

## The Sociological Approach to Islamic Da'wa

### Pendekatan Sosiologikal Dakwah Islam

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#### Abstract

Da'wah has been studied from different angles and from different points of view. The present paper deals with the sociological approach to da'wah. It focuses on three aspects of da'wah which has wide repercussions and a determinant impact on social relations and the lives of individuals. First, the significance of da'wah from the sociological perspective is the nature of intellectual interaction where there is an exchange of ideas and ideals affecting the mind-set of individuals. Second, it is a vital form of social transformation which takes place at the intellectual level and proceeds to the physical level. Third, it has a distinct method based on the communicator, content, recipient and the style of communication.

**Keywords:** Islamic Da'wah, Intellectual Interaction, Social Transformation, Communication Process, Ideals.

#### Abstrak

Dakwah telah dikaji dari sudut pandangan yang berbeza. Karya ini berurusan dengan pendekatan sosiologikal untuk dakwah. Ia menumpukan perhatian kepada tiga aspek dakwah yang mempunyai pelbagai akibat dan kesan penentu kepada hubungan sosial dan kehidupan individu. Yang pertama, kepentingan dakwah dari perspektif sosiologikal adalah sifat interaksi secara intelektual dimana berlakunya pertukaran idea dan cita-cita yang mempengaruhi minda seorang individu. Kedua, ia adalah satu bentuk transformasi sosial penting yang berlaku pada tahap intelektual sehingga tahap fizikal. Ketiga, ia mempunyai kaedah yang berbeza berdasarkan komunikator, kandungan, penerima dan gaya komunikasinya.

**Kata Kunci:** Dakwah Islam, Interaksi secara intelektual, Transformasi Sosial, Proses Komunikasi, Cita-cita.

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### Introduction

*Da'wah* is an invitation to someone to participate in some event or to do something. Islamic *da'wah* is the call to the Truth, to the ways of Allah, the straight path, as well as to the virtuous, dignified and contented life. It invites humanity to comprehend and invoke the 'Absolute Reality', a living force behind all realities that derive their strength and vitality from it. It is the call to Allah (swt), the Lord and Master of the universe, the Most Glorious, Powerful of Whom it is said "there is none like Him".<sup>1</sup> He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe as well as the Provider of subsistence to every living being. As a living Reality, Allah wants close relation with humans, His superior and most auspicious creatures, and provides them with a comprehensive and appropriate system so as to live in peace and harmony with happiness and exuberance. He, thus, calls humans to "*the Home of Peace*"<sup>2</sup>, the most superior, sophisticated, beneficial and felicitous life. *Da'wah* in Islam is an earnest plea to follow this system of life and venerate the Supreme Suzerain Who is only capable of being worshipped. It urges humans to accept this truth, surrender to His authority, submit to His will, obey His commandments and manifest His sovereignty and suzerainty in all aspects of their lives and in all spheres of society. This is the message that Allah conveys to humankind time and again and this is the crux of *da'wah* towards which the servants of Allah call people.

Apostles and guides who have been raised from time to time from among their own people conveyed the same truth and impressed people to accept it and act upon it. They embodied this principle in their lives, manifested it in their thought and action and call their people to go through the path of Allah in order to make their lives beneficial and meaningful as, besides that, all is falsehood. They struggled hard, faced all odds, overcame various obstacles but remained steadfast to the Truth and never compromised with falsehood and untruth. Prophet Hūd (pbuh) told his people with no ifs or buts: "*O my people! Worship Allah! Ye*

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<sup>1</sup> The Qur'ān, Al Ikhhlās 112: 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Qur'ān, Yūnus 10: 25.

