

Exploring the Prophet (PBUH)'s Methodology in Dealing with Other Religions based on Selected Historical Incidents during the Time of Revelation

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Abstract: This paper seeks to explore the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with other religions based on textual analysis of selected historical incidents that took place during the time of revelation. The goal of this study is to analyse the text related to these incidents in order to extract the methodologies used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with those involved in these events, especially the non-Muslims. This work is significant as it provides genuine understanding of the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with others, which is relevant to contemporary Muslim scholarship of comparative religion. This research starts with a brief introduction followed by a discussion on: (1) the essence of the Prophetic Methodology; (2) the Prophet (PBUH)'s descriptive and objective methods in the light of *al-Hikmah* (Wisdom); (3) the Prophet (PBUH)'s altruistic and analytical methods in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah* (good advice); and (4) the Prophet (PBUH)'s dialogical and pacific methods in the light of *al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Ahsan* (arguing with what is best). The historical, descriptive, and analytical methods are used in the entire study.

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This study concludes that the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with other religions is clearly significant and relevant to contemporary Muslim scholarship in the study of other religions, faiths, traditions, civilisations, customs and ideologies.

Keywords: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Methodology, *Sunnah*, Religions, Historical incidents.

Introduction

Today's world community is characterised by diversity, where most people find it difficult to coexist peacefully with one another because of their cultural, religious, civilisational, ethnical and ideological differences. Forgetting that diversity is what makes a society stronger, the lack of willingness to accept others, the fear of what is different, and the incompatible methodology in dealing with others, have become obstacles for the establishment of constructive communication and interaction among people. This has led to a situation, where different communities not only do not accept the others, but they attack them and their identities through polemics, provocations and defamations.

In the last two decades Islam and Muslims have been blamed for being the source of terrorism, violence and injustice against others by the then and current political-ideological system in the civilised western world supported by a good number of ruling elites and intellectuals in the Muslim world. As a result, Muslims are witnessing ongoing conflicts among themselves and facing countless challenges in their relationships with people of other religions, civilisations and ideologies. In addition, Muslims are attacked from various directions through different ways and, especially through the media, which is over and over again used by the Western intelligences to provoke their feelings and reactions. In the October 2005 incident, the Danish newspaper - *Jyllands-Posten*, published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which created a very offensive, blasphemous and Islamophobic (Weaver, 2010, p. 676) situation about the Muslims. Similarly, in 2006, the famous French magazine - *Charlie-Hebdo* (Visier, 2015-2016, pp. 13-14), published the Prophet (PBUH)'s cartoons again, which angered the Muslims even more. Such disgracing incidents displeased Muslims, who have expressed their anger through protests in all corners of the world. The

question raised here is whether this was the first time that the Prophet (PBUH) was vilified, belittled and humiliated. Definitely, the answer is no. The Arabs, his own people, did it during the time of revelation, calling him crazy and sorcerer.

These kinds of incidents are repeated again and again in the history of Muslim relationships with others. The most important thing here is to know how to respond to such incidents by using a methodology inspired by the Islamic Sources, *al-Qur'ān* and *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* [Prophet (PBUH)'s approvals, statements, articulations, and actions]. The questions that can be raised are: How to develop these methods? Where to get them from? What are the inspiring sources? How and when to use them? In responding to these questions, this paper urges contemporary Muslims to study the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodologies in dealing with people belonging to different belief systems and ideologies during the time of revelation. These different belief systems and ideologies actually created conflicts and posed challenges for the first Muslim community.

The history of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and his exemplary charisma shown to his own people, the Arabs, and the followers of other religions fourteen centuries ago indicate that an altruistic methodology approved by Allah (SWT)'s revelation is very much required to be used in dealing with others and their belief systems. The Prophet (PBUH)'s genuine methodology employed by him (PBUH) while responding to the questions³ raised by his people during the time of revelation inspired both the classical and contemporary Muslim scholars to produce immense literature on the Prophet (PBUH)'s life. Two types of literature have been produced. The first type of literature deals with the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Sunnah*, which is compiled by the scholars of *Aḥādīth* (sayings) in voluminous works, i.e., *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* and other similar classical and contemporary books. They provide data about what has been approved, professed, and practised by the Prophet (PBUH) as recorded and narrated by authentic chains of narrators among the companions and their followers.

³ Related to Allah, Islam, Prophethood, life after death, rewards=Paradise, punishments= Hellfire, etc.

The second type of literature includes the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Sīrah* (biography) and *Tārīkh al-Umam* (history of nations) describing: (1) the situation of pre-Islamic Arabian society; (2) the miraculous birth of the Prophet (PBUH); (3) his childhood, youth and married life; (4) his Prophecy; (5) his *Da'wah* activities during the Makkan and Madinan periods; (6) his role in the establishment and management of the first Islamic state; (7) his relationships with Muslims and non-Muslims (Jews, Christians and Arab pagans); and (8) finally his departure from this world to Allah (SWT). *Sīrah Ibn Ishāq*, *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (the History of Nations and Kings) and Ibn Kathīr's *Sīrah* are the earliest reliable writings about the Prophet (PBUH) used in this study as main sources for data related to the historical incidents of the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) in dealing with others during the time of revelation. Contemporary literature on the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Sīrah* is used as secondary supportive sources for *Da'wah* purposes reminding Muslims and non-Muslims about Muhammad (PBUH)'s life, the lessons they derive from it, and how to apply them to their everyday lives when they deal with each other's religions. According to the researchers, both types of literature are informative in nature and have not discussed the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with other religions based on historical incidents during the time of revelation, and hence, this study adds new insights to this subject.

The main objectives of this research are: (1) to identify the historical incidents involving the Prophet (PBUH) and the representatives of other religions; (2) to study the texts of these historical incidents; (3) to extract the methods used by the Prophet (PBUH); and (4) to analyse these methods. This study is greatly significant as it provides new insights into Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with other religions and their adherents, which are relevant to contemporary Muslim society and human community at large. Historical, descriptive and analytical methods are used in the entire study. The historical method was used to collect data relating to historical facts and incidents about the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showing when (time), where (place), and why (the purpose) they happened? The descriptive method has been used here to describe those incidents as mentioned by the original sources in the Arabic language with accurate translations in English. Lastly, the analytical method has been used to analyse the

selected historical incidents in order to explore, and then to extract the methodologies used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with others based on the context of these incidents.

The researchers of this humble work urge all Muslims, in general, and the young Muslim scholars, in particular, to understand and utilise the Prophetic methodology in all aspects of their lives in order to present, introduce and inform others about Allah (SWT), while studying their religions, worldviews, ideologies, civilisations, traditions, and customs. This should be done in the light of the Islamic Sources, *al-Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. Therefore, this research paper discusses the following issues: (1) What is the essence of the Prophetic Methodology? (2) the Prophet (PBUH)'s descriptive and objective methods in the light of *al-Hikmah* (Wisdom); (3) the Prophet (PBUH)'s altruistic and analytical methods in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* (good advice); and (4) the Prophet (PBUH)'s dialogical and pacific methods in the light of *Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan* (arguing with what is best).

What is the Essence of Prophetic Methodology?

The essence of the Prophetic methodology is *Tawḥīd* [Oneness of Allah (SWT)], and therefore it is important to use accurate methods in dealing with others to inform them about the Ultimate Authority of the Almighty Allah (SWT) in their personal, social, and public affairs, which encompass both the seen and the unseen aspects of their lives. This, then, leads to a qualitative change in their individual and communal day-to-day lives. In order to transmit the Truth to other fellow human beings, it is necessary to have: (1) an accurate, sublime source of inspiration; (2) a sound, unique methodology; and (3) an appropriate use of this methodology. Definitely, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) followed *al-Qur'ān* as a source of inspiration from which he (PBUH) extracted the best methodologies, and then used them appropriately while dealing with other religions and their adherents.

The *Tawḥīdic* orientation of Muḥammad (PBUH)'s methodology has the divine purpose to communicate the Word of Allah (SWT) – *al-Qur'ān*, to all mankind. To achieve the universality of his Prophetic mission, the Prophet (PBUH) had to start this journey, first with his own community and then, with others (Yusuf, 1993, pp. 35-37). Hence,

the Prophet (PBUH) approached the members of his society by using **direct and indirect** methodologies in the process of conveying *al-Qur'ān* to them secretly and publicly. The Prophet (PBUH)'s successful communication of the Divine Message to his people shows the significance of *Tawhīdic* essence in his methodology, which he applied to his **face to face persuasive dialogue, presentation of thoughts and ideas**.

Allah (SWT) revealed to the last Prophet (PBUH) the teachings and methodologies of all previous Prophets and Messengers, which served as an example to him (PBUH), to the Muslims and to humanity at large. Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is mentioned in *al-Qu'rān* with the Messengers of determination, known as *'Ūlū al-'Azm*:

35 – (فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ...). الأحقاف: 35

Therefore, patiently persevere, as did (all) messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers)...⁴ (al-Aḥqāf: 35). According to Ibn Kathīr, this verse indicates Allah (SWT)'s command to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) to observe patience with those who reject his mission among his people, just as Nūḥ (AS), Ibrāhīm (AS), Mūsā (AS), and 'Īsā (AS) (Ibn Kathīr, 2000, Vol. 9, p. 82), who preserved patience in using appealing and convincing methods and means, while interacting with their people.

Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) used genuine methodologies in dealing with the members of his society consisting of *Ahl al-Kitāb* (the Jews and the Christians) and the Arab pagans and idol worshipers. In all his encounters with them, the Prophet (PBUH) made use of *al-Hikmah* (wisdom) with all his spiritual, intellectual and physical qualities. Indeed, *al-Hikmah* is an integral part of the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Sīrah* and *Sunnah*. Therefore, to build a good relationship with followers of other religions, Muslims ought to **study, analyse and understand** the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Sīrah* and *Sunnah* (Siddiqui, 1996, p. 3, passim p. 25.), then **apply** them to their methodologies in dealing with other religions and **make them relevant** to their time and space. Nevertheless,

⁴ The reference for all translated Qur'anic verses mentioned in the entire paper is: A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989). The words in bold are done by the researchers.

the *Tawhīdic* essence of Prophetic methodology in dealing with other fellows is stated by Allah (SWT) in the following Qur'anic verse:

(ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ) النحل: 125

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: ..." (al-Nahl: 125). This Qur'anic verse endorses the Prophet (PBUH)'s use of three central principles from the beginning to the end of his Prophetic Mission, which are: (1) *al-Ḥikmah* (Wisdom); (2) *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah* (good advice); and (3) *al-Jidāl bil-lati Hiya Aḥsan* (arguing with what is best). In the light of these three Qur'anic cardinal principles, this study *discovers, exposes and explores* other unique **methods** used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with other religions, while responding to the claims of their adherents. The following discussion focuses on how the Prophet (PBUH) used these three sublimes, unique and interrelated principles of the Qur'an.

