

Common Prophethood (Nabuwat ‘Ammah)

Once the existence of the All-Wise Creator is proved, the necessity of Prophethood and prophets is proven through it.

[Need for Divine Education and Training](#)

To understand the need of mankind for the guidance of the prophets, we must know the nature of human creation, the purpose of his creation and the factors that make him reach that purpose or prevent him from it.

This brief book does not allow us to go deep into these discussions, as is apparent from the presented topics. However, we will indicate some dimensions to a degree:

[First Dimension](#)

The human being has different instincts. His life begins from the weakest stage, which is the plant life, and ascends to the intellectual life. In fact, it ascends to a stage higher than that. Indeed, a believer looks with the light of Allah. ¹

The human being is a creation composed of nature and intellect, a body with limited needs, and a soul with unlimited wishes. In his eminence man is higher than the angels, and in his abasement he is lower than the animals.

It is reported on the authority of ‘Abd Allah ibn Sinan, who said: I asked Abu ‘Abd Allah Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (as): Are the angels superior or the children of Adam?

He (as) replied: *The Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) said: Indeed, Allah, the Mighty and High, composed the angels from the intellect without the desires and composed the animals from the desires without the intellect, but He composed the children of Adam from both of them. Therefore, whose intellect overcomes his desires is better than the angels, and whose desires overpower his*

intellect is worse than the animals.[2](#)

This creation was at the peak of innovation as it became—after being made completely and the spirit breathed[3](#) into him—an exceptional creation of all beings. The greatness of His creation becomes apparent from the Word of the Exalted:

Then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.[4](#)

The human being perceives that he is not made for a limited materialist life. Wisdom demands that the tools should be appropriate for the work that is required of them. They should be made to suit the purpose they serve. If man was made for the life of this world alone, then the faculty of desire, which attracts to the comfortable and the faculty of anger, which rejects the painful, were sufficient for him.

There was no need to give him intellect, which informs of unlimited knowledge. The intellect is eager to liberate itself from evil and embellish itself with virtues. It is naturally not content with whatever level it reaches. In fact, it is thirsty for what is higher than it. Thus, bestowing man with that intellect and that nature is proof that he is created for an unlimited life. This is transmitted in a prophetic tradition: *You are not created for perishing; rather, you are created for remaining. Indeed, you transfer from one abode to the other.*[5](#)

From another viewpoint, the wisdom of the Absolute Wise guides us that if He has placed potential in a being, then He has also prepared factors that elevate him to the stage of actualisation. Exhausting a potential does not change it into an actual. A wish that has no objective is useless and in vain. Exalted is Allah from that.

You see that when the Knowledge and the Absolute Power gave a seed the potential to become a fruit, He created for it the water, the soil and the air. Hence, He placed in them the factors that make the seed reach its goal.

When He gave human semen the potential to change into organs and limbs, He created for it the womb and other factors for its actualisation.

Then how is it possible that Allah created the intellectual faculty in the human being to reach the fruit of knowledge and practice? He created the human soul and placed in it the ability to reach the perfection in knowledge, morals and practice to reach the recognition of Allah through Allah. Then how did He not prepare the factors that would make him reach the fruit of knowledge and practice? Why would He not provide the conditions to take the human being to the highest levels of perfection?

How is it possible that He would not guide the human being to the purpose of his creation? Is it possible that He would withhold the law: ***He gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal),***[6](#) and exempt the creation of the human beings from it?

Of course not! This is why it is clear that the need for Divine guidance is to make man accomplish the

purpose of his creation.

And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. [7](#)

Second Dimension

It is in human nature to search for one's Creator. Man wants to know Who it is that brought him about when he did not exist. The One Who gave him these limbs, organs and muscles

and made complete to you His favours outwardly and inwardly;[8](#)

and blessed him with which is countless and limitless:

And if you would count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them. [9](#)

He wants to know the real Benefactor. His logical duty is to thank the real Benefactor.

From another angle, the human being perceives that Allah, the Exalted—Who is the Creator of the sense and the sensed, the imagination and the imagined, the understanding and the understood, the Most Praised, the Most Holy from all deficiencies and evils, whose magnificence and perfection are endless—is Greater and Higher and Mightier than being on the other side of communication with the created who is full of ignorance, faults and evil desires. Thus, why should He answer man's questions directly and elucidate to him what is obligatory and what is forbidden in his life?

