

The Qualities of an Islamic Da`i

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Da`i is a person who invites people to a particular message and therefore, *da`i* ila-Allah is one who invites people to Allah. All the Prophets and Messengers of Allah were *da`is* as *da`wah* ila Allah was the duty of every Prophet. Apart from individual references the Qur'an has described *da`wa* as their duty in general. It says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ﴾ ١.

For we assuredly sent among every people a Messenger (with the command) to serve Allah and eschew evil"

For Noah the Qur'an says:

﴿أَبْلَغُكُمْ رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ ٢.

I but convey to you the duties of my Lord's mission; sincere is my advice to you and I know from Allah something that you do not know.

The same subject is repeated through Prophet Hud with slight difference of words:

﴿وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ﴾ ٣.

I am to you a sincere and a trustworthy advisor.

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) is the supreme example of a *da`i* for all ages. The Qur'an has described him in an unequivocal way.

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1- Al-Qur'an 16/36

2- Ibid, 35/45-46

3- Ibid, 12/108

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا. وَدَاعِيَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَسِرَاجًا
مَنِيرًا﴾. ٤

O Prophet : Truly we have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, and as one who invites to Allah by His leave and as a Lamp Spreading Light :

﴿قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾. ٥

You say: This is my way: I do invite unto Allah on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, I and who ever follows me. Glory to Allah and never will I join gods with Allah.

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أَشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُوا وَإِلَيْهِ مَآبٌ﴾. ٦

Say: I am commanded to worship Allah and not to join partners with Him. Unto Him do I call, and unto Him is my return.

Allah sent his messengers and Prophets as *da'i* to human kind so that they could not have any excuse on the day of judgement:

﴿رَسُولًا مَبْشُرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِّئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾. ٧

Messengers who gave good news as well as warning that human kind, after (the coming) of the messengers, should have no plea against Allah: For Allah is exalted in Power Wise.

Addressing to the people of the Book, Qur'an has made special reference to the Prophethood of Mohammad (Pbuh). It is mentioned :

4- Ibid, 33/45-46

5- Ibid, 12/108

6- Al-Qur'an 13/36

7- Ibid, 4/165

﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا
مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ﴾. ٨

O People of the Book: now has come unto you, making (things) clear unto you, our Messenger after the break in (the series of!) our messengers, lest you should say: there came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner (from evil) but now has come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner (from evil).

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) is the last one in the line of these *da'is* and therefore the nature of his *da'wah* though similar in basic substance but is different in its scope. Earlier *da'is* addressed their communities according to their capacity to absorb it and Prophet of Islam communicated to humankind according to the level of understanding bestowed upon it by Allah (SWT)

Da'wah of the Prophet of Islam therefore, is not concerned with national, communal or regional requirement it is rather related to human kind and their requirements. Islam fulfills individual and collective needs of whole humankind and does not limit its scope to narrow national or geographical demands. The Prophethood of Muhammad (Pbuh) has two dimensions of *da'wah* special and general. special *da'wah* was for the Arabs because they were the first addressee of the call. The language of the Prophetic message was Arabic and the Prophet was from amongst the Arabs. The Qur'an has explained this aspect in the following verses.

﴿وهذا كتاب أنزلناه مبارك مصدق الذي بين يديه ولتنذر أم القرى ومن

حولها﴾. ٩

And this is a book which we have sent down, bringing blessings and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that you may warn the Mother of cities and all around her.

﴿الر. تلك آيات الكتاب المبين. إنا أنزلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون﴾. ١٠

These are the verses of perspicuous Book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, in order that you may learn wisdom.

﴿وهذا كتاب مصدق لسانا عربيا لينذر الذين ظلموا وبشرى

للمحسنين﴾. ١١

And this Book confirms in the Arabic tongue to admonish the unjust and as glad tidings to those who do right

The Arabic characteristic of the Qur'an is repeatedly asserted by the Qur'an¹² which is a special reference to local situation in which the message was revealed.

The general dimension of his Prophet hood is meant for whole of humankind. It was this level which required delegation and representation and therefore, an Ummah was raised to represent the

Prophet in his *da`wah* work. This duty was delegated to Ummah for there was no Prophet to come after the last Prophet. Allah has commanded the Ummah to do the *da`wah* work which was done by the Prophet.

9- Al-Quran 6/92

10- Ibid 12/1-2

11- Ibid 46/12

12- Ibid 16/103; 26/195; 41/44; 13/37; 20/113; 39/28; 41/3; 42/7; 43/3;

﴿وكذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس ويكون الرسول عليكم شهيدا﴾. ١٣

Thus we have made of you an Ummah justly balanced that you might be witnesses over the nations. And the Messenger a witness over yourselves.

