

"A Comparative Study of the Arguments for Proving 'Prophethood' from the Perspective of Maturidi and Imami Schools"

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Abstract

This article examines the arguments for proving "Prophethood" from the perspectives of the Maturidi and Imami schools. Using a descriptive-analytical method, it gathers both rational and scriptural evidence that has been presented on this topic. Through analysis, the study addresses the question of which rational and scriptural arguments these two major theological schools of Islam provide to affirm "Prophethood" as a fundamental tenet of faith. The study of arguments from both schools reveals that Prophethood is an undeniable concept, supported by rational and scriptural evidence. Both schools validate the principle of sending messengers based on a set of principles and rules, recognizing that while humans can comprehend certain matters through rational investigation, understanding many aspects is beyond their capacity. The Imami school views the doctrine of grace as the strongest justification for the sending of messengers and holds that reason alone does not necessitate punishment. However, the Maturidi school, in addition to considering reason sufficient for punishment and destruction, sees the sending of messengers as essential for the establishment and completion of proof. The Holy Qur'an reinforces this by emphasizing humanity's struggles in resolving issues without the guidance of prophets and by presenting the sending of messengers as a means to eliminate disputes and as a conclusive proof upon humankind.

Keywords: Prophethood, Maturidi, Imami, Rational Arguments, Scriptural Arguments.

Introduction

The Almighty God created jinn and humans and stated, *"I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me"* (Qur'an, 51:56). For humanity to fulfill this purpose of worship and submission to God, human reason alone is insufficient; the limitations of human intellect are evident even in minor matters, let alone in understanding the essence of worship and servitude to the Divine. Herein lies the necessity of sending messengers. Out of His grace and mercy, God provides humanity with guidance, including the sending of messengers, to ensure that people have the means to pursue their ultimate happiness and perfection.

The discussion of "Prophethood" is crucial because, in today's complex world of competing ideologies, the very principle of Prophethood is often questioned. There are attempts to undermine the concepts of Prophethood, revelation, and ultimately the monotheistic order. Defending Prophethood using rational and scriptural arguments, to counter these doubts and to satisfy minds and souls thirsty for truth, can help dispel baseless ideologies and replace them with the pure monotheistic perspective based on the guidance of the prophets.

The Maturidi school, like the Imami school, places a significant emphasis on reason and rational principles in elucidating theological matters within Islam. This focus on rationality is vital for affirming religious beliefs in response to deviating and anti-religious thoughts. Therefore, this study examines Prophethood from the perspectives of two major Islamic theological schools: the Imami and Maturidi. This topic will be discussed from both "rational" (epistemological) and "scriptural" perspectives, ultimately exploring the implications and outcomes of these discussions.

1. Conceptual Understanding of "Prophethood"

In examining the arguments for proving "Prophethood" from the perspectives of theological schools, it is essential first to clarify and analyze the semantic understanding of the term.

Nubuwwah (Prophethood): Derived from the root *naba'*, meaning "to bring news," and in religious terminology, it refers to the communication of a human being with God, bringing divine messages to humanity without human intermediaries. This act is a divine favor and a blessing from the Almighty to

humanity, granting them the means to understand divine commands. Some scholars suggest it originates from the root *nubuwwah* (with a simplified waw) and *nabawah*, referring to an elevated area of land. By extension, the elevated status of prophets compared to other humans is captured in the term "Prophethood" (Ibn Manzur, 1414 AH, Vol. 1, p. 405; Taftazani, 1407 AH, Vol. 1, p. 189; Ibn Sina, 1326 AH, p. 172; Tusi, 1414 AH, p. 103).

Prophethood is the second of the three fundamental principles of Islam, with the first being *Tawhid* (Monotheism) and the third *Ma'ad* (Resurrection). Importantly, *Nubuwwah* is considered one of the essential principles acknowledged by the followers of all religions, with the exception of the Brahmans, who recognize its necessity as stemming from the purposeful nature of creation and the wisdom and benefit underlying the world order (Dashti, 1373 AH, Vol. 10, p. 67).

