

Islamic Da‘wah and Civilizational Development: A Reflection

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Abstract

Generally, Da‘wah is defined as a struggle of the followers of a religion to convert people from other religions. This misrepresentation has not only created misunderstandings about Islam and Islamic movement, it has also affected negatively the image of Islam and Islamic movement in the world. Islam represents the truth concerning human life and ultimate bliss in both this world and the hereafter. The Qur’an is the source of true and authentic knowledge which provides guidance for the well-being of mankind and stands for the development of civilization. This paper contends that the purpose of Da‘wah needs to be presented in the context of civilizational development rather than in the context of religious conversion.

Keywords: Da‘wah, Islam, The Qur’an, Civilization, Truth.

Abstrak

Secara umumnya, Da‘wah ditakrifkan sebagai perjuangan pengikut agama untuk menukar agama orang-orang dari agama-agama lain. Pernyataan yang salah ini bukan sahaja telah menimbulkan salah faham tentang islam dan pergerakan islam, ia juga telah memberi kesan negatif kepada imej islam dan pergerakan islam di dunia. Islam mewakili kebenaran yang berkenaan dengan kehidupan manusia dan kebahagiaan muktamad dalam kedua-dua dunia dan akhirat. Al-Qur’an adalah sumber pengetahuan yang benar dan sahih yang memberi panduan untuk kesejahteraan manusia dan mewakili pembangunan tamadun. Karya ini menegaskan bahawa tujuan Da‘wah perlu disampaikan dalam konteks pembangunan tamadun dan bukannya dalam konteks penukaran agama.

Kata kunci: Da‘wah, Islam, Al-Qur’an, Tamadun, kebenaran.

Introduction

The Qur’an has made it collective obligation for its followers to spread the message of Allah to the entire humanity: *“Let there be a group among you who call others to good, and forbid what is*

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wrong: those who do this shall be successful" (3:104). That is why there have always been groups and organizations among Muslim communities the world over which devoted their time and energy to fulfill that obligation. In Islamic terminology it is called Da'wah. Muslim ummah is so serious towards this task that Muslim universities, colleges, schools and seminaries offer special subjects and disciplines of study for students such as *Methods of Da'wah*, *Purpose of Da'wah*, *Islamic Da'wah* and *Modern Islamic Movements*. These courses are taught as required courses for Muslim students in many universities in the Muslim world including International Islamic University Malaysia. Muslims consider teaching of the courses related to the Islamic concept of Da'wah as important because Da'wah work is obligatory for all Muslims. It appears that the very objective of these Da'wah courses is to prepare young Muslim graduates to propagate Islam as a religion with a view to attracting non-Muslims and persuading them to embrace Islam. Undoubtedly, this is a justifiably fascinating objective. But it may not be in complete conformity with the Qur'anic philosophy of calling the people to the truth. Islam is not a religion; it is a way of life; and it seeks to establish its own civilization on the earth. Does it not, then, mean that Da'wah should mainly be aimed at interpreting Islam as a civilization. This paper represents a humble attempt to explain the real purpose of Da'wah.

Misunderstanding the Purpose of Da'wah

Islam is not a religion. Religion is understood in the modern world as a personal and private individual relationship between man and God. Islam is not introduced in the Qur'an in this sense; it is rather presented as *al-Dīn* which means the way of life, encompassing both individual and social aspects. The existing style of presentation of purpose of Da'wah as calling people to come-out from one religion and follow another religion seems to be against the Truth revealed in the Qur'an. This kind of presentation has created some misunderstandings about Da'wah and its true purpose. The Islamic Da'wah is understood in the West and elsewhere in the context of 'missionary' zeal and it is equalized

with Christian evangelicalism.¹ Hence, they think quite contrary about the purpose of Da‘wah and perceive it in terms of ‘expansion of the Muslim faith’² or ‘propagation of religion’ or ‘the conversion of individuals’ or ‘missionary activity’. Writers and thinkers in the West assert that: “There is little question that one of the goals of Da‘wah is the expansion of the Muslim faith, for the ‘invitation’ or ‘call’ is to ‘the way of Allah’, and this implies that one is invited to abandon whatever existential patterns of life he or she happens to be following and to take instead the ‘path of God’. By any definition this would be tantamount to converting to the Islamic religion.”³ These scholars remark that, “it is difficult to know whether conversions were desired for religious reasons or whether they were seen as a means to economic and political ends”; and that Muslim conversion “may be interpreted as a necessary measure by means of which the world may be made safe not for democracy but rather for Islamicity”.⁴