The Prophet (PBUH)'s Descriptive and Objective Methods in Light of *al-Ḥikmah* (Wisdom)

Allah (SWT), after granting *al-Ḥikmah* (wisdom) to the Prophet (PBUH), showed to him the way to use it in the light of *al-Qur'ān*, which is the main source of Divine Wisdom. Throughout the life of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), whatever he said, did and approved were done based on *Qur'anic* wisdom. Hence, the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology is based on the wisdom and guidance of Allah (SWT). The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) used *al-Ḥikmah* to communicate *Dīn al-Islām* in the early stages of his Prophetic Mission to his people, where most of them were pagans and idol worshippers. In the fourth year of his Prophetic Mission, the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to warn his close relatives: “وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ))” (الشعراء: 214) - And admonish your close relatives”⁵ (al-Shu'arā': 214.”

⁵ Even though the revelation of this verse (al-Shu'arā': 214) pleased the Prophet (PBUH), he was worried about its implementation. Based on his four-year Prophetic experience, most of his relatives were not happy with his Mission, especially his uncle Abū Lahab. In spite of the tense relationship between the Prophet (PBUH) and his close relatives, the Prophet (PBUH) decided to call them to Islam. In this first public call, the Messenger (PBUH)

In order to carry out this Divine command, the Prophet (PBUH) used various methods in dealing firstly with his close relatives and then, with all his people. In this section, two important methods – **descriptive** and **objective**, are discussed in the light of *al-Hikmah* based on the selected historical incidents taken from the books of *al-Sīrah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and other historical sources. The text of these incidents is mentioned in its original language, Arabic, followed by translation into English, and then, its analysis is done to explore the Prophetic methodology.

Descriptive Method

This method is discussed by referring to selected historical incidents during the time of revelation in Makkah. The Prophet (PBUH) used the **descriptive method** in the light of *al-Hikmah* through various steps, as commanded by Allah (SWT), to deal with his close relatives. In the historical incident taken from the book of *Sīrah*, the Prophet (PBUH) called his close relatives on two different occasions.

First Occasion: The Prophet (PBUH) gathered his close relatives among the *Quraysh* at the side of the hill of *aş-Şafā*. The text of this incident is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ: لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ: ﴿وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ﴾ (الشعراء: 214)، خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ حَتَّى صَعَدَ الصَّفَا، فَهَتَفَ: «يَا صَبَاةَ» فَقَالُوا: مَنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَهْتَفُ؟ فَقَالُوا: مُحَمَّدٌ، فَاجْتَمَعُوا إِلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ [رسول الله]: «يَا بَنِي فُلَانٍ، يَا بَنِي فُلَانٍ، يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ»، فَاجْتَمَعُوا إِلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ [رسول الله]: «أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلًا تَخْرُجُ بِسَفْحِ هَذَا الْجَبَلِ أَكُنْتُمْ مُصَدِّقِي؟» قَالُوا: مَا جَزَيْتَنَا عَلَيْكَ كَذِبًا، قَالَ [رسول الله]: «فَأَيُّ نَذِيرٍ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ»، فَقَالَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ: نَبَأُ لَكَ! مَا جَمَعْتَنَا إِلَّا لِهَذَا؟ ثُمَّ قَامَ. فَنَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ السُّورَةُ: ﴿بِئْسَ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَفُؤَادُ نَبِّ﴾ كَذَا قَرَأَ الْأَعْمَشُ، إِلَى آخِرِ السُّورَةِ. (al-Ṭabarī, 1407H/1986C.E., Vol. 1, p. 542; al-Ṭabarī, 2001, Vol. 17, p. 659; Ibn Kathīr, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 456; and al-‘Amrī, 1994, Vol. 1, pp. 141, 342.).

On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās (RA), who said: When this verse was revealed “and admonish thy nearest kinsmen” (al-Shu‘arā’: 214), the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT)

of Allah (SWT), using *al-Hikmah*, first of all, wanted to confirm his relatives’ trust in him before describing to them the Islamic Message.

went out, mounted al-Ṣafā, and called out: «Beware this morning.» So they [some people] said: “Who is that calling out?” They [Others] said: It is Muḥammad.” Then, he [the Prophet (PBUH)] said: «Yā (O) Banī so and so! Yā Banī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! Yā Banī ‘Abd Manāf!» They gathered around him, and then, he [the Prophet (PBUH)] said: «If I were to tell you that horsemen were coming out at the foot of that mountain, would you believe me?» They replied: “We have never known you to tell a lie.” He [the Prophet (PBUH)] said: «I am ‘a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom.’» Then, Abū Lahab [Prophet (PBUH)’s uncle] said: “May you perish! Did you only bring us together for this?” Then he went away. [Allah (SWT)] revealed this verse: {Perish the hands of Abū Lahab (the Father of Flame)! Perish he!}, al-*A‘mashu* read it like this, till the end of the *Sūrah* (Fishbein, 1997, Vol. 6, p. 89; and Haykal, 2009, pp. 93-94).

The content of the above text shows how the Prophet (PBUH) used the descriptive method in the light of *al-Hikmah* through **indirect** and **direct descriptive approaches** in response to Allah (SWT)’s command to openly call upon his close relatives to inform them about his Prophetic Mission.

Firstly, the **indirect descriptive approach** starts with the plan of the Prophet (PBUH) calling his relatives to listen to his Prophetic Mission. In this incident, the Prophet (PBUH) did not send messengers to knock on the doors of his relatives; rather, he extended to them an unexpected invitation. He caught them by surprise, when he mounted *al-Ṣafā* and called out: «**Beware this morning.**» This unexpected call made them eager to know what was happening, and therefore, without any delay, they responded immediately to his call by asking each other “Who is that calling out?” Those among them who heard it replied to them: “It is Muḥammad.” They were attracted the most, when the Prophet (PBUH) called them by their tribes’ names: «**Yā (O) Banī so and so! Yā Banī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! Yā Banī ‘Abd Manāf!**» They were more assured and hence, they responded to his call immediately. When they gathered, the Prophet (PBUH) described to them the following situation: «**If I were to tell you that horsemen were coming out at the foot of that mountain, would you believe me?**» Indeed, this statement was very appealing as the Prophet (PBUH) used his creative skills to inform his

people about an incident that would affect their material well-being if it happened. The descriptive method used by the Prophet (PBUH) in this statement was meant to test his relatives in advance, in order to know their views on his personality before informing them about his Prophetic Mission. It is remarkable to mention here that the description of such a threatening situation presented by the Prophet (PBUH) to his relatives indicates the Prophet (PBUH)'s unique communication skills and techniques used by the Prophet (PBUH) to attract his pagan and idol worshipper relatives. Therefore, the outcome was very fruitful as all of them responded in a positive manner, knowing, based on their experience with the Prophet (PBUH), that he was fair and just with everyone. They acknowledged this by saying "We have never known you to tell a lie." Here they have shown their fair position and judgement about the personality of the Prophet (PBUH).

Secondly, the Prophet (PBUH), after knowing their views on his personality, used the **direct descriptive approach** to inform them about his Prophetic Mission. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) decided to inform them saying: «**I am 'a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom.'**» Even though his relatives acknowledged him to be the most trustworthy among them, most of them did not embrace his Prophetic call. Strangely, most of them were silent, waiting for one of his uncles, Abū Lahab, who expressed his dissatisfaction towards him, saying: "May you perish! Did you only bring us together for this?" He not only rejected the Prophet (PBUH)'s mission, but he also cursed the Prophet (PBUH) and then, left immediately. One of the strongest Arab customs was to take care and support close relatives. However, Abū Lahab's ignorance and arrogance made him abandon this custom and did not allow him to see the Truth introduced by his nephew, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). The devilish manners shown by Abū Lahab towards the Prophet (PBUH) during the time of revelation caused him to deserve the wrath of Allah (SWT). His and his wife's severe punishment started in this earthly life and continues forever in the Hereafter in Hellfire.

Regardless of the way in which his relatives responded to his call, the Prophet (PBUH) described to them his position as a warner sent by Allah (SWT) to warn them first as being his close relatives. This shows that priority should be given to those who are very close in blood

relationships, regardless of whether they accept or reject what is offered to them. In addition, this signifies how far the relatives care for one another. The Prophet (PBUH) revealed his care for his relatives by telling them that a terrible fate awaited them if they did not embrace his Prophetic Message - *Dīn al-Islām*. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) employed the descriptive method to inform them of what is awaiting them in their near and the far future. The former denotes the terrible fate they could face in their earthly life. The latter shows to them in what terrible situation they should expect to find themselves in their everlasting life after death. Thus, to avoid this, the Prophet (PBUH)'s relatives had to respond to and embrace the Prophetic Call.

Second Occasion: The Prophet (PBUH) invites to his house for meal his close relatives. This incident is as follows:

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ قَالَ: لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ: (وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ* وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) [الشعراء: 214-215]... فَدَعَا نِي رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ: «...فَاصْنَعْ لَنَا يَا عَلِيُّ رَجُلَ شَاةٍ عَلَى صِنَاعِ مَنْ طَعَامٍ، وَأَمْلَأْ لَنَا عَسًا مِنْ لَبَنٍ، ثُمَّ اجْمَعْ لِي بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ حَتَّى أَكَلَهُمْ وَأَتَلَعَهُمْ مَا أَمَرْتُ بِهِ» فَفَعَلْتُ مَا أَمَرَنِي بِهِ، ثُمَّ دَعَوْتُهُمْ لَهُ، وَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ أُرْبَعُونَ رَجُلًا، يَزِيدُونَ رَجُلًا أَوْ يُنْقُصُونَ، فِيهِمْ أَعْمَامُهُ: أَبُو طَالِبٍ، وَحَمْرَةَ، وَالْعَبَّاسُ، وَأَبُو لَهَبٍ؛... ثُمَّ قَالَ: قَالَ: «كُلُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ»، فَأَكَلَ الْقَوْمُ... ثُمَّ قَالَ: «اسْقِ النَّاسَ»، فَجَنَّتُهُمْ بِذَلِكَ الْعَسِيبِ، فَشَرَبُوا حَتَّى رَوُوا مِنْهُ جَمِيعًا،... فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُمْ، بَدَرَهُ أَبُو لَهَبٍ إِلَى الْكَلَامِ، فَقَالَ: لَهْدٌ، مَا سَحَرَكُم بِهِ صَاحِبُكُمْ! فَتَفَرَّقَ الْقَوْمُ وَلَمْ يَكَلِّمَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ الْغَدُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «الْغَدُ يَا عَلِيُّ، إِنَّ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ قَدْ سَنَقَبَنِي إِلَى مَا قَدْ سَمِعْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ، فَتَفَرَّقَ الْقَوْمُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَكَلَهُمْ، فَأَعَدَّ لَنَا مِنَ الطَّعَامِ مِثْلَ الَّذِي صَنَعْتَ، ثُمَّ اجْمَعْهُمْ لِي»، فَفَعَلْتُ، ثُمَّ جَمَعْتُهُمْ... فَفَعَلَ [رسول الله] كَمَا فَعَلَ بِالْأَمْسِ، فَأَكَلُوا حَتَّى نَهَوْا عَنْهُ...، ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ: «يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، إِنِّي وَاللَّهِ مَا أَعْلَمُ شَأْنًا فِي الْعَرَبِ جَاءَ قَوْمَهُ بِأَفْضَلٍ مِمَّا جِئْتُكُمْ بِهِ، إِنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِخَيْرِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ» (Ibn Ishāq, n.d., Vol. 1, pp. 46-47; al-Ṭabarī, 1407H/1986C.E., Vol. 1, p. 542; al-Ṭabarī, 2001, Vol. 17, p. 661; Ibn Kathīr, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 458.).

