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Lesson 4: The Best Way to come to Know the Prophets

Without doubt, accepting the claims of every pretender to prophethood is unintelligent and illogical.

It was possible that the claims to prophethood and the mission on behalf of God were true but the possibility also existed that an opportunist and a cheat was introducing himself as a prophet. Because of this, it is necessary that certain criteria be established for evaluating the claims of the prophets and their relationship with God.

In order to reach such a determination, various ways exist, the most important of which are two:

1. To study the content of the invitation of the prophets and to collect the laws and signs.
2. Miracles and deeds which exceed normal human ones.

Let us be allowed to first speak about miracles.

There are some people who are surprised by the word ‘miracle’ or consider miracles to be equivalent to fairy tales and myths whereas if we look carefully at the meaning of the word ‘miracle’, we would not get such an incorrect picture of it.

A miracle is not an act which is not possible and without reason or cause. Rather a miracle is something as simple as an interpretation of an extraordinary deed, the performance of which is beyond the means of normal people and can only be undertaken with the help from something beyond nature.

Thus, a miracle has the following conditions:

1. Something which is possible and accepted.
2. Normal people and even geniuses, by relying on the strong power of humanity cannot do the deed.

3. The miracle-maker must be so certain of what he is doing that he can challenge others to try.

4. No one else was able to offer these miracles and everyone was impotent before them.

Miracles must be connected with the claims of prophethood or imamate (thus any work which is extraordinary and comes from someone other than a prophet or pure Imam is not called a miracle, but a blessing).

Several Clear Examples

Many people are familiar with the miracles of the Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, who was able to raise the dead to life and heal the incurably sick.

Is there any clear and intelligent reason why a human being, after death, is not able to return to life?

Is there any scientific or intelligent reason why a person with an incurable disease cannot be cured?

Doubtlessly, however, the power which a human being has, under the present conditions, is not sufficient to be able to raise the dead and give them life or to treat some diseases, even if all the doctors of the world were to Work together and give each other of their experience and knowledge.

But what is to prevent a person with a divine power and with particular awareness which has come from God's endless ocean of knowledge, to be able to give life to the body of a dead person or to cure one who has an incurable disease?

Science says, "I do not know and I do not have the ability," but it would never say that it is impossible or unintelligent.

And other examples: It is not possible for any human being to journey to the moon without making use of a space ship but at the same time that there is nothing to prevent a superior force and a horse which is stronger than horses which we know to be placed at the disposal of a person and without using a space ship, that person go to the moon or planets above it.

If a person can do such an extraordinary feat, and along with that, claim prophet hood, and ask others to try and challenge everyone and everyone prove to be impotent in relation to him, we will find certainty that it is from God because it is not possible that God give such a strength to a human being who lies and would cause His creatures to be misled. (Note this with care).

Miracles Should Not be Confused with Superstitions

Extremism, of the right or the left, has always been the source of corruption and darkening of the truth.

As to miracles, this very statement is true. Whereas some pseudo intellectuals speedily and directly

deny miracles, another group tries to extend miracles and take the weak traditions and fairy-tale superstitions which were most often done with the help of the enemies and mix them with miracles and the scientific visage of miracles of the prophets and cover them with fairy tale like stories and unclarities so that the real miracles of these kinds of stories not be known.

It is because of this that our great scholars were always very careful to avoid such mistakes in Islamic Traditions relating to miracles.

Also, it is because of this that the 'Science of Biography' came into being so that the methods of Traditions be known and that the correct and the weak traditions be separated from one another, and that the useless not mixed with the truth.

The policies of the colonialists and the extremists today have been busy trying to mix the pure with the impure and in this way give an unscientific image to all of them. We must be very aware of these conspiracies of the enemies.

What is the Difference Between Miracles and Extraordinary Deeds?

We have often heard that a group of ascetics have undertaken extraordinary feats. People who have seen these deeds are not few. This is a reality, not a fairy tale.

It is here that this question arises as to what difference is there between this extraordinary work and the miracles of the prophets? And what criteria should we use to separate them?

Here the question arises as to what the difference is between these extraordinary feats and the miracle of the prophets and what criteria we use to distinguish them.

This question has several responses, the two clearest of which are:

1. An ascetic always does work which is limited In other words, no ascetic is ready to do what you ask him to do. He undertakes an extraordinary feat which he himself wants to do, that is, something which he has practiced a great deal, learned how to do well and at which is an expert.

The reason for this is clear because the power or force of every human being is limited and in one or several things only can he attain skill.

But the extraordinary deeds of the prophets had no limits, no conditions to be able to perform them. They can, whenever they want, perform a miracle which is suggested to them because they receive help from the endless power of the Creator and we know that God's power is not limited, whereas the power of the human being is very limited.

2. The work done by an ascetic, another ascetic does the same thing in the same way, that is, it is not

beyond the power of the human being. Because of this, an ascetic who does extraordinary feats never invites others to try and to do what he has done and he does not challenge him because he knows that in his town or in the surrounding areas, there are other individuals such as himself who can do the same thing.

But the prophets, with complete assurance and certainty, challenge others and they say, “Even if you were to bring together all of humanity, they could not do what we are doing or can do.”

This difference is also true in relation to magic. These refer to the two differences which we have mentioned and they divide a miracle from magic. (Note this with care).

Think and Answer

1. Why do we call a miracle, a miracle?
2. Is a miracle an exception to the law of causes?
3. How many differences can you name between the work of the prophets and that of the ascetic and magician?
4. What is the main condition for a miracle?
5. Have you ever seen something which is similar to a miracle?

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