In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, John L. Esposito explains the concept of "Prophethood" as follows:

"Prophethood" is the most common term for "prophethood" in Islamic religious language, derived from the root *n.b.w.* or *n.b.a.*, meaning "to elevate" or "to inform," respectively. The latter meaning is specifically reflected in the Qur'anic understanding of a prophet—*nabi*—as "one who brings news." The former meaning, however, has been used by Islamic scholars to denote the elevated status of a prophet among humanity, highlighting the uplifting influence of the prophet's message on those who receive it (Esposito, 2012, Vol. 4, pp. 382–383).

Further in his work, Esposito discusses the functional significance of this term, describing *Nubuwwah* as fulfilling an essential human need. It provides a framework through which humanity, either individually or collectively, can respond to God within a dynamic faith grounded in sound guidance and in dissuading evil: "*Let there arise from among you a group inviting to goodness, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong; it is they who will be successful*" (Qur'an 3:104). The prophet serves as a witness to monotheism, a bearer of glad tidings (*mubashir*) of the religion God intends for

Prophethood (*Nubuwwah*) serves as a divinely appointed mediation between God and rational human beings among His creations and servants. This mediation exists to alleviate the deficiencies and challenges they face in matters of both worldly affairs and the afterlife. The prophet conveys insights into matters that purified minds and enlightened intellects perceive as significant. If the term *Nabi* is taken to mean an "actor" (*fa'il*), it is fitting, as it implies a communicator of divine truths, as illustrated by God's words: "*Tell My servants that I am truly the Forgiving, Merciful One*" (Quran, 15:49), and "*Say, shall I inform you of what is better than that?*" (Quran, 3:15).

Furthermore, the word *Nabi* (without a final hamza) is considered by grammarians to originate from *nab'* but is commonly used without it, as evidenced by certain linguistic derivations. Some scholars argue that *Nabi* is derived from *Nubuwwah*, signifying exalted status, indicating that the prophet holds a lofty position above others, as suggested in the verse "*and We raised him to a high position*" (Quran, 19:57). In this interpretation, the form without a final hamza is deemed more eloquent, as not every informant holds this elevated rank. When someone addressed the Prophet saying, "*O Nabi' of Allah!*" he replied, "*I am not Nabi' of Allah but Nabi of Allah,*" correcting the term's pronunciation and meaning. Certain linguists stress reading it without the hamza to convey the true sense of the term, as adding a hamza could imply mere claim rather than authenticity (Raghib Isfahani, 1412 AH; Qurashi, 1413 AH; Ibn Athir al-Jazari, 1367 AH).

Thus, it becomes clear that *Nubuwwah* is derived from "n-b-y" rather than "n-b-'," signifying a conveyance of divine knowledge, or, as some interpret, a spiritual elevation due to the prophet's lofty moral and spiritual qualities, enabling them to guide humanity toward ultimate salvation.

2. "Methodology of Proving Prophethood from the Perspective of Maturidism and Imamism"

Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 AH) presents several arguments in his book *al-Tawhid* to prove the concept of "prophethood" and establishes it as a rational necessity. For Maturidi, the use of reason to prove "prophethood" holds a significant place. It is also important to note that the Imami theology, long before Maturidi, during the time of the infallible Imams (ع), had already considered rationalism as one of the essential components of their theological discussions, without going to extremes in this regard. In contrast, the Ash'arites adhered primarily to transmitted texts, validating them through reason. The

Ash'arites can be seen as positioned between the Mu'tazilites and the scholars of jurisprudence and hadith, while the Maturidites stand between the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites (Subhani, 1412 AH, vol. 3, p. 20). In discussing the proofs for "prophethood," topics such as the necessity of sending prophets, the objectives of their missions, humanity's need for prophets, and the need for religion arise naturally. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, only the arguments for proving this phenomenon from the perspectives of two theological schools — Imami and Maturidi — will be examined. The other related topics, though significant, are better suited for detailed discussion within the realms of modern theology and the philosophy of religion.

Rational Arguments

The first argument according to the Maturidis is the limitation of reason in understanding knowledge beyond itself (rational necessities) in proving "Prophethood," which can be explained as follows.

The stages of proving "Prophethood" according to Imam Maturidi begin with: "Belief in the message is a necessary and rationally established duty, in response to the religious and worldly needs" (Maturidi, 1995, p. 134).

He begins the proof of prophethood with rational necessity, based on the idea that reason requires a series of understandings and knowledge regarding the world and religion. However, through its own investigation and analysis, reason lacks the ability to reach these truths and requires a force beyond itself to aid in interpreting, analyzing, and understanding this knowledge—whether these truths are related to worldly or otherworldly matters.

