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Part 3: Prophethood

Lesson 21: Our Need of Divine Leaders

The Limitations of Our Knowledge

There are people who might perhaps ask if sending of the prophets by God is necessary to guide the people. Is our intellect not sufficient to understand the realities? Is the progress and development of science not sufficient to discover all of the secrets and illuminate all of the truths?

And then whatever the prophets might tell us, is one of two things which either our intellect understands well or it does not.

In the first case, we do not need the prophets and as to the second, we cannot accept something which goes against our intellect and wisdom.

On the other hand, is it correct for the human being to be placed completely in the hands of others and accept whatever they say without questioning? Are the prophets not human beings just like we are? How can we agree to place ourselves at the disposal of what another human being says?

Answers: Noting the following points, the position of the Holy Prophet in the system of the life of human beings will be come clear.

1. We should recognize the fact that our knowledge is limited and with all of the progress which humanity has made in science and technology, still that which we know, in comparison to that which we do not know, is like a drop in comparison to an ocean.

As some of the great scientists say, all of the knowledge that we have at our disposal at the present time, can only be considered to be the abc's of the great book of the world of creation.

In other words, the realms, judgments and comprehension of our intellect are a small area which has been lit by our knowledge. In truth, our intellect is like a strong spot light but the prophets and heavenly revelation are like a sun which shines upon the earth. Can a person say, “As I have a spot light, I no longer need the sun??!!

Even a clearer example: Life’s issues can be divided into three groups, ‘intelligent’, ‘unintelligent’ and ‘unknown’.

The prophets never say anything which was ‘unintelligent’, that is, something against the intellect or wisdom and if they do, they are not prophets, rather, they help us in the understanding of unknowns and this is very important for us.

Thus, those in the past who said that if a person has intelligence, he does not need a prophet or like those who today say that with all of the knowledge that the human being has today, there is no need for prophets and their teachings, have not understood the realms of the intelligence and knowledge of the human being, nor the mission of the prophets.

This is just like a child who has studied the abc’s in the first grade and then says, “I know everything and so I have no need of a teacher.” Are these not baseless words?

The prophets are not just teachers, either; the story of their leadership is something which needs to be discussed separately, which we will do in later lessons.

2. No one says that a human being should place themselves completely at the disposal of another person. The point is that the prophets — as we will later prove — are related to divine revelation, that is, with the endless knowledge of God, and we must, by means of certain and sure reasons, know their relation to God. It is only then that the words of these heavenly messages can be accepted and we accept their reckoned teachings with all of our hearts and being.

If I follow the prescriptions of an expert physician, have I erred? The prophets are great doctors of the spirit. If I accept the lessons of a teacher which are coordinated with the intellect, have I done something wrong? The prophets are the great teachers of humanity.

More important than this is that we carefully study the reason for the necessity of God sending the prophets to us. There are three reasons why we need the guidance of the prophets from God:

1. The Need of Teachings

If we ride upon a fantastic and fairy tale-like horse which is built of rays of light and in every second we travel 300,000 kilometers in the shoreless space, doubtlessly we will need to have thousands of life-times of Noah just to see a small part of this extensive universe.

It is clear that this universe, with its greatness, was not created uselessly and as we learned in our study of God, the creation of this world has no benefit to God's state, because He is a Being Who is totally and absolutely free from any need, Who is eternal and He has no deficiency which He could want to meet by the creation of the world and humanity.

Thus, we can conclude that His goal was to give Mercy to others and to help creatures reach perfection, just like the fact that the sun shines upon us without it having any need of us. This light and heat of the sun is only to our advantage and benefit because what do we do for the sun?

On the other hand, is our intelligence and knowledge sufficient for us to move along towards the way of perfection and the reaching towards becoming a perfect human being?

What amount of the secrets of the world do we know?

What is the truth of life?

When was this world created? No one knows the answer to these questions.

How long will it remain? Again, no one knows the answer to this.

Every scholar of humanity has an opinion from the social and economic point of view.

For instance, one group recommends capitalism and another group, socialism or communism and another group, neither accepts this group nor that, and considers both to be harmful.

In other issues of life, as well, there are differences of opinions among the scholars.

A human being falls into a state of wonder as to which one of all of these to accept.

It is here that, in all fairness, we must admit that in order to reach the main goal of creation, that is, perfection and nourishment of the human being in all areas, we need a series of teachings which are correct and empty of any error; ones which rely upon the realities of life, teachings which can help us, upon this long road, to reach the main goal.

This can only be done through God's knowledge, that is, divine revelation through the prophets. Because of this, God Who created us to take this journey, must place the knowledge at our disposal.

2. The Need for Leadership in the Social and Moral Areas

We know that within our being, in addition to knowledge and wisdom, other motives called 'instincts' also exist, the instinct of self-love, the instinct of anger and harshness, the instinct of lust and multiple other instincts.

Without doubt, if we do not control our instincts, and they dominate over us, even our knowledge and

intellect will be imprisoned, and the human being, like the oppressors of history, will be changed into wolves which are far more dangerous than the wolf of the wilderness.

We need a teacher to learn ethics. We need a model so that we can learn from him according to the principle whereby one narrates something and others follow.

A perfect and disciplined human being, from every point of view, is required to take our hand upon this way, which is full of twists and turns, and prevent the rebellion of our instincts, to have virtuous .principles and his deeds and words sit upon our hearts and very beings, nurture courage, bravery, friendship with other human beings, brotherhood, forgiveness, loyalty, correctness, trustworthiness and purity within our spirits.

What person, other than a pure and immaculate prophet, could be chosen to be such a teacher and guide?

For this very reason, it is not possible that God not show His Mercy to us and prevent us from the existence of such leaders and teachers. (A discussion on this will continue in the next lesson).

Think and Answer

1. Do you feel that with whatever knowledge you gain, what you do not know has increased? (Give examples)
2. Can you clarify the difference between blind imitation and being followers of the prophets?
3. If, without a guide, we take the unknown road, what dangers will exist for us?
4. Describe the dimension of our need for leader ship of the prophets.
5. Can you guess what other discussion remains in this area to complete this discussion

Lesson 22: The Need of having Prophets who Present The Law

In the previous lesson, we came to know the need for the existence of the prophets from the two dimensions of learning and training. Now we have reached the point where we need to know the social laws and the important role of the prophets in this area.

