

## Exploring the methodology of Da'wah: The prophetic model and its relevance to the contemporary era

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**Abstract:** *Islam is a peaceful religion that teaches love, sincerity, and brotherhood to all mankind. Propagating Islam by beneficial means is called Da'wah and is one of the strategies favored by the Holy Prophet (SAW) to spread Islam. He adopted a new and better strategy and, in a short time the light of Islam has spread throughout the world. This study applies a qualitative methodology to examine Quranic verses, Hadiths, scholarly interpretations, and historical accounts in order to identify the main ideas and methods of Da'wah that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used. The study also includes analysing the prophetic strategies, and educational aspects, highlighting how flexible it is for contemporary situations. Firstly, the current study shares valuable knowledge on prophetic Da'wah methodology and highlights the importance of Da'wah in everyday life with relevant examples. Secondly, this research is primarily focused on the Divine Prophet's Da'wah strategy to be addressed and implemented in the 21st century. Moreover, the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is a great source of learning and his Da'wah techniques must be learned and embraced as preaching Islam. It's the duty of every Muslim man and woman. This treatise offers immense knowledge of the Prophetic Da'wah techniques that are fruitful examples for all mankind. Finally, this paper concludes that these Da'wah principles are useful and desirable not only for Muslim-non-Muslim relations, but also for improving and maintaining Muslim-Muslim relations.*

**Keywords:** *Prophetic, Da'wah, Strategies, Contemporary, Islam, Education.*

### Introduction

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) took a special approach to teaching his followers and associates the basics and concepts of Islam, which derive from divine revelation. His teachings cover all aspects of life, work, living and relationships, applicable anytime and anywhere. Every pioneer, reformer, and historian has earned fame in one or two of his life's walks. It was the Holy Prophet (SAW) who became a perfect and exemplary role model in all aspects of human life. Muslims as well as Non-Muslims recognized his expertise, skill, intelligence, wisdom and strategy in peace and war.

In the context of education, history tells us that the Holy Prophet (SAW) was a zealous teacher, a wisest policy maker, aware of educational goals, well-informed of educational methods, and a perfect preacher. One of the unique prophetic strategies was to use education as a source for preaching Da'wah. There was no distinction between secular and religious knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers had the duty

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of calling everyone to Islam through da'wah. It is the duty of all people, male and female, to practice da'wah. During the time of Prophet Muhammad, a number of women conducted the da'wah. The responsibility of a dai, or someone engaged in da'wah activities, is to spread the word about Islam and its truths to everyone.<sup>2</sup> To the best of their abilities, every Muslim is expected to actively assist in pointing others in the direction of righteousness. A competent group can take up this duty collectively if the Muslim community as a whole (Ummah) is unable to do so.<sup>3</sup> Allah says in *Qur'ān*,

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is (rightly) guided”.<sup>4</sup>

### Understanding Da'wah and the Prophetic Methodology

The literal meaning of Da'wah is “to deliver the teaching of Islam” and “comprehensive knowledge program needed by man to understand life’s objectives and to know the signs which are misleading them.”<sup>5</sup> Da'wah not only encourages people to adopt the Islamic way of life, but how the Da'wah is done is more important. Therefore, different approaches, techniques, and methods are required to apply in specific situations.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) made special arrangements for Da'wah which can be seen throughout his life. To this end, he used the educational process as a tool to preach the teachings of Islam. In order to convey the message of Islam, he went to markets, fairs, gatherings of people, and heads of various tribes, using his ultimate potential to convince people of Islam and Allah Almighty. The Da'wah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) has many important aspects, some of which are listed below.

#### I. Psychological Considerations in Da'wah

Addressing the audience according to their spiritual level is very important in Da'wah activities. Some people brag about their knowledge by using difficult vocabulary and phrases to impress others. People differ in their abilities and dispositions. This is a godsend, but performance depends on everyone's understanding. The Holy Prophet (SAW) spoke in such a way that his compatriots could understand everything without ambiguity. The Prophet speaks clearly for all to understand. Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greetings. “Companions had different backgrounds, including those of urban and rural origins. His methodology was equally beneficial to educated and uneducated people.

