

A Brief History Of Dawah

Calling People to God in the Modern Age



MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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FOREWORD

Muslims are responsible for calling people to God. If they rise to this task, they will be held deserving of the greatest share in God's blessings.

Muslims are the *Ummah* of the final prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). This position of the Muslims determines their responsibility as the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad in the present world. They have the responsibility to call people to God, for which the prophets used to come in the past. The coming of the prophets has undoubtedly stopped but the mission of the prophets continues. After the finality of prophethood through Prophet Muhammad (570-623 AD), Muslims have been assigned the task of prophethood. No other work less than this mission of the Prophet will suffice to qualify them for being the *Ummah* of the Final Prophet.

What is the mission of the Prophet? It is to convey God's message to man, that there is no god but one God. It is to tell them that this world is not the 'be all' and the 'end all' of their life. After death, they will

be reborn in the Hereafter. It is to tell them that they are not free to do whatever they want in the present world; they are under the command of God. They have to lead a disciplined life despite having freedom of choice. The prophetic mission is to communicate the divine knowledge that is preserved in the Quran and the Prophet's teachings to everyone so that in the Hereafter, no one might say he had no knowledge of this or that he was unaware. (Quran, 4:165) This is the real responsibility of the Muslims as the followers of Prophet Muhammad.

While calling people to God is the only religious duty for Muslims, this is also the most important duty to which the Muslims of the present times are totally oblivious. The greatest reason for this is that the minds of the present Muslims are obsessed with their community problems. They think that their very existence as a nation is in danger. This thinking so dominates their psyche that they are not even aware of their dawah responsibilities. Some Muslims have gone to the extent of regarding their community activities as Islamic dawah. This thinking is un-Islamic and un-Quranic.

In fact, according to the Quran, the problem, or the issue of the security of the Muslims, is also linked

with dawah work. God has guaranteed the security of Muslims as a community based on their performance of dawah work. (5:67) If Muslims fail to perform this task, then their national security is not guaranteed. The history of the Muslims of the past is proof of the former. And the history of the present Muslims is proof of the latter.

The entire history of Islam proves that the Islamic dawah is the greatest power of Islam. But for this power to materialize, all the psychological obstacles must be removed between Muslims and their addressees. The Muslims of the first phase were aware of this reality. That is why they adopted the way of tolerance and adjustment in all the countries they went to. They knew any conflict, controversy, or religious coercion would only make their addressees obdurate. Due to this feeling, they would refuse to accept something they would otherwise have readily accepted.

The truth is that Islam has the power to conquer the hearts and minds of people within itself. Islam is exactly in accordance with human nature. If it is brought to man in its original form, it directly descends on his heart and mind. It compels man to acknowledge its veracity. Islam has the inherent power to appeal to hearts and minds even today, provided the present

Muslims end all national or communal controversies which they are indulging in with their non-Muslim neighbours in every country.

The truth is that there is only one religious duty for Muslims: calling people to God. Both their worldly success and salvation in the Hereafter depend upon the performance of this task. This is the work which has been destined for them by God. If they rise to this task, they will be held, deserving of having the greatest share in God's blessings. If they do not rise to this task, there is great fear and apprehension that they will be subject to God's wrath and chastisement. All the present activities in the name of Islam will not save them from God's wrath.

Wahiduddin Khan

March 20, 2020

New Delhi

THE HISTORY OF DAWAH

After the finality of prophethood, Muslims have been assigned the task of prophethood. For this, they have been guaranteed security from God.

Muslims are the *Ummah* of the final prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). This position of the Muslims determines their responsibility as the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad in the present world. Their responsibility is to call people to God, for which the prophets used to come in the past. The coming of the prophets has undoubtedly stopped, but the mission of the prophets, without doubt, continues. The truth is that after the finality of prophethood, the Muslims have been assigned the task of prophethood. Muslims are responsible for calling people to God. No other work less than this dawah mission of the prophets will suffice to qualify them for being the *Ummah* of the final prophet.

THE MISSION OF THE PROPHET

It is the responsibility of Muslims to convey to people the divine knowledge preserved in the form of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet.

What is the mission of the Prophet? The prophet's mission is to convey God's message to his servants, to convey to them the message of monotheism, that there is no god but one God. Those who regard worldly matters as the 'be all' and the 'end all' must be told they will be reborn in the Hereafter. Everyone must be told that he is not free to do whatever he wants in the present world; he is under the command of God. He must lead a disciplined life despite having freedom of choice. The divine knowledge preserved in the Quran and the Prophet's traditions must be communicated to everyone so that in the Hereafter, no one might say he was unaware. (Quran, 4:165)

This is the real responsibility of the Muslims as the followers of Prophet Muhammad. But this is the most important duty to which the Muslims of the present

times are totally oblivious. The greatest reason for this is that the minds of the present Muslims are obsessed with their community problems. That is why they have become oblivious to communicating the divine message to others.

During a visit to an Arab country, I met a highly educated Muslim. During our conversation, I told him that the main duty of Muslims is to convey the message of Islam to non-Muslims. He immediately retorted that today's Muslims are beset with their own set of problems; then, how can they perform dawah work among other nations?

This answer tells us of the psychology because of which the Muslims of the present times have abandoned dawah work. They are obsessed with their own problems. They think that their very existence as a nation is in danger. That is why they have paid full attention to the front of the defense. This thinking so dominates their psyche that they are not even aware of their dawah responsibilities. On the other hand, some Muslims have come to regard their community activities as Islamic dawah.

