

Part One: Prophethood General Prophethood

Need for Prophethood

Almighty Allah has created man in the best of the forms and bestowed perfections for him and He has placed in his being, inclination to perfection and power of movement towards it. Man, in the course of his life and to guarantee the real success is in need of a program and guide and without them he cannot reach his aimed perfection. Man alone cannot recognize the program of life and the path of success and he does not know how to apply them. On the contrary, he is needful of the creator of the world and His prophets. Thus we conclude that it is necessary for the Almighty God to send prophets to guide mankind.

We shall study this subject under two topics:

First topic: Study of the need of man for a program of life and the special qualities of a successful program:

Second topic: Recognition of the compiler of the perfect program.

We shall explain the first topic under a few headings:

1. In logical sciences, it is proved that man is a compound of a body and a soul, from the aspect of the body, he is like other material things and is subject to change and movement; and from the aspect of the soul he is considered as a part of the abstract world. But in this very condition, each of them is related to another. Since the soul of man is related to a material body, and is not solely an abstract thing; it is having possibility of movement and desire for perfection. In the beginning, he is a weak being, which progresses gradually and becomes more and more perfect; but in all the stages there is only one reality and not more.

2. On one side, man is placed on path of perfection and by nature he is desirous of perfection and on

the other hand, he is equipped with the power of acquiring perfection, therefore it is possible for him to reach perfection; hence there is no vain act in the system of God's creation. Since every material being can reach its possible perfection, man is also not deprived of this great divine bounty and he can reach his desired perfection; on the contrary Almighty Allah has prepared for him the way to achieve this.

3. Man is having two kinds of lives: one of them is the life of the world, which is related to his body; and the other is the spiritual and inward life, related to his soul. As a result of this in accordance with each of these two lives, he will either have perfection and success or decline and misfortune.

Man is busy in the life of the world and it is possible that he might become unmindful of his spiritual life, but he is also having a real life in his inner being, which in the end will either take him to salvation and perfection of humanity or lead him to an everlasting decline and evil resort.

Therefore, correct beliefs, good manners and good deeds, are means for perfection of soul and inner success, because false beliefs, bad habits and improper behaviors make a man deviate from the straight path and take him to the valley of destruction and evil.

If man is on the straight path of perfection, the essence of his being gains maturity and after traversing stages of perfection to his real condition, which is the condition of luminosity and happiness, he scales them. But if he sacrifices the spiritual perfections, good ethics and excellent character on the altar of sensual and animal desires or in shape of beastly infatuations, he would become deviated from the straight path of humanity and fall into the ravine of destruction and evil.

4. Just as there is perfect unity and attachment between the body and soul of man, there is also a relationship between the life of the world and spiritual life. And it is not possible to separate the two of them and make each of them independent entities.

Good or bad deeds and character of man, without any doubt will have good or bad effect on his self; since the qualities and capacities have effect on the howness of incidence of acts. The spiritual and inner life of man is the source of his beliefs, character and acts. Without correct faith and performance of good deeds, he cannot reach his intended stage of perfection and spiritual success, just as without purification of self it is not possible to reform ones acts and to gain perfect good sense.

5. Man lives in the society and derives all kinds of benefits from it and also passes on benefits to them. But there are instances when a person may not pass on the benefit or may trespass on the rights of others; and this would make life in society very difficult. That is why human society is needful of a perfect, precise and comprehensive set of laws so that it can guarantee the rights of people and prevent the trespassing on the rights of others.

Therefore, since man is having two dimensions of existence (body and soul) and two kinds of life, which have perfect relationship with each other, he is in need of a program and course of action to gain success in both his lives; which has the success of the world as well as everlasting success in the

hereafter; in such a way that it neither sacrifices the life of the hereafter on the life of the world and neither does it give up the spiritual life for the comfort of the life of this world.

It is such a program, which is compiled according to the actual needs of man and which leads man on the path of success and salvation and not on an imaginative and hypothetical perfection. A program, which is based on human excellence and perfection and which calls the attention of man for growth of his ethereal soul and inclines him to the position of divine proximity and thus he begins to consider the world as the harvest field of the hereafter. In compilation and arrangement of these laws, real benefits of all human beings are kept in view and narrow mindedness, improper prejudice and groupism are avoided. Almighty Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

“O you who believe! answer (the call of) Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life; and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered.” (8:24)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا * فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا

“O people! surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light. Then as for those who believe in Allah and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a right path.” (4: 174–175)

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفوا فيه وَمَا اختلف فيه إلا الذين أوتوه من بعد ما جاءتهم البينات بغيا بينهم فهدى الله الذين ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اختلفوا فيه من الحق بإذنه والله يهدي من يشاء إلى صراطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves; so Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.” (2:213)

Compilation of the Program of Success

After we have become aware of conditions and specialties of a perfect program, the question arises that who is supposed to design and compile this program? Whether all human beings or intellectuals, intelligent beings or reformers are capable of designing such a program?

With a little thought we can conclude that the reply to this is a decisive 'no', because:

Firstly: One who can occupy this post of designing such a program should have real cognition of man and he should be aware of the secrets and subtleties of the body and ethereal soul of man and he should also have knowledge about the aims and inclinations and the positive and negative points of man and the demands of time and space and occurrence of hardships as also their laws and effects; while the fact is that such a person cannot be found among human beings.

Secondly: Even if we suppose that human law makers can design such a program for administration of worldly matters of human beings, without any doubt, they do not have sufficient awareness about the secrets and mysteries of the ethereal soul of man, and the ideal needs and spiritual life, from the deep relationship between the life of the world and the inner life and also from the perfection of soul and causes of the decline of man. That is why man himself cannot to design for himself a perfect and complete program of life, and basically control the spiritual life of man with attention to the development of ethereal soul of human beings, which is beyond the scope of lawmakers of humanity.

That is why man is not capable to frame laws to guarantee peace and prosperity of his worldly life and to design a program to assure success of his life in hereafter. Thus the only one who can design a perfect and compatible program and entrust it to man, is God, creator of the world and man, who is perfectly aware of makeup and being of man, secrets and subtleties and who is well aware of all his needs, aspirations and inclinations.

It is Him alone who is aware of the real perfections of man and well knows the causes of the exaltation and decline of the soul. It is only the wise God, who sees the world of human beings equally, and all the human beings are His creatures. He loves all and is desirous of their success and salvation. He is never selfish, narrow minded and prejudiced.

Yes, it is only God who can lay down the program to guarantee success of the body and soul and world and the hereafter of man and entrust it to His chosen prophets. It is Him that His unlimited grace has caused the performance of this action and has not deprived the people from this great divine bounty. It is God, who has provided causes for the perfection for different types of material beings so that they may be able to through their actions and efforts to reach their intended aim. The Holy Quran says:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

“Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).” (20:50)

A God, who created man with this greatness and in creation of his body and soul placed thousands of secrets and mysteries and appointed the material world at his disposal; it is not possible that He should become oblivious of his success, real perfection and actual aim of his existence and that he should not give him the capability reach this aim.

Through this is proved the need of prophets and their message. Almighty Allah, in order to convey His message to man, selected some persons from among them, so that He may through them send His programs and laws with regard to their needs. Thus prophets are selected human beings who convey the message of God and guide to success and perfection and warn of the factors of decline and misfortune. Almighty Allah says:

يَبْنِي آدَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنِ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ / وَالَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“O children of Adam! if there come to you apostles from among you relating to you My communications, then whoever shall guard (against evil) and act aright- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. And (as for) those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily- these are the inmates of the fire, they shall abide in it.” (7:35-36)

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ / وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

“And We send not messengers but as announcers of good news and givers of warning, then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. And (as for) those who reject Our communications, chastisement shall afflict them because they transgressed.” (6:48-49)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ
فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ

“And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah and shun the Shaitan. So there were some of them whom Allah guided and there were others against whom error was due; therefore travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters.” (16:36)

Infallibility of the Prophets

Almighty Allah selected the prophets so that they may entrust the human beings with laws and life-giving program of religion in a perfect way without adding or subtracting anything. That they may show man the straight path of perfection and divine proximity and it is one path and not more. And also that they may help human beings on the path of salvation and perfection; that they take up the responsibility of guardianship and leadership of nation and implementation of divine laws and development of excellence of man.

