

# Dawah and its Contemporary Relevance; A study of Muslim Scholars

Azad Hussain Aakhon  
Research Scholar, Department of Islamic studies  
University Of Kashmir, Srinagar J&K, India, 190006

## Abstract

*Muslim in the east and west are facing lot of problems regarding their sustenance, maintenance and the preaching of their faith to the fellow human beings. The reason for these crisis can be ascribed to the methodology and approaches utilized to arrive at the objectivity of the propagation of faith (D'awah). On one hand these approaches lack proper consideration with Quran and Sunnah and on the other hand they are full of errors on our part. To these pessimistic conceptions/notions and efforts as delivered by our Muslim fellows which go against the revealed dictates and the ground realities we need to redraft or reform our Dawah Methodology. These measures must be in conformity with Quran and must be viable, relevant and objective in nature. Many modern scholars made critical evaluation of such approaches and notions held by Muslims in the field of Dawah. These scholars reflected their respective models and approaches which are primarily based on the Quranic insights and also maintain efficacy, viability and relevance. The features of Prophetic Dawah Methodology bearing the testimony of acceptance, moderation, tolerance, diversity, sympathy and other principles of universal character hold valid today if brought into limelight. This paper intends to explore the significance of Quranic Dawah methodology and its reflections with the recommendations put forth in the light of models/approaches shared by Contemporary Muslim Scholars like Maulana Islahi and Dr. Alwani, so as to arrive at the endeavor of the Ummah from divisions, profligacy of thoughts, discordance, and deformation in creed and conduct.*

**Keywords:** Approaches, Realities, Ethics, Insights

## Introduction

The Arabic term da'wah is derived from the verb da'a means "to call; to invite; and to supplicate, i.e. to call on God"<sup>1</sup>

It is used to refer to the act of conveying or calling people to the message of Islam. The Quran categorically reveals as:

*"Say: This is my way and I invite to Allah with certain knowledge ..."*<sup>2</sup>.

Da'wah in Islamic technical sense means inviting people towards Islamic faith and its practice. Da' wah is the invitation addressed to men by Allah through His Messenger to believe in the true religion , Islam. All the Messengers have been sent to invite and guide mankind towards their lord, Allah as the Holy Qur'an says:

*“Mankind was one single nation , And Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed”.<sup>3</sup>*

This verse of the Quran points out the great responsibility of this community regarding the guardianship of the message of Truth. The purpose to serve this was to warn of the grave differences that came out from the nations of past which were dealt through the agency of Prophets and messengers so as to stand by the truth. In this verse there lies the success of the preachers of Islamic faith conditioned on the being on the side of truth and standing firm on it.<sup>4</sup>

Dawah is therefore the Qur'anic term for the mission of the Messengers which the Holy Qur'an has variously explained. Numerous Qur'anic Ayat indicate that Da'wah is Shahadah, Indhar, Bayan, Tabyin, Nasihah, Tabligh, Tabshir, Tadhkir, Hujjah, Islah, Tajdid, Sadaqah, Jihad. e.g.

*“As to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them , they will not believe.”<sup>5</sup>*

Moulana Islahi comments on this verse that in the call of Prophets there are evidences for it concrete and universal on one hand while warn and glad tidings in terms of fatalities and triumph. <sup>6</sup>

**Scope of Dawah :** Thus Scope of Dawah extends to a wider range which involves; a) Inviting people towards the Islamic faith and its Practice b) Witnessing in favour of the ultimate truth Islam, giving witness by words and deeds. c) Warning people against the dreadful consequences of rejecting the truth or neglecting it. d) Advising people to accept Islam and to practice it. e) Conveying the message of Islam to every member of mankind. f) Giving people glad tidings about the beneficial results of accepting and practicing the truth. g) Reminding people of the forgotten reality that their real success and salvation lies in accepting the way ordained for them by their creator. Dawah is based on the feelings of love and fraternity. Islam believes that the entire humanity is the family of Allah and therefore all humanbeings are the members of this family. . This love for humanity is deep rooted and comprehensive .- wishing their worldly success and above it their spiritual salvation.<sup>7</sup>