Therefore, there must be a link between Allah, the Exalted, and His creation. This link should have a human shape and attributes, in order to deal with the people, an intellect free from mistakes, a soul consecrated from evil and full of Godly practice. Based on the rule of effectiveness and liability, he should have the ability to be lightened with the light of revelation, so that he can receive the guidance and recognition from Allah, the Exalted, and open the doors of this guidance and recognition to the mankind.

Then he can show man his shortcomings in hindering the intellect from the recognition of Allah on one extreme, and in ascribing human characteristics to God on the other extreme. Thus, he can guide mankind to the true faith and the right path.

And (know) that this is My path, the right one therefore follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard (against evil). [10](#)

Third Dimension

The human being possesses many mental abilities with which he can discover a number of secrets of

nature and its laws, and then use these to serve his abilities. Yet, he also possesses evil desires and the faculties of lust and anger, which are vast and dangerous. These do not stop at any limit, which is a trait of human nature.

Hence, the interest and the corruption of the earth are connected to the interest and the corruption of mankind:

Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought. [11](#)

In fact, according to the Word of the Exalted:

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. [12](#)

Thus, the interest and the corruption of other planets are connected to the humans as well.

The only thing that guarantees the interest of this being is Divine guidance. Divine guidance results in the balance of the thoughts through correct belief. Spiritual balance is achieved through virtuous morals and good actions.

Fourth Dimension

Human life is connected to society in various ways. The consequence of this connection is that people influence one another. Inevitably, this causes difference in personal and social rights. Social life cannot remain without having its right. It is impossible to give it its rights without stipulating and implementing laws which are correct and protected from deficiencies and mistakes. Their stipulator and executor must be an infallible who is not affected by personal interests, nor deviant from righteousness and justice.

This cannot materialise except with Divine laws and with prophets who convey these laws and execute them.

Certainly We sent Our messengers with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity. [13](#)

It is thus clear that mankind needs to be guided to God, the Return, and the purpose of his creation. It is clear that it is necessary to take him to his psychological and practical perfection. It is also clear that human faculties require balance, and that they need assurance of their personal and social rights. However, it is obvious that these goals are not achievable without the path of revelation and prophethood. These important matters cannot be achieved with intellects full of faults and hands full of personal desires.

No matter how strong human thinking may be, it cannot ascertain the ambiguous and unknown points of

nature. Thus, he is not self-sufficient of the prophets (as) and their guidance in the walk of life.

Geniuses have struggled in studying the secrets of the universe. They thought that they had reached the conclusion, and were proud of their discoveries. The people agreed with them, and generations and centuries passed approving them. Nonetheless, they were later proved to be void.

The view that the human body is composed of four substances and that their illnesses originate from the nature of these four things was discovered to be null. The views of the early people that the universe is made up of dust, water, air and fire, and that space cannot accept penetration and connection, went up in the air after scientific discoveries.

Even though his body is the closest thing to him, it has become so apparent that man does not even understand the make of his own body, or the factors behind its illness and health. Most of the human theories about nature, the universe, the moon, and the closest star are mere imaginations. Is it possible that this intellect can become a guide for mankind in understanding God and the Return, and the causes of his privilege and adversity? Never!

In fact, the human mind is unable to discover the secrets inside a particle. Then how is it possible for it to know the beginning and end of the creation of man and the universe? How can mankind know what guides him to God and the Return, and the causes of his privilege and adversity?

The Commander of the Faithful (as) said: *Then Allah sent His Messengers and series of His prophets towards them to get them to fulfil the pledges of His creation, to recall to them His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom and show them the signs of His Omnipotence.* [14](#)

The Qualities of a Prophet (Khasa'is al-Nabi)

A prophet possesses many qualities, two of which we will discuss:

The First Quality: Infallibility

There are many proofs for the infallibility of the Prophets (as). We will mention some of them:

First Proof

Every creation has to follow practices and laws in order to attain its perfection. It is clear from what has been explained earlier that the practice that takes mankind to his perfection, which is the purpose of his creation, is Divine guidance and true faith.

The achievement of this perfection is based upon the guidance of mankind to the true faith, and delivering and executing Divine laws. A prophet is liable for the training of mankind in accordance with this practice. It would be against the objective if any deviation in conveying or execution occurred; for,

the deviation of this conveyor and instructor of Divine training would be due to error or evil desire. Undoubtedly, either of these two would be against the objective.

The perfection of Divine guidance demands perfection of the guide. Infallibility of the Divine law requires infallibility of the teacher and the executor.

Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it. [15](#)

Second Proof

Both rational and textual proofs tell us that the religion has come to give humanity a happy life.

Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did. [16](#)

The water of happy life is faith and good deeds. These two make up the religion.