﴿قل أي شيء أكبر شهادة قل لله شهيد بيني وبينكم وأوحى إلي هذا القرآن لأنذركم به ومن بلغ. أنكم لتشهدون أن مع الله آلهة أخرى قل لا أشهد قل إنما إله واحد وإنني بريء مما تشركون﴾. ١٤

Say; what thing is most weighty in evidence ? say: Allah is witness between me and you: This Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you and all whom it reaches. Can you possibly bear witness that besides Allah there is another God. ? Say: "Nay" I can not bear witness: say: But in truth He is the one God and I truly am innocent of (your blasphemy of) joining others with Him:

The Ummah being representative of the Prophetic duty is responsible for *da'wah* work. This collective responsibility has been explained in the following verse:-

﴿كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس تأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر وتؤمنون بالله﴾. ١٥

You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah.

This collective responsibility can be taken up by some people who are capable of doing the job if the whole Ummah is unable to perform it. The Qur'an has referred to such a group in these words:

13- Al-Qur'an 2/143

14- Ibid 6/19

15- Ibid 3/110

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ ١٦

Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.

The above mentioned verses show clearly that the Ummah is *Da'i* as a collective entity. However, individuals and groups can take up the job and become *da'is*. Some people have misunderstood this Qur'anic injunction and have taken up the view that *da'wah* is *wajib kifayah* meaning thereby that it will suffice to all if it is done by some one from amongst the community. Ibn Kathir has removed this misunderstanding by stating:

والمقصود من هذه الآية أن تكون فرقة من هذه الأمة متعدية بهذا الشأن وإن كان ذلك واجبا على كل فرد من الأمة بحسبه، كما ثبت في صحيح مسلم عن أبي هريرة، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من رأى منكم منكرا فليغيره بيده فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه وإن لم يستطع فبقلبه، وذلك أضعف الإيمان. ١٧

And the objective of this verse is that there should be a group of Ummah who has this purpose in their mind, though it is obligatory for every member of the Ummah according to his ability. This is testified by a saying of the Prophet recorded by Muslim. Abu Hurayra is reported to have said that the Prophet said, "He who amongst you should see something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with

16- Ibid 3/104

17- Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, 2/195-196

his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.

Fakhr al-Din Razi commenting on this verse has elaborated this point further by saying:

"منكم" قولان: أحدهما: إن "من" ههنا ليست للتبعيض لدليلين:
الأول: إن الله أوجب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر على كل الأمة في قوله: ﴿كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس تأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر﴾
- الثاني: أنه لا مكلف إلا ويجب عليه الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر، إما بيده أو بلسانه أو بقلبه ، ويجب على كل أحد دفع الضرر عن النفس. إذ ثبت هذا فنقول: معنى هذه الآية: كونوا أمة دعاة إلى الخير آمرين بالمعروف ناهين عن المنكر، وأما كلمة "من" فهي هنا للتبيين، لا للتبعيض كقوله تعالى: فاجتنبوا الرجس من الأوثان ... ثم ذكر الرازي القول الثاني وهو أن "من" للتبعيض لأن "في القوم من لا يقدر على الدعوة ولا على الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر" ... ثم قال عن أصحاب هذا القول: إن هذا التكليف مختص بالعلماء لأن الدعوة إلى الخير مشروطة بالعلم بالخير وبالمعروف وبالمنكر، ... فثبت أن هذا التكليف متوجه على العلماء لا على الجاهل، والعلماء بعض الأمة. ١٨ وبنفس هذا المعنى وذكر القولين في هذه الآية جاء في تفسير القرطبي ١٩ وتفسير الجصاص ٢٠

There are two opinions about the interpretation of the word "من" one opinion is that the word "من" here is not for portioning " " the holder of this view base their opinion on two arguments Firstly Allah (SWT) has made enjoining of good and forbidding of evil obligatory for the whole Ummah as evident from his command in the verse: you are the best of people, evlved from mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong.

18- Mafatih al-Ghayb, 8/177-178

19- Ahkam al-Qur'an, 4/165-170

20- Ahkam al-Qur'an, 2/29

Secondly, every one who is obliged to observe the precepts of *Shari'a* is obliged to enjoin good and forbid evil, either by hand, tongue or heart. And it is incumbent upon every one to protect himself from haram. When this proposition is proven we say that the meaning of this verse is that you be the Ummah which calls people to goodness, enjoin good and forbids evil. As for the word "*min*" it is for explanation **بيان** here and not for proportioning , as it is in the words of Allah: But Shun the obomination of idols". Al-Razi has mentioned another opinion that the word "**من**" here is for proportioning because there are people in the Ummah who are neither able to do *da'wa* nor have the powers to enjoin good and forbid evil. Talking about the holder of this opinion he further said that this obligation is especially related to the '*ulama*' for *da'wa* to goodness has a prerequisite of the knowledge of goodness and evil. It therefore. is proven that this obligation is meant for '*ulama*' and is not meant for the ignorants and the '*ulama*' are a portion of the Ummah. The same interpretation and opinions have been mentioned by al-Qurtubi and Jassas.