We know that the greatest privilege of life for the human being, which is the factor for all of the progress in all of the various areas of life, is a dynamic social encounter.

Most certainly, if human beings lived apart from each other, they would still be like the human beings in

the Stone Age from the point of view of knowledge and civilization.

Yes. It is the united efforts and endeavors which light the lamp of culture and civilization. It is united efforts and endeavors which are the source and origin for all of these scientific discoveries.

As an example, if we consider the journey to the moon, we see that this was not the result of the work of one or several scientists. Rather, it has been the result of the efforts of millions of scholars over thousands of years and the experiences of scholars gained through group living and then this knowledge reached the point where we find it today.

If a skilled physician in our age succeeds to transplant the living heart of a human being from the body of a dead person into the body of another person and save him from certain death, this has been made possible from the results of the experiences of thousands of physicians and surgeons throughout history which, by means of teachers, has been transferred to their students.

But, of course, social life, on the other hand, does present difficulties in the conflicts which arise between the rights and interests of human beings with each other, resulting sometimes in aggression and even war.

It is here that the need exists for law, programming and clear rules? Laws can solve three great problems for us.

1. Laws define the duties of each individual in relation to society. Social duties are clarified and talents are coordinated which blossom among human beings.

2. Laws coordinate the methods to be used to carry out one's responsibility by every individual.

3. Laws prevent the aggression of individuals against the rights of each other; they prevent chaos and conflicts between individuals and groups and, when necessary, punishments are provided for aggressors.

Who is the best lawgiver?

Now we have to see what person is best to bring laws which meet the human being's needs in such a way that all three principles mentioned above are followed and included as well as clarifying the limits, duties and rights of the individual and society so that the best system be put to use and aggression be prevented.

Let us to give a simple example here.

Human society can be compared to a great train, and the leaders or rulers to a locomotive, which causes this human society to move towards a destination.

The laws are like the rails or tracks which provide the line to be followed by this train to a clear destination, a line which moves throughout twists and turns. It is clear that a good train must have the following conditions:

● The land which the train moves through must have sufficient strength for the greatest extent of pressure.

● The distance between the two tracks or rails must be carefully coordinated with the wheels of the locomotive as well as the walls of tunnels and the heights of the tunnels must suit the highest level of the trains.

● The ups and downs must not be so sharp that they are beyond the power of the brakes of the train.

● The possibility of landslides or floods along the way which the train moves must be carefully studied so that the train can pass through that area under all conditions.

Noting these examples, we return to human society.

A lawgiver who wants to give the best laws for human beings must have the following qualities:

1. Know the human species in a perfect and total way and be aware of all of their instincts, feelings, needs and difficulties.

2. All of the praiseworthy qualities and talents which exist in a human being should be taken into consideration and laws should be made use of for their blossoming.

3. The events and accidents which are possible to occur should be foreseen, as well as the necessary precaution taken.

4. Such a lawgiver should have no particular interests in society so that in providing the laws, his thoughts turn upon his own interests or his family or his social group.

5. This lawgiver must allow human beings the possibility to benefit from all of the advances made as well as to learn from the deviations.

6. This lawgiver must, at the maximum, be free from error, mistakes and forgetfulness.

7. Finally, this lawgiver must have such power that no position or power in society may intimidate him and he not fears anyone. At the same time, he must be very kind and merciful.

In what person have these conditions been gathered?

Can a human being be the best lawgiver?

Has anyone understood the human being in a complete way to date? A famous scholar in our age has

written a book about the human being calling it, Man: The Unknown Creature.

Have the human spirit, instincts and feelings been completely known?

Are the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the human being clear for a person?

Can someone be found in the midst of average people who have no special benefits or interests in society?

Do you know of any human being among ordinary people who is free from error and sin and who has the awareness of all of the issues of life and individual human beings and society?

Thus, other than God and those who received the Divine revelation, there can never be a good and perfect lawgiver.

In this way, we must conclude that God Who created the human being to reach perfection must send someone as a guide to place the laws of heaven at the disposal of the human being.

It is clear that at the time when people know that laws are the laws of God, they will put them into practice with more credibility and certainty. In other words, this awareness is a valuable guarantee of those laws.

The Relationship between Monotheism and Prophethood

It is important to note the following that the system of creation is itself a living witness for the existence of the Divine prophets and their mission.

The reason is this: a short glance at this wondrous system of existence shows us that nothing of the needs of creatures is hidden from His Mercy.

For instance, if He gives us eyes with which to see, He has also given these eyes, lids and lashes so that they are protected and so that the light which enters is regulated and the eye is not harmed.

The eye has a radius which can see in several directions without the turning of the head.
Is it possible that God Who so met the needs of the human being not provide a leader and a guide who is pure and trustworthy to bring His revelation?

A famous philosopher, Abu ‘Ali Sina (Avicenna) in his famous book Shifa’ says:

“The needs of the human being for the sending of the prophets for the survival of the human species and their moving towards perfection is greater than their need for lashes, eyebrows and the arch of the foot; thus, is it possible for Him to provide those and not these?”

Think and Answer

1. What are the greatest needs of life of humanity?
2. Why is it that a human being cannot live without laws?
3. Give a living example to clarify the role of law in human life.
4. What qualities should the best lawgiver have?
5. Why should the prophets be of the human species?

Lesson 23: Why are the Prophets Free of Sin and Error?

Without doubt, more important than anything else, a prophet must attract the trust of the general public in such a way that his words contain no possibility of being lies or erroneous, otherwise, his position of leadership will be a shaky one.

If they are not immaculate, using the excuse that the prophets have erred, people who seek the truth from what they say will begin to doubt their invitation. It will not be accepted, or, at least, their words will not be accepted with all of their hearts.

This reason which can be called 'trustworthiness' is one of the most important reasons for their being immaculate.

In other words, how is it possible that God give His Commands for His people to follow a person who is not truthful for if this person were to err or sin, people would not follow him. If they do, they have erred and if they do not, they have weakened his position of leadership, in particular, since the position of the leadership of the prophets completely differs with the leadership of others for people receive their entire program of life from the prophets.

