

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All Praise belongs to Allah alone, and honorable and perfect blessings be upon Muhammad and his infallible, immaculate Progeny.

Unfortunately, scholars have not regarded adequately three questions concerning the Prophets' missions. The first question is the conveyance of the Lord's message being the original mission of the Prophets. This point is in fact the pivot on which the Prophets' missions and actions are grounded, and is purposed for substantiating the Lord's claim on His servants. A Prophet is then a conveyor of an epistle; he fears the Lord and works for evading His ire and torment in case he violates the instructions. For this reason, the Prophets were wont to call people to witness on the perfection of their conveyance. In addition, they are not asked to enforce people to admit and accept their promulgations and, similarly, not admitted to submit people to their missions.

As a second rule, coercion in matters of the divine religion is rejected. It is obligatory to preserve people's freedom of believing or refutation. They are, likewise, free to commit themselves to the religion or to deviate. This is the very meaning of opening the school of life in this world and testing people in guidance or deviation by giving them the ability to do good and evil, and the result will be declared on another stage and in another world. Drawing people to the religion by force is contrary to the principles of this divine test as well as to the freedom of choice.

The second question is the Prophets' goals being to minister to the grand issues of people and societies. A messenger of Allah is compared to an engineer specialized in the construction of cultures, societies and history. The Prophets' missions should thus be looked upon from these angles. A scholar must ask himself how people's cultures and history should have been if a certain Prophet (S) had not been given the Divine Mission, and what changes had been made when that Prophet (S) conveyed the Lord's

Message.

In other words, we should wonder how paganism would have looked like nowadays if Prophet Abraham had not been chosen for conveying the Divine Mission or if he had not established the principles of monotheism. We should also wonder what the situation in the Arab lands in particular and the whole world in general would have been if Prophet Muhammad (S)¹ had not been chosen for the Divine Mission and what would have occurred had he not perfected the belief of monotheism giving it its current form.

The Holy Prophet (S)'s mission was to establish a nation and to lead it to occupy an advanced, if not pioneer, position amongst other nations, and this formation has been proved the best in content and structure. It is undeniable that the Holy Prophet (S) was keen on giving the leadership of the *Ummah*² to his Ahl al-Bayt³ (a.s.)⁴ as they have been the choice of Allah Who purified them thoroughly⁵ and gave them His Book in heritage exclusively.⁶ If people reject the Ahl al-Bayt's divinely commissioned Imamate,⁷ it will then make no difference for anyone to hold it, in order that Allah might bring about a matter that was to be done, which is the advent of the Concealed Imam (al-Mahdi the Expected).

The third question is that the Holy Prophet (S)'s personality is indisputably present and effective, yet limited and minute, in the process of the conveyance. None can deny the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) was intelligent, genius, worthy of leadership and free to act as well as divinely selected, though his own identity is restricted during the promulgation of the Mission. What is meant by identity is not the opposite of mechanism, since the Holy Prophet (S)'s obedience to what was revealed to him was the result of perfect satisfaction, faith and observance.

The area in which the Holy Prophet (S) was allowed to practice his personal inference formed a narrow point in proportion to the large area of his practices.

Hence, he was just like an engineer whose manager binds him with giving effects to a large project. This engineer is satisfied that he should contact his manager frequently so as to evade any mistake and, meanwhile, he works, thinks and carries on working; still he contacts the center so that he receives the strategies and consults saving from problems. This example is, however, a highly microscopic view of the Holy Prophet (S)'s mission.

Regarding the Center of the Holy Prophet (S), Almighty Allah is unparalleled in entity and deeds. Depending upon the previous, any study of the Holy Prophet (S)'s life account should regard three matters;

- (1) the Holy Prophet (S)'s mission was to carry what was revealed to him,
- (2) his task was to build a nation and help it find its way in history and,
- (3) he ought to follow the Lord's instructions in each and every action.

A deep look at the Holy Prophet (S)'s life proves the three aforementioned points. Almighty Allah has obviously managed the Holy Prophet (S)'s affairs from start to finish, and the Holy Prophet (S) obeyed his Lord's instructions submissively. Therefore, the results of his deeds achieved an extraordinary attainment that exceeded all the intellectualities and senses of sociologists.

The Holy Prophet (S) created an international, civilized and ideological extension in a relative period with the least material and humane casualties. Despite the truculence of the Holy Prophet (S)'s foes that waged fierce wars against him, the casualties of both sides did not attain two thousand victims, since it was the Lord who supervised the Holy Prophet (S)'s management.