Any individual or group who has the intention of doing *da'wa* work must fulfill certain requirement and should possess these qualities which are essential for a *da'i*. Some of these qualities are mentioned below:

FAITH (إيمان)

The most important quality of a *da'i* is his faith in the message that he is going to preach. Without a strong faith a *da'i* becomes a joke among the people. With reference to the Prophets the Qur'an says:

﴿آمن الرسول بما أنزل إليه من ربه والمؤمنون. كل آمن بالله وملائكته
وكتبه ورسله لا تفرق بين أحد من رسله ، وقالوا سمعنا وأطعنا غفرانك ربنا

وإليك المصير ﴿ ٢١

The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believes in Allah, His angles, His Book and His messengers "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers" And they say: we hear and we obey. (We seek) your forgiveness, our Lord and to you is the end of all journeys.

Prophets as first *da'is* have deep faith in their message and Allah (SWT) bestowed upon them faith and strengthened it by inspiration, providing spiritual experience revealing to them secrets of His creation with the convincing arguments. Examples of such faith can be found in the Qur'an and by providing *ahadith*. The Qur'an says:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي نَهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا أَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذَا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ
قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ، مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ - يَقْصُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ﴾ ٢٢

Say: I am forbidden to worship those-other than Allah- whom you call upon say: I will not follow your vain desires: If I did, I would stray from the path, and be not of the company of those who receive guidance. Say: "For me, I (work) on a clear sign from my Lord, but you reject Him, what you would see hastened, is not in my power. The command rests none but Allah: He declares the truth and he is the best of judges.

A *da'i* must have a conviction and an unshaken faith in his *da'wah* and according to Qur'an the Prophets were gifted with such faith. Going through the arguments of the Qur'an one can see such faith shining in the hearts of the *da'is*. This

overflowing strength of faith is exemplified in the story of Abraham narrated in the Qur'an:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ ارْنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى، قَالَ أُولِمُ تَوَمَّنْ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ ٢٣

Behold: Abraham said, "My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead". He said, "dost you believe"? He said, yes, but to satisfy my own understanding." He said, "take four birds: tame them to turn to you: put a portion of them on every hill, and call to them; they will come to you (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power Wise.

A similar request was made by Moses to see Divine self with his own eyes. Qur'an has stated this incident in the following words:

﴿وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ ارْنِي أَنْظُرَ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ وَلَكِنْ نَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنْ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعَقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ ٢٤

When Moses came to the place appointed by us, and his Lord addressed him. He said, "O my Lord: show yourself to me that I may look upon you". Allah said, "By no means can you see me (direct) But look upon the mount, if it abide in its place then shall you see Me". When his Lord manifested His glory on the Mount He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to You. To You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe."

Apart from the personal experience of the Prophets Qur'anic arguments on the true nature of the message is another attempt to strengthen the faith of the believers. One of such argument is given in the following verse of the Qur'an:

﴿لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطٌ
كُفَيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دَعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ﴾. ٢٥

For Him (alone) is prayer in truth: any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths but it reaches them not. For the prayers of those without faith is nothing but (futile), wandering (in the mind).

The faith is an essential quality for a *da'i* as well as for a real believer. The Prophet is reported to have said:

عن أنس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ثلث من كن فيه وجد
بهن حلاوة الإيمان: من كان الله ورسوله أحب مما سواهما ومن أحب عبدا
لا يحبه إلا الله ومن يكره أن يعود في الكفر بعد أن أنقذه الله منه كما يكره
أن يقذف في النار. ٢٦

It is reported from Anas that the Messenger of Allah said, "there are three qualities for which anyone who is characterised by them will relish the savour of faith: that he loves man and he does not love him but for Allah's sake alone; he is to whom Allah and His messenger are dearer than all else. He who prefers to be thrown into fire than to return to unbelief after Allah has rescued him out of it.

Such strong faith is the need of every Muslim and it is more essential for a *da'i* because he is going to be an example for those who accept message.