Responsibility of the prophets in this regard is explained in three stages:

1. They receive laws and programs of religion through the channel of revelation;
2. They convey the divine programs and messages to human beings;
3. They themselves act on the rules and regulations of religion and also call people to divine religion through their words and deeds.

The aim of Almighty Allah in sending mortal prophets assures that they should be infallible in these three stages; that is they should be immune from mistakes, doubts and forgetfulness in receiving the divine messages and conveying them to the people. In case they are not infallible, how can they convey the life-giving program of religion without any alteration and without any increase or decrease to people?

In that case would the aim of the wise God in sending the prophets be achieved perfectly? Can people gain satisfaction and assurance that the statements of the prophets are the same message of God and program of religion? No, it is never in this way, on the contrary divine prophets should be immune from errors, doubts and forgetfulness so that they may be able to convey the programs of religion without any increase or decrease and that they may guarantee the fulfillment of the aim of Almighty Allah.

Prophets in the stage of acting on the laws of religion also must be infallible; that is they should fulfill the duties and obligatory acts and keep away from prohibited matters, sins and evil deeds. Because they are perfect examples of religion and by their actions they call people to good deeds and restrain them from evil deeds. If the prophets are not infallible, how can they take up the responsibility of guiding the humanity and how they can invite people to good deeds?

People do not trust one who is himself deviated and who is having contradiction between his words and deeds; since they say: If he was truthful and had believed in his own words, he would have acted according to them. In that case most probably they would prefer to follow their acts and not their words (supposing they were not in consonance with their prophethood). Therefore Almighty Allah will never send such a person as a prophet.

Hence the intellect of man testifies to the necessity of infallibility of prophets and there is no need to quote more verses of Quran or traditions to emphasize this matter. But in the coming pages we would quote some of them by way of textual proofs.

Philosophy of Infallibility

In the past discussion we concluded that prophets are immune from sins, mistakes and forgetfulness. Now the question arises that what is the philosophy of infallibility? Why some people are infallible and why some are not? Since all human beings are prone to commit mistakes, how can some persons be immune from errors? What factor bestows to human beings such a power and immunity that they can dominate their selfish desires and don't even think of committing sins? What is the real motive and aim of this immunity?

According to our belief, infallibility is a quality of the soul and a powerful inner capacity, which restrains the infallible from committing sin and falling into doubt and other similar things. The factor and aim of the existence of this quality is perfect faith, which is beyond the stage of meaning and mental imagination and which has come into the shape of a certainty and actual realization.

People who have reached to the lofty stages of knowing Almighty Allah and have faith in resurrection and through the inner conscience have witnessed the greatness and majesty of the Lord of the universe; and who are aware of the effects of deeds, good manners as also the consequences of following bad ethics and character are aloof from sins and disobedience and with insight and from the aspect of choice and intention, they were obedient to divine laws and control their selfish desires and under no circumstances cross the divinely ordained limits of servitude and submission.

On the other hand, the existence of this insight is a strong support, which prevents them from committing mistakes and forgetfulness in receiving divine revelation and in conveying them to the people. They have realized the truth of divine messages and possess the treasures of unseen knowledge. It is due to this same reason that they are immune from mistakes and errors.

Since the existence of such a perfect and infallible man is necessary for prophethood, Allah, the Mighty and Sublime has arranged the system of creation in such a way that when needed, such a person would be available.

It is said that although the prophet is infallible and does not commit any kind of sin, it is not that the capacity of committing sins has been taken away from him. Instead, the prophet is also like other people; he is capable enough to commit sins and has the choice to commit them; at the most, under the influence of a strong faith and perfect insight, which is placed in his being as a divine gift, by choice and intention he gives up evil deeds and does not fall into divine disobedience.

Below we present some examples of strong evidences which prove that it is necessary for divine

prophets to be infallible:

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran:

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا / إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا / لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

“The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any. Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him. So that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them, and He records the number of all things.” (72:26-28)

Allamah Tabatabai has written under the exegesis of this verse:

Apparently this verse shows that Almighty Allah has chosen the prophets for divine revelation and also gave them a hidden power which accords protection to them. It is that Almighty Allah has surrounded the prophets in order to guard revelation from destruction and change which Satan or others may undertake. This is due to the joining of prophethood to the stage of manifestation. Similar to this verse is the verse in which it is mentioned in the words of angels:

(And we do not descend but by the command of your Lord; (Know that) to Him belongs whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these, and your Lord is not forgetful.)

The verses prove that divine revelation from the beginning of revelation till the time it reaches to the ears of man are in protection and are guarded from every kind of alteration. [1](#)

Also it has come in the same background that:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدْيِهِمُ اقْتَدِهْ

“These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance.” (6:90)

This proves the infallibility of the prophets; thus all of them are guided and Allah says:

مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

“...and (as for) him whom Allah makes err, there is no guide for him.” (39:23)

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ

“And whom Allah guides, there is none that can lead him astray.” (39:37)

And He also says:

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدَى

“Whomsoever Allah guides, he is the one who follows the right way.” (7:178)

Thus Almighty Allah has kept immune His guided ones from every deviated and all kinds of deviations, which want to gain an upper hand on them. That is He has kept them safe from every kind of disobedience since disobedience is also a kind of misguidance.²

¹. Al-Mizan, Vol. 2, Pg. 139.

². Al-Mizan, Vol. 2, Pg. 140.

Knowledge of the Prophets

Knowledge of the prophets through the channel of revelation originates from the limitless knowledge of God. Almighty Allah raised the prophets in order to convey the laws and programs of religion to human beings in a perfect way. They make efforts in guidance and hand over the causes of perfection and success to the people.

That is why the prophets are supposed to be aware of all the matters connected with religion, which the people might be in need of so that they may be able to fulfill the aim of Almighty Allah in sending them to humanity.

Allah, the Mighty and Sublime has not left the success giving program of religion as defective and ambiguous and does not deprive people from the path of perfection and proximity. Therefore there is no other way to guide and instruct the people other than the channel of prophets, hence they should be perfectly cognizant of all the programs of religion.

Sciences necessary for prophethood can be divided into the following:

1. Perfect recognition of God, His names and qualities;
2. Perfect recognition of the world of Purgatory (Barzakh) and its specialties; complete awareness of the circumstances of Judgment Day, accounting, scroll of deeds, balance of deeds, Paradise and Hell.
3. Complete cognition of human soul and spiritual diseases and the methods of prevention and cures of

these spiritual diseases; identification of good and bad morals and the method of purifying the soul and discipline and perfection of the self.

4. Complete knowledge of all the laws and programs of religion, following which can guarantee the success of man in the world and the hereafter.

The prophet should have complete knowledge of all the above mentioned points so that he may be able to guide the people on the straight path of religion. If he himself is not having knowledge, how he would be able to guide the people? Therefore, the God who sent prophets for the guidance of people, it is not possible that He should keep these prophets deprived of the necessary knowledge.

This point is mentioned in a number of verses of the Holy Quran. For example:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity...” (57:25)

On another occasion He says:

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ / وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ / وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ / وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ / ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ / أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبِيَّةَ فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَوًى فَقَدْ وَقَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ / أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدْيِهِمْ اقْتَدِهْ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

“And We gave to him Ishaq and Yaqub; each did We guide, and Nuh did We guide before, and of his descendants, Dawood and Sulaiman and Ayyub and Yusuf and Musa and Harun; and thus do We reward those who do good (to others). And Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Ilyas; every one was of the good; and Ismail and Al-Yasha and Yunus and Lut; and every one We made to excel (in) the worlds: and from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the right way. This is Allah’s guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His servants; and if they had set up others (with Him), certainly what they did would have become ineffectual for them. These are they to whom We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophecy; therefore if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say: I do not ask you for any reward for it; it is nothing but a reminder to the nations.” (6:84-90)

Prophets and the Knowledge of Unseen

Existing things can generally be divided into two groups. Hidden (unseen) things, called as the world of Ghaib and world of seen beings, which is called as the world of visibility.

