PROPHETHOOD

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Abstract: *The present article is dealing with the issues related to Prophethood, such as necessity of a guide, signs of prophets' honesty, Divine teachers, history and prophets, legacy of prophets, and other issues in this realm.*

Key words: *Prophecy, Khatamiyat, successorship, Caliphate*

The necessity of a guide

He said, "As we have reason we do not need a guide! I said: we only come to this world once, and we do not have enough experience and information for living here. We are like a traveler who enters an unfamiliar country and does not have any information about the life in that country. If we want to pass this time by trial and error, we will actually have destroyed a lot of our time, facilities and opportunities, and we may face many risks and challenges and may

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endanger our health or our lives. Travel without a guide is risky. This is the command of reason not to travel to unknown places without a guide. We, the travelers of this world who have traveled here for the first and the last time, logically needs a guide or guides who depict(s) the map of a healthy, secure, successful and prosperous life for us and show(s) us challenges and opportunities along the way. And if we are informed that malicious enemies like demons are hidden in our way to entangle us, we feel needing more help from guides to release us from their traps ...

He said, “But what are the characteristics of this guide? I said, "If the knowledge and experience of this guide be the same as ours, then he is unable to guide us because he himself needs guidance." The one who wants to be guide of our lives in the world must enjoy sufficient knowledge that this knowledge is only available to our creator Who knows us and is aware of the paths to salvation, destruction and laws governing the world. He has already done so before. He has appointed some leaders named Prophets and Imams to guide us and provided us with the necessary information to make us happy through revelation received by them and He never leave the earth empty of a guide. This is of His great Kindness.

He said, "isn’t it better if God inspires or reveals His messages to each of us one by one?" I said: No, because, firstly, not everyone has the capacity to receive revelation, as not everyone can be a professor of the university, and the capacities are not the same, and secondly, when one has free will it means he is not forced to do something. He said, Aren’t reason and logic enough for us? I said: "As you see it is not, and the reason itself tells us that revelation comes to be used where its spotlight does not shine." He asked: “Has the people who are atheist any problem?” I said, “You see they have! They have to go forward by trial and errors. He said, “But even believers have problems?” I said, “Yes! They also have problems and their problems are because they do not act upon their religion, like the one who has a roadmap but does not move according to it ...

He said: Should Prophets have physical presence? I said: First and foremost, yes! But if they bring the guidance and people are able to comprehend and not to distort it, in some periods of time, there would be no need of their physical presence. He said, “Will their guidance be spiritual, or can it be only achieved if you see them in person? I said: both. He said, “What about today?” I said: Today we are at the time of the last proof of God, he is our divine guidance, and in his absence he is also a guide for the

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people of the world, provided that we people tend to be guided and not to skip guidance...

Signs of being honest

If anyone claim that he is a prophet, should we accept it? What are the signs of real prophets? How to recognize that one who claims to be prophet is true or false? ... His questions continued, and he wanted answers:

No, one should not accept the invitation of any claimant. The real Prophets have signs that one can distinguish them from liars through them. Apart from the content of their invitation and their divine spiritual character that men of knowledge can recognize, they have signs and miracles which are the proof of their claim, because others are unable to bring them. As Moses' signs and proof were opening up the sea, his cane changing into a dragon, shining hand... and the proof of Jesus, speaking while in the cradle, healing special diseases, giving life to dead, and the sign and evidence of our Prophet Muhammad was the eternal miracle which is the holy Quran. These miracles and signs are the proof of the Prophets' honesty… .

He said: "These miracles were acceptable to the people of their times who can see these miracles, but to the people, in the following times, when they did not see these miracles, how could the sign be regarded as the signs of truth?" God shows signs to the following generations that make them sure; As for the Quran, which is the eternal miracle of our Prophet, until the Resurrection day, no one will be able to bring such a thing...

One of the other signs of the honesty of the Prophets was that they did not invite people to themselves, but to Allah, while the false claimant of prophecy called people to themselves by tricking them, promising them wealth and position.

He asked, "Does the Prophet's eternal miracle merely lay in literary aspect of it or in its teachings and contents? - In both, because no one could make similar words nor in its literary aspects nor contents. But as long as guidance is concerned, its educational concept is more intended. Because all its verses have amazing layers and knowledge that when it is decoded by the carriers of these teachings, I.e. the Imams (as), the pure and glorious jewels of Guidance are extracted and its wonders have no end ... It is about fourteen centuries, the researchers of meaning and the scholars quenched their thirst by the spring of its knowledge. But they were unable to decode more than a few secrets of it and this is the eternal miracle of the Prophet.