Muslims may be equally responsible for this misunderstanding. Da‘wah and its purpose has been introduced by Muslim scholars in a religious sense. Most of the books of Da‘wah written by Muslim scholars sketch the image of Da‘wah as a conversion movement from religious angle. Ahmad Saqr, for example, argues that through the methods of Da‘wah “one has to inform people about Allah, His Prophet and their teachings”.⁵ Muhammad Imran explains that Islam is “...a missionary religion from its very inception. The Muslims are...missionaries of a world message and representatives of the greatest world movement”.⁶ Some others argue that the aim of Da‘wah is, “to make Islam better known...by way of delivering lectures and issuance of publications...to generally acquaint the ...public with the realities about the Muslim world”.⁷ There are scholars and activists who see modern man and his society bereft of moral and ethical values,

¹ See for example the work of Larry Allan Poston, *Islamic Da‘wah in North America and The Dynamics of Conversion to Islam in Western Societies*, Unpublished thesis, Evanston, Illinois, 1988, p. 5.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 79.

hence, they set the goal of Da'wah to call people to faith in God and to work for the establishment of an equitable and just Islamic order. It is also argued by some other scholars that Enlightenment and rationalism have effectively relegated religious beliefs to private life; it is, then, necessary to bring back religion through Da'wah to the mainstream of society. Most of the Muslim scholars and activists who are involved in the Islamic movements and organizations repeatedly contend that the purpose of Da'wah is to Islamize every aspect of life and thus to establish an Islamic order and Islamic state. For them Islam is an all-embracing *al-Din* (way of life) which regulates every aspect of life.

Proper Perspective of Da'wah

To avoid misunderstandings about Da'wah and to make it more relevant and useful to our contemporary world we need to put Da'wah and its purpose in a proper perspective.

The fact is that our scholars and writers who, refer to the Qur'anic verse 16: 125 ("*Call men to the path of your Lord*"), have focused more on '*the Path of God*'. This literal presentation has diverted the attention of people from the real purpose of Da'wah to the purpose of religious nature. Muslim scholars argue that for calling people to the way of God one should use wisdom and goodly exhortation, as mentioned in the above verse: "*Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation and reason with them in a way that best*". But, here one can ask some simple questions. Why can't Muslims invite people in a simple way to the Path of God? Why did God ask us instead to use wisdom and intelligent ways? Why is there a need of the use of wisdom? In the verse (16:125) Muslims are in fact advised that they should be more wise and intelligent in inviting people to the Path of God. Why do Muslims invite people to the Path of God? Why do people need to come to the Path of God? Is it God who needs them? Or do the people need the Path of God? Here is the need to use wisdom, good exhortation and present Da'wah in the best possible manner. What is, then, the best possible manner of Da'wah? This is the most important point which has been neglected by our writers and activists who are involved in Da'wah. The Qur'an is the fundamental source of knowledge through which one can understand the true Purpose and the best possible manner of

Da‘wah. To explain the true purpose of Da‘wah, the Qur’an presents before mankind few fundamental claims and invites them to reflect upon those claims. The understanding of those claims becomes one of the prerequisites of the true understanding of the true purpose of Da‘wah.

The Fundamental Claims of the Qur’an

To understand the true purpose of Da‘wah one needs to understand the fundamental claims of the Qur’an. This is the first condition towards comprehension of true purpose of Da‘wah. But before listing down the Qur’anic claims, understanding a fact which is directly relevant to the discussion is very significant.

