

Creative Methodologies of Da'wah Through Different Phases of a Human's Life

Metodologi Dakwah Secara Kreatif Mengikuti Fasa Kehidupan Manusia

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Abstract

In addition to compliance with the five pillars of Islam, Da'wah Islamiyyah is an indispensable act for Muslims who view their life missions as to propagate Islam. The act of da'wah is a mission only undertaken by those who are selected to do so, as Allah SWT said: *"You are the best of peoples, taken out for mankind, you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong...."* (Al-Qur'an, Al-`Imran, 3:110). The phrase "you are taken out for mankind" is a very clear phrase which refers to a special group. Many du'at propagate Islam through regular procedures. In this contemporary day and age, it would be more successful if creative da'wah methodologies are used to special groups where special talent is required. Examples of these special target groups are individuals such as [1] pregnant mothers, [2] mothers of new born babies, [3] parents of toddlers, [4] parents of children [5] youth, teenagers and adolescents, [6] married couples, [7] elderly or aged individuals and [8] non-Muslims. They are good targets to promote Islam. Thus, du'at must have special talents and knowledge to do so. In this regard, du'at must be equipped with exceptional knowledge of the target groups to propagate Islam effectively. The present paper attempts to highlight the distinctive natures of the above mentioned categories of individuals and explores how du'at should approach them when he or she encounters them for the purpose of promoting Islam.

Keywords: Call to Islam, Da'wah Islamiyyah, creative da'wah, creative da'ie, enjoin good, forbid evil.

Abstrak

Selain mematuhi 5 rukun Islam, dakwah Islamiyyah tidak dapat diasingkan daripada seseorang Muslim yang bermatlamat untuk menyebarkan ajaran Islam. Berdakwah adalah suatu tugas yang hanya dijalankan oleh mereka yang terpilih. Seperti yang diwahyukan oleh Allah SWT *"Kamu adalah sebaik-baik umat yang dilahirkan bagi umat manusia, kerana kamu menyuruh berbuat segala perkara yang baik dan melarang daripada segala perkara yang buruk dan keji..."* (Al-Quran, Al-Imran, 3:110). Frasa *"umat yang dilahirkan bagi umat manusia"* jelas dinyatakan di mana ia merujuk kepada satu golongan yang istimewa. Kebanyakan pendakwah menyebarkan Islam melalui metodologi yang sudah menjadi kebiasaan. Bagaimanapun, pada zaman

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ini, pendakwahan akan lebih berjaya jika kaedah yang kreatif digunakan kepada beberapa golongan yang tertentu. Antara contoh golongan yang dimaksudkan adalah [1] wanita yang mengandung, [2] ibu kepada bayi yang baru lahir, [3] ibu bapa kepada anak-anak kecil, [4] ibu bapa kepada kanak-kanak, [5] golongan belia dan remaja, [6] pasangan suami isteri, [7] warga emas, dan [8] golongan bukan Islam. Mereka merupakan sasaran yang sempurna untuk mempelajari Islam. Oleh hal demikian, para pendakwah mesti mempunyai bakat yang istimewa dan ilmu yang mencukupi untuk berdakwah. Para pendakwah juga harus memahami kumpulan sasaran dengan menyeluruh supaya penyebaran ajaran Islam akan lebih berkesan. Tujuan penulisan ini adalah untuk menggariskan sifat unik golongan yang dinyatakan di atas dan menerokai bagaimana para pendakwah harus mendekati mereka dengan niat untuk menyebarkan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Panggilan kepada Islam, dakwah Islamiyyah, dakwah kreatif, da'ie kreatif, menyuruh kepada kebaikan, menghalang daripada kejahatan.

Introduction

If anyone on this earth is asked what he or she would like to be, then he or she would answer that he or she would like to be a successful person in both worlds i.e. in this world and the Hereafter. If that is the case, he or she must look to the promise of Allah SWT, the Creator, who said that the successful people are those who would save others from the hellfire. Further detail can be seen in the below Qur'anic verse:

*Let there be a group of people amongst you inviting to all that is good, enjoining al-ma`ruf and forbidding al-munkar and it is they who are successful.*¹

The question is: who would sacrifice their time to propagate Islam to mankind? In fact, every Muslim is responsible to undertake da'wah acts, but it is relatively rare to see people who are seriously engaged in this noble task. Our Prophet PBUH said: "*Convey from me, even one verse.*"² Critical analysis of this hadith conveyed that the Prophet urges every Muslim to undertake the acts of da'wah. Nevertheless, only a few people are seen today carrying out the da'wah mission. The reason for this is, engaging in da'wah is not everyone's job. Only selected few have an interest in doing so. However, there is still a group of people who are engaged in da'wah activities. Indeed, they spend their time, money and efforts to liberate people who have deviated from the right path of Islam. It is known through the light of the Qur'an that these liber-

¹Al-Qur'an, Aal `Imran, 3:104

² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, Sahih Al Bukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), Book, Beginning of Creation, Discussion on Bni Israil , No. 3724.

ators (du'at) were selected by Allah SWT for the purpose of da'wah. People cannot become du'at by themselves, they are designated to be du'at by Allah SWT. In this regard, the Lord of the Heaven said:

