

Prophetic mission in 21st century

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Introduction

The Quran is the authentic source to know the Creation Plan of God. According to the Quran, in this world, creation and prophethood were created at the same time. Fifteen billion years ago God created the universe with matter. After the coming of the material world, the planet earth was made inhabitable for man. Adam, according to the Quran, was the first man as well as the first prophet. Since, God settled man in this world for test, it was necessary to tell him what he was to be tested on. Thus, the prophets were sent to make man aware of this fact. According to the Quran

We sent them [messengers] with clear signs and scriptures (16:44)

All the prophets were given two things: the divine book or divine guidance and signs from God (bayyinat or dalail). The signs or bayyinat were given to the prophets in accordance with their age and from this point of view, there are two broad divisions of human history: the *pre-scientific age* and the *post-scientific age*.

Pre-scientific age – age of traditional arguments

In the *pre-scientific age*, the various discoveries in nature that we know of today were not made. At the time, only traditional arguments were possible. Thus, in these ages, prophetic mission was based on traditional argument. Along with these arguments they used for their mission, the prophets were given miracles. On the one hand, the prophets told people the creation plan according to the idiom of that age, and on the other hand, to establish their authenticity they were given miracles by God.

For example, Prophet Moses came to Egypt. Pharaoh was the title used by the rulers of Egypt at the time. The method of the prophets was to address the ruler or the head of the society. These people have been called *mala-e-qaum* (7:109) in the Quran. It was not the way of the prophets to begin from ordinary people (*awaam*) and then go to the eminent people (*khawaas*). They begin from the *khawaas* and then reach the *awaam*. Working at the grassroot level was not the way of the prophets; they strived to propagate their message amidst the intellectual people. Since the king held sway in the previous ages, the prophets started their mission by addressing them. Thus, God told Moses in the very beginning:

Go to Pharaoh (20:24)

Moses gave the message of monotheism to the Pharaoh and told him that the correct way to lead life for man is to surrender before God and follow the principles laid down by God. When the Pharaoh asked for proof of Moses' prophethood, Moses threw down his staff, which turned into a large serpent. This was the miracle given to Moses. But Pharaoh didn't believe Moses and he decided in consultation with his counsels that biggest state magicians be called to compete with Moses. A day was agreed upon, on which all the people of his kingdom gathered, and great magicians came to display their tricks. The magicians asked Moses whether he would throw his staff first or they should show their magic. Moses asked them to take the first attempt. As they cast their sticks and ropes on the ground, they appeared as serpents to the people present. This was a case of magic and the Quran has this to say about their magic:

When they made their cast, they bewitched the eyes of people. (7:116)

Thus this was an illusion of the eye and was not real. Next, Moses threw his staff and it turned into a big serpent. The Quran says,

And it immediately swallowed up their false devices. (7:117)

People generally believe that the serpent of Moses ate the smaller serpents wrought by the other magicians. But this is not correct. Moses' serpent did not "eat" the other serpents. In reality, when Moses threw his staff, the serpents of other magicians came back to their original form of being a rope or a stick whereas the serpent of Moses did not change its form. Thus, it became evident that what the magicians had done was only trickery and an illusion. On the contrary, what Moses had done was a *real* miracle. This is an example of the kind of miracles shown by the prophets in the traditional age.

However, God had ordained a change in the ages that were to come; an age where dayee get a replacement for miracles in the form of scientific arguments and reasoning. In other word, what was attained through miracles in the traditional age was now to be attained through scientific reasoning. This has been predicted in the Quran as follows:

We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. (41:53)

The verb (*sanuu-ree-him*: we will show them) used in this verse is the future tense. The verse means that right now God is showing miracles through Prophets but in future, such discoveries will be made in nature as will become a source of manifestation of the truth (*tabin-e-haq*).

Due to this change of age, God brought prophethood to an end. Miracles were no longer required because miracles are only given to and can be shown by a prophet.

But, dawah work must continue despite coming to an end of prophethood. This is because today the arguments and reasoning for making the truth plain can be used by any dayee, a prophet is not required for this purpose. Earlier, a prophet was necessary to show miracles to prove the veracity of his message as being from God. But today, the same message can be presented to people without the need of any miracles, as the modern discoveries and methods of reasoning suffice to establish their veracity.

