

# The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## ITMAM AL-HUJJAH - COMPLETION OF PROOF

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Itmam al-Hujjah is a **concept** derived by many Muslim theologians from the Quran and in the main, refers to the completion / realisation of proof or a reality by a person or a community. It is usually understood as the complete clarification of the message delivered by a Messenger of God where the recipient of the message has no reason left to deny its veracity. This concept finds support in the Quran.

### 004.165

"Messengers, bearers of glad tidings and warners, that mankind, after (the coming) of the messengers, should have no argument (**Arabic: Hujjatun**) against God: For God is Exalted in Power, Wise"

While such a concept of 'completion of proof' and to some extent the above concept in its basic form 'a realisation of a fundamental reality' can be clearly derived from the Quran, often many Muslims give further elucidations as to their particular understanding of the concept. This may govern what such a concept entails and what often results once such as 'state' is reached by a person or community.

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the variations in thought, other than discuss some verses in light of this concept of what the remit of such a concept may entail.

It is to be appreciated that when deriving concepts from the Quran, they must remain fully compatible with all the verses of the Quran and offer no tension with other basic Quranic concepts.

For example, the rule of complete religious freedom is completely established by the Quran. This is a fundamental Quranic concept which cannot be circumvented or breached. Even the Prophet was strongly advised not to grieve over those that would not accept his calling.

**010:099**

"If it had been the Lord's Will they would all have believed all who are on earth! **Will you then compel mankind against their will to believe!?**"

**006:035**

"And if their aversion is grievous to you, then, if you can, seek a way down into the earth or a ladder to the sky so that you may bring to them a sign (to convince them all)! **If God willed, He could have brought them all together to the guidance. So do not be among the ignorant ones (Arabic: Jahileen)**"

**002:256**

"**Let there be no compulsion in religion:** Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects false deities and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things"

The main remit of the messenger was simply to convey the message

**005:092**

"And obey God and obey the messenger and beware; but if you turn back, then know that **it is only upon Our Messenger is to convey the message clearly**"

Some Muslim theologians draw inferences with their understanding of 'Itmam al-Hujjah' and the necessity to fight the disbelievers if they are in a position to do so. This inference is completely unsupportable by the Quran.

Fighting was only ordained in the case of self defence and on account of those that continuously broke their treaties and aggressed. It was against those that fought the believers on account of their religion.

**002:190-194**

"**Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loves not transgressors**" And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the **Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them.** Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. **But if they cease, God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.** And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God; **but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression**"

**060:008**

"**God does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely God loves the doers of justice**"

The Quranic advice is always to incline to peace.

**008:061**

"And if they incline to **peace, then you also incline to it and trust in God; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing**"

## THE QURANIC SCOPE OF ITMAM AL-HUJJAH

It is clear that the Messengers were required to give clarity of proof.

### 098:001-4

"Those who disbelieved from the People of the Book and the polytheists would not be abandoned until there came to them clear evidence. A messenger from God, reciting purified pages containing correct writings"

However, once realisation is completed and the truth is rejected, it is only then that one is branded 'Kaffir' according to the Quran. It is at this juncture that the heart is also sealed and where retribution is left with God to impose. (See related article below)

### 007:101

"These towns - We relate to you some of their stories, and certainly their messengers came to them with clear arguments, but they would not believe in what they rejected at first; thus does God set a seal over the hearts of the unbelievers"

### 063.003

"That is because they believed, then they rejected faith: So a seal was set on their hearts: therefore they understand not"

## CAN ITMAM AL-HUJJAH ONLY BE COMPLETED BY MESSENGERS OF GOD?

There is nothing in the Quran to suggest that the only mechanism by which Itmam al-Hujjah can be completed is through a prophet or messenger. The ultimate responsibility is solely with God as to best decide He manifests a particular truth. Indeed, as we noted in verses 98:1-4, a messenger is one mechanism by which truth is manifested to a person or community.

### THE EXAMPLE OF PROPHET ABRAHAM <sup>(pbuh)</sup>

Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> required no 'messenger' or 'prophet' for him to come to a fundamental realisation of truth that there was only **One God** and that He was unseen. Rather, it was a consequence of his consistent analysis of the Universe and the celestial bodies within them that forced his conclusion. The following verses exquisitely capture how, with God's guidance, Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> arrived at the 'realisation' of a fundamental truth. It can be argued that this constituted Prophet Abraham's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> 'itmam al-hujjah'

### 006:075-79

"And thus We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are certain. When the night covered him over, He saw a star: He said: "**This is my Lord.**" But when it set, He said: "I love not those that set." When he saw the moon rising, he said: "**This is my Lord.**" But when the moon set, He said: "unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray." When he saw the sun rising, he said: "**This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).**" But when the sun set, he said: "**O my people! I am indeed free from what you associate (with**

Him). "Indeed, I have set my face to the One Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright and I am not of the polytheists"

This is consistent with other verses of the Quran where it is God that manifests the signs.

