

Prophetic Methodologies in Da'wah (Calling to Allaah)

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فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

**"So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord,
let him work righteousness and associate none
as a partner in the worship of his Lord."**

The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Kahf, Aayah 110

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بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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If one considers the life of the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) as a preacher, he will come to realise how the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) employed specific methodologies in Calling to Allaah.

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Allaah (the Majestic) distinguished this Ummah over other nations due to us establishing the call to Allaah and His religion.

{You are the best nation raised up [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah}
[03:110]

The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) lived his life calling to Allaah in earnest. If one considers the life of the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) as a preacher, he will come to realise how the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) employed specific methodologies in Calling to Allaah.

The success – or indeed failure – of our Da'wah therefore depends on how closely we adhere to the guidance and methodologies set out by the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam). It should also be noted “that the difference, separation and discord that has occurred between many of those who Call to Allaah, has only occurred due to a lack of understanding the Fiqh of Da'wah established in the Qur'an & the Sunnah in accordance with the understanding of the Pious Generations.

From this, we are able to understand the importance of paying attention to the methodology of Da'wah as found in the Prophetic Sunnah.”¹

Mentioned below are five Prophetic methodologies and principles that all preachers to Islaam should adhere to in Calling to Allaah and Islaam.

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¹ Fiqh ad-Da'wah fee Saheeh al-Bukhaaree; Shaykh Saalih Aal as-Shaykh

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1. Actions speak louder than words

Before a Muslim calls other people to Islaam with his tongue, he must first display his religious call through his own good actions and beautiful manners. Before calling the people to implementing the laws of Islaam, a Muslim must first implement the laws himself. People are influenced by actions and behaviours more than they are influenced by mere words and statements.

Allaah (the Most High) censured the Tribe of Israeel for commanding others with goodness and yet ignoring their own actions,

{Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?} [02:44]

He (the Exalted) also directly addressed the Believers:

{O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do?} [61:02]

"The scholars of evil sit at the doors of Paradise, they invite the people to it with their statements but their actions call the people to the Hellfire. Every time their statements proclaim to the people: 'Come [to Paradise]'; their actions reply: 'don't listen to him.' If what he called to was the truth, he himself would be the first person to act according to his own words. Such people appear as guides; however their reality is of bandits."²

2. Give glad tidings or reward before threatening with warnings

Whoever contemplates the verses of the Qur'aan, will find that when Allaah (the Exalted) combines a mentioning of a glad tiding of a reward as well as the threat of a punishment, He brings the glad tiding of the reward before the threat of the punishment. Indeed, He even described His Messenger as being:

{We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a Giver of glad tidings and a Warner to all mankind, but most of men know not.}
[34:28]

Consider in the above Verse how the Prophet was sent as a 'Giver of glad tidings' before a 'Warner to mankind.'

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2 Al-Fawaaid by Ibn al-Qayyim (p112)

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When the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) sent Abu Moosa al-Ash'aree and Mu'aadh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he advised them by saying,

((make matters easy for people and do not make them difficult, give glad tidings to the people, and do not cause the people to flee away)).³

So each Muslim who calls to Allaah should seek to entice the people with Islaam, and give them the glad tiding that Islaam will afford for them a happy beautiful life. Contemplate the saying of Allaah, in which He encourages people to do good deeds by mentioning great rewards,

{Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.} [16:97]

This is the same methodology you should use with your own children; entice them with rewards before you threaten them with punishments. 'If you do this righteous action, I will reward you with such and such...' before you ever say: 'if you do this action I threaten you with such and such...'

This does not however mean that we do not warn people about punishments, but rather we should begin with the many glad tidings mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah and resort to punishments afterwards.

3. Moderation in giving Da'wah and be careful of going to extremes

Every Caller to Islaam should maintain moderation in calling to Allaah and His religion. Both the extreme of exaggeration as well as the extreme of being too lenient and negligent will only harm the Da'wah. Unfortunately, some preachers begin with the extremes of Takfeer (passing a verdict of disbelief upon an individual who declares himself a Muslim), Tafseeq (accusing a Muslim to be sinful and disobedient) and Tabdee' (Judging Muslims as being Innovators). This phenomenon is something which has today become common amongst some youth who ascribe themselves to knowledge. Due to being overzealous they occupy themselves with Takfeer, Tafseeq and Tabdee'; no doubt this is a form of being

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³ Narrated by Abu Moosa al-Ash'aree; Collected by Abu Dawood in the Book of Manners

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extreme.⁴

So our Da'wah must be based on a methodology which is apparent, fair and moderate; "we must maintain a moderate methodology in passing judgements on situations, people, ideologies, intentions, intended objectives, societies, scholars, preachers and people. This moderate and fair methodology must be implemented."⁵

In addition a student of knowledge only judges actions and statements that are apparent rather than passing judgements on individuals, this is left to the firmly grounded scholars who have the appropriate credentials to pass such verdicts.