25- Al-Qur'an 13/14

26- Muslim, Al-Jami', K, al-Iman, bab Bayan Halalwat al-Iman 1/33

It was the faith of the Prophet (Pbuh) which made him steadfast against all odds. When the Prophet started his mission the Qureish were furious about the preaching of Islam. They went to his uncle Abu Talib and said”.

يا أبا طالب ! ان لك سنا وشرفا ومنزلة فينا وأنا قد استنهيناك من ابن أخيك فلم تنهه عنا، وإنا والله لا نصبر على هذا من شتم آبائنا وتسفيه أحلامنا وعيب آلهتنا، حتى تكفه عنا، أو ننازله وإياك في ذلك حتى يهلك أحد الفريقين... حين قالوا لأبي طالب هذه المقالة، بعث إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال له يا ابن أخي إن قومك قد جاءوني، فقالوا لي كذا وكذا للذي كانوا قالوا له، فابق علي وعلى نفسك ولا تحملني من الأمر ما لا أطيق، قال: فظن رسول الله أنه قد بدا لعمه فيه بداء أنه خاذله ومسلمه وأنه قد ضعف عن نصرته والقيام معه. قال: فقال رسول الله: يا عم! والله لو وضعوا الشمس في يميني والقمر في يساري على أن أترك هذا الأمر حتى يظهر الله أو أهلك فيه، ما تركته ثم استعبر رسول الله فبكى ثم قام، فلما ولى ناداه أبو طالب، فقال: أقبل يا ابن أخي. فأقبل عليه رسول الله فقال: اذهب يا ابن أخي فقل ما أحببت، فوالله لا أسلمك لشيء أبدا. ٢٧

O Abu Talib! you have an old age privilege and an honour and position among us, we asked you to stop your nephew but you did not. We do not tolerate our fathers to be abused, our wisdom is stultified and our gods are ridiculd. Either you stop him to do that or we fight with him alongwith you the time that one of the parties is perished. Abu Talib summoned the Messenger of Allah and said, “O son of my brother: Your people come to me and said such and such thing. So have pity on me and yourself and do not put on me a burden which I cannot carry. The Messenger of Allah felt

a change in the attitude of his uncle and he felt that he has become weak to help him and stand with him. The Prophet said, "O uncle: by God if they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in left hand so that I leave this matter I would not leave it until Allah make it victorious or I am perished in this. Tears were in the eyes of the Prophet and he cried. He stood to leave when Abu Talib called him and said to him "come here my nephew". The Prophet went near him he said, "O son of my brother say what ever you like I will never hand over you to the enemies for anything.

The above statement manifests the strength of Prophetic faith in odd situation. To remain firm in the situation of suffering and persecution can only be possible with the strength of the faith one possesses.

The Prophet was commanded to ask Allah for more knowledge because the more knowledge you have the more strength you get in your faith.

KNOWLEDGE AND DEEP UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge and understanding of the nature and various aspect of *da`wah* is an essential quality for a *da'i*. In fact understanding is the first requirement of the job. It is even prior to faith, because faith needs an understanding for its basic element. Allah (SWT) established the superiority of Adam over angels through knowledge. The Qur'an has summed it up in the following verse:

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ. قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ ٢٨

And He taught Adam the names of all things: then he placed them before the angels and said. "Tell me the nature of these if you are right." They said glory to you; of knowledge we have no save what you have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in Knowledge and Wisdom.

The Prophet was commanded to ask Allah for more knowledge the more knowledge you have the more strength you get in your faith. In a verse the Prophet supplicates his Lord for increase in knowledge:

﴿وقل رب زدني علماً﴾ ٢٩

And say: O my Lord: advance me in knowledge.

Knowledge and understanding is the criterion of preference in human race. It is always knowledge which bestowed leadership upon those who possessed it. The Qur'an has stated this fact in the realm of faith and obedience. It says:

﴿قل هل يستوي الذين يعلمون والذين لا يعلمون إنما يتذكر أولو

الآل﴾ ٣٠

Say: are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?. It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition.

Even among the believers, those who possess knowledge, are given preference over those who do not.

﴿يرفع الله الذين آمنوا منكم والذين أوتوا العلم درجات والله بما تعملون

خبير﴾ ٣١

Allah will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is well acquainted with all you do.

29- Ibid 20/114

30- Ibid 39/9

31- Ibid 58/11

﴿شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو والملائكة وأولو العلم قائما بالقسط لا إله إلا هو العزيز الحكيم﴾. ٣٢

There is no God but He: that is the witness of Allah, His angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He the Exalted in Power, the Wise.