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History and Prophets

If it was not Quran, we could not find any proof on the existence of Prophets. We did not see any prophets but we believe in them all. Why? Because in our holy book the reports about them and stories of their life have been included by God otherwise we do not have any authentic historian who lived in two thousand to six thousand years ago who had seen prophets and reported their news in details, and then his book reached us and made us believe in them. If it was not Quran, we like Will Durant might doubt in the existence of prophet Jesus. Our certainty of the existence of prophets are derived from Divine revelation which pictured the reports of prophets to give us historical, educational and theological experiences.

The first prophet and the first leader was the first human being "Adam" whom all people are from him. Gradually other prophets were selected by God which were responsible to lead people in different period of time. The holy Quran named 26 prophets directly who are Adam, Noah, Idris, Saleh, Hud, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Joseph, Lot, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Shoayb, Zakariya, Yahya, Isa, Dawood (David), Sulayman, Eliyas, Muhammed. It does not name some others but describe their stories. In some sources the number of them in total is 124000 prophets. Some of them had books and Sharia but some were to propagate what the previous prophets brought.

God clearly states the reason of telling these stories, which is learning lessons from them. لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لأُولِي الأَلْبَابِ why did people receive divine punishment? What were the obstacles to be guided? How were they guided? What prophets told them? What are the reasons of the nations' extinction? What similarities can be found between them and us? Quran is the only historical document, which its contents are not distorted or altered. Therefore, confidently, we can take a look at what happened to others and learn from them. The story of Bani Israel (the children of Jacob the prophet) allocates much verses in Quran in comparison with other nations'. The reason can be: the historical, social , religious similarities between them and muslim nation concerning misfortunes and hardship they both had and have, obstacles in the way of guidance, excuses, challenges, opportunities, people's behavior and rulers of their time, Satanic temptation, ways to solve problems and other similarities. In traditions for example it is talked about the role of pray to shorten the time of disappearance of a savior to 170 years and it can teach us to pray for expediting appearance of imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance.).

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Divine teacher

All of us owe to our teachers. We are the result of their educational and spiritual efforts, and they are the results of their previous teachers. This circle of learning when starts and ends to human beings will only be limited to human knowledge and definitely it will contain many limitations; this limited circle should be broken and a way to join the ocean of knowledge should be sought, because the amount of human knowledge, no matter how broad, is still limited (وما اوتيتم من العلم الّا قليلاً). It is necessary to join oceans of the divine knowledge which is governing all knowledge and understanding (والله بكلّ شيئٍ محيط). Besides the primary education, we should learn what divine teachers are bringing for us: The teachers who are not taught by human beings and are taught by God. Their knowledge originates from the source of undying divine knowledge, and their guidance embraces all hidden and clear aspects of human soul and his salvation in this world and hereafter. We need such teachers: divine teachers...

The teachers - the prophets- who are not educated by human beings speak of everything: of the proper lifestyle and proper personal and social behaviors; of the life of the ancient nations and their mistakes; of the worlds before and after this world; of the universe; of the pure teachings about our origin and resurrection; of humanistic ethics and behaviour; of prayer and spiritual connection; of shari'ah, and in a word of whatever that is necessary for individual and social perfection of man. This collection of knowledge can only be found in divine teachings by divine teachers...

The modern man who deprives himself of these teachings, what can gain instead? Can he solve his psychological problems, or economic problems or social problems or environmental problems? Has he solved the problems of war or murder or has settled down his family-life problems? Or can he eradicate discrimination, solve gap between generations, cultures and races? The limited knowledge of humanity that is unable to solve poverty, inflation, unemployment, discrimination, war and terror, how can answer needs and issues related to the other world? Is thousand years of experience of mankind proving his inability to handle his life and society not enough? Trial and error again and again?!

If they give their hearts to the teachings of revelation, believe that we are all from the same mother and father, piety is what gives us value, violation of rights of others is haram and the best people will be the most useful ones of them for other people, and the value of

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guiding a human being is superior to anything that the sun spreads its light on, and the worst thing is to commit sins, haram, violating rights, corruption and destruction ... And true knowledge is with the divine teachers, prophets and imams, and we must refer to their remarks and scientific heritage left for us, and resort to them to achieve prosperity, in this way their world would be luminous...

God has explicitly explained: How were the people of the prophets' age guided? What were the barriers to guidance? What did the prophets have for them, what were the factors of extinction of some of them, and what are the similarities between them and us, and ... The Qur'an is the only historical document of the Divine which its contents remain protected from distortion, not altered or distorted like previous books. Therefore, we can see the history of the prophets and the previous nations in it.