On the authority of ‘Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib (RA), who said: “when this verse was revealed to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) {And admonish thy nearest kinsmen * And lower thy wing to the Believers who follow thee.} (al-Shu‘arā’: 214-215) the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) called me, and said: «... make ready food, with a leg of mutton, and fill a cup with milk, and assemble together the people of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, that I may tell them that which I have been commanded to say.» I did what he ordered and

summoned them. There were at that time forty men more or less including his uncles Abū Ṭālib, Ḥamza, al-‘Abbās, and Abū Lahab.... Then, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said: “Take it [the food] in the Name of Allah.” The men ate, then, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said to me: “Give them to drink!”, So, I brought the cup, and each drank his fill, though one man alone could have emptied that cup. But, when the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) was about to talk to them, Abū Lahab forestalled him and said: “Your host has placed a spell upon you! So they dispersed and the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) did not speak to them.” The next day the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said: “O ‘Alī (RA)! Prepare for us exactly the food and drink as you had done the previous day. This man spoke before I could, and the people dispersed before I could address them.” So I did it. Then, I summoned them. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) did exactly what he did in the previous day. They ate until they finished it..., then, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) spoke to them saying: “O sons of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message than mine. I brought you the best of this world and the next.” (Guillaume, 2004, pp. 117-118; and Fishbein, 1997, Vol. 6, pp. 90-91; and Haykal, 2009, pp. 93-94)

According to the text of the abovementioned historical incident, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) invited the family of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, including Abū Lahab, for a meal in his house twice. The first time, as it is mentioned in the first part of the text, plenty of food and drink was prepared by ‘Alī (RA) as instructed by the Prophet (PBUH). It is noted here that the purpose of the invitation for having a meal in the Prophet (PBUH)’s house was kept secret by the Prophet (PBUH) and was not shared with his relatives. The Prophet (PBUH) knew his relatives well and therefore, he did not tell them in advance about the purpose of his invitation. Perhaps, they would not respond to his call as expected by the Prophet (PBUH). Besides, keeping this a secret would attract his relatives more as they were eager to know what he would share with them. Even though the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to describe the Prophetic Mission to his close relatives, the way to inform them was left to him to choose. Hence, the Prophet

(PBUH) planned to prepare a meal in his house and then, invite the sons (people) of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib to «...**tell them that which I have been commanded to say**». The question raised here is, why is the Prophet (PBUH) commanded by Allah (SWT) to admonish his close relatives? Certainly, this is done for the following reasons: *firstly*, to know their views on his personality; *secondly*, to know who will support him; *thirdly*, to inform them about the Message of Allah (SWT); and *fourthly*, to show to his relatives Islam’s position on peoples’ blood relationships. The Prophet (PBUH)’s relatives gathered in his house as planned. They ate and drank until they had finished their meal. When the Prophet (PBUH) was about to speak to his guests, suddenly Abū Lahab stood up before him and said unpleasant things: “Your host has placed a spell upon you! So they dispersed and the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) did not speak to them.” This shows that the attitude of Abū Lahab towards the Prophet (PBUH) was very offensive in nature. He insulted the personality of the Prophet (PBUH) and his Prophetic Mission, by claiming that he had cast a magical spell upon them. In other words, he meant to tell them not to listen to the magical trick of this man, the Prophet (PBUH). Besides, most of his other relatives (who had not embraced Islam yet) kept silent and did not say anything. They just dispersed. Nevertheless, the Prophet (PBUH) did not give any prompt response to what his uncle said. Rather, he used the **silent approach**, though he was **listening, observing, studying** the situation, and **gathering information** about their views on his mission. It is remarked from this that the Prophet (PBUH) showed at the beginning of his interaction with his close relatives a **firm endurance** by using the **silent approach** as his methodology. Such a stand allowed the Prophet (PBUH) to collect the required information and then plan how to respond to his relatives’ views when he invited them the second time.

The second time which is mentioned in the last part of the above text, the Prophet (PBUH) invited his relatives again for a meal in his house. The same food and drink were prepared by ‘Alī (RA) as instructed by the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH)’s relatives gathered in his house and ate and drank until they were satisfied. After they had finished their meal, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) stood up and started his speech with an outstanding remark by addressing them as one unique family «**O sons of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib**» including himself. This shows how much the Prophet (PBUH) cared for his relatives. Regardless of

whether they accept his message or not, the family relationships should be maintained. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) used the **descriptive method** here in dealing with his relatives in order to show to them the favor Allah (SWT) had shown to them by choosing him as a Messenger among them. According to the Prophet (PBUH), this never happened to the other tribes among the Arabs «**I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message than mine**». In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) described to them that what he had brought them would benefit them the best in both aspects of their lives, related to this world and the next one «**I brought you the best of this world and the next.**” The Prophet (PBUH) made his Prophetic claim very specific for his relatives, when he said, «**I brought you...**». This shows the Prophet (PBUH)’s *al-Hikmah* in approaching his relatives by showing to them the privilege they were granted by having him as a Messenger of Allah (SWT) among themselves, who is connected to them through blood relationship. This is a very strong bond of relationship that the Arabs were very keen to maintain, regardless of the consequences.

These two historical incidents reveal: (1) the Prophet (PBUH)’s firm attitude towards his relatives about his Prophetic mission; and (2) the Prophet (PBUH)’s priority in inviting his relatives to *al-Dīn* of Allah (SWT) and then, the rest of the people, which was Allah (SWT)’s command. The **descriptive method** used by the Prophet (PBUH), which was full of *al-Hikmah* on both occasions, allowed him to know the real ones among his relatives who were ready to support him regardless of accepting his call.

Besides, the Prophet (PBUH) came to know his real enemies, who opposed his Prophetic mission. It is remarked here that this situation enabled the Prophet (PBUH) to expand his Prophetic mission from his family members to his close relatives, who later became a real supporting force for him. The Prophet (PBUH)’s use of the **silent method** in the first invitation and **descriptive-informative method** in the second one, reveals the appropriate steps to be taken to get to know others, and what they have, before informing them about what they are supposed to get from you. Thus, these Prophetic methods must be used while interacting with others in daily encounters, or when reading and writing about belief system(s) or religion(s) of others.

Objective Method

This method is discussed in light of *al-Hikmah* used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with others on different occasions during the time of revelation. Indeed, the Prophet (PBUH) has been recorded and known by the Arabs even before his Prophetic mission for his fairness and justice while dealing with them. The Prophet (PBUH) used the **objective method** to implement justice in the investigation of news presented to him, especially by doubtful reporters or unreliable sources. The text of the selected historical incident is as follows:

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، قَوْلُهُ: (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ) وَهُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ عُقَيْبَةَ، بَعَثَهُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا إِلَى بَنِي الْمُصْطَلِقِ، فَلَمَّا أَبْصَرُوهُ أَقْبَلُوا نَحْوَهُ، فَهَابَهُمْ، فَرَجَعَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُمْ قَدِ ارْتَدُّوا عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، فَبَعَثَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ خَالِدَ بْنَ الْوَلِيدِ، وَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَتَّبِعْتَهُ وَلَا يُعْجِلَ، فَانْطَلَقَ حَتَّى أَتَاهُمْ لَيْلًا، فَبَعَثَ عُيُونَهُ، فَلَمَّا جَاءُوا أَخْبَرُوا خَالِدًا أَنَّهُمْ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ، وَسَمِعُوا آذَانَهُمْ وَصَلَاتَهُمْ، فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحُوا أَتَاهُمْ خَالِدٌ، فَرَأَى الَّذِي يُعْجِبُهُ، فَرَجَعَ إِلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ الْخَبْرَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ، فَكَانَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ: «التَّبَيُّنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَالْعَجَلَةُ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ» (al-Ṭabarī, n.d., Vol. 21, p. 351; al-Qurtubī, 1384H./1964C.E., Vol. 16, p. 311; and, Ibn Hishām, 1411H./1991C.E., Vol. 4, pp. 259-260.).

It is reported on the authority of Qatādah, his saying [that this verse]: “(O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news....” [was revealed concerning] Ibn Abū Mu‘ayṭ al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah, whom the Prophet (PBUH) gave the authority to go to the tribe of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* [to collect *Zakāh* (levies) from them and bring it back to Madinah]. When *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* saw him, they turned towards him [to welcome him]. So, he feared them [thinking they would kill him] and went back to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) [in Madinah]. He reported to him that the tribe of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* had turned away from Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) dispatched Khālīd bin al-Walīd [to the tribe of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*], and commanded him to provide evidence and not to hasten. So, he set out to come to them at night. Then, he sent his agents [to observe them]; when they came back, they informed Khalid that they had adhered to *al-Islām*, that they had heard their *āzān* (calls) and their *ṣalāt* (prayers). In the morning, Khalid came to them and saw what pleased him. Hence, he came back to the Prophet (PBUH) and reported to him the news. Subsequently, Allah (SWT) revealed what you hear [the abovementioned verse]. The Prophet (PBUH) used

to say: «Certainty is from Allah and haste is from Satan».”
(The translation is done by the researchers)

The content of this incident shows how the **objective method** was used by the Prophet (PBUH) in the midst of the confusion and doubt created by the false news brought by a wicked person called *Ibn Abū Mu‘ayt al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*⁶ about *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* to avoid the conflict by providing informed judgement. This incident occurred in Madinah after the Messenger of Allah (SWT) went on an expedition against the *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* [clan of Khuza‘ah] in Sha‘ban, in the year 6 of Hijrah or between the 5th and 6th years of Hijrah (Fishbein, 1997, Vol. 8, p. 41; Ramadan, 2007, p. 121; and Lings, n.d., pp. 237-239). The question raised here is how and why did the Prophet (PBUH) decide to use the **objective method** in this incident? An appropriate answer is given in this section through a textual analysis of this historical incident, which is divided in two parts.

