

# Finality of the Prophethood

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Introduction

The following article is a response to an individual questioning whether or not the Prophet Muhammad (S) is indeed the Final Messenger sent by Allah (SWT) to mankind. He cited some verses from the Qur'an, and questioned if they do in fact refer to a Prophet and/or Messenger after the Prophet Muhammad (S).

In response to the following verses, I render my own, relative understanding of the verses. I am not a scholar in Islam, and very few people are; as such, I take full responsibility for what I say here, and I emphasize that my answer is not to be taken exhaustive, definitive, or absolute.

I was not able to access books of Tafsir (Qur'anic Commentaries) to ascertain some meanings, but my assurance to you is that there is no messenger after the final messenger, Muhammad (S & His Family), as will be demonstrated, Allah (SWT) Willing. Again, I restate that the following is my own understanding. It should not be taken as a perfect representation of the Islamic belief and/or Shi'i ideology.

Here are some of the perplexing verses:

33. O children of Adam! there shall come to you Apostles from among yourselves, rehearsing my signs to you; and whoso shall fear God and do good works, no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they be put to grief. (The Heights (al-Araf)

The verse you quote is numbered incorrectly; the correct number is (7:35). The verse does NOT suggest another Messenger at all. The way I understand it is that Allah (SWT) is making a statement about the Messengers which He (SWT) sends to His (SWT) creation. As such, the warning to the people is that if a Messenger, like Moses, Jesus, or Muhammad (S), among others, should emerge from amongst you,

then follow him.

For those who follow him, they shall not grieve, but those that don't, shall indeed suffer. The verse is really saying that throughout the ages, there shall come Messengers sent by Allah (SWT) as a Mercy to His (SWT) creation; whosoever follows these Messengers and abides by the message which they (the Messengers) bring, shall grieve not, nor fear nothing.

Let me elaborate some more. In Arabic, one word can have many, many meanings that sometimes seem totally conflicting. As such, any translation of the Qur'an is not acceptable as the platform whence an argument concerning a verse is to be launched. We must return to the Arabic original. I will surrender to your postulate that Prima Facie (superficially) the verse does suggest that a Messenger shall emerge, but deep in the inner meaning of the verse, it is not so.

If we momentarily disregard the literal religious meaning of Rasool, we can forward the statement that if a friend of yours is a believing individual, and he approaches you in a sincere fashion advising you to do righteous deeds and to avoid wicked acts, then that friend of yours is a Rasool. Moreover, keep in mind that in Arabic, any individual sent with a message to someone else is also called a Rasool (Messenger). Here is how the American Heritage Dictionary defines "Messenger:"

messenger n. 1. One that carries messages or performs errands, as:

- a. A person employed to carry telegrams, letters, or parcels.
- b. A military or official courier. c. An envoy to another person, party, or government.
2. A bearer of news.
3. A forerunner; a harbinger.
4. A prophet.
5. Nautical. A chain or rope used for hauling in a cable. In this sense, also called messenger line. --  
meszsenzger tr.v. meszsenzgered, meszsenzgerzing, meszsenzgers. To send by messenger.

Given the above definition, we can contend that any "carrier" from a king to another king is also called a Messenger or a Rasool (in Arabic). This, I believe, clarifies the verse for you. Let us examine some other verses:

***"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: And Allah has full knowledge of all things. (Qur'an 33:40)"***

It is clear from the above verse that Muhammad (S) is the SEAL of the Prophets. Notice that if we abide by the meaning of a Prophet (Nabi), and understand that a Nabi's status is lower than that of a Rasool (Messenger), we can discern that Muhammad (S), by virtue of the what the verse states, is the Seal of both the Prophets and the Messengers.

By stating that he (S) is the Seal of the Prophets, Allah (SWT) has made it evident that NOT even a

Prophet (Nabi) will come after Muhammad (S). That is, if Allah (SWT) had said that Muhammad was the Seal of "Messengers", He (SWT) would leave the door open for people to say that Muhammad (S) is NOT the seal of the prophets then -- because a Prophet is a step below a Messenger. But by stating that he (Muhammad) (S) is the seal from the bottom up, Allah (SWT) has clarified the point that nobody will come after Muhammad (S).

