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Lessons from the Missions of Prophets Nūḥ and Hūd to the Contemporary Missionaries

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Abstract

Prophets Nūḥ and Hūd were representatives of Allah sent purposely to promote oneness of Allah and abhor various forms of indecency that were the order of the day in their communities. However, their messages were not received raptly by their people except a few weak people while the affluent among them flagrantly rejected the da‘wah. They mocked the prophets, ridiculed them, cast aspersions on them, derided them and labelled them. Yet, the Prophets were resilient, patient, consistent and steadfast in the delivery of the divine messages. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to infer lessons from the teachings of the duo for the benefit of the contemporary missionaries who also experience similar misdemeanours, pioneered by the disciples of the two Prophets, from the recipients of da‘wah. Through the use of historical method, this work unfolded that the ordeal of the two Prophets is replete with abundant lessons that can be harnessed to transform the contemporary missionaries for positive influence of their immediate environment.

Keywords: *Missionary, Prophet Nūḥ, Prophet Hūd, Revelation, Da‘wah.*

Introduction

The Glorious Qur'an is a divine book that embodies all aspects of Islam in order to serve as guidance to all. It reports the past events to affirm that the purpose of storytelling approach of the Qur'an is to draw lessons from the past history. Commenting on this approach of the Qur'an, As-Sayūti remarks thus:

إن القصص التي قصها الله تعالى عن الأمم الماضية وما عاقبهم به ظاهرها الإخبار
بهلاك الأولين وباطنها وعظ الآخرين وتحذيرهم أن يفعلوا كفعلهم فيحل بهم مثل ما
حل بهم.

Indeed, the manifest (message) of the stories narrated by Allah in the Qur'an about the past nations and their consequence is reportage of the devastation of the first generation while their hidden (message) is an admonition for other generations as well as warning so as to stay away from their doing to avoid the replica of what happened to them.¹

It is therefore lucid clear that the History has been a source of connecting the past with the present and the present with the future. In order words, it benefits the modern world by letting them draw lessons from the past. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to deduce lessons from the teachings of Prophets Nūḥ and Ḥūd for the benefit of the contemporary missionaries who also encounter shenanigans from the populace in the course of communicating divine message to the people. To achieve this, the paper x-rayed the significance of revelation via its discussion of the controversies surrounding reasoning and revelation, duties of the Prophets, missions of Prophets Nūḥ and Ḥūd and the lessons embedded in their experience.

Reasoning versus Revelation

The debate on the superiority of human reasoning over divine revelation is an unending controversy. Some sects including *Mu'tazilites*, who champion the course of superiority of reasoning, express the view that there is no rationale behind sending a prophet to any nation. They contend that the faculty of reasoning endowed on man by the Creator suffices to guide man to the righteous path. They also posited that giving preference to reasoning whenever there is a seemingly contradiction between revelation and reasoning is one of the graces of Allah.² However, this opinion is obsessed with flaw. This is because reasoning alone cannot grasp the true way of worshipping Allah. In addition, it cannot differentiate between what is good and bad. This limitation of human reasoning in

¹ A.K.As-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūmi'l-Qur'ān*, Vol.2, (n.p.:n.d.), 184.

² Retrieved from Sekhama.com/index.php?com on 2/01/2014.

many circumstances is a pointer to the wisdom behind institution of prophet-hood. Like Brahmins, who claimed that sending the messengers was a folly which did not befit Allah, they promulgate laws and dictate what is permitted and forbidden based on their reasoning.³

In contrary, some people also assert that revelation renders human reasoning useless reason and extinguishes its light, causing it to become inefficient and ineffective. This claim is also of no basis because Divine revelation instructs reasoning to ponder over the earth, universe and revealed Book itself. Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl opines that reason confirms revelation.⁴

According to ‘Umar Al-Ashqar, reasoning has its own specialized field; if it works outside that field, then it will go wrong and will become extremely confusing. If it works outside its own field, it will stumble and it will not be able to go far. If it is expected to do more than it is able to, this will result in failure and exhaustion.⁵ This opinion implies that reasoning cannot be divorced from understanding revelation. It is on this background that Ar-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī declares:

لله عز وجل إلى خلقه رسولان أحدهما من الباطن وهو العقل والثاني من الظاهر وهو الرسول ولا سبيل لأحد إلى الانتفاع بالرسول الظاهر مالم يتقدم الانتفاع بالباطن فالباطن يعرف صحة دعوى... فالعقل رائد والدين مدد ولولم يكن العقل لم يكن الدين باقيا، ولم يكن الدين لأصبح العقل حائرا كما قال الله تعالى: "... نور على نور..." Allah, the exalted be He, has two messengers to His creatures. One of (these messengers) is from inside (which is the reasoning) while the other is from outside (which is the messenger). Thus, there is no way for anybody to embrace the exterior messenger (revelation) prior to that of interior. (This is because) the interior confirms the validity of the claim of exterior. Reason is pacesetter while the *dīn* (revelation) is *madad*. Had not been the reason, the *dīn* (religion or revelation) would not be subsisting. Also, had not been the *dīn* (religion or revelation), the reason would be irresolute as stated by Allah, "...Light upon light..." Q24:35⁶

³ M.A. As-Safarīnī, *Lawāmi' al- 'Anwār al-Bahīyyah wa sawāṭi' al- 'Asrār al-Bahīyyah*, Vol.2, (Damascus, Mu'assasah al-Khāfiqīn, 1982), 256.