Because of this, we see that the great commentators speak about the verse,

"Obey God and obey the Prophet and those charged with authority among you." (***4:59***)

saying that the command for Absolute obedience is because the Prophet is immaculate as well as 'being charged with authority'. The pure leaders like the Holy Prophet are referred to as 'being charged with authority'. If not, God would never give the command to unconditional obedience to them.

Another way of proving the immaculateness of the Holy Prophet in relation to any sin is that any factor of sin is condemned to defeat within the very being of the Holy Prophet.

The explanation of this is: when we turn to ourselves, we see that we, too, are immaculate in relation to some sins or evil or unacceptable deeds.

Note the following examples:

Can you find an intelligent person who thinks about eating fire or trash or filth?

Can you find an intelligent person who will walk naked through the streets and bazaars?

Clearly not! If we saw such deeds from someone, we will be assured of the fact that he is no longer normal and has become insane because an intelligent person would never do these things.

When we analyze such behavior, we see that the ugliness of such deeds is so clear that an intelligent person would never even consider them.

It is here that we can imagine what this short phrase means and say that every intelligent and healthy person is 'free of' unacceptable deeds.

From this stage, we take a step further. We see some people who are free from unacceptable deeds.

For instance, an aware physician and expert who knows the various kinds of microbes well is never prepared to drink the polluted water of the dirty clothes of a person who has one of the most dangerous contagious diseases whereas an illiterate person , perhaps, would be indifferent to such a thing.

With another simple example, we reach the point that however much the level of a person rises in the area of awareness, they are less likely to do evil or ugly deeds.

Taking into consideration that if a person's faith and awareness were to rise and have so much faith in God and His court of justice, so that everything that he sees is present before his eyes, such a person will be free of all sin and every ugly deed in relation to him, like walking naked through the streets, will be in our eyes only.

For such a person, the property of something forbid den is just like the flames of fire, and just like we do not put fire in our mouths, he does not put something which is forbidden into his mouth.

We can then conclude that the prophets, because of the extraordinary knowledge, awareness and faith which they have, tame the motives of sin and the most exciting factors causing sin will not prevail upon his intellect and faith. This is why we say that the prophets are immaculate; they are insured against sin.

How can the Station of Purity be a Honor?

Some people who do not understand the meaning of purity and the factors of immaculateness and being free from sin are not aware of the fact that if God prevents one from sin and destroys the factors which

cause sin, this will not be an honor for that person!

This is coercive purity and therefore is not considered to be a virtue.

But with the discussion which he had above, this issue is very clear:

The freedom of the prophets from sin in no sense is a coercive one. Rather, it is born from their strong faith and absolute certainty, their awareness and extraordinary knowledge and this is the greatest honor for them.

If an aware physician takes care of and treats a person with the worst of diseases is this a sign of his being forced to do so?

If such a person were to follow the rules of health, would this be Considered to be a virtue?

If a person, a lawyer, were to take the disgraceful considerations into effect of a dreadful crime and try to prevent it, is this a virtue?

Thus, we reach this conclusion that the fact that the prophets are free from sin is both one of their own choice and great honor for them.

Think and Answer

1. How many branches are there to being immaculate?
2. If prophets were not free from sin, what would happen?
3. What is the truth of the station of immaculateness?
4. Other than the examples given here, can you point out another example of someone who is immaculate in relation to another group?
5. Is the immaculateness of the prophets coercive or a result of free will? Why?

Lesson 24: The Best Way to come to Know the Prophets

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

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

relationship with God.

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

1. To study the content of the invitation of the prophets and to collect the laws and signs.

2. Miracles and deeds which exceed normal human ones.

Let us be allowed to first speak about miracles.

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

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

Thus, a miracle has the following conditions:

1. Something which is possible and accepted.

2. Normal people and even geniuses, by relying on the strong power of humanity cannot do the deed.

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

4. No one else was able to offer these miracles and everyone was impotent before them.
Miracles must be connected with the claims of prophethood or imamate (thus any work which is extraordinary and comes from someone other than a prophet or pure Imam is not called a miracle, but a blessing).

Several Clear Examples

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

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

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

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

But what is to prevent a person with a divine power and with particular awareness which has come from

God's endless ocean of knowledge, to be able to give life to the body of a dead person or to cure one who has an incurable disease?

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

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

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

Miracles Should Not be Confused with Superstitions

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

As to miracles, this very statement is true. Whereas some pseudo intellectuals speedily and directly deny miracles, another group tries to extend miracles and take the weak traditions and fairy-tale superstitions which were most often done with the help of the enemies and mix them with miracles and the scientific visage of miracles of the prophets and cover them with fairy tale like stories and unclarities so that the real miracles of these kinds of stories not be known.

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

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

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

What is the Difference Between Miracles and Extraordinary Deeds?

We have often heard that a group of ascetics have undertaken extraordinary feats. People who have

seen these deeds are not few. This is a reality, not a fairy tale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Think and Answer

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

Lesson 25: The Greatest Miracle of the Prophet of Islam

All scholars of Islam believe that the Qur'an is the greatest miracle of the Prophet of Islam (S).

When we say the most superior, it is because, in the first place, the Qur'an is not an intellectual miracle but rather has to do with the spirit and intellect of the people and secondly, it is eternal and everlasting and third, it is a miracle which has cried out for 14 centuries.

It says: "If you do not believe that this is a Book of God, bring one like it." This invitation to an equivalent or something like it or challenge has appeared several times in the Holy Qur'an. In one place it says:

"Say: If the whole of humanity and jinn were to gather together to produce the life of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support. "(***17:88***)

In another place, it has made the condition for the bringing of something like it even easier. It says:

"Bring ten suras forged like unto it and call to your aid whomever you can other than God if you speak the truth. " (***11: 13***)

"If they (***your false gods***) ***answer not your*** (***call***)***, know that this Revelation is sent down*** (***replete***) ***with the knowledge of God... "***(***11:14***)

"And if you are in doubt about that which We have revealed to Our Servant, then bring a surah like it and call your witnesses, other than God, if you are truthful." (***2:23***)

In the next verse, it directly states:

"But if you do not and you shall never do — guard yourselves against the fire." (***2:24***)

These continuous and successive invitations to challenge the Qur'an show that the Holy Prophet placed the greatest of emphasis and importance upon the miracle of the Qur'an even though many other miracles have been recorded about the Prophet and have appeared in books on Islamic history.

