

Cosmic Testimony The Example of Prophet Ibrahim

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Summary

It is possible to examine the concept of testimony as mentioned in the Qur'an from two perspectives: *Taqwini* / Cosmic testimony and *teşriî* / legal testimony. Cosmic testimony has a very wide scope. Everything within the realm of existence, from angel to fish, are all witnesses to the existence and oneness of the Supreme Creator. Man also testifies to this through his research and studies made with reason and experiments. *Teşriî* testimony, on the other hand, is legal testimony made in relation to individuals and social life. In this article, we will discuss cosmic testimony, as we have briefly mentioned above, within the framework of the example of Prophet Ibrahim as mentioned in the Qur'an, and not the legal testimony which falls under the field of law and jurisprudence.

Keywords: Cosmic testimony, taqwini testimony, teşriî testimony, Prophet Ibrahim

1. Conceptual Framework

The root word, S-H-D, derived from the Arabic language signifies presence, knowledge and declaration. (Ibn Fâris, Mu'cem: III / 221)

In the Qur'an, the concept of testimony, which is also derived from the root word Ş-H-D, means to testify, to be ready, to be present, to perceive an event with both internal and external senses, to be aware of everything. The Qur'an emphasized that on issues such as witnessing the crescent of the month of Ramadan (Al-Baqara, 185), standing witness in legal matters (Al-Baqara, 2/282), knowing the attributes of Prophet in their own holy texts (Al-Baqara, 2/140, 283; Ali-i Imran, 3/70) etc. concealing testimony is a great cruelty: "Who could be more cruel than the one who

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concealed the truth that Allah conveyed to him through the book? (Al-Baqara, 2/140), "Do not hide what you see and know, the heart of the person who hides it will become sinful." (Al-Baqara, 2/283)

In verse 18 of Ali-i Imran, it is mentioned that Allah, the Angels and the ones endowed with knowledge (upright with equity) witness that there is no god other than Allah. Here, the mention of scholars was intended to emphasize that high moral principle is essential for them. It is maturity to put everything in its place with a sense of fairness and justice. Because the damage to this basic moral principle throws people out of reality. However, just and morally upright scholars understand the revelation of Allah on a higher level that they will testify to other people on that issue. (Albayrak, Human-Unseen Relationship in Halis Qur'an: 128)

Every being in the universe testify to the existence and oneness of Allah in its own language and with its own conscience. In fact, the attestation of man occurred before he was sent to the world and while he was still in the realm of spirits.: "وإذ أخذ ربك من بني آدم من ظهورهم ذريتهم وأشهدهم على أنفسهم" "ألمست بربكم قالوا بلى شهدنا" And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify," (A'raf, 7/172).

In addition, by sending prophets and messengers, and by revealing books, Allah has revealed His attributes and signs in clear verses. Allah did not leave anything to Himself and especially helped people to testify on tawhid by their own will. The wisdom of this is that when people return to their Lord, they have no excuse. Allah intends that those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence (al-Anfal, 8/42). From now on, it is entirely up to the person's choice and conscience to belief and testify.

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ân) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" (Fussilat, 41/53)

Allah's revelation of verses / evidences to people can be interpreted in two ways: The spread of the Qur'an throughout the world in a short time and Allah's demonstration to mankind the proofs of His existence and oneness on earth and in the sky. As a matter of fact, many truths that have been revealed in the Qur'an will be better understood by scientific discoveries, and this will

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ultimately lead to the undeniable conclusion that the Qur'an comes from Allah. (Yıldırım, K.Hakîm and his Annotated Meaning: p. 481.)