He continues by discussing some matters that reason alone cannot grasp, such as the proper way to thank the benefactor, the purpose of creation, the concept of the afterlife, and so on.

Reason is not self-sufficient in meeting all of its needs; thus, it requires a sincere advisor whom God sends to convey the necessary matters related to religion and the world (ibid., p. 135).

God Almighty uses the prophets to convey the knowledge of religion and the world to His creation, as clearly shown in this rational argument.

However, this rational argument in the Shia tradition begins with a principle known as the "Principle of Grace" (Qā'idat al-Lutfi). In this principle, God's benevolence and provision of guidance for humanity are fundamental.

Shaykh Tusi (d. 460 AH) discusses the principle of grace (Lutf) as follows:

"Grace is obligatory upon God because He created the creatures and granted them desires, and if there were no 'grace,' then trickery and deceit would be necessary, which is reprehensible. Reprehensible things are far from God. Therefore, 'grace' is the foundation of the argument for sending messengers" (Tusi, 1411, p. 247).

One of the uses of the principle of grace is to present it in opposition to the Brahmins' view.

Shaykh Fadhl Muqaddad (d. 876 AH), in this regard, explains the arguments of philosophers and theologians with the following reasoning:

"In contrast to the Brahmins, who said that whatever reason arrives at, if it is contrary, is rejected, and if it agrees, it is irrelevant, we must say that [there is a third possibility for such matters in the eyes of reason]; that is, the prophets come to explain matters that are ambiguous and concealed" (Fadhl Muqaddad, 1405, p. 295).

The basis of the argument he presented is the nature of human social life. That is, a human being is inherently and fundamentally social; meaning that neither his creation is individualistic, nor does he have a nature or life that is focused on individualism. This social nature, in accordance with his natural tendencies, such as desires, passions, the inclination to dominate others, and so on, has certain drawbacks. As a result of these drawbacks, the individual himself cannot establish laws to regulate his own social life. Therefore, it is necessary for someone else to fulfill this duty, and that person is the prophet. For obedience and submission to the prophet, a sign is required, and that sign is miracles, which is not the subject of discussion in this paper (ibid., pp. 296-298).

After presenting the sociological arguments of the philosophers in proving "prophethood," the theologians' arguments are then explained:

The theologians' reasoning is based on two aspects: First, due to the existence of auditory duties such as prayer, fasting, and so on within the religion, the necessity of the sending of prophets becomes obligatory, because these duties come from the prophets. Therefore, knowledge of these duties depends on prophethood. Additionally, due to the obligation of necessary means, the sending of prophets is obligatory. Second, knowledge of reward and punishment and their permanence are two acts of divine grace that encourage obedience and prevent disobedience; therefore, all acts of grace, including these two, are obligatory (ibid., pp. 299-300).

As mentioned in the theologians' argument, the rule of grace (lutf) is frequently invoked, highlighting its importance in proving the necessity of sending prophets.

Among the prominent figures of the Maturidi theological school, sending of prophets is regarded as a rational and established matter, accepted by all theological schools. In other words, they present the rule of grace along with the concept of enabling means to achieve human creation's goals as a divine act.

Abu al-Thana' Maturidi (6th century) writes:

The sending of prophets is established because it is a requirement of wisdom according to the scholars, the Imams of guidance, and the philosophers of humanity. Since God Almighty created the creatures, He must enable them to fulfill what He has commanded them, such as faith and refraining from prohibitions like idol worship and the pursuit of desires. For this reason, the sending of prophets is considered rational by the majority of theologians (ibid., p. 86).

Taḥṭāzānī (d. 793 AH) writes in his commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya*:

And Allah, the Exalted, has sent messengers from among humans to humans, bringing glad tidings and warnings, and clarifying for people what they need regarding worldly and religious matters. He then discusses the occurrence of the sending of prophets, its benefits, ways of proving it, and some of the evidence for the truth of their mission. The phrase *ma yaḥtājūn ilayh* (what they need) means those matters that reason cannot access. Furthermore, He created useful and harmful bodies, but did not grant reason or other senses the independence to comprehend them (Taḥṭāzānī, 1407, pp. 85–86).