⁴ M.A. As-Safarīnī, *Lawāmi' al- 'Anwār al-Bahīyyah wa sawāṭi' al- 'Asrār al-Bahīyyah*, ...256.

⁵ U.S. Al-'Ashqar, *Ar-Rusul wa'r-Risālāt*, N.al-Khattab (Trans.), *The Messengers and the Messages*, (Riyadh: I.I.P.H., 2005), 37.

⁶ A. Al-'Ajamiyy, *Adh-dharī'ah 'ilā Makārim ash-Sharī'ah*, (Cairo: Dār aṣ-Ṣaḥwah, n.d.), 207.

This position of ar-Rāghib is further reiterated and strengthened by 'Imām Ghazālī as follows:

أن لاغنى بالشرع عن العقل ولا بالعقل عن الشرع (فإن العلوم العقلية كالأغذية والعلوم الشرعية كالأدوية والشخص المريض يستضر بالغذاء متى فاته الدواء) وننكر على من يظن أن العلوم العقلية منتقضة للعلوم الشرعية وأن الجمع بينهما غير ممكن وهو في رأينا ظن صادر عن عى في عين البصيرة

The Islamic law is not sufficient without reason and reason also is not sufficient without Islamic law (indeed, the psychological sciences are like nutrition while Islamic laws are like drug. The sick person is impaired with food whenever he misses drug). We therefore castigate those who assume that psychological sciences contradict Islamic sciences and impossibility of harmonizing between the duos. It is therefore conjuncture, in our opinion, that emanates from the blind man with two eyes.⁷

'Imām Ghazālī further explicates his view of impossibility of dissociation of reason in understanding *Sharī'ah* as follows:

اعلم أن العقل لن يهتدي إلا بالشرع والشرع لم يتبين إلا بالعقل فالعقل كالأس والشرع كالبناء ولن يغنى أس مالم يكن بناء ولن يثبت بناء مالم يكن أس وأيضا فالعقل والشرع كالشعاع ولن يغني البصر مالم يكن شعاع من خارج

Know that reason cannot come up with guidance save with the aid of *shar'* (revelation) nor *shar'* (revelation) can discern save with the aid of reason. Reason is like foundation while *shar'* (revelation) is like building. Foundation can not avail itself without building as building cannot be steady without foundation. Also the reason is like the sight while the revelation is like beam. The sight can not avail without beam at the outside.⁸

However, we posit the view that following revelation solely is guidance and foresight and any one that is left without guidance is left behind. Thus, Sayyid Quṭb, like many other orthodox scholars, submits that knowledge cannot render revelation irrelevant and out dated. He expressed his view as follows:

والذين يزعمون أن الفلسفة تغني العقل عن الدين أو أن العلم هو من منتجات العقل يغني البشرية عن هدى الله إنما يقولون قولاً لا سند له من الحقيقة ولا من الواقع

⁷ M.M.Imām Ghazālī, 'Iḥyā' 'Ulūmi d-dīn, (Bayrūt: Dāru'l-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 208.

⁸ M.M.Imām Ghazālī, *Ma'ārij al-Qudus*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Afāq, n.d.), 57.

كذلك فالواقع يشهد أن الحياة البشرية التي قامت أنظمتها على المذاهب أو على العلم أبأس حياة يشقى فيها مهما فتحت عليه أبواب كل شيء ومهما تضاعف الإنناج والإيراد والعقل بمصاحبة وحي الله وهداه بصير ويترك وحي الله وهداه أعى.

Those who claim that philosophy has rendered religion irrelevant to mankind or that knowledge which is the product of the reason has made mankind independent of the divine guidance. They are uttering statement which has no chain in the truth and reality. The reality has shown that human life whose system is based on philosophical schools or science will be a miserable life of suffering no matter how wide the doors of everything may have been open for it and no matter how surplus its products and exports may seem to him. Therefore, the reason which conforms with the revelation and guidance amounts to sagacity, while reason without revelation and guidance leads to blindness.⁹

In spite of the above submissions of the renowned scholars, reason has limitation in grasping the truth without revelation. In an attempt to point out this, Ibn Taymiyyah declares:

الأنبياء جاءوا بما تعجز العقول عن معرفته ولم يجيئوا بما تعلم العقول بطلانه...

The Prophets came with what paralyze the precognition of the reasons and not with what can be null by the reasons

In a nutshell, the need for prophethood cannot be over emphasized, as would be seen below

Duties of Prophet-hood

The limitation of human reason in many circumstances shows the rationale behind the institution of prophet-hood. The Prophets were therefore sent to discharge the following duties:

- Disseminating the message of Allah: This implies reciting and explaining the texts of the books sent by Allah to them without adding anything or taking something away from the scripture. It also signifies the act of explaining the revelation which Allah has sent down in concise terms. Allah says:

O Messenger! Proclaim the (message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. And Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allah guideth not those who reject faith. Q5 : 67.

⁹ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*,...1098.