"We have not sent thee but as a (Messenger) to ALL MANKIND, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men know not. (34:28)"

Again, we may forward the contention by Allah (SWT) that Muhammad was sent as a Messenger to all mankind. Why then would Allah (SWT) send anyone after him (S) as a new Messenger?

***"For me, I have been commanded to serve the Lord of this City, Him Who has sanctified it and to Whom (belong) all things: And I am commanded to be of those who bow in Islam to Allah's Will, -- and to rehearse the Qur'an: And if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their souls, and if any stray, say: I am only a Warner. (Qur'an 27:91)"***

Again, listen to what the above verse concludes with:

***"And if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their souls, and if any stray, say: I am only a Warner. (Qur'an 27:91)"***

This is in conformity with my statement at the beginning of this article: You are at liberty to accept or to reject faith and guidance; however, you may reject it at the expense of injury to your soul, or you may accept it and reap its benefits.

***"It is He who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth. That he make it prevail over all religion, even though the pagans may detest (it). (Qur'an 61:9)"***

The clear assertion by Allah (SWT), in the above verse, that He (SWT) "...make it prevail over all religion..." indicates that this is the final and complete religion. This is also in conformity with the statement that Islam is the Truth without form, it is THE primordial religion of mankind, which will never change:

***"So set thou thy face truly to the religion being upright, the nature in which Allah has made mankind: no change (there is) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the true religion: But most among mankind know not. (Qur'an 30:30)"***

***"...For Allah hath indeed sent down to you a Message,-- A Messenger, who rehearses to you the Signs of Allah containing clear explanations, that he may lead forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the depths of Darkness into Light. (Qur'an 65: 11)"***

The above verse, although not directly related to the topic of a final messenger, it, nonetheless, outlines

the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S); and asserts that he (S) is a guide sent to "...lead forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the depths of Darkness into Light."

Perhaps all revelations have a fixed time, we read:

32. Every nation hath its set time. And when their time is come, they shall not retard it an hour; and they shall not advance it. (The Heights (al-Araf))

Again, the correct number for the verse is (7:34), not 32. (Which translation are you using?)

I don't know how you interpreted the above verse to allude to a Fixed Revelation. Unless your claim is that a revelation is valid only for a limited time, and that there are no timeless truths, I fail to see your point. Moreover, if we assume that a revelation is indeed fixed, then it must be that we are now waiting for a New Revelation to come. Obviously, that would directly and undoubtedly contradict the Islamic Belief System. Now, let's the examine the verse in detail:

***"To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation). (Qur'an 7:34)"***

The verse is dealing with the dimension of time that engulfs every nation or generation. In that frame of time, they are supposed to achieve whatever good they can; if they do so, they shall not grieve, otherwise they shall suffer the consequences. For example, you as a person, will exist only for a fixed time on this Earth, then you shall perish. In that time, if you strive to perform good deeds, then you have nothing to worry about in the hereafter; otherwise you shall account for your actions.

Now, your existence on Earth is fixed: you came into being at a certain time (which you had no choice in), and you will leave at a certain time; there is nothing you can do to change that. If you add suicide to the formula, the meaning of the verse would change to: when the necessary conditions for death are gathered, then no delay or advancement can there be.

That is, if the necessary conditions or factors that cause death have been met, then the individual who is trying to commit suicide will surely die, there is nothing he can do after those conditions have been met, nor can he change his mind and return to life. Again, keep in mind that Time moves only in one direction.

Another explanation is that offered by Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali in his translation of the Qur'an:

"I do not know whether "generation" would not be more appropriate here. If so, it would refer to the Time-Spirit, for it affects a whole number of people living contemporaneously, and while we deal grammatically with a group, we really have in mind the individual's composing the group. Anyway, the lesson is what is suggested in the following verses. There is only a limited time for an individual or for a group of people. If they do not make good during that time of probation, the chance is lost, and it cannot come again. We cannot retard or advance the march of time by a single hour or minute. ("Hour" in the

text expresses an indefinite but short period of time.)"