Beings and things which can be perceived through the five senses are included in the world of visibility; like matter, body and generally all its effects and specialties, like colors, quantities, forms, foods, smells, voices, softness and hardness, heat and cold and generally all matter and material things are included in this world of visibility. Things which man can perceive through his senses and about which he can gain knowledge.

World of the unseen is opposed to the world of visibility and all the beings that are beyond matter and materiality are included in the world of unseen. Like God, His names and qualities, angels, world of Purgatory (Barzakh), existing things of Barzakh, Judgment Day, Paradise and Hell, bounties of Paradise and chastisements of the hereafter; existences of these types are abstract things and they are superior to matter.

Therefore they are included in the world of unseen. That is why we cannot maintain contact with the unseen world with our senses and create knowledge about it. This understanding and intelligence of ours for the unseen world should have been obtained through a channel other than the senses, which in terminology is called as knowledge of unseen.

Through the five senses we can only maintain contact with the things of the world of matter and we gain knowledge directly or indirectly, although in those instances also our knowledge is limited and conditional. Our eyes see, but only those that which possesses a particular volume and which is at a particular distance and having some special conditions of space and time.

If that thing is very tiny or it is at a long distance of time or space from us or it is in darkness or there is something obstructing our view, it cannot be seen by us. Events of the period of Prophet Nuh (a.s.) or a thousand years after that cannot be seen by us. We cannot with the help of the tools of our knowledge get connected to those events directly.

They are unseen from us. Although they exist in the presence of God and He has knowledge of all of them; He encompasses all the existing things of the world of matter and the unseen. In the Holy Quran, He says:

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

“Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Aware.” (6:73)

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“And Allah’s is the unseen in the heavens and the earth...” (11: 123)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Surely Allah knows the unseen things of the heavens and the earth.” (49: 18)

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ

“This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you...” (3:44)

Is the knowledge of Unseen only for Allah?

At this point, a question arises: Whether the knowledge of the unseen is restricted only to Almighty Allah; or human beings can also become aware of it? Some intellectuals consider the knowledge of unseen to be restricted only to Almighty Allah and they have reasoned through verses of Quran, like:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures – none knows them but He...” (6:59)

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

“And they say: Why is not a sign sent to him from his Lord? Say: The unseen is only for Allah; therefore wait – surely I too, with you am of those who wait.” (10:20)

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

“Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen but Allah; and they do not know when they shall be raised.” (27:65)

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا اتَّبَعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“Say: I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do

I say to you that I am an angel; I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me. Say: Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?” (6:50)

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“Say: I do not control any benefit or harm for my own soul except as Allah please; and had I known the unseen I would have had much of good and no evil would have touched me; I am nothing but a warner and the giver of good news to a people who believe.” (7:188)

They have reasoned through the apparent meaning of these verses and have said: Knowledge of unseen is only with Almighty Allah and human beings are ignorant of it.

But through other verses it can be concluded that there are some human beings also have access to this knowledge of unseen. For example:

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا / إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَانَّهُ يَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

“The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any. Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him.” (72:26-27)

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

“On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition which you are in until He separates the evil from the good; nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His apostles whom He pleases...” (3:179)

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ / مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ / وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ / وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ / وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ

“The processor of strength, having an honorable place with the Lord of the Dominion, One (to be) obeyed, and faithful in trust. And your companion is not gone mad. And of a truth he saw himself on the clear horizon. Nor of the unseen is he a tenacious concealer.” (81:20-24)

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ

“This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you...” (3:44)

From the above verses, it can be concluded that since the knowledge of unseen is itself restricted to the being of Almighty Allah and the way of access to unseen for human beings is closed, but the selected prophets are able to connect to the world of unseen through revelation and gain knowledge and learn about the realities of unseen.

On the whole it can be concluded from these verses that absolute unseen is restricted only to Almighty Allah since His being is unlimited and He has complete knowledge about seen and unseen world, so much so that even the prophets do not have this knowledge in the beginning, but since they have the capacity to receive revelation and get connected to the unseen world, through the assistance and grace of Almighty Allah they can maintain contact with unseen world and according to their own capacity and capability get access to the unending realities of the unseen world.

Miracle, a Testimony of Prophethood

Prophets claim to have connection with Almighty Allah and the unseen world and that they are appointed by God on the office of conveying His message to the people and to guide them to the path of religion. These claims are very great and people will not accept their statements without any reliable testimony. Therefore they should have evidence to prove the veracity of their claims. The greatest proof is the miracle of the prophets. Miracle is an extraordinary act which ordinary people are unable to perform. Prophets must have miracles in order to prove their extraordinary claims. So that the veracity of their claims is proved and the argument is exhausted. If it is not so how people would understand that they are true in their claims? And how can they distinguish the true prophets from false claimants of prophethood?

In view of the Holy Quran, it is necessary for divine prophets to display miracles, and this point is mentioned on numerous occasions. For example the staff of Prophet Musa (a.s.), which used to be transformed into a python and swallowed the ropes of sorcerers; he stroke the staff on stone and springs of water gushed out from it; he stroked the staff on the surface of water and it split exposing a path through which the Bani Israel crossed to the opposite side. Another example is that of the talking of Prophet Isa (a.s.) while he was yet an infant in a cradle; his curing the born leper and raising the dead, giving life to the bird of clay and the cooling of the inferno for Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.).

For example, pay attention to the following verses:

قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ / فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ / وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ

بَيُّضَاءَ لِلنَّظِيرِينَ

“He said: If you have come with a sign, then bring it, if you are of the truthful ones. So he threw his rod, then lo! it was a clear serpent. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white to the beholders.” (7: 106–108)

وَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

“And We revealed to Musa, saying: Cast your rod; then lo! it devoured the lies they told.” (7: 117)

وَإِذْ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ
كُلُوا وَ اشْرَبُوا مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

“And when Musa prayed for drink for his people, We said: Strike the rock with your staff. So there gushed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking place: Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief.” (2:60)

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ / وَأَزَلَفْنَا نَمَّ الْأَخْرِينَ / وَأَنْجَيْنَا
مُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ / ثُمَّ أَعْرَفْنَا الْأَخْرِينَ / إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“Then We revealed to Musa: Strike the sea with your staff. So it had cloven asunder, and each part was like a huge mound. And We brought near, there, the others. And We saved Musa and those with him, all of them. Then We drowned the others. Most surely there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe.” (26:63–67)

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ / قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“They said: Burn him and help your gods, if you are going to do (anything). We said: O fire! be a comfort and peace to Ibrahim...” (21:68–69)

From these verses and tens of others like it, it can be concluded that existence of miracles of prophets in the view of Quran is a fact and whoever considers Quran as a heavenly book, cannot deny the origin of miracles. Basically, Quran introduces itself as a miracle and says:

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

“Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others.” (17:88)

Definition of Miracle

Miracle is an extraordinary act performed through an unnatural and unknown way. In other words, law of causality is a complete rational law and Quran has also accepted it. That is why nothing comes into existence without a cause; so much so that miracles are also not without a cause.

Finally, the fact is that a phenomenon can be produced in two ways: natural and unnatural (miraculous); for example a staff can transform into a python in two ways:

Firstly: Through the channel of natural causes and factors; that is by the passage of time, natural actions and reactions, when the matter of the staff develops the capability to accept the being of the python. After that from the side of Almighty Allah the form and being of the python is added to it. In this case the python has come into being through natural causes and factors and no miracle has been employed.

Secondly: Through miracle. In this instance also the matter of the staff develops the capability of accepting the soul of the python not through natural actions and reactions, on the contrary it is instantly through the spiritual power of the prophet and his absolute intention that such a capability has developed in the matter of the staff. At that moment the soul of the python is added to it by Almighty Allah and it is transformed into a real python. Therefore, in case of a miracle also the phenomenon does not occur without a cause; at the most its natural cause is not recognized; on the contrary it occurs as a result of divine will and unnatural and extraordinary causes. From this aspect, it is named as a miracle and it is a testimony to the veracity of the prophet.

Whose act is a Miracle?

Is the miracle a directly action of Almighty Allah without any intermediary or it is the act of the prophet only as a demand of circumstances? Or is it the act of the prophet himself that he performs with his own will?