As the Holy Qur'an is a living miracle, we will, in this discussion, give greater emphasis to it.

How they have remained impotent in face of this challenge It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an places the greatest emphasis upon inviting the opponents to the arena and with stimulating comparisons, it challenges them to enter the arena so that no excuse remain for anyone.

Words like, “If you speak the truth...”, “You can never do so...”, “Even if you seek help from all of humanity...”, “Bring at least one verse like it...”, “If you become a kafir, a flaming fire is awaiting you...” speak of this truth.

These are all on one side. On the other side, the struggle of the Holy Prophet with the opponents was not a simple struggle, because Islam not only endangered their religion which they firmly supported, but also endangered their economic, political interests and even their very existence.

In other words, the progress and influence of Islam caused all of the lives to be turned upside down. Thus, they were obliged to come to the arena with all of their power and force.

No matter what the cost, in order to disarm the Holy Prophet, they would have to bring a verse like a verse of the Holy Qur’an so that they could no longer rely on the Qur’an as a miracle, and everyone who believed in it would become defective and it would become a document for proving their truth.

They invited all of the Arabs who were learned scholars to help them but every time that they tried to challenge the Holy Qur’an, they were defeated and they very readily retreated. The story of these events have been recorded in the history books.

The Story of Walid ibn Mughayrah

Among the people invited to this challenge was Walid ibn Mughayrah from the Bani Makhzum who was famous at that time among the Arabs for his literary abilities.

They asked him to think about this challenge and to give his opinion about the miraculous verses of the Qur’an and its extraordinary influence.

Walid asked the Holy Prophet to recite a verse of the Holy Qur’an for him. The Holy Prophet recited a verse from Surah Ha Mim (as-Sajdah, n.32).

This verse caused such excitement in Walid that he, without thinking, arose from his place and left the group of the Bani Makhzum which had been formed, saying, “I swear by God that I have heard words from Muhammad which neither resembled the words of human beings nor the fairies.

“His words have a special tone and a particular beauty. They are like a branch of a tree which bears a great deal of fruit; they are words which are victorious over all things and nothing will be victorious over them.” These words caused the Quraysh to whisper among themselves, “Walid has lost his heart to Muhammad.”

Abu Jahl, in a state of anxiety, went to his home and told him what the Quraysh were saying. He invited him to a meeting of theirs.

Walid went to their group and said, “Do you think Muhammad is crazy? Have you seen the effects of insanity in him?”

Those who were present said, “No.”

“Do you think that he is a liar? Was he not famous to date among you for his truthfulness and his trustworthiness? Did you not call him a truthful and trustworthy person?”

Some of the leaders of the Quraysh said, “Then what should we call him, what should we relate him to?”

Walid thought a bit and then said, “He is a magician.”

Even though they tried to turn the common people away from the Qur’an, which they were attracted to, this commentary of ‘magic’ was itself living proof of the extraordinary attraction of the Holy Qur’an and they called this attraction, bewitchment while it had nothing to do with magic.

It was because of this that the Quraysh spread this opinion everywhere that Muhammad is a magician and these verses are his magic, keep away from him and try not to listen to what he is saying. But in spite of all of their efforts and endeavors, their plan had no effect. The thirsty were everywhere and plentiful. They had pure hearts and group by group, they joined the Qur’an. They drank of the pure water of the heavenly message and the enemy, defeated, retreated.

The Holy Qur’an, today, challenges all of the people of the world and invites them to struggle against it. It cries out, “If you doubt the truth of these verses and you think that it is born of human thought, bring its like. O scholars, philosophers and literary persons, writers from whatever nation or people!”

We also know that the enemies of Islam, in particular, Christian priests, who know Islam to be a revolutionary school, full of meaning, a strong competitor and a danger to it, every year spend millions of dollars to spread anti-Islamic propaganda.

They are active in Islamic countries under the cover of culture, science and health. What would happen if they made the way closer, if they were to invite Arab-Christian scholars, poets, writers and philosophers to write verses like the verses of the Holy Qur’an to silence the Muslims?

It is clear that if such a thing were possible, at whatever the cost, they would do so.
The very fact that they are unable to do so is a proof before the opponents and proof of the miracle of the Qur’an.

Think and Answer

1. Why is the Holy Qur’an the highest and most superior of the miracles of the Holy Prophet?
2. How does the Qur’an challenge people?
3. Why have the enemies of the Qur’an referred to it as magic?

4. Why is Islam a strong opponent for present clay?
5. What was the story of Walid ibn Mughayrah?

Lesson 26: A Glance at the Miracle of the Qur'an

What do the letters stand for at the beginning of some of the Surahs?

We see that the beginning verse of many of the surahs of the Holy Qur'an are letters, like alif lam mim, alif lam mim rah and ya sin.

One of the secrets and the philosophy behind these letters, according to some of the Islamic traditions, is that God is showing the great miraculous and eternal quality of the Holy Qur'an.

That is, how can the Qur'an make use of these simple letters and create such words which are greater than the letters while every child can repeat them and in truth the appearance of this important fact is one of the most important miraculous issues.

Now this question arises. From what point of view is the Qur'an a miracle? It is only because of its simplicity and tone, or, in other words, the sweetness and clarity of its expression and the extraordinary influence of it or is it because of something else?

The truth is that whenever we look at the Holy Qur'an from different points of view, each one presents another image of its miracle. For instance:

1. Eloquence: The sweetness and extraordinary attraction of the miraculous words and concepts.

2. The expression of the highest content from every point of view, especially beliefs which lack any sort of superstition.

3. Scientific miracle: That is, the uncovering of issues which human beings during that age had not come to know.

4. To foresee and speak directly and accurately about some future events (the hidden news of the Qur'an).

5. The lack of contradiction, disputes, disorderliness and others.

A discussion about each of these five areas is very extensive but we will discuss some of them here.

1. Eloquence

We know that every discussion has to aspects: letter and content.

Whatever letters and words of beauty contain the necessary unity and are free of complicated and complex expression and also the sentence structure is such that they are exactly what one desires to hear and they attract the heart, that expression is called eloquence.

The Qur'an has both of these two qualities to the highest extent possible so that to date no one has been able to bring verses and surahs with such attraction, sweetness and tone.