The term "*Ulu'l-ilm*" which was mentioned in Qur'an, means scholars or people of knowledge, and it is stated that these scholars have witnessed that there is no god but Allah: "Allah bears witness that there is no god except He, and the Angels and the ones endowed with knowledge, upright with equity (bear witness). There is no god except He, The Ever-Mighty, The Ever-Wise." (Âl-i İmrân, 3/18). Although different interpretations have been made about the word "scholars" mentioned in this verse, such as "Najran Christians" and "Jewish scholars" (Hâzin, Lûbâb: I / 233; Nâsabûrî, Ğarâibu'l- Qur'an: II / 129). It suffice to say that the word refers to all scholars who have internalized the truth of *tawhid*, especially prophets. As a matter of fact, Kurtubî emphasizes that this verse is an evidence for the virtue of scholars. He even says, "If there were some people who were superior to the scholars, He would mention them after Himself and the angels" (Qurtubî, al-Jami': IV / 41). On the other hand, Beydâvî notes that the "the ones endowed with knowledge" as mentioned in the verse refers to the virtue and superiority of the scholars of *Usûlü-d Din*. (Beydâvî, Anvâru't- Tenzîl: II / 9). Ibn-i Kesir also stated that the verse emphasized on the character and virtue of the scholars who believe in Allah (Ibn-i Kesir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim: II / 24).

2. The Cosmic Testimony of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)

The reason why we are giving the example of Prophet Ibrahim in relation to this subject is because Prophet Ibrahim and those who were with him have been presented to us, by the Qur'an, as an excellent example. (Al-Mumtahanah, 60/4). In terms of witnessing the existence and oneness of Allah by looking at the outer world, prophet Ibrahim's spiritual experience is also a striking example in terms of our topic. The verses in the Surah al-An'am are as follows:

"And thus We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he may be firm in belief. So, when the night enveloped him, he saw a star. He said, "This is my Lord." But, when it vanished, he said, "I do not like those who vanish." Later, when he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." But, when it vanished, he said, "If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be among those gone astray." Thereafter, when he saw the sun rising, he said, "This is my Lord. This is

greater." Again, when it vanished, he said, "O my people, I am free of whatever you associate with Allah. I have, indeed, turned my face straight towards the One who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of those who associate partners with Allah." (Al-An'am, 6 / 75-79).

3. The Educational Dimension in the Cosmic Testimony of Prophet Ibrahim

According to many commentators, when Prophet Ibrahim said "This is my Lord", he wanted to educate the society he was addressing and sought to draw them towards the line of oneness. Müfessir Zeccâc adds the statement "according to your claim" to the sentence "This is my Lord" and interprets the verse as "This is my Lord according to your claim" (Zeccâc, Abu İshâk, Maâni'l-Qur'an and İ'râbuh: II / 266). Imam Abu Mansur Maturidî states that Prophet Ibrahim proves that the worship of those who worship the setting moon, star and sun is false with the evidence in these verses (Matüridi, Abu Mansur, People of Tevilâtü-Sunnah: IV / 21).

Tabari, also, narrates the following narration from Ibn Abbas: When night fell on Ibrahim, he saw a star. He said, "This is my Lord," and worshiped it until the star disappeared. When the star disappeared, he said, "I do not like those who disappear." When Ibrahim saw that the Moon was born, he said, "This is my Lord," he worshiped the Moon until it disappeared. When the Moon disappeared, he said: If my Lord does not show me the right way, I will definitely be a perverted society. This time, Ibrahim, seeing the sun with all its brilliance, said "This is my Lord" and worshiped the sun until it set. When the sun went down, Ibrahim said, "O my tribe, I am staying away from what you used to associate with" (Tabari, Jâmiu'l- Beyân: IX / 356). According to this, Prophet Ibrahim demonstrated to the moon, star and sun worshippers how absurd and unreasonable their beliefs were by experiencing them personally. This method he applied proved to be very effective. Here, Prophet Ibrahim saved the people from their dogmas by engaging their minds and reason. As a matter of fact, it is based on the same method that he hung the axe on the neck of the biggest idol after breaking the small idols with the same axe, and when his people came and say, "Who did this to our gods, he pointed to the great idol (See Ebiya, 21 / 52-63).

On the other hand, it can be claimed that Prophet Ibrahim worshiping the star, the moon and the sun contradicts the divine statements about him. So the first meaning of the phrase "this is my Lord" would be "I will accept it as Lord according to your claim and understanding." It is known

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that prophets have attributes of virtue. Accordingly, they do not commit shirk before or after prophethood, nor do they commit minor and major sins. They are special people who have a very clean nature and live under the special protection of Allah. Consequently, it is out of the question for Prophet Ibrahim to worship the star and the sun. Because the Qur'an's words about him was that he never entered shirk *إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ* " Verily, Ibrâhîm (Abraham) was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities), or a nation, obedient to Allâh, Hanîf (i.e. to worship none but Allâh), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikûn (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh, and those who joined partners with Allâh). (An-Nahl, 16/120).

