Lessons about Prophethood

The Philosophy of Besat

(Part. 5 and the last part)

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Abstract: the present article is the last part of lessons about prophethood. During these lessons we have dealt with the philosophy of sending prophets, their roles in our life and what they add to our life. In this article we deal with their roles in bringing peace and justice to our society, reminding us of God's blessings, and their role in recognizing the truest path of life.

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One of the responsibilities of prophets is to ***explain benefits and harms*** on the lurk of people; human beings due to their incomplete knowledge regarding themselves are not informed of all their capabilities. In order to reach this self-cognition, they need some guidelines to lighten their way to salvation. After such cognition, if they fail to behave well, it is still illogical to punish them; in fact, it is unfair to punish someone without prior admonition. Therefore, if God wants to punish someone, He should warn him in advance about the consequences of his actions. He sent His warning by His prophets.

The aim of creating humankind is to worship God; to this end, some incentives for peoples are needed. God by sending His prophets sent His message to people to motivate them to worship Him.

Spreading justice is one of the main goals of prophethood. To be able to bring justice to each society, first we should start from each and every human being, from ourselves. We need to know abilities and rights of ourselves. What we deserve and what we should expect from ourselves. God provides human beings with this knowledge by His prophets.

In addition, ***teaching and training*** **people are of the most important responsibilities of prophets**. These two are complementary and neither of them can be useful without the other one. "Training" means controlling physical and spiritual abilities and leading them to a specific goal, which is "worshipping God".

The teachings of prophets all aimed at reaching us to this point. The holy prophets did not hesitate to do whatever they could to get people closer to the afore-mentioned goal.

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The Results of Besat

Declaring what truth is, what untruth is

According to the revelation of God, human being is a creature who had experienced other worlds before coming to this world. He/she will leave this world and migrate into another world. Therefore, human being will not perish and become nothing by death but death is just a form of migration into another world.

Human being will not know him/herself completely in all aspects if he/she can not find a way to connect to his/her creator. When he/she can not know him/herself, it is impossible for him/her to realize what is good or bad for him/her. Finding a way to connect to his/her creator is the only solution for this problem. And inevitably, to connect God, he/she should connect prophets or infallibles sent by God.

Imam Sadiq in a reply to a disbeliever who asked about prophets and messengers said, “as soon as we realize that there is a creator for us above us and superior to everything, a creator who is All-Wise and Exalted, Who is impossible to be seen by His creatures … we can comprehend that so He should have messengers among His creatures whom invite people to Him and guide people to their benefits and show them their harms.

In another tradition , Mansoor ibn Hazim said, I asked imam Sadiq “when a person realizes that there is a God, then he should search about what makes God angry or satisfied. And the causes of His rage or satisfaction can only be understood by revelations or by messengers; as we do not receive any revelation from God, so we have to look for the messengers. Imam Sadiq said, “You’re right. May God bless you.”

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Therefore, one of the benefits of prophets and messengers is that people can realize their own benefits or harms and by following the guidelines do their duty and bring salvation for themselves.

On the other hand, torture and reward are meaningless unless the reasons of them become clear in advance. Therefore, God should declare His dos and don'ts first and if His creatures do not follow His rules, they deserve to be punished.

God says, ***"and not say, when a disaster befalls them on account of that which their hands forwarded: 'our lord, why did you not send a messenger to us so that we might follow your verses and so that we might be among the believers."*** *(the holy Quran, 28:47)*

In another place God says, ***"...nor do we punish until we have sent a messenger."*** *(the holy Quran, 17:15)*

Or

"Messengers bearing glad tidings and warning, so that the people will have no argument against Allah, after the messengers. Allah is the almighty, the wise." *(the holy Quran,4:165)*

Prophets through giving God's orders to human beings and inviting them to truth and warning them about sins do their duty and no place will remain for people to make excuses.

Imam Ali said, "He appointed His messengers among people and sent His prophets to them to propagate ... ."

In this way, everyone will face the outcomes of his actions and based on his free will and deeds is going to be a heaven resident or hell resident. God says the hell dwellers will be asked***, "Did no one come to warn you?"*** *and they will answer****, "yes, indeed' they will reply, 'but we rejected the Warner (messenger) saying: 'Allah has not sent down anything, you are but in great error! '"*** *(the holy Quran, 67:8-9)*

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Giving glad tidings or warning

The reason of creating mankind and jinns is that they worship their God willingly. And it is obvious that prophets were appointed to prepare the prerequisites and pave the way to this end. He creates hell and heaven, and He sent the holy books to His prophets. These two places of hell and heaven are counted as the reward or punishment for human beings and ***human beings can choose either place.***

God says, ***"We did not send you (prophet Muhammad) for all mankind except to bring them glad tidings and to warn, but most people do not know."*** *(the holy Quran, 34:28)*

Justice

God likes justice to be widespread in all societies and people live in justice. In Quran we read, ***"believers, be dutiful to Allah and bearers of just witness. Do not allow your hatred for other people to turn you away from justice. Deal justly; it is nearer to piety. have fear of Allah; Allah is aware of what you do."*** *(the holy Quran, 5:8)*; ***"Allah orders justice, and good deeds"*** *(the holy Quran, 16:90)*; ***"say: 'my lord ordered justice."*** *(the holy Quran, 7:29)*

Justice – which means putting everything in its proper place – includes all duties including individual, social or political duties. Justice means observing your right in all aspects while avoiding violating other people's rights. So if all human beings observe their own rights and do not violate other one's rights, all can live in peace and society will blossom in happiness and prosperity. If rights are violated, society will lose its freshness and peace, end up in anarchy and unhappiness.