In the previous lessons, we saw that Walid ibn Mugharayah, a skilled Arab linguist, was enraptured by hearing a verse of the Holy Qur'an and was made to think about how to express something to the Quraysh which would lessen the Holy Prophet in the eyes of the people, finally thought of the word 'bewitchment' and called Muhammad a be This is what they called the Prophet of Islam, even though they wanted, in this way, to condemn him, but, in truth, they were unable to do so.

At the same time, this calling the Prophet a magician is to admit to the extraordinary effects of the Qur'an in the sense that it cannot be explained and justified in simple terms and it must be recognized as being something miraculous.

But instead of them accepting the truth, and considering it to be a miracle, and gaining faith, they took the way of myth and legend. They were led astray and said that it was magic.

In the history of Islam, it can very often be seen that whenever harsh individuals went to see the Prophet, or hear verses of the Holy Qur'an, they changed their direction in life and allowed the light of the Holy Qur'an to guide them. This well shows that the attractions and eloquence of the Qur'an are miraculous.

We do not need to go far to see that whenever those people who are familiar with the Arabic language read the Qur'an, and they repeat it, they receive pleasure; they do not tire or become satiated.

The words of the Holy Qur'an are very accurate, are mixed with the purity of expression, and, at the same time, are clear and enlightening as well as, when necessary, they are firm.

It is necessary to point out that the Arabic language at that time had progressed a great deal as a language and examples of poetry during the Age of Ignorance, before the appearance of Islam, are among the best poems from the point of view of language.

It was famous that every year, the greatest literary men of the Hijaz would gather together and would offer the best examples of their poems in a commercial–literary center in the ukaz bazaar. One poem would be chosen as the best of the year. They would write it down and recite it in the Ka'bah. At the time

of the Prophet, seven of these still existed and were called mu‘alaqat sab’.

But after the descent of the Holy Qur’an, they paled in comparison to the eloquence of the Holy Qur’an, so that one after another, they were removed from there and were forgotten in history.

The commentators upon the various verses of the Qur’an express all of the wondrous qualities of the verses so that reference can be made to them to gain a familiarity with it.

A familiarity with the Holy Qur’an shows that this saying of the Prophet of Islam, is not an exaggeration, “The Holy Qur’an has a beautiful exterior and a deep and subtle interior. The wonders of the Qur’an can never be counted and the miraculous qualities of the Qur’an will never age.”

The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali, peace be upon him, a great student of the Holy Qur’an, also says in the Nahj al-Balaghah, “The spring of hearts is in the Qur’an and it is the source of the springs of knowledge. There is no better way to remove the rust of the hearts and souls of people than through the Holy Qur’an.

Think and Answer

1. What is the philosophy behind the beginning letters of some of the verses of the Holy Qur’an?
2. Is the Holy Qur’an a miracle from only one point of view? Or from several points of view?
3. Why did the opponents of the Holy Qur’an refer to the Prophet of Islam as a ‘bewitcher’?
4. What is the difference between eloquence and bewitching?
5. What age did the mu’alaqat sab’ refer to and what does it mean?

Lesson 27: The World View of the Holy Qur’an

Before anything else, we should study the intellectual and cultural environment from which the Holy Qur’an arose.

From the point of view of all historians, the Hijaz was among the most underdeveloped and backward areas of the world at that time. During the Age of Ignorance, the people of this area are referred to as savage or half-savage.

From the point of view of ideology, they were very firm worshippers of idols and stone and wood statues had cast their disgraceful shadows upon all of their culture.

They even say that they made statues and idols out of dates and they would kneel before them but at times of famine, they would eat them.

They held great hatred for female children so that they buried them alive and they called the angels, the daughters of God! They thought that God was just like a human being.

They were very surprised by the idea that a person should only worship One God. When the Holy Prophet invited them to worship the One God, with great surprise, they said,

"Has he made the gods (***all***) ***into one God? Truly this is a wondrous thing."*** (***38:5***)

Whoever spoke against their superstitions and their myths were called liars and insane.

They were ruled by a very firm tribal system and the differences and disputes among the tribes were so extensive that the wars among them never ended and time and time again, they colored each other's environment with blood, creating blood baths. They were proud of their plunder and considered it to be part of their daily activity.

The number of people who could read and write in the area of Mecca, the center of commerce, could be counted on one hand and it was very rare to find scholars among them.

Yes, in such an environment, an individual who could not read and write and who had never had a teacher, arose and brought a book which was so full of such content and meaning that after 14 centuries, the scholars are still busy with its interpretation. Every age discovers new truths in it.

The image that the Holy Qur'an gives of the world of existence is a very accurate and exact one: monotheism is presented in the most perfect form. It expresses the secrets of the Creation of the earth, the heavens, the night and day, the sun and the moon, plants and the existence of the human being — each one as a sign of the One God in the various verses and with a varied form of expression.

Sometimes, it goes into the depths of the human being and speaks about the unity of the primordial nature:

"Now, if they embark on a boat, they call on God, making their devotion sincerely (***and exclusively***) ***to Him; but when He has delivered them safely to*** (***dry***) ***land, behold, they give a share*** (***of their worship to others***)***!"*** (***29:65***)

Sometimes it speaks of the intellect.

Sometimes it reasons from the unity of the intellect and relies upon the journey through the horizons and souls: the secrets of the creation of the earth and the heavens, animals and mountains and seas, rain and breezes and of the body and spirit of the human being.
When speaking about the Qualities of God, the most interesting and the deepest form of expression is selected.