To each age its Book. (The Thunder (al-Rad))

The above verse is misquoted, here's the exact verse:

***"We did send messengers before thee, and appointed for them wives and children: And it was never the part of a messenger to bring a Sign except as Allah permitted (or commanded). For each period is appointment. (Qur'an 13:38)"***

Now, the verse in Arabic does indeed mention "Kitab -- Book," but the translation of meaning is not a literal book. Remember that I said a word in Arabic may have many meanings; as such, one of the meanings of the word Kitab means the collection and gathering of conditions to cause or form something. For example "Kitab-al-Mowt --- The Book of Death" means the collection and gathering of all the conditions and factors that cause death.

Just like a normal book is a collection of ideas, so is this symbolic book, referred to above, a collection of conditions that cause an event to occur. As such, we find that the word appointment is a better word for the translation of meaning.

45. Neither too soon, nor too late, shall a people reach its appointed time - (The Believers (al-Muminun))

The correct verse is:

***"No people can hasten their term, nor can they delay (it.) (Qur'an 23:43)"***

The verse has the exact meaning as the verse:

***"To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation). (Qur'an 7:34)"***

I have already explained that verse above -- please consult that aforementioned part for elaboration.

***"And to you there came Joseph in times gone by, with Clear Signs, but ye ceased not to doubt of the (mission) for which he had come: at length, when he died, ye said: 'No apostle will God send after him.' Thus doth God leave to stray such as transgress and live in doubt (Qur'an Surah 40:34)"***

If you are trying to state that people are misled in believing that there are no more Messengers and/or Prophets after Muhammad (S), then I assure you that you are wrong. The verse is talking about the fixed Time- Frame of Joseph's (as) existence and what was to come immediately after him. It is not that Allah (SWT) has told the people of Joseph (as) that NO Messenger will come after Joseph (as) and then changed His (SWT) mind, and sent a Messenger!

In the case of Islam and Muhammad (S), we are clearly told that no more messengers will be sent by He (SWT) Who created the Universe and Sustains it. There is a clear distinction here: the people of Joseph (as) said that there will not come a prophet or messenger after Joseph (as), whereas Allah (SWT) never said such a thing! It was the concoction of the people to say that Allah (SWT) will not send another messenger. Now, in the case of Muhammad (S), the people have been notified by Allah (SWT) that there shall come no Messenger after Muhammad (S). Therein lies the distinction in this verse.

Another point worthy of mentioning is that: why do we wait until the Messenger dies to rethink our existence and actions? Why does remorse begin after a Messenger's death? Why can't we follow that Messenger when he was alive? The lesson clearly stated here is that we shouldn't wait until the milk is spilled and then weep and cry over it, we should prevent the milk from being spilled in the first place (if you know what I mean!?).

Again, the verse alludes to Allah's (SWT) Mercy in that even if a Messenger dies, Allah (SWT) is still merciful enough to send another one. However, in the case of Muhammad (S), the warning is loud and CLEAR that Muhammad (S) is the FINAL Mercy to mankind from Allah (SWT).

***Ah! alas for (My) servants! There comes not an apostle to them but they mock Him! (Qur'an Surah 36:30)***

What do you intend by quoting this verse? The meaning is abundantly clear, unless your intention is that there has come to us an apostle after Muhammad (S) and we mocked him!!! Now, I question if you really meant that? The verse is clear, but let me make it a bit clearer:

Obviously, the verse states that the Messengers of Allah (SWT) are indeed mocked by ignorant men, and that Allah (SWT) has indeed sent messengers to mankind, but mankind has transgressed and mocked these men.

