

Muhammad, the Last Prophet

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) is the last of the divine prophets. After His Eminence, no other prophet is going to be sent by God. The Prophet of Islam, from the beginning of his mission, introduced himself as the seal of the prophets and was accepted by the Muslims as such. The subject of finality of prophethood in the Islamic milieu is considered to be an important matter and it is not in need of evidence.

Finality is mentioned in the Holy Quran as well as books of traditions. It is mentioned in Quran that:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the prophets; and Allah is cognizant of all things.” (33:40)

If the Arabic word of KH-T-M is recited with vowel ‘I’ on ‘T’, as some reciters have done this, it would imply one who ends something; thus it clearly shows that The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) is the last of the prophets. But if it is recited with the vowel ‘A’ on ‘T’ it denotes a thing with which something ends. Ring and seal are also called as such, because they are placed at the end of a letter and indicate the end of it. According to the second possibility also, it is concluded from the verse that the Holy Prophet (S) is the last prophet, because he is introduced as a seal, which has come at the end of the letter of prophethood.

Therefore, no other prophet is to appear after him. Thus the finality of the Prophet of Islam is nicely concluded from the above verse as the Muslims of the early period of Islam also understood it in this meaning and did not have any doubt in the finality of the prophethood of His Eminence.

Other verses also exist in this regard, but there is no need to mention them here.

A large number of traditions also exist with regard to finality of prophethood and some of them are

mentioned below:

Saad Ibn Abi Waqqas has narrated from his father that the Messenger of Allah (S) said to Imam Ali (a.s.):

You are to me as Harun was to Musa (a.s.), except that there is no prophet after me.[1](#)

The above tradition is known as “the tradition of position” (Hadith Manzila) and is recorded in Shia and Sunni books through various channels and it proves that no other prophet is to come after the Prophet of Islam.

It is narrated from Abu Huraira that he said:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: I have been sent for all the people of the world and prophethood has ended with me.[2](#) Abu Amama has narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

O people, no prophet is to come after me and there is no nation (Ummah) after you. So worship Allah, perform the five daily ritual prayers, observe the fasts of the month of Ramadan, perform the Hajj of Kaaba and pay the Zakat of your wealth, so that your selves are purified. Also obey the ones who are vested with authority among you so that you may enter Paradise.[3](#)

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said:

Almighty Allah sent the Holy Prophet (S) at a time when no prophet existed on the earth and there was a time gap between them and discord had developed among the people. Thus by sending him, He ended prophethood and revelation came to an end.[4](#)

It is concluded from his tradition and others like it that The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) is the seal of prophets and that after him no other prophet came and nor any prophet is going to come. It was also stated previously that the Prophet of Islam, at the beginning of his mission, introduced himself as the seal of prophets and all those who accepted his prophethood they also accepted the finality of his prophethood. Therefore no separate evidence is required to prove the finality of the Prophet of Islam.

Question: What is the reason of the finality of prophethood? If people are in need of a prophet and heavenly commands, this need existed at all times and still exists. And if after the advent of Prophet of Islam this need does not exist anymore, with regard to the past prophets also the same possibility was there. Why one of them were not considered as the seal of the prophets?

Reply: Some points are mentioned below:

1. Religion is a reality and a way and all heavenly religions are same in that regard. Principles of religion are explained in brief as follows:

First: Faith in God and His recognition. Second: Faith in resurrection and life after death and the rewards

and punishments of the hereafter. Third: Faith in prophets. Fourth: Moral, worship and social duties and responsibilities of human beings.

All the prophets and all heavenly religions are similar in this regard and they called their followers to the same principles.

2. Although heavenly religions are similar in principles and generalities, they are not same on an equal level; on the contrary from the aspect of depth of religious cognition and intellectual matters, in social rules and regulations, in the condition and kind of worship rituals etc. they are very much different from each other. Religions have gradually developed and spread through the ages. The mentioned differences are effects of intellectual maturity and the level of knowledge of the people and the changes and transformations that occurred in the life of human beings.

Learning and intellectual capacity of the ancient people was definitely not at the level of the present man. And from the aspect of individual and social life also, the ancient man was in no way like the man of today. Religious knowledge, laws of faith and other matters were also sent by Almighty God to man through the channel of prophets in accordance to the capability of man and they spoke to people according their intellectual level. Therefore the Prophet of Islam (S) said:

We prophets have been commanded to speak to people in accordance with their intellectual level.[5](#)

Prophets through the ages, like loving parents held the hands of the people with determination and took them through development step by step till they reached the present level. Therefore as much man gained intellectual maturity as much advanced religious concepts were presented to him. And in the same way, if they were in need of more advanced rules and regulations they were given as much advanced rules and regulations.