The spring of life from which pours out this water is the presence of a prophet. If the place where the water is pouring out from is unclean, then the water would be unclean. Hence, it would not be suitable for quenching the thirst of the minds and the hearts of the people. Then the fruit of a happy life would not be achieved.

Third Proof

The objective of sending a prophet is not accomplished without obeying his commands. Obedience of the one who commits mistakes and sins is not permissible. Therefore, if a prophet is not infallible, his obedience will not be obligatory, which would negate and invalidate the objective of sending a prophet.

Fourth Proof

If a prophet is not infallible from making mistakes, then the people will never be confident in his truthfulness or the veracity of his delivering the revelation. Also, if a prophet is not infallible from committing sins, then his position will drop in the eyes of the people. The words of an unpracticing scholar do not have any effect. As such, the purpose of sending the prophets would not be fulfilled.

Fifth Proof

The origin of mistakes and sins is weakness of intellect and will-power, whereas the intellect of a prophet is perfect. A prophet reaches the stage of true certainty due to his connection with revelation. He sees things as they really are. His will-power is only affected by the will of Allah, Glory be to Him, the Exalted. Therefore, there remains no place for mistake and sin in a prophet's personality.

The Second Quality: The Miracle

Accepting any proclamation requires proof. The connection between the proclamation and the proof must be so reliable that the confidence in the righteousness of the proclamation is indissoluble from the proof. A prophet proclaims representation from Allah, the Exalted. There is no way of proving this proclamation except for confirmation from Allah. Thus, a miracle is a practical confirmation from Allah for his proclamation as a prophet.

A miracle takes place without a material cause, with a will that encompasses the causes and effect. The cause determines the effect and the effect accepts determining from the cause, which is nothing but the will of Allah, the Exalted. When a miracle takes place with the proclamation of a prophet, then it gives certainty that Allah, the Exalted, performed the miracle for his confirmation.

When someone proclaimed prophethood and it was rationally possible to confirm this, if he showed a miracle, it would be a convincing proof to verify his claim. However, if he was not truthful, then the occurrence of a miracle from him would be verification of a liar and a reason for misleading the people. Exalted is Allah, Glory be to Him, from authenticating a liar and misleading the people.

Regarding common prophethood, there are noble verses and gracious traditions. We will suffice with two traditions.

First Tradition

It is said on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq (as): *Indeed, we prove that we have a Creator and a Maker Who is Higher than us and everything He has created. And that this Creator is All-Wise to the extreme, and it is not possible for His creation to witness Him or touch Him, so that He may form physical connection with them and they with Him. He disputes them and they dispute Him. This proves that He has representatives in His creation, who voice Him in His creation, and servants who guide them to their interests and benefits and to what will make them remain and make them perish.*

This proves that there are ones who command what to do and what not to do on behalf of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, who are in His creation and are designated by Him, the Mighty and High. They are the prophets (as) and the best of His creation. They are wise, mannered with wisdom and sent with wisdom. They do not share with people in anything from their state, even though they share the creation and composition.

They are endorsed with wisdom by the All-Wise, the All-Knowing. This was proved in all times and places with the reasons and proofs the Messengers and the prophets brought with them. So that Allah's earth is not vacant from a proof who has knowledge indicating his truthfulness and justice. [17](#)

We will elucidate some of the points which his words imply:

He (as) mentioned the proof for the necessity of sending prophets with his words: *and that this Creator is All-Wise to the extreme...* the implication is that every action that a man performs or leaves, and every motion or stillness that occurs from him is either useful for both worlds or harmful, or neither useful nor harmful. Based on all of these assumptions, the human being needs to know what is useful and what is harmful, what is in his interest in this life and the life hereafter, and what is harmful.

This knowledge can only be achieved from one who knows of the connection between performing an action and not performing it, the interests of mankind and his problems. It has to be from the one who encompasses the effects of all motions and stillnesses in human life in this world and the hereafter. Indeed, that is the Creator of the mankind and the Creator of this world and the hereafter.

Divine Wisdom demands that He should guide His servants, however, His guidance to Himself cannot happen without an intermediary due to His being above physical connection and conversation. Thus, there must be selected representatives: *who guide them to their interests and benefits and to what will make them remain and make them perish.*

This proof is distinctive from all dimensions in comparison with the proof that philosophers use to prove the necessity of prophethood. This proof from the Imam (as) includes all the interests and harms of the human being in all stages of existence. Philosophers use the rule that man is naturally a social animal. Therefore, he requires fair laws for his dealings and social connections; hence, their proof is specified for social life on earth.