Examples of scientific discoveries

I would like to give some examples which show how scientific discoveries have become the substitute for miracles. First, consider the concept of *monotheism*. The traditional age was an age of polytheism, where people believed that there were many gods. When the prophets were sent to people in this age, they had to show miracles to prove that his message of monotheism was in fact true. But today the veracity of the monotheistic concept has been established through scientific discoveries.

Polytheism in the previous ages arose when people started worshipping the diverse phenomena they observed in nature. The mountains, trees, planets, stars etc., were all believed to be governed by a separate god, each of whom, therefore, had to be worshipped. This belief of diversity in nature has now been discarded by science, which has shown that all matter in the universe, in its final analysis, to be composed of atoms. Thus, at the atomic level, the various components in nature show unity. So, the concept of diversity was discarded.

Since Newton's time, scientists were struggling to unify the four different forces that were then known to govern the natural phenomena. Now these four forces have been reduced to *one* force. The theory that propounds that the universe is controlled by one force is called the *single string theory*. This theory has been put forward by the British scientist, Stephen Hawking.

Therefore, the concept of oneness got established. There is oneness, both in terms of the matter that forms the various components of the universe and also in terms of the law that is governing the universe. The logic on which polytheistic beliefs were standing has been disproved.

Coming of the Prophets

A prominent question has been why at all did the prophets come? Man due to his limitations cannot acquire absolute knowledge (ilm-e-kulli). The Quran points towards this reality:

You have been granted but little knowledge. (17:85)

Therefore, God sent prophets so that man can gain knowledge of things which he cannot obtain himself. The ideology required to lead life needed complete, absolute knowledge and no one knew in the traditional age that this couldn't be achieved.

In that age it was only a claim but now this has been acknowledged by scientists. Many books have been written on the subject. One such book is JWN Sullivan's *Limitations of Science* (1933). Today scientists, after lengthy research, accept that *science gives us but a partial knowledge of reality*. Thus, the necessity of a prophet has been proved. Man needs an ideology to live in this world. An ideology of life should explain the entire universe and this could have not been done by science as it gives us only partial knowledge. Philosophy tried for 5,000 years to reach absolute, total knowledge, however it failed. It is said of a philosopher that he was a *philosopher of no philosophy*. This observation is true for all philosophers. Hence, science established that man cannot reach complete knowledge on his own. But man needs an ideology to lead his life. He is therefore required to trust the prophet, take guidance and help from him as he has come with God's book. This is such a great contribution of science that today the need of the prophet is understood academically, and no miracle is required to prove this.

Paradise

The last example is of the message of the prophet, that is, dawat-e-tauheed. The prophet told people about the creation plan of God. That is, the world is a testing period and paradise cannot be built here. But, man wasn't ready to accept this since he is a desire-seeking animal. He wants to build his ideal paradise here in this world itself. Throughout history people have been in search of paradise, all their struggle and actions were aimed at building a beautiful, ideal world. The prophet, however, told people that this was not possible but man refused to listen. He thought he will one day build paradise for himself. Academically it was not established why paradise cannot be built in this world. Today science has provided confirmation of what the prophets have been telling us.

Earlier it was told to people who wanted to make paradise in this world that man's life lasts hundred years and this is not enough for the making of paradise. The atheists countered this argument of searching for paradise saying that seeking paradise may not necessarily happen in the lifetime of a single person. This search is a continuous process and if the present generation couldn't make it, the generations to come would surely be able to achieve this goal. But science disproved this argument. In 1970, Alvin Toffler had said in his book, *Future Shock*, the world in the twentieth century had reached the *industrial* age after a long struggle and now the world would step into a *super-industrial* age. However, latest scientific findings have made it clear that this goal is not achievable. This is because, as the twenty-first century dawned, man was face to face with a new problem, that of pollution. The resources on planet earth were limited. Now, all the resources of the planet earth have been exhausted and we are nearing the end of this world. Man used the resources of nature extravagantly after industrial age and now these resources have been destroyed, a limit has been reached.