*have no other god but Him. (Your other gods) ye do nothing but invent!”*<sup>3</sup> Similar messages have been conveyed by all the apostles to their people. Prophet Ibrāhīm (pbuh) declared that there would be no compromise with their people if they worshiped other than Allah.<sup>4</sup> Prophet Noah (pbuh) exhorted; “*O my people! I am to you a Warner, clear and open: that you worship Allah, fear Him and obey me*”.<sup>5</sup> This indicates that the fundamental truth is one, that is, the unity and sovereignty of Allah; that the straight path is one that manifests His ascendancy in thought and action and *Dīn*; and that the only appropriate system of life is one, that is, submitting oneself to His will. These ideals and paragons have been revealed by Allah throughout the ages; and His apostles communicated these to humans and impressed them to act upon these principles. The Qur’ān asserts:

*We have sent the inspiration, as we sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma’il, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms. Of some messengers We have already told thee the story; of others we have not – and to Moses Allah spoke direct.*<sup>6</sup>

### The Prophetic Mission

Allah sent His Messengers and Apostles to convey the Truth, reveal the essentials of virtues, expose the difference between right and wrong and guide people to the right path so that they make sense of their lives, live in dignity and augustness and achieve success. The Messengers devoted their lives to complete their tasks, called people to the Truth, acquainted them with the glory, eminence and distinction of Allah and instilled in the minds and hearts of people His omnipotence and omniscience. They convinced their people to venerate Allah Who deserves

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<sup>3</sup> The Qur’ān, Hūd 11: 50.

<sup>4</sup> The Qur’ān, Mumtaḥinah 60: 4.

<sup>5</sup> The Qur’ān, Nūḥ 71: 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> The Qur’ān, Al Nisā’ 4: 163 - 164

alone all gratitude, all our worship and devotion. They carried the torch of the Truth to every nook and cranny, established the sovereignty of Allah on earth and completed the mission for which they were sent. The important fact was that the Apostles were raised among their own people and from the same socio-cultural background. The purpose was to let people know that the ideals which they were teaching were not meant for any other creature but human beings who could follow them because they were appropriate to their nature and could enrich their lives. Further, the Truth must be conveyed in the language of the people in simple and clear terms and within the same socio-cultural context so that people may understand it, grasp it and appreciate its significance. At the same time, people would have no excuse that no Warner came and apprised them of glad tidings so they remained gasping in the darkness of ignorance. The Qur'ān exhorts:

*O People of the Book! Now hath come unto you, making (things) clear unto you, our Messenger, after break in (the series of) our messengers, lest ye should say: "There came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner (from evil)". But now hath come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner (from evil), and Allah hath power over all things.*<sup>7</sup>

The Apostles and Guides dedicated their lives to calling people to the Truth and guiding them to the right path. They preached "with due care whatever the people needed to know to seek the countenance of Allah and to do the full existence in this world".<sup>8</sup> When, according to Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, the moral and social consciousness of man was awakened and material resources were developed to the extent that the message of the Truth could easily reach every corner of the world, Allah sent the last Prophet and through him completed the creed and conferred a perfect and comprehensive way of life on humankind suitable to their nature, temperament and requirements.<sup>9</sup> The way of life given by Allah through the

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<sup>7</sup> The Qur'ān, al-Mā'idah 5: 19.

<sup>8</sup> Iṣlāḥī, Amīn Aḥsan, *Call To Islam And How The Holy Prophets Preached*, [Translated by Sharif Ahmed Khan] (Safat, Kuwait: Islamic Book Publishers, 1982), 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 19 – 20.

last Prophet was not parochial and limited to a particular land and community but it was universal and appropriate to the entire humankind for its perfection, overall wellbeing and amelioration. Thus, the significant task of the last Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was to guide the entire humankind to the right path, to enlighten the minds and hearts with the Truth, inculcate a sense of submission to Allah in them and convince them to embrace virtues and righteousness. The last Prophet (s.a.w.) left no stone unturned to discharge his responsibilities and complete his mission. He succeeded in changing the minds of people, inspiring them to act on the command of Allah and establishing the suzerainty of Allah on earth. He raised a number of dedicated persons to maintain and continue the system of life which Allah bestowed upon humankind. The mission of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was so important that Allah strengthened it and raised a whole *Ummah* to carry it to every part of the world, spread the Truth to every land, witness the propriety and authenticity of the system of life which Allah commanded and implant in every heart and on every land. The Qur'ān clarifies: "*Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves*".<sup>10</sup>