In some verses, the Holy Quran has related miracle to the prophets; for example: He says in the words of Prophet Isa (a.s.):

أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخُرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ

“That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah’s permission and I heal the

blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses.” (3:49)

In Surah Maidah, He says:

وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي

“...and when you determined out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission.” (5:110)

With regard to Prophet Musa (a.s.), He says:

/ قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ / فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ

“He said: If you have come with a sign, then bring it, if you are of the truthful ones. So he threw his rod, then lo! it was a clear serpent. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white to the beholders.” (7: 106–108)

In some verses, the miracle has also been related to Almighty Allah; for example:

وَوَضَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَى

“And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails.” (2:57)

In any case, it can generally be concluded from the verses that miracle is the direct act of the prophet, which is performed through his will and intention; but the prophet is not independent in its performance; instead, his action is subject to the permission and help of Almighty Allah. Although will and intention of the prophet is a means to causes, but the one who has given reality to it is Almighty Allah. That is why in most verses, the performance of miracle is related to the prophet, but it is made conditional to His leave. In one verse, this point is mentioned with more clarity:

وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

“...and it was not meant for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with Allah's permission, but when the command of Allah came, judgment was given with truth, and those who treated (it) as a lie were lost.” (40:78)

Difference between Miracle and Magic

At this point the question arises: If prophet from the aspect of miracle performs an extraordinary act that others cannot do, the sorcerer also performs amazing acts which others are unable to do. Thus what is the difference between miracle and magic? And how can one be satisfied that the act of the claimant of prophethood is a miracle and not magic? In reply to this question, we shall mention some differences:

Firstly: In magic, the occurrence which takes place is not real; on the contrary the sorcerer influences the senses and perception of people in order to display a non-factual and unreal happening. Thus in the story of Prophet Musa (a.s.), the magicians threw ropes, staffs and other instruments of magic before the people and by magic performed acts so that in the view of people they appeared as pythons and snakes, who came into being and moved about here and there horrifying the audience, while in fact there were no pythons and snakes there. Therefore Quran says:

قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرٍ عَظِيمٍ

“He said: Cast. So when they cast, they deceived the people’s eyes and frightened them, and they produced a mighty enchantment.” (7: 116)

But in case of miracle, a factual and natural matter comes into existence. In the story of Prophet Musa (a.s.), his staff really changed into a python and it really swallowed up the magic of the magicians. Almighty Allah told Prophet Musa (a.s.):

فُلْنَا لَا تَخَفُ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَىٰ / وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سَاجِرٌ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاجِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ
/ فَأَلْقَى السَّحْرَةَ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ

“We said: Fear not, surely you shall be the uppermost, and cast down what is in your right hand; it shall devour what they have wrought; they have wrought only the plan of a magician, and the magician shall not be successful wheresoever he may come from. And the magicians were cast down making obeisance; they said: We believe in the Lord of Harun and Musa.” (20:68-70)

That is why when the magicians saw that the python of Prophet Musa (a.s.) has swallowed the instruments of their magic, they understood that the act of Musa (a.s.) was a miracle and that it was totally different from their act. Therefore they surrendered before it and embraced faith.

Secondly: The sorcerer is needful of special acts for his job or he has to use some recitations and magic words; or to draw some figures etc. and write some charms. But no such thing is required for miracles; only the will and desire of the prophet is enough to perform that act through the help of Almighty Allah.

Thirdly: Miracle is never defeated; that is when the prophet desires something it definitely turns into a

reality and no human power can prevent its occurrence or that he should be able to invalidate it after its occurrence, since it has originated from divine power; but such is not the case with regard to magic; because it is possible that a magician superior to him can defeat him or a prophet can invalidate it as happened in the story of Prophet Musa (a.s.).

Fourthly: Magic is considered as a science and a craft; on the contrary showing miracles cannot be taught and learnt. An ordinary person can learn magic through training and practice and he does not need to have faith in Almighty Allah or develop connection with Him; but the power of miracle is a divine bestowal and is not obtained through learning and practice and the performer of miracle is in possession of extensively lofty faith and has a deep connection with Almighty Allah.

Methods to Recognize the Prophet

The following methods may be employed in order to recognize true prophets and to certify their claims:

1. Miracle: Asking for a miracle is the best and the most satisfactory way to recognize the prophet. If the claimant of prophethood is in possession of miracle or miracles to prove the veracity of his claim, its existence is absolute proof like witnessing or a reliable and definite report and hence his prophethood is proved.

2. Information given by Past Prophets: In case the previous prophet, whose prophethood had been proved, gives information about the advent of the prophet after himself and mentions his distinctive qualities perfectly, the prophethood of the latter would also be proved as happened in case of the Prophet of Islam. The past prophets gave glad tidings of his arrival, which were recorded in their books. Quran has mentioned this same point in the words of Prophet Isa (a.s.):

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي
مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ

“And when Isa son of Maryam said: O children of Israel! surely I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Taurat and giving the good news of an Apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad...” (61:6)

3. Study of the text of the laws and programs of religion of the prophet: If an intellectual or researcher studies in detail religious cognitions, laws, rules and programs of religion and its different dimensions without prejudice and evaluates them, he can discover the value and comprehensiveness of that religion.

Whether the view of the laws of that religion are according to the criterion of reason and its rules have really complied with the actual needs of the society and that it defends individual rights and social units of the community and observes social justice; and assures the success of man in the world and the hereafter. And by observing its good ethics, which advise its followers to keep away from bad manners etc. he discovers the truthfulness and perfection of that religion and in this way it supports and verifies the prophethood of the prophet.

At this point it is necessary to mention two points: Firstly: Such minute research and indeed all aspects of reformation of people would be limited and cannot become the responsibility of the people. Secondly: In case of certainty, it can be relied upon only within limit of contexts and testimonies, but it cannot be presented as decisive proof. In any case, it does not make us needless of the proof of miracle.

4. Study of life, character and behavior of the claimant of prophethood: If the claimant of prophethood is a person whose trustworthiness, honesty and truthfulness is proved to others and there is no weak point in his internal and external character and he practices what he preaches, he would be supported and verified by the people with regard to the claim of prophethood also. But this topic also would be considered only as a confirmation and not an absolute proof and lawful argument.

Revelation

According to the dictionary meaning, revelation is the conveying of a message in a secret manner to another. In Islamic terminology it is defined as the dialogue of Almighty Allah with the prophets. They were claiming to have a special connection with God and that Almighty Allah speaks to them and conveys His messages to the people through them. They claimed that they can hear the statements of Almighty Allah and see realities in the unseen world and that they have been appointed on behalf of God so that they may convey His messages to the people.

Knowledge of the prophets is obtained through the channel of revelation and it is absolutely opposed to our acquisition of knowledge. We have three kinds of knowledge: Knowledge of senses, knowledge gained through generalities and internal perceptions and realizations. Knowledge of senses is obtained directly from the five senses.

The senses also have a role in the knowledge of generalities, because their parts previously were realized through the channel of these senses. After that the generalities are separated from them. The third type is through the inner senses, like: the perception of pain, hunger, thirst, happiness and sorrow. All our knowledge is obtained through the channel of inner or outer senses directly or indirectly. But revelation is not a part of any of them and is having no similarity to them.

Prophets witness the reality in the unseen world and hear the words of God, but not with these eyes and ears. In this instance, knowledge is transferred from Almighty Allah to the heart of the prophets through revelation and at that moment it becomes apparent. Exactly opposed to it is ordinary knowledge which in the beginning is obtained through senses and in the end it enters ourselves and hearts. The Quran has also interpreted revelation in this manner:

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ / نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ / عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ / بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ

“And most surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The Faithful Spirit has descended with it. Upon your heart that you may be of the warners, In plain Arabic language.” (26: 192–195)

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ

“Say: Whoever is the enemy of Jibraeel- for surely he revealed it to your heart...” (Surah Baqarah 2:97)

It is mentioned in Tafsir Ruhul Bayan that:

Whenever revelation descended on Prophet Muhammad (S), it first descended upon his heart as he was extremely thirsty for it. At that moment his heart absorbed it. Then he understood it through his heart and heard it and this is in the meaning of coming down from a height and this is the status of the special ones.¹

The late Allamah Tabatabai (q) has said: Heart denotes the self of man, which has the power of perception, perhaps the reason why Quran has mentioned:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ / عَلَى قَلْبِكَ

“The Faithful Spirit has descended with it. Upon your heart...” (26: 193–194)

And did not say: “upon you”, which indicates the comprehensiveness of Quran from the side of the Holy Prophet (S) and also whatever he received from the soul was his noble self without his conscious perception having any interference in it.

