

Chapter 7: The Beginning Of The Revelation

We have so far taken a glance at the earlier part of the blessed life of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Now we must talk about some of the most momentous phases of his life. By the age of 40 he was still living among an extremely backward people who were devoid of any traces of civilization and humanity. These hard conditions severely tormented his pure soul. He observed nothing in that society but the darkness of ignorance. He would go to the Ka'aba, but instead of witnessing the worship of God, he witnessed idolatry. He would then leave the Ka'aba and go among the people. But there, too, he was troubled by what he saw. He was pained by the ugly customs and false thoughts of his people. The pitiable condition of the poor and the destitute caused him great anguish. The deplorable situation of women, who were treated worse than animals, as well as the prevalence of gambling, wine drinking and murder tortured his blessed heart.

When he dealt with people as a merchant, their immoral behaviour gave so severe an emotional shock to him that he had to go to a lonely place where he would not be tormented by people's inhuman behaviour. For these reasons and to find peace of mind, he would go to Mount Hira and there think deeply about the amazing phenomena of nature and the vestiges of God's All-Embracing Compassion. 1

The Prophet At The Age Of Forty

By the time the Holy Prophet of Islam reached the age of 40, he was ready for his divine mission." One day suddenly, while he sat in a cave at Mount Hira, Gabriel, the Angel of Revelation, appeared to him and said, 'Recite!' He said in surprise, 'What shall I recite?' Again the divine voice very clearly and openly called out, 'Recite, O Muhammad!'²

And a third time Gabriel repeated³,

'Recite in the Name of Your Lord Who created. He created the human being from a clot. Recite and your Lord is Most Honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen, taught the human being what he knew not' (95: 1-5).

An indescribable excitement and eagerness overcame the Holy Prophet, for he had come into contact with a supreme supernatural world. His high spirit had now found a sacred support and an eternal refuge. He saw in himself the power of prophecy. No longer was any worry or agitation to be found in his blessed being. There was now just peace and confidence within him.

Was the Prophet really going through the learning process in that cave on Mount Hira? Some orientalist and foreign authors have answered this question in the affirmative. They have remarked, 'On Mount Hira, the Prophet thought deeply about the concepts of the Bible as well as the instructions of the prophets. There he spent his time in meditation and enjoyed this intellectual meditation'.⁴

This remark is meant to imply that he was a self-made man who invented the religion of Islam by studying and carefully thinking about the Old and New Testaments! But there are certain documents that attest to the contrary, some of which are:

1. If the Holy Prophet of Islam had derived the Qur'an from the Bible and from the teachings of the prophets before him, the conceptions and contents of the Qur'an would have had to perfectly resemble those in the Old and New Testaments, whereas the purport of the Qur'an is quite different from that of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The magnificent and extremely beautiful wording and style of the Qur'an have brought the greatest literary men of the ages to their knees, proving that the Holy Prophet of Islam has been in direct contact with the Creator of the world. The Holy Prophet could have derived such a style from no other book.
3. No credible authentic source has ever mentioned such false accusations. Rather, these bigoted rumours are made by the Christian clergy and by the western orientalist who have selfish, hostile motives.
4. If the Qur'an had been brought into existence through study of the Old and New Testaments, those intending to fight against the Qur'an through tampering with some of its verses could have more easily made reference to the Old and New Testaments and would have achieved their purpose with a great deal less trouble.
5. All agree that the Prophet was unlettered.⁵ Is it logical to believe that an uneducated, unlettered person, brought up in an ignorant, backward society that was devoid of any knowledge, learning or scholarly books could offer such an amazing book, full of startling facts and extremely advanced learning? Such bigoted persons have to be asked, 'How was the Holy Prophet of Islam able to study the Old and New Testaments? How is it possible for an unlettered man who has not been taught by any teacher nor gone to any school, to make predictions of the future and relate events of the past?'

What Is Revelation?