Now, let me add something else: Muhammad (S) was sent as a Messenger, and it is clear that his (S) message contained the affirmation that he (S) is the final Messenger; if we state that there may come a messenger after him (S), then we are mocking him (S), and, as a result, mocking Allah (SWT)! Such is the concept of mockery referred to in the above verse. Also, as I said above, any person that calls people to the righteous path is considered a Rasool (within the confines of the definition of a messenger (rasool) as a "carrier" or a "caller to righteousness" as stated above. He is not, however, an inspired individual sent by Allah (SWT)). As such, if people mock him, then they have also mocked a messenger, as the above verse suggests.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I hope that these answers clarify many points, and I repeat my apology for the late response. Let me also state that an answer to your references of a possible prophet after Muhammad

(S) requires that we examine creation from several facets: sociological, evolutionary, political, historical, scientific, religious, and philosophical, among others. This, clearly, is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, Islamically, that contention is null and void.

Let me also add that all the above is my own explanation of the verses. Nonetheless, certain Truths are integral to Islam, and cannot be compromised (like the FACT that Muhammad (S) is the Final Messenger of Allah (SWT)).

## Side Comments To A Bahai

A Baha'i contributor presented Baha'i views about the Seal of Prophets quoting from Islamic sources. Here I mainly focus on Shi'i point of view in this matter. He wrote in his article that:

Clearly, the concept of no Nabi, or prophet, appearing after Muhammad must have been associated with His immediate successorship, and had nothing to do with coming of future Messengers from God. Otherwise, It is not clear to me though. You are using induction which is logically incorrect. If Qur'an wanted to say that "Muhammad is the last Nabi among his children,"he could say so! When such thing is not specified and nothing is exempted, then it covers every human being. There is no Prophet after Muhammad (S).

More over, your Logic is convoluted. Here you are saying that There will be no prophet from the household of Muhammad (S). In another place, you say that Mahdi is from the Family of Prophet (which is actually the belief of all Muslims who have the knowledge of their own books). In another place you say that "the Bab"was the promised Mahdi. In the other place you say that Bab was a messenger. The conclusion from the above sentences is that according to you, Mahdi who was the descendant of Muhammad, was a messenger. This "contradicts"what you just said above, that the verse (33:40) is saying Muhammad was the last Prophet among his family!!!

How nice is the verse 4:82 of Qur'an which describes that one can find many contradictions in something that is not from Allah (i.e., a man-made religion). A British-made religion is not any better.

Many of the Shi'ah commentators believe in a literal meaning of the term Khatam-u-Nabieen (Seal of the Prophets, after Whom no other Messengers of God shall come), however, there are other commentatorswho believe differently:

I did not see anything differently from the following tradition!

Ibn-i Babuyih known as Sheikh Sadoogh, another highly respected Shi'ah scholar/theologian argues in his book, Ekmaal-ud-Din vol I:

"All the Messengers of God who appeared prior to Muhammad, were succeeded by a Nabi (i.e. a prophet). Adam was a Rasool (Messenger of God), and His successor was Shais the Nabi (Seth the

prophet). Noah was a Messenger of God and His successor was Saam the Nabi (Shem the prophet). Abraham, Moses, Jesus and David (peace be upon Them!), were also God's Messengers, Whose successors were Isaac, Jashua, Simon (St. Peter) and Solomon Who were all prophets. However, the successors of Muhammad, Rasool-Allah (the Messenger of God), were not called Nabis (prophets). They were referred to as Imams. Therefore, 'Ali was not a Nabi, Hasan was not a Nabi, Hossein was not a Nabi, etc...., since, with the Manifestation of Muhammad, the usage of the term Nabi was abandoned (i.e. He was Khatam-u-Nabieen), and ended.

As you can see, Shaykh Sadooq is confirming that there will be neither prophet nor messenger after Muhammad (S). How could he explain more simple than that?!

Allamah Majlesi in Bahar'ul-Anvar Vol 13, p.323 mentions one of the discourses of Imam 'Ali. In that discourse 'Ali says: "I am the Commander of the faithful. I am the King among the pious.... I am the Khatam'u-Vasieen (which can be either taken as "The Seal of the guardians and successors", or, as "The Ornament of the Guardians and successors".) and the heir of the prophets and the representative of the God of the worlds."

This Hadith is referred to as the Hadith Nuraniah as is reported by several people such as Ibn Babyih (Sheikh Sadooq) in "Uyoon'ul-Akhbar Ar-Rida".