The story of the people of Israel (the sons of Ya'qub, the Prophet) is the most-told story in the verses of the Quran. In our traditions, an example of similarities between us and them is emphasized which is the role of prayer in shortening the time of coming of a Savior.

Legacy of prophets

The heritage of scientists is science and literature; the heritage of artists artwork and the heritage of rich people wealth and property. What is the heritage of prophets? Do prophets also leave something behind for others? Yes. Indeed, their heritage is guidance and light, science and ethics, and the proper lifestyle. Whatever from goodness, ethical virtues, and knowledge of life is in the world is the result of the existence of divine prophets. Even those who did not believe in them, were also indirectly influenced by their teachings. From Adam to the last Prophet, they all have taught truth and righteousness, politeness, kindness, and respect. Are not these principles what which are included and taught in educational systems of the whole world, even in secular countries and among secular people? This is the heritage that the Prophets have left behind ...

The other legacy of the Prophets is to stand up against injustice. There was no prophet who spread oppression, fanaticism or injustice. God has said:

لَقَد أَرسَلنا رُسُلَنا بِالبَيِّناتِ وَأَنزَلنا مَعَهُمُ الكِتابَ وَالميزانَ لِيَقومَ النّاسُ بِالقِسطِ

The main and permanent enemy of the Prophets and their followers were ignorant people, such as Pharaohs, Nimrods, and other manifestations of

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cruelty and oppression whom have persecuted and killed believers of the Prophets. This is the report of the Qur'an from this historical process: ***When the Prophet came to you, who did not agree with your desires, you were arrogant, you disagreed and denied some of them, and killed some others.***

So humanity owes prophets for all good deeds has done and will do! If the prophets were not denied by rulers, wrongdoers and corruptors, all their attempts in guiding people (and not some of them) were put into action and the world was a better place than now. Discrimination, corruption, oppression, impurity, haram, and others, which are now commonplace and are traps of humanity were not their legacy...

Besides, it is worth mentioning the role and mission of the hereditary ones. Those who put their steps in the path of infallibles must be very active and try to institutionalize these teachings in the world, as some of them opened their way to history. Now which is the age of media, and the world is like a village where voices are coming too soon, the mission of the faithful is heavier. They should spread the message of the Prophets. If we do so, the world community will soon reach the time of justice which God has promised with the coming of the last Imam and divine proof...

Feature of Prophets

I said: What are the characteristics of those who carry heavy burdens of divine revelation and who are the ambassador and representative of the Supreme Being (God)? He said, "People trust the one who has a good record and is reputed and competent. From a person who has a bad history, people can not take any advice and guidance. This rational principle requires that the Prophet be innocent. "Being pure عصمت" is one of the first characteristics of the prophets. I said: "Say more," he said: "The next features are their knowledge and power. People are going to learn things from these divine representatives of God. If their knowledge is not more, the people's learning from them is not possible. Also, to be able to have miracles which are sign of being honest necessitates them to have honesty, to absorb people's trust, and to show that they are connected with the origin of all power....

I said: what other features should they have? He said: honesty, trust, altruism and others. Likewise, the prophets invited people to God and did not consider anything for themselves. In contrast, false claimant of prophethood invited people to themselves and used this claim to deceive people and to gain access to worldly goods and property. The influence of Prophets' words and

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their penetration to the hearts were also for those who did not darken their hearts. They did what they were saying, they were not aggressive or war-manger, and they had a firm, stable and brave personality while at the same time, be kind and sympathetic.

I said, was their infallibility limited to their mission or covered all aspects of their life? "He said:" No, they should be innocent in all conditions so that people trust them. If in all situations, they were not innocent, People might have said who knows? They may be wrong in the revelation so doubt their speeches. They must be innocent in all matters, in order to gain public trust. Being innocent is an inseparable element of the prophets ...

I said: then why are there some mistakes attributed to the Prophets, such as the error of Adam, which led to his descent from Paradise, or the error of Jonah, which led to confinement in the abdomen of a shark, he said: "what you have counted are examples of leaving what is the best .(ترک اولی) not sin. They did not commit sins, but they did not do what was the best. They did not do Haram. Satan did not abandon them, but Satan could not encourage them to commit sins. At most they might leave an advised command which this does not impair their infallibility, and of course their positions and ranks of all of them are not the same:

تلك الرسل فضلنا بعضهم علىٰ بعض.

