

Fast 26: Prophets — appeared in each nation, and Muhammad (s) came for all of them

- The Quran not only establishes the theory that prophets have appeared in all nations; it goes further and makes it necessary that a Muslim should believe in all those prophets. In Study 23 we have seen that in the Quran Muslims are told to declare:

“We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us and in what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and in what was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him we submit.” — 2:136

Here the word *prophets* clearly refers to the prophets of other nations. The same statement occurs in 3:84.

- Again, the Holy Quran speaks of Muslims as believing in all the prophets of God and not in Prophet Muhammad alone:

“...but righteous is the one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the prophets...” — 2:177

“The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His messengers; we make no distinction between any of His messengers.” — 2:285

“Those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and desire to make a distinction between Allah and His messengers and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others ... these are truly disbelievers ... And those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them, to them He will grant their rewards.” — 4:150–152

- A belief in all the prophets of the world is thus an essential principle of the religion of Islam, and though the faith of Islam is summed up in two brief sentences, ‘There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger’, yet the one who confesses belief in Prophet Muhammad, in so doing, accepts all the prophets of the world, whether their names are mentioned in the Quran or not. Islam claims a universality to which no other religion can aspire, and lays the foundation of a brotherhood as vast as humanity itself.
- According to the Quran, while prophets appeared in every nation their message was limited to that particular nation and in some cases to one or a few generations. All these prophets were, so to speak, national prophets, and their work was limited to the moral upliftment and spiritual regeneration of one nation only.

- National growth was the first step, when each nation lived almost an exclusive life and the means of communication were wanting. But the grand aim which the Divine scheme had in view was the upliftment and unification of the whole human race. The final step, therefore, in the institution of prophethood was the coming of one prophet for all the nations, so that the consciousness of being one whole might be brought to the human race.
- **The prophet for all the world.** When mentioning the earlier prophets the Quran says that Noah was sent “to *his* people”, and so for Hud, Salih and Shuaib — everyone of them was sent to his own people (7:59, 65, 73, 85). It speaks of Moses as being commanded to “bring forth *your* people from darkness into light” (14:5), it speaks of Jesus as “a messenger to the children of Israel” (3:49) but in speaking of Holy Prophet Muhammad it says in unequivocal words:

“We have not sent you but as a bearer of good news and as a warner *to all mankind...*” — 34:28

The Arabic words for *all mankind* are *kāffat-an li-l-nās*, where even *al-nās* carries the idea of *all people*, and the addition of *kāffah* is meant to emphasize further that not a single nation was excluded from the heavenly ministration of the Prophet Muhammad.

- At another point also, the universality of the Holy Prophet’s mission is thus stressed:

“Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.” — 7:158

The word for “all” here is *jamī‘-an*.

- One thing is sure, that no other prophet is spoken of **either in the Quran or in any other scripture** as having been sent to the whole of humanity or to all people or all nations; nor is Prophet Muhammad ever spoken of in the Quran as having been sent to *his people* only. The Quran itself is repeatedly termed “a Reminder for the nations” (68:52, 81:27, 38:87, 12:104). And the Holy Prophet is called not only “a warner to all the nations” (25:1) but a mercy to all of them as well:

“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the nations.” — 21:107

- Muhammad (peace be on him), therefore, does not only claim to have been sent to the whole world, to be a warner to all peoples and a mercy to all nations but lays the foundations of a world-religion, by making a belief in the prophet of every nation the basic principle of his faith. It is the only principle on which the whole of humanity can agree, the only basis of equal treatment for all nations.