**Da'wah in the light of Quran and Hadith.:** Importance of Dawah is quite evident from it being the Prophetic domain and from its weightiness in driving people towards the ultimate truth. It is an admitted fact that the last Messenger has been commanded to proclaim the Message, which has been revealed to him by

his Lord and this responsibility of Da'wah was, then after the Messenger passed on to the Ummah. Allah says:

*"Thus We have made you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witness over nations , and the Messenger a witness over yourselves".<sup>8</sup>*

"And who is better in speech than one who calls (people) to Allah" (Al Qur'an: Fussilat 41:33).

*"You are the best community that has been raised up for mankind .You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency ; and you believe in Allah".<sup>9</sup>*

Noted scholar of 20<sup>th</sup> century Dr. Mustafa Siba'i comments on the verses as mentioned above that in the nations of the world the Muslims are the unique nation that can foster to the reconstruction of humanity in civilizational perspective. It is so because of the belief and the ethics they share which created the potential of best community within it. These verses make it mandatory and projection of sacred mission to guide the humanity to truth and the way of excellence irrespective of denominations.<sup>10</sup>

The Islamic jurisprudence differ on the subject of nature and magnitude of importance of dawah. Some categorise it as fard ayn (compulsory), while as others bring it under fard kifayah (optional) . Both the sections of Islamic scholars base their viewpoints on the verse 104 of surah al Imran. "Let there arise out of you a brand of people inviting to all that is good , enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the one to attain felicity".

Dawah is dynamism in Islam without which there will be stagnation. Any movement having dynamism in it is a living movement. A nation fallen into slumber itself never influences others but in turn get influenced by other movements and nations. It is the zeal of dawah in the Muslim communities that has led to the victory of Muslims in the past. And it is their lethargy towards this most important and divinely ordained responsibility that is responsible for their present decline and persistent confusion among other peoples of the world. To conclude, preaching of Islam is incumbent upon Muslims not only to earn the pleasure of Allah and fulfill the ordained commandments but also as a sense of responsibility and care sprouting for the entire humanity

Islamic Dawah intends to solve many more problems of the world. Many countries in the world , today, face different kinds of social evils and tension. Muslims being the upholders of the Message of peace, reconciliation, concord, safety, tranquility, security, prosperity, and above all submission and surrender 11 before the Supreme Will of Allah cannot remain mute spectators to these human agonies. They are dutybound to help these societies and the humanity at large to get rid of these problems.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has blessed for the person who take note of His sermons and then passes it to others as it is.

There are many reasons for such knowledge ethics for its dissemination to others because both the Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic traditions deal extensively with its concealment. The person who conceals the knowledge and its virtues has been cursed severely of the dire consequences here and hereafter.<sup>11</sup>

The prophet said, Convey (teachings) from me to the people even if it were a single sentence. This depicts the Prophetic exhortation to his companions for the spread/convey of the divine message to others.<sup>12</sup>

It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent because those who are absent might comprehend (what I have said) better than the present audience.

The tradition makes it mandatory for the learner of knowledge of matters of religion to pass it to others, it is so because the man who is being presented (third person) may memorize, compile it, understand and explain it in a better way than person who directly takes it. Also the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) emphasized that the matters of knowledge and importance must be transmitted to the future generations so that they may be benefitted like their predecessors.<sup>13</sup>

## CHOOSING YOUR APPROACH

Choice of Subject Next we have to choose our approach. After reading the situation carefully and correctly, you must now choose the subject. What are you going to talk about? Prophet Muhammad (r) told Mu'aath ibn Jabal, "You are coming to a people from Ahl al-Kitaab, so the first thing you should invite them to is Tawheed." Notice the logic. You are coming to some People of the Scripture; therefore choose to talk to them about Tawheed. When you know the people, the situation and the circumstance, now you choose your topic.