The first part starts with the Qur’anic verse revealed by Allah (SWT) to remind the believers about the news brought by wicked persons or hypocrites, who cannot be considered as reliable sources to refer to. In addition, this verse is mentioned at the beginning of this historical incident by the narrator to show the reasons behind its revelation and those involved in it. The person behind this incident is *Ibn Abū Mu‘ayt al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*, who was known as a wicked (al-Qurṭubī, 1384H./1964C.E., Vol. 14, p. 106) person before he became a Muslim and a hypocrite after he embraced Islam.⁷ If this was his case, then,

⁶ He was the son of ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘ayt, who was one of the staunch enemies of the Prophet (PBUH). Incidentally during the Battle of Badr, ‘Uqbah was killed after being captured in the war. Thus, al-Walīd was one of the branches of this evil tree and was not too far away from the wickedness of his own father. He was a sinful and unclean person, who due to the past hatred he had for the tribe of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*, or due to his own carelessness - wanted the blood of Muslims to be shed (*The Sin of Making up Rumors*, accessed on April 23, 2020).

⁷ Ibn ‘Abbās in his *Tafsīr* comments about this incident is as follow: “{O ye who believe! If a wicked person...}... a **hypocrite**, al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah, brings you news about *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*, (ascertain the truth,) check whether the news is true or false, (lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done) regret killing them (Ibn ‘Abbās, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 436).

why did the Prophet (PBUH) entrust him with a duty? Certainly, this is the Divine Plan of Allah (SWT) and a cause for the revelation of the above-mentioned Qur'anic verse. Nevertheless, the Prophet (PBUH) entrusted him with an important duty sending him to *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* (after they became Muslims) to collect *Zakāh* (levies) from them, which must then be brought back to Madinah. *al-Walīd bin 'Uqbah* accepted this task and headed towards the tribe of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*. When he approached them, they saw him and to honor him as the messenger of the Prophet (PBUH) sent to them, they decided to come out and welcome him. This was not how *al-Walīd bin 'Uqbah* understood it. After looking at this situation, without any proof, he thought that they came out to kill him instead of welcoming him. Therefore, this frightened him and made him to return to Madinah without collecting *Zakāh* from them. He came back and told the Prophet (PBUH) that *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* not only did not want to pay *Zakāh*, but they attempted to kill him and they turned away from Islam. This shocking fabricated news brought by *al-Walīd bin 'Uqbah* to the Prophet (PBUH) made him doubt the status of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*, who embraced Islam lately and willingly after the war between them and the Muslims. This shows that the Prophet (PBUH) was caught in a very difficult situation. The most important thing here is to know how the Prophet (PBUH) responded to this incident and what kind of methodology he used.

The second part shows how the Prophet (PBUH) responded to this incident and the methods he used to attain his judgement. Hence, he started immediately to investigate this incident as it is mentioned at the beginning of this part, where the Prophet (PBUH) sent a reliable person, Khālīd bin al-Walīd (RA), without any delay, to *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*, in order to confirm the news brought to them by *al-Walīd bin 'Uqbah*. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) advised Khālīd (RA) to go to the tribe and prove whether this news was true or false without hastening in his final decision. Thus, Khālīd (RA) went to the tribe and sent out his agents, who brought back to him pleasing information about the people of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* who were found to perform all their obligatory duties according to the teachings of Islam. In the morning of the next day, Khālīd (RA), to further prove whether the news his agents brought to him were true or false, decided to visit the tribe, where he saw for himself what pleased him: **“In the morning, Khalid came to them and saw what pleased him.”** Then, immediately he returned to the Prophet

(PBUH) in Madinah to inform him about the status of the fake news related to *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*, which were brought before by *al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*: “**the tribe of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq had turned away from Islam.**” It is observed here that there were two different versions of news about *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq* presented to the Prophet (PBUH) by two different persons. The first version of the news was brought by *al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*, which confused the Prophet (PBUH), his Companions and other Muslims about the Islam of *Banū al-Muṣṭaliq*. The second version of the news was presented by Khālīd (RA) after the investigation of the first version of the news about *Banī al-Muṣṭaliq*. Of course, the news brought by Khalid (RA) was true compared to the news brought by *al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*, even though the latter was entrusted by the Prophet (PBUH). Khalid (RA)’s Islamic personality, views, and decisions were well established and confirmed by the Prophet (PBUH) and Muslims to be true in various incidents before this. Thus, there was no doubt in him being a reliable source for the news he brought about *Banī al-Muṣṭaliq* as a verification of the first version of the news. This is not the same with *al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*. His experience as a Muslim showing his Islamic personality, views, and decisions were very doubtful as they were neither established nor proven by the Prophet (PBUH) before this incident. Thus, his status did not allow him to be considered a reliable source; rather, it showed him as a wicked person, as well as a hypocrite, who had a hidden intention to create trouble that would lead to bloodshed among the Muslims. Therefore, to stop the bloodshed, Allah (SWT) showed His mercy to His Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims by revealing this verse commanding them what to do when false news is presented to them by wicked persons and hypocrites, like *al-Walīd bin ‘Uqbah*. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) advised the Muslims not to hasten in their judgments about the news brought to them by wicked people or unreliable sources in his saying: «**Certainty is from Allah (SWT) and hastening is from Satan.**»

The analysis of the abovementioned incident justifies the main purpose behind the use of the **objective method** by the Prophet (PBUH) in the light of *al-Hikmah*, which is to investigate with fairness and justice any news in order to make a well-informed judgement. If this Prophetic method is understood and applied appropriately by every matured Muslim, then, its application to their studies of other religions, belief systems, worldviews, civilisations, cultures, traditions,

and ideologies can be done correctly. Hence, the ongoing contemporary conflicts between them can be managed easily and peaceful coexistence can be promoted and established.

The Prophet (PBUH)'s Altruistic and Analytical Methods in Light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* (Good Advice)

The methods utilised by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with his people during the time of revelation, as commanded by Allah (SWT), are in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* (beautiful advice), through which peoples' hearts and emotions are moved. Certainly, *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* creates an environment for discussion or communication ruled by better understanding among the people who are involved in conversation or intellectual discourse (Al-Zamkhasharī, 1417H./1997C.E., Vol. 1, p. 601). In addition, this dimension is related to such manifestations that develop close relationships between Muslims and other fellow human beings (al-Bārūdī, 1987, p. 24). The utilisation of this method by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with the Arabs (Muslims and non-Muslims) throughout his Prophetic Mission depicts his ideal personality. The Prophetic model has served as an inspiration for Muslims to use methods in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* while encountering others, which enables them to repel evil with what is better. Therefore, *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* makes the believing Muslims to stay away from fallacy and to respond to oppressive voices with a call to rationality and thinking instead of quarrelling with his/her audience by using offensive and abusive words. To understand this issue better, this section focuses on the discussion of **altruistic** and **analytical** methods used by the Prophet (PBUH) in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* in dealing with others based on selected historical incidents taken from the books of *al-Aḥādīth* and *al-Sīrah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and other historical sources. The text of these incidents is mentioned in its original language, Arabic, followed by the translation into English, and then its analysis is done to explore the Prophetic methodology.

Altruistic Method

This method is discussed in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with his people during the time of

revelation in different situations. The Prophet (PBUH) was known to his people before his Prophecy for being polite in his approach towards them, regardless of the circumstances. He always used an **altruistic method** to cast tranquillity and love in the hearts of those involved in the incidents inspiring them to change their views about him and his Prophetic Message. The text of the selected historical incident is as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ: كُنْتُ أَمْشِي مَعَ النَّبِيِّ، وَعَلَيْهِ بُرْدٌ نَجْرَانِيٌّ غَلِيظٌ الْحَاشِيَّةُ فَأَدْرَكَهُ أَعْرَابِيٌّ فَجَذَبَهُ جَذْبَةً شَدِيدَةً حَتَّى نَظَرْتُ إِلَى صَفْحَةِ عَاتِقِ النَّبِيِّ قَدْ أَتَرْتُ بِهِ حَاشِيَةَ الرِّدَاءِ مِنْ شِدَّةِ جَذْبَتِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي عِنْدَكَ. «فَأَلْتَقَتْ إِلَيْهِ، فَصَجَكَ ثُمَّ أَمَرَ لَهُ بِعَطَاءٍ» (Al-Bukhārī, 1987, Vol. 4, p. 115)

It is reported on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (RA), who said: “While I was walking with the Prophet (PBUH), who was wearing a Najrānī outer garment with a thick hem, a desert Arab came upon him and pulled his garment so violently that I could recognise the impress of the hem of the garment on the Prophet (PBUH)’s shoulder, caused by the violence of his pull. Then, he (the Bedouin) said: ‘Order for me something from Allah’s Fortune, which you have.’” «{The Prophet (PBUH)} turned to him and smiled, and ordered that a gift be given to him»” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, accessed January 31, 2020).

In this incident the Prophet (PBUH) has utilised the **altruistic method** with a beautiful advice in his response to the demands of the ignorant desert Arab, who behaved in an abusive manner using a violent approach towards the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT). The question raised here is, why did the desert Arab use a violent approach instead of a polite and gentle one? There may be several assumptions about the reasons and the intentions in the mind of the desert Arab while dealing with the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT). Firstly, the Bedouin Arab might have thought that showing harshness and violence towards the Prophet (PBUH) could frighten the Prophet (PBUH), and, therefore, he could get what he intended. Secondly, perhaps the desert Arab hoped that by behaving abusively towards the Prophet (PBUH) he could make him stop conveying his Prophetic Mission. Thirdly, the desert Arab might have wanted to tell the Prophet (PBUH) that the Arabs like him do not need his Prophetic advice or counseling commanding them what they must do. Fourthly, it might have been that the Bedouin Arab intended

to inform the Prophet (PBUH) that the Arabs had already established customs inherited from their great grandfathers, and therefore, they did not need his Prophetic mission. What requires attention here is the Prophet (PBUH)'s response to the violent and abusive approach of the desert Arab.

