

FIQH AD-DA'WAH

Compiled by
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~ ~ ~ Fiqh ad-Da'wah ~ ~ ~

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Preface

All praise is due to Allah, and blessings and peace upon His servant and messenger, Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions and all who follow his guidance until the Day of Resurrection.

Although not everyone will accept the message of Islam, the dā'iyah himself should not be a preventing factor. Firmly believing in this principle, I decided to gather material which has been presented over the last decade to students in the Islamic Cultural Center, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. My students and colleagues played a motivating role in collecting the material and putting it into a book form in order to meet the ever increasing need for effective da'wah among and by non-Arabic speaking people.

I must admit that although I had worked for some time in the field of da'wah, it had been, unfortunately, without sufficient enlightenment regarding the principles and procedures of conveying the message of Islam. I also happened to observe dā'iyahs who excelled in the field and others who failed. Then I came to know of da'wah courses being held in my city of residence, where I could learn and practice concurrently. I learned that da'wah cannot be done by "instinctive" measures alone, but must be disciplined by regulations and guidelines, just as Qur'ān recitation is governed by rules of tajweed.

All of my references were Arabic ones, which meant that extra effort was required to render the information into English. I was assisted in this by my friend and colleague, Umm Muḥammad, who typed, edited and checked the authenticity of ḥadiths quoted in Arabic sources in order to make the book more useful and readable. We tried to make this book inclusive of most of the basic fiqh ad-da'wah syllabuses due to the shortage of such literature in English.

We ask Allah, subḥānahu wa ta'ālā, to accept our efforts, forgive our errors and cover us with His mercy until we meet Him, hoping to find Him pleased with us, in-shā'-Allah.

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Definitions

Fiqh:	Knowledge, understanding, perception
Da`wah:	Encouragement toward the acceptance of something, invitation, call
Da`wah to Allah:	Invitation to belief in Allah and what His messengers have taught, in particular the final messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, i.e., the propagation of Islam.
Fiqh ad-Da`wah:	The deep and precise comprehension of all aspects of da`wah, its rationale, fundamentals, objectives, methods, consequences, etc.
Dā`iyah:	One who is active in da`wah to Allah, a propagator of Islam

Islamic Ruling Concerning Da`wah

Da`wah is the duty of all followers of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ according to their level of knowledge, means and abilities. It must be done with wisdom and sensitivity, and is directed to non-Muslims, and when necessary to Muslims. The dā`iyah can expect reward from Allah whether or not his da`wah is successful.

Calling to Islam: The Duty of Every Muslim

While all the messengers appointed by Allah were charged by Him to disseminate the revealed guidance with which they were entrusted, their respective nations too, were called upon to share in the fulfillment of Allah's orders. He reminds in the noble Qur'an:

وَأِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ

And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture to make it clear to the people and not conceal it. (3:187)

The position of the Muslim *ummah* (community), in this respect is clear in the Qur'an:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. (3:110)

Thus Allah, the Almighty has honored this Muslim *ummah* by appointing it to share in the noble cause of its Prophet by inviting people to follow the straight path. Moreover, the Qur'an makes two statements:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

The believing men and women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. (9:71)

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ

The hypocrite men and women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right. (9:67)

Hence, to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong constitutes a fundamental difference between the believer and the hypocrite. Consequently, all members of the Muslim *ummah*, men and women alike, are expected to further the cause of Islam with zeal, determination and sense of sacrifice, as did the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

That the companions did their utmost, individually and collectively, to convey the light of Islam to all people, even beyond the Arabian Peninsula, is demonstrated by the long and dangerous journeys they undertook, reaching the Atlantic Ocean to the west and China to the East. Countless distinguished companions breathed their last in faraway foreign lands preaching Islam, and their sacrifices knew no bounds.

To call all peoples of the world to Allah is the duty of every responsible and conscientious Muslim. Since there is no priesthood or religious class in Islam, the duty of invitation to Allah cannot be transferred to an imaginary group called "men of religion." In Islam everyone is a man of religion and everyone will be accountable to Allah as to whether he fulfilled his obligations sincerely and to the best of his abilities or not. The following verse of the Qur'an is enlightening in this respect:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

Say [O Muhammad] this is my way; I invite to Allah with insight - I and those who follow me. (12:108)

So anyone who claims to be a follower of the Prophet ﷺ cannot neglect his duty to call people to Allah, for He said, "Convey from me, even if only one verse."¹

Therefore, one does not have to be a profound scholar or a great jurist to call people to Islam. No doubt a person well-versed in Islamic sciences would be able to speak more authoritatively and he would be in a position to explain matters of religion in more detail. However, a high level of scholarship is not a prerequisite to call others to Islam. Everyone's effort fills a need of some kind. A Muslim scholar will address his counterpart with refined style and scholarly content, while a layman will reason with his equals in practical terms, each having a role complementary to the other. Every individual of the Muslim *ummah* is obligated to be actively engaged in whatever way he can to guide people to the right path and to support, morally and materially, those who strive to discharge this responsibility.

There is a common misconception among earlier Muslim generations which remains to this day concerning the Qur'anic verse which says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. The misguided will not harm you when you have been guided. To Allah is your return all together; then He will inform you of what you used to do. (5:105)

The above verse does not connote, by any stretch of imagination, that a righteous person may absolve himself of the responsibility to invite mankind to truth. No one can ever equal the Prophet ﷺ or excel his companions in their moral perfection, sincerity of worship and religious devotion, and none of the Prophet's companions ever dreamt of resigning from the noble task of inviting nations of the east and the west to Islam. It was precisely to correct this wrong notion about the verse that Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) warned: "O people, you recite this verse and put it in a context other than its own. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'Indeed, when people see wrongdoing and do not prevent it, Allah will be about to punish them all.'"²

So fulfill your obligation to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Learn whatever you are able and convey the truth – Islam, for this is truly the duty of every Muslim.

The History of Da'wah

Da'wah is as ancient as the existence of mankind on earth. Ādam was a dā'iyah as he was a prophet of Allah, and every prophet was a dā'iyah. Allah (ﷻ) addressed Ādam directly with no intermediary, giving him instruction - commands and prohibitions - which he taught his offspring, and that was his prophethood.

All the prophets after Ādam were dā'iyahs as well, for Allah declared:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid ṭāghūt."³ (16:36)

¹ Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Bukhāri.

² Aḥmad - ṣaḥeeḥ.

³ i.e., false objects of worship.

The Qur'ān has related accounts of *ulul-'azm*, or "those of determination" among Allah's messengers, and how they dealt with their peoples in order that they might serve as the best example for *dā'iyahs*, who are successors of the prophets and messengers.⁴ Those distinguished messengers were five: Prophets Nūh (Noah), Ibrāheem (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses), 'Eesā (Jesus) and Muḥammad (peace be upon them all). The most significant aspects of the *da'wah* of each is mentioned below.

1. Nūh

The *da'wah* of Nūh is remarkable for its length of time: 950 years. But in spite of that it was less successful than the *da'wah* of other messengers. The believers who finally boarded the ark, choosing truth and faith over falsehood and disbelief, were few in number; however, there are important lessons to be taken from his experience as related in the Qur'ān:

- ♦ *Da'wah* is not necessarily successful. The majority of people might remain obstinate and unresponsive.
- ♦ The exertion of effort with patience is required, even if the period is prolonged. One should not be impatient for results, for that is in the Hand of Allah.
- ♦ The timings, means and methods used in *da'wah* may vary.⁵ Examples and comparisons are useful in dialogues with people.
- ♦ A *dā'iyah* should not be dissuaded by opposition, ridicule and harm; rather he should increase his effort, trusting in the support of Allah and expecting His reward.
- ♦ He may be tested by the opposition of those nearest to him,⁶ requiring him to be additionally steadfast.

2. Ibrāheem

Prophet Ibrāheem is known as "*al-Khaleel*", or the close friend of Allah, and "the father of the prophets," as he was the ancestor of Arab and Jewish prophets descended from his sons, Ismā'eel and Is-ḥāq, respectively.

Throughout his life Ibrāheem opposed and struggled against falsehood and *shirk*.⁷ This led to confrontation of the idol worshippers, among whom was his own father. His dialogue with them is recorded in the Qur'ān:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَالِمِينَ . إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ . قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ . قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ . قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِبِينَ . قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ . وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُولُوا مُدْبِرِينَ . فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُدَادًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ . قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ . قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتَىٰ يَدُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ . قَالُوا فَاتُوا بِهِ عَلَىٰ أَغْنَيْنَ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ . قَالُوا أَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ . قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَاسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطَفِقُونَ . فَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ . ثُمَّ نَكَسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطَفِقُونَ . قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ

⁴ A prophet (*nabi*) is one who received revelation from Allah. A messenger (*rasūl*) is a prophet who was charged by Allah to reform society.

⁵ Refer to Sūrah Nūḥ: 5-7.

⁶ In the case of Prophet Nūḥ, it was his wife and son.

⁷ The association of another with Allah in some aspect of His divinity.

أَفِ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَقْلًا تَعْقِلُونَ . قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ . قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ . وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ .

And We had certainly given Ibrāheem his sound judgement before,⁸ and We were of him well-Knowing; when he said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are devoted?" They said, "We found our fathers worshippers of them." He said, "You were certainly, you and your fathers, in manifest error." They said, "Have you come to us with truth, or are you of those who jest?" He said, "[No], rather, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth who created them, and I, to that, am of those who testify. And [I swear] by Allah, I will surely plan against your idols after you have turned and gone away." So he made them into fragments, except a large one among them, that they might return to it [and question]. They said, "Who has done this to our gods? Indeed, he is of the wrongdoers." They said, "We heard a young man mention them who is called Ibrāheem." They said, "Then bring him before the eyes of the people that they may testify."⁹ They said, "Have you done this to our gods, O Ibrāheem?" He said, "Rather, this - the largest of them - did it, so ask them, if they should [be able to] speak." So they returned to [blaming] themselves and said [to each other], "Indeed, you are the wrongdoers." Then they reversed themselves,¹⁰ [saying], "You have already known that these do not speak!" He said, "Then do you worship instead of Allah that which does not benefit you at all or harm you? Uff¹¹ to you and to what you worship instead of Allah. Then will you not use reason?" They said, "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act." We [i.e., Allah] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Ibrāheem." And they intended for him a plan [i.e., harm], but We made them the greatest losers. (21:51-70)

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ . قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ . قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

Have you not considered the one who argued with Ibrāheem about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Ibrāheem said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," he said, "I give life and cause death." Ibrāheem said, "Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west." So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. (2:258)

Lessons from the da`wah of Ibrāheem to his people:

- ♦ A dā`iyah must have sound judgement and the ability to discern between truth and falsehood before he can challenge falsehood.
- ♦ To defeat falsehood the dā`iyah should use the method of dialogue and discussion and make his case through reason and logic.

⁸ i.e., before Prophet Mūsā. Allah had guided him from early youth.

⁹ To what they had heard him say. It may also mean "...that they may witness [what will be done to him as punishment]."

¹⁰ After first admitting their error, they were seized by pride and obstinacy.

¹¹ An exclamation of anger and displeasure.

The subjects of *tawḥeed*¹² and *shirk* should be presented clearly and in the best way without fear of negative consequences.

The dā'iyah should have complete trust in Allah's support during his da'wah. Then Allah will support him.¹³

Another incident in the life of Prophet Ibrāheem, his dialogue with a tyrannical king, is also related in the Qur'ān:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

Have you not considered the one who argued with Ibrāheem about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Ibrāheem said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," he said, "I give life and cause death." Ibrāheem said, "Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west." So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. (2:258)

Lessons derived from this incident:

- ♦ The strongest opponents of da'wah are usually people of power and authority.
- ♦ Confrontation of those in authority requires adequate knowledge, preparation and experience.¹⁴
- ♦ The dā'iyah must be confident that Allah is on the side of truth.

Ibrāheem made *hijrah* (emigration) for the sake of da'wah several times; first from his home in Ur to Palestine with his wife, Sarah, and nephew, Prophet Lūṭ, then to Egypt and later to Ḥijāz with his wife, Hājar and son, Ismā'eel. From this it may be concluded that:

The entire earth is within the dominion of Allah; the dā'iyah is not restricted to a particular location.¹⁵

- ♦ Hijrah is for the cause of Allah and not for worldly benefit.
- ♦ When da'wah is no longer possible in one locality, the dā'iyah seeks a more favorable environment.
- ♦ The dā'iyah must be prepared to make sacrifices of both a psychological and material nature.

3. Mūsā

Prophet Mūsā was spoken to directly by Allah, and thus was called *Kaleemullāh*. He is the third among the messengers of determination; this is evident in the fact that Allah sent him to make da'wah to Fir'aun (Pharaoh), the oppressive ruler of Egypt who enslaved the Children of Israel. Allah prepared him for this task by enabling him to spend his childhood in the household of Fir'aun.

¹² The confirmation of Allah's oneness and right to be worshipped alone.

¹³ As He made the fire coolness and safety upon Ibrāheem.

¹⁴ Ibrāheem was well acquainted with the movements of the heavenly bodies (refer to 6:75-79), so he was able to answer the king with certain knowledge.

¹⁵ The proper concept of nationalism is attachment to a land where the voice of truth prevails.

There were two main phases of Mūsā's da'wah: the period of da'wah to Fir'aun and the period of da'wah to his people, Bani Isrā'eel. Both required constant hard work and struggle, patience and reliance on Allah.

a) Da'wah to Fir'aun

In spite of his tyranny, Mūsā and his brother Hārūn were instructed to invite him to Allah with gentle speech.¹⁶ The dialogue in Sūrah ash-Shu'arā' illustrates the encounter between truth and falsehood which resulted in the magicians' belief:

وَإِذْ نَادَى رَبُّكَ مُوسَىٰ أَنِ أَنْتَ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَلَا يَتَّقُونَ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَىٰ هَارُونَ وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ قَالَ كَلَّا فَادْهَبَا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُسْتَمِعُونَ فَأَتَيْنَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أَنْ أَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلَتِكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكَ لَمَّا خِفْتُكَ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدتَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ قَالَ إِنْ رَسُولُكُمُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ لَمَجْنُونٌ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأُولِينَ قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ قَالَ لَنْ اتَّخَذتَّ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لِأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُورِينَ قَالَ أَوْلُو جِنَّتِكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُبِينٍ قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ فَأَلْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بِنُصَاءٍ لِلنَّاطِرِينَ قَالَ لِلْمَلَإِ حَوْلَهُ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُم مِّنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَبْعَثْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ يَا تَوَكَّلْ بِكُلِّ سِحَارٍ عَلِيمٍ فَجَمَعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُجْتَمِعُونَ لَعَلْنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَنَا أَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنِّكُمْ إِذَا لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلقُونَ فَأَلْقَوْا جِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ فَأَلْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثَلَاثُ حَاكِيٍّ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّي آيَةً مِّنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ لَهُ قِيلٌ أَنْ أَدْنَىٰ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَسَوْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَأَصْلَبَنَّاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرَ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ إِنَّا نَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْوِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا حَطَّائِنَا أَنْ كُنَّا أَوْلَىٰ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And [then] when your Lord called Mūsā, [saying], "Go to the wrongdoing people, the people of Fir'aun. Will they not fear Allah?" He said, "My Lord, indeed I fear that they will deny me, and that my breast will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent, so send for Hārūn. And they have upon me a [claim due to] sin, so I fear that they will kill me." [Allah] said, "No. Go, both of you, with Our signs; indeed, We are with you, listening. Go to Fir'aun and say, 'We are the messengers¹⁷ of the Lord of the worlds, so send with us Bani Isrā'eel.'" [Fir'aun] said, "Did we not raise you among us as a child, and you remained among us for years of your life? And [then] you did your deed which you did,¹⁸ and you were of the ungrateful." [Mūsā] said, "I did it, then, while I was of those astray [i.e., ignorant]. So I fled from you when I feared you. Then my Lord granted me judgement [i.e., wisdom and prophethood] and appointed me [as one] of the messengers. And is this a favor of which you remind me - that you have enslaved Bani Isrā'eel?" Said Fir'aun, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" [Mūsā] said, "The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them, if you should be convinced." [Fir'aun] said to those around him, "Do you not hear?" [Mūsā] said, "Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers." [Fir'aun] said, "Indeed, your 'messenger' who has been sent to you is mad." [Mūsā] said, "Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason." [Fir'aun] said, "If you take a god other than me, I will surely place you among those imprisoned." [Mūsā] said, "Even if I brought you something [i.e., proof] manifest?" [Fir'aun] said, "Then bring it, if you should be

¹⁶ Refer to Surah Tāhā, 20:43-44

¹⁷ The singular form in Arabic indicates that both were sent with a single message.

¹⁸ i.e., striking his opponent, who died as a result.

of the truthful." So [Mūsā] threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent manifest. And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white for the observers. [Fir'aun] said to the eminent ones around him, "Indeed, this is a learned magician. He wants to drive you out of your land by his magic, so what do you advise?" They said, "Postpone [the matter of] him and his brother and send among the cities gatherers who will bring you every learned, skilled magician." So the magicians were assembled for the appointment of a well-known day. And it was said to the people, "Will you congregate, that we might follow the magicians if they are the predominant?" And when the magicians arrived, they said to Fir'aun, "Is there indeed for us a reward if we are the predominant?" He said, "Yes, and indeed, you will then be of those near [to me]." Mūsā said to them, "Throw whatever you will throw." So they threw their ropes and their staffs and said, "By the might of Fir'aun, indeed it is we who are predominant." Then Mūsā threw his staff, and at once it devoured what they falsified. So the magicians fell down in prostration [to Allah]. They said, "We have believed in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn." [Fir'aun] said, "You believed him [Mūsā] before I gave you permission. Indeed, he is your leader who has taught you magic, but you are going to know. I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you all." They said, "No harm. Indeed, to our Lord we will return. Indeed, we aspire that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we were the first of the believers." (26:10-51)

b) Da'wah to Bani Isrā'eel

Although they had been victims of oppression, many of Bani Isrā'eel shared the materialistic values of the people of Fir'aun among whom they had lived and were prone to idol worship. After the drowning of Fir'aun and his soldiers in the sea, Allah had preserved his corpse as an example and admonition to any who might consider rebellion against Allah and his messengers. Notwithstanding, Bani Isrā'eel often disobeyed Mūsā and opposed the truth, as related in Sūrahs al-Baqarah, al-Mā'idah and al-A'rāf.

Lessons from Mūsā's da'wah:

- ♦ Dā'iyahs have to confront rejection of truth by the majority, even among their own people. Many are often blind followers of others with no conviction of their own. Some of these may be receptive to truth, as were Fir'aun's magicians.
- ♦ A dā'iyah may have to enter the territories of disbelieving and oppressive powers in order to invite people to Islam. While doing so he must practice courtesy and kindness.
- ♦ Instead of miracles, which were given to the prophets, the dā'iyah will support his da'wah with convincing proofs and evidences. He will also find assistance in a study of the history of mankind and by explaining the nature of Islam: its straightforwardness, simplicity and compatibility with human needs.
- ♦ Steadfastness is always required without giving in to despair.

4. 'Eesā

The da'wah of Prophet 'Eesā was an extension of that of Mūsā, as he was also sent to the Jews of Bani Isrā'eel. A summary is given in Sūrah az-Zukhruf:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلَفُونَ فِيهِ فَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا. إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ. فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْبَيْتِ.

And when 'Eesā brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom and to make clear to you some of that over which you differ, so fear Allah and obey me. Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path." But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day. (43:63-65)

The wisdom he brought was the use of knowledge and reason to arrive at the truth. Bani Isrā'eel had previously earned the curse of Allah by repeatedly breaking their covenants and killing the prophets He sent to them. 'Eesā came to clarify for the people matters of religion, eliminate their differences and invite them back to pure monotheism. He called upon them to obey him in worshipping Allah alone, and Allah supported him with miracles. But instead, they accused him of illegitimate birth, opposed him and conspired against him. His da'wah included several aspects:

- ♦ Invitation to the worship of Allah alone
- ♦ Confirmation of his prophethood through miracles
- ♦ Dealing with the doubts of his own followers and Allah's support of him, as described in Sūrah al-Mā'idah:

إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ. قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتُنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ. قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوْلَادِنَا وَأَجْرَانَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَارزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ. قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدَ مَنكُم فَأِنِّي أَعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ.

And when the disciples said, "O 'Eesā, Son of Maryam, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven?" ['Eesā] said, "Fear Allah, if you should be believers." They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses." Said 'Eesā, the son of Maryam, "O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers." Allah said, "Indeed, I will send it down to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you - then indeed will I punish him with a punishment by which I have not punished anyone among the worlds." (5:112-115)

Lessons from 'Eesā's da'wah:

- ♦ Despite the presentation of evidences, a dā'iyah can still expect denial and obstinacy since people tend to adhere to custom. He must be patient while expecting his reward from Allah.
- ♦ A dā'iyah can expect from people unreasonable demands. At such times he must control his anger and frustration and do his best to provide whatever will promote belief.
- ♦ Even when resistance continues, the mercy in the heart of a dā'iyah is reflected in the supplication of Prophet 'Eesā to Allah:

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَعُودْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

If You should punish them – indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them – indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (5:118)

Most of the Jews rejected the message of 'Eesā and plotted against him, but Allah saved him from crucifixion and raised him to heaven. Only a few of his followers remained true

to his teachings. Others, who became known as "Christians", deified him and his mother, Maryam, and worshipped them. The Qur'ān confirms his disassociation from this transgression:

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَ إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالِ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ
إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمَ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ. مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ...¹⁹

And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O 'Eesā, Son of Maryam, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord ... " (5:116-117)

'Eesā informed his people that Allah would send another prophet after him by the name of "Aḥmad" (i.e., Muḥammad). But when he appeared the majority of them denied him as well.

5. Muḥammad (ﷺ)

Although last in chronological order, Prophet Muḥammad was first and foremost in da'wah to Allah. In the Qur'ān, Allah addressed him, saying:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ نَبِيْرًا وَنَذِيْرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, but most of the people do not know. (34:28)

Among Allah's favors to mankind is the preservation of his *seerah* (biography) in exceptional detail. The da'wah of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the best example for every dā'iyah because it is wide-ranging and inclusive of all the pillars, conditions, methods and results of da'wah.

The Reasons for Da'wah

A reason is a motive or basis for something. It may also be defined as a cause, i.e., something that produces an effect, occurrence, action or change. Da'wah is an act - an effort toward effecting change. Therefore, to know the reasons for it is both logical and scientifically systematic. In essence, da'wah to Allah is both a human necessity and a religious obligation. Presently, there is an urgent need for qualified dā'iyahs worldwide. Three main reasons may be cited for this duty:

1) Allah's directive that He be worshipped alone.¹⁹ For this purpose He sent prophets and messengers, charging them with:

- Leading people to knowledge of Allah, understanding of His names and attributes and awareness of what He expects of them in this life and has prepared for them in the Hereafter. Believers will worship Allah in all circumstances, while others acknowledge Him only in times of affliction and need, as described in the Qur'ān:

¹⁹ "I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (51:56)

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوْجٌ كَالظَّلِيلِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الدِّينِ فَمنَهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ.

And when [at sea] waves come over them like canopies, they supplicate Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, there are some of them who are moderate. But none rejects Our signs except every treacherous ungrateful one. (31:32)

- Teaching about matters unseen, i.e., informing people of the life after death, the account, Paradise and Hell, angels, revelation to the prophets, the purpose of life, etc.
 - Clarifying what is permitted and prohibited in order to attain what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful in this life and the next.
 - The amendment of manners and morals by directing people toward Islamic values and conduct pleasing to Allah, and teaching them how to channel their physical desires in lawful ways through the guidance of the Shari'ah.
 - Encouraging brotherhood and cooperation and clarifying the truth when people differ over viewpoints aims and methods.
- 2) Allah meant for peoples to interact socially for their own benefit while recognizing that distinction and merit is due to righteousness and not differences of race, language, lineage, etc.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous²⁰ of you. (49:13)

This verse is understood in view of the following:

Allah created mankind from the same parents (Ādam and Ḥawwā'), spreading their descendants throughout the earth. Man's origin is one, while his color and language is varied. This is recognized by every stage of divinely revealed religion, but man made systems have divided people according to race, class status, etc.

Human individuals and groups are naturally interdependent. Islam establishes a bond of brotherhood based on faith as well as common origin, defining the duties, rights and conduct of all members of society.

3) Allah placed human beings on the earth in a position of responsibility. He said in the Qur'ān:

هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ

He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it. (11:61)

The Arabic text implies that man was settled on the earth for a purpose - to develop and civilize it. Allah also said:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ.

Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them

²⁰ Literally, "he who has the most *taqwa*," i.e., consciousness and fear of Allah, piety and righteousness.

[therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves²¹ after that – then those are the defiantly disobedient. (24:55)

Allah has honored man by making him a *khalifah*, i.e., a successor to authority on earth. Believers in particular are responsible for the bearing of trust and authority. Their obligations are to profess and adhere to belief in Allah and what He has revealed, to work for the establishment of that belief in throughout land and to perform righteous deeds. Prophets and messengers were sent to inform and make people aware of these obligations, of how to fulfill them and how to civilize the earth. Dā'iyahs are their successors.