*You are the best of peoples, taken out for mankind, you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah.*³

The propagation of da'wah or inviting people to the path of Islam in this contemporary world has become very difficult because people refute every controversial matter with their rational minds and do not take the Qur'anic revelations as serious references. Du'at need special skills that can be used to convince people to accept their propagation, because revelations carry a great sense of wisdom and explanations. In this case, Allah SWT said:

*Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious...*⁴

This Qur'anic verse clearly indicates that the da'ie must equip himself with a different level of knowledge, and utilize it properly, so that he would be successful in his assigned tasks. The question is why people fail in their attempts and lose interest in their pursuits. The answer to this question is it is because they have a lack of confidence and trust in themselves. Du'at should not underestimate themselves or question whether they have the skills to conduct da'wah. In fact, everyone is adorned with unique skills by Allah SWT. Du'at are the ones who must acquire different methods of doing da'wah and apply their skills accordingly. Du'at must know that they are dealing with human beings who have psychological issues and are emotional. Du'at must know the nature and habits of human beings. Human beings will behave according to their nature, age, gender; and they have to go through different phases of life, inevitably. For example, human has to go through life in a mother's womb, as a baby, toddler, child, teenager, youth, adolescent, young adult, married life, old age, life in the dying stage, life after death, life in the graveyard, etc.

If Du'at understand the stages of human development from the day he was conceived until the day he will be taken to the grave, it will be their asset and knowledge. The da'ie can use the knowledge as a skill

³Al-Qur'an, Aal `Imran, 3:110.

⁴Al-Qur'an, An Nahl, 16:125.

when he or she happens to meet certain groups in the process of da'wah. Da'wah methods need to be creative and selective according to the nature and status of people. A da'ie must sense a person's mood, attitude and requirements, before he or she talks about da'wah. A da'ie must be smart but also honest and he or she must not forget to introduce himself or herself to people and breaks the ice with three smart questions before the da'wah talk begins. The questions are [1] about their health, [2] their life, and [3] their family. A da'ie should never ask people about their personal information, business and age. When a da'ie asks these three questions, a person would feel happier and be more inclined to talk to the da'ie. When a da'ie makes a good suggestion, they would more likely to take it into account and a da'ie can become their confidant. If this happens, then a da'ie is on the right track. Asking the three questions will help a da'ie be acquainted with people and it would facilitate them to talk swiftly, smoothly and in a friendly manner. When people become friends, they generally like the impression and idea of each other and they will cooperate with each other.

As a da'ie, he or she may be approached by different types of people for Islamic message, then he or she is ready to explain to them about Islam on the basis of their position, standard, level, knowledge and information. Da'ie also must know some important information of a certain group of people. The group mentioned consists of [1] mothers of new born babies, [2] parents of toddlers, [3] parents of children [4] youth, teenagers and adolescents [5] married couples, [6] elderly or aged people, and [7] non-Muslims. A da'ie who is qualified and well-informed about all these life stages can convince the targeted audience and his or her mission can be successful. The present study was qualitative in nature and was conducted by exploring information through the media, books, magazines, and journals, etc. The objective of this paper was to discover important information relevant to certain target groups, which could then assist a da'ie in propagating his or her da'wah activities successfully.

Parents of Newborns

In a special seminar for children or in meetings or discussion group for mothers, a da'ie can discuss the nature of newborn babies. A da'ie cannot only provide advice on the welfare of the baby, but they can also propagate Islam through the messages of the Qur'an. This period for mothers is so special as they are excited to know more about their babies. However, when they discover that everything is controlled by Allah SWT, and that they must truly rely on Allah, they will become true fol-

lowers of Islam. These type of mothers can be influenced more easily, especially when a da'ie includes knowledge of babies in his or her conversation during the process of da'wah.

A newborn stage is called **neonatal**; the particular period is from birth to 4 weeks. Newborns know who their Creator is as soon as they are born. If a child specialist is asked about a baby, he or she would explain it from a medical perspective. A medical perspective asserts that babies do not understand what is happening to them at that age, or realize that they are unique individuals. They do not know who is feeding them, or who helps them when they cry. They only cry, when they are hungry or tired, but do not know they are being cared for. They cannot cry for attention or for their parents - a newborn is incapable of responding to anyone with any conscious purpose. They can feel, but not think.⁵

A spiritual connection between human beings is a matter of belief in Islam. A soul in a human body recognizes its Creator, although its senses have not yet developed. Nonetheless, they see God and answer to God, as soon as they are born. Before the devil comes to misguide a baby, parents should recite *azan* and *iqamah* in the baby's ear, as well as the act of "*tahnik*", which the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) used to do for newborn babies in his time. All parents should know about the recitation of the *azan*, *iqamah*, *tahnik*, giving a child a good name, *sadaqah*, and *aqiqah*, (slaughtering 2 goats for a boy and 1 goat for a girl) for their newborns.

