the repentance of the prophets is rooted in their humbleness before Allah. So, they aim to gain reward and by guidance, it means grace, as He says, *"As for those who are [rightly] guided, He increases them in guidance and blesses them with righteousness."* (Muhammad, 17) (Ibid, pp. 193-194).

On the commentary of verse 19 of Surah Al-A'raf, "and eat from wherever you please, but do not approach this tree, or else you will be wrongdoers", he states:

The Prophets (PBUT) did not commit any sins and didn't fail to do the obligatory deeds; In order for one to be accepted among people, it was obligatory for them to be pure from any hated so that the old purpose of prophecy required by Allah would be achieved. That is because the purpose of sending the prophets was that they must be accepted and followed by people. Whatever interrupts their acceptance and obedience by people should be away from them; this is called infallibility. Mutakallims have disagreement in this issue; followers of Hashvieh and hadith argue that according to Quran and hadith, committing major sins by prophets is acceptable. Mu'tazilites believe that committing minor sins by prophets is accepted. Nazzam and Ja'far ibn Mubasher state that committing sins by prophets is acceptable as long as it is done due to forgetfulness and ignorance (Ibid. p. 149).

Fayz's view on committing sins by the prophets: *"And ask forgiveness for your sin"*; Asking for forgiveness in this case is for the failure in doing the better, or for pursuing the worship that you have been commissioned to by Allah (Fayz Kashani, 2017, p. 570).

Mu'tazilites' view:

Mu'tazilites interpret infallibility in this way: a group of them state that major sins are not committed by the prophets, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; however, minor sins may be unintentionally committed by them, and that does not conflict with their prophecy and divine mission.

Another group of Mu'tazilites argue that major sins are not committed by the prophets at all, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; however, minor sins are not committed by them as long as they are aware that it is considered a sin. If they commit one, it is because they suppose that it is not a sin.

A third group of Mu'tazilites believe that major sins are not committed by the prophets, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; yet, they commit minor sins, whether intentionally or unintentionally. And this won't downgrade them since this small black spot is washed away and removed by the huge amount of pure water in their sea of rewards; that is to say that the rewards will remove the minor sin, as if *it was not a thing [even] mentioned* (Mohammadi, 2009, pp. 356-357).

In his commentary on verse 121 of Surah Taha, Al-Zamakhshari describes the sins of the prophets as follows:

"So Adam disobeyed his Lord, and [l]ost his way". This is said quite explicitly; it is not said in such a way to mean Adam erred or made a mistake. Such expressions function as a notice and a piece of advice to the believers, in such a way that, suppose, they are said, "Look and learn from how I rebuked the infallible Prophet who is a friend of Allah and who is allowed just to commit minor sin, which is not hated. Thus, O believers, don't ignore even minor sins and do not be unmindful of committing them, let alone committing major sins. (Zamakhshari, 1986, p. 94).

On commentary of the first verses of Surah 'Abasa, Al-Zamakhshari attributes the frowning to the prophet. "Abdullah ibn Sharih ibn Malik Fahri (Ibn Umm Maktum) came to the Prophet (PBUH), while the chiefs of Quraysh, including Abu Jahl bin Hisham, Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah bin Rabi'ah, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Ubay and Umayyah ibn Khalaf, were with the prophet; the Prophet invited them to Islam in the hope that when they became Muslims, others would also become Muslims.

Ibn Umm Maktoum said, "O, Messenger of Allah, recite Quran to me, and teach me what Allah has taught you; he repeated this request and was

unaware that the Prophet was busy talking to that group; then, the Prophet (PBUH) was upset that Ibn Umm Maktoum was interrupting him, frowned, and turned his face to the audiences to speak; then, those verses were revealed. After this event, whenever the Prophet (PBUH) saw Ibn Umm Maktoum, he respected him and said: Blessed is he for whom Allah rebuked me.