Therefore justice does not mean equality but it means observing rights of everyone. There is no doubt people are different regarding their

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talent and abilities. Therefore, it is not true to see everyone the same. A person who does good deeds is not equal to one who does not do good deeds. A faithful person is not equal to someone who does not believe in anything.

One of the significant goals of prophets is to invite people to justice. To be just needs good understanding and this is impossible without being connected to God. Therefore it is essential that God provides His creatures with the equipment and prerequisite of being just. One of the prerequisites is knowledge of it; as all human beings are free in their decisions, and as they have carnal soul, they usually tend to commit sins. Satan is always hiding on their way. He deceives them and leads them to the wrong way. Hence, besides having good knowledge, a power is needed to face tyrants of inside or outside (carnal desire or cruel peoples). The Almighty God by sending His prophets, the holy books, and creating hell and heavens paves the way of overcoming justice in societies. God says in His book, ***"We have sent our messengers with proofs, and sent them with the book and the scales, so that people might establish the scale (of justice). We have sent down iron in which there is great might and diverse benefit for people, so that Allah knows those who help him and his messengers in the unseen. Indeed, Allah is the strong, the almighty."*** *(the holy Quran, 57:25)*

Every nation has a messenger. When a messenger is appointed among them, he will judge justly and no one would be oppressed. Therefore the Almighty God by sending a Book and setting guidelines for people wants people to spread justice among themselves. But cruel rulers and hypocrite scholars whenever found their interests at risk, stood up against prophets; they threatened people or spread doubts among people to stop them following God's order.

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Teaching and training

The fundamental of getting to perfection is to be trained in a suitable way. No one can get anywhere unless he/she enjoys good training. It is worth mentioning though in order to get to perfection, human beings need to recognize their abilities first and then find a good way to manifest them.

It is clear that to be trained and taught, we need to pass through various levels from low levels to high levels. Training our soul needs knowledge, and to gain knowledge we need spiritual training. There is a cooperation between gaining knowledge and training our soul and vice versa.

We need knowledge to reach salvation. As we have mentioned earlier, the reason of creating mankind is to worship God. Therefore, whatever he/she learns should get her/him closer to this goal. Human being should know going far from this goal will waste his life. Unfortunately it is feasible that due to lack of good training, human beings miss the right path and end up in misfortune.

God sent His prophets one after the other one to inform them of the dangers ahead, provided them with proper tools to overcome obstacles...

God states, ***"our lord, send among them a messenger from them who shall recite to them your verses and teach them the book and wisdom, and purify them; you are the mighty, the wise."*** *(the holy Quran, 2:129)*

Though these verses have been sent for prophet of Islam, it is clear that this is not specified to him and it is applicable to all prophets and messengers. There is no doubt one of the significant goals of all prophets is to teach and train people.

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The principles of prophets in training people:

1. Reminding people of God
2. Inviting people to pray and worship Him
3. Confessing His greatness
4. Avoiding Satan and his temptations
5. Keeping away from tyrants
6. Confessing and believing in the day of Doom and the other World; hell and heaven
7. Accepting prophethood and holy books

God says, ***"we sent a messenger to every nation, saying: 'worship Allah and avoid the idols. Amongst them were some whom Allah guided, and some justly disposed to error. travel in the land and see what was the end of those who belied (the revelation and the prophets)!"*** *(the holy Quran, 16:36)*

God has selected His messengers from human beings; they speak to people with their own language, so there would be no hindrance or misunderstanding on the way of training.

"We have sent no messenger except in the tongue of his own nation, so that he might make everything plain to them. But Allah leads astray whom he will and guides whom he will. He is the almighty, the wise." *(the holy Quran, 14:4)*

Endeavour of prophets in training human beings

The holy prophets did their best to convey God's order to people. They did not hesitate and they benefited from whatever they had. They sacrificed all their life for this purpose.

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"Who were delivering the messages of Allah, fearing him and fearing none except Allah. Allah suffices as a reckoner." *(the holy Quran, 33:39)*

Imam Ali said about their perseverance in showing people the true path, "(They were) The messengers whose few members of followers and numerous opponents did not stop them."

It should be said that they were always the first one who did whatever they invited people to. Because a leader of a society should act according to what he said to others and then asked people to follow him.

God states, ***"believers, why do you say what you never do? it is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do."*** *(the holy Quran, 61:2-3)*

And imam Sadiq said, "don't be a person who invites to good deeds just by his tongue, do it and let other learn from your action, from your honesty, and from your piety."

Therefore a person first should do whatever he says. People who are witnessing him will trust him and follow him after that.

Reminding blessings of God

The last part of this article is the point of making people see God in everything. God sent His prophets to remind people of His blessings, because remembering these blessings will lead people to be thankful. Imam Baqir said, "God sent to Moses, do love me and make my creatures love me. Moses said, oh God! You know that to me no one is as dear as you are, but how can I enter people's heart? God revealed to him, do remind them of my blessings…"

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