The Holy Book says:

"There is nothing whatever like unto Him…" (***42:11***)

"He is God. There is no god save He; the Knower of the unseen and seen; He is the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. He is God; there is no god save He; the King, the Holy, the Peace-loving, (***the bestower***) ***of conviction, the Guardian*** (***over all***)***, the Ever-Prevalent, the Supreme, the Great absolute!***

Hallowed is God from what they associate (***with Him***)***. He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the Excellent Names; praises Him whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth; and He is the Ever-Prevalent, the All-Wise."***(***59:22-24***)

In expressing the Knowledge of God and explaining His Unlimitedness:

And if all the trees on earth were pens and the ocean (***were ink***)***, with seven oceans behind it to add to its*** (***supply***)***, yet would not the Words of God be exhausted."*** (***31:27***)

"To God belongs the Face of East and the West: whichever way you turn, there is the Face of God …" (***2:115***)

When words are spoken about the resurrection and it denies the polytheists:

"He says, 'Who can give life to (***dry***) ***bones and decomposed ones*** (***at that'***)***? Say, 'He will give them life Who created them for the first time! For He is well-versed in every kind of creation! The same who produces for you fire out of the green tree when behold! You kindle therewith*** (***your own fires***)***!***

Is not He who created the heavens and earth able to create the like thereof? Yea indeed! For He is the Creator supreme of skill and knowledge! Verily when He intends a thing, His Command is, be and it is!" (***36:78-82***)

"On that Day will (***the earth***) ***declare her tidings. "***(***99:4***)

"That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us and their feet bear witness to all that they did." (***36:65***)

"They will say to their skins: 'Why bear you witness against us?' They will say. 'God has given us speech, (***He***) ***Who gives speech to everything: He created you for the first time, and unto Him were you to return."*** (***41:21***)

The value of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and the greatness of its content and the greatness of its content and the fact that this knowledge is free from any kind of superstition will become clear when it is compared with the altered Bible and Pentateuch.

When we compare these two with each other, for instance, we see what the Pentateuch says about the

creation of the human being and then what the Holy Qur'an says.

What does the Pentateuch say about the prophets and what does the Holy Qur'an says?

How does the Bible and the Pentateuch describe God? How does the Qur'an do so?

Here the difference between these two will be made clear.

Think and Answer

1. What were the particularities of the environment from which the Qur'an arose?
2. What effect did idol worship have in their thoughts?
3. What is the difference between primordial nature and reason?
4. What is the logic used by the Qur'an in describing the Qualities of the Creator? Give examples.
5. How can one better understand the content of the Holy Qur'an?

Lesson 28: The Holy Qur'an and Modern Scientific Discoveries

There is no doubt that the Holy Qur'an is not a book about natural sciences, medicine, psychology or mathematical studies.

The Holy Qur'an is a book of guidance and one which builds a human being. It mentions whatever is necessary for one to know.

We should not expect that the Holy Qur'an be an encyclopedia about the various sciences. We should seek the light of faith and guidance, piety and purity, humanness and ethics, order and law from the Holy Qur'an and it contains all of these.

But sometimes in order to reach this goal, the Holy Qur'an indicates some of the natural sciences and the secrets of creation, in particular, in its lessons on unity; it removes the veil over the secrets of the world of creation and it discloses facts which were unknown to the scholars of that era.

This expression of the Qur'an forms a complex which we call the intellectual miracles of the Qur'an. Here we will indicate some of the intellectual miracles of the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an and the Law of Attraction

Before Newton, no one had discovered the law of gravity in a complete way.

It is famous that while Newton was sitting under a tree, and an apple fell from the tree, he began to think about the reason and said to himself, "What energy is this which attracts the apple to itself? Why did it not go up to heaven?" After many years of study, he discovered the law of gravity.

In the discovery of this law, it was proven where the order of the stars comes from, why this earth moves around the sun and why they do not fall into each other. What power is this which keeps them in their own orbit, and they do not move this way or that.

Yes. Newton discovered that the orbiting of a body causes it to flee from the center and the law of gravity causes it to return to the center and as long as these two are in balance, that is, the distance between these two bodies brings about a gravity to create a fleeing from the center and a gravity to pull it back to the center, this attraction and repulsion permits it to remain continuously in its orbit. But the Holy Qur'an, 1000 years before this event, says:

"God is He Who raised the heaven without any pillars that you can see; is firmly established on the throne. He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law)! Each one runs (its course) for a term appointed. He regulates all affairs, explaining the sign in detail that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord." (***13:2***)

In a Tradition from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida about this verse, he says, "Does God not say a pillar without a pillar being seen?

The narrator says that in response to the Imam, I said, "Yes."
He said, "Thus a pillar exists but you do not see it."

Can an analogy simpler than this be found to express this to simple Arab people?

In a tradition of Hadrat 'Ali we read: "These stars which are in the heavens are cities like cities on earth and every city is connected to another city by a ray of light."
Scholars today, among the astronomers, believe that there are millions of stars which are inhabited with living creatures but the details of this are still not known.

The Discovery of the Orbit of the Earth around the Sun

It is famous that the first person who discovered that the earth moves around the sun was Galileo, who lived approximately four centuries before and before that, the Egyptian scholar, Ptolemy, had said, "The earth is the center of the universe and everything revolves around it."

Galileo was reprimanded by the Catholic Church for his discovery and his denial of this discovery saved his life but finally other scholars followed up his discovery and today it is a certain scientific fact which has been proved by space flights.

In summary, the earth being the center was negated and it became clear that this was an error of our senses because we mistake the movement of the stars and planets for the movement of the earth. We are in motion and we assume that they are!

At any rate, the opinion of Ptolemy lasted for 1500 years and it influenced the thoughts of the scholars during those years, and, at the time of the descent of the Holy Qur'an, no one had the courage to speak against this view.

But when we turn to the Holy Qur'an, we see:

"You see the mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away…" (***27:88***)

The Qur'an speaks very clearly about the movement of the mountains whereas we see them as immovable and the analogy of their movement with that of clouds is both an indication of calmness and quietude.

If we see that instead of the movement of the earth, the movement of the mountains is mentioned, this is so that the truth of the matter be made known because it is clear that the mountains, without the earth, have no motion and the movement of them is exactly like the movement of the earth, either around itself, or around the sun or both.

Now think that at a time when all of the scholars of the world and the masses of the people thought that the earth was motionless, and believed that all of the stars and planets moved around it, the direct confrontation of this idea and the mention of the movement of the earth is a scientific miracle!

And this from a person who had never studied and who, in general, arose from an area where there were no teachers and which was considered to be very backward from the point of view of science and culture.

Is this not a proof of the Truth of this Book?

Think and Answer

1. What is meant by 'scientific miracles' of the Qur'an?
2. Who was the first person who discovered the law of gravity and in what age did he live?
3. In what verse in the Qur'an and with what analogy does it refer to the law of gravity in general terms?
4. Who said that the earth was immobile and how long did this rule human thought?