#### 2. Good Communication Skills and Gentleness

Good communication skills, presentation style, and good speaking will help make Da'wah efforts truly successful. Allah commanded Hazrat Musa (AS) to be gentle and kind to when he sent him to the Fir'aun (Pharaoh) along with his brother Haroun. The *Qur'ān* says,

“So speak to him, both of you, mildly, in order that he may reflect or fear God”.<sup>7</sup>

'A'isha, the wife of Allah's Apostle (SAW), reported Allah's Apostle (SAW) as saying: Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it

makes it defective.”<sup>8</sup> The Prophet (SAW), proved tolerance, compassion, and understanding in his dealings with individuals from all walks of life during his lifetime. As contemporary practitioners of Da'wah, individuals can draw inspiration from the Prophet's example by prioritizing kindness and gentleness in interactions with others.

### 3. Clarity of Concept and Logical Reasoning in Da'wah

Clarity of concept is important in Islamic imperatives. A clear mind can get message across in a logical and effective way. From the teachings of Islam, we know that it is not like other religions. Islam always requires reasoning and accept things with reason and evidence. The methodology of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was so effective that the audience could easily understand and achieve the purpose of the order. In fact, our Holy Prophet (SAW) was appointed by Almighty Allah to clearly convey the message of Islam, as the Holy *Qur'ān* states in this characteristic of the Holy Prophet (SAW) . Knowledge must be acquired before it can be imparted to others. When inviting people, don't let the caller's lack of knowledge discourage them.

“And we revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them, and that they might give thought”.<sup>9</sup>

### 4. Learning Language of Listener

The means of instruction in an educational system are of great importance because they have a lasting impact on listener understanding, academic learning, and achievement of goals. Considering the learner's language and using simple words that were easily understood, was the unique nature of the Holy Prophet (SAW). In this regard, Islamic preachers should consider the importance of language and try to use language that is easily understood by their listeners.

Different languages are required in different fields of preaching, that is why the Holy Prophet ordered Zaid Bin Sa'bit to learn Hebrew and syriak. Hazrat Zaid says that I have mastered in these languages in only 17 days.<sup>10</sup>

### 5. Appropriate Intervals and Time for Preaching

Among other unique qualities, the Holy Prophet (SAW) was also a great psychologist. He was well aware that the human mind cannot work for hours; so, in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) he chose a suitable time to preach, and in the middle of his speech, was seen to stop.

In many Ahadis it is said that the Holy Prophet (SAW) paused during his speech so that the audience could count his words and understand his message very clearly.<sup>11</sup> There was no ambiguity in his lectures. A preacher of Islam should follow the strategies of the Prophet (SAW) in order to effectively convey the message of Islam.

### 6. Women's Education and Training

The feminist reform is the only reform of mankind; the basis of social civilization. Mankind is trained in female stroke, considered the first school. The future of the nation depends on the mother's education. The Holy Prophet explains that the education and development of male and female humanity is equal. He said that “Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim male and Muslim female”<sup>12</sup>

Ignorance was considered more dangerous than an enemy attacking from the outside. The purpose of education is to enable individuals to perform all duties efficiently. It was during the training of the Holy Prophets that women became increasingly involved in the spread of Islam. As Islam became more

prevalent, women undoubtedly helped the Prophet, encouraging his husbands, servants, slaves, relatives and even friends to convert to Islam.

### **7. Telling stories and making gestures**

The Prophet used a variety of methods to instruct his companions, such as telling stories and making gestures to illustrate his point. Another approach was to draw simple illustrations to convey some of his abstract ideas. The implication here is to tailor the lesson to the learner, with the goal being that the learner gains from the interchange.<sup>13</sup> The Prophet stressed the honor in this process when he said, "I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in Paradise like this," putting his index and middle fingers together.<sup>14</sup>

### **8. Entertainment in Da'wah Activities**

It's a dilemma in our education system that listeners show no interest in learning activities and become bored. The strategy of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was excellent and kept the listeners entertained. Instead of losing interest, people were very interested in having more association with the Holy Prophet (SAW) and spending maximum time with the Holy Prophet (SAW). One of his companions reported that, "the Prophet used to take care of us in preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we might not get bored. He abstained from pestering us with sermons and knowledge all the time"<sup>15</sup>.