• Calling people to Allah: The Prophets were also asked to invite people to follow their call and respond to it, apply it in belief, word and deed. In this regard, they set out from the same starting point. The Qur'ān says:

For we assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command); Serve Allah, and eschew evil: of the people were some whom Allah guided, and some on whom error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth). Q16:36

• Purifying people's souls from vices: The role of the prophets is not limited only to conveying the message and calling people to Allah but also reviving their souls through revelation. The Qur'ān says:

It is He who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in scripture and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error Q62:2

• Rebuking bogus beliefs: In the onset, human beings were worshipping Allah alone without associating partner with Him. They, however, later deviated from the right path. This accounts for the need of messengers to rescue them from misguidance. Thus, different messengers were sent to them to urge them to discontinue polytheism and turn to the worship of Allah. Notable among the Prophets sent by Allah are Nūḥ and Hūd whose missions are under review.

Prophet Nūḥ and his Mission

For many generations after the demise of Prophet Ādam, human beings had deviated from the right path. They had been worshipping statues that they called gods. They believed that these gods would bring good to them, protect them from evils and make provision for all their desires.¹⁰ The names of these idols were Wadd, Suwā', Ya'ūq, Yaghūth and Nasr (Q71:23). According to As-Sa'dī, these were the names of the righteous people who had lived among them before they were instigated by devil (*Shayṭan*) to sculpture them in order to keep their memories alive.¹¹ This indeed marked the onset of worshipping idols. *Shayṭan* was happy because he had succeeded in misleading them. Hence, the situation of social and moral health began to deteriorate. The people adopted the wrong path and indulged in corruption as well as depravity. Thus, oppression and injustice in all its ramifications were the order of the day.¹²

¹⁰ I. Ibn Kathīr, *Stories of the Prophets*, (Riyadh: Dār As-Salām, 774A.H.),21.

¹¹ A.N. As- Sa'dī, *Taysīru Kalāmi'r-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Kalāmi'l-Mannān*, Vol.1, (Saudi: Mu'assasatur-Risālah, 2000), 889.

¹² I. Ibn, Kathīr *Stories of the Prophets*,...3.

Allah (S.W.T.) was not pleased with the atmosphere of the people and sent Prophet Nūḥ, who was the first Messenger on the earth after the indulgence in polytheism, to guide them to the right path. Like other prophets, Prophet Nūḥ was an outspoken man, very patient, pious, sincere and trustworthy. He therefore aimed at reforming the mischievous acts of his people as he was commanded to do. Because of his strong will and determination to convert all people into his fold, he introduced himself to them as a Messenger of Allah, a bearer of warning and glad tidings. He kept preaching *'Imān* and exhorted people to refrain from worshipping gods (Q71:3). The Qur'ān affirms these endeavours of winning the heart of his people thus:

We sent Noah to his people (with the command): Do thou warn thy people before there comes to them a grievous penalty. He said: "O my people! I am to you a warner, clear and open: That ye should worship Allah, fear Him and obey me . So He may forgive you your sins and give you respite for a stated term: for when the term given by Allah is accomplished, it cannot be put forward: if ye only knew. He said: "O my Lord! I have called my people night and Day. Q71:1-5

In another chapter, the Qur'ān says:

We sent Noah to his people (with a mission): I have come to you with a clear warning. That ye serve none but Allah. Verily, I do fear for you the penalty of a grievous Day. Q11:25

However, the Prophet was opposed by many of his people. They made fun of him and ridiculed him. The leaders of the unbelievers among them insulted him and they were heedless to his message. The Qur'ān portrays their attitude as follows:

But the Chiefs of the unbelievers among his people said: We see (in) thee nothing but a man like ourselves: nor do we see that any follow thee but the meanest among us, in judgment immature: nor do we see in you (all) any merit above us: In fact we think ye are liars! Q11:27

Ar- Rāzī glosses over the above verses and observes the following:

اعلم أنه تعالى لما حكى عن نوح عليه السلام أنه دعا قومه إلى عبادة الله تعالى حكى عنهم أنهم طعنوا في نبوته بثلاثة أنواع من الشبهات. فالشبهة الأولى : أنه بشر مثلهم... والشبهة الثانية : كونه ما أتبعه إلا أرادل من القوم كالحياكة وأهل الصنائع الخسيسة ، قالوا ولو كنت صادقاً لاتبعك الأكياس من الناس والأشراف منهم. والشبهة الثالثة لا

نرى لكم علينا من فضل لا في العقل ولا في رعاية المصالح العاجلة ولا في قوة الجدل
فإذا لم نشاهد فضلك علينا في شيء من هذه الأحوال الظاهرة فكيف نعتز بفضلك
علينا في أشرف الدرجات وأعلى المقامات

Know that when the exalted be He, relates about (Prophet) Nūḥ that he invited his people to worshipping of Allah, the exalted be He, reported that they questioned his prophecy on the basis of three kinds of suspicions. The first suspicion was that he is a mortal like them... And the second suspicion was that none followed him but meanest among the people like the weavers and those that produce minor tools. They held that if you (Prophet) are truthful, the witty and honourable people would have followed you. The third suspicion: We do not see any superiority in your people over us in terms of intellect, addressing urgent matters or in the power of argument. Thus, since we see not in you any merit above us in any of these obvious conditions, how can we admit your superiority over us in rank and position?¹³

Similarly, Sayyid Quṭb explicated those suspicions particularly that of their claim that Prophet Nūḥ is a man who could not receive inspiration from Allah. He posits:

إنها الشبهة التي وقرت في نفوس جهال البشر : أن الجنس البشري أصغر من حمل
رسالة الله؛ فإن تكن رسالة فليحملها ملك أو مخلوق آخر . وهي شبهة جاهلة ، مصدرها
عدم الثقة بهذا المخلوق الذي استخلفه الله في أرضه ، وهي وظيفة خطيرة ضخمة ، لا
بد أن يكون الخالق قد أودع في هذا الإنسان ما يكافئها من الاستعداد والطاقة... وشبهة
أخرى جاهلة كذلك . هي أنه إذا كان الله يختار رسولاً ، فلم لا يكون من بين هؤلاء الملأ
الكبراء في قومهم ، المتسلطين العالين؟ وهو جهل بالقيم الحقيقية لهذا المخلوق
الإنساني ، والتي من أجلها استحق الخلافة في الأرض بعمومه ، واستحق حمل رسالة
الله بخصوصيته في المختارين من صفوفه . وهذه القيم لا علاقة لها بمال أو جاه أو
استطالة في الأرض

Indeed, this is the suspicion established in the minds of the ignorant people: To assume that the human race is too low to bear the message of Allah. If it was a message, it should be brought by an Angel or another creature (better than human being). This is,

¹³ F.M. Ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥul-Ghayb*, Vol.1, (Bayrūt: Dārul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2000),2434

indeed, an ignorant suspicion propelled by the absence of confidence in the creature made as vicegerent on the earth by Allah. It (prophecy) is a critical and enormous duty which requires the Creator to equip man with disposition and power to discharge it. The other allegation is equally born out of ignorance. That if God wants to choose a messenger, why not from among the elderly chiefs who exercise power and influence in their community. This is an ignorance of the honour bestowed on human race which makes them eligible to vicegerency on earth and to messengership. These values have nothing to do with wealth, position or influences in the earth.¹⁴

Yet, Prophet Nūḥ did not relent. He started investing all his time and effort to warn his people. Amazingly, the Prophet had distinction of warning his people for an extremely long period of a millennium.¹⁵ His earnest call should have melted their hearts and stirred their souls to respond properly. However, the more he called them, the more they ran away from him. Qur'ān 11: 27 reveals the reaction of the Nūḥ's people and spells out the basic reason for their denial, pride and air organs.

Sūrat Nūḥ shows that Prophet Nūḥ augmented and launched an extensive effort to plead to his nation. He did not get frustrated at the obstinacy of his people, in fact the more they evaded his calls, the more he increased his pitch and the more hostility they showed to him, the more gracious he became. Allah confirms different ways employed by him thus:

So I have called them aloud. Further I have spoken to them in public and secretly in private. Saying, ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is Oft-Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance, give you increase in wealth and sons; and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers (of flowing water). Q 71:8-14

Commenting on the above verses, Sayyid Quṭb illustrated:

ومع الدأب على الدعوة ... اتبع نوح عليه السلام كل الأساليب فجهر بالدعوة تارة ، ثم زاجح بين الإعلان والإسرار تارة وفي أثناء ذلك كله أطمعهم في خير الدنيا والآخرة . أطمعهم في الغفران إذا استغفروا ربهم فهو سبحانه غفار للذنوب وأطمعهم في الرزق الوفير الميسور من أسبابه التي يعرفونها ويرجونها وهي المطر الغزير ، الذي تنبت به

¹⁴ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol.4,...211.

¹⁵ See Q29:14.

الزروع ، وتسيل به الأنهار ، كما وعدهم برزقهم الآخر من الذرية التي يحبونها وهي
البنين والأموال التي يطلبونها ويعزونها

And with perseverance on *da'wah*,... (Prophet) Nūḥ (A.S.) adopted all methods. Sometimes, he invited publicly and mixed both public and secret invitations in other time. And on each occasion, he assured them of good in this world and hereafter. He assured them of forgiveness if they seek forgiveness of their Lord who is Oft-Forgiver of the sins. He assured them of obtainable opulent sustenance in which one of its causes they knew and sought for is profuse rain with which crops germinate and rivers flow. He equally assured them with another provision that is beloved to them which are the children and the assets they seek and extol.¹⁶

The people of Nūḥ, like other arrogant nations created by Allah, had become deeply engrossed in their misdeeds. They considered the day of judgement as a doubtful day. Thus, Prophet Nūḥ proceeded in giving them detailed accounts of Allah's blessings with a view to enabling them to give heed to the admonition, grasp His magnanimity and appreciate Allah's generosity and countless favours on them.¹⁷ Just like all the Messengers of Allah have been slandered, the people of Prophet Nūḥ did the same and cast numerous aspersions in him as stated earlier. This is depicted in Qur'ān 7: 60. The Prophet, who had been strengthened like all other prophets with unending perseverance, firm resolution and adherence in all conditions, responded to their aspersion in courteous manner:

He said: "O my people! No wandering is there in my (mind): on the contrary I am an apostle from the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds! I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: sincere is my advice to you, and I know from Allah something that ye know not. Q7: 62

However, it is noted that concerns like greed for leadership, longing for wealth and expectation hold people back from trusting others to such an extent that people do not expect others to do another a favour unless a person's interest is in question. The Prophet however, expected their recompense from Allah Alone and stressed that they do not demand anything from people.¹⁸ Therefore, Prophet Nūḥ

¹⁶ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol.7,...346.