*Imam Nawawi said, "Scholars are agreed upon the recommendation of performing tahnik upon the baby after its birth."*⁶

Furthermore, A'ishah, (R) reported a relevant Hadith mentioned in Sahih Muslim that:

*New-born children used to be brought to the Messenger of Allah and he would supplicate for blessings for them, and rub a chewed date upon their palate.*⁷

⁵Carol Lynn Martin, Richard Fabes, *Discovering Child Development: Prenatal and Neonatal development* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2013), 118.

⁶Yahya Ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Riyad as-Salihin, The Book of Miscellaneous Ahadith of Significant Values*.

⁷Muslim bin Al Hajaj, *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), *The Book on General Behaviour (Kitab Al-Adab)* 025, No.5347.

The Prophet said: "*Shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver to the poor*"⁸. If a da'ie knows all this information, it will be one of his or her assets. With the knowledge, he or she can make his invitation to Islam more successful.

Parents of toddlers

Da'ie should also have information on the characteristics of toddler whose age is from one month to 3 years. Some Muslim doctors are also da'at, and they convene seminars and community discussions where they provide information for nurturing toddlers from both Islamic religious sources and medical perspective. According to medical perspective, a baby thinks that coming to the world is a big and scary adventure. At first, babies do not know who is going to feed and care for them - they only know when they feel comfortable and safe, or otherwise. However, even from birth, they start to communicate and give their parents little signals when they are tired, hungry, awake or alert. They are learning all the time, and the job of parents is to help them know that the world is a welcoming place where their needs will be met.⁹

Toddlers are sometimes mature, compliant, and patient, but sometimes they are often the exact opposite. This is the nature of a toddler. It is important to note that just because a toddler does something once, it does not mean that he or she is always capable of doing it. Toddlers are always on the go. They love climbing, jumping, running and bouncing. This can sometimes lead to challenging behaviors, especially when outdoor play is not available. Parents should remember that this activity is just a part of a toddler's development. Sometimes, parents do not know these facts about their toddlers, and make a lot of mistakes.¹⁰

From an Islamic perspective, Allah SWT reminded parents that children may be a great trial for the parents. The triumphs and tribulations of life are a test and children are no exception. Children can bring great joy and at times they can bring great sadness as well. Allah in His

⁸ Abu Isa, Muhammed, Tirmidhi, (19) The Book of Sacrifices, Chapter, 31: The 'Aqiqah With One Sheep, 1226.

⁹ Terri Jo Swim, Infants and Toddlers: Curriculum and Teaching (London: Wds worth, 2013), 334-376.

¹⁰ Characteristics of the Toddlers, accessed on 12.3.2017.

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_development_\(6\)_two_to_three_years?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_development_(6)_two_to_three_years?open)

infinite wisdom never leaves a human being alone and unable to face all of life's trials. Allah said:

*Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas God, with Him is a great reward (Paradise).*¹¹

Da'ie must convince parents that nurturing their babies is a test and trial of life. Indeed, the more hardship they face looking after them, the greater the reward that awaits in this world as well as in the hereafter. Toddlers, in particular, are very difficult to control by parents, as they start moving, and grabbing things wherever they go. Moreover, toddlers can break things and take something hazardous and put into their mouths. This will be a big trouble for the parents, thus they must look after them all the time. The parents may become fed up with this type of baby. This is a test for the parents to see how much they can bear the pain and be patient with their babies.

Both babies and toddlers need parental supervision to ensure they are brought up properly and appropriately. This can be done with love and affection, by parents adoring them and spending time with them. Parents must give their children a good education. The best education is understanding Islam and the Creator of the Universe. If both parents and children know their God and are responsible, both will love each other. Allah said:

*"Your parents and your children, ye know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit."*¹²

When parents become mature and gradually reach old age, then their bodies and minds become weaker. It is then time for the mature youth to look after their aging parents. There should be compassion and understanding of the responsibilities between parents and children; and Allah SWT bestows his love between them. Having a long life means one becomes physically weak. When parents become old, it is incumbent for the mature children to look after their aged parents. Allah said: *"If we grant long life to any, we cause him to be reversed in nature...."*¹³

This Qur'anic verse indicated the responsibility of both parents and children towards each other. Indeed, Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)

¹¹ Al Quran Suran At-Tagabun, 64:15.

¹² Al Qur'an, Sura, AN Nisa, 4:11.

¹³ Al Qur'an, Sura, AL Yaseen, 36:68.

said, as narrated by Abu Hurairah: “*No child repays his parent fully unless he finds him a slave, then he buys him and sets him free.*”¹⁴

The more parents take care of their children, the more they will please the Prophet and the Lord of the Heaven. The Prophet mentioned an Ansari woman who came to the Prophet in the company of her children, and the Prophet said to her, “*By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you are the most beloved people to me!*” He repeated the statement thrice.”¹⁵ The Prophet gave such a good tidings to this woman because she took care of her children wherever she went and she was a really careful and watchful mother.

Similarly, the babies should not be taken out when night falls. The Prophet said,

*“When night falls, then keep your children close to you, for the devil spread out then. An hour later you can let them free; and close the gates of your house (at night).”*¹⁶

In this present day and age, people's level of trust in such advice is faded to the extent that they become doubtful about this Hadith, and they go against it and thus face serious problems in their lives.