Such advancement continued through the ages under the supervision and efforts of prophets till the time that the intellect and capacity of man reached to a level that he could understand the most complex religious concepts and knowledge; with this aim the Prophet of Islam was sent, so that he may remove this need of man.

The Holy Quran through the Prophet of Islam was revealed for the people so that it may convey to them the loftiest religious cognitions and realities and not only for the people of that time; on the contrary, the intellectuals of every age could benefit from it and they would never become old.

The Holy Quran and the life history of the Prophet of Islam are two religious and scientific heritages that are handed over to Muslims.

3. The Holy Prophet (S) also made another arrangement to protect the knowledge of prophethood, laws of Islam and their application and that was through the appointment of Imam. The Prophet of Islam, by the order of Almighty Allah introduced the infallible Imams as reliable points of reference in intellectual

and religious matters and Quranic sciences and considered their statements and manners as the final proof.

Therefore in this way also he entrusted the Muslims with numerous traditions to guarantee the fulfillment of their needs.

4. Permission to deduce laws of Shariah from the Holy Quran, traditions and life history of Infallibles (a.s.) as well as the application of reason. Intellectuals and Islamic scholars in addition to the Holy Quran have at their disposal another great treasure, which are traditions through whom they can solve all the religious problems of man. In the same way is deductions based on the valuable sources of Islam and fulfillment of different needs of man throughout the changing times.

5. People of the time of the Prophet of Islam from the aspect of intellect had reached such a level that they were eligible to have been given the sciences of prophethood fully and that they can make efforts to protect and propagate them.

Muslims of the early period of Islam possessed this capability that they can protect their heavenly scripture and guard its writing from interpolation and forgery and preserve it for the future generations. In the same way, they had such intellectual maturity and possibilities that they acquired hundreds of thousands of traditions regarding various topics from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.) and guarded them in all circumstances.

Therefore it was at such a special time having so many possibilities, that the Prophet of Islam was appointed as a prophet. He brought the Quran and he conveyed to the people the most advanced religious concepts and laws. He perfected the religion through Imamate and introduced the infallible Imams as guardians of faith and those who were to continue his path. With this program, the Islamic Ummah became self-sufficient and it never became needful of a new prophet.

This is the philosophy of the finality of prophethood, but such possibilities were not available for the past prophets and nations.

Permanence of the Laws Of Islam And The Changing Life Of Man

Previously it was proved that the Prophet of Islam was the seal of the prophets and after him no other prophet is to come. At this point, it is possible that someone may pose frivolous objection and say: You consider laws of Islam as solution of all problems at all times, whereas the fact is that circumstances of man are always changing and new occurrences appear requiring new laws of religion. On other words, how can you justify the permanence of the laws of religion when the needs of life continue to change all the time?

How can the laws and rules of Islam, which were revealed 1420 years ago and were suitable for the life of the people of Arabian Peninsula, suit the developed life of the man of today? Therefore the complex

and difficult life of today needs more advanced laws and rules. If man is in need of heavenly laws, it would have been better if there had been a new prophet in every age, so that he may bring a more perfect law as per the new needs.

In reply to this objection, it can be said that the needs of the life of man, which were the aim behind devising of laws and rules have two aspects: Permanence and change: The permanent aspect is from the creation and human nature and which originates from his natural instincts and talents and all men at all times and places are similar in this matter. For example, all human beings require nourishment, water, clothes and a shelter. In fact these natural needs are applicable to all human beings even though there might be great difference between them.

As a result of this need man requires different types of exchanges like: buying and selling, rentals, liens and other transactions. Since human beings live in a society, they are needful of the help and cooperation of each other and even the civilized society is needful of right and perfect laws so that their application may guarantee the rights of all and that it may prevent oppression and excess.

Laws related to laborers and employers, ownership and its limits, sale and purchase, rent, pledges, justice and testimony, penalties, blood monies and retaliation etc. are shaped from these same natural needs.

Expression of sexual instincts also is a natural need and all human beings are needful of it. It is the same natural need, which has brought marriage and divorce into existence and which is the cause of legislation of laws related to matrimony and mutual rights between spouses, and between parents and children.

That is why the laws, which have come in the religious law of Islam, and which follow the natural instincts and needs of man, are all permanent and perpetual and they cannot have any problem with the finality of prophethood of the Holy Prophet (S).