The Objectives of Da'wah

An objective is something worked for, a goal. By attaining an objective, a need is met or fulfilled. The objectives of da'wah for individuals and communities may be summarized as follows:

- ♦ To assist people in worshiping Allah according to the way He ordained (i.e., His shari'ah).
- ♦ To enable people to know one another so that they can solve the problems that occur throughout life.
- ♦ To improve the negative conditions in which Muslims presently live, to bring them back to Allah, to the truth and to the realization of their best interests in this life and the next.
- ♦ To produce Muslim individuals whose complete Islamic education deals with all aspects of life - spiritual, physical, social, psychological and moral.
- ♦ To produce Muslim homes governed by the manners and spirit of Islam, for the home is the basis and foundation of the community or society.
- ♦ To produce a Muslim community whose members maintain the concept of enjoining what is right, forbidding evil, and practicing justice and *ihsān*.²²
- ♦ To establish an Islamic government which implements the laws of Islam by: propagating truth, upholding justice, practicing *ihsān*, caring for public interests, preventing harm, promoting prosperity, fulfilling trusts and spreading the teachings of Islam.
- ♦ To strive toward freeing Muslim lands from occupation and alien authority.
- ♦ To encourage and work toward the unification of the Muslim world regarding correct ideology, education, goals and objectives, finance and politics. This refers to a unification of policies, not necessarily governments.
- ♦ To spread the message of Allah, the invitation to truth, throughout the entire world because Allah has approved Islam as the complete, comprehensive and final religion for mankind.

²¹ i.e., denies the favor of Allah or does not live by His ordinance.

²² Kind treatment, forbearance and generosity practiced for the acceptance of Allah.

The Pillars of Da'wah

The pillars of da'wah are sometimes listed as components. These are three:

1. Da'wah - invitation to Islam
2. The dā'iyah - a Muslim who is qualified to practice da'wah
3. The recipient of da'wah

But many scholars define the pillars as requirements, which are six:

1. Imān - faith
2. 'Ilm - knowledge
3. 'Amal - deeds
4. Dhikr - remembrance of Allah
5. Ukhūwwah - brotherhood
6. Jihād - striving for the cause of Allah

Each of these will be discussed below.

Imān

Imān (faith) is Allah's gift to His servants. In the Qur'ān, He said:

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ. أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ.

But Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. (49:7)

Imān is precious, and everything precious in this world is scarce. Allah said in the Qur'ān:

وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ.

And most of the people, although you may strive, are not believers. (12:103)

Faith increases and decreases. It is increased and strengthened by:

- ♦ Correct knowledge, which is gained by reciting the book of Allah, understanding it and reflecting on the signs and verses of Allah.

وَإِذَا تَلَّيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

And when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith. (8:2)

- ♦ The performance of good deeds, such as prayer, fasting, giving charity, reciting the Qur'ān, etc., while remembering Allah, as well as avoiding disobedience to Allah. He has described the rightly guided as:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. (13:28)

- ♦ Righteous companionship, which is essential for the spread of da'wah. Allah commanded:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true. (9:119)

And īmān is decreased and weakened by:

- ♦ Neglecting worship, disobeying and forgetting Allah, which diminishes the light in one's heart as described in the Qur'ān:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of what [sins] they were earning. (83:14)

This process can be reversed only by repentance.

- ♦ Bad companionship, which encourages and leads one toward negligence and sin. A ḥadīth advises: "A person assumes the way of his friend, so let every one of you consider whom he takes as a friend."²³ And Allah, the Exalted, warns of the consequence in the Hereafter:

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا. يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا. لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي

And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, "Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken so-and-so as a friend. He led me away from the remembrance after it had come to me... (25:27-29)

'Ilm

The second requirement or pillar is correct knowledge. Without it, mankind would remain in a state of confusion and disorder. Allah, the All-Knowing, bestowed certain aspects of knowledge on man through his senses and in addition, through prophets, beginning with Ādam.²⁴ All the prophets were given knowledge, but Allah made special mention of His favor to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

And Allah has revealed to you the Book and wisdom and has taught you that which you did not know. And ever has the favor of Allah upon you been great. (4:113)

And the Prophet ﷺ added, "The example of what Allah has sent me with of guidance and knowledge is like an abundant beneficial rain which falls upon a land. There are some good portions of it that accept the water and produce much pasture and grassland, and there is barren land which retains the water so Allah benefits people thereby - they drink from it, irrigate fields and water animals. But it falls on other portions, hard riverbeds, which neither retain the water nor produce pasture. That is the example of someone who understands Allah's religion and benefits from that which Allah sent me, so he learns and teaches, and the example of someone who pays no attention to it and does not accept the Allah's guidance that was sent to me."²⁵

'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib is reported to have said, "Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you while you guard wealth. Knowledge is an administrator while wealth is administrated. And wealth decreases when spent while knowledge increases when spent."

²³ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd.

²⁴ Refer to Qur'ān 2:31-33.

²⁵ Narrated by al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

Sālim bin Abi Ja'd related, "I was a slave and then my master bought me for 300 dirhams and set me free. So I asked myself, 'What profession should I learn?' Then I chose the path of knowledge, and before the end of the first year I found the governor of the city wanting to visit me. However, I did not receive him." And Luqmān, the Wise, advised his son, saying, "O my son, sit with the scholars and crowd in close to them. For indeed, Allah brings hearts to life with the light of wisdom just as He brings the earth to life with a downpour from the sky."

Knowledge is essential for the dā'iyah, but it should be noted that among the people seeking knowledge there are two kinds:

1. Those who obtain knowledge for the cause of Allah, taking the straight path and acting according to what they learn. Consequently, Allah provides them with enlightenment and inner vision, truthful tongues and a following among the righteous. They obtain the honor attributed to scholars, so the angels and all creatures continually ask Allah to forgive them. They earn nearness to Allah, His pleasure and His mercy. And they attain the ability to practice da'wah successfully in the best way, which brings them countless rewards.
2. Those who are called "people of knowledge" while their deeds resemble deeds of the ignorant. Their knowledge gives them a sense of self-importance and they use it to impress others. They weaken when tempted with wealth or position and succumb to their own desires, preferring praise and worldly benefits. Their behavior is often contrary to their speech, and they forget much of what they have learned. They mislead people by their example, ultimately pursuing a path to self-destruction. Therefore, Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to make the following supplication: *O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit, from a heart that is not subdued, from a soul that is not satisfied and from a supplication that is not answered.*²⁶

'Amal

'Amal is the practice of what a person knows. The conduct of any Muslim should be according to the Shari'ah: submission and obedience to Allah and the fulfillment of one's Islamic obligations. This is required even more rigorously of the scholar and dā'iyah who are examples to the common people. Their deeds must reflect the added knowledge they have obtained, for they carry an additional responsibility and are thus more accountable before Allah.

This type of morality was exhibited by Prophet Shu'ayb, when he said to his people:

وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you. I only intend reform as much as I am able, and my success is not but through Allah. (11:88)

And the additional responsibility of those in positions of leadership is again shown by Allah in His warning to the Prophet's wives:

²⁶ Narrated by Muslim.

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيَّنَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا. وَمَن يَفْعَلْهُ مِنكُنَّ بِرَأْسِهِ وَتَعَمَّلَ صَالِحًا نُوتِبَهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا. يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ...

O wives of the Prophet, whoever of you should commit a clear immorality – for her the punishment would be doubled two fold, and ever is that, for Allah, easy. And whoever of you devoutly obeys Allah and His Messenger and does righteousness – We will give her her reward doubled; and We have prepared for her a noble provision. O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women... (33:30-32)

Islam is not a mere statement, theory or abstract ideology to be accepted or rejected. It is the law of Allah, Creator of mankind, to be applied on the earth by mankind. Therefore, faith cannot be confined to the heart or tongue alone but must be proven by one's deeds. As expressed in a ḥadith: "*Imān and `amal are companions. Neither one of them is satisfactory without its companion.*"²⁷ The Prophet ﷺ himself was a teacher and practical example of righteous conduct and correct worship for the Muslim ummah to follow. His companions and their students upheld his sunnah in this regard. The dā'iyah must also do so to the best of his ability among his people and community, his `amal consisting of correct practices and praiseworthy morals and manners.

Dhikr

The meaning of *dhikr* is mindfulness, or having something in one's mind or heart. In Islamic terminology it means avoiding unawareness of Allah by continuously keeping His presence in the mind and heart. Thus, it indicates remembrance, but also includes the mention of Allah by the tongue. So Allah is remembered and mentioned in the heart and by the tongue, within oneself or aloud, individually and collectively, mentally and physically.

There are many forms of dhikr, among them: remembering Allah's names and attributes, remembering the messengers of Allah, reciting the Qur'ān, studying Islamic rulings and the Prophet's seerah, praising and supplicating Allah, obeying Him, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and making da'wah to Allah. In the Qur'ān, Allah has praised those who remember Him²⁸ and denounces those who do not.²⁹ And He has ordered it of His sincere servants, saying,

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي **And establish the prayer to remember Me. (20:14)**

فَأذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ **Remember Me; I will remember you. (2:152)**

Additionally, there are numerous ḥadiths on this subject.

The dā'iyah is especially in need of dhikr at all times, for when the heart is connected to Allah, the tongue expresses the content of the heart. And, as the saying goes, "What comes from the heart enters the heart, but what comes from the tongue does not go beyond the ears." The kind of dhikr practiced by the dā'iyah must awaken and move unconscious and heedless hearts. It must also serve to purify his own intention, make him steadfast in

²⁷ Narrated by al-Hākim.

²⁸ For examples, see 3:191, 7:201, 13:28 and 33:35.

²⁹ See 4:142, 20:124, 39:22 and 39:45.

adhering to truth, strengthen his determination and provide him with Allah's support and patience in the face of opposition and denial.

Ukhuwwah

True brotherhood among Muslims is an essential part of da'wah and required of those who practice it. The Qur'ān states:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ

The believers are but brothers. (49:10)

And the Prophet ﷺ said, "*The Muslim is the brother of a Muslim.*"³⁰ The importance of this pillar necessitates mention of the following points:

- ♦ The feeling of brotherhood toward other Muslims is a characteristic of believers and is counted among the favors Allah granted them³¹ due to their faith and *taqwā*. It is based on common objectives rather than personal self-interest, and on sincere love for Allah and His religion rather than ties of family, tribe, community, etc. It is established by putting aside differences in wealth, social status, race and nationality, and is sustained throughout every condition, in times of both ease and difficulty.
- ♦ Bonds of brotherhood are strengthened through consideration and support of one's brother, assistance and defense of him, supplication for him, gestures of affection such as a smile or handshake, informing him that he is loved for Allah, occasional visits or the giving of a gift.
- ♦ The Muslim brother has certain rights over his brother: to be greeted with *salām*, visited when ill or distressed, defended when oppressed and assisted when in need. His invitation should be accepted, his wishes respected, his faults forgiven, his honor upheld, and his funeral attended at death.

The dā'iyah is expected to observe the duties of brotherhood even more precisely than others in order to be an example to them. Brotherhood also includes da'wah and advice to one's Muslim brothers. Only in case they do not respond out of stubbornness or arrogance is it permissible to disassociate oneself from them. The Prophet ﷺ occasionally used social boycott as a disciplinary measure. This is done to show displeasure for the cause of Allah and never for merely personal reasons.

The Prophet's companions and most of the early Muslims were dā'iyahs. The true brotherhood demonstrated among them resulted in the successful spread of Islam, the supremacy of the *ummah*, and Muslim leadership in world affairs.

Jihād

The general meaning of *jihād* is the utmost exertion of oneself. In Islam, the term denotes striving for the cause of Allah. A believer's life always brings him benefit. Indeed, the concept of *jihād* is one of life, and it is vast, not limited to armed struggle. For example, one finds in the Book of Allah:

³⁰ Narrated by al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

³¹ Refer to 3:103.

1. Jihād by means of the Qur'ān:

فَلَا تُطِيعُوا الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدُوهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

So do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with it [i.e., the Qur'ān] a great striving. (25:52)

This means da'wah, evidence, clarification and presenting the best argument.

2. Jihād of the soul:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good. (29:69)

Included in the meanings of this verse is: striving to purify the soul, to increase its faith and incline it toward good while keeping it from evil and from unlawful desires and temptations. For example, some people like to put themselves in the service of Islam, but they deliver speeches and draw up plans to correct others while ignoring their own faults and weaknesses. Others may organize study groups and *dhikr* assemblies, but these leave no effect on their personal conduct. When urged to do good and cease doing wrong they excuse themselves by saying, "The time is not right; corruption is too widespread." Hence, their aim is proven to be false. Jihād must begin with amendment of the self and then turning to one's family and community. Allah said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. (4:135)

3. Jihād through wealth, which means spending it in various beneficial ways for the cause of Allah. This is confirmed in numerous places in the noble Qur'ān.
4. Jihād through the self, which comprises all good works done by a believer, such as da'wah, teaching and lawful fighting for the cause of Allah, among others.

Faulty understanding of a matter often leads to serious errors in dealing with it. Jihād has been isolated from the cultural order to which it belongs, and misunderstanding has occurred in political, social and cultural spheres. It is a subject requiring from the *dā'iyah* extensive study in books of Islamic jurisprudence. Not only must his da'wah be a personal form of jihād, but he must elucidate its meanings to others and endeavor to clear up misunderstandings.

In the name of jihād, Islam calls for the protection of societies from oppression, foreign domination and dictatorships that usurp rights and freedom, that abolish just and moral rule, that prevent people from hearing the truth or following it, and that practice religious persecution. In the name of jihād, it endeavors to teach belief in Allah and worship of Him, to spread good values, virtue and morality through wise and proper methods. In the name of jihād, Islam calls for social reform and the elimination of ignorance, superstition, poverty, disease and racial discrimination. All this, in reality, is da'wah. It is the spirit of jihād which motivates the *dā'iyah* to work relentlessly in order to spread the light and truth of Islam to every corner of the earth.

Another aspect of jihād is opposition to systems that prefer to preserve conditions of ignorance and myth, denying room for values of faith and morality in social life. Among its main goals is the protection of rights for weaker members of society against the impositions

of the powerful and influential. Thus, jihād represents resistance to oppression in any way possible, beginning with peaceful methods, and includes the right of nations to defend themselves against unjust aggressors.

Islam prohibits injustice, even toward those who oppose the religion. Allah, the Exalted said:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا. اَعْدِلُوا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى

And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. (5:8)

Enmity toward any people or nation must not provoke Muslims to commit aggression against them, oppress them or disregard their rights, for the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Fear the supplication of one who is wronged, even a non-believer, for there is nothing to screen it [from Allah].*"³²

But it is also clear that Islam acknowledges war when it becomes the only choice for the treatment of such problems as tyranny and aggression and for the defense of certain freedoms and rights. The Qur'ān says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُولُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ اَهْلِهَا وَاَجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاَجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا

And why do you not fight in the cause of Allah and for the oppressed among men, women and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector." (4:75)

When Islam chooses the option of war, it is confined to a system that is precise, just and provides opportunity for peace. There are several conditions which indicate the kind of warfare lawful to Muslims as a form of jihād, showing clearly that it is regulated by a moral system that does not condone aggression but takes its place within a system promoting the protection and spread of civil liberties and rights.

It has been said, "Morals are known during times of power and predominance." When Islam enjoyed power and influence it demonstrated a high level of morality, even toward those who had opposed it in combat. To give a few brief examples:

- Abu 'Ubaydah returned to the people of Ḥims the payment they had given in return for protection (*jiyyah*), out of fear that he would be unable to do so adequately. Meanwhile, he was doing his best to protect them.
- The first caliph, Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, wrote the following instructions to Yazeed: "Kill neither a woman, a child nor an aged person." He also forbade the killing of monks in their monasteries.
- 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb gave similar instruction to his army and added, "Avoid the peasants who do not wage war against you."
- Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abdul-'Azeez set up a tribunal on the battlefield to look into the claim by the people of Samarkand of incorrect war procedures. The Islamic army was ordered to withdraw immediately, to the amazement of the people, who consequently embraced Islam.

When Islam acknowledges military engagement, it is as part of a complete system of values inherent in the religion, behind which any equitable person can perceive the reason and

³² Narrated by Aḥmad - ḥadith ṣaḥeeḥ.

logic. When enemies are drawing up an evil plan to destroy Muslims, they are required to prepare a parallel force, both moral and physical, as Allah has said:

وَأَعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ

And prepare for them whatever you are able of power ... (8:60)

Rulings Concerning Da'wah

The fact that virtually every verse in the Qur'ān and every ḥadīth contains the meaning of enjoining right and forbidding wrong is proof of the necessity of practicing it. This was expressed in different ways, some examples being given below:

- ♦ As a command - From the Qur'ān:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful. (3:104)

And from the ḥadīth: *Convey from me, even if only one verse.*³³

*Whoever of you sees a wrong - let him change it by his hand; and if he is unable, then with his tongue; and if he is unable, then in his heart - and that is the least of faith.*³⁴

- ♦ As a description, giving encouragement - From the Qur'ān:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. (3:110)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims." (41:33)

From the ḥadīth: *The best jihad is a word of truth before an unjust ruler.*³⁵

- ♦ As a condition for worthiness of authority in the land - From the Qur'ān:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

[And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakāh and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. (22:41)

- ♦ As a warning of the negative consequences of neglect - From the Qur'ān:

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ. كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ.

Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of Dāwūd and of 'Eesā, son of Maryam. That was because they disobeyed and

³³ Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Bukhāri.

³⁴ Narrated by Muslim.

³⁵ Narrated by Aḥmad - ṣaḥeeḥ.

[habitually] transgressed. They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing. (5:78-79)

In reality, da'wah is the effort to prevent evil and encourage what is right in order to avoid the punishment of Allah and to obtain His acceptance and mercy, both in this life and the Hereafter. For disobedience to Allah is a cause of affliction while obedience to Him is a cause of blessing.³⁶ Thus, its status as an Islamic obligation is clear.

Da'wah to Allah has been the primary duty of the prophets and their followers in every age. Muslims are the followers and successors of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and as such are supposed to be worshippers, leaders and dā'iyahs. The Qur'ān confirms this:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

Say [O Muḥammad], "This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me." (12:108)

And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Convey from me, even if only one verse."³⁷ Taking on this responsibility is what makes the Muslim ummah superior to other nations. After reciting the verse: "You are the best nation produced for mankind..."³⁸ 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb said, "Any neglect in this respect will deprive you of your designation as 'best' and result in your destruction."

A magnificent example can be found in the magicians of Fir'aun. They believed after witnessing miracles at the hand of Prophet Mūsā and were immediately condemned to death by Fir'aun. They had but one brief opportunity for da'wah, of which they took full advantage to state to him a simple fact:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَا . وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَى . جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى.

Indeed, whoever comes to his Lord as a criminal – indeed, for him is Hell; he will neither die therein nor live. But whoever comes to Him as a believer having done righteous deeds – for those will be the highest degrees: gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. And that is the reward of one who purifies himself. (20:74-76)

In Sūrah al-'Aṣr, Allah states that generally, mankind is in a state of loss,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience. (103:3)

These four things are what saves a Muslim from that fate. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "The religion is sincerity." When the companions asked, "To whom?" he said, "To Allah, to His Book and to His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common people."³⁹ Sincerity to the leaders and common people was explained by scholars as assistance to them and giving sincere advice, cautioning them and reminding them discreetly when they are wrong.

³⁶ For examples, refer to 3:148, 16:41 and 42:30.

³⁷ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd and al-Bayhaqī.

³⁸ 3:110 - كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

³⁹ Narrated by Muslim.

There is a consensus among scholars about the obligatory nature of da'wah, based on the following two verses:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and those will be the successful. (3:104)

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn [i.e., advise] their people when they return to them that they might fear Allah. (9:122)

However, they have differed over whether the obligation of da'wah is *fardh 'ayn* (a duty for each individual) or *fardh kifāyah* (a collective duty, wherein if it is performed adequately by some the rest are excused). The first verse (3:104) has been taken to be general, meaning that all members of the ummah have this function. The second (9:122) implies specialization, meaning that a particular group with specific qualifications performs this duty on behalf of the ummah. Imām ash-Shāṭibi said, "Inviting people to Islam is *wājib* (imperative) because its implementation is obligatory upon all. Some have the capability, and those who do not should encourage those who do." Shaykh 'Abdullāh ad-Darrāz said, "It is *wājib* on those [capable] few with the assistance and cooperation of all. If it is not done by anyone, they will all be blameworthy."

Thus, a general conclusion concerning the ruling may be drawn: General propagation of Islam should be done by Muslims according to their circumstances and abilities. Those with specialized knowledge of particular aspects of da'wah are responsible for their application. This might include, for example, knowledge of other religions, proficiency in the recipient's language or familiarity with his background, skill in public address, etc. In addition, women are best suited for da'wah to other women. The obligation to practice da'wah is not restricted to males, and women are often effective and implemental in reforming entire families. There should be participation by both men and women and cooperation between them.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ.

The believing men and believing women are supporters of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. (9:71)

Benefits and Consequences

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared, "By Allah, that Allah should guide through you one man is better for you than having red camels."⁴⁰ Red camels were the most precious of one's property at that time. But even if no one is guided by him, the dā'iyah is still rewarded for his time, effort and sincerity from the moment he begins, for Allah has said:

⁴⁰ Al-Bukhāri.

أَتِي لَا أَضِيعُ عَمَلٍ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى

Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female. (3:195)

He will have the blessing of the Prophet's supplication when he said, "May Allah make radiant the face of a person who hears from me a statement and conveys it just as he heard it."⁴¹ And he ﷺ said, "Indeed, Allah and His angels, even the ant in its chamber and the fish in the sea send blessings on the teacher of good to the people."⁴²

The dā'iyah earns the love of Allah and of His creatures. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "When Allah loves a servant He calls to Jibreel, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so love him.' So Jibreel loves him and calls to those [angels] of heaven, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so love him.' So those in the heaven love him, and then acceptance of him is established on the earth."⁴³

He also obtains the reward of a *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (continuing charity) that continues after his death when, through his efforts, he leaves beneficial effects on the community or on the lives of individuals. As the Prophet ﷺ said, "When a man dies his deeds are ended except for three: a continuing charity, beneficial knowledge [left by him] and a righteous child supplicating for him."⁴⁴

An additional consequence for the dā'iyah is that he is saved from Allah's punishment that afflicts those who neglect their duty. This is evident in stories of the prophets where, after most of the people rejected their warnings, Allah saved the warners and those who believed and obeyed them from the punishment sent upon the general population for their denial and wickedness.

The same is true of reformers who call for obedience to Allah. This is illustrated in the story of Bani Isrā'eel when they were commanded to observe the Sabbath day (Saturday) by refraining from worldly activities, in particular, their occupation of fishing. They thought they could avoid compliance by merely placing their nets and drawing them in filled with fish on the following day, but Allah was not unaware of their intention. A few of them tried to advise and warn the others to fear Allah, and were told:

لِمَ تَعْظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا

Why do you advise a people whom Allah is about to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?

They replied:

قَالُوا مَعذَرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him. (7:164)

But the majority persisted in disobedience, so they were told:

كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِيِينَ.

Be apes, despised. (7:166)

Yet the punishment did not include those who had practiced da'wah by enjoining what was right. Allah ta'ālā stated:

⁴¹ Ibn Mājah.

⁴² Aṭ-Ṭabarāni - ṣaḥeeḥ.

⁴³ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

⁴⁴ Muslim

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا دُكِّرُوا بِهِ اتَّجَبْنَا الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَدَابِ بَيْتِيسَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

And when they forgot that of which they had been reminded, We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged with a wretched punishment because they were defiantly disobeying. (7:165)

However, even righteous people are not spared from punishment when they neglect the duty of da'wah. The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Allah will not punish the common people for the deeds of the elite until they see wrongdoing [spreading] among themselves while they are able to denounce it but do not. When they act thus, Allah will punish both the elite and the common people.*"⁴⁵ Hence, the consequences of widespread evil reach the entire society. Allah has warned:

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

And beware of a fitnah that will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty. (8:25)

The *fitnah* referred to here is affliction during worldly life resulting from general corruption.

A further example was given by the Prophet ﷺ: "*The comparison of one who observes Allah's limits and one who transgresses them is like a people who drew lots for [places in] a ship, and some got the upper deck and others below. When those below needed water they would pass over those above, so they said, 'We will not allow you to come up and disturb us.' Those below said, 'If we make a hole in our section we would not have to bother those above us.' If [those above] left them to do as they intended they would all perish, but if they cooperate with them they would all be saved.*"⁴⁶ The ship represents a society, which must be protected by all of its members without exception. From this ḥadīth it may be inferred that the integrity or corruption of a society depends upon the extent to which enjoining right and forbidding wrong is practiced, and that wrongdoing must be stopped and prevented from spreading.

Misunderstood Matters

There are some statements and questions reflecting doubts or confusion about the subject of da'wah which need to be clarified:

1. People might say, "Why is da'wah in the form of advice and warning so fundamental to Islam? What about personal choice and free will?" The answer is that Islam upholds personal freedom a right as long as it does not have a negative effect on others. For example, every child has certain rights - to a healthy and stable environment, to be cared for physically and psychologically and to be taught good manners and morals. Parents addicted to drugs or alcohol will surely infringe upon the basic rights of their children and possibly those of other members of the community.

2. A passage from the Qur'ān sometimes misunderstood is the following:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ

⁴⁵ Aḥmad.

⁴⁶ Al-Bukhārī.

O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided. (5:105)

The words convey the fact that when believers are rightly guided they cannot be harmed. However, right guidance includes the practice of da'wah. A rightly guided believer strives for the good and guidance of all people as well as himself.