### **9. Gradualism and Continuity in Da'wah**

Almighty Allah has decreed various duties one after another in the Holy Qur'ān. Various examples can be found in the Holy Qur'ān in this regard. The phasing in of zakat, salah and alcohol restrictions are clear examples of phasing in. Our Holy Prophet (SAW) followed the same strategy as the Qur'an and issued various orders to his Companions based on the principle of gradualism. He began preaching to the people by explaining the harm of false beliefs, immoral practices, and bad controversies, then slowly called on people to correct their right thinking, worship, good morals, and ethical values. Our Holy Prophet (SAW) said in this regard "Make things easy and do not make them difficult, cheer the people up by conveying glad tidings to them and do not repulse them".<sup>16</sup>

### **10. Correction by Observation**

The prophetic way of correcting mistakes was great. For example, quoting the following narration: "Allah's Messenger (SAW) entered the mosque and a person followed him. The man prayed and move to the Prophet and greeted him. The Prophet (SAW) returned the greeting and said to him, "Go back and pray, for you have not prayed." The man went again prayed in the same way as before, returned and greeted the Prophet who said, "Go back and pray, for you have not prayed and, this happened three times with him. The man said, "By Him Who sent you with the Truth, I cannot pray in a better way than this. Please, guide me how to pray." The Prophet (SAW) said, "When you stand for Prayer say Takbir and then recite from the Holy Qur'an (of what you know by heart) and then bow till you feel at ease. Then raise your head and stand up straight, then prostrate till you feel at ease during your prostration, then sit with calmness until you feel at ease (do not hurry) and do the same in all your."<sup>17</sup>

### **Relevance of Prophetic Da'wah to the Contemporary Era**

In today's globalized world, means of communication are centralized, controlled, and used by systems that serve the interests of specific groups of people. Information is therefore not distributed fairly and cannot be distorted, altered or invented. Such attitudes have affected many communities, especially the

Muslim community and its religion, Islam. Likewise, the ongoing socio-economic, political and intellectual crises and conflicts witnessed by humanity, especially the Islamic world, have created rifts between Muslims and others, leading to a split between Islam and Muslims. Indeed, the events of 9/11<sup>18</sup> worsened relations between Muslim countries and Muslims with other countries due to weak leadership. The US invasion of the Islamic world marked a new direction with its motto of fighting terrorism, building democracy and peace. This new mechanism of the United States and its allies has failed to help fight terrorism, but helped in destroying and continuing to destroy Muslim nations, one after another. Who is responsible for creating this situation? In fact, neither Muslims nor non-Muslims want to take responsibility, but they both only blame each other. Thus, by the present year 2017, many innocent people have been killed or murdered worldwide in. Many lectures, conferences, seminars and summits have been held by scholars, intellectuals and world leaders. But the problem is not resolved.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, a leader and his subjects should not abuse the responsibilities entrusted to them. We must treat each other fairly and equitably, regardless of our position or status within the community. It is of interest to many who want to know how to live a better life in the future. Therefore, this study suggests that something higher in its virtues needs to be added to this technological development. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), the last Prophet of Allah (s.w.t.) and his righteous companions. Indeed, people today demand to follow the best example, which was provided by Islam and its civilization in his years before the 14th century, and that is Muhammad (SAW) as Allah (SWT) said "There was indeed the best model for you in the Messenger of Allah"<sup>20</sup> The Islamic Prophet (SAW) died before the 14th century, but he is the only organic and unique example produced by in human history. Therefore, regardless of time and space, humanity must follow in his footsteps and honor his legacy to be saved from the destruction of the earthly and otherworldly worlds.

The methodology of the Prophetic Da'wah, directly or indirectly, has been a very important subject that has been debated from time to time by many Muslim scholars. Muhammad al-Ghazali argues that choosing the appropriate methodology to be used has a great impact on people's awakening to the way they think, and their subsequent self-awareness. When people's way of thinking and their view of truth are corrected then Islamic Da'wah will surely achieve its purpose.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, all prophets and messengers of God were wise and Intelligent, leading their people to the truth, worshiping the only true God, Allah (s.w.t) and avoiding false worship and other forms of worship. According to the Qur'ān, Da'wah in the Way of Allah (s.w.t.) was the duty of every Prophet and his followers (Muslims). The current situation of Muslims and others is no different from the situation of the ancient Arabs, to whom God sent the last and final message, the Al-Qur'an, and the seal of all messengers (Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Therefore, it is the task and duty of every mature Muslim to transmit the message of Islam conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), especially the exemplary methods used by the Prophet (SAW) in Da'wah.<sup>22</sup> The purpose of Islamic Da'wah is to remind and, correct those who know Islam, and to inform those who do not know Islam, so there is a need to ensure that the proper Da'wah methodology is communicated to the people so they can get to the right purpose of Life, intelligence, offspring and wealth.