With regard to the changing needs of man it can be said that with attention to the changing conditions of the world and ever-increasing scientific and technological development, inventions of various tools and gadgets of daily use, there will be suitable solutions and fresh laws as religion is answerable for them and the holy religious law of Islam saw two ways to solve this problem:

First method: Jurisprudence (Ijtihad): It was stated previously that Islam is a valuable heritage of knowledge, religious cognition and laws based on Quran and traditions that is left for Muslims. If the Islamic jurists with attention to the demands of every age contemplate and research the sources of Islam, they can derive the appropriate solutions of the new problems and convey them to the people and may take the Islamic society on the path of progress along with different advanced societies of the world.

The Islamic scholar should be aware of present conditions and place and well versed with modern needs

of the great human society; he should also be having a wide view of the world and must be broad minded; he should be able to find out the solution of new difficult problems from self-sufficient religious sources of Islam and convey them to Muslims. And in this way he proves to the world that laws of Islam can be implemented in every time and place and they can guarantee the success of the world and the hereafter of its followers.

Second method – discretions of the jurist: It is automatically proved that governance is only according to rules and regulations of Islam. A large part of rules and regulations of Shariah are related to administration of society and political and social matters and their enforcement, without the existence of a religious, committed and expert ruler is not possible.

Muslim leaders have the responsibility to administer the Islamic government under the limits of the laws of Shariah and by complete application of the laws of Islam they can take it ahead of injustice and moral and social corruption and maintain Islamic justice. For governance of Islamic jurist it is a duty that he should make these arrangements in all conditions and times.

Although some Islamic laws are devised with this same aim and by applying them perfectly this aim can be achieved, but the jurist ruler sometimes has to face extraordinary and difficult circumstances in administering the territories of Islam as their solution requires authorities and special qualities and such discretions have been devised with foresight for Muslim rulers.

The Muslim ruler has permission to protect the principles and general sources of Islam and in observing the exigencies of Islamic nation, to frame rules and regulations and to use them in administration of the country. Such rules and regulations are called as the rules of governance.

The Holy Prophet (S) was having this power and he used them. After him the same powers are given to the Infallible Imams (a.s.). Especially it is the same law that Muslims are obliged to follow as per the orders of the Prophet and the Holy Imams (a.s.) who are mentioned as “those vested with authority” (Ulil Amr).

The Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you...”
(4:59)

According to a large number of traditions narrated in our sources, the responsibility of governance during the period of the occultation of the Infallible Imam is given to the just religious scholar who has determination and is also well versed in administration and political affairs. Such a jurist is introduced as an expert on human psychology and who can take over the function of a leader and guardianship of

Muslim affairs.

Master of affairs of Muslims also in administration of Islamic countries is having special powers of the Infallible Imams (a.s.) and he uses his powers in administration of the country.

That is why an Islamic government under no circumstances, in emergency of shortage, applies necessary rules and regulations, because in order to solve political difficulties it either depends on jurisprudential derivations (Ijtihadaat) of the jurists who are conversant with the current situation or uses its own special powers.

From that which is mentioned above, it is known that rules and regulations of Islam can be everlasting and assure the success of man in the world and the hereafter. That is why there is no doubt in the finality of prophethood of the Prophet of Islam.

Why the Sending of Legislative Prophets Ended?

It is possible that someone may raise other petty objections and say: since we have accepted that after the advent of the Prophet of Islam we do not have need of legislative prophets, we don't accept that there is no more need for missionary prophets also. The past prophets were of two types: some were owners of a separate Shariah (Ulul Azm) and there were some who only propagated the religion of these Ulul Azm prophets, which was very effective and beneficial in the guidance of people. After the Prophet of Islam also the existence of such prophets would have been definitely beneficial; thus why were they not continued?

In reply, it can be said that the sending of prophets is there to exhaust the argument under necessary circumstances. After the Prophet of Islam such a need did not exist anymore, because man by that time had matured in practical and theoretical intellect and knowledge and thus he was now capable of guarding and propagating his religious and intellectual heritage. Hence at that time religion was perfected and became needless of a missionary.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

“This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion...” (5:3)

Islam has given the responsibility of guarding and propagating faith to three groups of persons:

First: The Infallible Imam: Shia believe that after the Prophet of Islam (S), the responsibility of guarding

and propagating religion and administration of Islamic nation is entrusted to the Infallible Imam. During his lifetime, the Messenger of Allah (S) appointed Imam Ali (a.s.) for this purpose and entrusted to him the necessary information so that after him he may guard and promote the religion of Islam.