This thinking is totally un-Islamic and un-Quranic. According to the Quran, the problem, or the issue of the security of the Muslims, is also linked with dawah

work. God has guaranteed the security of Muslims as a community based on their performance of dawah work. (Quran, 5:67) If they fail to perform this task, then their national security is not guaranteed. The history of the Muslims of the past is proof of the former. And the history of the present Muslims is proof of the latter.

SECURITY THROUGH DAWAH WORK

The divine promise of the security of Muslims on the performance of dawah work is undoubtedly certain. God's succour is assured for dayees.

In the Quran, God gives His promise of security to Muslims on the performance of dawah work in these words:

“O Messenger, deliver whatever your Lord has sent down to you. If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His message, and God will protect you from the people. For God does not guide those who deny the truth.” (5:67)

Many traditions explain the background of this verse. For instance, Abdullah ibn Abbas says that the Prophet of Islam observed, “When God sent me His message, I felt some impediment within me, and I thought people would deny me”. At that time, God revealed this verse. Another tradition tells us that in the early Makkan period, the Companions of the Prophet would guard him. And when this verse was revealed, the Prophet told his Companions to go back to their

homes “as God has taken me in His security.” (Safwah-at-Tafasir, Vol. 1, p. 328)

This clearly shows that the secret of security from the people lies in their performance of dawah work. This promise was directly given concerning the Prophet and indirectly given concerning the *Ummah* of the Prophet.

This is a fundamental reality in the light of which we must see all matters. Whenever the Muslims faced the problem of security from other nations, the reason was that they had abandoned the duty of calling people to God. And when Muslims rise for the call to God, they must be convinced that God will provide a guarantee from all dangers and problems. So, they do not have to do anything on this front. They must do dawah work, and all other problems will be solved independently.

Dawah work means communicating God’s message to non-Muslims. The word ‘dawah’ has been used in the Quran to communicate God’s message to mankind.

The Quran mentions a believer who was a contemporary of Prophet Moses. He had embraced the faith of Moses, but he had not made it public. But a time came when the Pharaoh declared that he wanted to kill Moses. At that time, that Believer could no longer contain himself. He made a whole speech before the Pharaoh and his courtiers in support of Moses.

This was a very delicate matter, for, when the Pharaoh had openly declared his enmity towards Moses, it was certain that he would also deal harshly with the supporter of Moses. But fearlessly, the Believer declared the truth, preferring the truth over everything else.

The Quran, after mentioning this speech of the Believer, has this to say:

‘Thus, God delivered him from the evils they plotted, and a dreadful scourge encompassed the companions of Pharaoh themselves.’
(40:45)

This clearly shows that the call of truth saved the believer from the evil of Pharaoh. The believer possessed only the realization of the truth and dawah work to his credit, whereas the Pharaoh, in comparison, had all kinds of material power. But when the believer stood as a dayee, God’s succour came to defend him. Despite all his power, the Pharaoh could not succeed in carrying out his evil designs.

The divine promise of the security of Muslims in the performance of dawah work is undoubtedly certain. But God will fulfill this promise only with the performance of dawah work. If Muslims are engaged in anything else and call it dawah work, they should never expect God to fulfill His promise in their favour.

THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

Calling people to the divine religion is similar to knocking at the door of every human heart and mind.

Human history astonishingly testifies to the Quranic statement that if Muslims engaged themselves in dawah work, God would defend them from their opponents (5:67). Right from the early phase of Islam, the Muslims have repeatedly faced insecurity engendered by their opponents, and on each occasion, this problem has been solved by conveying the divine message. There are different forms of security resulting from such action. Whenever the Muslims have conveyed the divine message fully and despite that, the addressees have adopted the attitude of denial and insolence, this directly becomes God's concern. God sends special divine succour, enabling believers to prevail over their enemies. The instances of prophets Hud and Lot are examples.

God's religion is the voice of every man's nature itself. Calling people to the divine religion is like knocking at the door of every human heart. In such cases, even if there is little seriousness in man, his heart submits to the call of his nature. If he does not accept it fully, some soft corner

is produced in his heart for the truth. He starts feeling that he should help those who call people to the divine religion, at least at the human and moral level. The story of Prophet Joseph provides an example of this nature.

The third form of divine help, which can be called the final form, is that the addressee should be receptive to the divine message. Such divine help has also been given repeatedly throughout history, and as a result, all kinds of problems have been resolved on their own. It was this third form of help that was given in the case of Prophet Muhammad. This was divine help in the fullest sense.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) acknowledged the conquering power of the Islamic message:

“Much has been said of Mahomet’s (Muhammad) propagating his religion by the sword. The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? At its starting, every new opinion is precisely in a minority of one. In one man’s head alone, there it dwells as yet. One man of the whole world believes it; there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and tries to propagate with that will do little for him.”
(*Muhammad: The Hero As Prophet*, p. 80)

Islamic history testifies to the efficacy of the divine message.

HUMAN STRATEGY, DIVINE STRATEGY

God sends His Messengers to guide the people toward His message.

The Prophet of Islam lived in Makkah for about thirteen years. During his last days in Makkah, the Quraysh decided to eliminate the Prophet of Islam. To this end, their leaders produced several suggestions. This has been mentioned in the Quran:

“Remember how those who bent on denying the truth, plotted against you to imprison you or kill you or expel you: they schemed—, but God also schemed. God is the best of schemers.” (8:30)

The enemies of the Prophet of Islam planned to remove him from the scene either by imprisonment, or execution, or expulsion. This verse of the Quran tells us that God set at naught this evil plan through a far superior strategy. What was this divine plan? History shows that this plan was executed exactly

at the same time the Makkans were planning to end the Prophet's life: two Makkan Muslims were sent to Madinah to propagate Islam there, and through their efforts, people started accepting Islam on a large scale. Very soon, the Muslims increased so much in number that they assumed the dominating position in Madinah. The situation was favourable for the Prophet of Islam to leave Makkah for Madinah secretly.