5. In what verse and sura does the Holy Qur'an refer to the movement of the earth?

Lesson 29: Another Proof of the Rightfulness of the Prophet of Islam

In order to understand the truth of the invitation of a claimant to prophethood, and his truthfulness or falsity, we have other ways in addition to the question of his miracles and this can be another living proof of the way to reach the truth which is to study the following:

1. The moral personality and social background.

2. The conditions which ruled in the area of the invitation.

3. The conditions of the time.

4. The content of the invitation.

5. The programs and means and principles and goal.

6. An evaluation of the effects of the invitation upon the area or environment.

7. An evaluation of the faith and self-sacrifices of the invitee in relation to the goal.

8. The non-compromise with deviated suggestions.

9. The speed of the effects in public opinion.

10. A study of the faithful and understanding what group they come from.

If we, in truth, study these ten subjects in relation to every claimant and if we make a file about them, we can very easily understand the truth.

Noting that has been said above, we present a very brief study of the above issues in relation to the person of the Holy Prophet, even though each one of these items requires a separate study of its own.

1. That which is among the particularities of the morality of the Prophet of Islam in the midst of his social activities, according to the histories written by his friends and enemies, is clear to us that he was so pure and correct that even in the Age of Ignorance, he was given the title of 'trustworthy'. History says, "When he wanted to migrate to Medina, he assigned 'Ali, peace be upon him, the task of giving back the trusts which people had placed with him."

His courage, perseverance and good conduct, his quickness and his manliness, his forgiveness in war and peace can be seen, in particular, his command of forgiveness for the people of Mecca after the victory over this city and the surrender of the blood-thirsty enemies of Islam is clear and is clear evidence of his character.

2. We all know that normal, average individuals even geniuses — take on the color of their environment, whether they want to or not, of course, to a lesser or greater degree.

Now let us think that a person who lived for 40 years in the midst of ignorance, idol worship, in an environment which was formed by the weave of the culture of the people with polytheism and superstition. How is it possible that the people arise to establish pure monotheism and struggle against all forms of polytheism?

How is it possible that scientific analyses develop in an environment of ignorance?

Can one believe that without divine intervention such a wondrous phenomenon would occur?

3. It must be seen if the manifestation of a prophet took place in every age and era when the world was going through the Middle Ages, the age of despotism, discrimination, oppressive racial and class superiority? Perhaps we should read the words of Hadrat 'Ali, who bore witness to the age before and after the appearance of Islam.

He says, "God sent the Holy Prophet during a time when the people of the world were lost and led astray; their intellects were at the disposal of their whims and lusts; their sense of honor was destroyed; the oppression of ignorance had led them astray and in the midst of ignorance and anxiety, they were lost." (The Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 91).

Now think about the precepts which the slogans of equality of human beings, the elimination of racial discrimination and class distinction had in relation to the situation of that time. "Surely the believers are brothers."

4. The content of his invitation brought unity in all areas, the elimination of oppressive privileges, the unity of humanity, a struggle with oppression, a plan for the rule of the world, defense of the deprived and the acceptance of piety and trustworthiness as the best criteria for human values.

5. In the area of plans to be implemented, permission was never given to make use of the concept that the goal is a means to justify the end in order to attain the sacred goals but rather sought out sacred means. He directly would say:

"And let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably…" (***5:8***)

His commands to keep to moral principles even in the midst of war, not to attack civilians, not cutting down the forests and date palms, not polluting the drinking water of the enemy, good treatment of the

prisoners of war are clear signs of this truth.

6. The effects of his invitation upon the environment were so great that the enemies were even afraid of people going near the Prophet because they saw that his attraction and influence was extraordinary. Sometimes they raised such a commotion when he spoke that the people could not hear what he was saying, to prevent his words from entering their thirsty hearts. Because of this, and to cover over the truth of what he was saying, they called him 'bewitched' and his words, 'bewitchment'. This in itself was an admittance of the strange effects of the invitation of the Holy Prophet.

7. An evaluation of his self-sacrifice upon the way of his invitation shows that he, more than any other person, was a believer in and faithful to the precepts which he brought.
He stood in some of the battlefields where those who had recently accepted Islam fled. He paid no attention to the enemy who often threatened him in every way possible. He retained his beliefs and never showed weakness or doubt.

8. Several times they tried to kill him on the excuse that he compromised with the deviates, but he never surrendered. He would say, "If you give me the sun in one hand and the moon in another and all of the planets and stars be under my dominion, I will never give up my goal and surrender."

9. Not only was the effect of his invitation in public opinion wondrous, the speed by which it happened was also extraordinary. Those who have studied the books of western experts on the Middle East and on Islam, are all amazed by the speed of the spread of Islam. For example, three of the most famous ones of the West who wrote, The History of Arab Civilization and Its Basis in the East, have said that this must be admitted.

They say, "With all of the efforts for the understanding of the speedy progress of Islam in the world, the fact that in less than a century it was able to spread to most parts of the known world, is still a great puzzle."

Yes. It is a puzzle that Islam was able to penetrate into the hearts of millions of people with such speed, to absorb civilizations and bring about new civilizations.

10. Finally, we reach the point that the enemies were a group of unbeliever leaders, oppressors and wealthy who only sought their own self-interests whereas those who found faith were most often the pure-hearted youth, from among the large group of the abased who longed for the truth and were even slaves, individuals who other than pure hearts, had no capital and who were thirsty for the truth.

From the totality of this study, which is a very extensive one, we can well conclude that this was a divine invitation, an invitation which flowed from something beyond nature, from the great Creator for the salvation of the human being from corruption and ignorance, polytheism, oppression and injustice.

Think and Answer

1. Is there any way to come to recognize the truth of a prophet other than through his miracles? What are they?
2. What is meant by the gathering of laws and what issues must be considered?
3. Can anything be understood from a comparison of the Arabs before and after Islam?
4. Express a part of that which existed in the Age of Ignorance among the Arabs, in particular, and of the world, in general.
5. Why did the enemies of Islam condemn the Prophet by calling what he said bewitchment'.

Lesson 30: The Prophet of Islam is the "Seal of Prophecy"

A Clear Meaning of 'Seal'

The Prophet of Islam is the last Prophet of God and the hierarchy of prophethood ends with him. This is one of the necessary precepts of Islam.

What is meant by necessary is that whoever joins the ranks of the Muslims must understand that all Muslims believe this and that this is among their decisive beliefs. That is, just as those who have dealings with Muslims know that they emphasize the principle of unity, they must also know that the seal of the prophethood by the Prophet of Islam is also agreed to by all and there is no group of Muslims who are in anticipation of the coming of another prophet.