Now after the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), who was the last in the series of the prophets, the responsibility of calling people to the Truth and showing them the right path lies on the *Ummah*. It is necessary to preserve the Divine guidance (*hidāyah*) and manifest it in our thought and actions in order to institute the Truth in the phenomenal world and to be witness of the Truth before humankind. This magnanimous task can only be carried out by the *Ummah*, which should make all possible efforts to operate the mechanism of guidance and establish the ascendancy of the Truth. The Qur'ān says: (1) "*Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity*".<sup>11</sup> (2) "*Thus, it is the obligation of the Ummah and its members to continue the mission of the Prophet and invite people to what is righteous and virtuous. This is a no-*

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<sup>10</sup> The Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 2: 143.

<sup>11</sup> The Qur'ān, Āli 'Imrān 3: 104.

*ble act and so momentous that for it the Ummah is placed on a pedestal and considered as the best community. The Qur'an declares, "You are the best of peoples evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah".<sup>12</sup>*

### **Da'wah As An Intellectual Interaction**

*Da'wah*, from the sociological perspective, is an intellectual interaction where a person conveys a set of ideas which he considers valuable to others, convinces them of its efficacy and impresses their minds to think over it and weigh it up and react. It is an appeal to human consciousness to judge what is right and wrong and good and bad. If one considers a way of life right and genuine one should accept it. There is no coercion or compulsion in *da'wah* which is against its own principles. The Truth has itself a captivating quality that impresses others to accept it for their own wellbeing. In the Qur'anic language "*Truth stands out clear from error and those who reject evil and believe in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks*".<sup>13</sup> It is, in fact, a dialogue between two persons where one presents a system to the other who is free to accept or reject it. If the other accepts, it is so far so good. If he rejects, the first tries again and again and even then if the other rejects it, the first comes back happily because he has performed his duty. Ismā'īl al-Fārūqī observes:

It is a kind of academic seminar on a large scale where he who knows better is free to tell and to convince, and the others are free to listen and be convinced. Islam puts its trust in man's rational power to discriminate between the true and the false.<sup>14</sup>

In this intellectual interaction what is most important is what is conveyed and how it is received and understood by the other party. The content of what is conveyed should be directly related to the core of the Truth and the message of Allah. It should be ensured that the theme is

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<sup>12</sup> The Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān 3: 110.

<sup>13</sup> The Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 256.

<sup>14</sup> Ismail al-Farooqi, On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah, <http://www.ismailfaruqi.com/articles/on-the-nature-of-islamic-dawah/>

conveyed in a correct way without any distortion and it is also received and understood correctly. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was very particular that people may understand his message in the same sense and with the same effect. It is reported: “‘Ā’ishah said that the speech of Allah’s Messenger was (such that) all those who listened to him understood him”.<sup>15</sup>

The important point of the content should be stressed to create a distinct effect upon the recipient. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) had to say something important, he used to repeat it and say it three times.<sup>16</sup> The interaction will be fruitful only if both the parties are sincere and engage in dialogue with good intentions. The conveyor of the Truth should be interested in refining and purifying the life of the recipient; and he should acquaint the recipient with the right path and its outcome in his life. On the other hand, the recipient should have the desire to comprehend the Truth and act upon it to make his life constructive and worthwhile.