This verse clearly explains the human strategy and divine strategy. This shows that human strategy resorts to such things as imprisonment, killing, and expulsion, whereas the divine strategy works at the level of conquering hearts and minds. The last extent of human thinking is to oppose the divine mission or expel or kill the missionary, but God's way is different. God sends his servants as the callers to His religion in different areas. He opens people's hearts to His message. In this way, all those people become receptive to the call of truth. The power of true religion becomes so strong that no strategy by the enemy can succeed.

THE POWER OF IDEOLOGY

The power of the ideology presented by Prophet Muhammad attracted sincere individuals.

Abu Talib was the Prophet's uncle. Abdullah ibn Abbas narrates that when Abu Talib was on his deathbed, the leaders of the Quraysh went to him and said:

“You know your rank with us, and now that you are at the point of death, we are deeply concerned about your account. You know the trouble that exists between us and your nephew. So call him and let us agree that he will leave us alone, and we will leave him alone; let him have his religion, and we will have ours.” When the Prophet Muhammad came to Abu Talib, he said: “Nephew, these leaders have come about you. Tell us what you want from them.” The Prophet Muhammad, addressing the leaders, said: “You may give me one word by which you can rule the Arabs, and the Persians will surrender to

you.” The leaders asked what that word was. The Prophet said: “Say, there is no god but Allah, and forsake what you worship besides Him.” (Sirat Ibn Kathir, Vol. 2, p. 124)

When the Prophet rose with the call of truth in Makkah, he was precisely in a minority of one. But very soon, the intelligent and the right-minded were attracted by the power of his ideology. Initially, he faced stiff opposition, but it is a fact that to serious and sincere individuals, this message had a magnetic appeal that they could not resist.

During the early phase of Makkah, an individual named Tufail ibn Amr Addausi came to Makkah to visit the Kabah. He was a respectable member of his tribe. When he came to Makkah, some of the Quraysh members came to him and told him that this fellow, referring to Prophet Muhammad, was a sorcerer. So, he should not speak to or listen to a word from him. When Tufail ibn Amr learned that the Prophet was inside the Kabah, he stuffed cotton in his ear, fearing that he might overhear his words. After some time, he thought he was intelligent, knowing well the difference between good and evil. So, what was there to prevent him from listening to what this man was saying? He would accept it if it were good; if it were bad, he would reject it. Then he took the cotton out

of his ears, and he met the Prophet and told him what his people had said and that they had so scared him that he had stuffed cotton in his ears, lest he should hear him. “So explain the matter to me,” he said. The Prophet explained Islam to him and recited a part of the Quran. He said: “By God, I had never heard anything finer nor more just.” Then he accepted Islam. (*Dala'il an-Nubuwwah* by Abu Nu'aym, Vol. 1, p. 238)

THE MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

The address of Jafar ibn abi Talib so touched the heart of King Negus that the King as well as the courtiers were moved to tears.

When the Prophet of Islam started his mission in Makkah, polytheism prevailed there. Therefore, the Makkans opposed his call. Those who accepted Islam were persecuted in various ways. In the fifth year of his prophethood, the Prophet asked his Companions to leave Makkah for Abyssinia. The Companions emigrated on two occasions. In all, they numbered one hundred and twenty.

When the Makkans learned that the Companions of the Prophet had left for Abyssinia and were living there comfortably, they sent two of their men, Amr ibn al Aas and Abdullah ibn abi Rabia, to Negus, the King of Abyssinia. They offered presents to the king and his courtiers and said that some foolish persons from their people had taken refuge in his country. They had forsaken their religion and these emissaries requested the king and his courtiers to surrender them. They urged the king to give them up and return them to their own people.

It is a long story. To put it briefly, the courtiers of King Negus came under the influence of the Makkian delegation, and they recommended to the king that he give them up and return them to Makkah. It was a very delicate situation. It would have been like throwing them to the wolves. But at this delicate moment what came to the rescue of the Muslims was their missionary zeal, which was what they really possessed.

The king refused to take any action against the Muslims without hearing their side of the story. So, he summoned the Prophet's Companions and when they came to the court, the king asked them, "What is the religion that they have received from the Arab Prophet?" At this, Jafar ibn abi Talib stood up and made a speech that has been recorded in the biographies of the Prophet. He told the king about the teachings of the Prophet of Islam in detail. Then he recited a part of the chapter on Mary in the Quran. King Negus wept until his beard was wet and the courtiers too wept when they heard what Jafar read to them. Afterward, King Negus gave orders for the gifts of the Makkans to be returned to them. Then he turned to the Muslims and said "Go, for you are safe in my country." So the Makkans left the court crestfallen, while the Muslims lived there comfortably in total security. (Sirat Ibn Ishaq, Vol. 1, pp. 215-16)

UMAR IBN AL KHATTAB'S ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

Umar ibn Al-Khattab had a strong personality. His acceptance of Islam was a great help of God for Islam. This help came to Islam through dawah work.

In the 6th year of prophethood, a considerable number of Makkans had entered the fold of Islam. However, the majority of these people belonged to the lower class of the society. That is why people did not attach any importance to Islamic ideas. This door was also opened by dawah work. At that time, there were two highly influential people in Makkah: Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abu Jahl ibn Hisham.

The Prophet offered this prayer in Makkah: “O Lord, strengthen Islam by means of Umar ibn Al-Khattab or Abu-Jahl ibn Hisham.” (*Kashful Khifa*, Hadith No. 546)

The situation was so hostile at that time, that the Makkan leader, Abu Jahl, announced that anyone who killed Muhammad would be given a hundred camels as a reward. Umar bin Al-Khattab was a strong personality. So, he set out from his home with the

intention of killing the Prophet and earning the reward of a hundred camels.