The Prophet appointed Ibn Umm Maktoum twice as his successor in Medina (Al-Zamakhshari, p. 700-701; quoted by Tabarsi, 1955, pp. 560-561).

Conclusions

Unlike mutakalims of Mu'tazila, those of Imamiyah believe that the prophets are free from all minor and major sins in any situation, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Tabarsi, Abu al-Futuh, and Fayz hold the same opinion as above.

Abu al-Futuh states that, "Al-Jubba'i said it was on the basis his esoteric interpretation that Adam thought he was forbidden to eat from a certain tree, but not forbidden to eat from all trees. In fact, he supposed that it was only one tree he couldn't eat from, though Allah's order was a comprehensive prohibition.

We believe that Allah recommended, not ordered, Adam to avoid eating; it means that if he did not eat, he would gain a great reward; however, he would not feel guilty or deserve punishment for eating.

And we also say that in other things attributed to the prophets and other verses and stories that have the same condition, this would be true.

In his commentary on verse 50 of Surah Al-An'am, "Say, O Prophet, "I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasures or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel", Abu al-Futuh states about infallibility of the prophets that:

"Mu'tazilites clung to this verse and state that the angels are better than the prophets. These words wouldn't be used unless for showing a higher status. Don't you see that owning Allah's treasures and knowing the unseen are among their virtues? Also, he is not one of the angels; if he were an angel, these words would be contradictory. The answer is this: such a question would be raised by one who does not know the meaning of the verse and the reason for its revelation. The disbelievers mockingly asked about the Prophet (PBUH), "Why has there not been sent down to him a treasure or come with him an angel?" (Hud, 12). He replied, "Say, O Prophet, "I do not say to you that I possess Allah's

treasuries." They said that if he is a prophet, why doesn't he know the unseen? He replied, "I do not know the unseen". They mockingly asked, "What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places [for a living]?" He replied, "nor do I claim to be an angel [so that that I don't need to eat]". My duty and my privilege is that revelation comes to me and I follow it. Thus, this verse does not mean that the reward of an angel is greater than that of the prophet, so that they suppose the angel is superior to him.

Regarding the infallibility of the prophets, Tabrasi states that, "in our opinion and the opinion of Mu'tazilites, the prophets are infallible and do not need to be forgiven on Judgment Day. Although Mu'tazilites consider it possible for the prophets to commit minor sins, they believe the prophets' minor sins are forgiven and vanished in this world. Therefore, there is no sin left on them needed to be forgiven on Judgment Day".

On the issue of prophets' infallibility, Abu al-Futuh initially states the Al-Jubba'i's view from Mu'tazila, and then, he mentions that of the Shia. He argues that what Jubba'i holds regarding the commitment of a sin by Adam (PBUH) is based on esoteric interpretation. However, in our viewpoint, as Shias, Allah regarded the avoidance of eating from that tree as a *mustahabb* (recommended) command, meaning that if he didn't do that, he would receive a lot of rewards, and if he did, he would not be punished. Furthermore, in the other cases narrated about the prophets, as well as in Quran verses and hadiths, it is impossible for the prophets to commit a sin.

On the other hand, Mu'tazilites interpret infallibility in this way: a group of them state that major sins are not committed by the prophets, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; however, minor sins may be unintentionally committed by them, and that does not conflict with their prophecy and divine mission.

Another group of Mu'tazilites argue that major sins are not committed by the prophets at all, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; however, minor sins are not committed by them as long as they are aware that it is considered a sin. If they commit one, it is because they suppose that it is not a sin.

A third group of Mu'tazilites believe that major sins are not committed by the prophets, neither intentionally nor unintentionally; yet, they commit minor sins, whether intentionally or unintentionally. And this won't downgrade them since this small black spot is washed away and removed by the huge amount of pure water in their sea of rewards; that is to say that the rewards will remove the minor sin, as if *it was not a thing [even] mentioned* (Mohammadi, 2009, pp. 356-357).

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