Abū Bakr confirmed this, saying, "O people, you recite this verse and put it into other than its proper context. I heard the Prophet ﷺ say, '*When people see wrongdoing and do not correct it or see an oppressor and do not prevent him, Allah will be ready to include them all in His penalty.*'"⁴⁷

3. The excuse is given that corruption has become too widespread to contain. But in such a case, da'wah is required to a greater extent, in fact, the need for reform is proportionate to the degree of corruption. Our role model, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, began his da'wah while being the only dā'iyah upon the earth.

A dā'iyah should not expect immediate response or instant results. Nor should he despair if the outcome is other than what he had hoped. As Allah told His Messenger ﷺ:

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

"So remind; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller." (88:21-22)

4. It is often said that da'wah is only the responsibility of specialists in the field of Shari'ah and not others, or that it is required of men but not women. These assertions show an ignorance of Islamic principles. Once the caliph al-Ma'mūn tried to prohibit a dā'iyah from his activity, declaring that Allah had said:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

[They are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakāh and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. (22:41)

The man replied with another verse:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ.

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. (9:71)

The caliph said, "Such a man as you is worthy to practice da'wah." It is to be noted that the verse mentions believing women as well as men. Their contribution is of equal importance.

Obstacles in the Path of Da'wah

As mentioned previously, the dā'iyah, in spite of his utmost efforts, cannot always expect positive responses or complete successes. In fact, there are several factors that may hinder

⁴⁷ Narrated by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmidhi - ṣaḥeeḥ.

his da'wah and pose difficulties, increasingly so in modern times. Awareness of these is essential for a dā'iyah to plan his strategy.

1. Enemies of Islam - There are well prepared and well equipped forces in the world who use all their material means to lure Muslims away from their religion and portray their *ummah* as the weakest, poorest and most backward on earth. The dā'iyah's task is as great as the challenge. People (Muslims and non-Muslims alike) need to be educated regarding the truth about Islam and the real role of Muslims in the world today.
2. Lack of knowledge - The majority of contemporary Muslims have little true knowledge of Islam and thus become blind followers and victims of their ignorance. They are easily led to obey those who set themselves up as leaders, be they right or wrong, in the name of Islam.
3. The media - Under the control of Islam's enemies, the media plays a prime role in the spread of misinformation and the deliberate misrepresentation of Islam. Da'wah workers may take advantage of the same means, whenever possible, to counter this by spreading truth and beneficial knowledge, exposing their tactics and refuting their falsehoods.
4. Western culture - To those with little or no faith the materialistic secular way of life poses a powerful attraction. The true nature of this civilization will become evident in due time through a historical perspective. The dā'iyah must warn of its obvious negative aspects, and people should be encouraged to adopt only what is positive and beneficial from any culture while carefully avoiding all that is harmful.
5. A lack of Islamic role models - With the absence of effective upright Muslim leadership, people turn to other examples to follow, among them those heroes of the media who reinforce western cultural ideals at the expense of morality.
6. Unqualified propagators - There is a number of semi-educated Muslims who take upon themselves the role of leadership and da'wah. Incorrect perceptions of Islam or of da'wah methods may cause confusion or aversion among people as such amateur dā'iyahs often become immersed in secondary issues while neglecting the basics.
7. A da'wah worker's desire for comfort and ease - The dā'iyah must expect and be willing to undergo some hardship and sacrifice, otherwise he will not be effective in advancing his cause. His objective is a higher one than mere worldly satisfaction, and people will tend to see him as an example of righteousness and selflessness.

Trials Faced by the Dā'iyah

It has been said that the believer exists among five difficulties: another believer envying him, a hypocrite hating him, a *kāfir* fighting against him, a devil seeking to mislead him and a soul opposing him. The dā'iyah, like any believer, is subject to the same trials, if not more. He must learn to be steadfast in the face of:

1. Envy, which often leads someone to harm the one he envies or harm his reputation. The Prophet ﷺ issued severe warnings against envy since a true believer is only one who likes for his brother what he likes for himself. Nevertheless, a dā'iyah might be envied for

his outstanding qualities or for publicity afforded him. In the Qur'ān, Allah instructed seeking refuge in Him from all kinds of evil, among them:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

And from the evil of an envier when he envies. (113:5)

2. Hatred, which, when coming from a Muslim is a sign of hypocrisy. Such people pretend to work for Islam while disliking it in their hearts and seeking to aid its enemies. They are thus more dangerous than outspoken enemies and can cause greater harm. The dā'iyah should be aware of them and avoid them as much as possible without opposing them openly in order not to cause confusion and schism in the ranks of the Muslims. This was the practice of Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

3. Attacks from non-believers. The conflict between *imān* and *kufr* is as old as humanity, and the unbelievers and disbelievers have assisted Shayṭān in every place and time by their conspiracies and aggressions against believers, and in particular the persecution and oppression of da'wah workers. Therefore, they should follow the example of the prophets and scholars described in the Qur'ān, as did the Ṣaḥābah:

فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا

But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or submit. (3:146)

Throughout the history of Islam, dā'iyahs have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Allah. The following are among well-known examples:

♦ Khubayb bin 'Adiyy was taken out of the Ḥaram to be killed, so he said, "Allow me to pray two rak'ahs." When he had finished he told them, "If you did not think in me doing so that I feared death, I would have prayed more." And he supplicated, "O Allah, bring each one of them to account [and punishment]."

♦ Zayd bin ad-Dithannah was to be killed, so he was asked by Abū Sufyān, "Would you not like that Muḥammad was with us now in your place being beheaded while you were with your family?" Zayd replied, "By Allah, I would not like that Muḥammad, in whatever place he might be, be hurt by a thorn while I was sitting with my family."

♦ Eighty of the best Ṣaḥābah and reciters of the Qur'ān were sent by the Prophet ﷺ to make da'wah to the Bedouins. Their envoy, upon being stabbed in the back, shouted out, "I have succeeded, by the Lord of the Ka'bah!" The others were ambushed and martyred on route.

♦ Ḥabeeb bin Zayd was brought in captivity to Musaylimah the Liar (a false prophet), who said to him, "Do you testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah?" "Yes", replied Ḥabeeb. Then he asked, "Do you testify that I am the Messenger of Allah?" "I do not hear," said Ḥabeeb. Enraged, Musaylimah had his limbs cut off one by one, repeating the question each time but gaining nothing until Ḥabeeb was martyred.

♦ Sa'eed bin al-Musayyib refused to support some unjust policies of the caliph, 'Abdul-Malik bin Marwān, so he was beaten with 50 lashes and dragged through the markets. He asked the people not to approach him in order that they not be harmed because of him, and remained patient until his death.

♦ Sa'eed bin Jubayr was a prominent scholar who opposed the tyranny of al-Ḥajjāj. When al-Ḥajjāj ordered his beheading, Sa'eed said, "As for me, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger. Take it from me until you meet

me with it on the Day of Resurrection. O Allah, do not grant him power to kill anyone after me." Al-Ḥajjāj died shortly after killing Ibn Jubayr.

So when Islam is opposed and Muslims are oppressed, that is the time of hard work and sacrifice, and the dā'iyah must be prepared. Allah ta'ālā has said:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْتُمُ الْبِأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَرُلُّوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ. أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ.

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near. (2:214)

Let it be known that da'wah work is full of difficulties. Many are those who begin it but few are those who continue. Allah says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ. وَلَئِنْ جَاءَ نَصْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوْلَىٰ آلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ. وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ.

And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah," but when one [of them] is harmed for [the cause of] Allah, they consider the trial [i.e., harm] of the people as if it were the punishment of Allah. But if victory comes from your Lord, they say, "Indeed, We were with you." Is not Allah most knowing of what is within the breasts of the worlds? And Allah will surely make evident those who believe, and He will surely make evident the hypocrites. (29:10-11)

4. Attempts to mislead a believer by devils from the jinn and mankind.⁴⁸ A dā'iyah may remain strong in the face of every other hardship as long as he does not succumb to temptation. Devils (*shayāṭeen*) are persistent and employ various tactics to weaken a believer, and in particular, the dā'iyah. Their suggestions are sometimes in the form of praise of his knowledge and piety, so that he begins to be affected by pride. Or they might be as warnings against difficulties or loss of worldly advantages, so that he becomes unable to bear the consequences of his da'wah work, such as exile, imprisonment or execution, and considers giving it up.

The dā'iyah must be aware of these strategies, stand firm against them and continually remember Allah, seeking refuge in Him from any evil suggestions, for by doing so he can defeat the devils and avoid their influence, for Allah declared:

إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا.

Indeed, the plot of Shayṭān has ever been weak. (4:76)

If a person forgets Allah, then the devils become bold and make evil suggestions to him, but when he remembers Allah and mentions Him they retreat.

5. Opposition from the soul is caused by the influence on it of worldly desires and the natural inclination toward pleasure, ease and comfort. However, when Allah created the human soul He inspired it with knowledge of right and wrong, and said:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

He has succeeded who purifies it and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]. (91:9-10)

⁴⁸ As confirmed in 6:112 and 114:5-6.

The soul is of three types: the tranquil and assured,⁴⁹ the constantly reproaching⁵⁰ and the one constantly urging toward sin.⁵¹ The goal of a believer is to attain the first type – reassured of Allah's acceptance. His inner self sometimes pulls him in another direction, but with unceasing awareness, effort and by seeking Allah's aid he can ultimately succeed before the end of his life. The second one is the soul of a believer who acknowledges his errors and blames himself. This is a good soul since it is usually quick to repent and correct itself. The third type is the soul which persistently urges its owner to act in accordance with his earthly desires and meets little resistance.

Amendment of the soul begins within the heart. The heart is purified by the continual remembrance of Allah, by repeating words of praise and supplication, by seeking refuge in Him as a warrior takes refuge in a fortress, by being shy to commit wrong before Allah as people are shy of it before others, and by contemplating the outcome of all matters in this life and the Hereafter.

Additionally, the soul is disciplined by restricting demands made on it by the body. Its inclination to give in to temptations is opposed by eating less, which diminishes physical desire, sleeping less, which strengthens willpower, talking less, which eliminates many problems and conserves time, and increasing patience, which promotes the attainment of objectives.

As a role model, the *dā'iyah* is required to discipline his soul, restrict its negative influence, call himself to account before he is called to account and to correct himself before he corrects others. 'Ali bin Abi Tālib advised, "Anyone who positions himself as a leader should begin by instructing himself before others, and let it be by his manner rather than his tongue. For one who teaches and disciplines himself is more worthy of honor than one who teaches others."

The Recipients of Da'wah

Who should be invited to Allah and to Islam? Theoretically, da'wah is to include all people, but circumstances, abilities and experience may influence the direction a *dā'iyah* takes toward a particular group of recipients.

The first priority for him should be his immediate family because he is responsible for them before his Lord, and will be questioned about them at the time of judgement. Allah has ordered:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones. (66:6)

Unfortunately, there are some "activists" who spend most of their time outside the home, working hard to teach others about Islam while neglecting to educate their own spouses and children. Later in life they may be dismayed to discover ignorance and un-Islamic behavior among their family members. One should never assume because he is active in da'wah or Islamic work that his dependents will automatically become good Muslims. They are in need of his time and exertion as much, if not more than anyone else. In addition to

⁴⁹ *Muṭma'innah*, as addressed in 89:27.

⁵⁰ *Lawwāmah*, by which Allah swears in 75:

⁵¹ *Ammārah bis-sū'*, mentioned in 12:53.

explaining Islamic rulings in the home, the head of a household must make da'wah to its inhabitants by being to them an outstanding example.

Occasionally, and despite of one's best efforts, a family member may turn out to be disobedient to Allah or unaccepting of His message.⁵² This was the case with one of the sons of Prophet Nūḥ, the wives of Nūḥ and Lūṭ, the father of Ibrāheem, the brothers of Yūsuf, and even the uncle of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who was nevertheless his protector during the first years of his mission. As long as the dā'iyah does not neglect his duty toward his relatives, he can leave the matter of their ultimate guidance to Allah and then proceed to invite others to Islam. He should not feel that because those closest to him have not responded he is unworthy to approach others. That was not the practice of any prophet, and after all, Allah guides whom He wills and who wills to be guided.

Scholars have classified people into categories. Social and political divisions comprise:

- 1) those in authority and 2) the rest of the population.

Classification according to religion would include:

- 1) Muslims, who are subdivided into:
 - a. Those who generally obey Allah
 - b. Those who are disobedient
 - c. The hypocrites, who merely pretend obedience
- 2) Non-Muslims, whether of other faiths or atheists, who can be:
 - a. Friends
 - b. Enemies
 - c. Relatives

The object of da'wah efforts may be both non-Muslims and the heedless among Muslims. Often, da'wah workers become specialists in dealing with a particular group or category.

Throughout history it has been noted that those in power and authority are usually the most adamant opponents of da'wah. This is due to:

1. Arrogance - The Qur'ān cites the example of Fir'aun and his people when Prophet Mūsā brought them signs from Allah:

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا

And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness. (27:14)

2. Insecurity - Fear of losing positions of power and influence makes them feel threatened by the dā'iyah, whom they wrongly assume is seeking to depose them and take authority for himself. This kind of suspicion began with the first reformer, Prophet Nūḥ:

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ

But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "This is not but a man like yourselves who wishes to take precedence over you." (23:24)

⁵² See 64:14-15.

3. Denial - The powerful and affluent refuse to acknowledge that Allah can grant truth and right to people of lesser social status than themselves.

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا تَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا تَرَاكَ أَتَّبِعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادْنَا...

The eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "We do not see you but as a man like ourselves, and we do not see you followed except by those who are the lowest of us..." (11:27)

As for the common people, they are more inclined to be accepting of da'wah but are often under the influence of their rulers and leaders. This is due to:

1. Fear - Under threat, many will prefer their own safety to the support of truth and principle.

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ عَلَى خَوْفٍ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَهُمْ

But no one believed in Mūsā except some youths among his people, for fear of Fir'aun and his establishment that they would persecute them. (10:83)

It is a minority who remain steadfast at the risk of their lives or worldly interests. Those are people of true faith, like the magicians of Fir'aun when they witnessed the signs of Allah given to Mūsā:

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِرَكَ عَلَى مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِنَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَايَانَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ وَابْقَى

They said, "Never will we prefer you over what has come to us of clear proofs and [over] He who created us. So decree whatever you are to decree. You can only decree for this worldly life. Indeed, we have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and what you compelled us [to do] of magic. And Allah is better and more enduring." (20:72)

Examples given in the Qur'ān show it is the establishment's intolerance of those who accept and teach that authority belongs to Allah which subjects them to threat and persecution:

وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

And they resented them not except that they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy. (85:8)

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

And a believing man from the family of Fir'aun who concealed his faith said, "Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, 'My Lord is Allah' while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? (40:28)

2. Temptation - People often succumb to offers of wealth, power, pleasures and other favors from rulers and their agents in return for compliance to official policy. Few are as steadfast as Prophet Yūsuf:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ

He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me." (12:33)

3. Deception - To defend their positions of authority, the establishment may resort to the propagation of falsehood among the common people, as did Fir'aun:

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

Fir'aun said, "I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct." (40:29)

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ

And he said, "I am your most exalted lord." (79:24)

They accuse reformers, seen as adversaries, of spreading lies, of causing civil unrest and of treason in order to discredit them. This has always been their response to the prophets and to dā'iyahs after them.

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ

They said, "You are not but human beings like us, and the Most Merciful has revealed nothing. You are only telling lies." (36:15)

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَنْتَذُرُ مُوسَىٰ وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَدْرُكَ وَيَلْحَاقَكَ

And the eminent among the people of Fir'aun said, "Will you leave Mūsā and his people to cause corruption in the land and abandon you and your gods?" (7:127)

قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰذَانِ لَسَاحِرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكُم مِّنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُتَأَلَّمِ

They said, "Indeed, these are two magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic and do away with your most exemplary way." (20:63)

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ بَلِ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ

But they said, "[The revelation is but] a mixture of false dreams; rather, he has invented it; rather, he is a poet." (21:5)

But Allah, the Exalted has said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ

And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or denies the truth when it has come to him? (29:68)

Heedless and disobedient Muslims are also objects of concern for the dā'iyah, for he is anxious to save them from the consequences of their errors and sins. His duty is to advise them in a kind and sympathetic manner, explaining the serious nature of sins, especially those against Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. If they should criticize or insult him, the dā'iyah must follow the example of the Prophet ﷺ, who never became angry for personal reasons, but only when the transgression was against Allah. He would readily overlook offences against himself, as illustrated in the following ḥadith: Anas bin Mālik reported, "I was walking with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and he was wearing a Najrani cloak with a rough collar. A Bedouin approached him and pulled the cloak so hard that it left a mark on the Prophet's neck. He said, 'O Muḥammad, give me from the wealth of Allah that is with you.' The Prophet turned to him and smiled; then he ordered that something be given to him."⁵³ And he ﷺ said, "*The believer who mixes with the people and is patient with their abuse is better than the believer who does not mix with the people and is not patient with their abuse.*"⁵⁴

⁵³ Narrated by al-Bukhāri.

⁵⁴ Aḥmad and at-Tirmidhi.

The Responses of Recipients

Between two extremes lies a wide range of possible reactions: acceptance with interest, with disinterest or with reservation, curiosity, disappointment, anger, disgust or total rejection. Combine these with a wide range of circumstances and personality differences and it becomes evident that no one method or plan can be effective in dealing with every group or every individual. Indeed, failures can be expected; even the prophets were unable to affect defiant family members, because in the end, the result is up to Allah.

The scholar, Ibn al-Jawzi wrote that most people are influenced by reminders but forget quickly in their absence. That is because a reminder strikes the heart, causing momentary pain, while the mind and body are slower to absorb it. Thus, the message must affect all three aspects of man in order to bring permanent change. He alluded to three kinds of recipients:

- Those who after hearing advice determine to change and improve.
- Those who hear but are not affected.
- Those who are affected temporarily but soon return to their old habits unless there is a follow up. These are the real objects of da'wah with whom a dā'iyah should take every opportunity to discuss such subjects as the purpose of life, the reality of this world and its trials, the Creator and what He requires of His servants, etc.

The dā'iyah should explain the bad effects and negative consequences of mistakes and sins so that offenders will be convinced to give them up. In addition, he should offer a sound alternative within the framework of Islamic Shari'ah. For example, replacing fornication with lawful marriage, interest with lawful business profits, forbidden food and drink with lawful food and drink, etc., for there is enough in the world that is ḥalāl to make ḥarām unnecessary.

The Qualities of a Dā'iyah

Undoubtedly, Allah guides whom He wills, but He often does so by means of human efforts. Those who become Allah's means are particularly blessed with great rewards from Him. Although personalities vary, all successful da'wah workers possess certain qualities which earn them the confidence and trust of the people they hope to influence. Some of these traits are inborn and others have to be cultivated, especially when one has been affected by his environment and culture.

A sensitive dā'iyah is one who does not antagonize people, one who is close to people but not intrusive, one who strives to satisfy people, who is modest, righteous and truthful. He is of few words and many deeds, not overly curious, kind, pleasant, dignified, patient, contented, appreciative, chaste and sympathetic. He avoids cursing, insulting, gossiping and backbiting. He is neither rash nor resentful nor stingy nor envious. He is open and friendly; he loves the worshippers of Allah and hates the enemies of Allah; his contentment and his anger are for the cause of Allah.

The Dā'iyah as an Excellent Example

Cleanliness and good appearance make a good first impression and should always be part of the dā'iyah's presentation. But the key to success in dealings with people is excellence of character. The Prophet ﷺ informed his followers: "The most beloved of Allah's servants

to Him is the best of them in character."⁵⁵ That is why he himself was the best of all people in manner.

Anyone who has taken upon himself leadership in the promotion of a cause will find himself in the public eye to a certain degree. The dā'iyah who advocates the principles and moral standards of Islam must represent them in his personal conduct and behavior, as he is looked upon as an example by his followers and no less scrutinized by his enemies, who will be swift to capitalize on the least shortcoming.

The good example is among the primary means of da'wah. Quite often people consider doing something but will not take action until someone else begins and they see a realistic embodiment of the concept and perceive that it is indeed appropriate and valid. The example to be followed by the dā'iyah and in fact, every Muslim, is that of the Prophet ﷺ, for Allah has said:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا.

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern⁵⁶ for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often. (33:21)

The closer one adheres to this pattern the better role model he will become due to his distinction in knowledge, wisdom and upright conduct.

The example is most important for several reasons. It inspires those of perception and encourages similar behavior among admirers. Speech may be misunderstood whereas a practical demonstration serves to clarify the matter and often, action speaks louder than words. A good example shows that it is indeed possible for human beings to reach the high standard being propagated, and is thus the ideal becomes a reality.

On the other hand, a bad example serves only to turn people away from the objective. Ibn al-Qayyim wrote: "Evil scholars sit at the gate of Paradise inviting people to it with their words but inviting to the Hellfire with their deeds. Whenever their words say, 'come [to Paradise]' their deeds say, 'Do not listen to them, for if what they invite to was truth, they would be the first to respond to it.' So they appear in the image of guides while in fact they are actually highway robbers." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ confirmed, "A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown into Hell. His intestines will spill out into the fire while he goes around in circles like a donkey on a treadmill. The inhabitants of Hell gather around him, saying, 'O so-and-so, what is the matter with you? Did you not used to order us to do right and forbid us to do wrong?' He will reply, 'I used to order you to do right and not do it myself and forbid you to do wrong and do it myself.'⁵⁷

Additionally, a dā'iyah, like any leader, is observed carefully in various situations by the people who expect guidance from him. Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal was under intense pressure from the caliph, al-Ma'mūn, to support his erroneous viewpoint concerning the Qur'ān. A friend advised him, "You are today a leader and the people will follow you. So if you agree with the caliph many of them will do as you do, and if you do not, they will act accordingly. If al-Ma'mūn does not kill you for this, you are to die anyway, so fear Allah

⁵⁵ Aṭ-Ṭabarāni - ṣaḥeeḥ.

⁵⁶ The Arabic word, *uswah*, used in this verse is defined as "that which is relied upon and adhered to in all conditions."

⁵⁷ Al-Bukhāri.

and do not concede to what they ask of you." Aḥmad wept and said, "As Allah wills." When it was time to give his fatwā, another friend advised him, "Allah has said, 'Do not kill yourselves'." Aḥmad told him, "See what is outside," so he went out and found multitudes of people with pens in hand waiting to write down what the imām would announce. Aḥmad said to him, "I would prefer to be killed rather than mislead all of those."

The main requirements for anyone who is to become a dā'iyah, and thus an example for others, can be summarized as: deep belief in the cause reflected in conduct, sufficient knowledge of relevant subjects, sincere good manners and personal accountability. Actions and deeds must correspond with what is being promoted verbally, otherwise people will presume hypocrisy and all efforts will be lost. One must take care not to make commitments in a burst of enthusiasm which he will not be able to keep later. And he must not continue to defend a mistake but acknowledge it and try to amend whatever is possible. Given the importance of role models, education by example is an essential part of da'wah. Its effectiveness and efficiency can be illustrated in incidents throughout history, for example:

- ♦ Among the terms of the Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah, the Muslims were to return to Madinah and postpone their 'umrah until the following year. They had already entered the state of iḥrām and when the Prophet ﷺ told them to release themselves by slaughtering their sacrificial animals and shaving their heads they could not bring themselves to do so. On the advice of his wife, Umm Salamah, he arose without speaking, slaughtered his own animal and shaved his head. Upon seeing that, his companions followed suit.⁵⁸
- ♦ During the battle of Ḥunayn when defeat seemed imminent, a large number of Muslims began to flee. In such a state of chaos, inspiring speech was neither possible nor would it have served the immediate need. The Prophet ﷺ issued an order for the soldiers to return and drove the mule he was riding toward the enemy. Seeing his determination, the army rallied, rejoined him and fought with renewed vigor until the enemy was routed.⁵⁹
- ♦ When the governor of Baghdad ordered that the Shāfi'i scholar and mufti be brought to him in shackles and chains, he said, "I will speak the truth and die in my chains so that the people will know that someone died in chains on account of this matter."
- ♦ An influential man who wanted the support of al-Khaṭeab al-Baghdadi sent a large sum of money which was placed on his carpet in the masjid. He angrily pulled away the carpet, spilling the dinars onto the floor, and left the masjid. His students did not forget his nobility and the demeaning of the one who offered the bribe as he picked up the coins one by one.

Such examples serve to illustrate the effectiveness of a leader's initiative but do not diminish the role of the spoken or written word. One may encourage any beneficial act, such as charity, by being the first to do it publicly. In contrast to showing off, the intention of a sincere person to promote what is right and good makes the deed most acceptable to Allah.

⁵⁸ Al-Bukhāri.

⁵⁹ Muslim.

The Dā'iyah's Character

The character of a dā'iyah is that of the Muslim of strong faith who conscientiously and sincerely follows the teachings of Islam in all aspects of his life. Being human, however, he will naturally be more inclined to some characteristics than others, and will need to strengthen the other positive traits and make them a part of his personality. 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib, who was noted for keen observation and articulate expression, gave a lengthy and eloquent description of the qualities belonging to a righteous da'wah worker, which can be summarized as follows:

"When praised, he thinks: I am more knowing of myself than is another, and Allah is more knowing of me than myself. And he says: "O Allah, do not blame me for what they say, make me better than what they suppose and forgive me for that which they do not know."⁶⁰ His speech is true; he is modest and humble; his heart is constant in hardship and in ease. His needs are few, his soul contented; he seeks not the world except as a means. His nights spent in prayer, his days in learning, his deeds seen as few by a critical self. Strong in religion, firm in lenience, of certain faith and ambitious for knowledge. Conscious by day and thankful at night, desires contained and anger restrained. He is kind to his kin, forgiving and giving, aware and forbearing, observant of trusts. His soul from his numerous burdens is weary, but people, from him, will experience ease."