On his way, he learned that his own sister Fatima bint Khattab and his brother-in-law Said ibn Zaid had become Muslims and concealed the fact from Umar. When Umar learned of this fact, he immediately left for his sister's home, and he started beating his sister and brother-in-law. His sister said: "O son of Khattab! Do whatever you can do. Now that we've turned to Islam, we are not going to turn back." When Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done. He turned back and said: "Tell me about the religion which you have adopted." She gave him the manuscript which contained Chapter Taha (Chapter 20) of the Quran. Umar started reading it and he exclaimed: "How fine and noble is this speech!" Then he said to his brother-in-law, "Lead me to Muhammad so that I may accept Islam." (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 345) He was then brought to the house at al-Saffa where the Prophet was seated with some of his Companions. And then Umar ibn Al-Khattab accepted Islam at the hand of the Prophet.

Umar had a strong physique, and he was so tall that when he entered Masjid-e-Nabawi, he hit his head on the door of the mosque. The acceptance of Islam by such a prominent person was a very great help of God

for Islam. Again, this great help came to Islam through dawah work. Abdullah bin Masood says that the Islam of Umar was equal to a victory. “We were not able to pray in the Kabah until Umar accepted Islam. When he accepted Islam, he was enough to deal with the Quraysh, he himself prayed in the Kabah and we also prayed with him.” (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 342)

THE TRIBE OF YATHRIB

Islam is a natural religion that knocks at the door of everyone's heart. What is needed is to present it in a style that addresses people's minds.

Islam is a natural religion. It knocks at the door of everyone's heart. If there is no psychological obstacle, man is compelled to accept it. He surrenders to its veracity. One historical example of this is provided by Aws and Khazraj, the two tribes living in Madinah at the time of the Prophet.

During the Makkan period, an individual named Suayd ibn as-Samit came to Makkah from Madinah on a pilgrimage. His tribesmen used to call him Al-Kamil (the perfect one) because of his toughness, his poetry, his sense of honour, and his lineage.

The Prophet met him in Makkah and presented the message of Islam to him. Suayd said, "Perhaps you have something such as I have." The Prophet asked what that was. He replied, "The wisdom of Luqman." The Prophet said, "Present it to me." So, he recited some of Luqman's aphorisms. On hearing these words, the

Prophet said, “These words are fine, but what I have is better still—a Quran which God has revealed to me—a guidance and a light.” And the Prophet recited a passage from the Quran to him and invited him to accept Islam. Suayd replied that these were better words. (*Sirah Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 2, 174)

Sometime later, Abul Haiser Anas ibn Rafe came to Makkah, accompanied by some men of the Aws Tribe. At that time, the Aws and Khazraj were at war, and this group had come to seek the support of the Quraysh against the Khazraj. When the Prophet heard about their visit, he came to see them. He sat with them and asked them if they would like to obtain something more profitable than the object of their present errand. They asked him what that was. Then the Prophet told them that he was God’s messenger and had been sent to humanity to call on them to worship God and not associate anything with Him. Then he read a passage to them from the Quran. Having heard this, one of the young members of this delegation, Ayaz ibn Muaz, said, “By God, this is something better than what we came here for.” But he did not accept Islam because his people opposed him. Then he went back to Madinah. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 23619)

Later on, at the time of the pilgrimage, different Arab tribes came to Makkah. The Prophet used to go to

these tribes and present Islam to them. At Al Aqaba, he met six men of the Khazraj, one of them being Asad ibn Zurara. After a preliminary conversation with them, the Prophet presented Islam to them and recited a passage from the Quran. These people had heard from the Jews that a final prophet would soon be sent. So, when the people of the Khazraj heard the message of the Prophet, they said to one another, "This is the very Prophet the Jews told us about. Don't let them get to him before us." Thereupon they accepted his teachings and became Muslims. (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 429)

THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN MADINAH

The Madinan people were on their nature. That is why Islam spread rapidly throughout the tribes of Madinah.

After accepting Islam, these new converts returned to Madinah and started introducing Islam to the people until Islam became the talk of the town. The following year, twelve men from Madinah came to perform Hajj in the same season. These people had already been influenced by Islam. They gave allegiance to the Prophet that they would associate nothing with God and that Muhammad was God's messenger. When these men were going back to Madinah, the Prophet sent Musab ibn Umayr with them, so that they could introduce Islam to the Madinans. Musab ibn Umayr used to read passages from the Quran to them. That is why he was called the 'reciter' (*muqri*) in Madinah.

When, Usayd ibn Huzair, who was the leader of his clan, heard about the propagation of Islam in Madinah, he was enraged. He thought that some Makkans had come there and were making fools of their weak

members and turning them away from their ancestral religion. So, he picked up his lance and went to accost them.

