



Question:

Do the Shī'ah think that Jibra'īl (Archangel Gabriel) has committed treachery when he conveyed the message (risālah) to Muhammad instead of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib?

Answer:

Before proving the groundlessness of this loathsome accusation made against the Shī'ah by some ignorant or spiteful people, it is appropriate to trace its origin.

The origin of this accusation

The noble verses of the Qur'an and some relevant ḥadīths show that Jews were of the opinion that Jibrā'īl ('a) has committed treachery while conveying the message (risālah) claiming that God had ordered him to entrust the prophethood (nubuwwah) to the progeny of Isrā'īl (Ya'qūb or Jacob) from the line of Ishāq (Isaac), but he did not comply with that divine order by entrusting it to the offspring of Ismā'īl (Ishmael)!

Thus, a group of Jews regard Jibrā'īl ('a) as an enemy [1] and assume that "The truthful (al-amīn) (Jibrā'īl) has betrayed!" Therefore, in reproaching them and proving the groundlessness of their claim, the Qur'an refers to Jibrā'īl ('a) in the verse below as truthful (al-amīn) and honest angel: {تَنزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ} "It (Qur'an) was brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit, upon your heart, so that you may be one of the warners." [2]

In another verse, the Qur'an states: {قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ} "Say, 'Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel (should know that) it is he who has brought it down on your heart with the will of Allah.'" [3]

From the quoted verses and their commentaries, we realize that a group of Jews were hostile to Jibrā'īl ('a) for some reasons, branding him as the "angel of tribulation" (malā'ikah al-'adhāb) and accusing him of treachery in conveying the message (risālah).

Therefore, the slogan, "The truthful (Jibrā'īl) has betrayed" originates from the superstitions of the Jews. Some ignorant writers who have ancient enmity toward the Shī'ah make use of the Jews' statement to dastardly attribute it to the Shī'ah.

Prophethood (nubuwwah) from the Shī'ah viewpoint

Following the Book (the Qur'an) and the Sunnah, and relying on the explicit traditions of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the Shī'ah not only consider Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (s) as a prophet in truth appointed by God as a universal messenger, but also regard him as the Seal of the Prophets (khātam al-anbiyā') and the greatest divine envoy.

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a), the great leader who is followed by the Shī'ah testifies to this truth in these eloquent words:

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَحِجَّةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

And I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One and Only, Who has no partner,

and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, the Seal of the Prophets and the Proof of Allah to the worlds. [4]

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) also says:

لم يبعث الله عزّوجلّ من العرب إلا خمسة أنبياء: هوذا و صالحًا و إسماعيل و شعيبًا و محمدًا خاتم النبيين (ص)

“From among the Arabs, God appointed only five prophets: Hūd, Sāliḥ, Ismā‘īl, Shu‘ayb, and Muḥammad as the Seal of the Prophets (s).” [5]

This noble ḥadīth which proves the groundlessness of this repulsive accusation against the Shī‘ah refers to Hadrat [6] Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (s) as the last and final Prophet of God. [7]

Accordingly, the Shī‘ah all over the world think that Jibra‘īl (‘a) was truthful and honest in conveying the message, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (s) is the Prophet in truth and the last and final Messenger of Allah, and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is the Prophet’s successor and executor of his will.

Here, it is appropriate to quote a tradition on whose authenticity all the Sunnīs and the Shī‘ah agree and which can be found in their reliable books. In this tradition known as the Ḥadīth al-Manzilah, after announcing his being the Seal of the Prophets, the Holy Prophet (‘a) introduces ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) as his successor and the executor of his will when he says to him:

أما ترضى أن تكون منّي بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه لانيبيّ بعدي؟

“Are you not satisfied that you are to me as Hārūn (Aaron) is to Mūsā (Moses) except that there shall be no prophet after me?” [8]

This tradition whose chain of transmission is approved by great scholars of ḥadīth (muḥaddithūn)-both Sunnī and Shī‘ah-is a clear testimony to the soundness of the Shī‘ah’s view on the following:

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (s) is the most beloved prophet of God and the seal of the prophets who by the decree of God was sent as the final and universal messenger after whom no prophet will come.

Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is the Prophet’s successor and executor of his will, and the caliph of the Muslims after him. Reference:

[1] Al-Fakhr ar-Razī (Egypt, 1308 AH), vol. 1, p. pp. 436-437.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shu‘arā’ 26:193-194.

[3] Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:97.

[4] Nahj as-Sa‘ādah (Beirut), vol. 1, p. 188; Al-Kāfi (Tehran, 2nd Edition, 1389 AH), vol. 8, p.

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[5] *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Beirut, 2nd Edition, 1403 AH), vol. 11, p. 42.

[6] Hadrat: The Arabic word Hadrat is used as a respectful form of address. [Trans]

[7] For more information on the abundant ḥadīths indicating the Shī'ah's view concerning the finality of prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s), see Prof. Ja'far Subḥānī's *Mafāhīm al-Qur'ān*.

[8] This ḥadīth can be found in many references, some of which are the following: *Sāḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Egypt), vol. 6, "Bāb Ghazwah at-Tabūk," p. 3; *Sāḥīḥ Muslim* (Egypt), vol. 7, "Bāb Faḍā'il 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib," p. 120; *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Egypt), vol. 1, "Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb an-Nabī," p. 55; *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim* (Beirut), vol. 3, p. 109; *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 1, pp. 170, 177, 179, 182, 184-185; vol. 3, p. 32; *Sāḥīḥ Tirmidhī* (Beirut), vol. 5, "Bāb Manāqib 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib," p. 21; *Ibn Maghāzalī, Al-Manāqib* (Beirut, 1403 AH), p. 27; *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Beirut, 2nd Edition, 143 AH), vol. 37, p. 254; *Shaykh as-Sadūq, Ma'ānī al-Akhbār* (Beirut, 1399 AH), p. 74; *Kanz al-Fawā'id* (Beirut 1405 AH), vol. 2, p. 168.

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