#### Da'wah As Social Transformation

The other sociological significance of *da'wah* is that it is a vital process of social transformation. Sociologists have been interested in the study of social change. They have highlighted the factors that initiate changes and their impact on individuals’ lives. It is generally said and observed that changes in material condition, particularly in levels of economy, bring about changes in other aspects of the social structure and in the mind-set of people. Changes from the material condition to the non-material always create problems and sometimes lead to contradiction. First, it leads to unnecessary competition in society. People want to have more and more and in this attempt they may cross all limits of dignified and civilized living; and they do not hesitate even to grab the privileges of society at the cost of their brethren and social interest as well.

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<sup>15</sup> Abū Dā’ūd: A Day with the Prophet, No. 133 quoted by Ahmad Von Denffer in *Key –Issues of Islamic Da’wah* (Delhi: Hindustan Publications, 1988), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad Ismā’īl, *Saḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1400 A.H.), Vol. 1, Hadith No. 94-95.

Under these conditions, the exploitation, suppression and oppression of a section of the society begin and gradually become rampant throughout society. Second, the affluent members of the society gradually seize political power and introduce such a system as to suit to their own interests and provide for themselves a better opportunity of enjoying social privileges. The others, particularly the weaker and downtrodden sections of society, are deprived of the basic facilities of life and remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This not only creates unsystematic inequality in the society but also initiates conflict, tension and turmoil and, at the end of the day, changes the entire shape of society. Islamic *da'wah*, on the other hand, is the type of transformation that refines and purifies human thinking. It modifies the human mind-set and instills in it the fear of Allah. It gives the impression that humans are created by Allah for a certain purpose, that is, for complete submission to His will. They are equal as they are the progeny of the same father and mother. Their position is of a servant and of His vicegerent on earth. In these capacities they have to follow Allah's way of life and implement it on earth. Humans constitute the family of Allah; they have to take care of each other, help each other in times of difficulty and distress and live in peace and harmony. The resources and privileges of the society are for all, and they should not be monopolized, destroyed and damaged but should be used properly and shared by all. In human life, the mere satisfaction of urges is not important but the way one satisfies them is more important. Humans are free to earn a livelihood but in case of excess, it should be shared with others. Economic transactions and production should be done not only on the basis of profit but also keeping in view societal needs and national preferences. The important point in the process of *da'wah* is that it initiates changes from the mind-set to the physical condition or from the non-material aspect to the material aspect of society. In this case, humans restrain their behaviour of being greedy. Their purpose is not to get as much money as they can but to seek the pleasure of Allah and, thus, they pursue economic activities in a genuine way approved by Allah. This transformation creates a healthy society based on mutual help and cooperation and devoid of suppression and exploitation.



### Da‘wah As A Distinct Method

*Da‘wah* is a noble task performed with a view to spreading goodness, making truth prevail and establishing the ascendancy of Allah in every part of the world. It is a sincere attempt to introduce righteousness to others, direct them to the right path, save them from evil and distress and, in nutshell, change their lives for the better. This magnanimous task should be performed with due care, the utmost sincerity and in the most convincing way. This is the reason why the Qur’ān provides a distinct methodology for it. It explains in clear terms: “*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*”.<sup>17</sup> It indicates that the caller of the truth should use his/ her own intellect to decide how to convey the message of the truth in a particular situation and to a particular person. The preacher should take into consideration the socio-cultural background of the recipient of the message, his mind-set and level of understanding and adopt a persuasive way to communicate the ideas. According to Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī, the above passage of the Qur’ān stresses two important points: persons who are involved in *da‘wah* “have both their freedom and their constraints; they are free to pursue *da‘wah* to a particular extent; and at the same time, they are forbidden from going beyond certain limits”.<sup>18</sup> “Wisdom, according to him, stands for common sense, tact, persuasive charm, preaching in a way which does not betray any opportunism or bowing down to someone or politicization. Let it be realized that politics and preaching are poles apart”.<sup>19</sup>

The other significance of this method is that *da‘wah* is also applicable to the person who calls to truth. When one communicates the basic tenets of the Truth, the communication also affects one’s own mind and soul. It fortifies the faith and strengthens the commitment of the person

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<sup>17</sup> The Qur’ān, al-Naḥl 16: 125.