He met Musab ibn Umayr in an orchard where he was telling people about Islam. Usayd ibn Huzair scolded him and said that he had come there to deceive their weak people and turn them away from their religion. Musab asked him to sit down and listen to him. "If you like what you hear, you can accept it and if you don't, you can reject it." Usayd agreed that it was fair, stuck his lance in the ground, and sat down. Musab explained Islam to him and read the Quran to him. On hearing the verses of the Quran, Usayd said how wonderful and beautiful these words were. Then he asked what one should do if he wanted to enter this religion. Musab told him that he must wash and purify himself, then bear witness to the truth. He immediately did so and entered the fold of Islam. (*Seerat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 436)

Another tribal chief, Saad ibn Muaz of Madinah, had a similar experience. When he learned of the propagation of Islam in the town, he too was enraged and came to Musab ibn Umayr in great anger. The latter asked him first to listen to him and only then decide what to do. Then Musab read a part of the Quran to Saad ibn Muaz. He too was so impressed

with the words of the Quran that he asked Usayd what had to be done to enter this religion. When he was told that he must wash and purify himself, then bear witness to the truth and say two units of prayer, he immediately did so and prostrated himself twice. (*Seerat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, pp. 436-437)

After this, both the leaders, Saad ibn Muaz and Usayd ibn Huzair, returned to their tribes and asked their people their opinion of them. They replied, “You are our chief, the best in judgment among us.” Saad then said to his people, “I will not speak to a single man or woman among you until you believe in God and His messenger.” As a result, every man and woman of his clan joined Islam. (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, pp. 435-37)

The Madinan people were on their nature. After having learned the truth, they could not do other than accept it. That is why Islam spread rapidly throughout the tribes of Madinah until every house in Madinah became a Muslim household.

THE SECOND PLEDGE AT AL-AQABA

The people of Yathrib pledged their allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad for which they were promised Paradise in return.

Then Musab ibn Umayr returned to Makkah accompanied by 70 men and 2 women in order to perform the pilgrimage. After the completion of the rites of Hajj, they took the oath of allegiance known as the ‘Second Pledge’. This incident has been described in detail in the biographies of the Prophet.

In the last stage, during the talks, one person named Abbas ibn Ubada, said to them, “Do you know for what you are taking this pledge? This is a declaration of war between the Arabs and non-Arabs (*ajam*).” They replied, “O Messenger of God, if we fulfill the pledge what is in store for us?” The Prophet replied, ‘Paradise.’ They said, “Hold out your hand,” then the Prophet held out his hand and they pledged their allegiance. (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 446)

THE EMIGRATION TO MADINAH

Dawah work paved the way for a new chapter in Islamic history.

In ancient Arabia, people lived under tribal protection. The tribe was responsible for the security of each member's life and property. The Prophet of Islam belonged to the clan of the Banu Hashim. The Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, was the chief of his clan. Abu Talib died in the 10th year of prophethood. After that, according to the tribal custom, this seat was given to Abu Lahab, Abu Talib's brother.

Abu Lahab refused to extend tribal support to the Prophet. This was a very delicate situation because deprivation of tribal protection implied that the concerned person's life and property were constantly at risk. That is why the Prophet's opponents became more emboldened against him. However, according to the accounts in the Prophet's biographies, the Quraysh were not able to take any aggressive action against the Prophet during the life of Abu Talib. But after the death of Abu Talib, they became aggressive

towards him. Some foolish people even threw dust on the Prophet.

Apparently, the Prophet's stay in Makkah had become impossible. Exactly at the same time, a very bright opportunity opened up for the communication of the divine mission. In the eleventh year of prophethood, some people from Madinah came to Makkah on a pilgrimage and accepted Islam after being influenced by his message. The following year more people came to Makkah. They heard the Quran from the Prophet and pledged allegiance to him. When they were to return to Madinah, the Prophet sent two men Abdullah ibn Umm Maktuum and Musab ibn Umayr along with them from Makkah to teach Islam and the Quran to the people of Madinah. The moment they reached Madinah they started teaching the Quran to the people. The environment in Madinah was very conducive to the spread of Islam.

The people began accepting Islam at a rapid pace and soon Islam spread throughout all the Madinan localities. There was not a single house without some men and women who were Muslims.

When the Prophet saw the favourable environment for Islam in Madinah, he told the Muslims to leave Makkah quietly. So, they began to migrate until finally, the

majority of them migrated from Makkah to Madinah. The Makkans took this situation as a challenge. They thought that once these people were established in Madinah, they would take aggressive action against the local Makkans. So, they decided that Muhammad should be killed before his migration to Madinah. But by now the matter had gone out of their hands. The night they wanted to attack him; God made him leave Makkah for Madinah. After that, Islam began to make headway in Madinah and undoubtedly it was dawah that paved the way for this new chapter in its history.

THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM AFTER HUDAYBIYYAH

After the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah, the word of God spread throughout Arabia.

The Prophet of Islam lived in Makkah for a period of thirteen years. Later owing to the severe opposition of the Makkans, the Prophet had to leave Makkah but the anger of the Makkans had yet to subside. Their thinking was that if the Muslims were left in this way, they would become strong enough to attack Makkah one day. That is why they themselves started a war against the Muslims. Two major battles took place at Badr and Uhud and a number of skirmishes also took place. There were as many as eighty such encounters. Even after these wars and skirmishes, the outcome was undecided.

At that juncture, through the guidance of God, the Prophet of Islam made a well-considered plan for furthering his mission. It is this plan, famous in Islamic history, which took its final shape in the Hdaybiyyah

Peace Treaty (6 AH). Its details have been recorded in all the books of Hadith.

To put it briefly, after many untoward incidents, a stage came when peace negotiations had to be held between the Prophet of Islam and the Quraysh. The Prophet of Islam offered a ten-year no-war pact between the Muslims and the Makkkan non-Muslims. When these peace negotiations started, the Makkans laid down unilateral conditions for their agreeing to accept this no-war peace treaty. For instance, the Prophet of Islam and his Companions had to return to Madinah without performing Umrah. Also, if any member of the Quraysh went over to the Muslims, they would return him to them; and if any one of the Muslims came over to the Quraysh, they would not return him to the Muslims.