This tradition of Imam 'Ali is a very interesting. One must be fair in one's judgment. If we are to take, in this tradition, the term "Khatam" as "the Seal", "the ender", "one who completes", then one is obliged to accept that 'Ali was "the seal of the guardians, and successors", after Muhammad, Who is the Seal of the prophets.

Yet, Shi'ahs believe that after Muhammad there was supposed to be twelve Imams, only the first of Whom was 'Ali. So, assuming that the term Khatam in Khatam'u-Vasieen must have a similar meaning to the term Khatam in Khatam'u- Nabieen, then one is to question why were there more Imams after 'Ali. How are we to reconcile the existence of the other Imams, Who came after 'Ali, based on this interpretation? Let this be food for thought for the possessors of pure heart and open mind.

NOTE: I hope Shi'ah friends contemplate on the meaning of this quotation and its theological implication.

Good question. First I should say that in most of the traditions in this regard, the term "Sayyid al-Wasiyyin" (the master of executors) has been used for Imam 'Ali, and not the above phrase (the ender of executors).

Every Prophet had an executor. Prophet Muhammad was the master of all other Prophets. Naturally his executor (wasi) is the master of all other executors (of previous prophets).

However there is no contradiction in the above tradition. Out of twelve Imams, only Imam 'Ali (as) was the executor (wasi) of prophet (S). Because each person can only have one immediate executor (wasi).

Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger, thus his executor is the last executor among the executors of prophets. This is because there shall not come any prophet after Prophet Muhammad.

Imam Hasan (as), the second Imam, was the immediate executor (wasi) of Imam 'Ali. However we could say Imam Hasan (as) was indirect executor of Prophet too. The third Imam was immediate executor of the second Imam and so on. Thus in this sense, Imam 'Ali was the last immediate executor among the executors of prophets. I hope this is enough "food for thought for the possessors of pure heart and open mind".

***"O children of Adam, verily apostles from among you shall come unto you, who shall expound my signs unto you: whosoever therefore shall fear God and amend, there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved."*(Qur'an 7:35)**

2) Appearance of future Apostles of God is explicitly mentioned here.

3) These Apostles (more than one Apostle –i.e. Mahdi and Isaa bin Maryam) must come from among the Muslim ummah.

4) These Apostles SHALL COME in the future.

You got it wrong my friend. You are quoting Qur'an out of context. Please read the verses before the above verse (7:11–35). Particularly see verses 11, 19, 26 and 27. All of them are the commands of Allah to Prophet Adam (as) who was the first Prophet. Allah is saying O' sons of Prophet Adam, there shall come many prophets after Prophet Adam (a total of 123999 prophets after Prophet Adam).

About Jesus (as): He was a Prophet and came BEFORE prophet Muhammad (S). Prophet Jesus will return but he is not a new Prophet for he is older than Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Jesus also does not bring any new law for people. Christianity was expired when Prophet Muhammad came. Prophet Jesus will come as a follower of Imam Mahdi and will be his assistant. He will pray behind him. So Jesus (as) is not a new prophet. He is an old one who has lived long.

Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his relief) is going to establish a world-wide government and all people throughout the world will live peacefully under his Government. Bahais believe that "the Bab"(Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad) was the Imam Mahdi who claimed as such in May 1844 A.D. (1260 AH). He was executed in Iran shortly after (in July 1850 AD).

The above paragraph is enough for an elementary-school-age child to reject the Bahais. Because if he was really Imam Mahdi, then when did he establish the world-wide government in all corners of the world? "The Bab" could not even govern the city in which he was living! He was executed by people for his blasphemy six years later.

Imam Mahdi brings neither new religion nor new religious law. He does not cancel any regulations set by Prophet Muhammad. However there are some authentic traditions which state that although Imam Mahdi does not bring any new law when he comes, some people say: he is bringing a new religion.

Those traditions further explain that it is as a result of many innovations set by pseudo-scholars into to the religion of Islam. Imam Mahdi comes to reject any innovations and to revive the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad which was corrupted by people after him. As a result of ignorance of people to the true Sunnah of Prophet, they think he is bringing a new religion.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia/finality-prophethood#comment-0>