

A Mercy to the Worlds

Ever since the new government came into power shortly after the 14th General Election, the oft-repeated phrase used in promoting Islam in the country has been “Islam is a Mercy to the Worlds”. The phrase is actually part of verse 107 of the Holy Qur’an in *Surah al-Anbiya’*, in which God declares to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) “And We have not sent you, (O Muhammad), except as a mercy to the worlds”. Indeed, the far-reaching significance of verse 107 will try to be analysed syntactically with the support of several renowned Qur’anic commentaries or exegesis so as to fully grasp its meaning.

First of all, it says “...We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except...” is in itself a recognition that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is neither a self-proclaimed Prophet nor Messenger of God, but rather one appointed and chosen by the Creator of the Universe. The proclamation is necessary in order to build confidence and trust of the masses that the man by the name of “Muhammad” (pbuh) is a true Prophet and Messenger of God. More importantly, the proclamation simultaneously invalidate any other false and fake prophets should any existed. Such a validation is similar to a newly-appointed state ambassador presenting his credentials to the head of the host state upon commencing his duties there.

Secondly, the object pronoun “you” in “...sent you (O Muhammad)” generated substantial discussions among Muslim scholars in that they pointed out that the capacity and personality of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) alone, already brought mercy to the universe, notwithstanding the message entrusted upon him. A scholar, Abu Bakar bin Tahir as quoted by Imam al-Qadhi Iyad in his work *al-Shifa’* further elaborates: “God has beautified the Prophet (pbuh) with the beauty of mercy, the Prophet himself is a mercy, and all his (Prophet’s) perfection

(shama'il) and attributes are all but mercy to the creations". Hence, mercy existed in the personality of the Prophet, his trait and character. Nowhere is this more evident than in verse 4 of *Surah al-Qalam* when God commends him (pbuh), "And surely you are on an exalted standard of character".

Thirdly, the scholars of *tafsir* or exegetes highlight that the Prophet's mercy also has to do with the "divine message" that he brought with him and entrusted by God to be spread in this world. This is clear in the succeeding verses after verse 107, where verses 108–109 of the same *surah* explains, as it were, what God means in the preceding verse, when God affirms: "Say: **What has come to me by revelation is that your God is One God (Allah): will you therefore bow to His Will (in Islam)?** But if they turn back, say: "I have proclaimed the Message to you all alike and in truth; but I know not whether that you are promised is near or far"."

Indeed, the greatest and ultimate mercy of all to mankind has to be the prophetic or divine message that the Prophet (pbuh) brought with him to enjoin men to embrace Islam and worship one God (Allah). According to Ibn Kathir in his exegesis titled *Tafsir al-'Azim*, the Prophet's uncle, Ibn Abbas, opined on verse 107 that "... for those who accept the Prophet's call to Islam, the mercy for them is they are safe in this world and the Hereafter, while those who reject Islam, the mercy for them is they are safe in this world from the wrath of God unlike the communities of the past who had rejected the Prophets when God sent them immediate and express punishments and destructions while they were still alive in this world". This is in line with God's promise that He will not punish them (the infidels) so long as the Prophet (pbuh) is with them as in verse 33, *Surah al-Anfal*: "But God would not send them punishment while you [Prophet] are in their midst,...".

Hence, the Prophet's ultimate "mercy mission", as it were, was not merely on his personality and good character with others in the realm of ethics (*akhlaq*) alone, but more importantly

rather his “*tawhidic*” (unity) mission to enjoin everyone to worship no other god but Allah, for his mercy is not only restricted and limited to this world alone, but extends until the Hereafter.

Thus, it can be surmised that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is indeed a mercy to the worlds constitutes the following: Firstly, the Prophet’s characters and beautiful personality par excellence in all spheres of life should be emulated and internalised by all Muslims and only then the beauty of Islam and its merciful attributes to all mankind are clearly displayed and outshone vividly. Secondly, it is the duty of every Muslim to share with others about the truth of Islam, to propagate it to whomsoever he/she could within his/her capability so that those yet-to-be-Muslims would be attracted to embrace it and hence, be safe in the Hereafter. “A mercy to the worlds” is not only restricted to the good conduct and interactions with others in the social domain alone, but also greater than that is to enjoin others to the fold of Islam, for that indeed is the ultimate mercy of all. Wallahu’alam.

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