Their uncompromising attitude was so rigid that when the treaty was being written, they did not even allow the words “Muhammad, the Messenger of God” to be included in the text. They insisted that “Muhammad, son of Abdullah” should be written instead. There were many such provocative words uttered by them, but the Prophet of Islam refused to be provoked by them. Thus, by accepting all the conditions of the enemy, this ten-year no-war pact was finalized. The

conditions of the enemy were unilaterally accepted so that the door to dawah could be thrown open. Consequent upon this treaty, peace was established, and both parties started interacting with one another. The message of Islam began to be passed on to the non-Muslims of Makkah. Islamic teaching began to be disseminated everywhere.

After the cease-fire, the word of God was spread on a large scale. Consequently, a large number of people from different tribes started accepting Islam. Earlier, the Muslims numbered only fifteen hundred. But in a short period of two years, their numbers increased to ten thousand. Therefore, when the Prophet of Islam marched to Makkah along with his Companions, the Makkan leader, Abu Sufiyan, urged his people to lay down arms and submit to Muhammad, for they had no power to resist him.

THE ETERNAL POWER OF THE DIVINE MESSAGE

The spiritual power of the Divine Message addressed the hearts and minds of many rulers of the time.

The Prophet of Islam set out for Makkah from Madinah in 6 A.H. He was accompanied by his Companions who numbered fourteen hundred. He wanted to perform *umrah* in Makkah. After a long and hard journey, he reached Hudaybiyyah, which is 9 miles from Makkah. On hearing the news of the Muslims' arrival, the leaders of the Quraysh went there and said that they would not allow the Muslims to enter Makkah to perform *umrah*. Talks went on for two weeks, but the Quraysh refused to allow them into Makkah. Finally, the Prophet entered into a peace agreement with the Quraysh, accepting all their conditions unilaterally. This agreement is called the Hudaybiyyah Peace Treaty.

After coming back from Hudaybiyyah, the Prophet sent letters designed to introduce Islam to the Emperors and other heads of the different States

situated in and around Arabia and outside of Arabia.

These letters were sent in 7 AH to the following:

Heraclius	King of Rome
Negus	King of Abyssinia
Muqawqis	Ruler of Alexandria
Hozah bin Ali	Ruler of Al-Yamamah
Munzir Ibn Sawa	Ruler of Bahrain
Jayfar bin al-Julandi	Ruler of Oman
Chosroes	King of Iran
Haris Ghassani	Ruler of Damascus

Although some rulers behaved arrogantly and rejected these letters, most of the rulers honoured the letters and even accepted Islam. Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, said to his courtiers, “Come and let us follow Muhammad and testify to his being a Prophet so that we succeed in this world and the next.” (Sirat Ibn Kathir, Vol. 3, p. 505)

The ruler of Yamamah answered the letter saying how excellent was that towards which he called them. We find that even at a time when Islam was not in a position to make any material advancement, it still enjoyed a position that ideologically enabled it to address the rulers of the time. This was entirely due to the miracle brought about by propagating God’s word. An enemy can only check material advancement but not ideological advancement.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM OUTSIDE OF ARABIA

Islam spread worldwide because of its simple, rational,
and easily understandable teachings.

When the Prophet of Islam left this world, Islam had achieved a dominant position in Arabia. However, the communities that were situated around Arabia were following a religion, culture, and language that were different from that of Islam. At that time, the vast world known as the Arab world had not come into existence. This state of affairs posed a permanent threat to Islam. The truth is that had Islam been limited to the Arabian Peninsula, its survival would have been very difficult. For the permanent existence of Islam, it was essential that the religion of Islam, its language, and its culture should assume a dominant position in a vast area. This development took place almost half a century after the death of the Prophet. However, when such a situation evolved it was thanks to the religious power of Islam rather than to its political power. The truth is that political power is insufficient to bring

about a great development of this kind. Had it been possible to change people by using political power, then all the people in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh would have been converted to Christianity.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, many battles took place between the Muslim and non-Muslim nations outside of Arabia. The Muslims, in a very short period, conquered major parts of the region from Asia to Africa, but it is a fact that no forced conversion took place in these conquered territories, for instance, in Egypt, which was brought into the Islamic fold under Umar Farooq, the second Caliph. An article on Egyptian history, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, states that the Muslims conquered Egypt very rapidly in 642 A.D. But they strictly adhered to the policy of religious tolerance. The article says, "There was no attempt to force, or even to persuade the Egyptians to convert to Islam. The Arabs even pledged to preserve the Christian churches." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 6/487-88). Similarly, Professor T.W. Arnold in his book, *The Preaching of Islam*, states that the Muslim conquerors of Egypt showed total religious tolerance towards the Christians. According to him, "There is no evidence of their widespread apostasy to Islam being due to persecution or unjust pressure on the part of their new rulers." (*The Preaching of Islam*, p. 103)

Similarly, Prof. Arnold has written in his book on page 110 that ‘these conversions were not due to persecution.’

Now the question arises as to how it happened that, when the Egyptians were not subjected to forced conversion, the majority of them came into the fold of Islam. The answer to this question has been given by the well-known Egyptologist, Sir Arthur Keith:

“The Egyptians were conquered not by the sword, but by the Quran.” (Sir Arthur Keith, *A New Theory of Human Evolution*, London Watts & Co., 1950, p. 303)

The same was true in other conquered countries. No coercion was resorted to in order to bring the non-Muslim population in these countries into the fold of Islam. Actually, during the interaction with the Muslims who came to these countries, the local people would hear about Islam. They also studied Islamic books. All this revealed to them that Islam was more rational than their ancestral religions and that the teachings of Islam were easier to understand and more practicable. Having formed these impressions, they gradually embraced Islam, and finally, the majority of them accepted Islam, bringing into existence a vast Muslim world stretching across the known world.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM BY THE SELJUQ TURKS

Islam spread throughout the known world at the time through its ideological power. The Seljuq Turks were drawn toward this spiritual power of Islam.