¹⁷ Retrieved from www.renaissance.com.pk/maappen12y2.html on 5/02/2014.

¹⁸ Ibid.

said to his people who requested him to drive away the abject people who admired his invitation and followed him:

And O my people! I ask you for no wealth in return: My reward is from none but Allah. But I will not drive away (in contempt) those who believe: for verily they are to meet their Lord, and ye I see are the ignorant ones! And O my people! Who would help me against Allah if I drove them away? Will ye not then take heed? I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor do I know what is hidden, nor claim I to be an angel. Nor yet do I say, of those whom your eyes do despise that Allah will not grant them (all) that is good: Allah knoweth best what is in their souls: I should, if I did, indeed be a wrong-doer. Q11: 29 – 31

Having said this, Prophet Nūḥ also persisted in employing other ways and tried all courses to ensure submission of his people to the will of Allah. However, his people insisted on disbelief, insolence,, mockery and humiliation of the believers. The cyclorama of their reaction to the above verses is given thus by Sayyid Qutb:

وعند هذا الحد كان الملام من قوم نوح قد يئسوا من مناهضة الحجة بالحجة ، واستكبروا أن تغليهم الحجة ، وأن يدعنوا للبرهان العقلي والفطري . وإذا هم يتركون الجدل إلى التحدي : { قالوا : يا نوح قد جادلتنا ، فأكثر جدالنا ، فأتنا بما تعدنا إن كنت من الصادقين } وأنزل بنا العذاب الأليم الذي أذرتنا به فلسنا نصدقك ، ولسنا نبالي وعيدك .

At this moment, notables among the people of Nūḥ have despaired of resisting proof with proof and felt arrogant to admit defeat and to yield to the logical and natural proofs. Thus, they left argument and resorted to challenging (Prophet Nūḥ) saying: “Nūḥ, they replied, you have argued with us and argued to excess. Bring upon us that with which you have been threatening us if you are a man of truth. Send down the painful torment to us because we will not accept your (message) and we will not bother about your threat¹⁹

Despite this outright rejection of Prophet Nūḥ (A.S.), he continued to divulge the truth and facts which they have ignored. In other words, he maintained the attitude of the Prophets towards their people who immersed in the *jāhiliyyah*.

¹⁹ Sayyid Qutb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, Vol.4,...214-215.

Prophet Nūḥ reacted to their demand with mild words and restated that the decision to punish them or delay the torment lies in the hand of Allah. He explained further without being deterred from fulfilling his task (Q11: 33 -34). However, all the efforts of Prophet Nūḥ, who tarried among them a thousand years less fifty, were fruitless. He was therefore inspired by Allah that those who are susceptible to Divine religion have been embraced while others would not turn away from their aberrance. Hence, Nūḥ should grieve no longer about their evil deeds (Q11:36).

He therefore prayed for their destruction (Q71: 26 -27). As a result of this, he was instructed to construct an ark as contained below:

But construct an Ark under our eyes and our inspiration, and address me no (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the Flood). Forthwith he (starts) constructing the Ark: every time that the Chiefs of His people passed by him, they threw ridicule on Him. He said: "If ye ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise!" But soon will ye know who it is on whom will descend a penalty that will cover them with shame,- on whom will be unloosed a penalty lasting:". At length, behold! There came our command, and the fountains of the earth gushed forth! We said: "Embark therein, of each kind two, male and female, and your family - except those against whom the word has already gone forth,- and the believers." But only a few believed with him. So he said: "Embark ye on the Ark, in the name of Allah, whether it move or be at rest! For my Lord is, be sure, Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful! So the Ark floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest): "O My son! Embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers!" Q11: 37 -42.

Abū Shu‘bah made the following observation on the afore-quoted verses:

فمن الإسرائيليات التي اشتملت عليها بعض كتب التفسير: كابن جرير و(الدر المنثور) ما روي في سفينة نوح ؛ فقد أحاطوها بهالة من العجائب والغرائب؛ من أي خشب صنعت؟ وما طولها؟، وما عرضها؟، وما ارتفاعها؟، وكيف كانت طبقاتها؟ وذكروا خرافات في خلقه بعض الحيوانات من الأخرى، وقد بلغ ببعض الرواة أنهم نسبوا بعض هذا إلى النبي قال صاحب (الدر المنثور) وأخرج أبو الشيخ وابن مردويه عن ابن عباس

{عن النبي قال: "كانت سفينة نوح لها أجنحة، وتحت الأجنحة إيوان" أقول: قَبَّحَ الله من نسب هذا إلى النبي وذكر ابن مردويه أن طول السفينة كان ثلاثمائة ذراع، وعرضها خمسون ذراعًا وطولها في السماء ثلاثون ذراعًا، وبابها في عرضها.