Therefore, he hears whatever is revealed to him without the intervention of his eyes and ears. Because if his seeing and hearing had been through the apparent eyes and ears, everything he heard would be shared by others; that is whatever he sees, people also see it, while the fact is that traditional reports have refuted this meaning absolutely.²

That is why, the knowledge of prophets, which is obtained through revelation, is not like obtained knowledge learned through perception and human thinking, on the contrary it is of a higher type, whose essence is not clear to us. It is a type of secret and hidden understanding and errors and doubts cannot enter it.

From some verses, it is learnt that revelation takes place in one of the following three ways:

First method: Almighty Allah reveals matters directly on the heart of the prophet.

Second method: Matters are sent down to another place and the prophet obtains from there, like in the case of the conversation of Prophet Musa (a.s.) at Mount Tur through the tree. The Holy Quran says:

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ

“And when he came to it, a voice was uttered from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the bush...” (28:30)

Third method: Some points are revealed through the angel of revelation (Jibraeel) on the heart of the prophet.

These three methods are mentioned in the Holy Quran when Almighty Allah says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ

“And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases, Surely He is High, wise.” (42:51)

But it should be known that in every method, the dialogue is only with Almighty Allah and that is why in most verses, revelation is related to Almighty Allah, but through a medium of cause and effects, one of them being Jibraeel.

Hence, these three methods of revelation should be interpreted in the effect of psychological conditions of the prophet and various divine emotions. In this case, sometimes the ethereal soul of the prophet rises up to the position of Jibraeel and he hears the divine revelation from him. But he does not see himself till he himself saw Jibraeel with his eyes.

Sometimes the progress of his soul is to the limit that he hears the speech of Almighty Allah at a designated place like a tree etc. In that case also, his soul rises up such a level that he sees the medium and hears the dialogue directly from Almighty Allah.

Allamah Tabatabai (q) has mentioned the same point when he says:

The proof of veil (Hijab) or the conveyer of the message at the time of speaking does not use the medium of revelation, because revelation like his other characters is not without a medium, only the pivot is the attention of the one who is addressed. Thus if the prophet were to see through which he is getting divine revelation, and through this medium he veils the statement and message, which has come to him from Almighty Allah; like the medium of angel, in that case revelation is on that angel. Thus when the prophet looks at God, the revelation will be from Almighty Allah. Although there is also a medium, but the prophet pays no attention to it.³

That is why revelation is a kind of a hidden and inner understanding and perception, which the apparent and hidden perceptions and logical prefaces have no intervention in. On the contrary, it is directly inspired to the heart of the prophet. Since the self of the prophet has reached to the highest level of humanity it has the capacity to obtain such information; but revelation is not ordinary knowledge; it is an extraordinary matter. Therefore people demand miracle from the prophets. The latter also in order to prove the veracity of their claim, perform miracles in situations that demand it.

¹. Tafsir Ruhul Bayan, Vol. 6, Pg. 306.

². Al-Mizan, Vol. 15, Pg. 345.

³. Al-Mizan, Vol. 14, Pg. 150

Number of Prophets

Throughout the history, a large number of prophets were sent to guide human beings. His Eminence, Adam (a.s.) was the first of the divine prophets and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) was the last of them. The exact number of prophets is not known, but in some traditions their number is mentioned as 124000.

Some prophets were having special and particular laws and some others were not having special code of laws; on the contrary they promoted the Shariah of the previous prophet. Some of them brought scriptures and some others did not bring any books. Sometimes there were more than one prophet in a single town or city, who fulfilled the duties of prophethood.

It is narrated from Abu Dharr that one day he asked the Messenger of Allah (S): How many prophets are there in all? He replied: One hundred and twenty four thousand. He then asked: How many of them were messenger prophets? He replied: Three hundred thirteen from the above group. He asked: Who was the first of them? He replied: Adam. He asked: Was he a messenger prophet? He replied: Yes, Almighty Allah created him with His own hands and blew His spirit into him. At that moment the Holy Prophet (S) said: O Abu Dharr:

There were four from the Syriac prophets: Adam, Sheeth, and Ukhnuh, who is also called Idris and who was the first to write and Nuh. Four of them were Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shuaib and your prophet, Muhammad. The first prophet among Bani Israel was Musa and the last of them was Isa and they were in all six hundred prophets.

Abu Dharr asked: O Messenger of Allah (S), how many heavenly scriptures descended? He replied: One hundred and four, of which Almighty Allah revealed to Sheeth fifty scrolls, thirty on Idris and twenty on Ibrahim. He also revealed Taurat, Injeel, Zabur and Quran.^{[1](#)}

Five great divine prophets brought new sets of laws (Shariah) and they are known as Ulul Azm prophets. They were: Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad (S).

Ismail Jofi has narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that he said:

The Ulul Azm prophets are five in number: Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad (S).^{[2](#)}

We do not have detailed information about the names of all the prophets; in books of history also only some of their names are mentioned. In the Holy Quran, twenty-six of them are mentioned by names: They are: Adam, Nuh, Idris, Hud, Salih, Ibrahim, Lut, Ismail, Al-Yasa, Zulkifl, Ilyas, Ayyub, Yunus, Ishaq, Yaqub, Yusuf, Shuaib, Musa, Harun, Dawood, Sulaiman, Zakariya, Yahya, Ismail the keeper of his word, Isa and Muhammad (S).

^{[1](#)}. Biharul Anwar, Vol. 11, Pg. 32.

^{[2](#)}. Biharul Anwar, Vol. 11, Pg. 32.

Aims of the Prophets

Prophets in the capacity of their appointment by Almighty Allah followed some aims, which are mentioned in verses of the Holy Quran and traditions, but all of them could be summed up in two general points:

First aim: Calling the attention of the people to the value and significance of their spiritual life and their guidance to matters, which results in the perfection of self and proximity to God; and guarantees the success of the hereafter. Similarly they explain and warn about the causes and reasons for decline of the self and misfortune in the world of the hereafter. In this regard, pay attention to some important points as follows:

1. Recognition and faith in the One and only God, proofs of the qualities of perfection for that Holy being and purifying Him from the defective traits was the basis of the call of the prophets and the first of their proposals and most of the verses of the Holy Quran are also in connection with this subject:

2. Calling the attention of the people to faith in resurrection and life after death and belief in Paradise and bounties of the hereafter; as well as Hell and its chastisements was a part of their message. Prophets in proving the world of the hereafter emphasize on its rewards and punishments and a large number of verses of Quran are also about this.

3. Testifying the past prophets and calling the people to accept the new laws and Shariah and to follow his own prophethood.

These three acts were the basis of the call of the prophets. The Holy Prophet (S) in his call to his relatives said:

“Praise is only for Almighty Allah. I praise Him and ask help from Him and I have faith and reliance on Him. And I witness that there is no god except Him and that He has no associate. Then he said: The leader does not lie to his followers. By Allah, except whom there is no god, I am the messenger sent especially to you and generally to all the people. I swear by Allah, just as you sleep you would die and you will rise up just as you wake up. You will have to account for your deeds as a result of which you will either get everlasting Paradise or everlasting Hell.”¹

4. To motivate people to assume good manners and ethics and to warn them from improper acts. By explaining the worldly and other worldly effects of good ethics, prophets invited the people to good behavior and by explaining to them bad consequences of evil behavior they warned them. Therefore purifying and disciplining of the selves can be considered as an important aim of the prophets; just as Almighty Allah says:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.” (3: 164)

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“I advise you to follow good manners and ethics as Almighty Allah has raised me for the same purpose.”²

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

“I have been sent for the perfection of morals and improving the manners (of people).”³

5. Motivating people to the worship of one God and submission to His commands. Prophets have introduced a number of different types of worship acts and they consider them as causes of perfection of

the self and gaining proximity to Almighty Allah. Their performance is very much effective in the success of man in the life hereafter. So much so that it is mentioned that the aim of creation of man is not but the worship of God as mentioned in the following verse:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

“And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah and shun the Shaitan.” (16:36)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me.” (51:56)

By showing such a program to the people, the prophets called them to get assured success in the hereafter.