Another commentary on Prophet Ibrahim's saying "This is my Lord" is as follows: Before the statement *هذا ربي* "This is my Lord", there is a secret level of denunciation, this rhetoric also means sarcasm. Accordingly, the meaning of the sentence takes this form, "Is this my Lord!". As a matter of fact, Arabs sometimes express rhetoric with the tune in their voice tone without expressly giving away the sarcasm (Nasafî, Medârikü't- Tenzîl: I / 516). In this case, the Qur'an expressed the true meaning and purpose of the Prophet Ibrahim using the Arabic language. That is, when Prophet Ibrahim said *هذا ربي*, he meant to say "This is my Lord!".

In summary, in the verses we have mentioned, Prophet Ibrahim explained, in a very different and effective style, that the moon, star and sun were not gods or deities, as the people of that day believed. At the same time, Prophet Ibrahim testified to the oneness of Allah by saying that those who set and disappear cannot be worthy of love and divinity through the use of his mind and reasoning and thus, he progressed to a higher rank of belief.

The second example we will give regarding the cosmic testimony of Prophet Ibrahim is in the following verses related to resurrection after death: And (remember) when Ibrâhîm (Ibrahim) said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allâh) said: "Do you not believe?" He [Ibrâhîm (Ibrahim)] said: "Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in Faith." He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (Al-Baqarah, 2/260).

Since Prophet Ibrahim is presented to us as an example and a role model in the Qur'an, we want to analyze this submission of him from some aspects:

First: In this verse, Prophet Ibrahim prayed to Allah by saying " My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." and as a reason he expressed that his wishes to be assured in his heart. It is possible to deduce the following from this: As a believer, when we have any question mark in our minds, we should be able to beg our Lord in prayer, just as a child demands something from his mother or father with a feeling of weakness. If we stand firm on our prayer and sincerely favor Him, He will answer and guide us to the truth directly or indirectly.

Second: This request and prayer of Prophet Ibrahim is not that he doubts Allah's power, but that he wants to increase his faith even more, to rise from the rank of *ilma'l-yakîn* to *ayna'l-yakîn* (to attain a higher rank in belief). (Tüsterî, Tefsîru't- Tüsterî: I / 37; Tantâvî, et-Tefsîru'l- Wasât: VI / 35)

Third: In the Qur'an, Prophet Ibrahim was asked to take "four birds"; but the breed of birds is not specified. He was asked to first train the four birds and then slaughter them. After slaughtering, he was ordered to mix and divide into four parts, place each part on hills far from each other, and then to call the birds after a while. Prophet Ibrahim fulfilled all the conditions and when he called on the birds, they all came running to him quickly. It was a miracle that the slaughtered birds came back to life again. However, there is another dimension to the resurrection that makes the mind contemplate: the birds got used to Prophet Ibrahim, and with one call, they came to him. When Bedüzzaman Said Nursi described the mental possibility of resurrection after death, it is as if he was inspired by this experience of Prophet Ibrahim. He says: "... Or if someone one day should gather together a great army, and you are then informed that he will summon its battalions together with a blast of the trumpet after they had dispersed to rest, and the battalions will form up in disciplined shape, would you respond by saying, "I don't believe it?" Were you to say any of these things your behaviour would truly be madness."(Nursi, Said (1993), The Words: p. 77). In this simile of Nursi, "the army whose members were dispersed for rest" corresponds to the birds that Prophet Ibrahim slaughtered after getting used to him, then put them on individual hills and finally summoned them to him.

Conclusion

As a result, the necessary elements for testimony or attestation are; it consists of information, presence and confession. testimony in the cosmic sense is to gain philosophical depth through reflection, proper regard and scientific research, to deepen in faith and understanding of Allah and to propagate and disseminate this to other people. From another perspective; It is the correct reading of the true message of every being such as the sun and moon. This is exactly the cosmic testimony of Prophet Ibrahim.

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