It is a well-known fact that the present form of the Qur’an is not based on the chronological order of the revelation. The second, the third, the fourth, and the fifth chapters, *al-Baqarah*, *Āli ‘Imrān*, *al-Nisā’*, and *al-Mā’idah*, for instance, had not been revealed in the very beginning of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) mission. One may be wondering as to why Allah (swt) placed these chapters, which had been revealed quite late, in the beginning of the Qur’an. These four chapters present a comprehensive picture of Islamic civilization. These Chapters present the main claims of the Qur’an, which constitute essence of the Message of all the Prophets (a.s.).

First, knowledge and ignorance are not equal.

“Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition” (39: 9).

The Qur’an stresses that people need true and authentic knowledge for living a blissful life. It is because no one can lay the foundation of development in life and society on the basis of ignorance. Ignorance does not mean illiteracy but rather ignorance of the metaphysical realities. To make life meaningful man requires true and authentic knowledge of metaphysical realities. One must have correct knowledge about himself and this world. He must know authentically about the metaphysical realities of this world.

Second, human reason and sense perception are not the sources of knowledge of the metaphysical realities of this world.

The understanding of the metaphysical realities is, therefore, beyond the capacity of man.

“With Him are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a record clear”. (6: 59)

“Say: None in the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows what is hidden: nor can they perceive when they shall be raised up (for Judgment)”. (27: 65)

“He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make any one acquainted with His Mysteries”. (72: 26)

Third, speculation, conjecture, doubt, imagination, assumption cannot be the sources or origin of the true and authentic knowledge of the metaphysical realities.

“But most of them follow nothing but fancy: truly fancy can be of no avail against truth. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do”. (10: 36)

“But they have no knowledge therein. They follow nothing but conjecture; and conjecture avails nothing against Truth”. (58: 28)

Fourth, God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; He alone possesses the knowledge of the metaphysical realities some of which have been revealed to man through the selected human beings, the Messengers of God.

“Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which ye are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the Unseen. But He chooses of His Messengers (For the purpose) whom He pleases. So believe in Allah and His messengers: And if ye believe and do right, ye have a reward without measure”. (3: 179)

Fifth, it is God who has revealed the relevant knowledge of metaphysical realities through the Qur'an which is now the only authentic source for the guidance of mankind. The Qur'an says that God is the Creator of this world and He alone knows the Truth of this world.

"The Truth is from thy Lord; so be not at all in doubt". (02: 147)

"And Allah by His words doth prove and establish His truth, however much the sinners may hate it!" (10: 82)

"For Him (alone) is prayer in Truth: any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths but it reaches them not: for the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile) wandering (in the mind)". (13: 14)

Sixth, God also endowed man with the capacity for cognition, reflection, observation and understanding, with the ability to distinguish between good and evil, with the freedom of choice and volition, and with the power to exercise his latent potentials. God granted him the power of recognition of the Truth and Falsehood and appointed him His vicegerent on earth.

"Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed, did Allah create the heavens and the earth, and all between them: yet are there truly many among men who deny the meeting with their Lord". (30: 8)

Seventh, man is told that as a vicegerent he is not entitled to consider himself independent and think independently for the development of society because he is not capable to do that. Only God is capable to guide man to the Path of Development as He alone has the knowledge of each and everything of this world. God alone knows what is right and good for man and society. Hence, the

only logical way for man is to seek guidance from God for his own development and happiness.

“Allah doth wish to lighten your (difficulties): for man was created weak”. (04: 28)

“Allah sets forth the Parable of two men: one a slave under the dominion of another; he has no power of any sort; and (the other) a man on whom We have bestowed goodly favors from Ourselves, and he spends thereof (freely), privately and publicly: are the two equal? (By no means;) praise be to Allah. But most of them understand not”. (16: 75)

“Know they not that Allah enlarges the provision or restricts it, for any He pleases? Verily, in this are Signs for those who believe”. (39: 52)

Eighth, life in this world is in fact a temporary term, and is meant to test man. After the end of this earthly life man must return to God, Who will judge him on the basis of his performance in this worldly life. Accordingly, man would be rewarded in the Next world. The coming of the Next world is as real as the existence of this world.

