

PROPHETHOOD
IN
ISLAM

English translation of
An-Nubūwwat fīl Islām

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him), but it cannot be said that unless he joins the *ummah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) again after his manifestation in the world for the second time, he is, God forbid, a misled, erring and deficient in religion and that his divine knowledge is imperfect."¹¹¹

No further clarification is needed to prove that the significance of an *ummati* and prophet is antithetical. Neither can an *ummati* be a prophet in the real sense nor can a prophet be an *ummati* likewise. This is the point by understanding which the subject of prophethood becomes easy to understand and those who have stumbled unnecessarily over it have done so because neither have they kept in view the opposite significance of these words nor have they pondered over their reality.

Prophetic revelation a verifier of previous revelations

The third distinction between *wahy-i nubūwwah* (prophetic revelation) and *wahy-i wilāyah* (revelation granted to righteous servants) is that the former is confirmatory of the previous revelation of the same nature, that is to say, it verifies the truth of that revelation leaving aside the mistakes which have crept into it. Therefore, it is called the verifier (*musaddiq*) of previous revelation, whereas *wahy-i wilāyah* is dependent on the Book of the prophet it follows, and is not acceptable unless it is applied to and confirmed by the Book and the practice (*Sunnah*) of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It has been repeatedly said about the Qur'ān that it is: "verifying that which is before it"¹¹² This is, however, the status of the Qur'ān which has been called the verifier of all the (previous) divine revelations. But Jesus Christ has also been declared a verifier of the revelation of the Torah in the following words:

"We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary, verifying that which was before him of the Torah."¹¹³

Thus *wahy-i Nubūwwah* verifies what has passed before it, but *wahy-i wilāyah* stands in need of verification by the *wahy-i nabūwwah*. That is why a prophet does not need his revelation to be confirmed by another revelation, but, for a disciple, it is essential that he should not accept his revelation unless it is in conformity with that of the prophet he follows. It is because God has made special arrangements for the protection of the prophetic revelation, as has been mentioned in the Qur'ān:

"For surely He makes a guard to go before him and after him, that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord."¹¹⁴

Thus, this Gabrielic descent is such that the revelation which is communicated through it is specially guarded, for with this revelation is connected the guidance of men. A prophet who receives revelation in this way, and is delivered to him under special guard and protection, free from all errors, should be accepted independently without any reference to the previous book. Whatever that revelation would contain would be considered correct. If there is something which is not in harmony with the former revelations and scriptures, then, either they had been interpolated or were limited in their scope. That is to say, they were meant for a particular time and for a particular nation, and the new revelation should be fully accepted and recognized as fulfilling the needs of a new age and a new nation. In case of difference, however, it is the new revelation which stands in good stead and must be obeyed and accepted, and the previous revelation which goes contrary to it wholly or partially should be set aside after having considered it either specific, abrogated or interpolated. As against this, the revelation of a

but it cannot be said that, unless he joins the *ummah* of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) again after his manifestation in the world for the second time, he is (God forbid) lost, deficient and erring as far as spiritual life is concerned and that his divine knowledge has remained imperfect. Thus I assure my critics that Jesus Christ can never be a follower. Although he, and all the prophets too, had faith in the truthfulness of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but they were followers of the guidance which was revealed to them and God had directly manifested Himself to them. It was never the case that by following Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by his spiritual teachings they were made prophets so that they may be called followers. God had given them separate books and they were directed to follow and lead (according to the teachings of these books) as is witnessed by the Qur'ān.¹⁶⁹

In another book, *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, published in May, 1907, it has been mentioned:

"And the saying of God: "And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom – then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, and you shall believe in him, and you shall help him."¹⁷⁰

Again, in *Chashmah Ma'rifat*, while commenting on the verse: "And thus have We revealed the Book to thee. So those whom We have given the Book believe in it, and of these there are those who believe in it; and none deny our messages except the disbelievers,"¹⁷¹ the Founder writes:

"O messenger, as We had revealed the Books or previous messages, similarly, this Book has been sent down to you Thus, those who were given the Book be-