Da'ie must convince parents of toddlers that although caring and nurturing babies of this age is very difficult, they must understand that the rewards promised by Allah SWT in the Qur'an about parents who look after their children is definite and forthcoming. The Prophet always loved and cared for babies wherever he saw them and always saluted them. Jabir narrated a relevant Hadith: “*The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) came to some children who were playing: He saluted them.*”¹⁷

Parents of children

The following text is very useful for du'at who have a special interest in doing da'wah for women and mothers at community workshops and discussions. Individuals aged between 3 to 12 years are called ‘children’. Their nature is generally naughty, but they want to be good. Children love stories and are imaginative. They have the ability to sing, act, are creative and are sometimes emotional over small matters. However,

¹⁴ Muhammed ibn I'sa, Jami' at Tirmizi, 1906, book 27, Hadith 12.

¹⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, Sahih Bukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), Book 78, Oaths and Vows, Hadith 640.

¹⁶ Ibid., Book 54, Beginning of Creation, Hadith 500.

¹⁷ Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, Sunan Abu Dawood – Book 41 Hadith 5183.

they can be easily persuaded, which is why they are vulnerable and care-free. In most of cases, they can forgive and forget quickly and can easily become discouraged. Nevertheless, it is important not to forget their abilities to memorize things, their eagerness to learn and acquire skills and their trust in what adults tell them.¹⁸

From an Islamic perspective, children are a blessing in a house and their presence makes a big difference at home. Many people marry but do not have children, as having children is Allah's decision. Indeed, Allah SWT said: *"Wealth and children are beautifications (zinah) for the Life of this world."*¹⁹

Many parents want a male child, but they end up with female children at home and vice versa. However, it is Allah who decides who is who and what they should get. It is Allah SWT who arranges everything and everyone. He said:

*"To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and earth. He creates, as HE wants. He bestows female child upon whom HE wants and male child upon whom HE wants, or bestows male and female both and makes barren whomever HE wants. HE is The All Knowing, The All Powerful."*²⁰

Da'ie should also know that children learn better by example, especially visual and real-world examples. Parents must make children aware of the Almighty Allah. They must tell their children about His glory and greatness. They should make the child aware that Allah is the only one who they should ask for anything in their lives. Parents must try to develop a love for the Prophet (PBUH) in their child, so that he or she can follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In addition to regular learning, children must be taught an Islamic education, which includes the Arabic language, Al Qur'an and basic Sunnah as a part of a primary learning process.

At the same time, parents need to teach their child good manners, and ethical values. They must pay attention to detail about all aspects of behavior, which is reinforced by their own behaviors. Children need to be taught that they have to practice what their parents preach, be concerned for others, sacrifice for others, volunteer, help family members,

¹⁸ Ibid,

¹⁹ Al Qur'an, Sura, AL Anfal, 18:46.

²⁰ Al Qur'an, Sura, As Shura 42: 49-50.

the environment, servants, strangers, road users, neighbors, and relatives, etc. Parents must train their children in physical fitness by encouraging them to participate in regular sports, especially team sports; and parents should emphasize the importance of nutrition. Another pertinent matter is letting them learn how to be responsible with school projects, community services, home and neighborhood cleanliness. If parents can do all the above necessary teachings and programmes, their children will become good du'at and excellent in everything that they choose to do. Moreover, their children will become standard bearers of Islam.

From an Islamic perspective, children are seen to be very valuable and a significant resource for the future of the Ummah. In fact, children are gifts from Allah SWT and parents are responsible to carefully bring them up into good people and a good Ummah. Nurturing children needs care and love, not hatred and harsh treatment. When parents want to beat the children they should realize the psyche and mentality of children. The Prophet instructed to those parents who are harsh towards their children. "Whoever has children they should behave like child before the children. *Parents should not beat their children when they are already crying and love, hug and kiss them if they love in their heart.*' It was also narrated that a man once came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said: "I have never kissed my child." The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Surely a man like this will be a resident of the fire of hell."²¹

Parents should give *salam* to their children in order to build their children's Muslim personalities; and parents are responsible to teach them all their Islamic obligations, such as *fard ain*, *kifayah* and etc. The mistake that parents generally make is they call their children by nicknames that they do not like and order their children to do many things at a time, which they ultimately cannot perform. Parent should not frequently ridicule their children's mistakes, or they will become silly, rebellious or spoiled. When parents make promises to their children, they should try their best to fulfill the promise, otherwise the children will follow the example of their parents.

Parents are responsible to train their children about discipline inside the house as well as outside of the house. They should also teach them how to deal with their elders, to respect responsibility and to ask permission to do anything, anywhere. For example, if they want to enter

²¹Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl, Sahih al-Bukhaari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), the book of Manner, Hadith 5997.

their parents' room, they need to ask for permission. Indeed, Allah SWT said:

*"O you who have faith! Let your permission be sought by your slaves and those of you who have not reached puberty three times...."*²²

The significance of da'wah towards children should not be forgotten, as childhood is the best time to mold a child into an Islamic personality efficiently. Children on earth are naturally born as Muslims. Our prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said:

*"Surely every baby is born in a pure state (fitrah) as a white cloth, then parents who fill in the blank, whether Jewish, Christian or a Zoroastrian."*²³

This hadith clearly indicates that parents are the ones who shape their children according to their mold. Thus, the children must be given knowledge of Islam first. If this happens, children will know who their Creator is and they will respond when the name of their Creator is announced before them. Parents need to educate and perform Islamic obligations, then their children will gradually follow suit, because they are happy and comfortable when they see their parents adhere to the teachings of Islam. It has been proven that many children have become a true and loyal Muslims only because their parents are obedient and loyal towards Allah SWT.

