Techno-Da’ie and Challenges in the 21st Century

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Abstract. Education has always been instrumental in the dissemination of religious ideas, rituals and values. In the Islamic tradition it is the classical method of propagation and, therefore, education as a means of instructing and motivating (prospective) believers is an integral part of da’wah. Da’wah operates on two fronts: (i) towards Muslim who are perhaps unaware of Islam, maybe because of growing up in the western lifestyle and missing out of a proper Islamic education, and (ii) towards our non-muslim neighbours and colleagues, many of whom may be searching for truth. At the very least, we may be able to counter-act the many incorrect stereotypes of Islam and muslims, no one else will do this for us, we have to speak up and show by our behaviour what Islam is all about. By doing this, we may even bring people into the fold of Islam. Contemporary du’at face great challenges to systematize and to apply the practical methodology within the new era of modern context. This paper discusses some suggestions that Muslim du’at, individually and collectively can undertake to accomplish da’wah goals: i) performing da’wah through a worldwide Islamic movement, ii) strengthening da’wah with technology, iii) using communication media and conducting seminars and workshops, iv) displaying the real Islamic lifestyle.

1 Introduction

"And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah, does righteousness and says: Indeed, I am of those who surrender (unto Him)" (Fussilat; 41:33)

Way, technique and method in English, tariqah, manhaj and uslub in Arabic are principles for doing something. Da’wah methodology is a discipline which concerns with the question of how da’wah is performed systematically and strategically. The deliverer of the islamic da’wah ought further bolstering pass on of the individuals those frameworks by which they must take care of their worldly undertakings. The history of the triumph of the islamic da’wah is that it is progressive and fit to deal with individual, what’s more initiates clinch alongside him a thorough transform. [1, 2]

Da’wah, mission of inviting people to Islam, is a must on every Muslim. It is not honey and dew. It is filled up with complications, problems and difficulties. Many du’at invite others, advise them, but at the same time they forget themselves. They think that they are saved from da’wah, that it is for others. Those who ignore the duty of reforming and training their own character and ruminate over the reformation and training of others are completely devoid of common sense. Their own house is on fire, yet they are carrying about buckets of water looking for a blaze anywhere else to extinguish. Such people are losers not only in this world but in the hereafter also. The Prophet s.a.w. observed during the night of ascension some people whose lips were being clipped with scissors of fire and Gabriel told him that those are the orators of the ummah, they preached piety and fear of God to people, but forgot to follow these teachings in their personal lives. [3, 9]

On one occasion, a person mentioned to Saidina Abdullah ibn Abbas that he wished to instruct people in piety and forbid them to commit evil deeds. He desired to propagate religion among people. Ibn Abbas enquired if he have acquired the proper qualifications for becoming a preacher and the person believed that he is capable of performing the task of a missionary. Ibn Abbas observed: “if you do not apprehend any condemnation in the light of three verses of the Holy Qur’an, do preach Islam.”

The 1st verse:
"Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (to practise) it yourselves, and yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand" (al-Baqarah; 2:44)

Ibn Abbas then enquired: "Do you follow this verse in your practical life fully?". The man replied: "No". Ibn Abbas then recited the 2nd verse:

"O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not?" (al-Saf; 61:2)

Ibn Abbas then asked: "Are you sure you are following this verse?". The man replied "No".

The 3rd verse:

"I desire not to do by your backs that which I ask you not to do" (Hud; 11:88)

2 Da'wah Methodology In The Qur'an And Prophetic Traditions

As far as the method of da'wah is concerned, we find a large number of verses in the Qur'an related to this subject. The basic teaching of da'wah methodology has been formerly laid down by the Qur'an. This tends to be conceptual guidance which was later applied in reality by the Prophet. It was then adopted by later Muslim missionaries. [4, 7]

Allah commanded the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. to start his da'wah mission with his family members including his relatives:

And admonish thy nearest kinsmen, and lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee" (al-Shu'ara'; 26:214-5)

As very well-known verse which describes the method of da'wah in the Qur'an is in Surah al-Nahl. It clearly consists of the three ways to perform da'wah, namely hikmah or wisdom, fair exhortation or goodly counsel and argumentation with a gracious manner:

"Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in ways that are best and most gracious, for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance" (al-Nahl; 16:125)

Allah has reminded the Prophet to be kind, compassionate, low, humble, loving and friendly to all. It is only through love and mercy that he will be able to bring people together.