The main characteristics required of a dā'iyah have been described by scholars as follows:

◆ Deep Faith and Strong Attachment to Allah

The kind of faith which produces attachment to Allah and constant awareness that He is present is essential for the dā'iyah to be able to carry out his duties. He will not only feel honored that Allah has chosen him for His work, but absolute trust in Him diminishes all fear of people and circumstances. It is this deep faith and trust which allowed Prophet Ibrāheem to be calm when he was thrown into the fire and which made Hājar agree to remain alone with her baby, Ismā'eel, in the barren valley of Makkah. And it is this faith which makes believers steadfast during the trials they face throughout life. In the Qur'ān, Allah described this quality in the Prophet's companions:

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاحْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Those to whom people said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them." But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, "Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs." (3:173)

And the result was immediate:

فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمَسْسَهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them, and they pursued the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the possessor of great bounty. (3:174)

Deep faith is achieved through the knowledge that comes from a thorough study and prolonged contemplation of the Qur'ān. By reflecting on His signs, verses and perfect attributes one comes to know Allah, to fear and love Him. And that leads to complete compliance and obedience of all His commands, to sincere devotion, reliance on Him, courage, willingness to sacrifice and perseverance. Strong attachment to Allah is achieved

⁶⁰ A supplication attributed to Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq.

through increasing worship and adhering to the Sunnah, which in turn reinforces faith, trust and tranquility.

The committed dā'iyah is aware that his Lord is with him at all times. As Allah affirmed in a ḥadīth qudsī, "*I am present when My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me.*"⁶¹ This gives him the ability to speak the truth, even before a tyrant. An outstanding example cited in the Qur'ān is that of Prophets Mūsā and Hārūn, when after they expressed fear that their mission to Fir'aun would bring them harm, Allah reassured them:

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى

He said, "Fear not. Indeed, I am with you both; I hear and I see." (20:46)

Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, the Prevailing, the Effector of what He wills, confirmed that He was with them, adding that He hears and sees; therefore they need not be anxious. What was the result? Mūsā and Hārūn stood before Fir'aun, addressing him confidently and warning him:

إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى. إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَى مَن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى.

"Indeed, we are messengers of your Lord, so send with us the Children of Israel and do not torment them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord. And peace⁶² will be upon he who follows the guidance. Indeed, it has been revealed to us that the punishment will be upon whoever denies and turns away." (20:47-48)

An additional effect of this awareness was that it gave Mūsā the courage to lead Bani Isrā'eel out of Egypt despite seemingly hopeless conditions. Trapped between the pursuing army and the sea, his people cried out in despair, but Mūsā assured them:

قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

He said, "Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me." (26:62)

And indeed, Allah was with Mūsā and inspired him to strike the sea with his staff, producing the great miracle which none could have foreseen.^{□□}

Similarly, when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Abū Bakr were pursued by the Quraysh after leaving Makkah, they took refuge in a cave. Abū Bakr was fearful that they would be seen, but the Prophet ﷺ told him, "*Be quiet, Abū Bakr, [We are] two, the third of whom is Allah.*"⁶⁴ When their pursuers were very near Abū Bakr's fear increased, but the Prophet ﷺ said calmly, "*Do not be sad; indeed, Allah is with us.*"⁶⁵ These words remain as an eternal reminder to every dā'iyah not to fear, for Allah is with him.

Among the Ṣaḥābah, Ibn Mas'ūd, a small, thin man volunteered to perform the duty of reciting the Qur'ān to the disbelievers of Quraysh, although his companions feared for his safety. He said, "Let me, for Allah will protect me." When the disbelievers realized what

⁶¹ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim. A ḥadīth qudsī (sacred ḥadīth) is a revelation from Allah other than the Qur'ān recounted in the words of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁶² i.e., safety and security from Allah's punishment.

⁶³ Refer to 26:52-68.

⁶⁴ Narrated by al-Bukhāri.

⁶⁵ The incident is related in the Qur'ān (9:40), where these words are quoted. لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

he was reciting they beat him severely. Ibn Mas'ūd later told his companions, "Never were the enemies of Allah more worthless to me as they are now, and if you wish, I will do the same tomorrow." This experience only proved to him that enemies of Islam resort to violence because they have no logical response to da'wah.

♦ **Sincere Devotion, Honesty and Truthfulness**

Anyone working for Islam must have the highest degree of sincerity and honesty when dealing with his Lord, himself, his brothers and sisters in faith and his community. But the main concern of a dā'iyah is the acceptance, approval and pleasure of Allah, not of the people.⁶⁶ He therefore must strive to purify his intention from every kind of personal interest, including the praise of others. And he must be certain that his followers do not let loyalty to him blemish their concept of tawhīd or their worship of Allah alone.

Sincerity to Him is mentioned by Allah as a condition for His acceptance of any deed:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion... (98:5)

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

So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone. (18:110)

Like the prophets,⁶⁷ a true dā'iyah does not expect favors from any human being, but only the reward from Allah. He constantly takes account of himself - his motivations for performing da'wah, whether his conduct corresponds to his speech - and remains alert against temptations to seek respect, status or material benefit. Reformation of the people will only be accomplished with the help of Allah, and Allah supports those who seek only His approval.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ stated, "*Religion is sincerity - to Allah and to His Book, to His Messenger, and to the leaders of Muslims and to the common people.*"⁶⁸ And he said, "*Deeds are only by intentions,*"⁶⁹ meaning that actions and works are judged and compensated by Allah solely according to the reasons and motivations behind them rather than their quantity or dimension. Therefore, the dā'iyah needs to be scrupulous regarding both his relationship with Allah and his dealings with the people. Sincerity to Allah is reflected in honesty with one's fellow men as well. In the Qur'ān, Allah emphasized the importance of this quality:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true. (9:19)

And He promised great reward for it at the time of Judgement:

⁶⁶ The Prophet ﷺ warned against hypocrisy, saying, "*On the Day of Resurrection, a man will be brought and thrown into Hell. His intestines will spill out into the fire and he will be going round and round like a donkey on a treadmill. The inhabitants of Hellfire will gather around him and say, 'What is the matter with you? Did you not used to order us to do good and forbid us from wrong?' He will reply, 'I used to order you to do good and not do it myself, and forbid you from wrong while doing it myself.'*" (Narrated by al-Bukhāri.)

⁶⁷ Refer to the Qur'ān - 12:104 and 26:109, 127, 145, 164, 180.

⁶⁸ Narrated by Muslim.

⁶⁹ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ.

Allah will say, "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness." For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment. (5:119)

Ibn al-Qayyim explained that truthfulness must be within the objective, within speech and within action. The objective is to do all that Allah has required of a Muslim, which includes various forms of jihād and da'wah. The tongue must speak only what is true and right. And deeds must conform to the Shari'ah and Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus the dā'iyah reaches the level of truthfulness that he does everything for Allah alone as He has ordered:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. (6:162)

He lives for Allah and through Allah. He lives his life for the acceptance of his Lord, and having thereby earned His pleasure, dies with the longing to meet his Lord. So Allah's pleasure with him enables him to achieve his objectives both during his lifetime and after his death.

Except for those blind of heart, people readily perceive honesty and truthfulness in the dā'iyah's speech and in his face, and that makes a positive impression on them. Those who met Allah's Messenger ﷺ for the first time would say, "By Allah, it is not the face of a liar nor the voice of a liar." And Allah affirmed that the disbelievers refused His message not because they doubted the Prophet's truthfulness, but merely due to their own obstinacy:

فَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers reject. (6:33)

♦ Lenience, Compassion and Moderation

The Prophet ﷺ urged lenience, excusing others and avoiding revenge. He said, "If someone insults you and describes you with a fault you do not have, do not describe him with a fault he does have. Rather, let him earn the sin, and you will have the reward; and do not curse anyone."⁷⁰ And he ﷺ said, "*Allah does not increase His servant who pardons [others] except in honor.*"⁷¹ There are two facets to this ḥadīth. One is that when someone is known to pardon and overlook people's faults, they will love, respect and honor him. The other is that he will have reward and honor in the Hereafter.

In the Qur'ān, Allah addressed His Messenger ﷺ, saying:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

So by mercy from Allah you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you. (3:159)

⁷⁰ Ibn Ḥibbān - ṣaḥeḥ.

⁷¹ Muslim.

A scholar commented on this verse, "People are in need of a compassionate atmosphere, excessive care, friendly tolerance, sufficient affection, patience which is not exhausted by their ignorance, weaknesses or imperfections. They need a big heart which can give to them while not expecting anything from them, which can bear their anxieties and not trouble them with its own, in which they always find concern, care, empathy, lenience, warmth and acceptance." The dā'iyah, who carries on the mission of the prophets, has to cultivate these qualities within himself in order to be successful in da'wah. And if he cannot do so, the cause of da'wah is better off without him.

Allah described His Messenger ﷺ thus:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and with the believers is kind and merciful. (9:128)

There are numerous ḥadīths in which the Prophet ﷺ emphasized the importance of kindness and mercy, among them: "*Allah will not be merciful to him who is not merciful to people*"⁷² and "*The merciful will be given mercy by the Most Merciful. Show mercy to those on the earth; you will be shown mercy by Him in the heaven.*"⁷³

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "One should not order what is right and forbid what is wrong unless he has full understanding of what he orders and what he forbids, is gentle in what he orders and what he forbids and has patience in what he orders and what he forbids." All of this adds up to moderation during the performance of da'wah and in the character of the dā'iyah. It includes several aspects:

♦ **Moderation in the practice of religion**

This is what gives the balance which is compatible with the *fiṭrah*, or inborn nature of mankind. However, two important points should be noted here:

1. Moderation does not mean allowing what Allah has prohibited, and applies only to orders and instructions, for He has said:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ

Fear Allah as much as you are able. (64:16)

And the Prophet ﷺ said, "*What I have forbidden you, avoid, and what I have ordered you, do of it whatever you are able.*"⁷⁴

One should not assume that taking the strictest or most difficult options within the religion is a sign of righteousness. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "*The obstinate extremists are destroyed,*" repeating it three times.⁷⁵ And he instructed, "*Indeed, the religion is easy, and no one will make religion difficult but that it will overpower him. So do what is right, strive for perfection, receive good tidings [of reward], and seek help through prayer in the mornings and afternoons and some during the night.*"⁷⁶ It has been observed that the

⁷² Al-Bukhāri

⁷³ Aḥmad, Abu Dāwūd and at-Tirmidhi - ṣaḥeeḥ.

⁷⁴ Narrated by Aḥmad and Muslim.

⁷⁵ Aḥmad and Muslim.

⁷⁶ Al-Bukhāri.

pressure and stress of religious extremism and excesses eventually leads to obsessions, isolation or even rejection of the faith.

2. The ḥadīth also contains practical advice to do obligatory duties as well as possible and avoid overburdening oneself and others with numerous lesser matters. Rather, regarding daily practice, one should supplement his religious obligations only with that which he can do proficiently under normal circumstances. The Prophet ﷺ affirmed, *"The most beloved deeds to Allah are the most regular, even if few."*⁷⁷

Further evidence is found in the Prophet's reply to three of his companions who felt that their worship was insufficient. One said, "As for me, I will pray throughout the night forever." Another said, "I will fast always and not break it." The third said, "I will avoid women and never marry." So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came and said, *"Was it you who said such and such? As for me, by Allah, I am the most fearful of Allah and most conscious of Him, but I fast and break the fast, I pray and sleep, and I marry women. And whoever does not wish [to follow] my Sunnah is not of me."*⁷⁸

◆ Kindness to animals and all creatures

One who is kind and respectful toward all of Allah's creation will certainly show compassion to humans. This is particularly required of the dā'iyyah. His wife, 'Ā'ishah, reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, *"Kindness is not found in anything but that it adorns it and it is not removed from anything but that it spoils it."*⁷⁹ Every messenger sent by Allah was at one time a shepherd, including Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. He instructed, *"Allah has decreed good treatment for all things. So when you kill, kill well, and when you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters."*⁸⁰ And he said to a man, *"If you are merciful to the sheep, Allah will be merciful to you."*⁸¹

He encouraged good treatment of animals by relating incidents such as those of a man and of a prostitute from among the Israelites whose sins were forgiven because they took the trouble to obtain water for a thirsty dog, and that of a woman who entered the Hellfire for imprisoning a cat until it died of starvation. He said, *"In every moist liver [i.e., living creature] is a reward."*⁸²

◆ Thoughtfulness while conveying the message

Although not everyone will accept the message of Allah, the dā'iyyah himself must not be the preventing factor. Besides knowledge, thoughtfulness and consideration of the recipient is expected of the dā'iyyah. The following are examples of advice by the Ṣaḥābah:

- 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb spoke from the *minbar*, saying, "O people, do not make Allah disliked by His servants. One of you might sit [speaking] as an imām and prolong it until the people dislike their situation, and one of you might stand [in prayer] as an imām and prolong it until the people dislike their situation."

⁷⁷ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

⁷⁸ Al-Bukhāri.

⁷⁹ Muslim.

⁸⁰ Muslim.

⁸¹ Aḥmad - ṣaḥeeḥ.

⁸² Al-Bukhāri.

• Ibn 'Abbās said, "Speak to the people every week, and if more, then twice, and if more, then three times. Do not bore people with this Qur'ān, and do not approach a group who are engaged in conversation and interrupt it, but listen. Then, if they ask you, talk to them while they are desiring of it. And beware of making rhymes in du'aa', for when I was with the Messenger of Allah and his companions they did not do it."

• Ibn Mas'ūd was asked to give the people admonition and advice daily but he refused, saying, "What prevents me from that is that I do not like to bore you. I will give you instruction as [often as] the Prophet used to give us for fear of making us weary."

The dā'iyah will do well to keep in mind the words of the scholar, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr: "There are six, who if they are disappointed should blame only themselves: One who goes to a meal to which he was not invited, one who seeks a favor from a callous person, one who breaks into the conversation of two others without having been invited, one who underestimates the power of a ruler, one who assumes a position for which he is not qualified and one who speaks to those who are unwilling to listen to him.

♦ Gentleness with new recipients and the uninformed

Ignorance is like a disease which needs to be treated, and the dā'iyah places himself in the position of a physician. He must assume that his patients, the recipients, do not understand certain matters and may act inappropriately at times. Tolerance and a gentle manner usually do more to remedy such situations than a harsh reaction. An example of such conduct is in the previously mentioned ḥadīth describing the Prophet's response to a Bedouin who had pulled him roughly by his collar, and in another incident when he stopped people from rebuking a man who was urinating in the masjid, merely telling them instead to purify the spot by pouring water over it.⁸³ Allah's Messenger knew that these individuals were new to Islam and had not yet learned proper behavior. When Mu'āwiyah bin al-Ḥakam spoke during the prayer, people showed displeasure with him. But when it was concluded, the Prophet merely explained that the prayer is for praising Allah and reciting the Qur'ān and not for human speech. Mu'āwiyah exclaimed, "He did not hit or insult me. I have never seen a kinder teacher than the Messenger of Allah."⁸⁴

The Prophet was following the pattern established by earlier prophets and dā'iyahs of being kind and considerate of others, even at his own expense. He illustrated this principle by saying, "*It is said that one of the prophets was beaten by his people until he bled. All the while he was wiping the blood from his face and saying, 'O Allah, forgive my people, for they do not know.'*"⁸⁵

A true dā'iyah does not become weary of continuous work for his cause and is not offended by negative reactions due to ignorance. For rejecters are like small children who, when warned to stay away from fire, do not understand the extent of potential harm from which you seek to protect them. Abu Bakr al-Ajurri described the attitude of a scholar: "He is patient with those of little understanding who are rude to him until they become well mannered. He does not reproach a questioner nor does he put him off. He comes close to those in need of his knowledge but avoids those who merely want to argue. If asked and does not know, he is not

⁸³ Narrated by al-Bukhāri.

⁸⁴ Narrated by Abu Dāwūd.

⁸⁵ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

ashamed to say 'I do not know', and if he is mistaken in his answer, he does not hesitate to withdraw and correct it.

When dealing with new recipients, the dā'iyah must begin with extreme care. It has been observed that a bad outcome is often the result of a bad beginning. When the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh bin Jabal and Abu Mūsā al-Ash'ari to Yemen his first advice was, "*Make things easy and do not make them hard. Give good tidings and do not drive [people] away.*"⁸⁶

The fruits of thoughtfulness and kindness for the dā'iyah are many. First, it generates every kind of good, and he will be among those included in the Prophet's du'aa' when he said, "*O Allah, whoever takes upon himself anything of the affairs of my ummah and is considerate of them, be considerate of him.*"⁸⁷ Second, people will love the dā'iyah and his message, which is most conducive to success. And third, he earns Allah's love and His assistance. The Messenger ﷺ declared, "*Indeed, Allah is kind and loves kindness. He grants for kindness what He does not grant for harshness and what He does not grant for anything else.*"⁸⁸

◆ Generosity

Allah, the Exalted commanded:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you... (2:254)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ

O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned... (2:267)

آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَحْلِفِينَ فِيهِ

Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors. (57:7)

Ibn 'Abbās reported that the Prophet ﷺ was the most generous of people.⁸⁹ This contributed to people entering Islam who, although initially attracted by worldly benefit, would later become among its most fervent defenders and most sincere worshippers of Allah. He ﷺ instructed, "*Spread greetings of peace, give food and be brothers as Allah ordered.*"⁹⁰ The Ṣaḥābah used to compete with one another in generosity and selflessness in obedience to Allah's command, often depriving themselves to serve and help others.

For a Muslim, to be generous is an aim in itself and not the means to an end. Nevertheless, it is among the qualities which make a dā'iyah loved by his people. He spends from his time, knowledge and possessions for the cause of Allah and seeking His approval; thus his Lord is pleased with him and the people are pleased with him as well.

Among the deeds pointing to generosity is: showing a pleasant face, giving help kindly, repelling harm, and generally treating others as one would like to be treated himself. The Prophet ﷺ confirmed, "*Whoever would like to be saved from the Fire and enter Paradise*

⁸⁶ Al-Bukhāri.

⁸⁷ Muslim.

⁸⁸ Muslim.

⁸⁹ Al-Bukhāri.

⁹⁰ Ibn Mājah - ṣaḥeeḥ.

*should meet death believing in Allah and the Last Day, and should do to people as he would like done to him."*⁹¹

Suppressing anger and forgiving are a significant means of obtaining respect and affection. Everyone makes mistakes, so just as one would like to be pardoned and forgiven he should also pardon others. Such conduct is of the highest degree of righteousness and among the attributes of the pious.

♦ Modesty

Pride and self-importance are not found in the heart of a true believer who knows that Allah alone is worthy of all praise, distinction and grandeur. The dā'iyah, in particular, is acutely aware that whatever abilities and successes he may have are favors to him from Allah, so he is grateful to Him and does not take the credit for himself. He cannot consider himself superior to others, but merely as one who has been exceedingly blessed with guidance, knowledge and social skills by his Creator, a blessing which requires of him gratitude and responsibility.

People often pass judgements on others according to what is apparent to them, and criticism can turn into scorn and ridicule. Unfortunately, this is the case with some who take pride in their knowledge, their work or their position of leadership. A few Islamic groups have become so pleased with their own concepts that they consider them sound to the exclusion of all others. The idea that their methods are the only correct ones lead them to scorn other types of effort toward the same goal, even to the point of arrogance. They gradually deviate from their original program and become preoccupied with establishing their own superiority at the expense of the ummah's unity. Those who claim that they alone carry the banner of true Islam may be sincere, but they are surely mistaken, and moreover, seem oblivious to the damage they cause with their allegations and exaggerations.

A humble and friendly attitude makes the dā'iyah accessible to all people and loved by them. He is then able to explain the truth and discredit deviant beliefs and practices in a logical and tactful way. No one likes a person who projects airs of superiority and self-righteousness, even if what he is telling them is true. Vanity is without doubt a factor which prevents the acceptance of da'wah, as people are almost always put off by one who speaks excessively about himself, his family or his accomplishments. Any honest believer will attribute those blessings only to Allah.

There are certain indications of modesty and tolerance which can be readily noticed in a sincere dā'iyah:

- He greets everyone, those he knows and does not know.
- He mingles with the people and befriends the poor.
- He serves others and does not give preference to himself.
- He is satisfied when not given special honor or recognition in a gathering.
- He tries to avoid tribute and praise.

Allah, the Exalted has said,

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

⁹¹ Muslim.

That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous. (28:83)

◆ Confidence and Courage Balanced with Wisdom

There can be no compromise concerning truth and right; it must be stated courageously and clearly. The Ṣaḥābi, 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit reported, "We pledged to the Messenger of Allah to [speak] the word of truth and not to fear in the cause of Allah the blame of a critic." This characteristic is the result of strong faith in tawḥeed, in qadar (predestination) and in the obligation to convey what Allah has ordained for mankind. The Prophet ﷺ was himself the greatest example of courage due to faith. And he observed, "*The best jihad is a word of truth before an unjust ruler.*"⁹²

A dā'iyyah should, however, have the wisdom to distinguish between courage and recklessness, for the first is commendable whereas the second is blameworthy. He needs the motivation, enthusiasm and determination to face obstacles and enemies firmly and bravely, yet he must not risk ineffective or even disastrous consequences by hastening into something prematurely or allowing himself to fall into a trap laid by the enemy. Discretion, preparedness and forethought are prerequisites to bold initiatives and courageous actions. Wisdom (*ḥikmah*) has been defined as "the ability to do what must be done at the proper time and in the proper way."

Avoiding unnecessary harm is obligatory. When Khālīd bin al-Waleed withdrew the army from the battle of Mu'tah in order to save it from total destruction, some Muslims accused them of fleeing from the battlefield. But the Prophet ﷺ upheld the decision since it would enable them to engage in a future encounter with the knowledge they had acquired.

◆ Steadfastness and Patience

Difficulties and adversities are trials by which Allah tests His servants and rewards those of them who are forbearing and firm in faith and reliance upon Him. Allah said in the Qur'ān:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَكْتَبِينَ الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ. أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ.

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near. (2:214)

The dā'iyyah can expect an additional share of problems due to opposition by the enemies of truth and justice. The Prophet ﷺ himself was denied, tempted, threatened and persecuted, and da'wah workers must be prepared to endure similar hardships and sacrifices when required. They may face ridicule, threat, persecution, loss of job, financial difficulty, imprisonment, exile or even death for the cause of Allah, but they can be assured that any setback, defeat or loss in this world is a small price to pay for the eternal pleasure of Allah and His unlimited reward.

⁹² Narrated by Aḥmad - ṣaḥeeḥ. This is only an indication by the Prophet ﷺ of what is praiseworthy and not obligatory.

وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا

And We have made some of you as trial for others - will you have patience? And ever is your Lord Seeing. (25:20)

The definition of patience (*ṣabr*) is confinement or restraint - to restrain the soul from panic, anger or greed, restrain the tongue from complaint and restrain the limbs from improper action. Scholars have mentioned various types of patience. There is patience to obey Allah in every circumstance, patience to refrain from disobedience and patience in the face of problems and afflictions not of one's choosing. The *dā'iyah*, like any true believer, practices patience through Allah, for Allah and with Allah. He is patient through Allah when he seeks His help in being patient, certain that He alone can give him that ability. He is patient for Allah out of satisfaction and love for Him, striving to become closer to Him. And he is patient with Allah in whatever He has ordained for him, both in religious and worldly matters, upholding truth wherever it may be.

The *dā'iyah* achieves patience by keeping in mind certain facts which Allah has revealed:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

We have certainly created man into hardship. (90:4)

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا

Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us." (9:51)

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. (2:286)

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

For indeed, with hardship is ease. Indeed, with hardship is ease. (94:5-6)

Acceptance and forbearance does not mean, however, that one should seek affliction, for avoiding harm remains an obligation whenever possible. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to supplicate, "*O Allah, I ask You for forgiveness and freedom from all evil.*"⁹³ And he said, "*Do not wish to meet the enemy, but when you do meet them be patient.*"⁹⁴

The *dā'iyah* must protect himself and his colleagues from unnecessary harm for the sake of *da'wah*. To continue working for the cause of Islam is far more important than proving a point momentarily which could put an end to positive accomplishments. This is a valid policy illustrated in the practical approach of the Prophet ﷺ when he accepted the support of his non-Muslim uncle, Abū Ṭālib, and when he permitted some of his followers to seek asylum in Abyssinia.

Education of the *Dā'iyah*

Besides the essential knowledge of Islam, a *dā'iyah* today needs to be educated in other areas as well. The learning of so-called "secular" fields, such as the physical and social sciences, becomes an Islamic obligation whenever this knowledge can be utilized to bring

⁹³ Abu Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah - ṣaḥeeḥ.

⁹⁴ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

people to Islam and increase faith. Additionally, the dā'iyah must have a sufficient knowledge of contemporary global issues.

Unlike the qualified Islamic scholar or mufti, not every da'wah worker need be taught by a shaykh or have studied in a formal institution. Many are products of special courses or are self-educated and have gained additional skill from practical experience. When the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Convey from me, even if only one verse*"⁹⁵ he meant that any Muslim could perform da'wah to the extent of his own knowledge and ability. However, a sensitive person possessing most of the qualities mentioned in the previous section will obviously be more successful than others. Add to it adequate education, and the dā'iyah can hardly fail to be effective. Whatever his means of obtaining knowledge, the most important subjects for him to master are:

♦ **The Qur'ān** - The Book of Allah is the primary reference for all Muslims. Tafseer sessions which attract interested Muslims, and even non-Muslims, are one good way to begin da'wah. Because secular education today neglects religious studies, ordinary Muslims today have little knowledge of the Qur'ān, but many are pleased to have an opportunity to learn. The group can meet weekly or perhaps monthly if time is limited. Particular sūrahs or verses may be chosen for study, or else one can start at the beginning, explaining the Qur'ān's verses in sequence. Stories related by Allah in the Qur'ān are interesting and at the same time good sources of information and insight.