Seljuq was the chief of the Ghaz tribe. He gathered an army from the youths in his tribe and attacked the western part of Asia in the 11th century. He established a strong empire that included Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, etc. These States were at that time ruled by the Muslims. The Seljuq Turks defeated the Muslim armies and established their empire. Tughril Beg (d.1063) and Alp Arslan (d. 1072) succeeded the Seljuq. It is one of the greatest events in the history of Islam that the Seljuq Turks, who were tribals, accepted Islam and defended Islam for more than 200 years. They succeeded in putting an end to the Shia-Sunni conflicts and established unity in the Islamic world. They built great mosques and schools and defended Islam against enemy attacks.

Our history books describe in detail the achievements of the Seljuq Turks. But these books are totally silent on how

and when these Turks accepted Islam. This is the biggest vacuum in Islam's recorded history: it has recorded in great detail the military and political conquests, but it does not tell us of the greater conquest, i.e., how Islam made inroads into the hearts and minds of the people, and how nation after nation entered the fold of Islam. The present books on Islamic history tell us in great detail about the State of Seljuqs but they do not give us any details of the Islam of the Seljuqs.

In the entire Islamic literature, there is probably only one book worthy of mention, written on the history of the propagation of Islam by T.W. Arnold. Here is a passage from the book *The Preaching of Islam*:

“In the hours of its political degradation, Islam has achieved some of its most brilliant spiritual conquests: on two great historical occasions, infidel barbarians have set their feet on the necks of the followers of the Prophet—the Seljuq Turks in the eleventh and the Mongols in the thirteenth century — and in each case, the conquerors have accepted the religion of the conquered.” (p. 2)

History is witness to the fact that the Seljuq Turks established unity in the Islamic world, built great mosques and schools, and defended Islam for nearly 200 years.

THE MUGHAL-TARTARS

Islam has the inherent power to conquer the hearts and minds of the people.

Since ancient times, certain tribes called the Turks lived in Turkistan (Russia) and Mongolia (China). Genghis Khan (1162-1227 AD) was their leader. He was a man of extraordinary capabilities. He gathered a force of twenty thousand warriors and conquered territories from China to Iran.

These tribals continued to advance until Hulagu Khan (1218-1265 A.D.) came onto the scene and began to carry into effect the plan of his grandfather Genghis Khan to destroy the Islamic Empire. He completely destroyed Baghdad and killed the Caliph Mutasim. The Tartar chiefs had some cause for complaint against the Muslim ruler Khwarezm Shah, and in anger, they resolved to destroy the Muslim Empire.

This was the most horrible event in Islamic history and due to the tyranny and violence of the Tartars, the whole Muslim world became terror-stricken. Word spread that if someone said that the Tartars had

been defeated, he should not be believed. This most dreadful problem was solved by spreading the word of God. When the Tartars had shed enough Muslim blood, the fire of their revenge cooled down. Now they started thinking seriously about the religion of their subjects. This came about because the Tartars came into contact with the Muslims in a variety of ways. A great number of Muslim men and women were taken captive and confined in Tartar homes. They also met the Tartars in the streets and bazaars, etc. The Muslims used to go to their courts as well. In this way, the Tartars were introduced to the teachings of Islam through interaction with the Muslims.

They later began accepting Islam. First, their rulers and chiefs accepted Islam and then the rest followed suit. Finally, the majority of them embraced Islam. Consequently, the very people who had demolished the foundation of Islam became its builders. Professor Arnold has recorded this great story of their acceptance of Islam in detail. He writes, “The conquerors had accepted the religion of the conquered.” (*The Preaching of Islam*, p. 2) Professor Philip Hitti writes about this event in his book, *The History of the Arabs*, that “the religion of the Muslims had conquered where their arms had failed.” (p. 488) This shows that Islam has the inherent power to conquer the hearts and minds of the people.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN INDONESIA

Islam entered the region of Indonesia through peaceful interaction with Muslim merchants.

Professor Arnold writes in his book, *The Preaching of Islam*, “Although in after years this great empire was split up and the political power of Islam diminished, still its spiritual conquests went on uninterrupted. When the Mongol hordes sacked Baghdad (AD 1258) and drowned in blood the faded glory of the Abbasid dynasty,—when the Muslims were expelled from Cordova by Ferdinand of Leon and Castile (A.D. 1236), and Granada, the last stronghold of Islam in Spain, paid tribute to the Christian king,—Islam had just gained a footing in the island of Sumatra and was just about to commence its triumphant progress through the islands of the Malay Archipelago. In the hours of its political degradation, Islam has achieved some of its most brilliant spiritual conquests.” (p. 2)

Van Lear writes that anyone who enters the history of Indonesia enters into an unknown world. People

generally believe that some mysterious, miraculous force was at work that brought the people of South-East Asia into Islam.

It is true that a miraculous power was at work behind the propagation of Islam. But this was not some mysterious power but rather the power of Islam to communicate the word of God. This power of Islam has undoubtedly a miraculous capability to draw people towards it and encourage people to accept its religious tenets.

Islam entered this region through the merchants. The ethics of merchants are the same as those of dayees. The best dayee is one who deals with his addressees like a merchant.

Alexis deTocqueville writes that commerce is the killer of hostile behaviour. Commerce favours moderation and adjustment. A businessman takes extra care to control his anger. He is a tolerant man. These are the qualities that are cultivated by commerce in a businessman. That is why, Joseph Cook, a thinker has said, “God is making commerce His missionary.”

THE LAST WORD

Muslims are tasked with the duty of calling people to God. Their worldly success and salvation in the Hereafter both depend upon the performance of this task.

