

The Future in the Quranic View

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As you may know, Islam, like all other religions, portrays an optimistic picture of the future. This portrayal has been done in the manner most beautiful in the Holy Quran. Therefore, right in the beginning of creation, it is stated that the first creature on earth would be Allah's Caliph;

it was the wish of Allah to appoint His caliph on the earth.

"And when your Lord said to the angels, 'Surely I am going to appoint a Caliph in the earth.'"^[i]

At this juncture, the angels expressed their amazement and Allah replied to their query, which is known to one and all, He said:

"Surely I know what you do not know."

According to the Holy Quran, the aim of creation of mankind on the earth is based on the very appointment of Allah's Caliph. Thus, in the beginning of creation, Allah says, "Surely I am going to appoint a Caliph in the earth." After his advent on the earth, Allah has provided a model for

him so that all may strive to emulate him.

For further understanding of this concept, let me cite an example. Suppose that a person builds a school and expresses his desire to educate students to become engineers, doctors, specialists, etc in it. After the passage of some time, when one student passes out of this institution, the builder of this schools brings him forward and says, 'For him only have we built this institution. All our efforts were directed towards this very individual.'

Some of the traditions that explain the virtues of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and his pure progeny (a.s.) carry a similar meaning. For instance, Allah the Almighty says to the Holy Prophet (s.a.):

"If you were not there, I would not have created the universe."^[ii]

Allah the Almighty created Hazrat Adam (a.s.), the father of humanity, as a role model from all aspects and ordered the others to emulate him and strive to be like him. But as time passed, and other human beings tread on the face of the earth, they failed to emulate their role model, as was expected of them for the fulfillment of the divine promise, and much to the disappointment of the righteous.

Yet, Allah the Benevolent, by sending the other Prophets (peace be on them) to them, indicates that the appointment of His Caliph on the earth is not rendered null and void. Rather, He would send more such people on the earth, who would not only be like His first Caliph, but more perfect.

Some are of the opinion that such verses are only for the gradual finalization of Allah's

Promise. Hence, in the Holy Quran, first He says, "Surely I am going to appoint a Caliph in the earth" and thereafter the Prophets (peace be on them) reminded the people. And when the series of Prophethood reached to Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) and Hazrat Sulayman (a.s.), Allah says, "Surely I have written in the Psalms after the Old Testament that surely the earth, My righteous servants shall inherit it." [iii]

To understand the above verses in their right context and comprehend their relevance, let me cite an example. You loosen the nuts and bolts of this tape-recorder, dismantle it completely, mix it with some additional screws that do not belong to it and tell somebody to assemble it once again in the desired order.

Now, if somebody like me, who is totally ignorant about its technicalities, takes it in his hand, he will never manage to sort out its nuts and bolts with the additional screws or assemble it. But if it is given to somebody who is an expert in this field, immediately, he will get on with the task of separating its nuts and bolts with the additional screws and within no time, he will assemble it and hand it over back to you.

Similarly, the Quranic verses concerning Imamah and Qaumiyyat, are as scattered as the parts of the tape recorder in the above example. As we are unacquainted with Allah's Book, we do not know as to which verse talks about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). But if we hand over these verses to the one who is well familiar with them, he will bring one verse from the beginning, another from the middle and yet another one from the end. He will place about twenty to thirty verses next to each other in such a manner that they will not be applicable for anybody except the Promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.).

From such verses, we can select a few. For instance, "Surely I am going to appoint a Caliph in the earth" being one of them. If you ask what does this verse mean, it will be answered, 'It means that there must be a divine caliph in the earth.' The second verse is that very one which has been discussed above and which states that divine promise is definite. For, Allah the Almighty assures, "And indeed We have written in the Psalms after the Old Testament (in the various exegesis, the word zikr implies both the Old Testament as well as remembrance-its literal meaning) that the earth, it shall be inherited by My righteous servants."

