

Fast 5

Prophet is a mortal like other humans with no supernatural powers:

“Say: I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I follow only what is revealed to me. Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Do you not then reflect?” — 6:50

“Say: I do not control benefit nor harm for myself except as Allah please. And if I had known the unseen, I should have much of good, and no evil would touch me. I am but a warner and the giver of good news to a people who believe.” — 7:188

“Say: I am only a mortal like you — it is revealed to me that your God is one God. So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and make no one a partner (with God) in the service of his Lord.” — 18:110

“Say: I am only a mortal like you. It is revealed to me that your God is one God, so keep in the straight path to Him, and ask His protection.” — 41:6

Notes: Appearing among a superstitious and ignorant people, the Holy Prophet could have claimed any supernatural powers for himself. But he told them plainly that he was a man who had no treasures, nor did he lay claim as a man to know the secrets of the future, nor did he profess to be any more than a mortal. Allah had revealed His will to him, and he faithfully followed and translated into practice everything that he received from on High. And as he himself was, so he wanted others to be. The unique greatness of the Prophet lies in the fact that he never tried to put himself before people as superhuman.

The simplicity and nobility of these statements as indicating the mission of a prophet is unsurpassed. He gives glad news of triumph to those who believe, warns the evil-doers of the evil consequences of their deeds in this life as well as in the next, but he does not claim the possession of Divine powers.

Prophet rejected because he could not show signs on demand:

“And they say: We will by no means believe in you, till you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or you have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which you cause rivers to flow forth abundantly, or you cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces, as you think, or bring Allah and the angels face to face (with us), or you have a house of gold, or you ascend into heaven. And we will not believe in your ascending till you bring down to us a book we can read. Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal messenger?” — 17:90–93

Notes: The signs demanded here relate to (a) the promises made in the Quran for the righteous, and (b) the threats of punishments for the wicked (these are expressed in the demands “cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces”, “bring Allah and the angels face to face”). The Prophet was a mortal with no control over when these would come about, but eventually they did.

Muslims, in the great civilizations that they founded, **did** have springs and gardens and magnificent houses. The power of the Holy Prophet’s opponents **was** broken as if the sky had fallen on them, and they **did** see Allah and His angels face to face in the sense of Divine support for the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet’s reputation and glory **did** ascend to heaven so that the whole world saw it. The Quran **was** a book from heaven, although it wasn’t brought down physically by the Holy Prophet but revealed to him.