Second aim: Reforming the social conditions and worldly life of people. The prophets also paid full attention to reforming the social and economic circumstances of the people. They called people to acquisition of knowledge, gaining from natural resources and making efforts and putting in hard work as well as to observe justice; on the other hand they warned about injustice and oppression. They conveyed to the people rules and regulations to prevent injustice and oppression and to establish social justice; they also described the rights and duties as well as penalties and punishments in order to usher complete governance and they also struggled to establish this system. They confronted injustice and tyranny and supported the weak and the deprived.

By studying and researching the laws of Islam, it becomes absolutely clear that the religion of Islam is perfectly concerned about reforming the worldly affairs and social conditions of the people.

From some verses, it is also concluded that it was one of the aims of the prophets. For example it is said in Quran that:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity; and We have made the iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men, and that Allah may know who helps Him and His apostles in the secret; surely Allah is Strong, Mighty.” (57:25)

In another verse it is said:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves; so Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.” (2:213)

The final aim of the prophets

We say that prophets in their divine office follow two general aims: One is the recognition of God and His worship and proximity, which is related to the spiritual life and success of the hereafter of human beings and the second is the establishment of justice and equity and negation of injustice and prejudice, which is related to the worldly life of man.

Now the question arises that whether the prophets were inclined to two aims in their messengership? That is, did they pursue the above two aims separately? Or did considered one of them as primary and the other as secondary? If we suppose the latter, which is the primary aim and which is the secondary? At this point, there are a few possibilities:

1. Some are of the opinion that the main aim of the prophets is to assure the worldly success of man and establishment of justice and equity. The prophets came with the aim to restrain differences and oppositions and to make human life peaceful and prosperous. If with regard to the need of recognition and worship of Allah they stressed on resurrection, rewards and punishments of the hereafter, moral values like justice, favor, sacrifice, forgiveness, and defense of the deprived and weak, it was with the aim that they should maintain social justice and that it should be effective in negating injustice and prejudice. It is said: Unity of view and recognition of God is in itself of no benefit and whether we recognize God or not, whether we worship or do not worship, it is of no use to Allah. They should be considered as mediums of social unity and establishment of a just society.

2. Researches and real scholars of Islam, consider training of selves and reformation of spiritual life of man as the final aim of the prophets. Therefore in order to reach this aim, they consider theoretical monotheism, faith in resurrection and prophethood, worship and submission before the One God, purification and discipline of the self and following good ethics as necessary and effective. We mention some points to support this view:

A) It is concluded from Islamic philosophy, verses of Quran and traditions that man with regard to the ethereal soul is an abstract being and is superior to matter; he is everlasting and never annihilated or destroyed by death. On the contrary, he is transferred from this world to the world of the hereafter, so

that he may see the good and bad consequences of his deeds. Man in the dimension of his ethereal soul is moving to perfection; by nature he is searching for God and perfection, he struggles for success and well being in the recognition of God and in His worship and proximity and his original life will also be like the spiritual and other worldly life.

B) In some verses and traditions, it is explained that life and worldly affairs do not have any value and the real and valuable life of man is the spiritual life of the hereafter. For example:

أَلْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

“Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world; and the ever-abiding, the good works, are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation.” (18:46)

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوٌّ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ / سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

“Know that this world’s life is only sport and play and gaiety and boasting among yourselves, and a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children, like the rain, whose causing the vegetation to grow, pleases the husbandmen, then it withers away so that you will see it become yellow, then it becomes dried up and broken down; and in the hereafter is a severe chastisement and (also) forgiveness from Allah and (His) pleasure; and this world’s life is naught but means of deception. Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth; it is prepared for those who believe in Allah and His apostles; that is the grace of Allah: He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace.” (57:20–21)

وَمَا أَوْتَيْتُمْ مِّن شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of this world’s life and its adornment, and whatever is with Allah is better and more lasting; do you not then understand?” (28:60)

In numerous traditions, this world is mentioned as a place of short stay and a station on the journey and the harvest field of the hereafter and that the everlasting life of the hereafter should benefit from it. For example, Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

“Know that this world, which you have started to covet and in which you are interested, and which sometimes enrages you and sometimes pleases you, is not your (permanent) abode, nor the place of

your stay for which you might have been created, nor one to which you have been invited.”[4](#)

In the same way, he said:

“Certainly this world has not been made a place of permanent stay for you. But it has been created as a pathway in order that you may take from it the provisions of your (good) actions for the permanent house (in Paradise).”[5](#)

And he said:

“O people! The world is a place of transient stay and the hereafter is the place of permanent stay. Thus you should take advantage from the temporal place for the place of permanent stay. Do not raise the veils from those who know your secrets. Take out your hearts from the world before your bodies are taken out of it. Thus you will be tested in the world and you are created for something other than it.”[6](#)

From these verses, and traditions and their like it can be concluded that the actual life of man in the view of Islam is the spiritual life and life in the hereafter. And the life of the world is a medium of guaranteeing the success of the hereafter.

That is why, it can be concluded that the final aim of the prophets also was to entrust to man, ways of gaining divine proximity, perfection and attainment of success and salvation; as they had learnt from Almighty Allah. Any other person cannot introduce such a method. Prophets introduced faith in God, resurrection, prophethood; worship of One God and taught that attaining good ethics is the only way to salvation.

That is why, the second view is supported and the first view; that is the reformation of livelihood of people is disproved to be the final aim of the prophets as also opposed by verses and traditions.

But our aim is not that prophets paid no attention to reform the worldly life of man and to establish justice and equity and to oppose injustice, prejudice and differences. On the contrary, in order to attain these aims also they struggled as much as was possible. They introduced this same topic as a genuine value and one of the best channels of perfection of self and proximity of God. They considered efforts and service for the people and observance of justice, provided they are accompanied with sincerity, as the best worship acts. Since through this the social life of man is possible and through this may be achieved the purification and training of selves as well the worship of the One God.

This is a perfect refutation for one who says: Prophets were dualist in their aims and they paid equal attention to the affairs of the world and the hereafter as explained by them. Because the world in the view of the prophets was only having the value of a preface; that is, it was the harvest field of the hereafter.

According to them it is possible to gain spiritual perfection and success for the hereafter in this world. Therefore the prophets did not consider hereafter to be absolutely divorced from this world. On the

contrary, they tried make worldly affairs as means to perfect the soul and to secure success in the Hereafter.

- [1.](#) Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 41.
- [2.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 69, Pg. 375.
- [3.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 69, Pg. 405.
- [4.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 173.
- [5.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 132.
- [6.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Saying 203.

Two World Views

How do you view the world? How do you consider man as a phenomenon? What is your view with regard to man and the world? In reply to these questions, two totally opposite views exist: the divine view and the materialistic view: In other words: the religious world view and the materialistic world view.

Materialistic world view

The supporters of this type of view consider the world to be permanent and existence to have come about without any aim or intention. In this view, the world is a collection having no particular aim. On the contrary, it is shaped from material elements tangled with each other without any aim, and they all are vain and aimless. Within this great collection, man is also an aimless and confused existence marching towards annihilation. He does not have any motive and his end is despair, darkness and annihilation. He does not have any refuge or hope and he lives a life of darkness and horror.

The life of man is also according to the materialistic world view, vain and aimless. There is no one to whom man is answerable, no being who may be aware and higher to him and who may well know the good and bad of man and recognizes his behavior and who punishes or rewards him. And no absolute criterion exists to assess the deeds of man and his good and bad character...

Religious world view

In the religious world view, the present world is not permanent. On the contrary, it is created and it is dependant. In this view, the world is a creation, created on the basis of a minute accounting for continuity, arrangement and special compatibility for a designated aim and the world is dependant on the power of a powerful creator; forceful intention and a wise being, who is also powerful and is giving it continuous support and protection.