So how much of the earth will they inherit? Is it about three hundred or four hundred meters of a land? No, definitely not. It is not talking about just a piece of land but about the whole earth. The definitive article used in the word 'the earth' is used to connote the whole in Arabic. Thus, the righteous servants of Allah will inherit the entire earth.

In yet another verse, Allah the Almighty prophesies,

Surely the earth is for Allah, He causes it to be inherited by anyone of His servants, as He pleases and the hereafter is for the pious ones."iv Here too the servants have been categorized as the righteous and pious servants. The last part of the verse is a pledge where Allah says that this is My promise to you.

It is better to clarify this point over here that some times we speak in general that I will do this work. But at other times, we say it in the form of a vow. We practice this in our daily lives. For instance, one of our friends usually comes to us and says that 'I intend to invite you'; but this is a general statement. But when? where? Will he not regret? Thus, it is still not a promise. One day he comes and says, 'Sir, please note and remember that I intend to invite you.' Fine, we remember but still he has not taken any commitment from us. But one fine day he comes and takes a promise from us. That is, he says, 'I want to officially invite you all on such and such day, at such and such time, and in so and so place for dinner.' These are the three stages of glad tidings.

Of course, it should be known that there are two kinds of prophecies, one is a promise (wa'd) and another is a threat (waeed). It is certainly better if a threat is not carried out. But if a promise is not fulfilled, it is wrong and evil. In the case of Allah, He has threatened a lot, 'I will throw you in hell, I will punish you,...' but later, He forgives. On account of His being a Forgiver, maybe He does not carry out His threat. But if He does not fulfill His promise, then it is indeed wrong and evil.

Now, when this is clear, Allah the Almighty, promises,
"Allah has promised those of you who believe and perform good deeds." [v]

In the beginning, He said,
'Surely I am going to appoint a Caliph in the earth'
but now He says,
"Allah has promised those of you who believe and perform good deeds that He will certainly appoint them as heirs in the earth as He has appointed as heirs those before them (one type of such caliphs were Prophets Dawood and Sulayman (a.s.)) and certainly He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them."

Where in the Holy Quran has this chosen religion been mentioned? It is mentioned in the following verse,
"Today, I have perfected for you your religion, completed My bounties upon you and chosen for you Islam as a religion." [vi]

So in this verse, it has been explained in clear terms as to which is the religion chosen by Allah for His servants.

Thereafter, He says, "And He will surely convert their fear into security". What does fear and security imply in this verse? Fear is a general term e.g. fear of hunger, fear of insecurity, fear of world war, fear of an atomic war, etc. All these are fears and hence Allah promises that He will convert their fear into security. In other words, We will change the atmosphere of fear and .insecurity into one of security and comfort

The verse continues, "(as) they worship only Me, do not associate anything with Me. Then whoever disbelieves after that, then indeed these are the transgressors."

Therefore, all the above are promises of Allah. Now let us see, whether these statements are definite promises of Allah, tantamount to His Intention, or they are just general statements made by Him. In this regard, there is another verse that pledges, "And We intend to oblige those who have been rendered weak in the earth and that We make them the Imams and We make them the heirs. And We will establish them in the earth and We will show Firaon, Hamaan and their armies what they were dreading from them."[\[vii\]](#)

It should be known that the word "mustaz'af" does not mean weak. Rather, its true connotation would be those who have become weak willingly and voluntarily or have been rendered weak. For, it is possible that those who have preferred to remain weak willingly could be strong and (.powerful. (They have preferred being the oppressed one rather than the oppressor

This article is excerpted from " DISCUSSIONS ON IMAM-E-ZAMAN

Notes

[\[i\]](#) Baqarah: 30

[\[ii\]](#) Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 15, p. 28

[\[iii\]](#) Anbiyaa: 105

[\[iv\]](#) A'raaf: 128

[\[v\]](#) Noor: 55

[\[vi\]](#) Maaedah: 3

[\[vii\]](#) Qasas: 5,6