## Method of Delivery

The next thing which we need to keep in mind when approaching others is our method of delivery. We have to decide how we are going to communicate our message. Are we going to use an emotion approach? Although, emotional arguments are to be avoided in general because they tend to cloud the issues and the facts, sometimes they are the best method. Gradual Progression Read your progress by analyzing the level of your audience's internal motivation. This is a technique used by motivators to assess where somebody is relative to the point they are trying to get across and to gradually get the person to agree with their point. By reading the person's body movements one can assess the person's response position and his or her progress according to the scale. At the bottom of the scale is "neglect – indifferent." If you are talking and somebody is ignoring you, it means that they are completely indifferent to what you have to say and to the topic on which you are speaking. This is what is known as a "difficult person", because they just do not care about your point of view. Convincing them is virtually impossible, because they have no interest in what you have to say.



### Moulana Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-1997)

Mawlana Amin Ahsan Islahi is considered to be a prominent Islamic scholar in Pakistan. He belonged to Farahi school that is known after Mawlana Hamiduddin Farahi. Mawlana Islahi was also a religio-political activist, thinker and wrote extensively on various issues faced by the Muslims in his time. He wrote various books on Islamic philosophy but the must celebrated work of Islahi was his exegesis of the Holy Qurān.

### Errors in Contemporary Dawah Methodology

Modern Scholars have highlighted the numerous errors that are clearly visible in the approaches and the methodology of our fellows while conveying this message. Moulana Islahi has dedicated two complete books to this issue titled as “*Dawat-i-Din aur Uss ka Tareeqay Kar*/Islamic Faith and its Presentation and the second one is “*Da‘wat-i-Din Ki Ahmiyat aur Taqazay*”. The book opens up with the basic errors that are in practice during preaching. He has classified therein these errors as;

1. Theoretical /Conceptual Errors.
2. Practical Errors.

The first kind of flaws that had crept in our approach deal with the failure of the conveyors to appreciate their own position, the position of scripture (Quran) and in presenting it to others. Our failure to present it as the religion or the way of life from the very inception of entire humanity rather we presented it as rival to other faiths at the cost of ridiculing other faiths. There we had made comparison between the Prophets on the basis of *Asabiyyah* (group prejudice) by our preachers which ultimately led to the creation of malice among other faiths.<sup>14</sup>

### Dr. Taha Jabir al`Alwani

Born in Iraq 1354/1935, he received his primary and secondary education in his native land and then graduated with an Honors Degree from the College of Shari`ah and Law at al Azhar University in Cairo in 1378/1959. From the same university, he was awarded his Master's degree in 1388/1968 and a doctorate in Usul al fiqh in 1392/1973.

As far as the methodological perspective of Da‘wah is concerned it is evident from the writings of these scholars like Dr Taha Jabir ‘Alwani that we must address the three things in it which would serve the purpose of conveying/preaching message if recognized.

1. Ethics of Disagreement.
2. Understanding the Principles of Jurisprudence and its differences in it.
3. Reformation in Islamic thought.

The first concept is concerned with the normative aspect of Da‘wah wherein the circumstances in the Muslim community (*Ummah*) had the splits in the groups, confusion among masses, disappointment over

superficial points of jurisprudence and theology. Dr ‘alwani came up with the system of thought to minimise these differences so as to revive the higher aims and purposes of the Ummah. Dr ‘alwani has cited durable examples from the texts of classical Muslims scholars over the early judicial differences that wouldn’t go beyond the academic domain or the cause of haderning feeling of hatred and otherness.<sup>15</sup>