In modern times Islam is judged by the people and not necessarily by reading the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Misconceptions about how Islam allows the killing of innocent people in

the name of jihad, that Muslims are extremists; that Islam is preached based on the sword, etc. Create a dress code for Muslim women, polygamy, and so on. These are all the usual challenging questions that people ask a Muslim preacher. So even today, out of ignorance, people question and claim that Islam is not a peaceful religion. The preachers should take the most appropriate approach in delivering the message and clarifying the conversation while communicating with the masses. When talking to people, preachers need to be calm, listen patiently, and read the situation before explaining. The preacher should always refer to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) way of life and his methodology in performing the Da'wah. It is the preacher's job to deliver the message of Allah properly.

Another principle is that Da'wah is a specialty and requires some training. Da'wah should be based on an authentic understanding of various Islamic teachings, practices and institutions. This principle is so important that Muslims are commanded in the Qur'an to make the acquisition of knowledge a collective duty<sup>23</sup>, and some Muslims fall behind in military jihad to deepen their knowledge of Islam. Therefore, the preacher should continuously and earnestly engage in learning activities such as the Qur'an, Sunnah, and modern scientific research, and use them as tools for the Da'wah. They must be constantly engaged in the learning and teaching process.

Consistent with the need to win the hearts and minds of the people, preachers should work to bridge the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims by organizing lectures, forums, seminars, debates and conferences in partnership with the non-Muslim community. Da'wah efforts bring Muslims and non-Muslims together by imparting the teachings of Islam to ensure a true understanding of Islam as an inclusive system of life. We must focus on educating as well. This allows modern Da'wah to fully embrace the interactive dynamics of Islam in the modern world.<sup>24</sup>

The content and message of the primary da'wah reflect the scope of Islam, and this interactive dynamic of the da'wah is included in the core teachings of Islam. Teachings that explain the foundations of Islamic faith and the arguments that support them, as well as teachings that contain moral foundations.<sup>25</sup>

Muslims should committed to their Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his mission by reading Qur'an and understanding his seerah (biography of the Prophet) and Sunnah (the words and deeds of the Prophet) and carrying them out in daily communication with other Muslims and non-Muslims in their faith. They must pass on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) to humanity at large, apply wisdom and civility, and make them relevant to the contemporary global society. On the other hand, non-Muslims are humbly asked to obtain information about Islam and its Prophet (SAW) from credible sources, the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and credible representatives of Islam.<sup>26</sup> They are not forced to accept Islam, they are welcome if they wish to participate and are humbled to respect Islam and its way of life as well as Islam and their beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). If Islamic Da'wah, promoted according to the prophetic methodology, will bring about a true revolution in the hearts and minds of today's people who are ignorant of the truth in reality. If this is done by modern Muslims as well as non-Muslims, peace, security and happiness will be restored to humanity.

### **Conclusions**

It would be beneficial for religious scholars to follow the methodology of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to

convey the message of Islam in a peaceful, effective and inclusive way. In addition, Muslim preachers must consider solutions to current problems through sound and effective constitutional means, including print, social media, and various other methods, to spread the message of Islam around the world. Islam attracts both believers and unbelievers if the prophetic strategy is kept in mind. In addition, prophetic principles help bring peace and prosperity to society.

The ongoing conflict between Muslims and Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims has created a hostile environment, but understanding of prophetic methodologies by Muslims in dealing with Non-Muslims can end this conflict. In addition, Non-Muslims must be informed about the character of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through authentic sources. The prophetic Da'wah methodology offers the best possible cures for the personal and societal ailments of people today, both locally and globally. Muslim intellectuals, especially Muslim leaders and preachers, should deal with their responsibilities and deal with the people, in accordance with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) methodology.

Preachers need to focus on raising the current low level of tolerance in the world to the level of accommodation as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) left an example with his contemporaries for Muslims of all ages which should be followed. The preachers can make a valuable contribution in eradicating religious intolerance and violence, promoting peaceful conditions that can help spread the message of Islam to all mankind, and leading to the realization of the goal of a peaceful and prosperous global land.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Being the best preacher, teacher, and guider, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has left his mark on history. His actions should be properly studied as lessons for all modern Muslims and those who come after, especially in the process of teaching and learning.
- Like the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) employed a variety of teaching and preaching techniques. Modern educators should therefore research these techniques and use them appropriately to enhance the task of teaching and learning.
- Islam supports growth and advancement in all spheres of life. So, modern scholars and teachers must be well-equipped with the most up-to-date tools for teaching and development in order to succeed because they are the ones who lay the initial foundation of an individual, develop lasting character, and advance society.
- Through regular trainings, seminars, workshops, etc., the government should encourage modern teachers from a variety of fields to use the appropriate teaching techniques that aid in the development of the students' minds and behavior or good character.

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