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Lesson 11: The Last Prophet

As we said the last prophet is Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah. He was appointed as prophet at the age of forty. As attested by history, throughout his life he never ever worshipped idols or abandoned his faith in God. Prior to his appointment, he occasionally went to a certain location in Hara Mountain (Hara cave) during certain seasons to serve and worship the Only God.

He was appointed by God to lead people with the divine plans and rules at a time when the contemporary society was gripped by chaos, bloodshed, conflicts, and superstitions and when myths prevailed in the minds.

He proclaimed his invitation and to prove his authenticity he presented innumerable signs and miracles. Among his miracles, one was very lively, eloquent and enduring which in terms of its testimony to his prophetic mission has preserved its validity. This living evidence and immortal miracle is the Great Qur'an which still shines like a brilliant sun and lights up the hearts of its followers. Qur'an still clearly states, *“My carrier is not an ordinary person and I am not produced by his thought, rather, the person who brought me is a distinguished individual who has been in touch with the Unseen and God has sent him to guide mankind.”*

The prophet of Islam has observed, “O folks! I have been appointed by God and this Qur'an is a living testimony to my prophetic mission. If you doubt me, get together and with the help of one another present one verse like one of this Qur'an. If you succeed and could equal me, then you're entitled to decline my invitation but if you fail —which you will ever do— then realize that I am a mediator between God and mankind and am God's prophet and messenger to lead you toward perfection and felicity.”

At that time, all the eloquent orators and celebrated poets who were reputed to be peerless masters of eloquence failed to introduce a verse like one of Qur'an's and they acknowledged their failure and defeat. Since then, the enemies of Islam have utilized every means available against Islam but they have failed to counteract the Holy Qur'an and present one verse like that of Qur'an's.

The Qur'an, the Immortal Miracle

Qur'an is a miracle not only by virtue of its eloquence, spiritual appeal, and beauty of composition but also due to many other aspects. Now we briefly allude to some of them.

1. All historians unanimously agree that the noble Prophet of Islam was illiterate and prior to his appointment at forty, had not been educated. Given this, the Muslim Prophet has recounted the accounts of a large number of the preceding prophets. Of course, the narration of other prophets' accounts per se is not a miracle. But these narratives have been incorporated by the Jewish and Christian Scriptures (the Old and New Testaments).

Therefore, we can compare this section of Qur'an (the narratives of the previous prophets) with its counterpart in the Old and New Testaments and thus establish the heavenly nature of *the Holy Qur'an*. Because having studied the current Old and New Testaments¹, we realize that their writers have presented the history of these prophets, who were prominent men and devout instructors and their accounts must be instructive, in the form of superstitious myths and have so distorted facts that in these books prophets have been depicted as inferior to ordinary men. But when we return to Qur'an, the accounts of these virtuous prophets have been presented in a way that they bear an educational and moral point for everyone.

By the same token, one cannot claim that the prophet of Islam has borrowed the contents of the Holy Qur'an from the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians to present them in the form of the Holy Qur'an.

When the Holy Qur'an recounts the story of a prophet, it also refers to a number of moral facts and points and relates their accounts without any distortion or superfluous superstitions. If the prophet's source for Qur'an were not from Revelation, then undoubtedly, in recounting these stories, he would suffer from the same superstitious distortion that befell the writers of the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians and Arab storytellers and consequently the narratives of the prophets would be marred by superstitions and untruths.

You can ascertain this by comparing the accounts of Adam, Eve, Abraham and Jesus in Qur'an and the Bible. This cursory comparison will demonstrate that the Prophet of Islam has come up with these facts through divine revelation. These stories have been so blatantly distorted in the Old and New Testaments that pen is ashamed of ascribing such stories to the divine instructors whereas the same accounts have turned up in Qur'an with the best of themes bearing a series of moral and educational facts.

2. Another way of establishing the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'an is through the rules that are included within it. These rules are so precise, robust and calculated that the passage of time and transformation of societies have never been able to undermine them. Qur'an has presented a special economic system for the human society which is capable of meeting peoples' demands in every period. If we only comply with one of the economic principles of Islam, that is, *the ban on usury* then many of the

class divisions would disappear.

An illiterate person would never be able to present partially correct economic system, let alone an accurate economic system, which won't be discredited with the advent of new economic systems but its principles are endorsed by contemporary economists and which will also direct its followers (if they observe it) to elevation and dignity.

Qur'an has distributed wealth in a way that if its commands were abided by, poverty and famine would vanish. Qur'an has introduced solid criminal laws to maintain peace and welfare. The military rules and warfare principles and tactics of Islam are so progressive that they have taken into consideration the rights and sacred things of the enemy. Finally, the Islamic law is so extensive and exhaustive that it covers the entire human life from his birth to his death and has a definite verdict for even the slightest things.

Is it likely that an illiterate person could have presented such plans and enduring rules without aid from the Unseen and without any connection with God, especially in the light of the atmosphere of the time which was prevailed by ignorance and savagery?

The superiority of Islam and the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'an are not confined to these but there are many more signs to prove that the carrier of Qur'an is a divine teacher and leader and his plan is heavenly. Imam ar-Ridha has observed, "My grandfather, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) was asked why does not the Holy Qur'an lose its appeal and originality despite its widespread progress and over-familiarity but conversely grows more lively day by day?

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) replied, "it is so because Qur'an is not exclusively pertinent to a certain time or certain people and consequently it is new and fresh all the time."²

Indeed, if we adopt the Holy Qur'an as our plan for life, then our perfection and prosperity will be guaranteed. And like the early Muslims who achieved dignity and splendor swiftly due to their compliance with Qur'an, we also could restore the lost grandeur of Islam. But, sadly, Muslims have abandoned Qur'an, and therefore the Muslim world is as it is.

¹. Note: the present Jewish and Christian Scriptures are not those that were introduced by the prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) and the authentic scriptures are lost.

². 'Uyun Akhbar ar-Ridha, vol. 2, Qum, p. 87.

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