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) also during his lifetime, fulfilled his duty and as far as possible tried to defend religion and lead the nation and at the time of his passing away appointed Imam Hasan (a.s.) in his place and transferred the necessary information to him. After Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.) succeeded to Imamate and in this way every Imam specified the next Imam. This continued till the time of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) in 255 A.H.

As a result of the efforts and struggles of the Infallible Imams (a.s.), hundreds of thousands of sayings regarding various subjects were bestowed to Muslims which remained for future generations and due to the efforts of the Holy Imams (a.s.) thousands of intellectuals, Islamic scholars and missionaries were trained.

The Eleventh Imam also, at the time of his passing away, appointed his son, Hujjat Ibnul Hasan (a.s.) as the Imam in his place and transferred to him the responsibility of protecting religion. The Twelfth Imam is in occultation from that time till the present day and he is fulfilling his duties in other ways, although every moment he is in anticipation of the day when people would be fully ready for his Islamic revolution and the rule of absolute justice and equity. At that time, he would spread Islam to all corners of the world with a universal revolution and fill the earth with justice and equity like it would have been filled with injustice and oppression.

From what is mentioned above, it can be concluded that by the legislation of the post of Imamate, there is no need of sending missionary prophets who may propagate Islam, because this responsibility is given over to the Infallible Imams.

Second: Jurists and scholars of religion: During the period of Infallibles (a.s.) many intellectuals and scholars acquired knowledge of Islamic laws and sciences and became ready to propagate them. The Prophet of Islam (S) and Holy Imams (a.s.) made great efforts to nurture such persons.

Regarding this, we have a large number of traditions and some of them are mentioned below:

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Scholars are the heirs of the prophets. Prophets do not leave behind any material wealth; on the contrary, they leave traditions in inheritance. Thus anyone who takes something from those traditions earns a great advantage. Take care from whom you obtain your knowledge. Among us Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) in every generation there exist just persons who refrain from distortion of the extremists, deviation of the misguided and interpretation of the ignorant.[6](#)

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

The scholars of my Ummah are like the prophets of Bani Israel.[7](#)

In the same way, he said:

May Allah have mercy on my successors. He was asked: O Messenger of Allah (S), who are your successors? He replied: One who revives my practice and reminds people about it.[8](#)

He also said:

The simile of the scholars on the earth is the simile of the stars on the sky as people seek directions through them in darkness in land and seas and if they disappear it is feared that those who are guided by them would be lost.[9](#)

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) has narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) that he said:

On Judgment Day, the ink of the scholars will weighed against the blood of martyrs and the ink of the scholars will be found to be superior to the blood of martyrs.[10](#)

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

For one who dies while being in pursuit of knowledge aimed at revival of Islam, there is only a difference of one stage between him and the prophets.[11](#)

It can be concluded from these and similar traditions that the Holy Prophet (S) has placed the responsibility of guiding the people upon the religious scholars. In such a case there is no need of sending missionary prophets.

Third: Human Intellect: One of the important aims of the prophets was nurturing and perfection of intellects. The past prophets played a very important role in this regard. Human intellects were gradually perfected through the ages through the efforts of prophets till they reached absolute maturity during the time of the Prophet of Islam (S).

The Prophet of Islam (S) also had a special quality with regard to development and perfection of human intellect. He advised people that they should use their intellects and be inquisitive to discover realities and understand facts and that they should discriminate between truth and falsehood through contemplation and should only accept the truth.

In numerous verses, the Holy Quran had encouraged people to use intellect and contemplation. In books of traditions also there are a large number of traditions that praise intelligence and advise people to gain knowledge and intelligence. The Prophet of Islam (S) and the Holy Imams (a.s.) have mentioned the intellect to be a guide and a religious evidence in identification of intellectual subjects and problems and have asked them to use their intellect to identify the realities and to follow them.

It can thus be concluded that after the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) there is no need of sending

missionary prophets and that is why we can say that Prophet of Islam (S) is the seal of the prophets and that prophethood has ended with him.

- [1.](#) Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, Pg. 1870.
- [2.](#) At-Tabaqatul Kubra, Vol. 1, Pg. 192.
- [3.](#) Wasailush Shia, Vol. 1, Pg. 23.
- [4.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 129.
- [5.](#) Tohufful Uqul, Pg. 36.
- [6.](#) Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, Pg. 32.
- [7.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 2, Pg. 21.
- [8.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 2, Pg. 25.
- [9.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 2, Pg. 25.
- [10.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 2, Pg. 16.
- [11.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 1, Pg. 184.

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