The dā'iyah should have memorized the Qur'ān or at least parts of it. It is preferable that he knows *tajweed* (the correct manner of recitation). But the essential Qur'anic science for him is that of *tafseer*. He must have the ability to explain the meanings accurately according to references recognized as reliable by Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.⁹⁶ This understandably requires an adequate knowledge of the Arabic language in which the Qur'ān was revealed and in which it was originally explained. For the precision and accuracy required, one cannot rely on translations.

One or more of the well-known and reliable references, such as *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, should be used. A person should never present personal opinions as fact, for as the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Whoever says something about the Qur'ān according to his own opinion or without knowledge – let him take his seat in the Hellfire.*"⁹⁷ Some scholars have said that he who interprets the Qur'ān by his own opinion is wrong even if he happens to be correct. That is because pretending knowledge is a lie, and the liar is not to be trusted. The general rule is that it is an obligation to speak of what one knows for certain, otherwise he should keep quiet.

As to how the Qur'ān is explained, scholars have established certain criteria:

1. The best and most certain way is through the Qur'ān itself. Often another verse can be found similar in meaning to the one in question or giving further details about it.

⁹⁵ Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Bukhāri.

⁹⁶ *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*: Those who follow the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions. They were called "people of the Sunnah" due to their careful adherence to the Prophet's Sunnah. And they were called "al-Jamā'ah" because they agreed on the truth and did not separate into sects. They are also called "the people of hadith", "the people of narrations" and "the people of adherence."

⁹⁷ Narrated by at-Tirmidhi and an-Nasā'i – ḥadīth ḥasan.

2. If the meaning is not found within the text of the Qur'ān, the next source is the authentic Sunnah. The Prophet's explanations were recorded and passed on in the form of ḥadīth, and their validity is confirmed by Allah, who said about His Messenger:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

"And he does not speak from his own inclination." (53:3)

3. If no explanation is found in either the Qur'ān or ḥadīth, one turns to that of the Ṣaḥābah because they were the most familiar with each verse - the time, place and immediate circumstances in which it was revealed.

The last source for reference is the Tābi'een, who were students of the Ṣaḥābah and took their knowledge from them, although not directly from the Prophet ﷺ. The Tābi'een always gave sources for their tafseer; however, some of their commentaries included narrations from Jewish sources (*isrā'eeliyyāt*). These were added for the purpose of filling in further details but were not meant to be considered as fact. The Prophet ﷺ had said, "*Neither believe the People of the Scriptures nor disbelieve them, but say, 'We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us.'*"⁹⁸ So it is preferable to avoid them altogether.

Even the best books of tafseer still contain a number of weak ḥadīths.⁹⁹ Narrations must be verified as far as possible and questionable ones omitted during the oral presentation of tafseer. A weak ḥadīth may be quoted on occasion to illustrate a point or encourage righteous deeds, but it is not valid evidence for a legal ruling and must not be put forward as such.

Additionally, Ibn Taymiyyah and others warned against the acceptance of any interpretations contrary to the Sunnah or those given by factions whose aim it is to use the Qur'ān to support their own beliefs, or those who claim that its meanings have changed with time. As 'Alī bin Abi Ṭālib observed, "Truth is not known by [the status of] men, but when you know the truth you will know its people."

Initially, emphasis should be placed on issues of 'aqeedah rather than manners and morals, and a firm and correct belief must be the first goal. Once established in the mind and heart, it will lead individuals to amend their behavior accordingly. Questions arising are to be answered when the answer is known, without unnecessary digression, dispute or expounding the views of a particular school of thought. One must consider the environment and educational level of the group before him, address them appropriately and help them to understand how meanings expressed in the Qur'ān are applicable to present conditions and circumstances.

♦ **The Sunnah** - The prophetic Sunnah is contained within the body of *ṣaḥeeḥ* (sound) and *ḥasan* (acceptable) ḥadīth literature, and is the second of the two fundamental sources of Islam after the Qur'ān. A ḥadīth has two parts: the text (*matn*) and the chain of transmitters (*isnād*). Even when the text seems good and logical, it must be supported by an unbroken chain of reliable reporters in order to be acceptable. 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubārak, one of the teachers of Imām al-Bukhāri, said, "The isnād is part of the religion."

⁹⁸ Al-Bukhāri.

⁹⁹ Although the first generation of scholars cited the transmitters of a ḥadīth so that those who heard or read it would be able to check them out, later ones often dropped their mention, assuming that they were known. Thus, the authenticity of a ḥadīth was not always evident until it was researched again in more recent times and graded by ḥadīth specialists.

If not for the isnād, whoever wished could have said whatever he wished." No tradition is accepted as authoritative unless it meets a certain standard of authenticity determined by specialists (*muḥaddithūn*). Once confirmed as acceptable and valid, a ḥadīth may not be disregarded and becomes part of the Sunnah.

Again, one should practice caution and avoid the quotation of weak ḥadīths. These are often cited in books on virtuous deeds, the beautiful names of Allah or in various other publications under such headings as "The Merits of Particular Sūrahs" or "The Merits of Dhikr." Some well-known scholars allowed weak narrations in books of admonition and advice, although it was not acceptable to the prominent ḥadīth scholars like al-Bukhari and Muslim. These need to be reviewed and properly graded. When in doubt, one can say, if necessary, "It was related that...", but a weak, fabricated or questionable saying must not be attributed to the Prophet ﷺ and is best abandoned.

Most all information needed by the dā'iyah can be found in *ṣaḥeeḥ* or *ḥasan* ḥadīths. He can acquire abundant teaching material from the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim,¹⁰⁰ and may add to them from the works of Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasā'i and Ibn Mājah on condition that he is able to confirm the authenticity of the narrations he quotes. The Prophet's Sunnah may also be learned and taught through books of tafseer, the Prophet's *seerah* (biography) and descriptions of his appearance, deeds and characteristics, such as *Zād al-Ma'ād* by Ibn al-Qayyim, and books of history such as those by Ibn Katheer, Ibn al-Atheer and aṭ-Ṭabari. However, it is often difficult to verify the ḥadīths contained in them.

♦ **Fiqh**¹⁰¹ - A da'wah worker will inevitably be asked many questions about Islam and about what is obligatory, permissible and prohibited. He therefore needs to have a knowledge of the basic rulings concerning worship, dealings with others and personal life. And this knowledge is an essential requirement for those who must enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

The dā'iyah should have the ability to refer to the source books on whatever he has not memorized and to present each ruling along with its evidence from the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. If he follows a particular school of thought, he should be aware of the evidences used by that school and be flexible enough to accept a stronger viewpoint if presented to him.

He may at times be confronted with queries about such subjects as marriage, divorce, business matters, jihād, funerals, etc. When uncertain of an issue, he must either do research and locate the correct ruling or else state honestly that he does not know and refer the questioner to someone more knowledgeable. Occasionally, people will seek from him a ruling more to their preference than one given them previously. He should steer clear of such situations and avoid assuming the role of a mufti unless he is qualified to do so. Similarly, there are those who insist on knowing a worldly benefit behind a certain act of worship. It can be mentioned if known, but should not be emphasized in view of the fact that worship is an objective in itself and not a means.

¹⁰⁰ The condensed volumes are useful for this purpose.

¹⁰¹ Literally meaning "an understanding of precise matters," the term *fiqh* within Islam refers to knowledge of Shari'ah rulings from their particular sources and proofs.

♦ **'Aqeedah**¹⁰² - The Islamic doctrine, or 'aqeedah, comprises: certain belief in Allah and His oneness, in His angels, His revealed scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Resurrection, predestination and in all that He revealed about matters of the unseen and His fundamental orders and prohibitions. The sources of Islamic doctrine are the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and the consensus of the *salaf*.¹⁰³

The dā'iyah must adhere to certain rules and principles when obtaining knowledge and applying evidences:

- ♦ The basis for understanding the Qur'ān and Sunnah is those passages which clarify them from within them, and then the explanations of the righteous *salaf* and those imāms who followed their methods. These are never invalidated by other linguistic possibilities.
- ♦ All fundamentals of the religion were clarified by the Prophet ﷺ and no one has the right to innovate anything and attribute it to the religion. Complete submission to Allah and obedience to His Messenger outwardly and inwardly means that the Qur'ān and Sunnah take precedence over analogy, opinion, dreams, the statements of scholars and imāms or anything else.
- ♦ All that has been confirmed as authentic from Allah's Messenger ﷺ must be accepted and practiced, even when not reported by a large number of narrators. The sound mind is in agreement with authentic texts and there is no discrepancy between them. In case of imagined incompatibility, the text must take preference.
- ♦ One must adhere to established religious terminology when dealing with 'aqeedah and avoid using expressions invented by people in later centuries.

When presenting Islamic belief, the dā'iyah should observe the following:

- ♦ Regarding the Book of Allah and Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ as the only sources of Islamic belief and doctrine.
- ♦ Following the Qur'anic method of addressing both the mind and heart. The neglect of either one will produce a unsound result.
- ♦ Following the practice of the *salaf* by describing Allah as He described Himself in the Qur'ān and as His Messenger described Him, without applying to His attributes any allegorical meanings or attempting to explain how one of them might be (while this is known only to Allah) and without denying that Allah would have such qualities or comparing them to those of His creation.¹⁰⁴
- ♦ Making use of confirmed scientific knowledge in such fields as physics, astronomy, biology and medicine in explaining issues of faith and showing that the Qur'ān is a continuing miracle containing evidence to be uncovered gradually as human beings increase in knowledge of their universe. Some da'wah workers, although harboring good intentions, have fallen into the error of seeking to "prove" the Qur'ān's authenticity with modern scientific findings. This approach is not sound and should be avoided, for in reality, it is the Qur'ān which is the criterion by which all other statements and

¹⁰² Linguistically, the word *'aqeedah* is derived from "aqd", meaning: fastening, strengthening or holding together. In religious terminology it is defined as: conviction without any doubt.

¹⁰³ *Salaf*: The predecessors who were the leaders of the Islamic nation from among the Prophet's companions, their students and the rightly guided imāms of the first three distinguished centuries.

¹⁰⁴ His attributes are befitting to Allah alone, and "There is nothing like unto Him." (42:11)

theories are to be judged, while those "facts" accepted by science today are neither final nor absolute.

How should Sufism be regarded?

Sufi sects first appeared as response to the weakening of spirituality with the rise of materialism and excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures. Their aim was to reform society by bringing individuals back to piety, devotion, and full submission to Allah. Early sufis adhered to the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah while emphasizing selflessness and discipline of the soul. They also worked hard at propagating Islam and waged war against heresy, atheism and polytheism.

However, the deviations that crept into most of these movements with time are considered unacceptable and have been condemned by Muslim scholars. These include systems of hierarchy, taking shaykhs as intercessors, obeying them absolutely in every matter without question, inventing verbal and physical rituals, requiring a particular way of dressing, etc. Some sufis formulated ideas that have no basis in Islam - for example, the claim that the inner feelings of a sufi are his source of guidance. The student is expected to be with his shaykh "like a dead body in the hands him who washes it," and is forbidden from consulting any other scholar or attending any other circle of knowledge.

In addition, there are those who uphold and advocate cultic practices which are contrary to the Sunnah, as well as some who have mixed Islam with speculative mysticism or neo-Platonism and dabble in metaphysical theories about the cosmos. While the former invent new forms of worship that were never sanctioned by Allah, the latter mix philosophy with religion and obscure the essential distinction between the Creator and His creation, which is the fundamental basis of Islam.

The dā'iyah should explain Islam as a comprehensive way of life that combines the basic aspects of faith, worship, moral teachings and law, and which offers the most intensive and effective means to know and love the Creator, to purify the soul and refine its human qualities and to establish a collective bond of affection, brotherhood and solidarity. True spirituality in Islam is found only within the 'aqeedah and practices ordained by Allah. As Ibn Taymiyyah pointed out, anyone who claims an act to be a means of coming closer to Allah must produce proof of this from the Qur'ān or authentic Sunnah, for nothing is religion except what Allah Himself ordained.

♦ **History** - History has been described as "the memory of mankind." Man is supposed to learn from both positive and negative experience, and for this reason the Qur'ān documents particular events and describes the people involved in them, showing the consequences of attitudes and behavior in this world and the next. The main reasons for studying history can be listed as:

1. To learn lessons from the experiences of previous nations and to consider the causes behind their rise to power and their decline and fall. The resulting conclusion is that unbelief, transgression and widespread corruption inevitably leads to the collapse of societies and nations.
2. To instill determination and patience in the dā'iyah by reminding him of what those before him endured.
3. To acquire a better understanding of issues and problems of the present time. Examination of the past reveals that tyranny, oppression and rejection of truth is basically the same in every age. A knowledge of history often clarifies the motives

behind modern political and religious conflicts, such as that between contemporary Muslims and Christians. It is additionally helpful for the dā'iyah in his work to know the history of other religions and sects with which he is in contact, as well as that of the various Islamic movements that arose in the past - their successes and failures.

When relating historical events, the da'wah worker should not be overly concerned with details, but concentrate on the lesson to be imparted. He may quote from the Qur'ān, ḥadīth or other literature. It is sometimes useful to focus on the life story of an illustrious Islamic hero or personality as an appropriate example and role model. Through history he may also be able to show the impact of Islam on human life and its effect in changing former enemies into supporters and even leaders.

However, a word of caution is in order about historic narrations, which cannot be regarded as completely authentic or factual. Early Muslim historians with sincere intent to serve the *ummah* concentrated on gathering and recording as much information as possible, but they did not give much attention to verifying their sources. For example, the most prominent of them, aṭ-Ṭabari, believed that he was obligated to record whatever details he came across, and that in due time they would be evaluated as to their accuracy and significance by specialists. When he named narrators, he expected those after him to check out their reliability, deeming it to be their obligation and responsibility. He also considered that a lesser degree of precision was acceptable in historical documentations since they were not a source of Islamic jurisprudence.

Those early records were not adequately subjected to the anticipated research and scholarship by the generation that followed; then they were later misinterpreted and misused by those who wished to distance Islam from the rest of mankind by making it out to be an Arab nationalist movement, a distorted offshoot of Judaism and Christianity or a philosophy like that of the Greeks and Romans. Needless to say, modern historians, as products of western culture, based much of their writings on similar themes. Such works need to be analyzed carefully and utilized with extreme caution.

♦ **Language and Literature** - A study of the Arabic language is in order for any dā'iyah, but knowledge of it is essential for anyone who will be explaining the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Errors in recitation of the Qur'ān are especially serious as they can change meaning, and an Arabic speaking listener will easily recognize this. The dā'iyah or teacher addressing non-Arabic speakers will probably rely a great deal on translations, but must be sure that they are accurate ones reflecting the 'aqeedah of Ahl as-Sunnah. He should at least be able to refer to dictionaries of the classical language and to the well-known, reliable Arabic books of tafseer and related subjects in order to clarify whatever is obscure in translation. In addition, a dā'iyah should be adequately proficient in the language of his recipients.

Literature reflects the cultural aspects, concerns and values of any particular people. For the dā'iyah, looking into their literature should not be an aim in itself; rather, it is a means toward understanding the mentality of those he will be addressing and enabling him to relate to them. For example, among the Arabs poetry is a most effective manner of expression, while its importance is negligible in western societies.

♦ **The Physical and Social Sciences** - One of the most effective arguments a dā'iyah can present is: that in contrast to other religions, Islam has no problem whatsoever with science or scientific advancement. In fact, he can point to numerous recent discoveries in various fields and show that they were miraculously mentioned in the Qur'ān centuries before being uncovered by the efforts of man. Education in such fields as astronomy,

geology, chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, psychology, sociology and political science can be most helpful in the practice of da`wah, especially among the learned and well-read members of modern societies. Whatever data has been confirmed and verified by sound scientific methods will inevitably coincide with information in the Qur`ān.

The dā`iyah must be aware, however, that not everything claimed to be science is proven fact, and much of it remains in the realm of theory. Moreover, much of what is presently accepted in the West is based more on cultural bias than actual scientific research. A leading example is Darwin's theory of evolution, the avid supporters of which continue to stubbornly disregard an increasing amount of scientific evidence against it.

Knowledge of this kind is best obtained from Muslim specialists who also have a good background in Islam. One may read some of the books and articles meant for laymen which will enable him to present scientific facts to his audiences in a clear and simple manner for comparison with those stated in the Qur`ān and ḥadīth. This method has been proven effective in establishing and increasing faith in recipients of various backgrounds, and has indeed transformed people from worshippers of science into sincere worshippers of Allah.

♦ **Contemporary Issues** - A da`wah worker needs to have adequate knowledge concerning actualities of the present-day world in order to effectively make use of various methods with different types of people. He should be familiar with the issues of the immediate environment in which he works and acquainted with the political, social and economic situations of the world at large. He must understand the people who are to be the recipients of his da`wah, being fully aware of their lifestyles, mentalities, values and major concerns. He should familiarize himself thoroughly with their society and its customs, with the ideology, religion or school of thought they follow, with the problems they face and the goals they seek to achieve.

The dā`iyah who shares the concerns and problems of his recipients, sympathizes and cooperates with them sincerely in seeking practical solutions will surely win over their hearts in time. The present day ascendance of poverty, disease, conflict and oppression worldwide is an obvious base from which discussion, dialogue and, hopefully, assistance may begin. In such endeavors, it is important to neither exaggerate nor underestimate the strategies and abilities of opposing powers. A balance must be kept among the people between excessive fear and indifference, between despair and hope.

Da`wah in the twenty first century will not depart from fundamental principles laid out in the Qur`ān and Sunnah. However, new circumstances in an ever changing world require that the dā`iyah be up to every challenge in ways compatible with the times. What follows is a summary of twenty characteristics and skills by which contemporary da`wah workers may evaluate themselves and should strive to acquire:

- Belief in the importance of his mission
- Knowledge of the value of time and how to make the best use of it
- Knowledge that it is thought and contemplation which produces material assets and builds civilizations (So it can also produce better results in da`wah and other efforts)
- The ability to judge ideas by their validity and value rather than by the person who presents them
- Belief in the possibility of change through well directed efforts along with frequent du`aa'

- The practical application of one's beliefs and convictions to his own life (making oneself an example, as mentioned previously)
- Perception of the universality of Islam and that solutions must not be limited to certain groups or particular fatwās
- Appreciation of all types of positive work and effort
- A sense of organized planning in one's thoughts and activities
- An understanding of the negative aspects of one's own culture and striving to remove such effects from one's personality (The elimination of bad habits)
- Optimism and the ability to see the good aspects of various people and events
- Ability to make the most of the good within people and happenings
- Ability to appreciate small deeds and contributions and their place in the community effort (Each of them has a function, and may be very significant in the sight of Allah)
- Courage to introduce positive ideas and changes
- Respect for specialization in a person's field of work when judging or speaking to him (Do not expect him to be an expert on everything)
- Willingness to learn from mistakes and from all situations and to cooperate with others
- Patience and deliberation in thought and action with consideration of consequences, both positive and negative
- Implementation of the concept of brotherhood and generosity in the face of others' faults and in dealing with differences of opinion
- Ability to converse honestly and openly with oneself and others
- Continuous effort to understand the world around oneself in depth, precision and balance, and to look for suitable solutions compatible with new situations within an Islamic framework

The Role of Women in Da'wah

Women have a definite responsibility and role in da'wah, no less important than that of men. Except for specific instances which are clear in context, the Qur'ān's commands and prohibitions are directed to both sexes, including those verses enjoining da'wah.¹⁰⁵ Some verses mention women specifically along with men, in order to put emphasis on the fact that they are included; for example:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ.

The believing men and believing women are supporters of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. (9:71)

¹⁰⁵ In particular, 3:104, 3:110, 41:33-35. Like many other languages, Arabic uses the masculine gender when either sex is intended or both are included, as in people, believers, hypocrites, etc.

While Allah stated that believing women as well as men enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, the Prophet ﷺ also emphasized this obligation by saying, *"All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock. The imām is a shepherd and he is responsible for his flock, The man is a shepherd among his family and he is responsible for his flock, and the woman is a shepherd in her husband's home and she is responsible for her flock."*¹⁰⁶

Among the Ṣaḥābah was Umm Sulaym, a woman from the Anṣār. After her acceptance of Islam she began da'wah with her young son, Anas bin Mālik, although her husband opposed it. She also invited her husband to Allah, but he refused and left her, dying a disbeliever. She asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to accept Anas as his servant, which enabled him to gain a great deal of knowledge and later become a trustworthy narrator of ḥadīth. After the death of her husband, another polytheist, Abū Ṭalḥah, asked to marry Umm Sulaym. She refused as it was unlawful, but took the opportunity to present Islam to him. When he persisted, she said, "If you should accept Islam, that would be my *mahr*,¹⁰⁷ and I would not ask of you anything else." Abū Ṭalḥah embraced Islam sincerely and fought in numerous battles with the Prophet ﷺ.

Da'wah work for a woman may be somewhat specialized since recipients are often family members, neighbors or women's circles. The home is her first base, and the Islamic upbringing of her children is the primary duty about which she will be questioned on the Day of Judgement. Mothers have great influence over their children since the child is by nature most attached to her, especially in the formative years. Additionally, many wives have ability to influence their husbands in positive ways. Almost every woman can find subtle ways to perform da'wah in her own home and reap the rewards of it in this life even before the next.

Besides the home, there are fertile fields for da'wah by women in social groups, schools, hospitals, workplaces, even in the female section of prisons. Those who are unmarried or who no longer have children at home and have some free time can study the possibilities, evaluate their capabilities and then branch out into one or more of these fields in accordance with their own particular circumstances and personal preferences. Such women may actually have more opportunities for da'wah than their male counterparts who are restricted by long working hours.

A simple reminder or word of truth is often an effective form of da'wah. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged people to sleep after the 'ishā' prayer and disliked that they should stay up talking. His wife, 'Ā'ishah would send word after 'ishā' to some of her relatives, saying, "Will you not allow the register [of deeds] to rest?" After the Prophet's death, she learned that his wives had asked about inheritance. She reminded them that he ﷺ had said, *"We do not leave inheritance; what we leave is ṣadaqah."*¹⁰⁸

Islamic history offers numerous examples of righteous women whose influence was felt in society. To mention one instance: Some wives were present to encourage their husbands at the battle of Yarmūk. When a number of soldiers wanted to flee the battlefield, the women prevented them by shouting threats and insults at any who would not stand

¹⁰⁶ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

¹⁰⁷ The obligatory bridal gift.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

gallantly to face the enemy and defend them. Although significantly outnumbered, the Muslims rallied and soundly defeated the Byzantines.

Muslim women in former times did not hesitate to enjoin right and forbid wrong wherever they encountered it, and even were able to criticize and correct their rulers. For example, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb was challenged publicly by a woman who cited a verse of the Qur'ān¹⁰⁹ as evidence against his limitation of the mahr. He promptly admitted his error. Umm Dardā' said to the caliph, 'Abdul-Malik bin Marwān, "Do not curse, for Abū Dardā' told me that he heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say, 'Those given to cursing will not be intercessors or witnesses on the Day of Resurrection'."¹¹⁰ These knowledgeable women provided the required evidence to back up their statements, which is the technique of a wise and skillful dā'iyah.

The Practical Application of Da'wah

When Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "The example of what Allah has sent me with of guidance and knowledge is like an abundant beneficial rain",¹¹¹ he did not mention knowledge alone, for that could be harmful rather than beneficial. But guidance, when added to knowledge is what makes it beneficial. Just as a beneficial rain is one which comes at the right time, in the right place and in the right amount to promote growth, da'wah must be issued in the same way. The dā'iyah is required not only to have precise knowledge of the Shari'ah, but guidance as to the systematic methodology of da'wah. His program may periodically have to be adjusted according to particulars of the society or individuals he hopes to influence.

And when Allah sent His Prophet ﷺ to mankind, He said to him:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. (33:45 and 48:8)

So a dā'iyah needs to actually witness the current realities of his society, its way of life, customs, beliefs, etc., otherwise he will not be able to perform the other two functions. When Mūsā requested that his brother Hārūn accompany him to confront Fir'aun, he said:

وَأَخِي هَارُونُ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْءًا يُصَدِّقُنِي

And my brother Aaron is more fluent than me in tongue, so send him with me as support, verifying me. (28:34)

It may be noted that it was Mūsā who spoke to Fir'aun and his people and not Hārūn. Mūsā had been absent from Egypt for many years and thus was in need of an advisor who had lived among the people.

How to Invite People to Allah

Da'wah requires knowledge of communication skills, as given below.

Clarity of Expression

Allah said in the Qur'ān:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

¹⁰⁹ 4:20

¹¹⁰ Muslim.

¹¹¹ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them. (14:4)

وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

And there is not upon the Messenger except [the duty of] clear notification. (29:18)

This includes:

- Precision in expressing oneself and the avoidance of words that are vague, confusing or can have more than one meaning.
- Using an approach compatible with the background and educational level of the recipient.
- Speaking at a moderate speed that is understandable and repeating when necessary for emphasis.