The entire history of Islam proves that dawah is its greatest power. Islam is exactly in accordance with human nature. If it is brought to man in its original form, it addresses his heart and mind directly. It compels man to acknowledge its veracity. It has the power to conquer the hearts and minds of the people. But for this power to materialize, all the psychological obstacles must be removed between Islam and its addressees. The Muslims of the first phase knew the secret of this reality.

That is why they adopted the way of tolerance and adjustment in all the countries they went to and in the countries that they conquered. They gave full freedom to the local people to practice their religion. They knew that any conflict, controversy, or religious coercion, would only make their addressees obdurate. Due to

this feeling, they would refuse to accept something they would otherwise have readily accepted.

The well-known historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) clearly acknowledged this wisdom and strategy of the Muslims of the first phase.

“Instead of holding themselves apart in proud isolation, they gradually melted into the mass of the population, employing all their superiority of intelligence and civilization for disseminating the message of Islam and making such skillful compromises in the doctrines and practices of their faith as were needed to recommend it to the people they wished to attract.” (p. 409)

Professor Arnold has shown in great detail in his book, *The Preaching of Islam*, that the Muslims of the first phase adopted total religious tolerance everywhere. In spite of having gained political power, they never indulged in religious controversies with non-Muslims.

This inherent power of Islam to appeal to hearts and minds can rise even today provided that present Muslims put an end to all national or communal controversies which they are indulging in with their non-Muslim neighbours in every country. These communal controversies, wrongly termed jihad, are the greatest obstacle to dawah work.

Every human group has a system of beliefs and a system of political power. The Muslims of the present times are behind other nations as regards a system of political power but as regards a belief system, they are still more powerful than all other nations. But the Muslim leaders all over the world are in confrontation with other nations in the political field. Consequently, they have been fated to experience little other than defeat and destruction. If they put an end to this futile confrontation and address other nations in the field of belief and ideology, then they will soon see that their defeat has been turned into a story of victory.

A person may be a qualified doctor but if, instead of practicing medicine, he starts indulging in meaningless activities, then everyone will criticize his behaviour and advise him to lead an honourable life as a doctor.

The same is the case with the Muslims of the present times. Muslims are, in actual fact, dayees. They possess such truth as no one else does. Of all the religious groups, they are the only ones who have unadulterated religious truth, who have a historical religion in the full sense. Islam is the only religion that has a historical base.

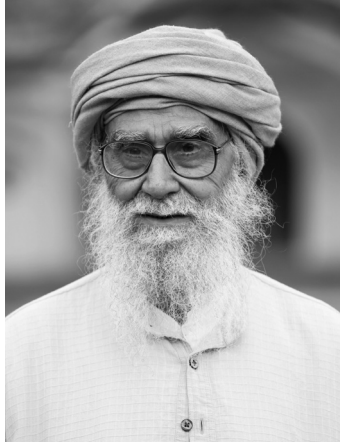
In this respect, the most important task for Muslims is to exert themselves to call people to God. But the

Muslim leaders, by waging unnecessary battles in the political field, have turned the Muslim rulers into their enemies. Consequently, in almost every Muslim country the opportunities for dawah work have been ruined. Our unwise Muslim leaders are wholly responsible for this state of affairs. For them, Islam is only a subject of confrontation with the rulers, and this has caused Islam to be perceived as a danger to their political rule by the Muslim rulers.

The situation is no different in those countries where Muslims are in a minority. Here too, the Muslim leaders are doing the same as the Muslim leaders in the countries where the Muslims are in the majority. In both cases, they are fighting equally futile battles, such as have destroyed all the opportunities for dawah work. The only difference is that the battle being waged in Muslim countries is to establish Islam as a political power, while in other countries the battle is being fought to establish the Muslim identity.

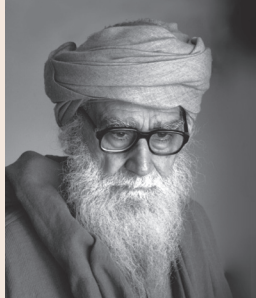
Both these movements are undoubtedly based on falsehood. The greatest proof of this is that despite there being a huge number of concerned individuals and ample resources, these movements have been a total failure. It seems that this is the decree of God. Even if they gain the support of the whole world, they will meet with nothing but failure.

The truth is that there is only one religious duty for the Muslims and that is calling people to God. Their worldly success and salvation in the Hereafter both depend upon the performance of this task. This is the work which has been destined for them by God. If they rise to this task, they will be held deserving of having the greatest share in God's blessings. If they do not rise to this task, there is great fear and apprehension that they will be subject to God's wrath and chastisement. All the present activities in the name of Islam are not going to save them from the wrath of God.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and an Ambassador of Peace. Having received international recognition for his work, the Maulana authored over 200 books and recorded thousands of lectures giving the rational interpretation of Islamic concepts, prophetic wisdom and the spiritual meaning of Quran and Islam in the contemporary style. His English translation of the Quran is widely appreciated as simple, clear and in contemporary style. He founded Centre for Peace and Spirituality International in 2001 to re-engineer the minds of people towards the culture of peace and present Islam in the modern idiom based as it is on peace, non-violence, and spirituality.

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After Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims as his Ummah have been assigned the task of calling people to God. This mission is to tell people that there is no god but one God. to make man aware of God's Creation Plan and to communicate the divine knowledge preserved in the Quran and Sunnah. This is the real responsibility of the Muslims. Their worldly success and salvation in the Hereafter both depend upon the performance of this task. If they rise to this task, they will be held deserving of having the greatest share in God's blessings. If they do not rise to this task, there is great fear that they will be subject to God's chastisement.

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