Some *Isrā'iliyyāt* which some books of *tafsīr* like Tafsīr of Ibn Jarīr and *Ad-Durru al-Manthūr* contained is what is related about the ark of Nūḥ (A.S.) which was enclosed with amazing and strange narrations like from which wood was it built? What was its length? What was its breadth? What was its height? And how were its layers? And they mentioned many tales in the creation of some animals from others. And indeed some of these narrators reached the level of ascribing some of them to the Prophet (S.A.W). The author of *Ad-Dur* says: Abū Shaykh related and Ibn Marduwayh from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that the Prophet (S.A.W) says: The ark of Nūḥ (A.S) had wings while magnificent building is underneath it . I (Abū Shuhbah) say may Allah reproach whosoever ascribes the like of this to the Prophet (S.A.W). And also Ibn Marduwayh mentioned that the length of the ark is 300 arms, its breath is 50 arms while its height is 30 arms.²⁰

It could be deduced from the above quoted verses that Prophet Nūḥ carried out instructions as they were given to him. Thus, the ark, which floated under God's watchful eyes, was sailed. Therefore, the unbelievers who did not have confidence in Nūḥ's call failed to embark on the ark and they were drowned. Among the people that refused to enter the ark was Nūḥ's rebellious son. The parental emotion made Prophet Nūḥ to call out his stray child:

...And Nūḥ called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest): "O my son! Embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers. Q11:47

Al- Alūsī observed the following on the passionate call of Prophet Nūḥ to his son:

وقال بعض المحققين : إن هذا النداء إنما كان قبل الركوب في السفينة والواو لا تدل على الترتيب

²⁰ M.M.Maḥmūd, *Al- 'Isrā'iliyyāt al-latī wradat fī Qiṣṣat Nūḥ*, (Malaysia, College of the Humanities, n.d.), 1.

Some researchers said that the call (of Nūḥ to his son) was before boarding the ark and the letter *waw* does not suggest sequence.²¹

Upon this father's plea, the conceited son argued:

The son replied: I will betake myself to some mountain: it will save me from the water. Noah said: "This Day nothing can save, from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy! And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the flood. Q11: 43 – 43

Then, Nūḥ was emotionally disturbed and felt sad with the outcome of the punishment because of inclusion of his son among the infidels. Both son and wife of Prophet Nūḥ were betrayals and they witnessed several punishment. Concerning the situation of the son, Nūḥ wanted to save him from the blazing punishment but he couldn't. Nūḥ and the believers were saved while the disbelievers were destroyed. After a long time the people began to engross in sinful acts again.

Prophet Hūd and his Mission

Hūd was a Prophet sent to Banī 'Ād for their reformation. His name is Hūd bn Nūḥ (A.S.) and he was from a clan called 'Ād bn 'Awd bn Sām bn Nūḥ.²² The 'Ād were part of Nūḥ's offspring who dispersed on earth, as were the *thamūd* and the *duos* belonged to *jāhiliyyah*. The worshipping of statues by the two tribes came after a time when they once believed in one God.²³ In other words, Shayṭān made their deeds alluring to them and this led to their deviation from the right path.

The 'Ād was a tribe living at al-'Aḥqāf, or the sand dunes in the south of the Arabian Peninsula and were believed to belong to the fourth generation from Prophet Nūḥ.²⁴ They were extremely powerful and wealthy, tall in stature and they built numerous buildings and monuments to show their prowess.²⁵ Hence, their success blinded them, their wealth ultimately proved to be their failure, as they denied the favours of Allah on them and forsook His worship and began to adopt deities for worship.²⁶ Therefore, Allah raised Hūd as a Prophet from among them in order to warn them. The Qur'ān states:

²¹ S.M. Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥu 'l-Ma 'ānī fī Tafsīri 'l-Qur 'ānī 'l-'Azīm wa's- Sab 'il-Mathānī*, Vol.8, (n.p.n.d), 242. Accessed at Al-Maktabatu-sh-Shāmilah software.

²² M. Sayyid Ṭanṭāwī, *At-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ*, Vol.1 (n.p.n.d.),2220. Accessed at Al-Maktabatu-sh-Shāmilah software.

²³ M. Sayyid Ṭanṭāwī, *At-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ*,...2220

²⁴ I.Z.Aliagan and M.A. Adedimeji, *Stories from the Qur 'ān*, (Ilorin: N.N.I. Press Limited, 2011), 47.

²⁵ I.Z.Aliagan and M.A. Adedimeji, *Stories from the Qur 'ān*,... 47.

²⁶ A.W. An-Najār, *Qaṣaṣ al-Ambiyā 'i*, (Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1986), 82

To the 'Ad people (we sent) Hūd, one of their own brethren. He said: "O my people! Worship Allah ye have no other god but Him. (your other gods) ye do nothing but invent! O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (message). My reward is from none but Him who created me: Will ye not then understand? "And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: so turn ye not back in sin! Q11:50-52

According to Sayyid Ṭantāwī, the 'Ād in the verse refers to the first 'Ād, the nation of Prophet Hūd.²⁷ Hūd commences his call, recognizing that he and his people belong to the same community who are united together by ties of family, clan, tribes and land. Allah states: "To 'Ād, we sent their brothers Hūd "(Q11:50). In the same way as Nūḥ was previously sent to his people, he said: "My people!". His appeal is friendly, reminding them of the ties that unite them together so that they may have confidence in what he said: "'Worship God Alone; you have no deity other than him'" (Q11:50). These are the very same words with which every messenger addressed his people.