Diplomacy

Allah has said:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. (16:125)

Regarding this verse, commentators have said the following:

Wisdom in da'wah means:

- Keeping in mind the intelligence, capabilities and circumstances of the recipient. The message should be conveyed to him according to the requirements of the occasion, not applying the same method to every person or group.
- Identification of the recipient's immediate need and presentation of treatment accordingly.

Good instruction means:

- Showing respect and concern for the recipient and sincerity in informing him of what is of benefit to him.
- Arousing interest in the instruction by using logic and by appealing to his sense of right and wrong, alluding to consequences.

Arguing in a way that is best means:

- Showing noble character, pleasing manner and humility, using reasonable, appealing and straightforward arguments.
- Avoiding affected speech or mannerisms.
- Never using ridicule, accusations or doubletalk. If the other party should resort to such methods, the discussion should be suspended and may perhaps be resumed at a later time.

And Allah instructed:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.

And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community

their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do. (6:108)

The dā'iyah should use diplomacy when dealing with ill-mannered people, avoiding arguments and disputes with them. Allah encouraged this method, saying:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly] they say [words of] peace. (25:63)

This was also the practice of the Prophet ﷺ, who refused to treat obnoxious people in a like manner. He ﷺ said, *"The worst of people is one that others leave alone out of fear of his evil."* And in another narration, *"...out of fear of his obscenity."¹¹²* In such cases, being pleasant to a wicked person is not considered as hypocrisy but prudence.

It is human nature which makes anyone who does something, be it right or wrong, consider it good and defend it. So the dā'iyah should not aggravate the recipient by showing contempt of his beliefs and practices, but present the truth in a straightforward and logical manner which allows him to compare it with what he accepted before. It is not necessary, nor was it the practice of Allah's Messenger ﷺ to undertake a detailed criticism of other beliefs. Since the recipient already knows what he believes, one may simply present the truths of Islam and allow him to make his own comparisons. The mention of Allah's final judgment of what people hold to be true prompts the recipient to review his previously held opinions.

Attempts by non-Muslims to understand why Muslims follow certain practices which seem strange or difficult to them should be referred back to belief in the perfect attributes of Allah, who has ordained this way of life. Without faith in the Creator's absolute knowledge and wisdom they will not see any advantage in submission. At this stage, legislative issues should not hijack the main purpose of the discussion, which is to enable the other side to acknowledge the basic truths that will open his heart to belief. Once that is accomplished, the rest is easy.

A dā'iyah must not be like his opponents who, when failing to find logical answers, resort to lies, accusations and perhaps even violence. Instead, he needs to follow the example of the prophets in controlling his anger and responding with reason. Note the reply of Prophet Ibrāheem, when, during a debate, the king claimed that it was he (rather than Allah) who gave life and death. Although he was undoubtedly angry, Ibrāheem said calmly,

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ

Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west. (2:258)

To this the arrogant king had no response.

Systematic Progression

Faith must be firmly established before ordering obedience or forbidding disobedience. This is the method of Allah in revealing the Qur'ān. The Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah, told Yūsuf bin Mālik, "The first of what was revealed was the shorter sūrahs, in which was mention of Paradise and Hellfire - until, when people had returned to Islam, the ḥalāl and ḥarām was

¹¹² Al-Bukhāri

revealed. Had [the command] not to commit zinā¹¹³ come down [first], they would have said, 'We will never give up zinā.'" No law will be willingly obeyed until people are convinced of the power, wisdom, generosity and divinity of the Lawmaker.

The following is a simplified sample pattern of a procedure that may be used in the first stage of presenting Islam. Each factual statement, which may be expressed in one's own words, leads to the next in logical order. Elaborations can be given whenever necessary.

- Man (as well as every other creature) exists.
- Nothing can come into existence by itself.
- Logic leads to the requirement of a creator.
- Everything in nature is conducive to life, especially human life.
- Everything works smoothly in nature. There is order.
- Every created thing has a function performed efficiently.
- Every created thing automatically follows laws of nature.
- The exception is man, who has the ability to choose.
- In contrast to the natural order, there is disorder in the human world.
- Men fail in their interactions and many misuse their powers. Some are cruel, selfish and worse than wild beasts.
- Clearly, men need guidance.
- The Creator of intelligent beings has provided the needed guidance.
- He sent messages to mankind through human messengers.
- Previous messages were eventually lost or distorted.
- The final message, revealed to Muḥammad ﷺ has remained intact and unchanged.
- This message contains:
 - ... Knowledge of the Creator and information about Him
 - ... The purpose of creation and man's life on earth
 - ... Disclosure of the consequences of attitudes and behavior
 - ... How man should relate to his Creator, his fellow men and the universe in general
- It is obviously in man's best interest to understand the divine message and follow its guidance.

Indirect Means of Da'wah

There are several alternatives when direct communication is not possible, when one is unable to express himself adequately in confrontation or when harmful consequences are anticipated. Both ancient and modern means may be used, among them, the general or public lecture, the book, newspaper or magazine article, poster, distribution of audio and video tapes, etc. Booklets, pamphlets, articles, cassettes and information from the internet may be passed on to particular recipients according to their needs, interests and circumstances. Such materials may be studied by them in private and at their own convenience, which is often conducive to positive response. On the other hand they can

¹¹³ Fornication and adultery.

be ignored or discarded, so care should be taken in choosing what is suitable for each recipient or group.

Books and scholarly publications are often suitable for recipients who are educated and interested in particular subjects. A *dā'iyah* can choose the book most suitable for the people he knows and give it as a gift. For general distribution smaller booklets are less expensive and are more apt to be read by ordinary people than large volumes. Articles for publication in magazines or newspapers and other kinds of short literature may also be distributed by the *dā'iyah*. He may himself be a writer who can produce suitable publications. To be effective, an article or leaflet should have an attractive title, be well organized and of medium length, neither too long nor too short. The language used should be interesting and easily understood, avoiding offensive or indecent expressions. And it should contain ample evidence, either from the Qur'ān and Sunnah (in the case of Muslims) or from history and present realities, such as statistics and proven scientific facts.

The media in all its aspects is a most influential and powerful means of selling a product or a concept in modern times. Muslims have yet to make adequate use of the available means of communication. This means of *da'wah* requires qualified and well trained professionals with a sufficient understanding of both Islamic Shari'ah and contemporary Muslim affairs. It is a collective obligation (*fardh kifāyah*), which to date has not been fulfilled.

The Personal Message

Besides meeting directly with recipients, the telephone provides opportunities when a visit is not feasible and distances are great. When performing *da'wah* by phone one should observe the proper manner: a polite and friendly approach, not raising the voice, showing anger or excessively prolonging the message. Carelessness in this regard may lead to the loss of opportunity if the recipient should hang up the receiver.

The other well-known and much utilized method is through the written letter, often replaced today by e-mail communication. In contrast to other indirect means which may be preferable in some situations, the letter provides a personal touch showing a greater degree of concern and compassion and the opportunity to express noble sentiments.

The Qur'ān makes clear that this method was used by Prophet Sulaymān, and Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is known to have dictated letters to tribal chiefs, kings and emperors inviting them to Islam. A letter may be efficient and effective provided that the *dā'iyah* has perfected its skills.

The written message should contain an introduction, a theme or subject and a conclusion. The introduction has been compared to a drug given before an operation. It prepares the recipient to receive the subject matter, so it should mention something positive about him or perhaps the explanation of a relevant principle in a pleasing manner. The main theme should be a simple statement without digression or provocation. It should include as many evidences as possible. The conclusion is related to the theme and completes it. It should show affection and concern, possibly mentioning the sender's motivation, and may contain advice or warning. The Prophet ﷺ followed this pattern in his communications to the various rulers as can be seen in the following chart:

The Prophet's Da'wah Letters

To Heraclius:¹¹⁴

Introduction	Theme	Conclusion
<p>Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥeem. From Muḥammad, Messenger of Allah to the Emperor of Rome.¹¹⁵ Peace be upon him who follows right guidance.</p>	<p>I invite you with an invitation to Islam.</p>	<p>Accept Islam; you will be in peace and Allah will give you your reward twice. But if you refuse, the sin of your subjects will be upon you. "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you – that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah."</p>

To an-Najāshi:

Introduction	Theme	Conclusion
<p>Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥeem From Muḥammad, Messenger of Allah to an-Najāshi, King of Abyssinia. Accept Islam, for indeed, I praise Allah, other than whom there is no god, al-Malik, al-Quddūs, as-Salām, al-Mu'min, al-Muḥaymin. And I testify that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the spirit of Allah and His word breathed into Mary, the pure and chaste virgin, and so she conceived Jesus. Allah created him through His breath as He created Adam by His hand.</p>	<p>I invite you to Allah alone, without any associate, to a friendly agreement to obey Him and to follow me and believe in what has come down to me, for I am the Messenger of Allah. And indeed, I invite you and your soldiers to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.</p>	<p>I have conveyed [the message] and advised, so accept my advice. And peace upon him who follows right guidance.</p>

To Kistrā:

Introduction	Theme	Conclusion
<p>Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥeem From Muḥammad, Messenger of Allah to the Emperor of Persia. Peace be upon him who follows right guidance and testifies that there is no god but Allah alone, having no associate, and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.</p>	<p>I invite you with an invitation to Allah, for I am the Messenger of Allah to all people to warn those alive and verify [Allah's] decree against the disbelievers.</p>	<p>Accept Islam and you will be in peace. But if you refuse, the sin of the fire worshippers will be upon you.</p>

¹¹⁴ A letter addressed to al-Muqawqis, ruler of the Copts in Egypt was worded similarly.

¹¹⁵ i.e., the Eastern Roman Empire or the Byzantines.

Another example of a da'wah letter was one written by al-Waleed bin al-Waleed to his brother, Khālid:

Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥeem

Indeed, I have not seen anything stranger than your disregard of Islam while your mind is such as it is! Can anyone be ignorant of something like Islam? The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked me, "Where is Khālid?" and I said, "Allah will bring him around." Then he said, "Can someone like him be ignorant of Islam? If he placed his force and zeal with the Muslims it would be better for him, and we have greater hope for him than for others." So, my brother, make up for what you have already missed of good occasions.

Electronic Da'wah

The internet has revolutionized every aspect of modern life. But many Muslims still have not recognized the unique opportunity it offers for conveying Islam. A great deal of time and money may be needed to purchase, produce, print, and mail literature as well as to regularly call people or keep a staff available to answer questions. Although the internet will never replace face-to-face da'wah and distribution of Islamic literature, it will supplement it and continue to broaden da'wah opportunities in new ways. Dā'iyahs will continue to use the traditional means of communication and education and to hold lectures and dialogues in public places. However, through the internet they can now also send multiple copies of a message by e-mail, print articles from the web for distribution, create Islamic websites, have interfaith dialogues in chat rooms and make use of online education.

E-mail has become an important modern means of communication. Islam-related information can be sent to both Muslims and non-Muslims at any time of the day or night from anywhere in the world to practically anywhere else in the world. The recipient receives the message within seconds or minutes. E-mail messages are usually typed, but one can also use e-mail to send attachments containing documents, pictures, and lectures. An e-mail can be answered, stored, forwarded or printed out on a printer, and offers the facility to send a single message to many people at once.

E-da'wah means using the internet for da'wah purposes, and it has many benefits. The internet allows one to easily and inexpensively communicate with people around the world, but in addition, the web also makes learning more accessible. People are no longer totally dependent upon a teacher, school or library. The web offers world-wide resources as text, images or audio and video. Using the internet to carry out research cuts costs and is usually faster; moreover, it offers year around, up-to-the-minute information. Thus, da'wah becomes more efficient, effective, and less expensive.

The net contains thousands of newsgroups hosted all over the world that cover every imaginable topic. It is used daily by millions of people around the world and non-Muslims often post general questions about Islam. A dā'iyah may want to monitor newsgroups for negative comments in order to clear up misconceptions about Islam. He can also be alert to attempts by devious individuals or groups at distorting the teachings of Islam.

People with a common Islamic interest can subscribe to an e-mail service called a news list. When a member sends an e-mail to the news list, he sends the message to the entire group. All members receive the messages posted to a news list. News lists can be a very important and effective communication tool. Various organizations use them to discuss, plan, and

announce events and to discuss recent news, various topics and common concerns. Subscribing to a news list is one way to keep a dā'iyah informed.

And finally, one can create a website. People from across the globe will be able to access it and download the information found there. Web pages may be printed from any computer connected to the internet, and links to the website can be e-mailed to anyone. Updating anything published on the web is simple and inexpensive. And people can find and visit the web pages that contain Islamic information, so any non-Muslims searching for truth will also benefit from the internet.

Individual Da'wah to Muslims

The majority of Muslims presently live and work within Muslim communities, making opportunities for da'wah greater for them among Muslims than non-Muslims. Moreover, the fact that there is a general lack of knowledge and awareness among Muslims today makes education and motivation a top priority. This subject has been discussed in detail by Mustafa Mashhoor in *Ad-Da'wah al-Fardiyyah*. The following section is excerpted from the text of his book:

- Da'wah to Allah is the duty of every Muslim in every age, and in our time this da'wah is particularly important in light of malicious campaigns by the enemies of Allah to remove the importance of da'wah from the hearts of Muslims.
- Da'wah to Allah is a great honor for its carrier. Allah says in the Qur'ān:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims." (41:33)

- Da'wah to Allah promises great reward for its carrier, and the ḥadith of the Prophet ﷺ confirms the reward. He said: "For Allah to guide one man through you is better for you than all that is shined upon by the sun."
- Da'wah to Allah and to the straight path is the way of moderation amid the various doctrines and ideologies wrapped in confusion, and ignorance.
- Da'wah to Allah is an important step in serious Islamic work. It serves to familiarize people with Islamic thought, which precedes the establishment of organized Islamic work and the education and training of individuals and groups. There is public da'wah by means of the lecture, book, magazine, leaflet or cassette, and there is also individual da'wah, which is just as important. Here, we will examine individual da'wah to Muslims, its method and stages.

We must first understand the realities in which Muslims who receive our da'wah live, so we can change the mentalities in which they exist - the limitations in their understanding, the weakness in their commitment or extremism in their views - to a complete, pure and robust understanding of Islam as described by the Prophet ﷺ. We must also explain thoroughly the requirements of Islam and the way to fulfill them in a satisfactory manner. With a bit of study and analysis of our societies, we find that weakness of faith or dormancy of faith in people's hearts, a lack of understanding of the realities of this religion and ignorance of the cultural and social assault against Muslim thought are afflicting most Muslims and facilitating for the enemies of Allah exploitation of some Muslims to oppose the religion openly and covertly.

We cannot expect pure understanding, activism or productive work for Islam from those who are afflicted. We can expect proper understanding, activism, productive work and elevation of souls to the level of righteous workers only when Islam has been awakened within hearts and then motivates them toward change.

We must emphasize, as well, that adherence to order in the steps followed is essential to protect both dā'iyahs and recipients from frustration and despair. To clarify the method of individual da'wah, we will start with a person who is unaware or neglectful of his duties, and will attempt to elevate him methodically, step by step. Generally, there are some individuals who are in a better condition and are more likely to be receptive, so we should begin with them to save time and effort.

Many Muslims are preoccupied and distracted from the worship of Allah. Heedlessness has made them like people who are deep in slumber, while a blazing fire is approaching to consume them if their state continues. Among those slumbering is a group of people who are awake, aware of the situation but they cannot stop the fire. Duty dictates that those who are awake awaken those who are sleeping so that each of them can realize the gravity of the situation and save himself from the fire. Any attempt to warn the sleepers before waking them up will be useless because they will not respond. Hence, awakening the sleepers before warning is essential. Very often, when one attempts to wake up a sleeping person, he will ask to be left alone to continue sleeping. The sleeper is enjoying his sleep and does not want any disturbance. If he was awake and could see the fire, he would surely flee from it. Moreover, if a person claims to be awake, then his attempt to escape the fire would be the only proof of the truth of his claim.

The example of the fire is like a da'iyah among those he is calling to Allah. Therefore, the da'iyah must be patient during his da'wah and in the face of any mistreatment from his recipients. He must embrace the example of the beloved Prophet ﷺ who was forbearing and continued in his da'wah despite being harmed. He ﷺ would say: "*My Lord, guide my people for they do not know.*" Along the same line, someone said, "Be like trees among people. People will stone trees, but the trees continue to produce fruit."

- **The first stage** in individual da'wah is establishing a friendship with the recipient and making him feel that you are genuinely concerned with him. Interact with him without indulging in any kind of da'wah until his heart is comfortable enough to receive useful instructions. The reception of the recipient is directly proportional to the concern and affection devoted to him. Any talk with the recipient about da'wah at this point may turn him away. This first step might take several weeks.

- **The second stage** is an attempt to revive dormant faith in the heart of the recipient. The conversation might be touch on faith indirectly, but it should seem natural as if unintended. You could utilize the opportunity when seeing a bird, plant, insect or any other of Allah's creations to talk about the ability, greatness and power of Allah. For example, you might remark how all plants grow from the earth, yet they are different in their stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, colors, smell and taste, even though they are irrigated with the same water and emerge from one soil, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْتَقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

The work of Allah who has perfected all things. (27:88)

هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ.

This is the creation of Allah so show me what others have created. (31:11)

With continuing dialogue and contemplation over Allah's creation, the recipient's heart will begin to appreciate Allah. As the Qur'ān says:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ

[Those of understanding] give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You..." (3:191)

This verse clearly illustrates that the fruit of contemplation is the glorification of Allah. With the awakening of belief in Allah, His oneness, His might, and His perfection, the heart is put onto the path of Allah, it arises from its sleep and understands the purpose for which Allah created us - worship of Him - and that He has not created us in vain.

Dialogue should continue in this manner about the issue of faith. It might be relevant to explain the mark of distinction that Allah bestowed upon human beings when He breathed life into them. Many have ignored this honor and concentrated on the physical aspects of creation and needs of the body. Indeed, the Islamic 'aqedah (creed) is essential to the well-being of the soul and its happiness in this life and the next.

Once faith is awakened, the person will start reviewing his life and will feel that if he continues his negligence, indulgence in sins and disobedience to Allah, he will face a severe punishment from Allah on the Day of Judgement when there is no escape or benefit. At this point, directing him and instructing him as to his Islamic duties will become easier.

- **The third stage** deals with helping the recipient of da'wah to realize his situation by learning about obedience to Allah, compulsory worship, the necessity of practicing the teachings of Islam regularly, staying away from the sins, and acquiring Islamic manners. It may be good to supply him with simple reading material about 'aqedah, 'ibadah, and *akhlāq* (manners) and to invite him to attend lectures and circles of knowledge where he can meet righteous people and avoid sinful ones. Then, he should not be left alone for prolonged periods of time without follow up. Keeping in contact will help him to continue on the straight path, and it will help to protect him from causes of diminishing commitment, laziness or immoderation. This stage may continue for several weeks or months until his character is molded Islamically and becomes firm.

- **The fourth stage** involves explaining the complete meaning of 'ibadah - that it is not limited to prayer, fasting, zakāh, and ḥajj, but encompasses all aspects of life, including food, dress, study, work, marriage, amusement and caring for the younger generation. Ordinary activities become 'ibadah, or worship, whenever two conditions are fulfilled: pure intention and adherence to Islam.

1. First, we intend our actions as help toward obeying Allah and fulfilling the role Allah meant for us as His agents on earth. For example, we eat and drink to obtain the strength to obey and worship Allah; thus eating and drinking become acts of worship for which we are rewarded. We learn in order to benefit Muslims and the ummah of Islam, so our learning becomes an act of worship. We receive reward for the time, effort, and work in any branch of study that will benefit Muslims and enable us to earn a living lawfully and fulfill our needs. Further, when we marry to guard our chastity, to establish a Muslim home that is a strong pillar within the ummah, and to rear righteous offspring, devoting our time to educating them in Islam, then the marriage is transformed into an act of worship for which we receive reward from Allah. Even when we practice sports to strengthen our bodies in order to carry the burdens of da'wah and jihād in the cause of Allah, then it becomes an act of worship. In this fashion, our entire life becomes a vast field in which we worship Allah with every action we perform with pure and sincere intention.

2. The second condition is adherence in all our actions to the commandments of Allah and the teachings of Islam. Therefore, we do not eat, drink, dress, or act unless it is permissible, which makes it an acceptable act of worship. For example, we cannot eat what is prohibited to build strength to obey Allah. The Muslim's actions and attitudes must concur with the commandments of Allah. Thus, he must understand the comprehensive nature of 'ibadah, and that it is not limited to the pillars of Islam.

- **The fifth stage** involves explaining to the recipient that our religion is not restricted to private individual commitment to Allah, in which a Muslim performs compulsory worship, practices good manners and avoids harm to others. Rather, Islam is a communal religion which regulates all aspects of life, including jurisprudence and politics. This correct understanding of Islam dictates the general responsibilities and obligations of Muslims. They are obligated to obey the orders of Allah to establish a society based on Islamic political, economic, social, and legislative principles. We should understand that our duty toward this religion is to establish it on earth and to convey it to all humanity.

A Muslim can not live a proper Islam when he is isolated from his Muslim brothers or if he is unmoved by what Muslims face of hardship, trials, and calamities at the hands of enemies throughout the Muslim world. The Prophet ﷺ said: "*Whoever is not concerned with the affairs of the Muslims is not from among them.*" Dialogue continues with the recipient around this concept until the feeling of responsibility towards Islam and Muslims in general is established in his mind and manifested in his actions.

- **The sixth stage** involves explaining that the duty of establishing Islam on earth cannot be accomplished by one individual, but by an organized group of Muslims working collectively, coordinating the efforts of individuals to achieve the noble aim. One cannot imagine that a person can be complete in his religion if he lives alone and does not work as part of a larger group. Many Muslims do not see the necessity of working through groups or organizations, either because they would like to escape responsibility or because they would not like to make the sacrifices or concessions associated with working collectively. It is essential to convince the recipient of the importance and benefits of collective efforts.

- **The seventh stage** deals with the question of which group a person should work with. He must be comfortable with the soundness of its path and should not rush into a choice, but expend some time and effort until he feels confident of his choice. Fulfilling the demands of Islam must be done in accordance with the method of the Prophet ﷺ when he established the first Islamic state. It was accomplished by first planting the pure 'aqeedah in the hearts of believers and training them through the Qur'ān and Sunnah. From his school, many graduated with an 'aqeedah that ruled their feelings, actions, and every aspect of their lives. For it, they persevered and withstood every kind of hardship and suffering. They protected it by jihād though their wealth and their lives. Hence, those men became the strong pillars of the first Islamic state. The Prophet ﷺ made them brothers, organized them, and took from them vows to protect the religion with all they possessed, until they ultimately achieved victory by the grace of Allah. When a vibrant and strong 'aqeedah resides in the hearts of believers, they can face the enemies of Allah and repel them with might.

The group most worthy of working with is that which takes Islam in its entirety as 'aqeedah, worship, morality, legislation, government, jihād and every aspect of life. It must not stress one aspect and neglect others for any reason. It must have a wide enough base to facilitate international relations and not be limited to a particular country or region. We must beware of divisions and the wasting of effort caused by splintering into small disunited factions. The group must be united and well organized, and should work according to a concrete

plan, avoiding impulsiveness and haphazardness. This also serves to keep it from sectarianism, extremism and carelessness, and keeps it on the path of the Prophet ﷺ and our righteous predecessors. Essentially, everyone who wants to work for Islam must add his voice and effort to the ummah at large.

Collective Da'wah

Da'wah can be conveyed through three main methods; by word, by deed and by being an example. In this section, da'wah by word will be discussed as a central method of conveying the message of Islam to the public from the Prophet's time until today. It is considered as a form of jihād in the cause of Allah. Seven methods are mentioned traditional books on the subject of da'wah, which are: the sermon, the lecture, the lesson, the debate, the letter, the article and the book. We have additionally included some modern methods facilitated by the internet.

Islamic da'wah was initially established by word of mouth, as were all other divine messages conveyed by the prophets. Allah says:

وَأذِ احْدَ اللّٰهَ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰوْتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوْنَهُ

And mention [O Muhammad], when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the scripture, [saying], "You must make it clear to the people and not conceal it. (3:187)

The first instruction revealed to the Prophet ﷺ was to recite and then reflect on the wisdom and insight of Allah in giving man the ability to read and write:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Recite in the name of your Lord who created - created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous who taught by the pen; taught man that which he knew not. (96:1-5)

Then, Allah willed that His Messenger ﷺ should convey the message to his kinsmen:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ

And warn your closest kindred. (26:214)

After that, Allah instructed him to expand the area of da'wah by declaring the message publicly:

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

Then declare what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists. (15:94)

For thirteen years in Makkah, Allah directed the Prophet ﷺ to make da'wah through speech. He was ordered to make da'wah his way of life, and this is true for every Muslim.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيْلِيْ اَدْعُوْ اِلَى اللّٰهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَنِيْ

Say, "This is my way. I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me." (12:108)

And Allah described da'wah by the tongue as the best of speech:

وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ صٰلِحًا وَقَالَ اِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ.

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah, and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims." (41:33)

Public Speaking

Under this heading are included sermons, speeches and lectures, the aim being that the speaker transfer what is in his heart and mind to the hearts and minds of his audience. Islam has taught the use of convincing argument to bring people to the truth and to defend the truth to which they are invited. The Qur'ān itself is a guide to dialogues that can be used to establish truth, as was illustrated in the da'wah of the prophets, signs of Allah in the universe, etc. And the Sunnah provides added inspiration through countless examples. Some common forms of public address are:

- The Friday and 'Eid prayer sermons
- Speeches promoting a particular deed
- Addressing delegations and political speeches
- Enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is evil
- The instruction and direction of a group or community
- Speeches on the occasion of marriage or other specific occurrences
- Public discussions and debates

The Prophet's speeches were models upon which the dā'iyyah can pattern his own. He would begin with praise of Allah and the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. The content was adorned with verses from the Qur'ān, and the conclusion contained further praise of Allah, thankfulness to Him and a prayer for blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ. His words were beautiful and dignified, soft yet effective. They showed affection, enthusiasm and strong faith, and were simple yet convincing. They expressed thoughts that were purposeful, productive, well constructed and well ordered, and always encouraged something good.