The Holy Qur'an was uninterruptedly revealed to the Holy Prophet since the first day of his Mission up to a few days before his decease. Archangel Gabriel visited him frequently with Qur'anic Verses, revelation, instructions, directives, answers and like things. There are innumerable examples on the Divine presence and intervention to save a situation in the life of the Holy Prophet (S) proving that he would not have behaved personally except when he applied the general lines and carried on the detailed commandments drawn by the Divine Revelation. On many occasions, the Holy Prophet (S), having waited for the Revelation, would not act personally. He is reported to have said, 'I have been given the Book and its like.'

'Its like' stands for the instructions carried by Archangel Gabriel that later on took the form of Hadith.⁸ This means that his traditions were also revealed to him, just like the Holy Qur'an.⁹ Besides, these instructions included his personal affairs such as marriage, divorce, dress, eating, sleeping, ablution and even brushing the teeth. The Holy Prophet (S)'s endowment, detriment, cherishing, malice, residence, touring, satisfaction and rage; all were determined by revealed instructions.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) told the story of an atheist who disputed, belied, harmed and threatened the Holy Prophet (S) face to face. The Holy Prophet (S) became so angry that the vein of ire was clearly seen between his eyes. As he nodded his head down, Archangel Gabriel came to him and revealed, 'Your Lord asked me to carry His compliments to you and to inform you that the man in front of you is generous and he used to serve food to people.' At once, the Holy Prophet (S)'s anger vanished; he spoke to the man, 'I would have banished you and made you an example had not Archangel Gabriel came to me and told, on behalf of my Lord, that you have been generous as you used to serve people with food.' 'Does your Lord favor generosity?' asked the man. 'Yes, He does,' answered the Holy Prophet (S). 'I now declare that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. I swear by Him Who sends you with the truth, I have never rejected a beggar's request,' declared the man.¹⁰

One day, a man asked Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) whether the Holy Prophet (S)'s nomination of Imam `Ali as his successor and the Muslims' next leader had been a personal conduct or a divine directive. 'Woe is you!' Imam al-Baqir said angrily, 'The Holy Prophet (S) was too reverent to say what Allah did not order him to say. Like the prayers, zakat,¹¹ fasting and Hajj,¹² the Holy Prophet (S)'s nominating Imam `Ali for

his vicegerency was a divine order.’¹³

The Holy Prophet (S)’s Succession Being a Simple Theme

The question of holding the Holy Prophet (S)’s position after his decease is simple, not complicated. The Ahl al-Bayt and their Shi`ah –followers– claim the Holy Prophet (S)’s nominating Imam `Ali (a.s.) as Muslims’ next leader and it is thus unacceptable for people of Quraysh,¹⁴ or any others, to choose anyone else since the Holy Prophet (S)’s nomination was only the conveyance of the Lord’s instruction. People of Quraysh, unfortunately, denied this nomination a few hours after the Holy Prophet (S)’s demise¹⁵ claiming that the Holy Prophet (S)’s ‘authority’ should be distributed among the twenty-three clans of Quraysh. Therefore, they selected Abu-Bakr who belonged to the Qurayshite clan of Taym ibn Murrah for the leadership. This man nominated `Umar ibn al-Khattab who belonged to the Qurayshite clan of `Adi as his successor. By the so-called Shura (the Advisory Council), `Umar nominated another Qurayshite man who belonged to the clan of Umayyah ibn `Abd-Shams, namely `Uthman ibn `Affan, as his successor.

They neither elected any of Ansar,¹⁶ because they were not from Quraysh and thus had no right in the authority of the Qurayshite Prophet (S), nor any of the Hashimites¹⁷ though they were the worthiest of this position, because they were, in the view of the conspirators against the leadership of Islam, just like the other Qurayshite clans most of whom did not want for the Hashimites to win the position of leadership after they had won the ‘position of Prophethood’!

Thus, the matter is very simple; did the Holy Prophet (S) nominate a successor or not? Nevertheless, it is very complicated that people of Quraysh and their fans do not want to discuss because it demolishes their structure and legality. Furthermore, they have warned all people not to discuss this matter claiming its being arduous, complicated and even haram¹⁸ to be discussed!

The Verses of Ghadir¹⁹ are only a part of the Qur’anic texts that declared Imam `Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt as the divinely commissioned leaders of the *Ummah*. Late and current Sunni and Shiite authors and exegetes have been authoring books discussing the Verses and Hadiths about the Ahl al-Bayt and their roles in the *Ummah*. In this regard, let us refer to two well-known and available references:

(1) Al-Hafiz Abu-Na`im al-Isfahani: *Ma Nazala fi `Ali Min al-Qur’an* (Qur’anic Verses respecting `Ali)

(2) Al-Nassa`i: *Khasa`is Amir al-Mu`minin `Ali* (Peculiarities of `Ali Amir al-Mu`minin).²⁰

The Three Verses of Ghadir

“O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.” [Surah al-Ma`idah 5:67]

“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.” [Surah al-Ma`idah 5:3]