Da'ie must remember that the method of calling children to Islam should be more lenient and tactful compared to calling adults to Islam. The reason for this is, children tend to love those who understand them, listen to them and comfort them. The Prophet (PBUH) was quite lenient with children and respectful of them. When he saw children, he gave them Salam, food and comfort. Consequently, children loved him and tended to respect and listen to him. When the children saw him, they ran to him and listened to what he said. He showed them kindness and love which made them love him and love Allah SWT and become true Muslims. Thus, it is important for du'at to train and call children to Islam in a very unique and caring way. Doing so will make the children feel really comfortable and they will love their parents and become ready to carry

²² Al Qur'an, Sura, An Noor, 24:58.

²³ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, Sahih Bukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), Book 60 Prophet Commentary, Hadith No, 298.

out important Islamic responsibilities. Therefore, parents should not address their children the way they address their friends and colleagues. Instead, they should address their children lovingly and profoundly.²⁴

Teenagers or Adolescents

Teachers and trainers or du'at who are involved in youth training centers and government schools can use the following tips to handle kids and youth with regards to da'wah activities. In this day and age, majority of teenager favor liberalism and secularism. Indeed, they think religion cannot help them to succeed. Therefore, they tend to rely on modern education and career development, science and technology. It is undeniable that development is important, but at the same time, youth must have strong conviction to Allah SWT. Indeed, without His aid, mankind will be nothing. It is the da'ie's job to inculcate Islamic belief in the mindset of youth. Nonetheless, da'ie must make sure that he or she knows how to handle them. More specifically, when he or she approaches them, he or she needs to use logical and reasonable approaches, so that they become truly strong Muslims. In this regard, Allah SWT said:

*Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner.*²⁵

Teenagers are part of a society. The adolescence stage is the last stage before a teenager enters the adulthood stage. The adolescence stage is known as the 'storm and stress' stage and is difficult to be understood by parents. Adolescence is described as a period full of emotion. The reason for this is because of various hormonal changes that occur in teenagers' bodies. Moreover, they are in the midst of mental conflict. They need to be approached creatively and wisely. It is also highly compatible to use logical approach in the process of bringing up a teenager. A motivational counseling approach is advisable in order to discover adolescents' cognitive development and spiritual qualities. The counseling approach also emphasizes empathy for teenagers. Empathy and sympathy are two different feelings. Sympathy does not warrant any action that stems from an understanding of what is felt by those who are sympathetic

²⁴ Sabir Uddin, *A Muslim Husband and Wife: Rights and Duties* (New Delhi: Kitabkhavan Publishing, 1990), 11-23.

²⁵ Surah An Nahal, 16:125.

in counseling. Empathy really understands one's inner feelings, so that a person can respond appropriately in an effort to help others.²⁶ Inculcating Islamic values in this day and age needs tactful methods, because teenagers have different characters and natures. For example, some teenagers are highly interactive, whereas some are anti-social. Thus, du'at need to approach teenagers accordingly so that their message is received by different teenagers appropriately. Admonishing or preaching with wisdom is highly recommended in Islam. Teenagers are the backbone of a country and will determine the direction of our future. It is important to prepare a better Ummah in the future. Thus, children need to be taught and reminded when they reach 7 years of age on how to pray. At 10 years old, they must pray, otherwise they should be admonished and sent to bed and disciplined.²⁷

Do not wait to teach adolescents in Islam at a later stage, try to teach them at an early age. The age of 7 has been suggested by the Prophet, otherwise, it will be difficult to train them. If this is not done, it is almost impossible to change them, for they would have already been influenced by other fancy ideas from their peers. A worst case scenario is if they use drugs, alcohol, skip classes, mixing freely with opposite gender, become pregnant out of wedlock. Before all of these stressful experiences occur, parents should be responsible and take appropriate action. If we develop a love for Islam in teenagers, they will be less likely to go astray. If we teach them about Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) or his companions as models, they will tend to become like them. If not, whoever they see, or admire, they will make them their role model. However, if since the beginning they are inspired Islamically, they will never be led astray. Indeed, although they are tempted to do wrong, they will remember God and remain steadfast.²⁸

During teenage years, adolescents often care more about what their friends say than what their parents or elders say. According to a Hadith, "*Man is upon the path of his intimate friend; so let each look to whom he takes as a friend.*"²⁹ Therefore, parents should know who their children associated with and give them a proper advice or warn them accordingly. Nevertheless they should not be too late to act, otherwise a

²⁶ Ibid., Sabir Uddin, A Muslim Husband and Wife: Rights and Duties, 150-151.