Among the features which contribute to the effectiveness of a speech are:

- The speaker's character - his morality, upright leadership, motivation and compassion.
- The speaker's intellectual, psychological and linguistic ability - he should be able to perceive the way his audience sees things, deal easily with their attitudes and remarks and manage unexpected situations. He should have a clear, pleasing and convincing way of speaking and address his audience according to its mentality, social status and general level of education.
- The suitability and importance of the topic - it should be a priority topic, preferably one with which a majority of the audience is concerned, or ought to be concerned.
- The suitability of the time and place - it should not be delivered in situations where the recipients are distracted by other matters. Whenever possible, the speaker needs to choose a time and place in which people are prepared to listen.
- The speaker's method - he should make his words understandable, unambiguous and uncomplicated, free of imaginative or vague expressions which tend to obscure the facts, and he should use proper and precise terminology. The Prophet ﷺ forbade the use of obscure language and affectations in speech, and discouraged overly prolonging the address so that people would not become bored. His own way of speaking confirmed this, for his talks and sermons were usually brief, concise and to the point.
- Familiarity with the topic and adequate preparation - this gives the speaker confidence and will enable him to answer questions and refute erroneous arguments. He may start

by collecting the quotations he plans to use from the Qur'ān, Sunnah and other relevant sources and then arrange them in order of use in his talk.

The components of a speech are similar to those of a letter: an introduction, main theme and conclusion. The introduction opens the ears of the audience and creates interest. It can be omitted when the topic is a simple and obvious one or when it has just been discussed by a previous speaker or when time is limited and there is urgency.

The theme should be limited to one subject, straightforward, of moderate length and supported by evidences. These should be well arranged, ending with the strongest and most important one so that the listener will be convinced at the end. The conclusion is a brief summary which should be well presented since it is what usually remains in the listener's mind and will be passed on by him to others.

The Lesson

The lesson refers to information presented to a class or study circle held in a masjid or other suitable place where a number of people gather to learn from a teacher. It is among the important ways to provide knowledge and understanding of both religious and worldly matters and is a means of da'wah to Allah. Its objectives are to teach a particular subject to the attendants, to bond people together within Islamic beliefs and principles, to correct misconceptions and errors spread by enemies of Islam, to instill Islamic values and morality in individuals and ultimately, in society, to become acquainted with their opinions and to accustom them to the Islamic ethics of conversation and discussion.

The field of study must be chosen carefully with regard to the educational level of those who attend, the time and place of the lesson, the extent of people's interest and the methods of presentation. Subject matter may be taken from any of the following:

- The Qur'ān and its sciences, tafseer or tajweed
- Ḥadīth and seerah
- Fiqh
- Islamic history
- Any other field - scientific, social, political, economic, etc., that the dā'iyah believes is needed and would be beneficial to the particular group

While the attendants of a speech may at times require words of inspiration, emotion, urging and prompting, attendants of a lesson more often require quiet reasoning, facts and evidences. Some advantages of the lesson are that those attending do so out of desire to learn about the subject, which is not always the case with those who hear a speech. They are usually more highly educated than the general public and their numbers are fewer, allowing more opportunity for questions and discussion.

When conducting the lesson, the educator should use language that is unambiguous and comprehensible. If he teaches in Arabic he should use the classical language of the Qur'ān. He can make good use of quotations from the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth and sayings of the Ṣaḥābah and our pious predecessors. It is also beneficial to cite examples by relating stories narrated in the Qur'ān or from the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. And words of wisdom worth mentioning can be taken from the writings of scholars or even from the astute among ordinary people.

The Debate

A dialogue may take place between two people or groups about a certain topic, in which

each side presents an opinion or concept and endeavors to convince the other of its validity. When it is done either privately or publicly with the intent of establishing, supporting or defending the truth it becomes a form of da'wah. As Allah instructed:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِلَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. (16:125)

Public debates are the means preferred by some dā'iyahs, who have become skillful and successful in this field. The goal of the debate is to show and uphold the truth before a large number of people, and today the media makes possible a worldwide audience. The debate has three purposes:

- To present the truth about an Islam-related issue
- To expose and refute the false claims of those who oppose Islam and Muslims
- To encourage further thought and research on the part of the audience

A dā'iyah who participates in a debate must be highly qualified for this task, a specialist in his subject and well prepared in order not to be defeated and thereby bring defeat to his cause. While being Islamically motivated, he should also be tolerant and broad minded enough to acknowledge the arguments of others and then refute those that are erroneous calmly and subjectively. He should be able to express himself with precision and clarity, choosing the most convincing arguments while avoiding exaggeration, anger and any display of shock, disdain or self-righteousness. A clear, calm and positive statement of truth is often all that is needed to convince an audience, if not the stubborn opponent.

The Written Word

Da'wah material in the form of books, articles, letters, e-mails, etc. may be widely distributed to large numbers of people in various locations. Each of these means has been discussed in previous sections of this book. Needless to say, the written message has the particular advantage of allowing the recipient to go over it as often as necessary at his own convenience and when he has the time to reflect upon its content. Writing also enables the dā'iyah to take extra time in order to state an issue in the most precise and diplomatic way possible. Some dā'iyahs are authors who write either general information about Islam or about subjects deemed important and necessary. A well written book offers an organized and systematic presentation of its subject by a specialist in the field with all of the persuasive proofs and evidences. Although there is no shortage at present of Islamic literature, not all of it is up to the desired standard. Those of means should seriously consider the production and distribution of top quality Islamic publications on every subject as a form of da'wah and jihād for the cause of Allah.

The Principles of Forbidding Wrongdoing

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared, *"Whoever of you sees a wrong - let him change it by his hand; and if he is not able, then by his tongue; and if he is not able, then in his heart. And that is the least of faith."*¹¹⁶ In other words, a Muslim is ordered to prevent what is wrong to the extent of his ability. Al-Qādhī 'Iyādh, an early scholar, said, "This hadith

¹¹⁶ Narrated by Muslim.

defines the methods used to prevent wrongdoing. The dā'iyah has an obligation to prevent wrong in every way he can, physically, verbally or [at least] within the heart. When he is convinced that were he to attempt amendment by force it would lead to a greater wrong, such as exposing himself or others to death, then he should move on to the second option, prohibiting it by the tongue. But if he believes this also would lead to a similar harm, he should move on to the third option."

Stipulations for Each of the Three Methods

1. By the hand - This refers to physical means, which should be used by those in a position of authority such as the head of state or head of a family. When lesser efforts, such as sincere advice, kind instruction, warning, etc., have failed, their duty is not only to order an end to the wrongdoing, but to enforce it. However, if this method should lead to greater conflict or damage it is no longer permissible.

When one is certain he will not be harmed by doing so, he is under obligation to change what is wrong by the hand (physically), otherwise he is not. This applies to the moderate person of sound character and not one who merely fears refusal or ridicule.

When one does not expect direct harm but it is thought that people could misunderstand the motivation, then physical means should be avoided. The following examples may be cited:

- ♦ The Prophet ﷺ did not punish or execute the leader of the hypocrites, 'Abdullāh bin Ubayy bin Salūl, so the people would not say, "Muḥammad kills his companions" and shun Islam.

- ♦ The Prophet ﷺ refrained from demolishing the Ka'bah and rebuilding it on the foundation of Prophet Ibrāheem, as it could have caused the people to think that he did not respect its sanctity.

- ♦ The caliph, al-Mahdi, accepted the gift of a man who claimed that it was a shoe of the Prophet ﷺ and gave him a reward. Then he confided to his attendants, "If I had said to him, 'You are a liar,' he would tell everyone, 'The caliph refused to accept the Prophet's shoe!' He would find those who believe him more numerous than those who deny since people like to support the weak against the powerful. So I preferred to buy his tongue, for that is cheaper."

2. By the tongue - This method is not limited to verbal advice, speeches, lectures, debates, etc., but includes all forms of communication. The dā'iyah can make use of any means at his disposal to convey his message - by writing or sending a book, article or letter, by recording or sending an audio cassette, video tape or CD, by telephone, by internet, by public or private contacts of any kind.

Certain important points related to this method should be noted which are similar to those of general da'wah:

- ♦ The message must be clear and precise without ambiguity.
- ♦ It should begin on a friendly note by mentioning some of the recipient's good qualities.
- ♦ The dā'iyah must avoid any airs of superiority and be humble and sincere in his advice.

3. In the heart - This is the last option when neither of the first two is possible or they will not bring a positive result. This is the obligation of every Muslim without exception,

as the Prophet ﷺ said, "And that is the least of faith."¹¹⁷ To remain a believer, one must at least disapprove of and object to the wrong in his heart, supplicate to Allah for its amendment and be prepared to take a more active role whenever the opportunity should arise.

Rulings

To summarize, the following rulings may be applied to the forbidding of wrong:

Wājib, or obligation whenever one is certain that he can successfully stop the wrongdoing and replace it with what is lawful.

Mustahabb, or desirable when one knows that some aspects of the wrong can be eliminated.

Makrūh, or disliked when it is likely that by preventing the wrong another of the same degree would take its place.

Harām, or prohibited when it would lead to the commission of a greater sin. For example, when the eminent scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah was asked why he did not forbid Tatar soldiers who occupied the cities from drinking wine, he answered that when they were intoxicated they slept but when they were sober they shed Muslim blood.

The Process of Dealing with Wrongdoers

Ibn Qudāmah pointed out that a person who commits sins in ignorance can be compared to a child or someone who is ill, and therefore should be treated thoughtfully at the beginning. Those in position to alter a situation should abide by a specific process with offenders:

1. Assuming the person to be unaware of the seriousness and consequence of his deed. He must be informed of it gently and progressively.
2. Giving advice, warnings and examples without anger or harshness.
3. Showing strong disapproval if the previous method fails.
4. Threat, when deemed effective.
5. Physical prevention when possible.

Again, the last two methods are used by those in authority and cannot be used against them. Additionally, they must not result in a greater wrong being committed.

Procedures to Be Followed in Communication with Wrongdoers

Just as scholars laid out rules of grammar for the Arabic language and rules of tajweed for correct recitation of the Qur'ān, da'wah specialists have compiled works enumerating the principles and methods shown to bring about the greatest measure of success in effecting positive change. These may be summarized as follows:

a. Knowing where to start

The dā'iyah must have knowledge of priorities and begin with the most important of them. Some sins are worse than others and some obligations are more urgent than others. Therefore awareness of the proper point at which to undertake da'wah is essential. It is

¹¹⁷ This kind of faith is weakest because it has no direct impact on the status quo and does not necessarily imply that the person's faith is weak.

incorrect, for example, to commence by telling a man who does not pray not to smoke, shave his beard or eat with his left hand. The pillars of Islam, in particular regular prayer, the payment of zakāh and the fast of Ramadhān take precedent over other religious obligations, such as the woman's ḥijāb.

When the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh bin Jabal to Yemen, he told him, "*You will go to a people from Ahl al-Kitāb, so invite them to testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they comply with you in that, inform them that Allah has made obligatory upon them five prayers within every day and night. And if they comply with you in that, inform them that Allah has made obligatory upon them an expenditure [i.e., zakāh] from their wealth...*"¹¹⁸ In this way, Allah's Messenger ﷺ began with the most important aspects of the faith and did not order that they do everything at once; otherwise they would have found it burdensome and turned away.

It is related that Ibn Dhu'ayb went to the governor of Madinah to intercede for Ibn 'Ajlān, a scholar of ḥadīth whom he had imprisoned. Ibn 'Ajlān had criticized the governor for prolonging his Friday speech, contrary to the Prophet's Sunnah. He said to Ibn Dhu'ayb, "It was not sufficient for him to advise us in confidence; he transgressed by speaking publicly so that we appear weak before the people." Ibn Dhu'ayb replied, "He is foolish, seeing you consuming and wearing what is ḥarām and not denouncing that but telling you not to prolong your articulate speech on the Prophet's platform." The governor said, "Release Ibn 'Ajlān; there is no case against him."

b. Confirming the transgression

The Prophet's words, "*Whoever of you sees a wrong*" imply that the offense should be witnessed, which means confirmed in a way that one can testify to it. Muslims are to base their actions on certainty and never on doubt. The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Leave what makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.*" Judgments should not be made on the basis of suspicions, rumors or unconfirmed reports, for that inevitably leads to hatred and distrust. Allah has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful. (49:6)

Before confronting someone over a wrong it must be established that it is actually being committed. The story of Prophet Mūsā and al-Khadir related in the Qu'rān teaches that one should not hasten to make judgments and be thorough in ascertaining the facts. And when Prophet Sulaymān was told that the Queen of Sheba and her people prostrated to the sun instead of Allah, he did not take immediate action but waited to make certain of what he had heard.

قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

He said, "We will see whether you were truthful or were of the liars." (27:27)¹¹⁹

While investigation into unconfirmed reports is called for, it does not normally mean spying or eavesdropping on people within the privacy of their homes, because Allah has said,

¹¹⁸ Al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

¹¹⁹ Ibn al-Mufliḥ wrote: "From these verses it can be inferred that a man and woman seen together in public should not be questioned as long as there is no indication of anything unlawful, whereas if they are seen in a private place they should be told, "If you are related, go to a public place and if you are not, fear Allah!"

ولا تَجَسَّسُوا... (49:12) ... **And do not spy...**

During his caliphate, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb heard a man singing in his house in a way that made him suspicious. So he climbed over the wall and upon seeing him drinking wine said, "Do you think you can disobey Allah and not be exposed?!" The man replied, "If I have committed one sin, then you have committed three. Allah prohibited spying and you spied. Allah ordered entering houses by their doors¹²⁰ and you entered it from the wall. And Allah ordered not entering houses until permission is granted¹²¹ and you entered without permission." 'Umar admitted his error and the man promised not to repeat the offense in the future.

Mere suspicion of someone does not warrant such behavior by individuals or by an Islamic government. However, information given by a trustworthy, reliable reporter or a perceptible indication that a crime is about to be committed would justify it in a case of urgency, and immediate action should be taken to prevent injury or damage.

Offenders who admit or speak of their wrongdoing or commit a sin publicly have allowed it to be witnessed and thus may be dealt with accordingly, but what is concealed or done in private should not be sought out. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*If you pursue the faults of people you will destroy them, or almost destroy them.*"¹²² And he said, "*Do not backbite Muslims or pursue their faults. For he who pursues the fault of his brother Muslim - Allah will pursue his fault, and when Allah pursues his fault, He will expose him even if he should be in the interior of his house.*"¹²³

c. Avoiding what is controversial

The error or sin to be forbidden must be one about which there is no disagreement among the scholars of the main schools of thought.¹²⁴ There must be a consensus regarding its unlawfulness according to the Shari'ah.

A dā'iyah may not take the position that his own school of thought or a particular scholar's opinion is the only correct one and rebuke those who follow another as long as there is no deviation from the truth. Differences in viewpoint based on valid interpretations of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth must be respected, and there is always room for objective dialogue within the framework of the Shari'ah. To illustrate, Imām Mālik refused the caliph's suggestion that his madh-hab be imposed upon all regions of the Islamic state.

Another example is that of 'Umar, when a man asked him that since he had authority, why did he not force the acceptance of his opinion over that of 'Ali and Zayd. He replied, "If I had referred you to the Qur'ān and Sunnah of Allah's Messenger ﷺ I would have enforced it, but I referred you to my opinion, and opinion belongs to others as well."

When intentions are sincere, differences of opinion within the limits of Shari'ah can lead to greater awareness of the various aspects and possible interpretations of evidence. The process of dialogue may present a variety of options from which the most suitable solution may be found for particular cases. Knowledge and understanding of the reasons for

¹²⁰ In 2:189.

¹²¹ In 24:27

¹²² Narrated by Abū Dāwūd - ṣaḥeeḥ.

¹²³ Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd - ṣaḥeeḥ.

¹²⁴ Their viewpoints must be based on evidence from the Qur'ān or Sunnah and not merely personal or sectarian positions, which are not considered.

differences among the early jurists and the context within which they occurred will assist the dā'iyah to reduce present disagreements and encourage Muslims to abide by the proper ethics when dealing with them.

d. Choosing the right time

The perceptive dā'iyah will know the best time to approach the subject of a misdeed with the recipient, a period when he is calm and unoccupied, for someone who is angry or distracted with another matter will not listen and resent the intrusion. Ibn Mas'ūd said, "Hearts are sometimes eager and responsive and sometimes listless and indifferent, so grasp them when they are eager and responsive and leave them when they are listless and indifferent."

People will usually listen to someone of whom they are in need. For example, when the two companions of Prophet Yūsuf in prison asked him to interpret their dreams he took the opportunity before fulfilling their request to invite them to acknowledge Allah and worship Him alone.¹²⁵

e. Being methodical in presenting the case

This is illustrated in Sūrah Ghāfir¹²⁶ through the account of a believing man from among the people of Fir'aun who came forward to prevent the killing of Mūsā. His procedure was that of a progressive and logical argument presented step by step.

1. He began by emphasizing the injustice of such a deed as something obvious to all.

أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ

Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, "My Lord is Allah??"

How could one justify killing someone for his belief? The deed is shown as an outrage.

2. He then reminded those present that Mūsā had brought them proof that his Lord was Allah and that they had witnessed it.

وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

And he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord.

The dā'iyah needs to have clear evidence of what he says at hand.

3. He asked them to weigh the possibilities.

وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ

And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you.

Although he is a sincere propagator of truth and right, the dā'iyah must acknowledge the possibility (which is very real to the recipient) that he might be wrong, in order to be fair and just. But while the dā'iyah is confident in the face of the consequence of each possibility, its mention serves as a warning for those who deny.

4. He alludes to the fact that Allah knows which of the two parties is dishonest. Avoiding a direct accusation, he attributes the outcome to Allah according to His knowledge.

¹²⁵ Refer to 12:36-40.

¹²⁶ Refer to 40:26-44.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

Indeed, Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and liar.

An indirect warning is less distasteful and more acceptable to the human soul.

5. He then reminded them that Allah had favored them and warned of His punishment of the ungrateful.

يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمْ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا

O my people, sovereignty is yours today, [your being] dominant in the land. But who would protect us from the punishment of Allah if it came to us?

The gift of power and authority is a trial from Allah. Those in a position of responsibility are expected to show gratitude and are more accountable before Allah than others. The dā'iyah's anxiety is shown by including himself among the people who would be harmed. This makes them more likely to be attentive. He should never place himself in a position above his recipients, telling them, "You are so-and-so" or "Allah will punish you severely." This will only antagonize and distance them.

6. He showed fear for their future in that they could meet the fate of previous transgressors.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ مِثْلَ دَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظَلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ.

And he who believed said, "O my people, indeed I fear for you [a fate] like the day of the companies¹²⁷ – like the tradition of the people of Nūḥ and of 'Aad and Thamūd and those after them. And Allah wants no injustice for [His] servants."

A show of sincere concern, love and care for the recipients affects them and increases their confidence in the advisor.

7. He described some of the terrors of *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* and mentioned that there will be no help from Allah for those who were heedless of Him on the earth.

وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ يَوْمَ تُثَلَوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ

And O my people, indeed I fear for you the Day of Calling¹²⁸ – the Day you will turn your backs fleeing. There is for you from Allah no protector.

The prospect of being abandoned by Allah at such a time is a most severe and often effective threat.

8. He described to them a similar attitude held by a previous people and the result deserved by them. The comparison served as further warning.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زُلْتُمْ فِي شَكِّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا. كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ.

And Yūsuf had already come to you before with clear proofs, but you remained in doubt of that which he brought to you, until when he died, you

¹²⁷ i.e., Those peoples who rejected their prophets and were destroyed in former times.

¹²⁸ i.e., the Day of Resurrection, when the criminals will cry out in terror and people will call to each other (see 7:44-51).

said, "Never will Allah send a messenger after him." Thus does Allah leave astray he who is a transgressor and skeptic.

The narration is another effective form of indirect advice which can be presented without reference to the recipient.

9. The believing man, a compelling dā'iyah, concluded with a summary of his message, a final appeal and the statement that he had done his duty, expecting nothing but the acceptance of Allah.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِي أَهْدِيكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ. يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ. مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ. تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ. لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَرَدْنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالنَّاسُ شُرُفُوفٌ مِنْهُ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ. فَسْتَذَكَّرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفُوضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ.

And he who believed said, "O my people, follow me; I will guide you to the way of right conduct. O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter – that is the home of [permanent] settlement. Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof; but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – those will enter Paradise, being given provision therein without account. And O my people, how is it that I invite you to salvation while you invite me to the Fire? You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, and I invite you to the Exalted in Might, the Perpetual Forgiver. Assuredly, that to which you invite me has no [response to a] supplication in this world or in the Hereafter; and indeed, our return is to Allah, and indeed, the transgressors will be companions of the Fire. And you will remember what I [now] say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is Seeing of [His] servants."

f. Avoiding digression from the main subject

Sometimes a recipient will try to interrupt or redirect the conversation in order to evade the issue at hand. The dialogue between Mūsā and Fir'aun provides an example:

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ. قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ. قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ. قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأُولِينَ. قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ. قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. قَالَ لَئِنْ اتَّخَذْتُ لَهَا غَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ. قَالَ أَوْلُو جِنَّتِكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُبِينٍ. قَالَ فَاتِّبِعْ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ.

Said Fir'aun, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" [Mūsā] said, "The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them, if you should be convinced." [Fir'aun] said to those around him, "Do you not hear?" [Mūsā] said, "Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers." [Fir'aun] said, "Indeed, your 'messenger' who has been sent to you is mad." [Mūsā] said, "Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason." [Fir'aun] said, "If you take a god other than me, I will surely place you among those imprisoned." [Mūsā] said, "Even if I brought you something [i.e., proof] manifest?" [Fir'aun] said, "Then bring it, if you should be of the truthful." (26:23-31)

The dā'iyah must be alert to such tactics and keep himself from being sidetracked. He should either be able to bring the discussion back into focus or end it until a time when the recipient is more inclined to listen.

g. **Advising discreetly**

Most people do not like their faults mentioned in front of others. Even those who seek advice prefer that it be given behind closed doors. Imām ash-Shāfi'i observed, "He who admonishes his brother privately has advised and honored him, but he who admonishes him publicly has exposed and shamed him."

Many will not accept advice directed at them personally, but will recognize their errors and correct them when they are mentioned in a general way without naming anyone. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to use this method among his companions, saying, "*What do you think about people who do such and such...?*"

- 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb sent a letter to a man who had taken to drinking wine in which he said, "From 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb... Peace be upon you. I praise Allah, except whom there is no god. **[He is] the forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of abundance. There is no god except Him; to Him is the return.**"¹²⁹ The man read the verse over and over, becoming increasingly conscious of Allah's promise of forgiveness and His warning of punishment. He wept, repented and stopped drinking.

- A tābi'i scholar, ar-Rabi' bin Khaytham,¹³⁰ joined a gathering in which a man who had committed a wrong was being discussed. He remained quiet so they turned to him, expecting that he would share their view. He said, "I am not satisfied with my own self that I should cease blaming it and go on to blame [other] people. Indeed, people fear Allah regarding the sins of others but feel secure about their own sins." Thus, he brought their attention to their sin of backbiting in an indirect way.

- In more recent times, a primary school student sent a letter to the imām of a masjid near his school who would harshly expel the boys who liked to remain after the prayer. The message contained one verse: "**And do not send away those who call upon their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His countenance. Not upon you is anything of their account and not upon them is anything of your account. So were you to send them away, you would then be of the wrongdoers.**"¹³¹

In addition, people are more likely to accept change when they are given some kind of material encouragement, compensation or at least are reassured that it will not cause them worldly loss. Upon this fact is based the principle that zakāh may be given to those whose conduct is expected to be amended thereby. And the Prophet ﷺ was highly aware of this, especially in his dealings with non-Muslims and new Muslims. For example:

- Before entering Makkah at the time of conquest he ﷺ announced that anyone who entered the house of Abū Sufyān would be safe. Abū Sufyān, a former enemy, had feared the loss of his position of honor among the people, and was thus reassured that Islam does not deprive anyone of wealth or honor.

- Ṣafwān bin Umayyah fought with the Prophet ﷺ in the battle of Ḥunayn before his acceptance of Islam. The Prophet awarded him a large number of camels from the war booty. Ṣafwān said, "By Allah, the Prophet ﷺ gave to me while he was the most hated of people to me and he continued to give me until he became the most beloved of people to me."

¹²⁹ The verse quoted is 40:3.

¹³⁰ To whom Ibn Mas'ūd said, "If the Messenger of Allah had seen you he would have loved you."

¹³¹ 6:52.

- When the Messenger ﷺ sent da'wah letters to the kings and emperors of surrounding regions, he assured them that upon entering Islam their sovereignty would remain intact.

The dā'iyah may make use of any such means at his disposal, especially in light of the fact that Christian missionaries are given millions to spend on influencing destitute Muslims and others to join their churches. This can only be countered by efforts of their Muslim brothers to provide them with adequate food, clothing and medication. New Muslims, often disowned by their family members, may also be encouraged and supported in this way.

h. Avoiding provocation

The sensitive and compassionate dā'iyah is one who is genuinely concerned about his people and wishes the best for them. Although he hates wrongdoing and falsehood, he does not hate those who practice it but feels sorry for their ignorance. Moreover, he is acutely aware that harshness in dealing with them will only assist Shayṭān in keeping them away from reform.