He (as) has indicated the exceptional existence of the prophets due to what they have in common with the people and what they are distinctive in: *they do not share with people in anything from their state, even though they share the creation and composition.*

He (as) has indicated with his word: *the best of His creation*, to the fact that a prophet has been chosen over the rest of the creation. Due to this pure conduct, he can be at the position of the connection between the Creator and the created. He can perform the significant role of being a connection between the High and the low.

What a fine expression he has used: *who voice Him*, to clarify the status of a prophet. It is, indeed, an unequivocal statement revealing the true intention. It means speaking from Allah, the Exalted and delivering to His creation what He wills. Sanctity and infallibility are required for the status of a prophet.

The Imam (as) has explained the proof for the necessity of a miracle to prove the prophethood with his word: *who has knowledge indicating his truthfulness and justice.* The source of the prophethood is the

wisdom of the Absolute Wise and its result is wisdom as well.

'Isa said: I have come to you indeed with wisdom;[18](#)

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom.[19](#)

He (as) has attached importance to the distinction of the prophets' wisdom in thinking and practice from the wisdom of mankind, which is the result of human thinking. However, their wisdom is that they voice the Exalted. The requirement of his word: ***who voice Him, and that by the All-Wise, the All-Knowing***, their wisdom is pure from the filth of delusions. A prophet is a radiant lamp. He does not take the light of his knowledge from the teaching and training of mankind. It is indeed from the connection he has with the Light of the heavens and the earth.

The oil whereof almost gives light though fire touch it not.[20](#)

He (as) said: *They are wise and mannered with wisdom.* Later, he added: *They are endorsed with wisdom by the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.* This is to explain that the wisdom of the prophets—its occurrence and endurance—is from the All-Knowing, Who encompasses everything and the All-Wise, Who made firm everything. The wisdom of a prophet is as distinctive from human thinking as what is with Allah, the Exalted and what is with the people.

This Creator is All-Wise. It is apparent from this sentence and the sentence that describes the prophets as ***they are wise, mannered with wisdom and sent with it***, that the effectual reason and purpose of Prophethood is wisdom. The middle way between the beginning and the end is also wisdom.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise. He it is Who raised among the inhabitants of Mecca an Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although they were before certainly in clear error.[21](#)

There are other valuable and profound insights in the indications and elegant words of the Imam (as). However for reasons of brevity we will not discuss them.

Second Tradition

Imam Al-Rida (as) said: *If one said: Why is it compulsory for them to know the Messengers, acknowledge them and submit to their obedience? The reply would be: This is due to the creation not being able to reach in perfection what is in their interest. The Creator is Higher than can be seen. Due to their weakness and incapability, the creation cannot perceive Him. Thus, it was a must that an infallible*

messenger be in between Him and His creation to convey to them His commands regarding what to do and not to do.

He would teach them manners and inform them of their interests and harms, as they do not have the ability to understand what they need, and what is in their interest or what is harmful for them. If recognising and obeying the prophet was not compulsory upon the people, then there would be no use of his coming. This would mean that He has carried out a useless act which has no benefit and use. This is not the attribute of the All-Wise Who made firm everything. [22](#)

- [1.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 218, hadith no. 3.
- [2.](#) 'Ilal al-Shara'i': vol. 1, pp 4, ch. 6, hadith no. 1.
- [3.](#) Holy Qur'an, 15: 29: So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him.
- [4.](#) Holy Qur'an, 23: 14.
- [5.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 6, pp 249.
- [6.](#) Holy Qur'an, 20: 50.
- [7.](#) Holy Qur'an, 91: 7-8.
- [8.](#) Holy Qur'an, 31: 20
- [9.](#) Holy Qur'an, 14: 34.
- [10.](#) Holy Qur'an, 6: 153.
- [11.](#) Holy Qur'an, 30: 41.
- [12.](#) Holy Qur'an, 45: 13.
- [13.](#) Holy Qur'an, 57: 25.
- [14.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah: sermon no. 1.
- [15.](#) Holy Qur'an, 41: 42.
- [16.](#) Holy Qur'an, 16: 97.
- [17.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 168, hadith no. 1.
- [18.](#) Holy Qur'an, 43: 63.
- [19.](#) Holy Qur'an, 16: 125.
- [20.](#) Holy Qur'an, 24: 35.
- [21.](#) Holy Qur'an, 62: 1-2.
- [22.](#) 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 2, pp 100, ch. 34, hadith no. 1; Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 6, pp 59.

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