Seeing the current situation, the world will not remain inhabitable for our future generations. Now scientists want to make a space colony. But this is romantic thinking. Even if we make space colony, we wouldn't be able to live there, as we need water, food, etc., and all these are not present anywhere other than on earth. All scientists are unanimously saying that towards the middle of the twenty-first century the world will come to an end and the dream that paradise could be built by the generations is shattered. These studies proved scientifically the veracity of the message propagated by the prophets. Now, man has no choice but to accept that the world is a testing ground (*Darul imtihan*) and not paradise (*Darul jaza*).

Crucial message of the prophets

God has given man freedom and the crucial point is that if he misuses this freedom he'll go to hell and if he uses it properly he'll go to paradise. This has become a scientifically established reality; there is no need of miracles to explain this. The prediction made in the above verse of the Quran, has come true today. Today Muslims are uselessly engaged in fighting. God has provided them the opportunity to convey to people the message of Tauheed (monotheism) with proven studies to corroborate it. Now is the time to avail these opportunities and to not engage in violence. Recently, an Arab at a top post was killed. He knew Arabic, English, and was very intelligent. But because he was involved in anti-American militant activities he was killed. This man should have worked for dawah, but today Muslims have become dawah blind.

Another thing that has emerged in the present age is freedom of thought. Earlier, religion was that of the king, no religion other than the state religion was permitted, and if anyone did adopt a religion other than the state religion, it was regarded as treason and the person was subsequently killed. Loyalty to the state was considered in adhering to the religion of the king. Today, this age changed the very mindset and *thought-culture* was separated from *political power*. One is free to do whatever one wishes; the only restriction is that one shouldn't engage in violence. Today Muslim's violence is nothing but inviting calamity on themselves. They should avail dawah opportunities and not fight unnecessarily.

CPS Mission

Our mission is strictly a non-political mission and we don't desire anything from the government, we don't have to participate in political activities or have any share in activities of the government. Our sole aim is to utilize modern means of communications to spread the message of God worldwide. Violence is against Islam, rather it is ignorance: because, if opportunities for doing dawah are open, then why should there be violence? The goal of our mission is as expressed in a verse in the Quran:

Call to the way of your Lord (16:125)

This is our aim and not to establish shariat. There is no such verse in the Quran that asks Muslims to establish an Islamic state or enforce shariat. Dawah work is to tell man of God's creation plan. Man has been given freedom. If he uses freedom according with God's laws, he'll be rewarded with paradise. We use both print and electronic media to spread this message. The English translation of the Quran printed by CPS has clarity, is in the modern idiom and meets high standards of quality. Now the only aim is to spread the message of the Quran all over the world.

According to a Hadith

An age will come when the word of God will enter every home, big or small (Musnad Ahmed)

The age that has been predicted by the Hadith has already come. Had print media and globalization not come into existence, this task would have not been possible. It is obligatory now to spread this Quran everywhere. Today all intelligent people converse in English, that's why English has become an international language. Thus, *idkhal-e-kalimah* (taking the word of God in every home) has become possible.

Conclusion

God has already paved way for dawah work. Ninety-nine percent of the work has been completed in terms of bringing about an age where there is freedom of thought, religious freedom, communication, globalization, journeying has become simple. All the demands have been fulfilled by God. Now we have to do only remaining *one percent* of the task: use these opportunities opened by God to spread the Quran all over. The literature produced here is supportive literature for this task, as in this the Quranic message has been explained with greater detail and arguments.

The greatest task of dawah today is this: all doors are open, no door is closed. Earlier it was not possible with such ease to disseminate the message of God. Moreover, people have developed curiosity to know about the message of Islam. A person was given the Quran, he held it close to his chest and readily accepted it. It seemed as if he was waiting that someone may give him a Quran to read. There is curiosity in the world about the Quran. We all are required to think about this mission. Those who are present here have to tell others who are not present. You do not have to leave your job or business for this mission; it only requires you to keep dawah literature wherever you go give it to those whom you meet. This has to be incorporated in our lives and told to others to incorporate in their lives. The aim of dawah work is told in the Quran:

So that mankind would have no excuse before God, after the coming of the messengers (4:165)

On the Day of Judgement, people should not have the opportunity to say that they didn't know the Creation Plan of God, and thus they should not be held accountable for what they did. This is the aim of dawah work – *to make men aware about the Creation Plan*. If a person dies in ignorance of the Creation Plan of God, then the responsibility of his ignorance falls on the followers of the Prophet, that is, *ummat-e-muhammadi*. They will be asked why they didn't convey the message when they knew it. It is not simply a worldly issue, but it is about being held accountable by God in the Hereafter.