<sup>18</sup> Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī, *Guidance form the Holy Qur’an*, [translated by Abdur Raheem Kidwai] (Leicestershire, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2005), 34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

who invites others to goodness. *Da'wah*, in this respect, signifies not only calling upon others to accept truth but also calling upon the preacher to strengthen his faith in truth and manifesting it in his thoughts and actions.

*Da'wah*, as a method, from the sociological point of view, revolves around four important factors. In sociological research there is a method known as '*Content Analysis*' generally used to study the impact of communication. It is based on the principle, 'who says what to whom and with what effect'. It refers to four ingredients, the personality of the communicator, the content which is communicated, the person or audience to whom the communication is addressed, and the force or effect with which particular content is communicated. These principles determine the nature of *da'wah* and make it more relevant and efficacious.

### **The Preacher of the Truth (Dā'ī)**

The personality of the preacher plays a significant role in impacting and pursuing others to follow the truth. Personality depends upon one's sincerity, dedication and commitment to the Truth as well as its manifestation in one's thought and action. In Islamic terminology, a person who calls to the Truth must have a high degree of austerity and piety or fear of Allah (*taqwā*) because it purifies and sophisticates his personality. Further, the person concerned must have no other interest except to seek the pleasure of Allah. If a person conveys anything with the utmost sincerity, it has a durable effect upon the mind of others. According to Iqbal, if anything comes from the depth of the heart, it affects others.<sup>20</sup> Besides, the preacher should be concerned with the problems of the people and the situation in which they breathe, show interest in them and be sympathetic to the people. Moreover, the person who is involved in *da'wah* and calls people to the Truth should have the following characteristics:

1. The person who calls to the Truth must have thorough knowledge of the Divine message. He will be well-versed in the revelation,

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Islamic Religious Thought* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), 80.

its interpretation in the true sense and its execution in life so that he may be able to answer the questions and remove the doubts raised by the audience. He must also be aware of the precepts of the Prophet (s.a.w.), his life, actions, the hurdles he faced in remaining steadfast to the Truth and the way he invited people to the way of Allah. He must honestly believe in the Truth as concrete and palpable as anything else because it is the characteristics of men of faith. The Qur’ān says: “*The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith*”.<sup>21</sup> He must have full confidence in the principles and ideals which he communicates that they are more genuine, gracious and beneficial to humankind and they can change the lives of people if accepted and practised.

2. He should bear witness to the Truth and manifest it in his thought and action. He should have courage to boldly declare it, act on it and affirm its authenticity. Bearing witness to truth is the characteristic of the faith and being a true servant of Allah is its embodiment. He must exhibit it so that goodness would prevail over evil and vice. It is mentioned in the Qur’ān: “*Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over nations and the Messenger a witness over yourselves*”.<sup>22</sup> This indicates that it is the obligation of the community of believers to give evidence in favour of goodness, truth and piety that they are just, fruitful and for the overall well-being of humankind. The entire *Ummah* should be witness of the truth and stand for it. In exceptional cases, particularly in times of danger to his life, he may be allowed to avoid but not contradict it. Otherwise, if any one fails in his duty of declaring it, he is considered as a hypocrite or a coward.

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<sup>21</sup> The Qur’ān, al-Baqarah 2: 285.

<sup>22</sup> The Qur’ān, al-Baqarah 2: 143.