“One demanding, demanded the chastisement which must befall.” [Surah al-Maarij 70: 1]

Throughout our discussions of these three Verses of Ghadir, we will attract attentions to their firm relation to the Holy Prophet (S)’s sermons during the Farewell Hajj.²¹ It hence seems necessary to discuss these six sermons as well, since they contain the Holy Prophet (S)’s instructing his people to follow the two weighty (precious) things—the Qur’an and the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.).²² He also carried the good tidings to his people, in the Sermon of `Arafat, that Almighty Allah has solved the question of the vicegerency and has thus chosen the twelve divinely commissioned Imams. Moreover, it seems essential to discuss the relationship between the Holy Prophet (S) and the Qurayshite chiefs pertaining to the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.).

We hope these would be useful discussions by which Almighty Allah may reward us in the Hereafter and include us with the intercession (Shafa`ah) of Muhammad and his immaculate progeny, peace be upon them all.

Al-Mustafa Center for Islamic Researches

13 / Rajab / 1419 A.H

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1. (S) abbreviation of “ﷺalla’l-Lﻫﻮ ﻩalayhi wa ālihi wa sallam”: “peace and Allah’s blessings be upon him and his holy progeny”
 2. Ummah is the Islamic Nation—the Muslim’s community founded by Prophet (S) Muhammad, comprising individuals bound to one another predominantly by religious ties.
 3. The Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House) is a term dedicated to the family of the Holy Prophet (S). More precisely, it is dedicated to definite individuals; namely, Imam `Ali ibn Abi-Talib, Fatimah al-Zahra` (the Holy Prophet (S)’s daughter and Imam `Ali’s wife), al-Hasan ibn `Ali, and al-Husayn ibn `Ali. The nine Immaculate Imams (namely, `Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Sajjad, Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir, Ja`far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, Musa ibn Ja`far al-Kazim, `Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Jawad, `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi, al-Hasan ibn `Ali al-`Askari, and al-Mahdi the Awaited) are also within the Ahl al-Bayt.
 4. (a.s.) abbreviation of “ﻩalayhi-ha-hum assalām”, “peace be upon him, her or them”, that has been used besides the names of the prophets, angels, the members of Ah al-Bayt and the Women of Paradise (Khadīja, Fātima, Maria, Asyiah).
 5. This is an indication to Allah’s saying in the Holy Qur’an (Surah of al-Ahzab 33:33): “Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.”
 6. This is an indication to Allah’s saying in the Holy Qur’an (Surah of Fatir 35:32): “Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants.”
 7. Imamate is the succession of the Holy Prophet (S).
 8. Hadith is the body of traditions concerning the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet (S), considered to be second in authority to the Holy Qur’an.
 9. Sunan al-Darimi; 1/145
 10. Al-Kulayni: al-Kafi 4/29.
 11. Zakat is the obligatory payment made annually under Islamic law on certain kinds of property and used for charitable and religious objects.
 12. Hajj is the pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque at Makkah undertaken in the twelfth month of the Muslim year and

constituting one of the religious duties of Islam.

13. Al-Kulayni: al-Kafi 1/298.

14. Quraysh is the name of the tribe that inhabited Makkah in the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and to which he belonged. Quraysh, yet, was the name of one of the Holy Prophet (S)'s forefathers.

15. In fact, people of Quraysh denied the whole matter and claimed that the Holy Prophet (S) had never nominated or elected anyone for vicegerency.

16. Ansar is a title said to the people of Yathrib, later on al-Madinah (al-Munawwarah), who supported and received the Holy Prophet (S) and his followers after they had immigrated from Makkah.

17. Hashimites are the sons and descendants of Hashim ibn `Abd-Manaf, the second grandfather of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Hashimites are thus the uncles, cousins, and descendants of the Holy Prophet (S).

18. Illegal according to the Islamic doctrine.

19. Ghadir –or Ghadir Khumm– is a place between Makkah and Medina where the Holy Prophet (S) declared Imam `Ali as the next leader of the Ummah and made it incumbent on Muslims of all generations to obey this leadership and consider it as a divine directive. See Muhammad Baqir Ansari: What Happened in Ghadir, translated by Badr Shahin, Mowlood Kaaba Publications, Qum – Iran, 2000.

20. Al-Tabari has also compiled a book, in two volumes, in this regard entitled al-Wilayah (The Vicegerency). Unfortunately, this book has not been printed yet.

21. The Farewell Hajj is the final ritual collective pilgrimage led by the Holy Prophet (S).

22. This is an indication to the Holy Prophet (S)'s famous statement: "I am leaving among you that which will save you from deviation forever if you only adhere to: the Book of Allah and my progeny—my household. Have I conveyed (to you this matter)?" Al-Ya`qubi: al-Tarikh (Book of History) 2/92.

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