

Peculiarity of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ in Training Pattern— A Qur'anic Review

By: Sheikh Muhammad Ishtiaq *

To serve Allah and establish His Commands by bidding fair-deeds and forbidding unfair-deeds was the mission of all the Ambya' عليهم السلام [i.e., Prophets] and Rusul' عليهم السلام [i.e., Messengers], who came in every epoch and in all lands. After an accomplishment of the lineage of Prophetic series, from Adam عليه السلام to Muhammad ﷺ, this responsibility transmitted to the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ. Hence, the aim and objective of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is same as of the Prophets عليهم السلام of the past ages.

It is affirmed by the Holy Qur'an and Ah}adith that this Ummah was created and sent in this world for the purpose of fulfilling the obligations of the work of Da'wah [i.e. inviting people to the message of Allah ﷻ] and Tabligh [i.e. propagating the message of Allah ﷻ] and that every individual of the Muslim Ummah is the Deputy of Ambya' عليهم السلام, hence, therefore, is responsible to convey the Divine Message—Message of Islam—to the people and nations of the entire world.

Training pattern of Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is noticeably different from the past nations. To this Ummah, detail instructions regarding work of Da'wah has been given prior to the detail commandments concerning worship and other obligations of Deen. In other words, teachings and training of Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ have been done on the pattern of Ambya' عليهم السلام and Rusul' عليهم السلام. This notion is also supported by the theme of the Holy Qur'an, which spells out to the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ repeatedly—i.e., the duty of the Ambya' عليهم السلام, their way of preaching, their patients, their ardent desire for the Hidayah of their people as well as apathetic or offensive attitudes of their nation against their sympathetic and sincere admonitions. This theme infers that now the work of Ambya' عليهم السلام—the work of Da'wah—is transmitted to this Ummah—the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ.

*Lecturer: Bahria University [Karachi Campus] iqofpk@yahoo.com

Peculiarity of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ

As Allah ﷻ is **رَبُّ النَّاسِ**¹ [i.e. Lord and Cherisher of all mankind], and His Book, the Holy Qur'an is **هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ**² [i.e. the true guide to the all mankind], and His last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is **رَسُولٌ لِلنَّاسِ**³ [i.e. sent to the all mankind], similarly the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is **أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ**⁴ [i.e. brought out for the benefit of entire mankind]. The attribute of Ummah **أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ** [i.e., brought out for the entire mankind] affirms that the responsibility of this Ummah does not end at home, school, monastery, village, city or country rather it has been assigned the duty of whole world and entire humanity.

Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is required to convey the Message of Allah ﷻ—the Message of Islam—to the entire nations of the world. This Ummah is not like other nations which base on territorial or racial considerations. Allah ﷻ has chosen this Ummah and assigned it the great responsibility of the work of Da'wah—the work of Ambya' عليهم السلام—which has never been assigned wholly to any nations of the world.

The following verse elucidates the aim and objective of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

*Translation: Ye are the best of peoples evolved for mankind enjoining what is right forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah.*⁶

Said verse states that the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is the most righteous and beneficial nation for mankind, its status is **خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ** [i.e, the best nation] and its duty is to serve all the other nations by bidding good and forbidding evil.

About the virtues of this Ummah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:⁷

أَنْتُمْ تَوْفُونَ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً، أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُهَا، وَأَنْتُمْ أَكْرَمُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

*Al-H{adith: You are the final of seventy nations, you are the best and most honored among them to Allah.*⁸

Once 'Umar bin Al-Khattabؓ recited said Ayah then said: 'Whoever wants to be among this [praised] Ummah, let him fulfill the condition that Allah set in this Ayah [i.e., to enjoin good and forbid evil].' Ibne Jarirؒ says: 'Those from this Ummah who do not acquire these qualities [i.e., enjoining good and forbidding evil] are just like the People of the Scriptures whom Allah criticized.'⁹

Since this Ummah has been assigned the work of Da'wah in the deputyship of Ambya' ﷺ, the unique character and function of this Ummah becomes manifest:

- Acquiring a proper understanding of the message and commandments of Allah ﷻ
- Fulfilling requirements of this message
- Conveying this message to other members of the Ummah
- Inviting people to fulfill the demands of this message
- Establishing a universal brotherhood of those who adhere to it; and
- Fulfilling the obligations pertaining to this brotherhood.