There is double reward ordained for followers of the Prophet (*ummat-e-muslimah*). This is not for nothing. One unit of reward is because they followed the religion (*amil* or followers) and second, because they spread it (*dayee* or addressor). That is, they will get reward for being the doer (*amil*) of what was conveyed to them by the Prophet and the other reward for being dayee, conveying the message to mankind.

Double *sawab* (reward) is not due to any kind of superiority or fazilat, but for their actions of amil and dayee. If they don't perform these, they'll get nothing. If Muslims didn't do dawah, then their being followers of the Prophet would become doubtful. The Quran said referring to the Prophet:

O Messenger, deliver whatever has been sent down to you by your Lord.

If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His message. (5:67)

We cannot afford to be not regarded as *ummat-e-muhammadi* in the Hereafter. This is a very serious matter. Thus, we need to reset our priorities and think again, reassess, re-plan our lives. There will be severe retribution in this matter. He who is listening should tell those who are not present here. When the Prophet had given the Last Sermon, he said:

Those who are present should convey the message to those who are not present (Al Bukhari)

Not availing the opportunity is also a crime: if God has opened up opportunities, He also expects from us that we utilize these and do the task of global dawah. If we do not avail these then we didn't do that which was expected by God, thus we'll have to face God's wrath. This is a very serious matter because death can strike us at any time. After the Prophet received his first revelation in the Cave Thaur, he returned to his house, where his wife Khadijah had prepared his bedding for him to rest. Seeing it, the Prophet said:

There is no taking rest now, O Khadijah! (Musnad Ahmed)

What the Prophet said after being tasked with such a huge responsibility, is also true for all of us. A senior Muslim once remarked that in this world a Muslim had only responsibilities and duties and no rights. Rights will be given in the Hereafter, if we fulfil our duty in the present world, that is, live a need-based life and work according to God's will. The responsibility is to follow God's religion and to spread it. We must engage in *muhasabah*, that is introspection and thinking. Thinking has paramount importance in Islam as it opens new avenues and makes develops our understanding. The mission of the prophets started from Adam, continued until the time of Prophet Muhammad, and now the responsibility devolves upon the followers of the Prophet. In the age of the printing press, it has become even simpler, by just spreading the copies of the Quran. Earlier, the Sahaba did this through recitation; they used to memorise the Quran. Now with the printing press, one copy can be prepared and corrected and millions such can be produced and spread to the world. The opportunities have to be availed because we cannot afford to waste any opportunity. We have to save ourselves from the dejection in the Hereafter and from becoming a case of missed opportunities.

Question-Answers

Q1: What is the truth of “nazarbandi”?

A: It is no science and neither do I have a personal experience of it. But some believe it to be a trick. It may be something similar to mesmerisation.

Q2: What is the difference between “need” and greed”? And how should man define his line of contentment?

A: A man can understand his “bare necessity” himself. A person who has a mission cannot afford to waste his time in comfort and luxury and as such he becomes contented with what he has. For example, there are some chairs in my room which I do not like. There are there since 1983 but I have never even made a mention of my dislike. The list of a person’s like-dislike can be endless but being contented on life’s bare necessities is the culture of a man of mission. The question therefore is whether you want to be a man of mission or want to lead the life of an animal. This decision will decide your *need* list. If you decide to be a man of mission, you would yourself know what is required and what is not.

Q3: How did sectarian division in Muslims emerge?

A: Sects do not exist in Muslims alone, they exist everywhere be it the Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Jainism. Sectarianism is a matter of nature but the real lacking in Muslims is tolerance. The fatwa activism practised amongst Muslims has associated the allegiance to sects with hell and paradise. The focus therefore should not be on eliminating sects but on inculcating the spirit of tolerance and patience. A practical example of this is democracy which is a system of governance that allows different political parties (sects) to thrive and conduct themselves peacefully and express their differences, argumentatively.