One of the key aspects of this phrase in the argument for proving "prophethood" is that it uses terms such as "paradise and hell," "belief in God," "refraining from false gods," etc., which reason alone cannot fully comprehend. These concepts are significant because the prophets address the people about these matters. If their audience is unfamiliar with these terms, their invitation would be in vain. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the prophets present issues that are necessary for reason to understand but which it cannot fully grasp on its own. Based on the phrase "what they need regarding worldly and religious matters," it can be concluded that reason is incapable of comprehending these issues and requires guidance.

Another reason is that it cannot be said that the interests and harms of the servants are known to all. Certainly, they are known to God, and He conveys them to His creatures through the prophets (Maturidi, 1995, p. 136).

Imam Maturidi argues in proving this topic as follows:

All matters in the world are categorized into three types: impossible, necessary, and possible. The necessary and impossible can be understood by reason without the need for external revelation. However, due to the changes in possible matters, where they shift from one state to another, reason is unable to discern whether something is necessary or impossible. Therefore, it is in these matters that the prophets come to guide (Maturidi, 1995, p. 137).

This means that knowledge and understanding of certain aspects of religious and worldly benefits are things that human reason cannot fully grasp. Naturally, some of these benefits are known only to the Creator of humanity, who has complete and thorough knowledge of His creation. This is because humans do not have complete knowledge of all matters. The world's affairs are divided into three categories: necessary, impossible, and possible. Human reason has the capacity to understand necessary matters without needing anything external, as God has made their understanding obligatory for humans. The same applies to impossible matters, meaning that no one provides information to humans about them. Thus, both necessary and impossible matters share the fact that no external information is needed about them. However, the situation is different with possible matters. As their name suggests, they are things that reason can understand, but whether reason alone can fully grasp them is another matter. With these

divisions, Maturidi aims to explain that the sending of messengers is necessary and established because they teach humans about the knowledge of possible matters. In understanding necessary matters and the rejection of impossible ones, reason does not require an external guide, but for understanding possible matters, reason alone is insufficient, and guidance is needed.

Additionally, another crucial reason for the necessity of sending messengers is the removal of obstacles to knowledge that hinder human understanding.

Imam Maturidi writes:

"God Almighty has provided each faculty with a means of understanding, and with that means of understanding come both benefits and obstacles. Reason, too, follows this pattern; it has the means of knowledge at its disposal, but there are also hindrances behind it that make its understanding complicated and obscure. The task of the messengers is to remove those obstacles from the path of reason, and in this way, the sending of messengers becomes an undeniable necessity for reason." (Maturidi, 1995, p. 136).

Based on this, the first argument in the Maturidi school for proving the sending of messengers (Risalah) is the logical necessity. This argument is based on two things: first, the needs of reason in understanding meanings beyond itself and the goal of human creation, which is to distance oneself from idols and reach God; second, that reason faces obstacles on its path to understanding higher knowledge, which prevent it from comprehending these truths. Therefore, prophets and messengers have come to complete and correct the incomplete perceptions of reason, which arise due to the hindrances in understanding. It is here that the necessity of messengers and prophets becomes clear.

The principle of "Lutf" (grace) is also implicitly present in Shia theological sources, meaning that sometimes the arguments leading to the principle of Lutf are used to prove the sending of messengers.

Sheikh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita (d. 1228 AH) writes on this matter:

"What is required for the people of every nation is the recognition of their appointed prophet, who acts as a mediator between the creation and the Creator, to convey the divine commands and define the lawful and unlawful. This is because bringing the servants closer to God's proximity and keeping them away from corruption is obligatory upon God" (Kashif al-Ghita, 1425 AH, p. 21).

In fact, the Sheikh moves from the signified to the sign itself, meaning that the recognition of divine commandments and high knowledge, obedience, and understanding of the lawful and unlawful, and so on, are all a result of the sending of messengers. This is an obligation from God upon His servants, to guide them towards goodness and righteousness and to protect them from corruption.

Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Al-Yasin, a contemporary scholar, also emphasizes the necessity of accepting the principle of Lutf (grace) in proving the sending of messengers in his book. He states:

"It becomes obligatory upon God, out of His grace and kindness, to provide humanity with whatever ensures their security and stability. Among the examples of this is the sending of messengers to humanity to deliver the divine laws and commands to them" (Al-Yasin, 1413 AH, p. 189).