²⁷ Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, Sunan Abu Dawud, KitabulSalat, Hadith No. 494.

²⁸ Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer, Positive Parenting: Raising Children With Self-Esteem (London: Vermilion Press, 1998), 84-91, 153-177.

²⁹ Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, Abu Daud, 4833.

disaster might occur. Thus, parents must always coach them about Islamic values, particularly, maintaining *fard ain* and exercising Islamic values in their daily life. Allah SWT said in this regard: "*This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness...*"³⁰.

The most important individuals in the training of youth are parents. The way parents behave will determine how their children behave. Children will copy the moral behavior of their parents. Thus, parents must speak the truth before their children. Parent should be honest, and admit if they did anything wrong. They should also always do what they say. The Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said, as narrated by Abdullah:

*Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to wickedness or evil-doing, and wickedness leads to the (Hell) fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar.*³¹

*O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination.*³²

Da'wah to Married couples

On many occasions, a da'ie comes upon married couples for discussions and exchanges of knowledge. It is important that a da'ie is aware of the significance of an Islamic marriage. Marriage is a formal binding contract between a man and a woman. In the marriage contract, the rights and responsibilities of a groom and bride are delineated. There must be two Muslim witnesses of the marriage contract and a "mahar", which is an obligatory gift from the groom to his bride. The marriage needs to be publicized in order to be seen as legal in a society. Marriage is important for every mature person. The prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said: "*Marriage is my tradition who so ever keeps away there from is not from amongst me*". Marriage acts as an outlet for sexual needs and regulates it, so one does not become a slave to his or her desires. It is a social necessity, because through marriage, families are established, and a fami-

³⁰ Al Qur'an, Sura, AL Maeda, 5:119.

³¹ Muhammed bin Islamil, SahihBukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), Book of Manner, 78, Hadith 6094.

³² Al Qur'an, Sura, Luqman, 31:17.

ly is a fundamental unit of a society. Furthermore, marriage is the only legitimate or halal way to indulge in intimacy between a man and a woman.³³

A da'ie can use information from the Qur'an and Hadith about married couples to develop creative ideas when he or she is going to invite them to Islam. Marriage in Islam helps men and women happily enjoy this world. Allah plants love among couples when they get married. Indeed, Allah SWT said:

*And among His Signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between your affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.*³⁴

The best husband is a person who does the best for his family, as our Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said: *'The best among you is one who is good to his family, and I am the best of you to my family.'*

In fact, a good family man is very valuable for his family, as well as to Allah SWT. The Prophet in this regard, said that *"If I were to order any of you to prostrate before anyone, I would have ordered woman to prostrate before her husband"*³⁵.

Obedience and kindness of a wife towards her husband and his family are very important obligation of a wife, because these would maintain the happiness of a family and will keep them intact as our Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said:

*After piety of Allah (swt), nothing is as fruitful for a believer more than a good wife who obeys when ordered by her husband; when he casts a glance towards her, he is filled by happiness; if he takes an oath counting on her, he justifies it; and when the husband is away, she advises him well, guards herself as well as his property.*³⁶

Men are not only obligated to love and be kind to their women, but they also need to look after their welfare and provide a good life for their family. Allah SWT said:

³³ Ibid, Sabir Uddin, A Muslim Husband and Wife: Rights and Duties, 1-4.

³⁴ Al Qur'an, Sura, Ar Rum, 30: 21.

³⁵ Sunan Tirmidhi, the book Muqaddimat, Hadith No. 285.

³⁶ Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, Ibni Maja, Book 9, Hadith.1857.

*And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing through which Allah brings a great deal of good.*³⁷

Disputes between spouses are normal and can stem from a misunderstanding about the responsibilities of different family members. For example, a husband is still responsible to look after his parents (if they need his help) but he must make sure that his wife needs are also properly fulfilled. Allah SWT said:

*And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents,³⁸ And We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents.*³⁹

Ibn Mas'oud (r.a) said: I asked Allah's Apostle, *O Allah's Apostle! What is the best deed?" He replied, "To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times." I asked, "What is next in goodness?" He replied, "To be good and dutiful to your parents." I further asked, what is next in goodness?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause."*⁴⁰

A successful family is always supportive of each other and they are not self-centered. Instead, they try to fulfill the needs of each other. The best advice for couples is to have piety, as Allah SWT, said:

*O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness – that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.*⁴¹

During a marriage, Islam encourages couples to have children as they will be the light and delight of their parents. Children are the blessings of Allah SWT, and will be very useful when they are properly brought up and taught Islamic knowledge. Children would ask Allah

³⁷Al Qur'an, Sura An Nisaa, 4: 9.

³⁸ Al Qur'an, al-Israa, 17:23.

³⁹ Al Qur'an, Sura, Al 'Ankabout, 29:08.

⁴⁰ Muhamad Ismail, Al Bukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004) Vol, 54, the book of Jihad, Hadith Good Manner and Form (Adaab) Hadith No. 41.

⁴¹Al Qur'an, Sura, AlA'raf, 7:26.