“Every soul shall have a taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of Life): For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception”. (3: 185)

“What they spend in the life of this (material) world May be likened to a wind which brings a nipping frost: It strikes and destroys the harvest of men who have wronged their own souls: it is not Allah that hath wronged them, but they wrong themselves”. (03: 117)

“But when he delivereth them, behold! they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of right! O mankind! Your insolence is against your own souls,- an enjoyment of the life of the present: in the end, to Us is

your return, and We shall show you the truth of all that ye did". (10: 23)

"To the righteous (when) it is said, "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" they say, "All that is good." To those who do good, there is good in this world, and the Home of the Hereafter is even better and excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous". (16: 30)

"O my people! This life of the present is nothing but (temporary) convenience: It is the Hereafter that is the Home that will last". (40: 39)

"But the Hereafter is better and more enduring". (87: 17)

Ninth, the only right way for man to achieve development and success in life and society in this earthly world is to regard God as his only Guide and Lord and His Guidance as the only Source for development, peace, security, justice and happiness in this world and salvation in the Next world. Every other way of thinking and doing is wrong. This is the Truth and Reality of this world.

"And believe no one unless he follows your religion." Say: "True guidance is the Guidance of Allah: (Fear ye) lest a revelation be sent to someone (else) Like unto that which was sent unto you? Or that those (Receiving such revelation) should engage you in argument before your Lord?" Say: "All bounties are in the hand of Allah: He granteth them to whom He pleaseth: And Allah careth for all, and He knoweth all things." (3: 73)

"They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper". (2: 5)

"These are they who have bartered Guidance for error: But their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction". (2: 16)

"Say: "Shall we indeed call on others besides Allah-things that can do us neither good nor harm-and turn

on our heels after receiving guidance from Allah? - like one whom the evil ones have made into a fool, wandering bewildered through the earth, his friends calling, come to us', (vainly) guiding him to the path." Say: "Allah's guidance is the (only) guidance, and we have been directed to submit ourselves to the Lord of the worlds". (6: 71) "

"But Allah doth call to the Home of Peace: He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a way that is straight". (10: 25)

"Say: "Of your 'partners' is there any that can give any guidance towards truth?" Say: "It is Allah Who gives guidance towards truth, is then He Who gives guidance to truth more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How judge ye?" (10: 35)

Tenth, if man follows Truth and lives in accordance with Reality, he can lead his personality, family, society, community, country, culture, civilization etc. in the right direction and bring development and enjoy justice, peace, security and prosperity, otherwise he will turn this world into the world of chaos and crisis—*fitnah* and *fasād*.

"Fasād (corruption) has appeared on land and sea because of the evil which men's hands have done".(30: 41)

Finally, the Qur'an has provided empirical evidences in favor of its claims and asked thinking minds to ascertain and examine both claims and evidences. If they find that their intellectual sense

of curiosity is satisfied with the claims of the Qur'an concerning the Reality, they have to accept the Truth revealed in the Qur'an.⁸

The Qur'an emphatically declares:

“Say: the truth has come and falsehood has disappeared. Falsehood is always bound to wither away”. (17: 81)

“Truth has become [by this revelation] manifestly distinct from error”. (2: 256)

“And We sent down to you clear verses that elucidate the Truth, and which only the transgressors deny”. [2:99]

“In the beginning mankind followed one single way. Then Allah sent forth Prophets as heralds of good tidings for the righteous and as warners against the consequences of evil-doing. He sent down with them the Book embodying the Truth so that it might judge between people in their disputes”. (2: 213)

“We have revealed to you this Book with the Truth”. (4:105)

“We revealed the Book to you with Truth”. (5:48)

Validity of the Qur'anic Claims

Why should one accept the claims of the Qur'an? Are the Truth and Reality revealed by the Qur'an the only Truth and Reality? What is the proof of the truthfulness of the Truth of the Qur'an? What is unique to the claims of the Qur'an? What is wrong if man ignores the claims of the Qur'an? What will happen to man if he neglects the claims of the Qur'an? Is there any

⁸ See for more details on the same subject, Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, Vol. 1, English version of *Tafhīm al-Qur'an*, translated by Zafar Ishaque Ansari, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1988, pp. 9-16

positive/negative effect of the claims of the Qur'an on the earthly life of humanity? One can ask several questions like these before one accepts or rejects the claims of Truth and Reality as identified by the Qur'an.