Dr ‘Alwani viewed these problems and objectives in the form of book “*The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*” that serves the purpose of the theme and the glorifying examples for the contemporary preachers of Islamic faith to forebearance and understanding throughout Muslim history. The efficacy of this system of thought and concept lies in the revival of the ethical spirit to look ahead with hope and endeavor. The alarming challenge that Muslim community today is facing is the issue of differences that havd crept into it in terms of beliefs, charater, taste, thought, juristic and methodological approaches and even in the wholistic perspective in all domains of life.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

Both Islahi and ‘Alwani share a consensus on the reality that despite the efforts tried to gather the strength, recover and glory to attempt in this direction ended in absolute failure because the means adopted, applied and practised were flawed and are not in confirmation with the natural and divine patterns set by almighty Allah. In this new era of resurgence, a search has began to explore the way out that is viable, sound and authentic that may facilitate the whole discourse of rectification at this stage. The means must same that were used to set it right on the right course at the very beginning and this produced a phenomenon known as reawakening. So in this situation there is a dire need to expand the meaning of preaching in broader terms of mending human society towards the path of Allah through various stages and situations. We must clarify and cognize the whole course of action and work of Prophet as *Da’wah* as attested by Quran in comprehensive way that suits to the mission of Prophet.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Al Hussaini, Muhammad bin Muhammad, *Taj ul ‘Uroos* Vol 20, Dar ul Hidayah, Kuwait, 1983 pp. 548-49,/Al Isfahani, Raghil, *Mufradat al Quran*, Vol 1, Islamic Academy, Lahore, 1390 A.H, p. 366
- <sup>2</sup> Ali, ‘Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur’an. Text Translation & Commentary*, Goodword Books, Newdelhi, 2010 Quran: Surah Yusuf, 12: 108
- <sup>3</sup> Ali, ‘Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur’an. Text Translation & Commentary*, Goodword Books, Newdelhi, 2010 Qur’an , Al Baqarah 2: 213.
- <sup>4</sup> Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Tadabbur I Quran*, Vol 1, Chapter 2, verse 213, Faran Foundation , Lahore, 2009, pp. 502-504
- <sup>5</sup> Ali, ‘Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur’an. Text Translation & Commentary*, Goodword Books, Newdelhi, 2010 Qur’an , Al Baqarah 2:6.
- <sup>6</sup> Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Tadabbur I Quran*, p. 109
- <sup>7</sup> Qutb, Muhammad, *Kaifah Nad’u Naas*, Ed. Kamal ud din, Haamid, *Da’wat Ka Manhaj Kya Hoga*, Areeb Publications New Delhi, 2012, p.8

<sup>8</sup> Ali, 'Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an. Text Translation & Commentary*, Goodword Books, Newdelhi, 2010 Qur'an : Al Baqarah 2: 143.

<sup>9</sup>Ali, 'Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an. Text Translation & Commentary*, Goodword Books, Newdelhi, 2010 Qur'an : Al-Imran 3:110.

<sup>10</sup> Siba'i, Mustafa, *Min Rawa'i Hadharatina*, Darul Warraq, Riyadh, 1999, pp. 22-23

<sup>11</sup> Quran, 2:159

<sup>12</sup> Al Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Isma'il, *Sahih al Bukhari*, Kitab Ahadith al Anbiya ,Daar I Tuq al Najah, Damascus, 1322 A.H, , H.No 3461

<sup>13</sup>Al Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Isma'il, *Sahih al Bukhari*, , Kitab al 'Ilm, Daar I Tuq al Najah, Damascus, 1322 A.H, chapter 9, H.NO. 67

<sup>14</sup> Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Islamic Faith and its Presentation*, Adam Publishers, Newdelhi, 2002, pp. 2-4

<sup>15</sup> *Alwani*, Taha Jabir, *Towards a Fiqh For Minorities: Some Basic Reflections*, IIIT, USA, 2010, p. 9

<sup>16</sup> *Alwani*, Taha Jabir, *Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence*, IIIT, Washington, 2003, pp. 64-68