4. Small steps at a time

The methodology of the Qur'aan and the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) is to give Da'wah in a gradual process; beginning with the most important affairs and moving on to more detailed affairs at a later stage.

Preachers must therefore prioritise; "beginning with the most important matters and delaying other matters that are less important. We must be people of understanding because our Sharee'ah has ordered us to be people of understanding and vision; and that we should not be hasty and chaotic in our affairs."⁶

This is clearly shown in the narration of Mu'aadh Ibn Jabal, when the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) sent him to Yemen. He said to him,

((You are going to a people from the People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be the worship of Allah alone. If they acknowledge this from you, then inform them that Allah has obligated upon them five prayers during their days and nights. If they

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4 Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan delivered a lecture (in Arabic) entitled: The Appearance of Takfeer, Tafseeq and Tabdee'. In this lecture he expands on these issues and explains how people fall into extremism with regards to them. A small section of it has been transcribed here in Arabic: <http://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=26402>

5 'Moderation and Fairness; its effect on the Ummah' An Arabic lecture delivered by Shaykh Saalih Aal ash-Shaykh

6 Ibid

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acknowledge this from you, inform them that Allaah has obligated Zakaah upon them...))⁷

Also, the laws of Islaam were revealed in stages and over a number of years. Most of the Islamic laws were revealed in Madeenah after the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) had cultivated his companions upon the correct belief in Makkah for 13 years. For this reason, it is narrated that Aishah (may Allaah be pleased with her said),

“If the first verse to be revealed was, ‘Do not drink alcohol,’ the Arabs would have replied, ‘we will never leave drinking alcohol.’ If the first verse to be revealed was, ‘don’t fornicate,’ they would have replied, ‘we will never leave fornication...’”⁸

So this was the methodology traversed upon by the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) in calling people to Islaam. He cultivated them upon strong foundations for many years and then moved on to the other aspects of the religion.

5. Connect people to the truth and do not connect them to individuals and personalities

It is said, ‘truth is not known by men, rather men are know by the truth.’⁹ Therefore let the Call of a Muslim preacher be to connect people to the truth, to Allaah and to His religion. We shouldn’t connect the people to a specific personality, a particular group or party. Rather the connection should be to the Sacred Texts of the Qur’aan and the Sunnah. This is because, Islamic personalities and groups can – and will – make mistakes and err; however the Sacred Texts of the Qur’aan and Sunnah can never err.

For this reason, Allaah (the most High) ordered His Messenger to say,

We shouldn’t connect the people to a specific personality, a particular group or party. Rather the connection should be to the Sacred Texts of the Qur’aan and the Sunnah. This is because, Islamic personalities and groups can – and will – make mistakes and err; however the Sacred Texts of the Qur’aan and Sunnah can never err.

⁷ Narrated by Mu’aadh Ibn Jabal; Collected by Bukhaaree & Muslim

⁸ Narrated by Aishah; Collected By Bukhaaree in the Virtues of the Qur’aan

⁹ This saying is often mentioned by the scholars; Ibn Jawzee attributes it to ‘Alee Ibn Abee Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with him) regarding which he said: “One should look at the saying and not the person who is saying it, as ‘Alee (may Allaah be pleased with him) said to Haarith bin Hoot when he said to ‘Alee: Do you think that Talha and Zubayr were upon Falsehood? So ‘Alee replied to him: O Haarith, indeed you have been deceived. Indeed the truth is not known by men, rather know the truth and you will know its people.” [Summarised from Talbees Iblees, Ibn Jawzee.]

{Say, (O Muhammad) this is my way: I call to Allaah upon certain knowledge - I and those who follow me.} [12:108]

In this Qur'anic verse, the Prophet Muhammad (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) was ordered to proclaim that his way is to call to Allaah and not call to personalities or groups.

Having said this, the role of the Scholars who call to the truth can never be diminished. The scholars are to be referred back to in understanding the Sacred Texts for they are the people who have inherited this knowledge from the Prophets by way of learning and studying.

May Allaah guide us to implementing the methodology of the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) in establishing Da'wah in the correct manner.

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