The situation of this incident required the Prophet (PBUH) to use the **altruistic method** through which he revealed to the Bedouin Arab his Prophetic Message in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah*. The Prophet (PBUH)'s use of this noble method shows how he kept his patience over the harm caused to him by the Bedouin Arab and how he resisted desertion from this harm (al-Ghazālī, 1327H./ 2005C.E., p. 953). Indeed, this is the way in which the chosen Messengers and Prophets of Allah (SWT) behave, regardless of the hardship faced by them. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH), neither reacted with anger over the abusive act of the ignorant Arab, nor did he rebuke him. Rather, he endured this hardship by showing compassion and mercy, through which he reflected the very purpose of his Prophetic mission entrusted to him by Allah (SWT).

The application of the altruistic method granted the Prophet (PBUH) the opportunity to reveal to the desert Arab his true characteristics, as a Messenger and Prophet appointed by the Almighty Allah (SWT) and not by himself or by his people. If Muhammad (PBUH) was a self-proclaimed Prophet, the situation might be different. He could have easily reacted to the abusive approach of the desert Arab in the same way or even worse. If the Prophet (PBUH) were appointed by his people, the desert Arab would not dare to approach him abusively, as he was pretty aware of their customs. As a result, the Prophet (PBUH)'s noble method in dealing with the desert Arab rejected the possibility of he being a self-proclaimed prophet or appointed by his people, and strongly declared him to be the chosen Prophet of Allah (SWT). Indeed, this is asserted clearly in the last part of the text cited which relates to this incident through the Prophet (PBUH)'s immediate reaction, where he used his noble **altruistic method** in the light of good counseling in order to motivate and encourage the ignorant Arab to think and change their abusive and arrogant attitude: «**{The Prophet (PBUH)} turned to him and smiled, and ordered that a gift be given to him**».

This statement is divided into two parts. Part one, «{**The Prophet (PBUH)**} **turned to him and smiled**,...», displays the genuine and noble characteristics of the Prophet (PBUH), through which he shows a warm welcome to the ignorant Arab, regardless of his abusive approach. Besides, the Prophet (PBUH) through this noble gesture demonstrates to the desert Arab: (1) the divine commandment of Allah (SWT) about how evil can be abolished only with good advice and counseling; (2) the Prophetic lesson that an evil deed cannot be erased with another evil deed. Rather, it can be changed with a good deed; (3) the Prophetic manners in responding to the people's demands, which are: first "turned to him" signifying acceptance, and second "and smiled" denoting warm welcoming and listening. This Prophetic method pacifies the situation and brings hope to the Arab by assuring him the possibility of getting what he asked for, even though his request was not put forward appropriately. Part two, «..., **and ordered that a gift be given to him**», denotes the continuation to a higher level of the Prophet (PBUH)'s altruistic method and its completion through immediate execution that provided a satisfactory response to the demands of the desert Arab, even beyond his expectations.

It is observed from the above discussion that the Prophet (PBUH)'s **altruistic method** in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* – smiling and giving away gifts to strangers with ignorant and harsh attitude, like the Bedouin Arab, reveals the possibilities of (1) changing their hostile feelings towards you; (2) accepting and respecting you as you are and not as they want you to be; (3) establishing a friendly relationship between them and you; (4) creating peaceful coexistence between them and you; and (5) their willingness and readiness to listen to you, to know more about your religious identity, and to study and write about your religion and its teachings. Indeed, if this is achieved, strangers and enemies would become friends regardless of their differences, and they would be willing to assist each other accordingly.

Analytical Method

This method is discussed in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* used by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with his people during the time of revelation on different occasions. The Prophet (PBUH) was known to his people before his Prophetic mission for his sound and rational

analytical approach in dealing with a particular incident before passing his judgment on those among his people involved in it, regardless of the circumstances. The **analytical method** is illustrated in the following text of the selected historical incident:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ (ح) وَقَالَ اللَّيْثُ: حَدَّثَنِي يُونُسُ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا بَالَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَتَارَ إِلَيْهِ النَّاسُ لِيَقْعُوا بِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - دَعُوهُ وَأَهْرِيقُوا عَلَى بَوْلِهِ دُتُوبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ، أَوْ سَجَلًا مِنْ مَاءٍ - فَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ مُيسِّرِينَ وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ

(Al-Bukhārī, 1987, Vol. 8, p. 37.).

حَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ يُونُسَ الْحَنْفِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عِكْرَمَةُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ - وَهُوَ عَمُّ إِسْحَاقَ - قَالَ بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِذْ جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ فَقَامَ يَبُولُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقَالَ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَهْ مَهْ. قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ "لَا تُزْرِمُوهُ دَعُوهُ". فَتَرَكَوهُ حَتَّى بَالَ. ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ دَعَاهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ "إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَسَاجِدَ لَا تَصْلُحُ لِشَيْءٍ مِنْ هَذَا الْبَوْلِ وَلَا الْقَدْرِ إِنَّمَا هِيَ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَقِرَاءَةِ الْقُرْآنِ". أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ. قَالَ فَأَمَرَ رَجُلًا مِنْ الْقَوْمِ فَجَاءَ بِدَلْوٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَسَنَّهُ عَلَيْهِ

(Al-Muslim, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 163).

It is narrated by Abū Hurairah (RA) that "A desert Arab urinated in the mosque [of the Prophet (PBUH)], and the people rushed to beat him. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said: «Leave him and pour a bucket or a tumbler (full) of water over the place where he has passed urine – For you have been sent to make things easy (for the people) and you have not been sent to make things difficult for them» (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, accessed April 15, 2020). It is also reported on the authority of Anas bin Mālīk (RA), who said: "While we were in the mosque with the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), a desert Arab came and stood up and began to urinate in the mosque. The Companions of the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), said: 'Stop, stop.' He [Anas] said: "the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), said: «Do not interrupt him; leave him alone». They left him until he finished urinating. Then, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), called him and said to him: «These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an». Or the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said something like that. He (the narrator) said that he {the Prophet (PBUH)} then gave orders to one of the people who brought a bucket of water and poured it over" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim, accessed April 15, 2020).

The above-mentioned incident indicates clearly the Prophet (PBUH)'s use of the **analytical method** in dealing with the Muslims and the Bedouin Arab in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah*, stopping them in advance from entering a conflict that might have harmed both parties. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) employed this method in order to: (1) respond spontaneously to the chaotic situation between the Muslims and the ignorant Bedouin; and (2) to show to them the appropriate ways in dealing with each other's feelings, through which the harm caused by the tense situation can be prevented in advance by a careful analysis of the situation. This is shown clearly in the text of this incident, when the Muslims rushed to beat him **“the people rushed to beat him”** and the Companions said to him **“Stop, stop.”** The Prophet (PBUH) responded to them by saying **«Leave him and pour a bucket or a tumbler (full) of water over the place where he has passed urine»** and **«Do not interrupt him; leave him alone»**. The prompt reply of the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) to the actions of both the Companions and the Muslims, shows that he had analysed beforehand their feelings about the act of the Bedouin Arab, which made him realise the harmful outcome if their actions were allowed to take place. The Prophet (PBUH)'s utilisation of the analytical method in such a tense incident reflects his perfect counselling and communication skills. The former skill assisted the Prophet (PBUH) to analyse this incident immediately during its occurrence by observing and studying the Bedouin's gesture and Muslims' verbal speech. The latter skill enabled the Prophet (PBUH) to respond at once to their encounter in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah*, through which their hearts were comforted, their thoughts organised and their limbs monitored.

The Prophet (PBUH)'s goal in using the analytical method in the midst of the tense situation was to (1) respond immediately in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah* to the feelings and actions of both the Muslims and the non-Muslims; (2) to stop the conflict or confrontation that might have taken place between them; and (3) to reply to the offensive act caused by the ignorant Arab in his *Masjid* by making him to realise his responsibility towards others. In order to understand this better, the second part of the text is analysed to identify further details.

Firstly, the Prophet (PBUH) interfered with the Muslims' actions in order to show to them their responsibilities towards others. This is clearly shown in the text of this incident when the Prophet (PBUH)

advised them: «**For you have been sent to make things easy (for the people) and you have not been sent to make things difficult for them**». Thus, the Muslims are obliged to control their feelings regardless of the situation by showing complete endurance, which would enable them to respond to others in appropriate ways. In order to make things easy for others and not difficult, the Companions and other Muslims were instructed to analyse the situation in which they were involved, before taking any action. Their swift response as shown in this incident indicates that the decision was made by them without analysing their position as Muslims, making them to forget or neglect their duties. Perhaps, the love and care they had towards the Prophet (PBUH) and his Mission caused them to react emotionally, and therefore, did not realise that they had a responsibility to guide the ignorant Arab, who acted unethically. In other words, both the Prophet (PBUH)'s closest Companions and all other Muslims had to know their role first before they think, speak and act while dealing with non-Muslims, who are ignorant about the Prophet (PBUH)'s Divine Message, *al-Qur'ān* and his *Dīn*, *al-Islam*. They had to do this as the beloved Prophet (PBUH) did in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah*.