Secondly, the responsibility of work of Da'wah upon this Ummah is Fard}-e-Kafayah¹⁰ [i.e. collective responsibility], which means that if all the various sections of the Ummah neglect this duty; the entire Ummah will be declared defaulter. However, if a Jama'at [i.e. a particular group from this Ummah] consists of adequate numbers accomplished this task and fulfills this collective obligation on behalf of the Ummah, then this [collective] responsibility will not remain on the shoulder of each and every individual of this Ummah. The theme has been inferred from the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ¹¹

*Translation: Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity.*¹²

The objective of the Ayah is this that a group amongst the Ummah, comprises of adequate members, should be reserved specially for this task, even though it is also an obligation on every member of this Ummah as per his strength and

ability.¹³ According to this verse this chosen group is responsible for the reformation and well-being of the Ummah as well as the entire humanity.

By comparing both verses [i.e. Aal-e-‘Imran 3:110 and Aal-e-‘Imran 3:104] it is inferred that all sects and each individual of Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is responsible for the work of Da‘wah as per their capability and authority, but a group among the Ummah should be reserved merely for this task. In this sense the responsibility of work of Da‘wah is Fardh-e-Kifayah [i.e. collective responsibility] for this Ummah.

Surat-ul-‘Asr, one of the most comprehensive Surahs of the Holy Qur‘an about which Imam Shaf‘i رحمه الله عليه says¹⁴ لَوْ تَدَبَّرَ النَّاسُ هَذِهِ السُّورَةَ لَوَسَّعَتْهُمْ , describes that the exhortation to one another to the ‘Truth and Consistency’ [تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ] is also a basic requirement for the attainment of success besides bearing of ‘Faith in Allah ﷻ and doing good-deeds’.

15 وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ .

*Translation: By (the Token of) time (through the Ages). Verily Man is in loss. Except such as have Faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth and of Patience and Constancy.*¹⁶

‘Exhorting to one another to the Truth’ implies that the members of the Ummah join together in mutual teaching of Truth, while ‘the exhortation to one another to Consistency’ means that they should consistently seek to advise and instruct each other to overcome their absurd desires and remain faithful to the true religion and right guidance. Said *Surah* expresses that ‘moral and spiritual reform’ by way of exhorting to one another to the Truth and Consistency are also among the fundamental obligations of believers like ‘belief and good conduct’.

A broader and more important branch of the work of Da‘wah is *Jihad*, which means striving to the utmost in the cause of Allah ﷻ for the establishment of Allah’s ﷻ word in His land.¹⁷ This is what *Jihad* signifies in a nutshell, though its form varies as per time and place requirements. The manner in which the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ carried on the work of Da‘wah during the thirteen years of his Makkan life was a form of *Jihad*, and so also, hardships and privations he and his

S{ah}abah bore in the cause of Allah ﷺ during the earlier years of their stay in Madinah was *Jihad*, similarly the Battles like those of Badr, Uhad, Trench, Tabuk etc., they fought for the same cause was also the forms of *Jihad*.

Hence, wherever the duty of *Jihad* has been imposed by the Qur'an it means that a believer should make utmost effort to take people out from the utter darkness of ignorance to the perfect light of Islam; from the worship of creatures to the worship of their Creator; from the narrow conception of the world to its broad conception and from the life of self-conceit and selfishness to the life of self-sacrifice and selflessness. The Holy Qur'an referred this great task as 'Help of Allah ﷺ' because of its vital importance and those who take part in it are regarded as 'the Helpers of Allah ﷺ'. The Holy Qur'an states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تَجْرِيفٍ يُفَجِّمُكُم مِّنْ عَذَابِ آلِيمٍ
تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ¹⁸