Q4: Why did God create the Universe, give freedom, sent Prophets to guide and then pass on the responsibility of dawah work to those who get the message? I did not want to be born and go to paradise. Why did God cast man into such a big problem?

A: This is not a matter of “problem” but a matter of lack of study. A companion said, “*Before you question, study!*” It must be borne in mind that no one can give a 100 percent answer to a question. Only 50 percent of the answer can be sought from another person; the remaining 50 percent can be understood through deep self-study only.

Q5: What steps are being taken to foster unity through your mission?

A: People usually strive to eliminate differences. I met a Hindu who said that he got the same feeling upon reading the Quran and Geeta. To my mind, this is only a romantic idea, one which cannot bring about unity. A thinker once remarked, “*Nature abhors uniformity.*” Therefore, the Quranic formula for unity is, “*For you, your religion, for me, mine.*” This gives man the principle of “*Follow one and respect all.*” Swami Vivekananda also said, “*Follow one and hate none*” Eliminating differences cannot be the solution; instead differences should be made the point of discussion. Denying the existence of differences is unnatural. Our formula is to *follow one and respect all* and to *peacefully discuss differences* if any. Exchanging with other men has greatly boosted my intellectual development. Tolerance alone is therefore the base of unity for me.

Q6: How should we develop “art of thinking”?

A: In order to develop the “Art of thinking”, man should follow a two-point formula: *undertake study* and *introspection*. Study includes - observation, self study and discussion. Introspection requires mastication of the thoughts which have been absorbed in the human mind. This is a life-long process.

Q7: Democracy opens the door to intellectual freedom but other ideologies remain conflicting. Also, a large part of the world is still without communication, how should we do dawah work there?

A: Conflict to my mind is “intellectual challenge”. When someone differs with me, it opens my mind to newer possibilities. Conflict therefore is a positive phenomenon.

In order to accomplish dawah mission, a dayee must undertake whatever he is capable of. Everything else can be cast in future’s bucket.

Q8: After the death of a person, his deed register closes. How is reward (isa-le-sawaab) then made to reach the deceased?

A: Such concepts are prevalent only the in subcontinent; they are not practised elsewhere. Reward or punishment will be by virtue of deeds performed during the pre-death period.

Sadaqa-e-jariye is an act which is done with the intention that when the doer dies even then mankind continues to benefit from it. In earlier times, people used to dig well, construct bridges. Today, you can open a good school in which children will study. If you donate your eyes, someone will get vision after you die. *Sadaqa-e-jariya* becomes so only when your intent is integrated with the act.

There is only Hajje-badal. It means that a person arranged for resources but before he undertook the journey, he died. If before his death, such a person willed that using his resources, someone else may perform the hajj, then it is true *hajj-e-badal*.

Q9: I have been unclear for many years about non Muslims who believe in One God, do righteous deeds but are sceptical of Prophets. What would be the fate of such people?

A: Why do you want to sit on the seat of God? What will happen in the hereafter is a concern of God. You only need to spread the message of God. You don’t know what God decides. It is a gross misunderstanding that people think that those born in Muslim household are real Muslims. The only decision will be in the hereafter so think about yourself. The formula is: *introspection about self and with others*. People normally put their minds in unnecessary questions and forget their duty. This is not a healthy sign.

Q10: Will the life be over in this century?

A: It is not about comment. According to science, the resources in this world have exhausted and sea water has got polluted to the extent of 95%, animals have perished and science does not have a remedy to undo the damage done.

Q11: We know a lot but practice little. This can be a hindrance to dawah work. So, what should I do, first practice and then preach?

A: this is an entirely wrong notion that any will precede any other. The day you understand, you should start doing dawah work. Ibn Kathir said, if we wait for this to happen, no dawah work will ever happen. Islam only has dawah activism. You only have to discharge your own responsibility.

Q12: During dawah interactions, we often come across madus who harbour wrong opinion about dayee and their organisations. If it is entirely wrong, should it be corrected or left as it is for fear of confrontation?

A: In such cases, there is no use of confronting. Such persons should be asked to study. This is what I do. Studying more will open the realities upon them.