What is certain is that there have been relations between prophets and the Creator of the universe, that they have received the facts from the original source of creation, and that these relations have had to do with their purified selves and, fortified spirits.

It is obvious that if these relations with the divine source were taken away from the prophets, they would have no such supreme position. All the honour and value of the prophets lie in their having relations with the divine source. So there has been no ambiguity in their sayings, and they were all quite sure of what they said and knew very well the Source, Support, and Cause of their words and teachings, unlike those who claim a 'discovery' that might be made as a result of undergoing some ascetic practices. Such people often have no realization of what they have discovered. In fact, their claims are often mingled with fantasy and mere imagination and are sometimes untrue.

The superiority of prophets to such people is so obvious as to need no explanation. Divine prophets have seen and said nothing but the truth, and not even one single unclear, ambiguous point has ever been found in their speeches and teachings. Thus, divine revelation has resulted from a relation between God and His prophets. This relation has sometimes been made through the medium of Gabriel and sometimes directly, without any medium.

Is Revelation A Kind Of Hysteria?

Some western writers who are no doubt prejudiced have been dubious about the descent of revelation upon our Holy Prophet⁶ and have considered it a sort of disease called hysteria.

Fortunately, this false accusation is so vain and baseless that it calls for no arguments to prove its falsehood. It is well-known that hysteria has certain moods and indispositions, none of which has been observed in the Holy Prophet of Islam.

As John Davenport has said, 'This remark that Muhammad has suffered the attacks of epilepsy is one of the false, awkward sayings of the Greeks by which they meant to stain the prestige of the propagator of a new religion, and turn the world of Christianity against his moral behaviour and qualities. ⁷Even in the deepest moments of revelation, none of the piercing cries of severe agitation common in hysteria have been observed in the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Another reason is that when the person suffering from hysteria recovers from such indispositions, and comes to an ordinary state, that person does not remember anything from what he has seen or heard in his state of hysteria, while the contrary was the case with the Holy Prophet of Islam. He did not speak to anybody during the time revelations came upon him and after each revelation was over, he started talking to the people about the meaning of the revelation and announced everything he had heard or seen. Moreover, the expressions of a hysteric are usually related to the delusions brought about by his

suffering and exhausted nerves.

For example, some hysteric people imagine terrible faces that threaten them with death, and their cries are all about such things. And so far nobody has observed a hysteric say something that turns out to be law; knowledge or guidance, like the Islamic rules and teachings that, after 14 centuries, nobody has been able logically to find a single fault with.

Revelation And Today's Science

Unlike what some people might imagine, the advent and advance of scientific discoveries not only have not reduced or damaged the importance or high position of the orthodox religion of Islam, but they have confirmed and supported them.

The inventions of radar, radio, and teletypes have proved the fact that revelation is by no means inconsistent with the laws of nature or incompatible with the secrets of creation. The same God who has provided so many facilities, abilities, and mysterious ways of communication is able to set up special relations and communications with His prophets, though these two sorts of communications are not comparable.

In addition, the advance of the sciences of extra-sensory perception, hypnotism, telepathy and the like have made it clear that the facts of our world are not limited to the framework of our material senses.

Thus both history and science bear testimony to the fact that the Holy Prophet of Islam has been selected by God for the divine mission of leading mankind into the path of virtue and salvation and saving it from the deadly pit of corruption and deviation and that all those excellent ideas and advanced programs were inspired through divine revelation.

The world of Islam is proud of its great leader, the Prophet, whose divine religion not only brought life and prosperity to the world of his own time, but today, after the passing of 14 centuries, is truly the best guide of civilized societies. Each day more and more educated people come to realize the magnificence and value of his profound precepts and teachings.

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1. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 18, p.206.
 2. Manaqib, Vol. 1, p.40
 3. Kamil, Vol. 2, p.48; Tarikhi Tabari, Vol. 3, p.1148.
 4. Udhri Taqdir, p.19.
 5. Ibid., p.18.
 6. Hysteria is a mental disease.
 7. Udhri Taqdir, p.20.

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