Once, Abū Dardā' came upon some people insulting a man who had sinned. He asked them, "If you saw this man fall into a pit would you not rescue him?" They said, "Certainly." He said, "Do not insult your brother and praise Allah who kept you free from it [i.e., his sin]." They said, "Then we should not hate him?" He answered, "I would hate what he did, but if he has stopped, then he is my brother."

A tābi'i, Ṣilah bin Ashyam, saw that his friends were about to harshly admonish a young man for wearing an excessively long garment, so he said to them, "Let me do it instead." He said to the youth, "My nephew, indeed I need something from you." "What is it?" he asked. "I wish you would shorten your garment." The young man said, "Yes, I would be pleased to do it for you." Ṣilah said to his friends, "Is this way not better than what you intended? Had you insulted him, he would have responded in the same way."

Harsher methods can only be used when there is no response to diplomacy and kindness, when the wrongdoer flaunts his sin or tries to harm his advisor. Public transgressions can encourage similar behavior among the weaker Muslims, so it then becomes necessary to clarify the matter before others by severely reprimanding the offender.

i. Countering a bad deed with good

Allah, the Exalted has instructed:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. (41:34)

Because of the fact that people tend to be defensive about their beliefs and actions while assuming them to be good and correct, the dā'iyah who calls for change may initially be seen by them as someone who is trying to interfere in their personal affairs. He may therefore find an unpleasant reaction from some recipients. Abuse of the dā'iyah in the form of ridicule, insult, accusation, etc. is to be expected and dealt with in a diplomatic and generous manner. But the recipient should be made aware in such cases that the dā'iyah is overlooking his crude behavior in spite of the fact that he is in a position and has the ability to treat him in the same way. Thus he will not be looked upon as weak or unworthy of respect.

Moreover, it is only personal affront that is to be overlooked and forgiven by the dā'iyah and not attacks on the religion or falsehoods regarding it. Those should be defended by any means possible, and when one is unable by the hand or the tongue, at least in the heart.

Some Qur'anic dialogues may be taken as examples. In each of them, a prophet addresses his people in a gentle and logical way, receives a rude response and then counters it appropriately. These three steps follow a pattern which can be easily recognized:

1. Prophet Nūḥ said:

إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

"Indeed, I am to you a clear warner that you not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a painful day." (11:25-26)

2. Response:

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا تَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا تَرَاكَ إِلَّا اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِآدِي الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

So the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "We do not see you but as a man like ourselves, and we do not see you followed except by those who are the lowest of us [and] at first suggestion.¹³² And we do not see in you over us any merit; rather, we think you are liars." (11:27)

3. Reply:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأَتَانِي رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَتَمَيَّنْتُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْزَلْنَا مُكْرِمَهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ. وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ. وَيَا قَوْمِ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ. وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

He said, "O my people, have you considered: if I should be upon clear evidence from my Lord while He has given me mercy from Himself but it has been made unapparent to you, should we force it upon you while you are averse to it? And O my people, I ask not of you for it any wealth. My reward is not but from Allah. And I am not one to drive away those who have believed. Indeed, they will meet their Lord, but I see that you are a people behaving ignorantly. And O my people, who would protect me from Allah if I drove them away? Then will you not be reminded? And I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel, nor do I say of those upon whom your eyes look down that Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is most knowing of what is within their souls. Indeed, I would then be among the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust]." (11:28-31)

Prophet Hūd said:

يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

"O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. Then will you not fear Him?" (7:65)

¹³² i.e., without any thought or hesitation.

- Response:

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

Said the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people, "Indeed, we see you in foolishness, and indeed, we think you are of the liars." (7:66)

- Reply:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ

He said, "O my people, there is not foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser. (7:67-68)

Prophet Shu'ayb said:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُجِيطٍ. وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ. بَيِّنَةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ.

"O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. And do not decrease from the measure and the scale. Indeed, I see you in prosperity, but indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day. And my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption. What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you, if you would be believers. But I am not a guardian over you." (11:84-86)

- Response:

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ

They said, "O Shu'ayb, does your prayer [i.e., religion] command you that we should leave what our fathers worship or not do with our wealth what we please? Indeed, you are the forbearing, the discerning!"¹³³ (11:87)

- Reply:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ. وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمٍ لُوِطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ. وَاسْتَعْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَجِيمٌ وَدُوْدٌ.

He said, "O my people, have you considered: if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord and He has provided me with a good provision from Him...?¹³⁴ And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you; I only intend reform as much as I am able. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return.¹³⁵ And O my people, let not [your] dissension from me cause you to be struck by that similar to what struck the people of Noah or the people of Hūd or the people of Šāliḥ. And the people of Lūṭ are not from you far away. And ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is Merciful and Affectionate." (11:88-90)

¹³³ This is a sarcastic remark implying the opposite.

¹³⁴ The conclusion of the sentence is estimated as: "...would it not be my duty to warn you against corruption and disobedience?"

¹³⁵ i.e., I turn to Allah frequently in supplication and repentance.

The wrongdoers continued to defy him.

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْمُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بَعِزٌّ

They said, "O Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say, and indeed, we consider you among us as weak. And if not for your family, we would have stoned you [to death]; and you are not to us one respected." (11:91)

It then became necessary for him to put the matter back into proper perspective, decisively reaffirm the position of Allah, the Exalted, and remind them of His punishment:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ لِيَّ أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَاءَكُمْ ظَهْرًا إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ. وَيَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كاذِبٌ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ.

He said, "O my people, is my family more respected for power by you than Allah? But you put Him behind your backs [in neglect]. Indeed, my Lord is encompassing of what you do. And O my people, work according to your position; indeed, I am working. You are going to know to whom will come a punishment that will disgrace him and who is a liar. So watch; indeed, I am watching with you." (11:92-93)

Countering bad behavior with good is facilitated for the dā'iyah when he remembers two things: that what the wrongdoers and non-believers accuse him of is not true, and that he himself is not free of faults.

'Ali bin al-Ḥusayn was once insulted while leaving the masjid. The people wanted to defend him, but he told them to leave him alone. He went up to the man and said, "What Allah has concealed from you of my faults is even more. Can we do anything for you?" The man became ashamed, so 'Ali gave him the cloak he was wearing and a thousand dirhams. Thereafter, the man would say to him, "You are among the sons of prophets." On another occasion, 'Ali continued to disregard someone who was speaking rudely to him until the man said, "It is you I mean!" 'Ali answered, "And it is you I am ignoring." Perhaps he had remembered Allah's words:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ.

Take what is given freely, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant.¹³⁶ (7:199)

Another aid to practicing this virtue is to remember Allah's compensation in the Hereafter. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri sent a dish of dates to someone who had spoken ill of him behind his back with apologies that he was unable to adequately repay him for the rewards [from Allah] that he had granted him. And al-Ḥasan observed a man who was insulted arise, wipe the perspiration from his face and recite:

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

And whoever is patient and forgives – indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of resolve. (42:43)

Al-Ḥasan said, "His reward is with Allah. He understood it when the people had neglected it."

¹³⁶ "The ignorant" here does not mean the uninformed, but people of inappropriate behavior.

j. Choosing the lesser of two evils

When confronting wrongdoing, it is sometimes necessary to overlook the less harmful in order to prevent what is worse. An example is when Prophet Lūṭ suggested to the evil men marriage to the daughters of the community in the hope that they would give up the great sin they had intended.¹³⁷ Another example is that previously mentioned of Ibn Taymiyyah, who did not forbid the Tatar soldiers from intoxicants in order to save Muslim lives.

Similarly, in cases where condemnation of a wrong will lead to the loss of greater benefits it is not permissible. In modern times an effective speaker or a widely read Islamic publication can inform and correct a large section of the population. But were that speaker or publication to denounce the practices of particular rulers or regimes by name, the resulting loss would far outweigh a possible benefit.

Ibn Taymiyyah explained that according to the Islamic shari'ah, ordering what is right and forbidding what is wrong may indeed bring about good and reduce harm, but it must also be seen in another perspective. If its result is the loss of great benefit or the occurrence of greater harm it is no longer an obligation, rather, it is then prohibited. He went on to say that when something involves an equal degree of right and wrong or if it requires that both are present simultaneously,¹³⁸ then the people should not be ordered or forbidden concerning it.

Dealing with the Wrongdoing of Those in Authority

Populations are usually under the influence of their leaders to a great extent. Hence, it has been said, "The people are on the religion of their kings" and "When the rulers are upright, the subjects are upright." That is why Imām Ibn al-Jawzi affirmed that the most worthy to receive advice are the rulers since correcting them means the amendment of all the people.

When Allah's Messenger ﷺ stated that the best of people were his generation, followed by the next one and then the next...,¹³⁹ it included the rulers. After the four rightly-guided caliphs, most of the Umayyad and Abbasine rulers, although not above transgressions, were receptive to the advice of the scholars or at least bore it patiently out of respect for religious knowledge and fear of Allah.

Several reasons have been cited for correcting the behavior of those in authority:

- The influence they hold over their peoples, as mentioned above.
- Questioning by Allah on the Day of Judgment - The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, "*Let one of you not belittle himself so much as when he sees a matter about which something should be said he does not say it. So Allah will say, 'What prevented you from speaking about it?' He will answer, 'My Lord, I feared the people.'*" Allah will say, '*I am more worthy to be feared.*'"¹⁴⁰
- To escape punishment, as described in the ḥadīth which says, "*Allah does not punish ordinary people for the deeds of leaders until the leaders do that which the people are*

¹³⁷ Refer to 11:77-78.

¹³⁸ Such as keeping the ties of relationship while some family members do not observe correct Islamic dress or manners.

¹³⁹ Narrated by Aḥmad, al-Bukhāri, Muslim and at-Tirmidhi.

¹⁴⁰ Narrated by Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah.

able to correct but they do not correct it. That is when Allah will permit the destruction of both the people and the leaders." ¹⁴¹

- Confidence in Allah's reward, which overcomes the fear of expected harm. The Ṣaḥābi, 'Umayr bin Ḥabeeb, instructed, "When one of you wants to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong he should get himself used to being harmed and trust in the reward from Allah, the Exalted. For whoever trusts in the reward from Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, will not be hurt by a touch of harm." Such a person will taste the sweetness of faith even under torture or within the darkneses of prison.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*There are among my ummah people who will be given the [same] reward as the first generation; they forbid wrongdoing.*"¹⁴² That is because dā'iyahs who strive to reform their peoples face hardships similar to those endured by the first Muslims who supported the Prophet ﷺ and helped to establish Islam upon the earth. Moreover, one who is martyred for his efforts attains the position of Ḥamzah, *Sayyid ash-Shuhadā'* (the foremost of the martyrs). Allah's Messenger confirmed, "*Sayyid ash-Shuhadā' is Ḥamzah bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and [also] a man who stood before an unjust leader and enjoined him [to do right] and forbade him [from wrong] so he killed him.*"¹⁴³

Another ḥadīth concerning this issue:

The Prophet's wife, Umm Salamah related that he ﷺ said, "*Indeed, there will be appointed over you governors, and you will acknowledge [some of what they do] and disapprove [of some]. He who dislikes it has disassociated himself and he who condemns (speaks against it) is safe. But he who is satisfied and follows suit...*" People said, "O Messenger of Allah, should we not fight them?" He said, "*No, as long as they are praying.*"¹⁴⁴ Imām an-Nawawi wrote in his explanation: "There is proof in this ḥadīth that one who is unable to forbid the wrong does not commit a sin when he remains silent, but the one who sins is he who accepts it and does not dislike it in his heart or complies with it. And [further] that it is not permissible to withdraw allegiance from rulers because of their injustice or immorality as long as they do not modify anything of the fundamentals of Islam."

The ruling derived from the aforementioned ḥadīth is that forbidding the wrongdoing of those in authority is an obligation, but it must be done with great caution because of the potential harm to the da'wah itself and dā'iyahs, which in turn could adversely affect the establishment of a wider foundation for da'wah among the population. This means that:

- 1) Physical means against the legal authority should be avoided altogether.
- 2) Verbal means should be utilized with wisdom and discretion concerning the time and place, the circumstances and the manner of expression.

Sulṭān Saleem was a ruler who did not hesitate to kill anyone who angered him. The mufti, 'Alā'uddeen al-Jamāli sat before him and said, "The job of a mufti is to safeguard the sultan's Hereafter. You have ordered the killing of a hundred and fifty employees whose killing is unlawful, so you should pardon them." The sultan replied angrily, "You have

¹⁴¹ Narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarāni.

¹⁴² Narrated by Aḥmad - ṣaḥeeḥ.

¹⁴³ Narrated by al-Ḥākim - ṣaḥeeḥ.

¹⁴⁴ Narrated by Muslim. The implication behind the unfinished sentence is that whoever approves or accepts their wrongdoing will not be disassociated from its sin, nor will they be safe from Allah's punishment.

interfered in a matter of the sultanate and that is not part of your job." The mufti said, "Rather, I have intervened in a matter concerning your Hereafter and that is part of my job. However long you may live, you will die and be presented to Allah and stand before Him for account. If you pardon you will be saved, but if not, the Hellfire lies before you, from which you will not be protected by your sovereignty nor will you be saved by your authority." The sultan, realizing that the mufti was concerned for his welfare, pardoned the employees.

In addition, the dā'iyah must not address the ruler in a condescending manner or show belittlement of his knowledge. Advice and correction should be offered modestly without suggesting intellectual or academic superiority.

3) Verbal means should be avoided with unreasonable tyrants.

In order to keep the da'wah activity from being completely terminated, and perhaps in a violent manner, criticism of a tyrant's wrongdoing can be delayed until Allah provides a more favorable condition. The avoidance of confrontation does not mean, however, that the evil should not be deplored in the heart. It may sometimes be possible to convey a message by using indirect or general statements that will not be taken personally.

4) Advice should be given privately.

Even more than with ordinary people, those in positions of power do not like their weaknesses and failures discussed in front of others since they feel it undermines their authority. The caliph, Hārūn ar-Rasheed, said to Imām al-Aṣma'i, "You have greater knowledge but we have greater intellect, so do not instruct us in public. Leave us until we ask, and then answer precisely and do not say more unless we request it."

5) Harshness must be avoided.

On another occasion, Hārūn ar-Rasheed said to a man who had admonished him in an insensitive manner, "Tell me, am I more evil or was Fir'aun?" The man replied, "Fir'aun." He said, "And tell me, are you better or was Mūsā?" The man answered, "Mūsā, the chosen prophet who was spoken to by Allah." The caliph said, "Did you not know that when Allah sent Mūsā and his brother Hārūn to Fir'aun, He said, '**And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he will be reminded or fear [Allah].**'"¹⁴⁵ The man admitted his mistake and asked for forgiveness.

6) The dā'iyah must show that he is not competing for authority.

Those holding power in the land are usually extremely protective of their positions and fearful of losing them. They feel threatened by the mention of reform and tend to see those advocating it as trying to usurp their authority. And because Islam calls for implementation of the law of Allah, they assume it means they should be replaced by another group of people. In reality, amendment does not mean the removal of a government, but merely convincing heads of state to rule according to what Allah has revealed. Thus, the dā'iyah, as well as Islamic parties and organizations, must avoid any temptation toward armed rebellion, be sure their followers are aware that it is not permissible and reassure the rulers that their goal is simply reform within the system.

¹⁴⁵ Qur'ān, 20:44.

When the dā'iyah is clearly indifferent to worldly power and status he will be heard by the authority. After Mālik bin Dinār advised the governor of Baṣrah in an indirect and diplomatic way, the governor said to him, "Do you know what allowed you to be daring towards us and what keeps us from harming you? It is [your] lack of ambition for our position and indifference to our possessions."

A man said to Hārūn ar-Rasheed, "He who shares his wealth with the poor will be registered with Allah among the righteous." Suspecting a suggestion behind the remark, the caliph ordered that the man's debt be paid, but he said, "Do not do it, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, for a debt cannot be settled by another; return the right to its people." Then the caliph offered him 1000 dinārs. The man said, "Return them to the people; it is better for you. Take it away; you have harmed me."

The scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah, did his utmost to restore order after the governor fled Damascus in the wake of the Tatar invasion. He was confronted by the sultan, an-Nāṣir li-Deenillāh, with an accusation that had been sent him that the shaykh had ambitions toward sovereignty. Ibn Taymiyyah replied emphatically, "I would do that?! By Allah, all of your possessions and those of the Mongols do not equal a penny to me." Knowing the shaykh's sincerity, the sultan said, "By Allah, you are indeed truthful and the one who said it is a liar."

7) Admonition should be brief.

Because the affairs of state require so much time and effort, in order to be effective, a dā'iyah's advice should in a concise form and directly to the point. 'Umar bin 'Abdul-'Azeez wrote to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri asking him for brief advice. Al-Ḥasan replied, "The foremost of what is good for you and for what is before you is indifference to this world, and indifference results from certain faith, certain faith from contemplation, and contemplation from consideration. When you think about the world, you will not find it worthy to sell your soul for, but you will find your soul worthy to be honored by the belittlement of the world. For this world is not but a house of trials and a place of heedlessness."

Another example is in the brief reminder of 'Abdullāh bin 'Abdul-'Azeez al-'Umari to Hārūn ar-Rasheed: "Do you see all those people around the Ka'bah? Each one of them will be questioned about himself but you will be questioned about all of them." The caliph wept profusely.

Correcting Mistakes and Eliminating Sins

Correcting anything wrong is most important and is a part of giving sincere advice. It should be remembered that Islam is not only concerned with forbidding what is evil, but also enjoining what is right. Education, teaching and training involve clarifying the basic principles of religion and rules of sharī'ah, and using various methods to establish these concepts firmly in people's minds and hearts, by example, by encouragement, by relating stories, by discussing incidents, their consequences, etc. Some dā'iyahs fall short by confining their efforts only to addressing sins and mistakes without giving due attention to teaching the basics of the religion or to dealing with mistakes before they occur by instilling in people that which will protect them from committing them in the first place, or at least reduce their gravity.

To err is human; as the Prophet ﷺ said, *“Every son of Adam sins, and the best of those who sin are those who repent.”*¹⁴⁶ Bearing this fact clearly in mind will put things into their proper perspective, so the dā`iyah will not expect people to be perfect; nor will he judge them according to what he thinks they should be and then consider them failures if they commit a sin or err repeatedly. He must deal with them in a realistic manner, based on his knowledge of human nature which is subject to ignorance, negligence, shortcomings, whims, desires and forgetfulness. Understanding this fact will prevent him from being shocked by a sudden mistake that could lead him to react in an inappropriate fashion. It will remind the dā`iyah who is striving to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil that he too is a human being who could also make this mistake, so he can deal with the recipient on the basis of compassion rather than harshness, because the aim is to reform and amend and not to punish.

This does not mean, however, that we should leave people who are making mistakes alone, or find excuses for those who are committing sins on the basis that they are only human or they are youngsters, or that the modern age is full of temptations and so on. We must denounce wrong actions and call people to account, but at the same time, should evaluate their actions according to Islamic principles.

The Prophet ﷺ used various approaches in dealing with problems because conditions and personalities differ. Whoever understands this and intends to follow his example must determine the most appropriate approach to use according to the circumstances. The more serious a mistake, the more effort should be made to correct it. Effort to correct mistakes that have to do with ‘aqeedah should be greater than those to correct mistakes that have to do with worship and manners. For example, Allah's Messenger ﷺ was deeply concerned about dealing with and correcting mistakes that had to do with *shirk*, as when people attributed an eclipse of the sun to the death of his son, Ibrāheem. He ﷺ addressed the people saying, *“The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah, they do not eclipse for the death or life of anyone. If you see them thus, then invoke Allah and pray to Him until the eclipse is over.”*¹⁴⁷

The Prophet ﷺ often used to forgive those who made mistakes in their personal interactions with him, especially the harsh bedouins, in order to soften their hearts. But if the mistake had to do with some issue of religion, then he would become angry for the cause of Allah.

An educator may show anger in proportion to the sin at the time it is committed, or when he sees or hears it, in such a way that anger may be seen in his face or recognized from his tone of voice. This is a sign that his heart is alert to wrongdoing and that he will not keep silent about it, so that the others present will feel afraid of making the same mistake. Speaking out when one is angry can have a greater impact than remaining silent and then waiting until things have cooled down, because then the impact of his comments will be lost.

On the other hand, it may be wise to delay commenting on a regrettable incident or seriously mistaken words until all the people have been called together or until a time when they meet, because of the seriousness of what is involved or because there are not enough people around to understand and convey the information to others. There is nothing wrong

¹⁴⁶ At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah.

¹⁴⁷ Al-Bukhāri.

with addressing an individual immediately and delaying general discussion of the matter until later.

The following matters need to be kept in mind when dealing with sins and errors:

1. A dā'iyah should not concern himself with merely correcting noticeable aspects of behavior while neglecting the root cause of the mistake.

2. He should distinguish between major sins and minor mistakes and avoid exaggerating a mistake, going to extremes to prove it happened or trying to force an admission of guilt.

3. He should not make the one who errs or sins feel animosity, because the aim is to win people over, not to alienate them. Rather, he should explain the harmful effects of the mistake and offer a sound alternative. The Prophet ﷺ often admonished someone who had made a serious mistake by asking him, "What made you do that?" Inquiring as to the reason that motivated someone shows concern for him and undoubtedly has an effect on the way in which he will respond.

4. He should distinguish between the one who makes mistakes openly and blatantly, and one who tries to cover up his mistakes. Some people will try to offer phony, unacceptable excuses, especially when caught red-handed. The offender should be made to understand that his flimsy excuse is not acceptable. A person who has committed a sin will feel shy of a respected leader when he finds him out. The way the educator looks at and questions a person – even though it may be very brief – will have a great impact on him. Not discussing the false excuse at the time of hearing it – while knowing it is clearly made up – and ignoring the person may be enough to make him realize that his excuse is not accepted, motivating him to regret and repent.

5. He should distinguish between a person who has a record of countless good deeds, which will reduce the significance of his mistake, and a sinner who habitually transgresses, between one who frequently makes mistakes and one who rarely does so and one who repeats the error and one who is making a mistake for the first time. All of this should be taken into account when evaluating the level of his mistake and dealing with it.

6. He must take into account the wrongdoer's status and authority, and pay attention to cases where someone's adherence to Islam may not be strong and his heart needs to be opened further toward the religion, not being too harsh with him. The dā'iyah must always be conscious that there are moments of human weakness that may overcome some of his recipients, and should not be shocked by a serious error on the part of one who is relatively advanced in knowledge or age. Additionally, rebuking a child who makes a mistake should be done in a manner appropriate to his level of maturity.

7. He must allow enough time for correction of the mistake, especially in the case of those who have been accustomed to it for a long time, while continuing to follow the matter up with advice and counsel at appropriate times. The dā'iyah must be flexible enough in dealing with sins and mistakes that people will not be put off and continue to progress along the straight path to salvation.

Conclusion

Da'wah to Allah is the obligation of the Muslim ummah. Every Muslim is charged with this responsibility according to his ability. The importance of da'wah and need for sincere dā'iyahs like those of the past can be summed up in the words of Abul-Ḥasan 'Ali Nadwi.¹⁴⁸

"The ummah of Islam can still give the message of faith and life to a disillusioned humanity. Never was there a clearer appreciation for the need and worth of this message as now. The civilization of ignorance has been publicly disgraced. Its shame is being fragrantly exposed. People are disgusted with life; they are in despair of their intellectual and cultural leaders. Modern civilization is seriously ill. There is a dire need to disturb the complacency of the Community of the Faithful; it must be persuaded to care for human welfare more than for its own material interests.

The salvation of humanity is not achieved by force of arms. It relies on the moral courage and self-sacrifice of a handful of people who, by worldly standards, are often considered lacking in good fortune. It is they, courting dangers and trials, who will release millions from their miseries and lead them from despair to hope and from wretchedness to grace. They are the people who consider it a good bargain if, by the sacrifices of a few, many are able to achieve dignity and prosperity, and if, through some loss of affluence and wealth, the doors of material and spiritual well-being are opened to many."

The methods of da'wah are numerous, but foremost is the manner of the dā'iyah, who must make himself into a human being others are inclined to take as a role model. An admirable example is the most effective means of influence in conjunction with communication skills. The practice of da'wah requires the use of lawful methods, pursuit of justice and truth, protection of the ummah's unity and best interests, wisdom when imparting knowledge or advice and forbearance in the face of difficulties. Once he has exerted his utmost effort, the dā'iyah can rest assured of his reward and leave the outcome to Allah. For it is He, with His perfect knowledge of His servants, their attitudes and their potentials, who will determine the result, and it is He who guides whom He wills to the straight path.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, *"Indeed, Allah and His angels, even the ant in its hole and even the fish in the sea, bless those who teach good to the people."*¹⁴⁹ The skillful and sensitive dā'iyah is surely most worthy of these blessings. He will continue to reap them long after his death for whatever benefit he initiated or brought about, as was stated clearly by the Prophet ﷺ: *"Whoever invites to right guidance will have reward equal to the rewards of all those who follow it without it lessening anything from their rewards."*¹⁵⁰

And from Allah we seek success.

¹⁴⁸ Abridged from his book, *Islam and the World*.

¹⁴⁹ Narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarāni - ṣaḥeeḥ.

¹⁵⁰ Aḥmad and Muslim.

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