He further writes:

"From what has been discussed, it has been proven that prophethood is obligatory upon God by reason and as a matter of grace (Lutf). This necessity also requires that these messengers act as trustworthy intermediaries between God and the people in conveying the divine duties" (ibid., p. 201).

In the Shia tradition, the foundational explanation of the principle of *Lutf* (grace) is based on the inability of human beings to fully comprehend the necessary means of knowledge required to achieve the goal that God intends for them, and upon which He bestows His grace. In a sermon, Imam Ali (AS) speaks about the intellectual limitations of human beings, saying:

"... So He sent among them His messengers and continued sending His prophets to them, to make them fulfill the covenant of their innate nature, to remind them of forgotten blessings, to argue with them through His message, and to awaken the hidden faculties of their minds..." (Mutazili, 1404 AH, Vol. 1, p. 111).

The phrase "awakening the hidden faculties of the mind" implies that human reason has the capacity to comprehend many matters, which fall under the realm of possible knowledge for humans. However, there are fundamental innate principles of knowledge, tools of cognition, and other inherent human aspects that are neither impossible nor obligatory to understand but are possible to be known. These matters require

divine guidance to make them comprehensible to humans, from the depths of their innate foundations. These are matters that require prophets and messengers to come and clarify.

Many scholars of Shia Islam, such as Mulla Sadra (d. 1050 AH), have used this narration to support the issue of *Nubuwwah* (prophethood) (Al-Yasin, 1413 AH, p. 189; Subhani, 1412 AH, Vol. 3, p. 45; Khurazi, 1417 AH, Vol. 1, p. 229; Shirazi, 1366 AH, Vol. 1, p. 75).

Based on this, the Shia believe that the Wise God selected worthy men to guide and lead humanity toward happiness. These are the prophets, through whom divine guidance is bestowed upon the servants of God. The mission of the prophets is necessary for reaching the perfection that is the goal of human creation; because although human intellect is effective, beneficial, and necessary in the journey toward perfection, it is not sufficient. It seems that the most extensive intellectual argument for the Shia in proving the concept of *Nubuwwah* (prophethood) is this principle of *Lutf* (grace) with an epistemological perspective. In fact, the principle of *Lutf* is, from an intellectual standpoint, the fundamental proof for the necessity of the sending of messengers in both schools of thought. The difference, however, is that the Shia have presented this argument more extensively and in a more developed form, whereas the Maturidi school addresses it using other terms, such as logical entailments, the deficiency of human reason in the epistemology of worldly and otherworldly matters, and so on.

Another difference between the Shia and Maturidi reasoning concerns the sufficiency of reason in punishing and destroying the people without the sending of messengers. Imam Maturidi himself pointed out that the argument of reason for punishing and destroying the people is sufficient (*Abu Mansur al-Maturidi*, 1427 AH, Vol. 7, p. 324). However, this does not imply that the mission of the prophets is unnecessary. Rather, the Maturidi view considers the sending of messengers as necessary for matters that are supra-rational and beyond the comprehension of reason. In other words, human reason, as long as it can comprehend and obey the principles, suffices for the punishment of the wrongdoer. However, the sending of messengers, in its own place, remains essential to complete the argument in accordance with God's grace and kindness.

Transmitted Proofs

In the proof of *Nubuwwah* (prophethood), both schools of thought — Maturidi and Shia — have presented not only rational arguments, as discussed in the previous section, but also transmitted (scriptural) proofs.

The Qur'an contains many verses that support the concept of *Nubuwwah*. In this section, we will explain these verses from the perspective of both theological schools.

The Qur'an states:

"Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation], and Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and as warners, and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed concerning it except those who were given it — after the clear proofs came to them — out of mutual jealousy between themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that about which they had differed, by His permission, and Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:213)

From a narration in *Al-Ihtijaj* by Sheikh Tabrasi (d. 548 AH), which is attributed to Imam Ali (AS), the necessity of sending messengers and completing the proof on the servants of God is clearly evident:

"... And Allah cut off the excuses of His servants by clarifying His signs and sending His messengers, so that people would have no argument against Allah after the messengers, and He did not leave the earth devoid of a scholar who knows what the creation needs and a student on the path to salvation. These are the few in number..." (Tabrasi, 1403 AH, Vol. 1, p. 248)

Allama Hilli (d. 726 AH) extracts five arguments from this verse, which point to the necessity of the appointment of infallible individuals to lead and govern on earth. Since all prophets are infallible, he concludes that humanity needs such a prophet for guidance, and thus the prophet must be free from any impurity or sin in order to rule over mankind. In essence, he uses this verse to argue that for guiding

humanity, which is not an easy task and requires specific individuals, it is necessary for certain persons to be sent by Allah to bear the responsibility of guiding humanity.