"It is part of the Mercy of God that thou deal gently with them. Were thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee, so pass over (their faults, and ask for )God's) forgiveness for them, and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou has taken a decision, put thy trust in God, for God loves those who put their trust (in Him)" (ali-Imran; 3:159)

In the process of da'wah every Muslim is to say the best or else satan may play his dirty tricks. Da'at are to use the best approach as they are talking to the mad'uw (subject).

"Say to My servants that they should only say those things that are best, for satan does sow dissensions among them, for satan is to man an avowed enemy" (al-Isra'; 17:53)

Islamic workers should not address labourers with the language of grave diggers nor the atheists with tongue of emotionalists. They should use appropriate language at the proper place and time. As derived from the Prophet's hadith: "We are commanded to speak to people according to their mental capacity." [10, 15]
3 Da'wah Methodology In The Modern Context

The deliverer of the Islamic da'wah ought to pass on to the individuals the frameworks by which they have to settle their common illicit relationships. The mystery of the achievement of the Islamic da'wah is that it is moral force and ready to manage man as a man, and starts in him a far reaching change.

Da'wah operates on two fronts: (i) towards Muslims who are perhaps unaware of Islam, maybe because of growing up in the western lifestyle and missing out on a proper Islamic education, and (ii) towards our non-muslims neighbours and colleagues, many of whom may be searching for truth. At the very least, we may be able to counteract the many incorrect stereotypes of Islam and muslims, no one else will do this for us, we have to speak up! and show by our behaviour what Islam is all about. By doing this, we may even bring people into the fold of Islam. [13]

Effective du'at perceive that their part is not just in conveyance of the message, but rather stretches out to the limits of consistent tarbiyah (education) of youthful energetic generations from claiming adherents. The du'at must plant the seeds of goodness in the hearts of the Muslim youth and then pledge to constantly raise them progressively in accordance with Allah's law. [5, 6]

Contemporary Du'at face great challenges to systematize and to apply the practical methodology within the new era of modern context. Provided below are some suggestions that Muslim Du'at, individually and collectively can undertake to accomplish da'wah goal. [16]

3.1 Performing Da'wah through a Worldwide Islamic Movement

The Qur'an has obviously directed the Du'at to work within group:

اَنْتُوْنَى مَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْخَبَـيْرِ وَيَنْهَى مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِ وَيَتَّقُونَ عَنِ الْمَكَرِ وَأَلَّا يَخْطَأُنَّ "Let there arise out of you a nation inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful."

(ali-Imran; 3: 104)

The technique of da'wah through aggregate work or deliberate association was started when Dar al-Da'wah wal-Irsyad was established by Shaykh Rashid Rida in the early 19th century. His ambition was to train Muslim Du'at within an established da'wah college and to send them into Christian lands for propagating the message of Islam. They were also sent into those Muslim countries in which attempts had been made to induce the Muslims to abandon their faith. This approach is quite similar to the idea of al-Maududi and Hassan al-Banna that da'wah and politics are inseparable and the mass movement should struggle to create an Islamic order within the society.

3.2 Strengthening Da'wah with Technology

There appears to be a consensus on the compelling reason for preachers of Islam to utilise modern instruments to carry out the mission of da'wah. Today's culture is a whole lot technocentric. Technology has broken down physical, geographical and political barriers that once may have stood in the way of completing things proficiently and effectively. Consequently there exists a substantial compelling reason for the creation of a new breed of Muslim preachers. This new breed of techno-da'ie is a critical perspective for advanced Islam. Without them, it would be troublesome to present the genuine Islam in this post-modern world that we currently live in.