Some have a higher position, as our Prophet (PBUH) was superior to all Prophets, who did not even one case in which he did not do the best action. Our imams are also like them. Our Twelfth Imam, in addition to infallibility, is the most prestigious person who has worshiped God in the best and most complete form for twelve centuries…

Life style and Ethics

Be fair, how could we praise someone whom God has introduced him as a person who has the best ethics? We have the ability to describe Him? The Prophet who was insisting so much on the guidance of people that it was about he sacrificed his life in this way. God said to him,

لَعَلَّکَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَکَ أَلاَّ یَکُونُوا مُؤْمِنِینَ

فَلَعَلّکَ باخِعٌ نَفْسَکَ عَلی آثارِهِمْ اِنْ لَمْیُؤْمِنُوا بِهذَا الْحَدیث اَسَفا

and somewhere else He asked him not to be in grief (فَلاَ تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُکَ عَلَیْهِمْ حَسَرَاتٍ). Kindness towards people and thirst for their guidance and prosperity were mixed with his flesh and skin. The outcome of this kindness were apparent in His ethics and behavior.

History has only recorded a part of his magnanimity and greatness: whenever

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he entered a meeting, he sat at the closest vacant place, his meetings with his companions were friendly in a way that if someone stepped inside, he could not guess which one is the Prophet. Prophet did not allow anyone to stand up for him, never stretched his leg in front of his companions; when he was sitting in front of an individual, he respected him and did not remove his clothes in front of him. He shook hands with rich and poor the same, and he waited until the other person loosened his hand, then he took his hand out. His most distinguishing feature was his cleanness. He got dressed nicely not only for his family but for his companions and for people. He looked at the mirror or water before coming out of his house and he brushed his hair. The cost of his perfumes was more than his food. He was always good-tempered, even when he did not laugh, a smile was on his face.

The whole life of the Prophet was based on discipline and order, and one of manifestations of it was he had named his belongings. He ordered Muslims to cooperate, and he also took part in public services. In trips, he assigned duty to everyone, and he himself took a duty. He was the most generous person. He never saved any money, if something was more than his need, he would not go home unless when he gave that money to poor or needy ones. He was the best in controlling his anger. He never thought of taking revenge even from his enemies. And He did not take revenge on anyone during his lifetime. He got used to be kind with kids.

This spirit and ethics were so effective in attracting people to the religion that God said: "***if you were bad-tempered, people would not gather around you***." Today, the most similar person to the Prophet, in all aspects, is his son, Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him), in whom we can find all those moral features of forgiveness, generosity, courage and self-sacrifice, etc.

Successorship and Caliphate

If you found a small entrepreneurship, you know that the mission, responsibilities, rights and income of all shareholders and procedures of how to make changes, the continuation or dissolution of the company is definitely stated in the Articles of Association and the Commercial Code. How may you accept that God Almighty did not say anything about the leadership and the continuation of the path of Islam after the Prophet, did not set out a program and did not specify the task of successors and did not picture the roadmap for this immortal religion for the next centuries? Is it compatible with reason? When you travel for a long time, do not you specify the responsibilities of

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each person, or do not choose one as a director or supervisor or manager? Definitely you do. This is actually order of both logic and religious...

People were getting prepared to accept the successor of the Prophet since the very beginning of Islam when the Prophet intended to propagate and invite elders from his family in "Youm al-Dar" (يوم الدار) to Islam, at that time he spoke of succession, and thereafter Ali (as) was appointed as his successor. Subsequently, on other occasions such as Hadith Rayat in Kheibar battle and Hadith Tashbih, he said Ali's substitution for him is similar to Aaron's succession for Moses (آنت منی بمنزلة هارون من موسی الّا أنّه لا نبیّ بعدی), and then, in Ghadir Khum, he announced it publically and got allegiance for him. In fact, he documented and recorded his successorship in history.

In an eternal scripture, called Hadith Luoh, which was sent to Fatima on the occasion of the birth of Husayn ibn Ali, the names of the twelve Imams and their traits and their characteristics were documented by Jabir, the faithful companion of the Prophet. This documentation is so authentic that all acknowledged it and it is explained in various books such as al-Ghadir and 'Abaqat-al-Anwar in details by their sources.

Neither Allah nor His Messenger did not remain silent or inactive regarding Imamat and successorship and explained all the material needed to continue the path of Islam after the time of prophethood ... But after Prophet the direction of Islam changed … The caliphate of the Prophet, apart from a few short years after twenty-five years of seclusion, was not given to Ali (AS), he also faced challenges such as wars of Nakethin, Qasetin and Mareqin. And eventually his rulership was ended by his martyrdom in the altar and the government fell into the hands of the improper people ... But Imamate, which was a divine position, continued in the Imams until today which is reached to Imam Mahdi; now we are in the time of his imamate, and the divine guidance and blessings of God reach us through him and we are obliged to obey him.

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