#### **041:053**

"We will soon show them Our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things?"

Albeit that the above verse deals primarily with its immediate audience, there is nothing to suggest in the light of the Quran, that this does not have a timeless inference.

### **EXEMPLARY PUNISHMENTS**

Historically, exemplary punishments have only come to pass on a people or township when clear warnings had been imparted by a messenger of God. But this was not due to their rejection of the message alone but rather also due to their inequities, transgressions and injustices that they continued to pursue. For example, with regards the people of Aad, Thamud and with Pharaoh, it is clear as the Quran states:

#### **089.011**

"(All) these transgressed beyond bounds in the lands"

Therefore, it is incorrect from a Quranic perspective to insinuate that punishment always resulted as a function of when the clarity of proof delivered by a messenger was rejected and the recipients of the message remained disbelievers.

#### **028:059**

"Nor was thy Lord the one to destroy a population until He had sent to its centre a messenger, rehearsing to them Our Signs; nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practise iniquity (wrongdoers)"

#### **006.131**

"This is because thy Lord destroys not the townships arbitrarily while their people are unconscious (of the wrong they do)"

#### **011.117**

"In truth thy Lord destroyed not the townships tyrannously while their folk were doing right"

Even with regards the Jewish community present at the time of the Prophet Jesus's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> ministry who rejected the Prophet's call were not immediately punished. Moreover, it can be argued that their second punishment, which is arguably a reference to the destruction of the temple in AD70 at the hands of the Romans, was only due to their continued inequities and transgressions. A further threat of repeated punishment was also imparted by God.

### 017.007

"If you do good, you do good for yourselves and if you do evil, (it is) against yourselves. So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter your Temple (Arabic: Masjid) as they had entered it before, and to lay waste (with destruction) all that they conquered with an utter wasting. It may be that your Lord may show Mercy to you; **but if you revert (to your sins), We shall revert (to Our punishments):** And we have made Hell a prison for those who reject"

Furthermore, there is no change in God's ways (Arabic: Sunnata-Ilahi) in as far as how those that continue transgressions after the truth becomes known to them are dealt with.

### 035.043

"On account of their arrogance in the land and their plotting of evil, but the plotting of evil will only encompass its own people. Now are they but waiting for the way the ancients were dealt with (Arabic: Sunnata Awalina)? But no change will you find in God's way (Arabic: Sunnata-Ilahi): and never will you find in God's way (Arabic: Sunnata-Ilahi) any change"

(Please see related article [4] below)

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## FINAL THOUGHTS

The scope of 'Itmam al-Hujjah' has been discussed above. Albeit a prophet or a messenger can be an agent of God to manifest the truth, it is by no means the only mechanism that a truth can be manifested. It is also incorrect to suggest that complete 'realisation of proof' cannot be completed today even without a Prophet of God present.

As an example, from an everyday individual who may not believe in a God to the most notable astronomer who may be an ardent atheist, continued contemplations of the Universe may alter their world view. It may dawn on them that in fact; the only suitable explanation for the existence of the Universe is that it was created by a 'Designer'.

This may cause one to search a path of religious philosophy to understand this 'Designer' and to arrive at a cogent truth.

Albeit hypothetical, this is not impossible.

With regards as to what transpired after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, <sup>(pbuh)</sup> with elaborate histories replete with details and justifications, this is a matter between the ancients and God and the historians that have captured the tales with all their inherent weaknesses. Please see the section dealing with [Islamic secondary sources](#).

As in the advice given with respect to those that have preceded us, we will not be asked about them.

#### 002.134

"Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do"

Furthermore, to infer that 'Itmam al-Hujjah' could have been completed through merely a prophetic letter (from Prophet Muhammad)<sup>(pbuh)</sup> is also not supported by the Quran. All information regarding the existence of such prophetic letters and their contents are dependant on historical sources and questionable tangible evidence of which the authenticity remains debateable.

These are assertions that are derived from [Islamic secondary sources](#) for which the Quran gives no warrant.

Indeed, it is to be noted that a narrative is captured between Prophet Solomon<sup>(pbuh)</sup> and the female ruler at Saba (a.ka. Sheba) in verses 27:22-44 which involves a letter sent by the Prophet. However, there remains no definitive proof that whether what succinct contents have been captured by the Quran (27:30-31) was merely an excerpt or the complete letter.

Given the narrative, it seems it was not the purpose of the verses to give the complete content of the letter or the extent of the arguments posited by Prophet Solomon.<sup>(pbuh)</sup> Furthermore, it seems it required a further manifestation of truth for the female ruler at Saba to attain full realisation that she had wronged herself (Itmam al-Hujjah). It is also here that we note that the Quranic narrative ends once she has reached realisation.

#### 027:044

She was asked to enter the Palace: but when she saw it, she thought it was a lake of water, and she uncovered her legs. He said: "Indeed, it is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass." **She said: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul: I do (now) submit (in Islam), with Solomon, to the Lord of the Worlds."**

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