*Translation: O ye who believe! shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty? That ye believe in Allah and His Apostle and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah with your property and your persons: that will be best for you if ye but knew!*¹⁹

In the Holy Qur'an, *Jihad* has also been described as a prerequisite of *Eman*. It says that people of *Eman* [i.e., True Believers] are only those who believe in Allah ﷻ, in the Prophets ﷺ, in the Divine Guidance and are ready to strive to the utmost in the sacred cause with their person and property.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الصَّادِقُونَ

*Translation: The (true) believers are those only who believe in Allah and His messenger and afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. Such are the sincere.*²¹

The Holy Qur'an also stressed the outstanding quality of the every member of Ummah, that the love of Allah ﷻ and the Prophets ﷺ and the passion for service and sacrifice in the cause of Allah ﷻ is stronger in their hearts than devotion to the most precious things or persons in the world including their own lives, parents, wives, children, wealth and trade. One who did not achieve this standard are not worthy of Divine Grace and Mercy. For them there is a severe punishment.

22 قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ
وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ
تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ
فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

*Translation: Say: If it be that your fathers your sons your brothers your mates or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline; or the dwellings in which ye delight are dearer to you than Allah or His apostle or the striving in his cause; then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.*²³

The Holy Qur'an also tells the rank granted to the Ummah is only on account of their duty:

24 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَنْتُمْ قُلْتُمْ
إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضِيئُكُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ
فَمَا مَتَّعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَفْرُوْا يَعَذِّبُكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلُ قَوْمًا
عَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*Translation: O ye who believe! what is the matter with you then when ye are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life as compared with the hereafter. Unless ye go forth He will punish you with a grievous penalty and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For Allah hath power over all things.*²⁵

In the said Ayat, Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ is very fervently incited to *Jihad* and told that forsaking *Jihad* for the temporary comforts and luxuries meant falling from pinnacle of grandeur into the bottomless pit of degradation. There should be no value of the worldly comforts and luxuries in the eyes of a true Believer in comparison with the *Akhirat*. Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ has further been told that Allah's ﷻ work does not depend upon them. If they show laziness He ﷻ will raise other Ummah for the service of Islam and they will be deprived of this great honour.

Conclusion

The core objective of the raising up of the Muslim Ummah is to fulfill the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil. The responsibility for carrying out of this obligation does not rest with any individual section of the Ummah, but with the whole of it. However, the nature of this sacred mission is such that generally, it is not necessary for every member of the Ummah to take a hand in it. If people with the right aptitude and ability actively devote themselves to it while rest of the Ummah cooperate with them, in such case, the obligation will not remain long upon each sect of the Ummah, but in case of any weakness or insufficiency or indifferent attitude from this group, the entire Ummah will be declared defaulter.

References

- 1 *Al-Qur'an: Surat-un-Naas 114:1.*
- 2 *Al-Qur'an: Surat-ul-Baqarah 2:185.*
- 3 *Al-Qur'an: Surat-us-Sabaa 34:28.*
- 4 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.*
- 5 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.*
- 6 'Abdullah, Yusuf Ali., 1989. *The Holy Qur'an Translation and Commentary: Al-Qur'an: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.* 12th ed. Brentwood Maryland USA: Amana Corp.
- 7 'Emad-ud-Deen Isma'il, Ibne Kathir, Ad-Damishqi., (n.d.). *Tafseer Ibne Kathir.* In [CD-ROM]. ed., 2005. *Tafseer Ibne Kathir: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.* Abridged version. Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers; H{adith transmitted through Imam Ah}mad, Tirmidhi, Ibne Majah and H{akim.
- 8 Ibne Kathir, Ad-Damishqi., (n.d.). *Tafseer Ibne Kathir.* In [CD-ROM]. ed., 2005. *Tafseer Ibne Kathir: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.* Abridged version. Ibid.
- 9 Ibne Kathir, Ad-Damishqi., (n.d.). *Tafseer Ibne Kathir.* In [CD-ROM]. ed., 2005. *Tafseer Ibne Kathir: Surah Aal-e-'Imran 3:110.* Ibid.