SWT for mercy to be bestowed upon their parents, who looked after them when they were young. Even in the grave, parents would be surprised to see the reward brought by *malaikat* and would ask him what this reward is about, then *malaikat* would say, it is your child who prayed, and the same reward is shared for you. Therefore, having good children in one's life is very central and is the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). The Prophet would take pride with the growing number of the Islamic population on the day of *Qiyamah*. In this regard, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

*"Marry the loving and fertile because through you, I will compete with the nations for superiority in numbers"*⁴²

The Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said that:

*And it is important that the Parents bring up their children upon righteousness, so that the Parents will benefit from them during their lives and after their death.*⁴³

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

*A servant will have his rank raised and will say, 'O my Lord how has this come about for me?' He says, 'through your sons after you are seeking forgiveness for you.'*⁴⁴

Many married couples do not have children despite several attempts and they begin to despair. They do not realize that it is Allah who can give them children. Da'ie can explain the importance of praying for good children and it is Allah SWT who can bestow children with good *akhlaq*. Allah said: *"So now have sexual relations with them, and seek that which Allah has ordained for you."*⁴⁵

Some of us do not know about the blessing of having a daughter. Parents should know that they need to equally accept girls as they accept boys. Indeed, Islam has encouraged the bringing up of girls, and Allah condemns those that are distressed at the birth of a girl. The Prophet (PBUH) elevated the status baby girls to be a gift from Allah,

⁴² Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, 26. The Book of Marriage, Chapter.11: Marry One Who Is Infertile.

⁴³ Muhamad Ismail, Al Bukhari (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004) Vol, 55.

⁴⁴ Sunan ibn Majah.

⁴⁵ Al Qur'an, Sura, Al Baqara, 2:187.

'whoever takes care of two girls until they reach adulthood - he and I will come together on the Day of Resurrection (like this) - and he interlaced his two fingers,'⁴⁶

Thus, there is a great honor given to daughters.

A da'ie should advise parents to give good news of a child's birth to next of kin who are anxiously waiting to be informed, so that they can stop worrying and congratulate the parents and supplicate for the baby. Allah mentions such good news being conveyed to a number of His Prophets. One of them was the news to Zakariyyah about the birth of his son Yahya, where Allah said:

"Then the angels called him, while he was standing in prayer in a private room (saying), 'Allah gives you glad tidings of Yahya'."⁴⁷

Daw'ah to the Elders

Da'ie should not forget that he will face elderly men most of the time while he engages in the act of da'wah. Giving da'wah to the elders is also quite intricate and there are three methods that can be used. The first is to invite elders through their close friends or representatives. This method is quite effective as old people tend to fully trust their friends due to long term relationships; they shared thousands of memories and they have worked together to survive. Thus, when advice or a call is given to them from a friend, they will most probably accept it and apply it in their lives.

The second method is giving indirect messages. For example, give the elderly *tazkirah* or tell stories of the companions of the Prophet on how they became Muslims like Bilal. This may convince them internally. However, da'ie must make sure that his or her manners and tone should be balanced, as Allah said: "*And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice*"⁴⁸

The more one speaks leniently and slowly avoiding harsh and raised tones, the more effective is his mission.⁴⁹ The elderly are only interested in what the speaker is saying and do not want to know who is

⁴⁶ Muslim bin Al Hajaj, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2004), Vol 74, the book of the good Manner, Hadith No. 2631.

⁴⁷ Al Qur'an, Sura, Ali I'mram 3:39.

⁴⁸ Al Qur'an, Sura, Luqman, 31: 19.

⁴⁹ Al Qur'an, Sura, Luqman, 31: 20.

speaking. Therefore, da'ie has to play an important role and should avoid sarcastic and dubious words, because what he has said cannot be taken back; and thus he should remain positive.

The third method is a forum style discussion with the elderly on any Islamic topic. After a discussion, there should be question and answer sessions where the elderly is allowed to ask questions or the da'ie asks the audience related questions. For example, the elders can be asked about the issues surrounding *salat* or *wudu*'. If they answer correctly it is good, if not, a da'ie can understand them more closely and seriously. However, it is important for a da'ie to arrange his questions in a manner so that the elderly do not feel insulted. Many people do not know details about many issues in Islam, such as *shari'a*, *ibadah*, *aqidah* and *akhlaq*. Da'wah is not only for non-Muslims, but it is also important to invite Muslims who need to know many things about Islam. It is obligatory for Muslims who have knowledge to dedicate their time for da'wah Islamiyah. "*Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish...*"⁵⁰

Da'wah to Non-Muslims

Da'wah can also be extended to non-Muslims in order to promote understanding of the teaching of Islam and to spread Islam. Teaching Islam to non-Muslims should be handled wisely. The methods used may be different because non-Muslims' approach towards Islam is mostly to understand or study Islam, rather than to accept it. Da'ie should also realize that his or her task is not to convert them, but to help them understand Islam. Da'ie should be nicely dressed, neat and tidy, when he attends a non-Muslim audience. A da'ie should use language that is appropriate and convincing, while his manner should be friendly and hospitable. A da'ie's gestures should be kind and caring so that non-Muslims are undoubtedly convinced of the truth of Islam. Non-Muslims will become attracted to the appearance, approach and physiognomies of a da'ie. They would also like to know how a da'ie possessed such qualities. When they know such values come from the Qur'an, they will become eager to know more about Islam.