In the religious view, nothing in the world is vain and aimless. And among all the beings, man is having

an excellence and has a higher aim that he pursues throughout his life. His end is not despair and hopelessness; on the contrary, it is hope and eagerness. He is a being, which cannot be annihilated; who is traveling in this temporal on his way to the permanent world of the hereafter. In the religious world view, man is answerable before his beneficent and merciful creator. He is having a great answerability before his God, as He has created him with free will and allotted duties to him.

Religious world view believes that man is having a creator who is seeing and aware. He is the witness of all his actions all the time, and He rewards the doers of good deeds and punishes the wrong doers.

World view of the prophets

The view of the prophets about man and the world is divine. Prophets consider the worldly phenomena to be dependant and needful. They deem them to be signs of the power and greatness of the knowing and powerful creator. Prophets and their followers believe that the world is a creation of the beneficent and merciful God and all goodness is from Him and a policy connected to the world is in His hands. The world is not futile and a plaything, on the contrary it is created for a special aim.

They also have a special view and opinion with regard to man and his success. They consider him to be a respectful, exalted and a chosen being, who is a compound of two aspects: a body, which is made of clay and a soul, which is created from the ethereal and celestial world. That is why he is a superior being, everlasting, trustful and trustworthy one of the Lord and who is answerable to Him.

In this view, real success and perfection of man lies in recognition of God, movement towards Him and satisfaction in His pleasure; and since all power and goodness is only from Him, attention to Him leads to all goodness and lofty human values.

The first words of the prophets called to the worship of God and His oneness and negation of every type of polytheism. Prophets considered worship of God and monotheism as the foundations of human values and nobility and forgetting God and carelessness about the remembrance of the Lord as the roots of all evils and attachment to other than God as factors of destruction and misfortune.

Future of man and resurrection in the view of the prophets are perfectly clear, full of hope and nice. Prophets believe that the righteous and believing man will have a bright and comfortable future. He is traveling from this world to the world of the hereafter, which is much more vast and superior to this world and there he would see the final consequences of his deeds.

That is why prophets were having such clear and definite belief with regard to the world, man, success of man and his future; and they had perfect faith in this lofty and true view of theirs.

Foundation of the Call of the Prophets

Foundation of the call of the prophets was this same world view and they based their religion and code of law (Shariah) on it. The first sentence of Prophet Nuh (a.s.) to his people was:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

“...serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.” (7:59)

The first words of Prophet Hud (a.s.) to his people were:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ

“...serve Allah, you have no god other than He; you are nothing but forgers (of lies).” (Surah Hud 11:50)

The first statement of Prophet Salih (a.s.) to his people was:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

“O my people! serve Allah, you have no god other than He; He brought you into being from the earth, and made you dwell in it, therefore ask forgiveness of Him, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Nigh, Answering.” (11:61)

Prophet Shuaib (a.s.) also, in the beginning of his prophethood, said to the people:

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرِيكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ / وَيَقَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْنُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

“O my people! serve Allah, you have no god other than He, and do not give short measure and weight: surely I see you in prosperity and surely I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing day. And, O my people! give full measure and weight fairly, and defraud not men their things, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief.” (4:84–85)

Almighty Allah has said with regard to the messengership of Musa (a.s.):

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ / إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ أَمْرٌ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرٌ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرِشِيدٍ / يَفْقَهُ قَوْمَهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوَرْدُ الْمَوْرُدُ

“And certainly We sent Musa with Our communications and a clear authority. To Firon and his chiefs, but they followed the bidding of Firon, and Firon’s bidding was not right-directing. He shall lead his people on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the fire; and evil the place to which they are brought.” (4:96–98)

In continuation of these verses, He says:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ سُقَىٰ وَسَعِيدٌ / فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ / خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا
مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ / وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ
السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُوذٍ

“On the day when it shall come, no soul shall speak except with His permission, then (some) of them shall be unhappy and (others) happy. So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it: Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what He intends. And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall never be cut off.” (11: 105–108)

If we look carefully, we would see that two basic pillars are present in the call of all the prophets:

1. Worship of One God and 2. Future of man, his success or misfortune. (Resurrection); therefore, faith in these two basics of monotheism and resurrection shape the foundation of the call of the prophets.

The prophets, by establishing evidence and proof and by showing miracle, call people to faith in these two basics motivating them to contemplate and ponder on the secrets and mysteries of the world, awaken their God-searching nature, so that they may worship God only.

And through their religious view, they may witness the signs of His power in every corner of the world; that they may discover the aim of the creation of man and have faith in the world after death and may be thoughtful about their success or misfortune in future.

First of all, the prophets reformed the beliefs of the people with regard to God and resurrection, as they are the complete basis of all their deeds and behavior. After that they entrusted to them the heavenly program and their code of divine laws. And in this way they called them to goodness and reformation. But the faith, morals and manners of all are according to one’s faith and belief.

Hence true faith lead to good deeds and puts forth beautiful blossoms. And the result of corrupted and

improper belief is nothing, but destruction and injustice. Thus reformation of people requires the reformation of their world view and beliefs. And the same method was employed by the prophets.

Faith in God and Judgment Day strengthens the hearts of people so that they may not struggle except on the path Almighty Allah and that they do not accept the obedience of anyone other than Almighty Allah.

Prophets and unity of method and aim

Throughout history thousands of prophets have come from Almighty Allah for the guidance of man; some of them came with a special code of laws and others were missionaries of the religion of the previous prophets. Ultimately, the principle of heavenly religions and program of all the prophets was one and the same. All of them invited man to one and the same aim. Collectively, all the heavenly religions rest on the following three fundamentals:

First: Recognition of one God, who has created the world and faith in Him (monotheism);

Second: Belief in resurrection and the world of the hereafter and the everlasting future of man (resurrection);

Third: Belief in prophets, unity of the way and their way and aims (prophethood);

Prophets called man to accept these basic fundamentals and asked them so that they may adopt the guiding program of religion into their lives and that they should submit to the commands of the wise God. They should base the program of their life only according to the program that religion has chalked for them. All the prophets from Adam to the Messenger of Allah (S) have called man to this same reality. They have named this path that is chosen and liked by God for men as the 'religion of God'. It is only one religion and not more than that.

There is not the smallest difference between the principles and generalities of the call of the prophets and each of them mentioned the previous prophet with respect and honor and followed his methods and message. In the same way, they gave glad tidings of the advent of the coming prophet and informed their followers to have faith in him and accept his call. Almighty Allah has also said in the Holy Quran:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَ أَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and wisdom- then an apostle comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers of witness with

you.” (3:81)

The Holy Quran says thus with regard to faith in prophets and the unity of their way and aim:

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ / وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

“Say: We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqub and the tribes, and what was given to Musa and Isa and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.” (3:84–85)

Islam means submission to the command and religion of God. In this meaning, all the prophets were ‘Muslims’ (those who submit), although terminologically Islam is the last heavenly religion brought by Prophet Muhammad (S) for mankind and Muslim is a follower of this faith.

Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) in his supplication to Almighty Allah prayed in this way:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ / رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ
فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ / وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ / إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ / وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ / أَمْ
كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

“Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, Be a Muslim, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds. And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and (so did) Yaqub. O my sons! surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims. Nay! were you witnesses when death visited Yaqub, when he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We will serve your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq, one God only, and to Him do we submit.” (2: 128–133)

That is why Almighty Allah has introduced the prophets with one aim, which is the same submission before Allah and those who are opposed to their ways and manners are termed as foolish and ignorant, like in the following verses:

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ / وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلِأَجْلِ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ / فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَأَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ / رَبَّنَا ءَأَمَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“And (make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah’s permission and I heal the blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers. And a verifier of that which is before me of the Taurat and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah and obey me. Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. But when Isa perceived unbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers in Allah’s way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the way) of Allah: We believe in Allah and bear witness that we are submitting ones. Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the apostle, so write us down with those who bear witness.” (3:49–53)

All divine prophets like teachers of the same school, are sent one after another to call human beings to submission to religion of God and that by their guidance, they may lead man to the path of perfection, which is the same straight path. Religion and aim of the prophets was common and all of them made efforts to gain the satisfaction of Almighty Allah and His proximity. There was no difference between the heavenly religions of the prophets, except in secondary laws of religions. And that too was due to difference in conditions and circumstances as also the capacities of people.