Secondly, the non-Muslims are represented by the ignorant Arab, who is the main character in this incident. He unwillingly or unintentionally violates the rights of Muslims by vilifying their place of worship, *al-Masjid al-Nabawī*, in an offensive manner by urinating there, which led the Muslims to react and attempt to harm him. However, it was the Prophet (PBUH) who analysed the ongoing incident and immediately intervened by commanding the Muslims: «**Leave him ...**» and «**Do not interrupt him; leave him alone**». The Muslims responded immediately to the order of their beloved Prophet (PBUH) by allowing the Bedouin Arab to finish his unpleasant act. It can be argued here that this incident does not reveal any hidden intention of the Bedouin Arab, which may have caused him to act unethically in front of the Muslims without fear. The questions raised here are: What made him to enter *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* and urinate in it? Why did he choose *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* to do this immoral act, knowing that there were other places outside *al-Masjid* for him to do this? Was he instructed by someone else to do this act? Was this the way how the Bedouin Arab showed his enmity and dislike for the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims? There is no direct answer to these questions in the text of this incident. Perhaps

one might assume many other possible reasons that were behind the ignorant Arab's unethical and harmful act. The prompt response of the Prophet (PBUH) to control the tense situation between the Muslims and the Bedouin in this incident shows that he was the only one to analyse what was happening and why it was happening. One should know that this incident occurred during the time of revelation in Madinah. Certainly, it should be the Divine Plan of Allah (SWT) with the purpose of: (1) educating the Muslims about their position and duties towards others; (2) showing them the right ways to respond to such a delicate situation; and (3) giving a chance to the Bedouin Arab to embrace *Dīn al-Islām* by allowing him to know about the Truth communicated to him by the Prophet (PBUH). The knowledge of the unknown granted to the Prophet (PBUH) by Allah (SWT) provided him with the ability to **analyse** the situation of this incident and then to respond immediately to its happenings by controlling in advance the physical confrontation that might have taken place between the Muslims and the ignorant Arabs. When the tension between them was under control, the Prophet (PBUH) approached the Bedouin Arab in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah*. Although the Prophet (PBUH) had the ability to dismiss him, beat him or even kill him, yet he called him in the light *al-Maw'izah al-Ḥasanah* to show him the importance of al-Masjid by saying: **«These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an»**. This text shows that, through this incident, the ignorant Bedouin Arab had the privilege from Allah (SWT) to listen to the Prophetic advice of Muhammad (PBUH), the best created being among all the seen and the unseen creatures. This was a great opportunity for the Arab to be introduced to the Truth without any form of violence. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) achieved his Prophetic Mission by using the analytical methodology to respond to this incident in the light of counselling by introducing to the ignorant Arab the fundamental elements of *al-Dīn al-Islam*, which are: (1) *al-Qur'ān*; (2) Allah (SWT); (3) *al-Ṣalāh* (prayers); and (4) *al-Masjid* (the place of worship). In addition, the Prophet (PBUH), in the light of his Prophetic counseling and beautiful advice, achieved his goal, making the Bedouin Arab realise that what he did was unethical. He achieved this Prophetic goal by: (1) showing complete endurance towards the offensive act of the Bedouin Arab, that is, "urinating in *al-Masjīd al-Nabawī* (the Prophetic Mosque)"; (2) avoiding any abusive and violent method in his dealing with the

Bedouin Arab; and (3) responding to him in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah*.

It is remarked from the above discussion that the Prophet (PBUH)'s use of the **analytical method** in the light of *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah* enabled him to: (1) respond to the tense situation between the Muslims and the ignorant Arab; (2) control the feelings of Muslims by showing them the role they should play in dealing with strangers like the Bedouin Arab; (3) provide sound solutions for the conflict created by the Bedouin Arab as a result of his ignorance; (4) explain to the ignorant Arab Bedouin the purpose of *al-Masjid* and its importance; (5) make the ignorant Arab realise that his act of vilifying Muslims' *al-Masjid* (place of worship) was unethical in nature; and (6) show to both the Muslims and the Bedouin Arab how to coexist with each other by respecting and accepting each other as they are. Besides, the Prophet (PBUH)'s excellent and noble attitude towards the ignorant Bedouin Arab served as a model for his closest Companions and other Muslims involved in this incident, who wanted to stop the Bedouin or even assault him if they were allowed to do so by the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (PBUH). Finally, the methodology used by the Prophet (PBUH) to respond to this incident shows to every Muslim, as well as human beings at large, how to control their feelings before they judge each other's actions.

The Prophet (PBUH)'s Dialogical and Peaceful Methods in the Light of *al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan* (Arguing with What is Best)

The pre-Islamic Arabian society was a diverse society consisting of people with different religions, belief systems, worldviews, civilisations, ideologies, traditions, and customs. The Arabs were the dominant group in the Arabian Peninsula, which used to control the region. They were divided into many tribes and therefore, two separate social classes were established among them. The first social group was represented by the elite of each tribe to whom all the affairs of their people had been entrusted. The second social group was represented by the masses, in general, made up of members of different tribes with low social status and slaves, who were used as market products. Nevertheless, both social groups followed the pagan belief system and idol worship. They loved their idols to the extent that each tribe had an idol representing its

identity in *al-Ka'bah* (the House of Allah used for prayers and annual pilgrimage), and therefore, 365 idols surrounded *Ka'bah* before the Prophethood of Muḥammad (PBUH).

The Jewish and Christian communities, who were minorities among the Arabs, were following revealed scriptures, sent to them by Allah through Prophet Moses (AS) and 'Īsā (AS), but were corrupted by them. In other words, the three religious communities perceived the idea of one God in different ways, but none of them followed pure monotheism except a few, who followed *Dīn al-Ibrāhīm*, like Warāqah Ibn Nawfal. Thus, in the midst of this diverse religious society with different belief systems, Allah (SWT) revealed the Final Universal Message – *al-Qur'ān* through the Final Universal Prophet and Messenger, Muḥammad (PBUH), in order to respond to their false religious claims and practices, as well as to change their corrupted worldviews. The Prophet (PBUH), inspired by the Qur'anic methodology, utilised various methods in dealing with his people to convey his Prophetic mission. However, in this section the focus of discussion is on two selected methods, dialogical and pacifying, which were used by the Prophet (PBUH) in the light of **al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan** (arguing with what is best) while dealing with others and their religious claims during the time of revelation. In order to understand these methods, the text of the selected incident is cited in its original language, Arabic, followed by its translation into English. Then, it is analysed in a detailed form in line with its context.

Dialogical Method

This method is discussed in the light of ***al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan*** utilised by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with his people during the time of revelation on different occasions. The Prophet (PBUH) was known by his people before and after his Prophetic Mission for his sound **dialogical method** used in his discourse with the members of his diverse community consisting of the Arab pagans and the idol worshippers, as well as the Jews and the Christians. He dialogued with them in the light of what is best with the support from Allah (SWT) throughout his Prophetic mission during the Makkan and the Madinan periods. The text of the selected historical incident is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ: قَدِمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ عَشْرُونَ رَجُلًا وَهُوَ بِمَكَّةَ أَوْ قَرِيبَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، مِنَ النَّصَارَى حِينَ ظَهَرَ خَبْرُهُ مِنَ الْحَبَشَةِ، فَوَجَدُوهُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ [الْمَجْلِسِ]، فَكَلَّمُوهُ وَسَأَلُوهُ، وَرَجُلًا مِنْ فُرَيْشٍ فِي أُنْدِيَّتِهِمْ حَوْلَ الْكَعْبَةِ. فَلَمَّا فَرَّغُوا مِنْ مَسْأَلَتِهِمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا أَرَادُوا، دَعَاهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَتَلَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنَ، فَلَمَّا سَمِعُوهُ فَاضْتَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ، ثُمَّ اسْتَجَابُوا لَهُ وَأَمَنُوا بِهِ وَصَدَّقُوهُ، وَعَرَفُوا مِنْهُ مَا كَانَ يُوصَفُ لَهُمْ فِي كِتَابِهِمْ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ، فَلَمَّا قَامُوا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ اعْتَرَضَهُمْ أَبُو جَهْلٍ فِي نَفَرٍ مِنْ فُرَيْشٍ فَقَالُوا: خَيَّبَكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ رَكْبٍ! بَعَثَكُمُ مَنْ وَرَاءَكُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ دِينِكُمْ تَرْتَادُونَ لَهُمْ فَتَاتُونَهُمْ بِخَيْرِ الرَّجُلِ، فَلَمْ تَنْظُرُوا [تَطْمَئِنُّوا] مَجَالِسَتِكُمْ عِنْدَهُ حَتَّى فَارَقْتُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَصَدَقْتُمُوهُ بِمَا قَالَ لَكُمْ، مَا نَعْلَمُ رَكْبًا أَحْمَقَ مِنْكُمْ- أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ لَهُمْ- فَقَالُوا: سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نُجَاهِلُكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالًا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ، لَا نَأْلُوا أَنْفُسَنَا خَيْرًا. فَيَقَالُ: إِنَّ النَّفَرَ النَّصَارَى مِنْ أَهْلِ نَجْرَانَ، وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ أَيْ ذَلِكَ كَانَ (Ibn Ishāq, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 77; Ibn Hishām, 1411H./1991C.E., Vol. 24, p. 236; Al-Qurtubī, 1384H./1964C.E., Vol. 6, p. 256; and, Ibn Kathīr, 1971, Vol. 2, p. 40; Al-Shāribi, 1412H./1991C.E., Vol. 2, p. 965).

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Ishāq, who said: “Twenty men or close to that from the Christians came to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), while he was still in Makkah, when the news about him (PBUH) reached them in Abyssinia. They found him in *al-Masjid* [*al-Majlis*], talked to him and asking him questions, while some Qurayshites were in their meeting clubs round the *Ka’bah*. When they had finished asking the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) what they wished, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) invited them to Allah (SWT) [His *Din al-Islam*] reciting to them verses from *al-Qur’ān*. Upon hearing *al-Qur’ān*, their eyes were filled with tears. Then, they responded to his call, had faith in it, and trusted him. They knew from him the things, which were described by him in their scriptures. When they got up to go away, Abū Jahl with a number of Qurayshites intercepted them, saying: “What a wretched band you are. Your people at home sent you to bring them information about the fellow, and as soon as you sat with him [the Prophet (PBUH)] you renounced your religion and believed in what he said. We do not know a more asinine band than you,” or like what they said. They [the Christian delegation] responded to them: “Peace be upon you. We do not ignore you; we have our deeds and you have your deeds. We have not been remiss in seeking what is best.” It is said: “The Christian delegation came from Najrān, but Allah (SWT) knows whether that was so” (Guillaume, 2004, pp. 179-180).

The text of this historical incident, which is reported by Ibn Ishāq, an early bibliographer of the Prophet (PBUH), indicates that the Prophet (PBUH) used the **dialogical method** in dealing with the Christian delegation to know about their position towards his Prophetic mission and then responded to their concerns in a friendly conversation. The Prophet (PBUH)'s use of this method was done in the light of *al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan* that allowed him to listen first to their views on his Prophetic call and then, reply to their questions. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH)'s objective in using this method in this incident was to inform the Christian delegation about al-Qur'an and then, invite them to Allah (SWT) – *Dīn al-Islām* on the basis of mutual respect and better understanding.