He writes:

"To judge between the people concerning that in which they differ." This implies that there must be someone to govern the people in matters where they have disagreements. This is a divine mercy that is obligatory, and it is universally agreed that such a ruling must exist in every time and for every individual. Therefore, it is inevitable that someone must exist to judge between those who differ, according to the texts of the Qur'an. It is clear that no one except the infallible can perform this task, because there is a possibility of unjust rulings from those who are not infallible. The actions of a non-infallible person can be unjust, either by mistake or by intention, and furthermore, a non-infallible cannot, due to lack of knowledge, judge with certainty based on the Book.

"And none differed concerning it except those who were given it — after the clear proofs came to them." This means that they did not differ on it except those who were given clear signs after the messengers were sent to them. Their difference is for the purpose of deviating from the truth that exists among them. The path to knowledge is either through reason or transmitted sources. Since most of the rulings of the Sharia cannot be understood by reason, and there is no room for reason in this matter, it remains to be understood through transmission (Hilli, 1409 AH, p. 148).

Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 AH) in his tafsir, *Tawilat Ahl al-Sunnah*, explains the verse as follows:

Allah, the Almighty, bestowed mercy and favor upon a group and sent messengers and scriptures to them. Each messenger was sent to their own people, among whom there were both disbelievers and believers. This is because, in accordance with divine wisdom, the earth should never be without a guardian or a prophet. (Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, 1427 AH, vol. 2, p. 109).

The sending of prophets has been made certain so that humanity receives God's grace and honor. This means that humanity has no excuse to deviate from the path of guidance, as Allah has completed His proof upon His servants in this verse. He has assured that the earth will never be devoid of a prophet. It is up to humans to take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore, the reason for the sending of prophets in this verse is to complete the divine argument, ensuring that whatever humanity needed to reach perfection has been provided, with the sending of prophets being one of the means for them to achieve that perfection.

Contemporary scholar Ayatollah Subhani writes about this verse:

"فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ" – While it is true that Allah is the ultimate guide, this guidance is delivered through the prophet. To deliver this guidance fully, accurately, and without distortion, the infallibility of the messenger is essential in receiving and conveying the divine revelation (Subhani, 1412 AH, vol. 3, p. 185).

In this context, the outcome of the work of the prophets, which is to guide and judge with the truth, is used as evidence for the establishment of the sending of messengers. The reasoning is as follows: if a prophet is to come, why is he sent? There are two possibilities:

1. If the purpose of sending a prophet is to lead people astray or to guide them in a direction that contradicts reason or transcends matters that even reason cannot comprehend, then no messenger should be sent at all.
2. However, if the purpose is to guide humanity, then the messenger must be truthful and perfect, as the goal is to guide humanity toward the truth.

If a prophet were to come with the intention of guiding humanity but also perform actions contrary to that guidance, it would be pointless. Therefore, a prophet must come to establish the truth so that humanity is guided and reaches its perfection.

The Imamiyya, in their interpretation of this verse, affirm the necessity of sending messengers, asserting that prophets are sent to resolve matters of dispute that arise from the limits of human understanding and the inadequacies of reason. On the other hand, the Maturidiyya also derive from this verse the concept of divine grace and favor, and they affirm the sending of messengers based on God's kindness and generosity.

In addition to this verse, in other verses, one of the main reasons for sending messengers is to complete the argument for the servants, as seen in the verse:

"رَسُولًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا"

("Messengers who bring good news and give warnings, so that people will have no argument against Allah after the messengers, and Allah is Exalted in Might, Wise." (Quran 4:165)).