Welfare and development of humanity is not possible without realizing Truth in human life. Rejection of this Truth is tantamount to inviting people to the life of the existing phenomenon of contemporary world which is full of crisis, crimes, chaos, corruption, confusion, confrontation, conflict, catastrophe, calamity, consumerism, competition, congestion, confusions etc. Are not all these empirical realities and manifestations sufficient evidences of the failure of man for achieving success and development? The global phenomena of crisis and chaos are empirical proof that for success and development man needs true understanding of metaphysical realities. And knowledge and understanding of the metaphysical realities is beyond the capacity of man. He needs to submit to and seek guidance from his Creator, the only Source of All-Knowledge and All-Wisdom. The following verses of the Qur'an bear testimony to that.

“They [angels] said: Glory to You, We have no knowledge except what You taught us. You, only You are All-Knowing, All Wise”. (2: 32)

“He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing”. (2: 137)

“Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing”. (2: 227)

“Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing”. (2: 181)

“Surely, You alone are All-Hearing, All-Knowing”.(3: 35)

Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing. (3: 73)

“He is All-Powerful as well as All-Wise”. (2:220)

“Fear Allah, and know well that Allah has full knowledge of everything”. (2: 231)

“Fear Allah and know well that Allah sees all that you do”. (2: 233)

“Allah has full knowledge of all that you do”. (2: 283)

“There is no God but He; the All-Mighty, the All-Wise”. (3: 6)

Hence, man with his little knowledge cannot design any workable system but rather he needs guidance from God. The Qur’an gives the following challenge to mankind:

“If you are in any doubt whether it is We Who have revealed this book to Our servant, then produce just a sūrah like it, and call all your supporters and seek in it the support of all others save Allah. Accomplish this if you are truthful. But if you fail to do this – and you will most certainly fail – then have fear of the Fire whose fuel is men and stones and which has been prepared for those who deny the Truth”. (2: 23-24)

Metaphysical Realities Are beyond Human Perception

The Qur’anic statement—*“you will most certainly fail”*—as mentioned in the above quotation constitutes a serious challenge. The people surely fail to understand the metaphysical as well as physical realities of this world if they make intellectual efforts without seeking the guidance of God. Man has no capacity to learn the Truth and Reality on his own by applying merely his own intellectual power. It is because the Truth and the Reality belong to the domain of metaphysics—the Unseen, the Ultimate Reality—the *ghayb*. The *ghayb*—the Unseen signifies the verities—such as the existence and attributes of God, the Creator of man and universe, the purpose of creation, the nature of relationship between different creatures, the existence of *ākhirah* [life hereafter], the angels, the process of revelation, Paradise, Hell and so on—which are hidden from man’s senses and which are beyond the scope of man’s ordinary observation and experience. In short, all those things come under the Unseen that cannot be observed, experienced, weighed or measured by human senses or imagined authentically by reason. There is another important question: is there a link between metaphysical truth and truth of life? One cannot understand the Truth and Reality of life without understanding the truth of metaphysical realities –the Unseen. “Since Ultimate Reality is

hidden in this world”, “the superficially minded ones who lack true perception encounter many a thing which causes them to fall a prey to misconceptions. As a result of these misconceptions such persons indulge in a variety of actions which are so blatantly opposed to reality that their life seems to consist merely of sport and pastime”.⁹ Without knowing metaphysical realities man is unable to think and walk in a right direction.