Having invited them to worship Allah without any associate and seek for forgiveness for their past sins, the people of 'Ād laughed at him. They equally wondered why Hūd wanted to abandon the gods of their ancestors. More so, majority of them refuted to pay any notice to his teachings and they kept ignoring and mocking all he said. For instance, his people claimed that he was a fool.²⁸

Hūd then hurried to make it concise to the people that he is giving them honest and sincere counsel, for no ulterior motive, and that he seeks no reward from them but from God. He further reminded his people of Allah's blessings on them and they would have the rain they need for their farm and animals. Also, their strength, for which they were renowned, would certainly increase. He warned them against being arrogant but they refused to abandon the state of ignorance that had been part and parcel of them. Hūd also reminded them of what happened to Nūḥ's people when they rejected Allah's message.²⁹

However, his people entertained bad thought and looked at him with disdain. Their response was that:

They said: "O Hud! No clear (sign) that hast thou brought us, and we are not the ones to desert our gods on thy word! Nor shall we believe in thee!" We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our

²⁷ M. Sayyid Ṭantāwī, *At-Taḥsīn al-Wasīl*, Vol.1 ...2220

²⁸ See Q7:67-68

²⁹ See Q46:23

gods may have seized thee with imbecility." He said: "I call Allah to witness, and do ye bear witness, that I am free from the sin of ascribing, to him. Q11:52-54

Al-'Alūsī illustrates the verses thus:

{قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا هُوَ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ} أي بحجة واضحة تدل على صحة دعواك، وإنما قالوه لفرط عنادهم أو لشدة عماهم عن الحق وعدم نظرهم في الآيات فاعتقدوا أن ما هو آية ليس بآية {وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي * ءَالِهَتِنَا} أي بتاركي عبادتها {عَنْ قَوْلِكَ} أي بسبب قولك المجرد عن البينة

They said: O our father Hūd! No clear evidence have you brought to substantiate the authenticity of your invitation (*da'wah*). They said this in expressing their excessive adamance or their blindness from the truth as well as the absence of their mind in glancing the evidences and believed that the proof is not an evidence. And we shall not give up the worshipping of our lord for the sake of your mere utterance without evidence.³⁰

In the same vein, Ash-Sha'rāwī opined that the people of 'Ād denied the reality of miracle (*mu'jizah*) provided by Prophet Hūd but he provided them miracle without announcing it to them. He remarks:

والبينة كما نعلم هي الأمانة الدالة على صدق الرسول. وصحيح أن هوداً هنا لم يذكر معجزته؛ وتناسوا أن جوهر أي معجزة هو التحدي... إذن: فالبينة التي جاء بها هود عليه السلام أنه وقف أمامهم ودعاهم إلى ترك الكفر؛ وهو تحدي القادرين عليه؛ لأنهم أهل طغيان؛ وأهل بطش؛ ومع ذلك لم يقدروا عليه؛ مثلما لم يقدر كفار قريش على رسولنا صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The miracle as we know is the sign confirming the veracity of the Messenger. The authentic statement is that Hūd did not point out his miracle while his people forgot that the challenge is a miracle. Consequently, the proof brought by Prophet Hūd is that he stood before them and urged them to give up infidelity. He challenged those who can subdue him because they were despotic and villainous people. In spite of this, they could not subdue him as

³⁰ S.M. Al-'Alūsī, *Rūḥu'l-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīri'l-Qur'ān-il-'Aẓīm wa's-Sab' il-Mathānī*, V01.8...277

disbelievers among *Quraysh* could not overpower our Messenger (S.A.W).³¹

As a matter of fact, the hearts of a vast number of people of ‘Ād were as hard as stone. Indeed, they declared buoyantly that they were in dire need of clear evidence that would justify Hūd’s prophet-hood. Despite all his urgings to them to abandon their false gods without clear proof of truthfulness of his message as shown above, they opposed him just as all unbelievers have done throughout history and proclaimed that they wanted to see apparent miracles because they would not abandon their gods on mere wishful talk.

According to Sayyid Quṭb, Prophet Hūd delivered a final warning to those who denied him and his message because there was a little he could do apart from challenging them and putting his trust entirely in God.³² Allah says:

We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have seized thee with imbecility. He said: I call Allah to witness, and do ye bear witness, that I am free from the sin of ascribing, to him other gods as partners! So scheme (your worst) against me, all of you, and give me no respite. I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! There is not a moving creature, but He hath grasp of its fore-lock. Verily, it is my Lord that is on a straight path. If ye turn away, I (at least) have conveyed the message with which I was sent to you. My Lord will make another people to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. For my Lord hath care and watch over all things. Q11:54-57

From the above Qur’ānic allusion, Hūd’s statement shows that he cut himself off completely from them, despite the kinship of brotherhood. Also, Hūd’s attitude is very impressive as he confronted his people who were gigantic in stature. The consequences of heedless of the people of ‘Ād and their obstinacy earned them terrible blow from Allah as they jeered at Hūd like all arrogant people in history. Allah sent down a terrible windstorm which carried the grievous punishment to upturn their lands and destroy the entire people. Interestingly, Hūd and those who believe in his message were saved. The Qur’ān says:

And they were pursued by a curse in this life,- and on the Day of Judgment. Ah! Behold! For the ‘Ad rejected their Lord and