In truth, the movement of humanity upon its way towards perfection has passed through various states with sending of the prophets and they have attained a level upon this way so that they can stand on their own two feet. That is, by relying upon the universal teachings of Islam, they can solve their problems.

In other words, Islam is the final law and it is the age of maturity of humanity. From the point of view of belief, it is the most perfect of contents of religious thought and from the point of view of practice, it has so been formulated that it is coordinated with every age and every generation.

The Reason for the "Seal of the Prophecy"

In order to prove this, we have many reasons, the most clear of which are three:

1. The necessity of this issue — we have pointed out that whoever deals with Muslims, wherever in the world they may be, may come to know that they believe in the seal of prophethood with the Prophet of Islam and that if a person accepts Islam with sufficient reasons, they have no choice but to accept the ending of prophethood with him. And as in the previous lessons we have given sufficient proofs of this, we must also accept this idea, which is one of the necessities of this religion.

2. Verses of the Holy Qur'an are also clear proof of the end of prophethood with the Prophet of Islam.

***"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but* (*he is*) *the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets: and God has full knowledge of all things."* (*33:40*)**

This verse was revealed when the idea of foster children was prevalent among the Arabs. They would accept a child who had a different mother and father as their adopted child and they accepted the child into their home as if it was their own child. The child was Mahram and would inherit, etc.

But Islam came and did away with this ignorant custom saying foster children are not covered by the Divine Law like real children. Among them was Zayd, the foster child of the Prophet of Islam who was considered to be a child of the Prophet.

Thus the Holy Qur'an says that you should only describe the real qualities of the Prophet which are two: Divine mission and Seal of Prophethood instead of introducing him as the father of one of these individuals.

This shows that the seal of prophethood by the Prophet of Islam was clear for all, permanent and decisive as was his mission.

The only question which remains here is, "What exactly is meant by 'seal'?"

Seal means to end something. For instance, a seal is placed at the end of a letter and if we see that sometimes a ring is called a 'seal', it is because in that age, it was used in place of the signature of a name. Whoever at the end of his letter sealed it with the ring in which his name was carved, used it as a seal and every image on the ring was particular to that person.

In the Islamic Traditions, we read, "When the Holy Prophet wanted to write a letter for the kings and leaders of these times, and invited them to Islam, his servant told him that the kings would not accept a letter unless it had a seal. The letters of the Holy Prophet to that time did not have a seal. He ordered that a ring be made for him in which was imprinted, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." The Prophet, after this, ordered that his letters be sealed with that from then on.

Thus, the meaning of seal is clear.

1. We have many traditions which prove the seal of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam, among which are:

Among the Traditions recorded by Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari, he records the Prophet as saying, “Among the religions, Islam is like a house which has been built and completed and made beautiful and only one mud brick remains; whoever enters through there or looks through that, says, ‘How beautiful,’ but this has an empty place. I am that last mud brick and all prophets end with me.” (*Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayan,*).

Imam Sadiq says, “The permissible of Muhammad is permissible until the Day of Resurrection and the forbidden is forbidden until the Day of Resurrection.” (Usul al-Kafi, volume 1, p.58).

In the famous Traditions of the Shiites and Sunnite from the Prophet, we read that he said to ‘Ali, “You are like Aaron in relation to Moses in relation to me, other than the fact that after me there will be no prophet,” and tens of other Traditions.

As to the seal of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam, there are some questions which we should turn our attention towards.

1. Some people say that if the sending of the Prophets was through Divine Grace, why should the people of our age be deprived of this Grace? Why do you not find a new way to guide the people of our age?

But they are negligent of one point and that is that the deprivation in our age is not because they do not merit it, but because humanity’s thoughts and awareness have ended and by understanding the precepts of the Holy Prophet of Islam, they can continue them.

It is perhaps a good idea to give an example here.

The prophets, who came and brought a law or a book, were five: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, peace be upon them and Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him and his descendants. They made efforts in a particular area of the history for the guidance and perfection of humanity and this passed beyond a certain stage. The second phase of the prophets was handed over and has reached a level whereby they have found their final state and the strength to continue the way.

It is just like a five stages study program which must be followed to be completed.

If a physician does not go to school and college, it does not mean that he does not have merit, it is because of this that this amount of knowledge which he gains will help him to solve the scientific difficulties he faces.

2. As human society is continuously changing, how can we with the permanent laws of Islam, answer the needs of that?

In response, we say that Islam has two kinds of laws: one is a series of laws which resemble permanent qualities of particular human beings, like the necessity for the belief in unity, the implementation of the principles of justice, struggle against any kind of oppression.

But another part is a series of general principles which, with other changes and by the doing away of them, they take on a new form and they answer the problems of each age.
For instance, a universal principle of Islam is: respect the agreements that you make and be loyal.

It is clear that with the passing of time, new social and commercial and political ties will be made whereby a person can answer them by taking the major principle into consideration.

We have another principle, *la zarar*, which says that any law which will harm an individual or society must be limited.

You can see to what extent these universal principles of Islam are effective in solving problems and we have many such laws in Islam.

3. There is no doubt that leadership is a vital part of Islam with the lack of a prophet and the occultation of his successor, the issue of leadership will be terminated. Because of the principle of the seal of prophethood by the prophet of Islam, we cannot wait in anticipation for another prophet. Does this not have harmful implications for an Islamic society?

In response, we say that for this era, the necessary things have been suggested through *vilayat-i-faqih*, the leadership of religious jurisprudents who have the necessary conditions of knowledge, piety and political awareness. The means of recognizing such a leader also has been clearly expressed in Islam. There is thus no need for concern in this area.

Thus, *vilayat-i-faqih* is the end of the line of the prophets, the leadership of a religious jurisprudent who has all of the necessary conditions so that Islamic society is not left without a guardian.

Think and Answer

1. What is the exact meaning of 'seal'?
2. How can we use the Holy Qur'an to understand the meaning of 'seal?
3. Why are the people of our age deprived of the Divine prophets?
4. How many kinds of laws are there in Islam and how do they answer our needs today?
5. Can an Islamic society exist without a leader? How can you solve the issue of leadership in our times?

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