The first part of this incident reveals the Prophet (PBUH)'s willingness to accept the twenty members of the Abyssinian Christian delegation to engage in a friendly dialogue with them. Thus, from the very beginning of this historical event, the Prophet (PBUH)'s dialogical method was used when he accepted to listen to the Christian delegation's inquiries about his Prophetic mission. The text of this incident starts with the arrival of the Christian delegation in Makkah after hearing the news about the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH). They met with the Prophet (PBUH) at *Ka'bah*, while he was performing his prayers. The Prophet (PBUH) received them although it was the first time to see them: **"...found him [the Prophet (PBUH)] in al-Masjid, and sat..."** It can be argued based on this information that both the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christian delegation accepted willingly to meet with each other and engage in a peaceful conversation. Besides, this indicates their readiness to share with each other their religious identities and teachings. The Prophet (PBUH)'s intention was to inform them about his Prophetic call. On the other hand, the Christians' intention was to confirm whether the news about Muhammad (PBUH)'s Prophetic mission was true or false. Therefore, they decided to come to Makkah and hear the news from the Prophet (PBUH) in person, which could justify what they had heard about him from others. It can be asserted here that the acceptance of both parties to engage in friendly conversation signifies their pure intention in using the dialogical approach towards each other's views, regardless of their different religious backgrounds. In addition, this friendly meeting between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christian delegation initiated, for the first time, the beginning of inter-religious

dialogue between Muslims and Christians. The question raised here is what was the nature of their dialogue?

The second part of this incident shows the Prophet (PBUH) engaging in inter-religious dialogue with the Christians. The Prophet (PBUH) implemented the dialogical approach in the friendly conversation that took place between him and the twenty members of that delegation, who **"...talked with him, asking him questions."** The friendly relationship that was established between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christians provided an opportunity for both parties to be well-informed about each other's similarities and differences in the light of the teachings of their religions. Even though detailed information about the nature of the questions asked by the Christian delegation is not provided in the text of this incident, it can be argued that they might have asked the Prophet (PBUH) questions to prove the news about his Prophetic mission. In addition, they were eager to know about whether Muḥammad (PBUH) was the last Prophet or not as foretold in the Christian scripture, which was the main aim of their coming to Makkah. The question raised here is, what was the outcome of the Prophet (PBUH)'s utilisation of the dialogical method in responding to the Christians' questions?

The third part of this incident provides the answer to that question. After the Christians were satisfied with the answers provided by the Prophet (PBUH), **"the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) invited them to Allah (SWT) reciting to them verses from *al-Qur'ān*."** It can be argued here that the Prophet (PBUH) invited them to accept his Prophetic call after knowing that what they asked for was made clear to them about his Mission. This invitation was made on the basis of mutual respect for the close relationship that was established between them after the long friendly conversation. How did the Christians respond to the Prophet's invitation? It is mentioned in the text of this incident that all the members of this Christian delegation **"Upon hearing *al-Qur'ān*, their eyes were filled with tears."** The recitation of Qur'anic verses was the Prophet (PBUH)'s final response to their queries, through which their hearts were conquered and their eyes were filled with tears of joy, and therefore, **"they accepted his call, believed in him, and declared his Truth. They knew from him the things, which were described of him in their scripture."** It can be argued based on this text that their immediate response to the Truth after hearing it from the Prophet (PBUH) indicates that they were true followers of Jesus (PBUH) by

adhering to his teachings, as prescribed in the Divine Scripture - *al-Injīl*. Also, their acceptance of Prophet (PBUH)'s Truth acknowledged the Jesus (PBUH)'s Prophecy about Muḥammad as the final Messenger from Allah (SWT). The Christian delegation's sincere and willing submission to Allah (SWT) was immediately reflected in their response to the Quraishites.

The last part of this incident shows the dissatisfaction of Quraishites with the Prophet (PBUH)'s achievement from the inter-religious dialogue he had with the Christians. They were very annoyed upon hearing the reversion of the Christians to the Prophet's Message. Abū Jahl, who led the Quraishites, showed his anger towards the Christians through his offensive words, "**What a wretched band you are...**" and "**...We do not know a more asinine band than you.**" Abu Jahl's aim in using such abusive expressions was to provoke the Christians, which could lead them to get angry and renounce their Islam or enter into a fight with the Quraishites. However, Abū Jahl and his people were astonished when the Christian delegation argued with them in the light of what is best, as taught by the Prophet (PBUH) "**Peace be upon you. We do not ignore you; we have our deeds and you have your deeds. We have not been remiss in seeking what is best.**" The text of this statement reflects the Prophet (PBUH)'s dialogical method used by the Christian delegation, who became Muslims, in their response to the offensive claims of Abū Jahl and his circle. Indeed, the Islam (submission) of the twenty Christians shows the Prophet (p.b.u.h)'s greatest achievement during the time of revelation in Makkah.

It is concluded from the above discussion on the Prophet (PBUH)'s utilisation of the dialogical method in responding to the Christian delegation that there should be willingness and readiness to engage with others in matters pertaining to their religious teachings. It was the appropriate use of this method by the Prophet (PBUH) that created a friendly environment in the inter-religious discourse between him and the Christians, which led the latter to be convinced with the Prophetic Truth and profess its acceptance.

Pacific Method

This method is discussed in the light of *al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan*, as implemented by the Prophet (PBUH) in dealing with his people during the time of revelation in various events. The aim of the argument here is to know how the Prophet (PBUH) used the **pacific method** to respond to the disagreements between him and the Arab pagans, the Jews and the Christians on matters concerning *al-Tawḥīd* (the Oneness of Allah). They polluted this concept at the time of revelation as they associated others with Allah (SWT). The text of the elected historical incident is as follows:

قَالَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ قَدِمَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَفَدُ نَصَارَى نَجْرَانَ سِتُونَ رَاكِبًا ... الْمَدِينَةَ، فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ مَسْجِدَهُ حِينَ صَلَّى الْعَصْرَ،... وَقَدْ حَانَتْ صَلَاتُهُمْ، فَقَامُوا فِي مَسْجِدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ يُصَلُّونَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: دَعُوهُمْ فَصَلُّوا إِلَى الْمَشْرِقِ... يَقُولُونَ [عَنْ عَيْسَى]: هُوَ اللَّهُ، وَيَقُولُونَ: هُوَ وَلَدُ اللَّهِ، وَيَقُولُونَ: هُوَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ

(Ibn Hishām, 1411H./1991C.E., Vol. 3, pp. 112-114; Ibn Kathīr, 1420H./1999C.E., Vol. 2, p. 50.)

قالوا [الرَسُولُ اللَّهِ]: مَا نَقُولُ فِي عَيْسَى، فَإِنَّا نَرْجِعُ إِلَى قَوْمِنَا وَنَحْنُ نَصَارَى، . يَسِرْنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ نَبِيًّا أَنْ نَسْمَعُ مَا تَقُولُ فِيهِ؟ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «مَا عِنْدِي فِيهِ شَيْءٌ يَوْمِي هَذَا، فَأَقْبِمُوا حَتَّى أُخْبِرَكُمْ بِمَا يَقُولُ لِي رَبِّي فِي عَيْسَى». فَأَصْبَحَ الْغَدُ وَقَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ، هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ: (إِنَّ مَثَلَ عَيْسَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ * الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ * فَمَنْ حَاجَكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ) آل عمران: 59-61

(Ibn Hishām, 1411H./1991C.E., Vol. 3, pp. 112-114; Ibn Kathīr, 1420H./1999C.E., Vol. 2, p. 50.)

وَقَدْ دَعَا وَفَدُ نَجْرَانَ لِذَلِكَ لَمَّا حَاجُوهُ بِهِ، فَقَالُوا: حَتَّى تَنْظُرَ فِي أَمْرِنَا ثُمَّ نَأْتِيكَ، فَقَالَ ذُو رَأْيِهِمْ: يَا مَعْشَرَ النَّصَارَى لَقَدْ عَرَفْتُمْ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا لَنَبِيِّ مُرْسَلٍ، وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْفَصْلِ مِنْ خَيْرِ صَاحِبِكُمْ، وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ أَنَّهُ مَا لِأَعَنَ قَوْمٌ نَبِيًّا قَطُّ، فَبَيْعِي كَبِيرُهُمْ وَلَا نَبَتْ صَغِيرُهُمْ، وَلَنْ نَعْلَمَ ذَلِكَ لِنَهْلِكَنَّ، فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ أُنْبِئْتُمْ إِلَّا لَفْ دِينِكُمْ وَالْإِقَامَةَ عَلَى مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ فِي صَاحِبِكُمْ، فَوَادِعُوا الرَّجُلَ وَانصَرَفُوا إِلَى بِلَادِكُمْ

(Ibn Kathīr, 1419H./1998C.E., Vol. 2, p. 42)

فَأَتَى الرَّسُولَ وَقَدْ حَزَجَ وَمَعَهُ الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَقَاطِمَةُ وَعَلِيٌّ، وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: «إِذَا دَعَوْتُمْ فَأَمْتُوا»، فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يَلَاعِنُوا وَصَالَحُوهُ عَلَى الْجَزِيَّةِ

(Al-Baghawī, 1417H./1997C.E., Vol. 2, pp. 48-49; and Al-Muḥlī (d. 864H.) & Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911H.), n.d., Vol. 1, p. 361.)

Ibn Ishāq said that a deputation of sixty riders from the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) in Madinah. They entered the Prophet (PBUH)'s Masjid as he was praying the afternoon prayer.... The time of their prayers having come they stood and prayed in the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Masjid*. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said that they were to be left to do so. They prayed towards the east... They said about Jesus: He is God, the son of God, and He is the third person of the Trinity. They said to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT): "What do you say concerning Jesus as we return to our people and we are Christians, so facilitate us if you are a Prophet to hear what you say about him?" The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT) said: «I do not have anything concerning him on this day. So, stay till I inform you what my Lord says to me about Jesus». The next morning, Allah (SWT) revealed these verses: "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be". And he was. * The Truth (comes) from Allah alone; so be not of those who doubt. * If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge Hath come to thee, say: "Come! Let us gather together, - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!" (Āl-e-‘Imrān: 59-61). Then, the Prophet (PBUH) invited the Najrān delegation to settle what they had disputed with him [about Jesus]. But they said: "Let us consider our affairs; then, we will come to you later with our decision." Hence, their chief adviser said: "O Christians! You know very well that Muḥammad is a Prophet sent (by God) and he has brought a decisive declaration about the nature of your Master. You know, too, that a people has never invoked a curse on a prophet and seen its elders live and its youth grow up. If you do this, you will be destroyed. But if you decide to adhere to your religion and to maintain your doctrine about your master, then take your leave of the man and go home." They came to the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah (SWT), who came out accompanied by al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥussayn, Fāṭimah and ‘Alī. He [the Prophet (PBUH)] said to them: «If I invited you [to the Truth], so believe [in it]». Hence, they refused to resort to cursing and reconciled themselves with *al-Jizyah* (the tribute) (Guillaume, 2004, pp. 271-277; Al-Ghazālī, 1999, pp. 460-461; and Lings, n.d., p. 324).