One needs to know the fact of life at the very outset that the real success or failure in life depends on the failure or success in knowing the truth of metaphysical realities. The Qur’an has made it explicitly clear that man by himself is not at all capable to understand the realities of this world. This is the unfortunate phenomenon of humanity that the man of modern world bitterly failed to understand the reality and truth. He ignorantly turned to arrogance and speculation. He declared himself free and at liberty from God and His guidance. He pronounced that he is capable to understand each and every thing of this world by himself. Whereas, God mentioned repeatedly in the Qur’an that He has sent for the guidance of man thousands of Prophets (a.s.) throughout history but man out of his ignorance and arrogance refused to understand this fact of life and developed false understandings and gave them names of knowledge, science, philosophy, metaphysics and ethics. If man can understand the true nature of metaphysical realities then there is no need of Prophets (a.s.) and revealed guidance. Great Prophets like Adam, Idrīs (Enoch), Nūḥ (Noah), Hūd (Heber), Šālīḥ (Methusaleh), Lūṭ (Lot), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Ismā‘īl (Ishmael), Ishāq (Isaac), Ya‘qūb (Jacob), Yūsuf (Joseph), Shu‘ayb (Jethro), Ayyūb (Job), Dhū al-kifl (Ezekiel), Mūsa (Moses), Harūn (Aaron), Dā‘ūd (David), Sulaymān (Solomon), Ilyās (Elias), Al-yasa‘ (Elisha), Yūnus (Jonah), Zakarīyyā (Zachariah), Yaḥyā (John the Baptist), Īsā (Jesus) and Muhammad (a.s.) made a claim that they had been privileged by Allah with the knowledge about the metaphysical realities of this world. They came to explain to mankind the purpose of life. From pure ethical [rational] point of view at the very outset man needs to understand the basis of rational inquiry and settle down the issues of worldview, purpose of life, way of life, and way of development. Commenting one of the verses of the Qur’an Mawdūdī writes:

⁹ Ibid. vol. 2, p. 225.

“It is clearly stated in the Qur’an that man does not even have knowledge of some of the matters that are of the utmost interest to him. This being so, how can he know for sure about this whole Universe? Let us consider some of the obvious limitations of man’s knowledge. For instance, man’s material propriety and adversity depend mainly on rainfall, yet rainfall is totally under God’s control. God causes rain to fall as and when and in the quantity that He wills. He stops it, again at His will. Man does not know where and when it will rain and in what quantity. Nor does man know which part of the earth will remain deprived of rainfall; nor yet, for which part of the earth rainfall would be harmful. Consider another case: a woman becomes pregnant with her husband’s seed. This is the process that perpetuates man’s progeny. Yet neither the husband nor the wife is aware as regards the fetus being nurtured in the womb and what its shape and its good and bad qualities will be at the time it is born. In fact, man does not even know what his next day will be like. A sudden accident can change the entire course of his life. Yet he cannot anticipate that accident even by just a minute before it occurs. Man does not even know where he will breathe his last. All these crucial bits of knowledge rest only with God, man being denied the least bit of such knowledge.”¹⁰ The Unseen [*ghayb*] comprises all things that lie beyond the range of man’s knowledge and which are exclusively known to God. The range of Unseen in this sense is vast: it is veritably limitless.¹¹

Hence, one should know that “God Alone is the Knower of the Unseen World. He alone decides how much of His Knowledge He wants to impart to each individual and which of the Unseen He makes available to one particular individual but none else. But

¹⁰ Ibid. vol. 8, p. 150.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 151.

Knowledge of the Unseen has not been given to any human being in its totality: it is only God Who is the Knower of the Unseen”.¹²

“He has the keys to the realm that lies beyond the reach of human perception; none knows them but He. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea; there is not a leaf which falls that He does not know about...” (6: 58-59)

“Allah is He Who has the Knowledge of the Hour, and it is He Who sends down rain: it is He Who knows what is in the wombs [of the mothers] and no living being knows what will be born tomorrow nor in which place will his death overtake him”. (31: 34)

“He knows both what is visible and what is not visible”. (23: 92)

“Allah is not going to disclose to you what is hidden in the realm beyond the reach of perception, but He chooses from among His Messengers whom He wills [to intimate such knowledge]”. (3: 179)

“Did I not say to you that I know everything about the heavens and the earth which are beyond your range of knowledge and I know all that you disclose and all that you hide”. (2: 33)

“...It may well be that you dislike a thing even though it is good for you, and it may well be that you like a thing even though it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know”. (2:216)

The Qur’an categorically denies the possibility of acquisition of knowledge of the Unseen by created beings; it also specifically states that even the Prophets (a.s.), including the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) are not the “Knowers of the Unseen”.¹³ The philosophers did not realize that they were not capable to understand metaphysical realities.