Circumstances, levels of understanding and capabilities of people were not same during all ages, therefore the prophets spoke to the people in accordance to the level of their understanding and gradually bestowed to them perfection and maturity in understanding and awareness in accepting the concepts of religion till prophethood reached to the last of the prophets, Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S). He was sent for the guidance of people with such detailed and specific principles of faith that no prophet before him had come with such details.

He came with a comprehensive set of laws and greatness of religion cognition that his religion included all the modes of contemplation, reasoning and research. And the religion that he brought was the last

and the most detailed code of law and faith that Almighty Allah has ever sent for humanity. Almighty Allah has said with regard to the comprehensiveness of the religion of Islam as compared to the previous faith as follows:

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

“He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa that keep to obedience and be not divided therein; hard to the unbelievers is that which you call them to; Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns (to Him), frequently.” (42: 13)

Perseverance of the Prophets

Faith in God and the world of the hereafter is infused into the depths of the souls of the prophets and has reached to the level of certainty and spiritual realization. They had contacts with the unseen world and they had not the slightest doubt about their office.

They had trust in the unlimited power of God and did not fear any other force. They were determined in fulfilling their celestial responsibilities and did not fear the shortage of strength. Multitude of difficulties and obstruction of the enemies did not in any way disrupt their strong determination and they made efforts to solve the problems of the society with steadfastness and resolve.

The same decisiveness and determination can be considered as the most important factor of their success. Study of the life of the prophets and their struggle is extremely remarkable and edifying. Below we shall mention some of them in brief:

Perseverance of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)

This great divine prophet rose up all alone against polytheism and idol worship and single-handedly confronted Nimrod's regime, which supported idols and idol worship and he was not cowed down by Nimrod's power; he said with full determination:

وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَمَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُولُوا مُدْبِرِينَ

“And, by Allah! I will certainly do something against your idols after you go away, turning back.”
(21:57)

He staged an uprising all alone in order to destroy the idols. One day when the idol worshippers were out of town, Ibrahim (a.s.) entered a huge temple and broke down all the idols. When the tyrannical court condemned him to be thrown into the inferno for his crime of destroying the idols, he did not display slightest weakness and regret and remained firm in defense of his beliefs. So much so that when he was tossed by the catapult into the middle of the inferno, he showed no weakness from his side and did not ask for the help of anyone other than Almighty Allah till by the will of Allah the fire became cool and safe for him.

Steadfastness of Ibrahim (a.s.) in confrontation with idol worship and establishment of monotheism was to such an extent that the Holy Quran has mentioned him to be a single nation:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Surely Ibrahim was an exemplar, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not of the polytheists.”
(16: 120)

Perseverance of Prophet Musa (a.s.)

His Eminence, Musa (a.s.) was also sent with messengership and was appointed by Almighty Allah to approach the court of the tyrant Firon to convey His message and to save the oppressed community of Bani Israel from him.

He finally went to the huge palace of Firon dressed only in simple clothes, carrying a staff and accompanied by none but his brother, Harun. He was in no way cowed down by the magnificence of the grand palace or the power of the tyrannical Firon; and with perfect confidence said:

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَفْرَعُونَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ / حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَن لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

“And Musa said: O Firon! surely I am an apostle from the Lord of the worlds: (I am) worthy of not saying anything about Allah except the truth: I have come to you indeed with clear proof from your Lord, therefore send with me the children of Israel.” (7: 104–105)

Prophet Musa (a.s.) confronted the tyrant Firon for years in order to call people to monotheism and to save Bani Israel and displayed patience and steadfastness in front of all kinds of oppressions of the people of Firon. And even though surrounded by hardships, he encouraged Bani Israel to observe

patience and perseverance and he said:

قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“Musa said to his people: Ask help from Allah and be patient; surely the land is Allah’s; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who guard (against evil).” (7: 128)

The people of Musa (a.s.), whose patience was depleted, said:

قَالُوا أَوَدِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِينَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا

“They said: We have been persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us.” (7: 129)

In order to encourage and motivate them, Prophet Musa (a.s.) said:

قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

“He said: It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land; then He will see how you act.” (7: 129)

In the final days of his important and risky office, Prophet Musa (a.s.) displayed such perseverance that in the end he was successful and destroyed Firon and his accursed tyranny and saved Bani Israel from the disgrace of slavery, oppression, torture and killings at the hands of the Egyptians.

Perseverance of Prophet Muhammad (S)

Muhammad (S) rose up all alone against polytheism and idol worship and with deep-rooted determination and decisive will, struggled to achieve his lofty aim and was determined in front of different kinds of difficulties.

Throughout the period of 23 years of his prophethood, when he was faced with extremely troublesome hardships, he did not display even the least weakness and doubt. He was bestowed the office of prophethood by Almighty Allah so that he may be absolutely steadfastness in achieving his final aim. In the Holy Quran, Almighty Allah says:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

“Continue then in the right way as you are commanded, as also he who has turned (to Allah) with you, and be not inordinate (O men!), surely He sees what you do.” (11:112)

The Prophet of Islam, throughout the period of his messengership and even at the beginning of his call, explained his message clearly and decisively and did not have any fear of the multitude of the enemies. At the time, the following verse was revealed:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

“And warn your nearest relations,” (26:214)

...he was given the charge to make his call open, he ordered Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.): Prepare some food and invite the relatives, so that I may call them to Islam. Ali (a.s.), according to the order of the Holy Prophet (S), prepared food and invited approximately forty of their relatives for dinner. After the dinner, the Prophet wanted to address the guests, but Abu Lahab interrupted and prevented him from it till the time all the guests dispersed. Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said: I repeated the procedure under the orders of the Messenger of Allah (S) and again he was prevented from addressing the audience. I again organized a dinner on the third day and after that the Holy Prophet (S) addressed his relatives:

“O sons of Abdul Muttalib, by Allah, I don’t know of any young man who was appointed to his people better than me. I have brought the well-being of the world and the hereafter for you. Allah has commanded me to call you to Him.

Thus, who will help me in this matter, so that he may be my successor and legate?” Ali (a.s.) has described their reaction thus: All of them turned away and did not accept.

Thus, I, who was the youngest of all, and the sharpest and most sensitive of them, said: I will be your helper and vicegerent, O Messenger of Allah (S). The Holy Prophet (S) tapped my back and said: He is my brother, my successor and my vicegerent among you. Listen to him and obey him. After that people arose laughing and said to Abu Talib, “He is commanding you to listen to your son and to obey him.”¹

Polytheist employed every means to obstruct the mission of the Prophet, but he also observed steadfastness and perseverance. One day Quraish leaders came to Abu Talib, uncle of Prophet and said:

“O Abu Talib, you are senior in age and nobility and before this we had asked you to restrain your nephew, but you have not done that. By Allah, we cannot remain patient on the fact that someone should talk ill of our gods and ancestors and that he should consider our dream to be foolishness; but that you prevent him from us or we would confront him and you till one of us is killed.” As mentioned before, they said this and went away from there.

Abu Talib was troubled by the aloofness of the people and their enmity. Their non-acceptance of Islam and leaving the Prophet was also unbearable for him. So he sent a messenger to the Prophet to apprise him of the situation and tell him: Ensure yours as well as my well-being. And do not impose upon that which I cannot bear. The Holy Prophet (S) thought something has befallen his uncle and that he was leaving him to his own devices. Therefore the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

O uncle, if they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in the left, I will never give up this matter, except that I make it evident or I die.²

The Prophet of Islam (S) faced a world full of polytheism and infidelity and in the stages of his propagation, he had to bear hundreds of problems; the people troubled him time and again and subjected his few followers to different types of troubles and tortures. He and his followers were confined in the defile of Abu Talib and subjected to economic embargo.

His life was always in danger and many a times they planned to eliminate him and gave him other troubles. But he continued to perform the duties of his office with absolute determination and resolve till finally he came out successful over his enemies and hoisted the flag of monotheism over the world. Through this medium, he taught the Muslims, worshippers of God and reformers, a lesson in patience and steadfastness.

¹. Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 1, Pg. 487-488.

². Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 1, Pg. 488-489.

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