3. The preacher must manifest the Truth and its tenets in his actions. Merely saying something by word of mouth is not sufficient at all and cannot bear fruit unless it is supported by action. It is imperative for a person who calls others to truth that his ideals are translated into his actions. He should lead life according to the commandments of Allah and strictly follow the precepts of the Prophet (s.a.w.). This has two advantages. First, it shows his sincerity, candidness and devotion to the faith. Second, it makes a substantial and durable impact on others when they observe that there is no difference between his words and actions. Nevertheless, Allah prefers actions, and He wants His guidance and messages to be followed by humans, His laws and system to be implemented on earth and goodness and virtues to prevail in the world. The Qur'ān describes the characteristics of believers:

*The believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise.*<sup>23</sup>

4. The preacher should be above all prejudices and biases of any kind and nature. His affiliation to any nation, group and community should not give any undue privilege to anybody nor should his hatred and enmity deprive others of their genuine rights. He should not feel and show any superiority on national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic grounds. Instead, he should treat everybody on an equal footing as a creation of the Lord, as fellow beings, as brethren and as the progeny of the same father and mother. His attachment to Allah should be so intense and strong that his relations with other fellow beings and objects as well as his activities in this world should be in accordance with the way of Allah and only to seek the pleasure of the Lord. In fact this is “the way by which man is able to give religious significance to this daily life

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<sup>23</sup> The Qur'ān, al-Tawbah 9: 71.

and be able to integrate this life into a spiritual centre”.<sup>24</sup> His identity is only that of the servant of Allah and it should prevail over all other affiliations and associations.

5. The caller to the Truth should be ready to face all difficulties and obstacles in the way of *da‘wah*. He should be prepared to bear pain, stresses and strains in the way of Allah. He should sacrifice his whole life to spreading Allah’s message to the people. It is a noble act and the highest position of bearing witness. This is the reason why Allah gives the highest reward to those who spend their time, money and all valuables to acquaint people with the Truth and inspire them to follow it. However, the nucleus of the faith is that the whole life of believers should be spent in the service of the Lord and with unconditional submission to His will. In the words of the Qur’ān:

*Say: “Truly my prayer and my service of sacrifices, my life and death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds. No partner hath He. This I am commanded and I am the first of those who bow to His will”.*<sup>25</sup>

A person who conveys this message must also prove it by his actions. He is, thus, expected to sacrifice his pleasure and comfort in obedience to the Lord and in seeking His pleasure.

### **Content of the Da‘wah**

The purpose of calling people to the Truth is to convey the message of Allah to humankind, to acquaint them with what is righteous and virtuous, to direct them to the straight path shown by Allah and inspire them to submit to the will of Allah. It is a noble and significant act, the core of the Prophetic mission assigned to the *Ummah* to establish good on earth. It is, thus, the foremost obligation of Muslims as individuals as well as the community to admonish right (*ma‘rūf*) and to prohibit wrong

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<sup>24</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideal and Realities of Islam* (London: 1966), 18.

<sup>25</sup> The Qur’ān, al-An‘ām 6: 162 – 163.

(*munkar*). It should be performed with the utmost sincerity, devotion, with one's heart and soul in it as well as with words and deeds. Thus, the quintessence of the Truth as a whole must be conveyed in its original form without any distortion and fear or favour. It should be made clear that Islam is not a religion in the traditional sense consisting only of beliefs and rituals, but it is a complete and composite way of life. It is not developed by any human and it is also not the automatic result of historical development, but it is revealed by Allah to establish peace and harmony on earth and for the complete amelioration of human beings. It is the way of Allah, a straight path to goodness, benevolence, rectitude and serenity. It is characterized by two noteworthy verities. First, it divulges that the 'Ultimate Reality' is only Allah, the Creator, the Cherisher, the Sustainer, the 'Lord of Power'<sup>26</sup> Who "*causes the night to gain on the day and causes the day on the night, brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living*".<sup>27</sup> As He is the Lord, the Creator of all things, it is the human obligation to worship Him. He has power to dispose of all affairs.<sup>28</sup> Humans have to accept this Reality and, as such, venerate Him, obey Him and capitulate to Him. Veneration demands that man should manifest His sovereignty and suzerainty in his thoughts, actions, and interaction with others and in all aspects of his life. At the same time as being good servants to the Lord, man must also establish His eminence and illustriousness in every nook and cranny. It signifies that the way of Allah is the most appropriate, beneficial and gainful. It provides solace and contentment to the mind and soul and enables humans to live in peace and harmony. It gives meaning and direction to life and makes it worthwhile. The divine system of life also promotes the living condition of humans. It encourages them to make full use of Allah's bounties and natural resources, extract benefit from them, utilize them for developing their surroundings and making it more and more comfortable. It also urges to help others in leading a dignified and comfortable life by allowing them to share the privileges of society. In fact, it creates a

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<sup>26</sup> The Qur'ān, Āli 'Imrān 3: 26.