³¹ M.M. Ash-Sha’rāwī, *Tafsīr Ash-Sha’rāwī*, Vol.1, (n.p.n.d.), 4214. Accessed at Al-Maktabatu-sh-Shāmilah software

³² Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*,

Cherisher! Ah! Behold! removed (from sight) were 'Ad the people
of Hud! Q11:60

Lessons from Missions of the Prophets

The deducible lessons from missions of the Prophets under review include:

Uniformity of the message: Like other Prophets of Allah, the missions of the two Prophets reveal that both were sent to disseminate the fundamental message of monotheism. The reason may not be unconnected to the fact that monotheism (*Tawhīd*) is the first condition to be met before one can be admitted to the heaven and it is the concept that guarantees everlasting prosperity. It is therefore compulsory upon contemporary Muslim scholars to always create time for promoting the concept through consistent teaching. This is necessary because they are heirs of the Prophets and the discharge of this task is emphatically stressed by Prophet Muhammad in many traditions. However, my observations as a *Da'iyah* unfold that Muslims have deviated from *Tawhīd* because of their parochial understanding of the application of *Tawhīd*. The practice of sorcery and sooth-saying is predominant among Yoruba Muslims especially before marriage, embarking on a journey or starting a business venture. In other words, it is considered pertinent in their social endeavours.³³ Some practice adulterated Islam and believe that the objects being worshipped by them are the missionaries of Allah. They believe in the oneness of Allah and consider their clerics as intermediaries linking them with Allah. Therefore, Muslim missionaries must save the community against the wrath of Allah via consistency in the explication of *Tawhīd*. In the course of explanation, the two Prophets pointed out the severe punishment that awaits those who defile the divine teachings on monotheism. Emphasising the importance of monotheism, Ibn Rajab affirms:

من جاء مع التوحيد بقرب الأرض وهو ملؤها أو ما يقارب ملأها خطايا لقيه الله بقرابها
مغفرة لكن هذا مع مشيئة الله عز وجل فإن شاء غفر له وإن شاء أخذه بذنوبه

It is therefore important for Muslim scholars to realize that the more the concept is propagated, the more the Muslims are salvaged from the divine wrath that bedeviled the nations that preceded them.

³³ Adeyemi, A.W and Yahya, S.A., Islamic Stance on Resurgence of *Jahiliyyah* Culture among Muslims in Nigeria, vol4, no.1, 2018, Department of Religions Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, p.53.

Invitation of People to Islam with wisdom: One of the means used by the two Prophets to convince people to their tents was clemency during the invitation. The Prophets were not harsh in the words and actions. Rather, they bore the prejudice experienced in the course of *da'wah* and extended kindness to those who harassed them. They were resilient, steadfast and accommodating. They never discriminated between the influential and weak people. They employed different methods of *da'wah* to resonate their message. They never fatigued in the exercise. They called day and night without complaint of overwork. In other words, the message being passed to the rich people was not dissimilar to the downtrodden masses. However, it is saddening to note that some contemporary Muslim scholars give different messages to different classes of people in Nigeria especially in Yoruba populated cities.

Patience and Perseverance: One of the important lessons that can be inferred from the teachings of the two prophets is that a Muslim preacher must forbear and endure the prejudice and harassment experienced in the course of *da'wah* as demonstrated by their precursors, Nuh and Hud, in the exercise. He must be patient and optimistic in the task as exemplified by Prophet Nuh. He not be pessimistic on any of the recipients of *da'wah* and he should be ready to bear what an ordinary may see as an insult to his personality.³⁴ This is because guidance is from Allah and He grants it to whomever he likes.

Prohibition of seeking for remuneration on *Da'wah*: Unlike the contemporary scholars who have commercialised preaching by charging exorbitant money in order to deliver sermon when invited for public lectures, all the Prophets of Allah professed clearly that they were not commissioned to be demanding for monetary compensation for *da'wah*. However, the prevailing situation in Nigeria particularly in Ilorin is the request for money by some Muslim scholars before attending public lecture. This act has led to the debate of permissibility and impermissibility of the gesture among Muslims. Yet, it is not contentious that the Prophets never made such request before conveying divine message to the people of their respective nations. Surprisingly, different reasons were advanced by the Muslims who subscribed to the philosophy, citing the law of necessity (*ḍarūrah*) among others as tenable excuse for the

Turning to Allah for opulent blessings: The teachings embedded in the *da'wah* of the two Prophets show that there is connection between belief, seeking for forgiveness and amplex of divine mercy.

³⁴ Yahya, S.A., A Discourse on the Experiences of Selected Prophets in Suratu Hud: Lessons for the Contemporary Society, Voyages Journal of Religious Studies, vol. 5, no.1, 2019, Department of Religious Studies, Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria, P.69

Conclusion

This work has examined the lives and teachings of Prophets Nuh and Hud. Their lives affirm that they were resolute, steadfast, optimistic, and resilient in the discharge of the divine duty. Their missions depict that they frowned at syncretism and ascription of partners with Allah. They preached unity of Allah, invited people with wisdom, forbore prejudice and harassment in the course of performing enormous task of *da'wah*, never sought for monetary compensation from any human being on its basis and depended solely on Allah as the source of fortunes. It is therefore imperative on the missionaries to dispossess themselves from the qualities that negate the salient features emblemized by the two Prophets and take a lease from their exemplary *da'wah* method.