The new era particularly are becoming more techno smart. So what better way to approach the post-modern generation than to apply that which they are most comfortable with? Why not use technology to narrow the gap between the da'ie and the community? ICT, for instance, could be utilised to the best by the techno-da'ie to share and disseminate info data on Islam. Multimedia could be used to teach kids and adolescent how to read the Qur'an correctly. Multimedia is interactive and combines the usage of most senses. This would make learning the Qur'an more interesting, especially to today's children.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) additionally displays a perpetual likelihood of the techno-da'ie. Say, for instance, a techno-da'ie were to address a lecture in a mosque. He could make use of web-based presentation tools and online gadgets to make his talk extra charming. The audience would also be capable should recall more adequately if multimedia is utilized. [8, 12]

Likewise, assuming that conventional works of Islam such as the voluminous Imam Syafii's Kitab al-Umm or Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah are digitally transformed and stored
3.3 Using Communication Media and Conducting Seminars/Workshops

Ismail Faruqi suggested that the method of mujadalah should be applied in a kind of academic seminar on a large scale where Du’at can freely present and argue with other religions. This approach can achieve its objective because Islam puts in man's rational power to discriminate between the truth and false.

On the other hand, his approach may differ from Ahmad Deedat who eludes a charismatic and saintly appearance and his wit and charm temper what might otherwise be considered an acid tongue. He, moreover, regards Christianity as his chief enemy, and this creates tension between faiths rather than peaceful method required by Islam.

To practise da’wah one must be well mannered and conscious. Da’wah implies to gently persuade, attract, be polite, be friendly, be caring and understanding, and try to have a sense of humour. Outward appearance has a role to play; i) be clean and neat, ii) don’t eat raw onions or garlic before attending mosque or meeting people, and iii) chew gum or something mint for good breath. [14]

3.4 Displaying the Real Islamic Lifestyle

The above discussion is thoroughly concerned with the method of direct da’wah or activitistic preaching which is directed to the non-Muslim. In fact, da’wah should also be directed toward the Muslim. It is called as indirect/ non-verbal da’wah or Islamic lifestyle (Da’wah bil-Hal). It is to take Islam to non-Muslim, not by pulpit preaching and mailing Islamic literature but by doing what Muslim ought to do (action); living, drinking, eating, sleeping and behaving as Muslims are enjoined to do. This method is more attractive because people can practically see the beauty of Islam within the ummah (muslim community).

Word alone however will not suffice. Da’wah can be by writing, speaking, behaviour, attitude, manner, sharing and caring with and for others. The best da’wah is to be a good example.

Success in da’wah work means first of all knowing Islam and Qur’an and being familiar with the traditions and stories of the Prophet Muhammad's life, for only then it is possible in conversation to give answers to followers of other faiths.

Da’wah through humanitarian causes should be pondered thoughtfully in order to prove the fruit of Islam. Without such as this credibility, the whole effort of da’wah will be rhetorical and devoid of meaning. Unfortunately, it has been left to Christian missionaries to work on such lines.

Showing the fruit of the teaching is more effective than calling to something abstract and theoretical which is written on papers. For this
purpose, Muslims should improve their achievement in every aspect of life. Problems such as poverty and illiteracy within the Muslim ummah should be overcome. [14]

4 Conclusion

Educational training has a focal and key part, particularly when it is associated with the push to improve HR quality. It is brought about by the acknowledgment for human standing and glory increment. Socialization of Islamic qualities should be possible just by prominent human asset.

One of the best means for Islamic worker to attain the gentle and effective method of da’wah is to know what he wants. This clear conception and analysis of goals dictates the method the work should follow. Knowing what he wants, the Islamic worker will save effort and time and will make well-planned moves. This will enable him to avoid taking arbitrary decisions which are the results of a lack of planning and proper calculations. Al-Hasan al-Basri was quite right in his saying: "The one who acts without knowledge is like the one who travels on no road, and the one who accomplishes what he doesn't want, spoils more than he amends."

Deliverers of the Islamic da’wah, are not searching for any common compensate or expecting acclaim from individuals. They request nothing aside from the delight for Allah. May Allah keep us on the straightway, and acknowledge our modest endeavors for His adoration.

References