<sup>27</sup> The Qur'ān, Āli 'Imrān 3: 27.

<sup>28</sup> The Qur'ān, Āli 'Imrān 3: 102.

peaceful, prosperous and altruistic society where people are bound together in a bond of brotherhood and work together to attain felicity and opulence in the moral and material aspects of life.

### **Persons who are Called (*Mad'ū*) to the Truth**

There are different types of persons who live in society and who are called to the Truth. Their psyche, mind-set and level of understanding are quite different from each other. They also come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The preachers should take all these factors into consideration when they call them to the Truth and communicate the theme of the *da'wah*. The preachers should talk to the audience within the same socio-cultural context. They should convey their ideas in a simple but convincing way if the level of understanding of people is not very high. They should not discuss complex and philosophical issues involved in the description of the Truth. They should describe the main theme of the *da'wah* clearly and straightforwardly. In case preachers have to address highly educated people and persons of high status, the preachers have to adopt a different strategy. They have to use sophisticated language and present their ideas systematically and logically with certain evidence. The preachers should assess whether or not people are grasping their ideas and mold their style and strategy accordingly.

### **Impact of Communication**

The call to the Truth should be communicated in such a way as to create a durable impact on the minds and hearts of people. The general principle is that ideas can influence people more if they are communicated in an impressive, persuasive and convincing way but the fact is that there is no hard and fast rule about these ways of communication. It depends upon both the communicator and the person to whom a certain theme is being communicated. The communicator is important in the sense that his personality type and language play an important role in creating different kinds of impact on the audience. The same goes for the recipients. What influences them differs from person to person. It depends upon their taste and type of mind. Allah proclaims "*Invite (mankind) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching*".<sup>29</sup> It is the

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<sup>29</sup> The Qur'ān, al-Naḥl 16: 125.

broad principle which is the basis of preaching and should be taken into account. The details, according to Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī, have been left to the discretion of the person involved in *da‘wah*.<sup>30</sup> He has to decide in the light of the ground realities, nature and circumstances of the addressee what action he has to take. However, one should invite people to the Truth in the most effective way and, as such, take certain precautions. *Da‘wah* should be made in the language of the addressee so that they might understand it easily and ponder over it. The theme of the *da‘wah* should be communicated politely and in a manner that touches the heart of the addressee. The communication should be attractive and not boring or tiring. The preacher should not use harsh and bitter words that create a bad impression. The preacher should highlight the advantages of accepting the straight path, how this will change the lives of people and make it more beneficial, gracious and prosperous. He should also make people aware of the consequences of not accepting the Truth as they will be involved in transgression and gain nothing except loss.

### Conclusion

The distinct significance of *da‘wah* lies in its role in affecting the mind-set of people. It changes the thinking of people, introduces them to what is right and enables them to appreciate virtues and goodness. It sophisticates the human intellect to identify the right path and differentiate it from the wrong one. It, furthermore, transforms social life and enriches it with good values, happiness and contentment. The uniqueness of this transformation is that it proceeds from an intellectual refinement to a physical one and, thus, it is more genuine, profitable and enduring. It signifies a method based on the personality of the communicator, the nature of what is communicated, the types of addressee and the force with which the content is communicated.

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<sup>30</sup> Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī, *Guidance form the Holy Qur’an*, [translated by Abdur Raheem Kidwai] (Leicestershire, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2005), 35.