¹² Ibid. vol. 7, p. 178.

¹³ Ibid. p. 179.

The Link between Metaphysical and Physical Realities

There is a link between metaphysical and physical realities. Without understanding metaphysical realities it is hard to understand correctly in a comprehensive manner the physical realities. This is the reason that in spite of claim of man for scientific understanding and knowledge of several things of this world man is not capable to create a world of peace and prosperity. There is no way for man for development of himself and society except through submission to God and continuously seeking guidance from God individually and collectively. This is the Message that is given by Da'wah to people.

Purpose of Da'wah

The main purpose of Da'wah is to convey to man Truth and Reality of this world. The purpose of calling man is to ask him to reflect on the claims of the Qur'an and convince him that success lies in accepting the Truth and Reality as mentioned in the Qur'an. One can rightly argue here that Da'wah is conducted, in fact, to convince people to come together with each other and create a dialogue for civilizational development.

Another objective of Da'wah is to explain to humanity clearly that there is no other way for mankind for development of their societies except by accepting the Truth. This is the reason that the Qur'an says that the Prophets presented to humanity truth and gave those glad tidings, warn them against the falsehood, and argue with them that they need to understand the truth.

Da'wah is to explain to humanity that if they ignore Truth and consider this earthly life the only life and concentrate all energies on enjoying the fruits of this life, they will not only suffer in this world but also in the life hereafter. This warning was always given by all the Prophets.

Da'wah is in reality a process of liberation of man from the clutches of metaphysical ignorance, speculation and conjecture. It is a movement of Knowledge, Truth and Reality. As a path of knowledge, understanding and Truth, it is calling people to come closer to understand the Truth of the life and make it meaningful so that they can enjoy peace, security, justice, prosperity, development and happiness. The Path of God is in reality the Path of

Knowledge, Truth and Civilization. In this way Da'wah becomes source of justice, prosperity and development.

Da'wah is a program of education. It is educating people to understand their responsibilities as human beings. It is educating people that they should realize that emancipation, mental and physical, is their basic right. They should stand together against the denial of freedom of human beings and work hard, without fear and favor, against speculation, conjecture and ignorance. It is a call to work hard for the elimination of illegal and illegitimate dictators and rulers of this world. It is a call to create consciousness among people so that they can make sure that their political participation is their fundamental right which cannot be taken away at any cost by anybody. Through Da'wah the Islamic Da'wah organizations are inviting people to think how to create an environment of political participation of people in their countries. Da'wah is asking people to guarantee a just world order in which no one is superior and no one is inferior. Everyone is subject to both power of law and Power of God. Everyone is accountable to both people and God. People can decide what kind of system they want and which law is suitable for them.

Conclusion

Da'wah should not be explained and understood in terms of expansion of religion or domination of one religion over all other religions. Nor is it an invitation to the Path of God in a religious sense. If Da'wah is made as an obligation, it is not without any reason. The goal of this obligation is to raise among people the consciousness of civilizational responsibility. As vicegerent of God, people must realize their responsibility concerning development in human societies. Da'wah in fact is an invitation to people to understand Islam as *al-Dīn* – way of life – which stands to explain the Truth of this world. It stands for civilizational development. It liberates mankind from human authorities and takes them under the Authority of God, who guides them to the Path of Peace and Prosperity. This Truth of life was reminded to man again and again throughout history by Messengers. Through this Truth it is “explained to man that if he chooses to adopt the Truth - right way of life –freely, he would enjoy peace and contentment in this world and be rewarded, on his return to God,

the abode of eternal bliss and happiness in the form of Paradise. Should man follow any other way – although he is free to do so – he would experience the evil effects of corruption and disorder in the life of this world and be consigned to eternal grief and torment when he crosses the borders of the present world and arrives in the Hereafter. Islamic Da'wah must be to remind the people that they cannot develop principles of life because they are totally ignorant of the truth about them. It may, then, not be considered as a conversion movement.