

THE INHERITANCE OF THE PROPHETS

Excerpts from *'The Last Prophet'* by Ahmad Thomson

There is a very close connection which exists between all of the Prophets, not only as regards their knowledge of Reality – of Allah – and not only as regards their way of life – Islam – but also, in an age when this is not always realised or appreciated, their knowledge of each other.

For the Qur'an makes it clear that each Prophet was not only aware that the Prophet Muhammad would come, but also promised to support and follow him if he should come during his own particular life-time:

And when Allah made His covenant with the Prophets, (He said), 'This is what I have given you as a Book and wisdom, and then a Messenger (Muhammad) will come to you confirming what you have – and you will believe in him and you will help him.'

He said, 'Will you be bound by this and will you accept this obligation?'

They replied, 'We will be bound by it.'

He said, 'Then bear witness to it – and I will bear witness with you – and as for whoever turns away after this, then they will be the ones who disobey.' (3.81-82).

When commenting on the above passage Qadi 'Iyad states:

Abu'l-Hasan al-Qabisi said about this, 'Allah singled out Muhammad for an excellence which He did not give to anyone else. He clearly states this in this ayah.'

The commentators say that Allah made this pact by means of revelation. He did not send any Prophet without mentioning and describing Muhammad to him. The pact stipulated that if he met him, he must believe in him. It is said that the pact entailed them telling their people about him and that it stipulated that they must explain this and describe him to those coming after them. Allah's words, '**then a Messenger will come to you,**' (3.81) is in fact addressed to the People of the Book contemporary with Muhammad.

'Ali ibn Abi Talib said, 'Allah did not send any Prophet from the time of Adam onwards without making a pact with him about Muhammad. If Muhammad were sent while that Prophet was still alive, then he would have to believe in him and help him. He had to make a contract to that effect against his own people.' (*Ash-Shifa'* of Qadi 'Iyad: 1.1.7).

This covenant which Allah made with all of the Prophets is also mentioned in Surat al-Ahzab:

And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Prophets – with you, and with Nuh, and Ibrahim, and Musa, and 'Isa son of Maryam – and We made them make a solemn covenant, so that the truthful might be asked about their truthfulness – and He has prepared a painful punishment for the disbelievers. (33.7-8).

When referring to the above ayah, Qadi 'Iyad states:

It is related that while 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was lamenting the death of the Prophet, he said, 'My father and mother be your ransom, O Messenger of Allah! It has come down that part of your excellence with Allah is that He sent you as the last of the Prophets while mentioning you among the first of them: "**When We made a pact with the Prophets, with you and with Nuh ...**" (33.7). My mother and father be your ransom, O Messenger of Allah! It has come down that part of your excellence with Him is that the people of the Fire will wish they had obeyed you even while they are being punished in its depths. They will say, "**O would that we had obeyed Allah and the Messenger!**" (33.66).

Qatada said that the Prophet said, 'I was the first of the Prophets to be created and the last of them to be sent.' That is why he was mentioned before Nuh and the others.

As-Samarqandi said, 'Our Prophet is singled out by being mentioned before them even though he was the last of them to be sent. It means that Allah made a pact with them when He brought them out from the back of Adam like small ants.' (*Ash-Shifa'* of Qadi 'Iyad: 1.1.7).

Qadi 'Iyad also states:

Ibn 'Abbas said that the spirit of the Prophet was a light in the hands of Allah two thousand years before He created Adam. That light glorified Him and the angels glorified by his glorification. When Allah created Adam, He cast that light into his loins.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Allah brought me down to earth in the loins of Adam, placed me in the loins of Nuh and then cast me into the loins of Ibrahim. Allah continued to move me from noble loins and pure wombs until He brought me out of my parents. None of them were ever joined together in fornication.'

The famous poem of al-'Abbas in praise of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, testifies to the soundness of this tradition. (*Ash-Shifa'* of Qadi 'Iyad: 1.2.6).

And:

Abu Muhammad al-Makki, Abu'l-Layth as-Samarqandi and others related that when Adam rebelled, he said, 'O Allah, forgive me my error by the right of Muhammad!' Allah said to him, 'How do you know Muhammad?' He said, 'I saw written in every place in the Garden, "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," so I knew that he was the most honoured of creation in Your eyes.' So Allah turned to him and forgave him. It is said that this is the interpretation of the words of Allah, '**Adam learned some words from his Lord.**' (2.37).

Another variant has that Adam said, 'When You created me, I lifted my gaze to Your Throne and written on it was: "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," so I knew there would be no one held in greater esteem by You than the one whose name You placed alongside Your own Name.' Allah then revealed to him, 'By My might and majesty, he is the last of the Prophets among your descendants. If it had not been for him, I would not have created you.' It is said that Adam was given the kunya, Abu Muhammad. Some people say that it was Abu'l-Bashar (father of mankind). (*Ash-Shifa'* of Qadi 'Iyad: 1.3.1).

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When describing those who believe in the signs of Allah – including the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace – Allah says :

Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Taurah and the Ingil which are with them – he will enjoin what is right on them and forbid them what is wrong, and he will make the good things lawful for them and prohibit them the foul things, and he will relieve them of their burden and the chains they used to wear.

So those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him – they are the successful ones.

Say (O Muhammad): 'O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah – the One to Whom the dominion of the heavens and the earth belongs – to all of you. There is no god except Him – He gives life and He gives death – so believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, who believes in Allah and His words – and follow him so that you may be rightly guided.' (7.157-158).

And, as we have already seen:

And (remember) when Musa said to his people, 'O my people, why do you persecute me when you well know that I am the Messenger of Allah to you?' So when they went astray Allah sent their hearts astray. And Allah does not guide the people who are evil.

And (remember) when 'Isa son of Maryam said, 'O Tribe of Israel, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming what was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good news of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name is the Praised One (Ahmad).'

['Ahmad' is one of the names of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, meaning 'the Most Praiseworthy', 'the One who Distinguishes between Truth and Falsehood', and 'the Comforter'. Its equivalent in Greek is 'Parakletos' or 'Parakleitos', meaning 'the Comforter' or 'the Praised One'.]

Yet when he came to them with clear proofs, they said, 'This is clearly magic.'

And who does greater wrong than the one who makes up a lie against Allah when he is called to Islam? And Allah does not guide people who do wrong.

They desire to put out the Light of Allah with their words, but Allah will perfect His Light however much those who disbelieve detest it.

He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true deen, so that He may make it overcome all other religions, however much the idol worshippers detest it.

O you who trust, shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment? You should believe in Allah and His Messenger, and fight in the way of Allah with your wealth and your selves.

That is better for you, if only you knew.

He will forgive you your wrong actions and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of Eden.

That is the supreme success.

And He will give you something else that you love: Help from Allah and victory that is near – and give good news to the believers!

O you who believe, be Allah's helpers, just as when 'Isa son of Maryam said to the disciples, 'Who will be my helpers for Allah?' and the disciples replied, 'We are Allah's helpers.'

And a party of the Tribe of Israel believed, and a party disbelieved, and We strengthened those who believed against their enemy, and so they became the ones who prevailed. (61.5-14).