Imam Maturidi refers to the necessity of sending messengers on various disputed matters, as was previously mentioned by the Imamiyyah in the preceding verse. Imam Maturidi writes in his interpretation of this verse:

"It is possible that the phrase 'so that people would have no argument against Allah after the messengers' refers to a true argument, but this argument is in matters of worship and divine laws, which are known through hearing [from the messengers] rather than through reason. If it were through reason, there would be no argument left against Allah. Therefore, the sending of messengers in this verse is to prevent any possibility of establishing an argument against Allah." (Maturidi, 1426, Vol. 3, p. 421).

Imam Maturidi, using rational reasoning based on transmission, argues that the sending of messengers is to complete the argument for others. However, the completion of the argument applies to matters that cannot be understood through reason; in contrast, for issues whose necessity and obligation can be understood through reason, no argument remains for the people. This is because reason itself has access to understanding those matters. Prophets and messengers are sent for issues that reason cannot comprehend.

Another verse that can be cited to prove the necessity of prophethood is the following verse:

"And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before it, they would have said, 'Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger, so we could have followed Your verses before we were humiliated and disgraced?'"

(Quran, 20:134).

The late Fayz Kashani (d. 1091 AH) states:

"Reason does not comprehend matters like the prohibition of pork, camel meat, marrying close relatives, having relations during menstruation, etc. The only way to understand these issues is through Shari'ah, because Shari'ah provides a very strong and stable belief system that guides people to the straight path and the welfare of both this world and the hereafter. Anyone who turns away from these matters is misguided because reason cannot comprehend them." (Fayz Kashani, 1375 AH, p. 195).

Imam Maturidi writes about this verse:

"The words of Allah: 'And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before it, they would have said, 'Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger, so we could have followed Your verses before we were humiliated and disgraced?' (Quran, 20:134) – some people believe that it is not right for Allah to punish and destroy before sending a messenger, and they use this verse as evidence: 'And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before it, they would have said, 'Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger.' But in our view, the rational argument for punishment and destruction is sufficient. However, Allah, out of kindness and grace, does not punish merely with the first argument, which is reason. To strengthen and complete the argument, He sends messengers." (Abu Mansur Maturidi, 1427 AH, Vol. 7, p. 324).

In the interpretation of this verse, Imam Maturidi considers reason sufficient in the sending of messengers and possibly punishing the transgressors. However, because no argument will be brought against Allah by the adversaries on the Day of Judgment, He sends messengers as an act of grace and honor. Therefore, the sending of messengers is affirmed, so that no one can raise an argument against Allah or escape the consequences of their actions. The final point of this argument is the verse: "And We do not punish until We have sent a messenger." (Quran, 17:15).

Mohammad-Ja'far Isfahani (d. 1263 AH) states regarding the proof of "Prophethood" and the sending of messengers:

"If the sending of messengers were prevented due to grace, the question and argument would still remain; because punishment without clarification is reprehensible." (Isfahani, 1382 AH, Vol. 2, p. 459).

In essence, this means that punishment of the obligated person is conditional on showing them the path along with a guide. If this is not the case, the obligated person has the right to complain; in other words,

punishment without clarification is wrong. He seeks to explain one of the foundations of the principle of "Lutf" (grace), which is a rational and epistemological argument. The principle of Lutf asserts that if there is an obligated person, all paths to their perfection must be prepared with grace, so that if they fail to act, they would deserve punishment. Otherwise, God would be committing an improper act. In this statement and verse, a good integration of both transmitted and rational evidence is made.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions above, the practical outcomes of this paper can be summarized as follows: Regarding the nature and essence of the term "Prophethood," it was concluded that it is derived from "N.B.Y," not from "N.B.E." As a result, "Prophethood" refers to the act of informing others by a person or, according to some views, the spiritual elevation of an individual due to having noble spiritual qualities from God Almighty to guide humanity toward its ultimate goal.

The evidence presented by both schools of thought regarding the necessity of sending messengers proves that "Prophethood" is essential and necessary according to rational and transmitted principles and rules. This is because human reason, although capable of understanding and analyzing certain matters, is limited in comprehending many other issues. However, the capacity to understand them is still within reach. Without this, "Prophethood" would be meaningless.

The principle of grace (Lutf) has been considered by the Shia (Imamiyah) as the best proof for the sending of messengers. This means that human reason alone cannot serve as the justification for destruction or punishment, and messengers must be sent so that the argument against human beings is complete. However, the Maturidis believe that the very sending of messengers is necessary to complete the argument for humanity, even though reason itself could be a justification for punishment.

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