The content of this incident, as described by Ibn Ishāq, reveals that the Prophet (PBUH) employed the **pacific method** in dealing with the Christian delegation from Najrān. The Prophet (PBUH) utilised this method in the light of *al-Jidāl bil-Lati Hiya Aḥsan*, where he responded to their religious practices and their claims about the person of Jesus (PBUH). The question raised here is, what was the Prophet (PBUH)'s main purpose in using this method in this event? His main aim was to respond peacefully in the light of arguing with what is best to the theological claims of Christians about the Truth of Jesus, to provide them with sound evidence supported by Revelation. Another question raised here is, how did the Prophet (PBUH) employ the peaceful method in this incident? This method was used by the Prophet (PBUH) in this historical incident at three different stages related to the inter-religious discourse between him and the Christian delegation.

Stage one deals with the encounters between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christian delegation recounted at the beginning of this incident. When the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions, including other Muslims, finished their afternoon pray, the Christian delegation of sixty riders from *Najrān* (including religious and political leaders) entered *al-Masjid al-Nabawī*. After a while, they stood up and prayed in the Prophet (PBUH)'s *Masjid*, who allowed them to do so. The Prophet (PBUH)'s **pacific method** is applied at this stage in relation to: firstly, the Prophet (PBUH)'s acceptance of this delegation in his *Masjid*. By right, he could stop them from entering *al-Masjid*, as it is a place where the Muslims perform their daily prayers, remember Allah (SWT), recite al-Qur'an, teach *al-Islam* and carry out activities concerning their community. Thus, etiquette is required in entering *al-Masjid*. However, it is not known whether the Christian delegation followed this etiquette while entering the *Masjid*, as nothing is mentioned about this in the text of this incident. Secondly, the Prophet (PBUH)'s approval to allow this delegation to offer their religious prayers in his *Masjid*. Even though the Christian delegation did not ask for permission from the Prophet (PBUH) to perform their religious prayers in his *Masjid*, he still allowed them to do so. Why did not the Christians ask for permission before offering their prayers? Did they not think that their act could disturb the feelings of the Muslims as they were in their place of worship, which was very different from their own place of worship, the church? Perhaps, the Christians' attitude towards the Prophet (PBUH), his Prophetic mission,

and the Muslims by entering *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* and offering their prayers without permission is very provocative in nature. It annoyed the Muslims, who were not happy with their actions. However, this was different with the Prophet (PBUH) as none of their intentions and actions posed any threat to his Prophetic call. The pacifism shown by the Prophet (PBUH) towards the Christian delegation and their religious practices reveals his Prophetic plan and strategy in conveying his Prophetic Message to them, regardless of their attitude.

Stage two reveals the conversation between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christian delegation concerning the person of Jesus. When the Christians finished their prayers, they started to argue with the Prophet (PBUH) about Jesus. As it is mentioned in the text of this incident, the Christians claimed that Jesus is: (1) God, (2) the son of God, and (3) the third person of the Trinity. The *Najrānī* Christians argued with the Prophet (PBUH) about Jesus, as they wanted to know the Truth about his Prophetic mission, which was one of the aims that motivated them to come to Madinah. For this reason, they asked the Prophet (PBUH): **“What do you say concerning Jesus as we return to our people and we are Christians, so facilitate us if you are a Prophet to hear what you say about him?”** To prove his Prophetic mission, the Prophet (PBUH) needed to provide them with satisfying answers about Jesus, so they could inform their people when they returned. Their provocative expression **“if you are a Prophet”** shows their doubt about the Prophet (PBUH)’s Prophetic mission. The Prophet (PBUH) neither got angry with the way they asked the question, nor did he dismiss them. Rather, he requested them in a peaceful way to stay in Madinah until he had proved to them with a revelation from Allah (SWT) their claims about Jesus: **«I do not have anything concerning him on this day. So, stay till I inform you what my Lord says to me about Jesus»**. The Prophet (PBUH)’s statement affirmed to them the reality about Jesus (PBUH), as there was no specific revelation about this. Besides, this reveals the truth about his Prophetic mission. If he was a self-claimed prophet, then, easily he could respond to their questions based on his reasoning or just simply lie to them. This kind of behavior reveals how the Prophet (PBUH)’s peaceful approach was applied to respond to their arguments about Jesus in the light of what is best. Therefore, at this stage, the doctrinal discourse between the Prophet (PBUH) and the

Najrānī Christian delegation on Jesus did not create any enmity in their relationships.

Stage three indicates the outcome achieved by the Prophet (PBUH)'s use of the **pacific method** in replying to the claims of the Christian delegation about Jesus. This stage starts with the revelation from Allah (SWT) to the Prophet (PBUH) as a Divine Evidence against the claims of Christians on Jesus. The content of this revelation proves the creation of Jesus. Allah (SWT) tells the Prophet (PBUH) that if the Christians still argue with you about Jesus, then, say: "Come! Let us gather together, - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and **invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!**" (Āl-e-‘Imrān: 61). After hearing this, the Christian delegation came to the Prophet (PBUH) asking for an excuse without making any decision on their polemical discourse on Jesus. In addition, their excuse shows that they realised the truth of Muhammad (PBUH)'s Prophetic mission. After knowing this reality, they could not make any decision. Therefore, the only thing left for them was to excuse themselves by saying to the Prophet (PBUH) "**Let us consider our affairs; then, we will come to you later with our decision.**" The Prophet (PBUH), in a peaceful manner, accepted their excuse and allowed them to go and reconsider their position, though Allah (SWT) revealed these verses. He gave them permission to leave in order to give them a chance to know more about the theological teachings of Christianity on Jesus, and maybe, they could come to their sound reasoning by accepting the Revealed Truth. It can be argued that if the Christians knew that their claims about Jesus were true, then, why would they hesitate to decide about their position? Why would they have to ask someone else's opinion? Did they not know the teachings of their religion about Jesus?

After leaving the Prophet (PBUH), they asked their chief advisor about this matter, who said to them: "**O Christians! You know right well that Muḥammad (PBUH) is a Prophet sent (by God) and he has brought a decisive declaration about the nature of your Master.**" Thus, his statement proves strongly (1) the acknowledgement of the Prophethood of Muḥammad (PBUH) by a Christian, whom they considered as the wise among themselves; and (2) the fallacy of their claims about Jesus, as the Truth about Jesus was made clear by the revelation. In this sense, there was no other way after this that they could

argue with the Prophet (PBUH). Therefore, he continued to advise them saying **“You know too that a people has never invoked a curse on a prophet and seen its elders live and its youth grow up. If you do this you will be destroyed.”** In this statement, he warned them about the destructive consequences towards them and their families, if they would accept the Prophet (PBUH)’s suggestion about joining a prayer with all their family members by invoking the curse of God on those who lie about Jesus. After the Christians saw the Divine Evidence about Jesus (PBUH), would they accept the Prophet (PBUH)’s suggestion? The last advice given to them by their chief was **“But if you decide to adhere to your religion and to maintain your doctrine about your Master, then take your leave of the man and go home.”** It may be argued that if their chief advisor knew the truth about the Prophetic mission of Muhammad (PBUH), then, why would he tell them to continue following their religion blindly? Instead, he could have advised them to embrace the Prophetic call. However, he provided for them a peaceful solution that made them stop their arguments with the Prophet (PBUH) on Jesus (PBUH) and go home peacefully if they wanted to maintain their religion. When they heard this from their chief advisor, they did not worry anymore about whether their claims were right or wrong. Rather, they opted for the last option by surrendering themselves and accepting any suggestions that the Prophet (PBUH) would give them in return for their rejection of the prayer that invokes the curse of Allah (SWT) on those who lie.

Their chief advisor gave them satisfactory suggestions that motivated them to come back in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH) and express their final decision. Thus, they came to the Prophet (PBUH) who welcomed them accompanied by his grandchildren, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥussayn, his daughter Fāṭimah, and his cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with all of them). The Prophet (PBUH) peacefully invited them to embrace *al-Islām* «**If I invited you [to the Truth], so believe [in it]**». How did the Christians respond to the Prophet (PBUH)’s call? Did they accept to embrace the Prophet (PBUH)’s message? Rather, they rejected the Prophet (PBUH)’s truth and continued to follow blindly their distorted version of truth according to their religion, Christianity. In addition, to save themselves from this situation they opted to accept *al-Jizyah* (the tribute) instead of resorting to the curse. In spite of this, the Prophet (PBUH) agreed with their

decision and accepted to establish with them a peaceful covenant that would guarantee for them complete freedom to practice their religion.

It is concluded from the above analysis of this historical incident that the Prophet (PBUH)'s utilisation of **the pacific method** at three different stages in his discourse with the members of the Najrānī Christian delegation, reveals: (1) the Prophet (PBUH)'s tolerant approach in dealing with the Christian delegation by allowing them to perform their prayers in his mosque; (2) the continuity of friendly relationships between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Najrānī Christian delegation although they disagreed theologically on the person of Jesus; (3) the Divine Evidences provided by the Prophet (PBUH), via the *Qur'anic* revelation, against the Christians' arguments about Jesus; (4) the Prophet (PBUH)'s unique principles regarding the inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and others; and (5), the universal mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which rejects compulsion:

“(لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ) (البقرة:256)” - Let there be no compulsion in religion.” [al-Baqarah: 256].

Conclusion

This paper concludes that the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology in dealing with other religions to convey his Prophetic mission is of great significance and relevance to contemporary Muslim scholarship in the study of other religions, faiths, traditions, civilisations, customs, and ideologies. The *Tawhīdic* essence of the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodology is endorsed by the three central Qur'ānic principles, *al-Hikmah* (Wisdom), *al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah* (good advice), and *al-Jidāl bil-lati Hiya Ahsan* (arguing with what is best), used by him throughout his Prophetic mission. Through the textual analysis of selected historical incidents during the time of revelation, this study discovered, revealed and explored six unique methods, i.e., **the descriptive, the objective, the altruistic, the analytical, the dialogical and the peaceful**, used by the Prophet (PBUH) in the light of these three Qur'anic cardinal principles in dealing with other religions. The Prophet's use of these methods in responding to the behaviours and claims of adherents of other religions has, in most of the incidents discussed in this study, granted him the following achievements: (1) changing their hostile

feelings towards him; (2) to respect him and his Prophetic mission; (3) to embrace *Dīn al-Islām*; and (4) to establish a friendly relationship and peaceful coexistence between him and them. Hence, to build a good relationship with followers of other religions, this study urges contemporary Muslims to **study, analyse and understand** the Prophet (PBUH)'s methodologies, and **apply** them making them **relevant** to their discourses and writings related to other religions.

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