The above-mentioned methods are creative methods of da'wah which can be used to explain Islam, the substance of Islam, its ethics and moral values. A da'ie must possess a soft tone, have polite manners, and avoid indecorous gestures, rude words, aggressive debating styles and

⁵⁰ Al Qur'an, Sura, Al-A'raf 7: 199.

argumentative manners. From the beginning, da'ie should expect provocation, insults, neglect and disturbance from the audiences. Despite this, a da'ie has to be patient and should continue his or her task. They should follow the example of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) who suffered hardship during his trip to Taif for a da'wah mission. It is possible that an audience may have many questions about Islam and a da'ie must try to answer them with wisdom. When an audience asks about haram food, it should be explained that Muslims eat halal food which is clean, hygienic and beneficial for human beings; and this is proven medically. If they accept this explanation, it is fine, if not, a da'ie should not go into dispute with them. A da'ie must remember what Allah said in the Qur'an:

*And who is better in speech than he who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, 'Indeed, I am of the Muslims.'*⁵¹

It is also advisable for a da'ie to understand the perspective of non-Muslims about Islam. The most common misunderstanding of Islam among non-Muslims is that Islam is a religion of terror. Due to the 9/11 event which occurred in the USA, the ideology of ISIS, the religion-based wars which are mainly in Islamic countries, suicide bombings and disunity among Muslim nations, negative images are being created about Islam. It has caused misapprehension among non-Muslims and has made them abominate Islam. Hence, it is the responsibility of a da'ie to highlight the truth to them and provide them with beautiful images of Islam.

The best advisable approach with non-Muslims is a moderate way of dealing and explaining the true Islam. Islam itself is moderate and it respects all human beings. No one needs to be forced to become a Muslim, instead they should be made aware of the beauty of Islam. If Islam is portrayed properly, non-Muslims would be willing to become Muslims. The most important thing is that a da'ie needs to use moderate approach. Hence, they should never stop spreading good advice, as da'wah is an act of *ibadah*.

When a da'ie explains Islam to non-Muslims, he or she must maintain a positive attitude because there can be negative responses. In such situation, they should not get angry, instead, they should continue explaining patiently and use the word "thank you". When an opponent hears the word "thank you", it can change their mood.⁵² When a da'ie

⁵¹ Al Qur'an, Sura, Fussilat 41: 33.

⁵² www.justaskislam.com/188/Daw'ah-secrets-that-work-11-tips/ accessed on 12.3.2017.

sees their continued interest in the invitation to Islam, despite their dislike for it, this is the time for a da'ie to realize that they really want to know Islam. When this occurs, a Da'ie should continue with polite manners, but patiently and wisely. Many non-Muslims generally contextualize Islam as an extreme religion and associate it with the acts of Muslims who were involved in crimes against innocent people. In this situation, a da'ie must explain that no one can blame religion based on irrelevant acts of its followers. If a Muslim committed a crime, it has nothing to do with Islam and only the accused should be punished and Islam should not be blamed. The same thing applies to Buddhism; it should not be denounced if its followers commit adulterous acts. That's why a da'ie's comprehension about the act of da'wah is important, as he or she can explain Islam as a peaceful religion and that its mission is to make this world a pleasant place for human beings.

Another piece of advice to da'ie is not to feel shy when explaining the truth of Islam. Da'ie should not worry about the true facts about Islam such as whether it is a monotheistic religion, if Allah is the Creator and Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah. Allah wants every creation to believe Him and worship Him, to understand the obligations of the five pillars of Islam and its impact on the community. However, some non-Muslims may not like the concept of the creator and creations, commandments and prohibitions in Islam. In a situation like this, a da'ie does not need to feel uncomfortable, or hide their knowledge. For example, Ramadan fasting for the whole day and the whole month is compulsory for all Muslims. In this situation, he should tell the audience that it is only compulsory for those who are mature, fit, sane and healthy. Islam does not force fasting on those who are sick, insane and unable to do so. A da'ie should not hesitate to refer to evidences from the Qur'an. Indeed, evidences of other ancient religions has disappeared. Last but not the least, a da'ie should not make humorous or cynical statements, because his or her efforts would be to no avail. An audience would want a da'ie to be serious and true.

Conclusion

There seems to be a setback in the creativity of da'wah methods. Many of the da'ies forget the highly cultured methods of the Prophet and try to adopt ways other than his for the propagation of Islam. Most of the time, the new ways fail because it lacks the creative touch found in the da'wah of the Prophet and his companions. The most creative methods include human approach based on values and morals while taking care

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for the rights of everyone as well as ensuring love, harmony, knowledge, care and input of knowledge related to the essence of the mankind. Men are strange creatures who become serious when their inner senses are touched by logical ideas. Islamic messages are intrinsically moderate between idealism and rationalism, individualism and collectivism, divinity and humanity, spiritualism and materialism, and this world and the hereafter.

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