This verse tells us that the understanding of faith can not be developed without knowledge. Those who possess knowledge are made witness of *tauhid* alongwith the angels and Allah himself. The verse indicates that knowledge is the basis for accepting and witnessing of faith. At another place Qur'an has put knowledge as a source of understanding faith: ﴿فاعلم أنه لا إله إلا الله واستغفر لذنبك وللمؤمنين والمؤمنات والله يعلم

مقلبكم ومثواكم﴾. ٣٣

Know therefore, that there is no god but Allah and ask forgiveness for your faults and for the men and women who believe: For Allah know how you move about and how you dwell in your homes.

Since knowledge is essential for the understanding of faith it is also a prerequisite for *da'wah* work, therefore seeking knowledge remained a top priority among the Muslims. The Prophet (Pbuh) said:

فضل العالم على العابد كفضل على أدناكم ثم قال: إن الله وملائكته وأهل السماوات والأرض حتى النملة في جحرها وحتى الحوت ليصلون على معلم الناس الخير. ٣٤

The excellence of a learned over a worshipper is like any excellence over a lowest amongst you. Then he said, Surely Allah and his angels and dweller of heaven and earth even an ant in its chamber including the fish pray for the betterment who teaches beneficial sciences.

32- Ibid 3/18

33- The Qur'an 47/1

34- Tirmidhi, K. al-'Ilm, bab ma ja'a fi Fadl al-Fiqh, 5/50

The Prophet (Pbuh) is also reported to have said:

عن أنس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من خرج في طلب العلم فهو في سبيل الله حتى يرجع. ٣٥

Anas reported that the Prophet said "whosoever went out to seek knowledge has gone to the way of Allah till the time he comes back."

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

For the Prophets the knowledge and understanding came from Allah (SWT) directly. They were especially trained by Allah for the job and were always guided by Him. They were not only given revealed knowledge but also were gifted with a special faculty of wisdom and discernment. Since a common believer is not blessed with Prophetic qualities he therefore, has to depend upon revealed Book and Prophetic model. A Muslim has to have a deep understanding of the Qur'an, *sunnah* and the practice of trustworthy and pious generations of early Muslims. Without a deeper understanding of the examples of the best generations (*khayr al-Qurun*) a *da'i* is liable to commit blunders. The Prophet is reported to have said:

خير القرون قرني ثم الذين يلونهم. ٣٦

My time is the best of all periods then closer to it and then closer to that.

35- Tirmidhi, K. al-'Ilm, bab Fadl Talab al-'Ilm, 5/28

36- Bukhari, K. Bad' al-Khalq, bab Fada'l Ashab Nabi, 4/189

Tirmidhi, K. al-Fitan, ma Ja'a fi al-Qarn al-Thalith, 4/500

Reflecting on the Qur'an is one way of getting deeper understanding of the path of *da'wah* Qur'an says:

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ ٣٧.

(Here is) a book which we have sent down unto you, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its signs and that people of understanding may receive admonition.

Through reflection on the Qur'an a *da'i* is able to grasp the purpose of the communication of the Lord with His creation. It makes him aware of deep relation between the creator and the creation. Without reflection one can not unfold the complexities of this relationship. The Quran says:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا﴾ ٣٨.

Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them.

The other sources is the *sirah* of the Prophet and examples of the companions of the Prophet and successive generation to the companions. Their examples serve as a guiding light in the path of *da'wah* ila-Allah.

The Qur'an has directed the believers to follow the example of the Prophet by saying:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ

وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾ ٣٩.

37- Al-Qur'an, 38/29

38- Ibid 47/24

39- Al-Quran, 33/21

You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.

A *da'i* therefore, by following the example of the Prophet and studying his method can strengthen the understanding of the message of *da'wah*. Islamic *da'wah* never succeeds if a *da'i* ignores the beautiful pattern of the Prophet.

A *da'i* for the understanding of *da'wah* work, has to study and benefit from the experiences of the Companions of the Prophet and successive generation. The Companions in particular were the people with whom Allah was pleased and favoured them with His mercy. The Qur'an reports about a group of Companions who received Allah's favour in these words:

﴿لقد رضي الله عن المؤمنين إذ يبايعونك تحت الشجرة فعلم ما في قلوبهم فأنزل السكينة عليهم وأثابهم فتحاً قريباً﴾ ٤٠

Allah's good pleasure was on the believers when they swore fealty to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquility to them: and He rewarded them with a speedy victory.

The Qur'an describe them as a examples for the believers in their faith.

﴿فإن آمنوا بمثل ما آمنتم به فقد اهتدوا وإن تولوا فإنما هم في شقاق﴾ ٤١

So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right path: but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism.

40- Ibid, 48/18

41- Al-Qur'an, 2/137

The Companions enjoyed not only the company of the Prophet but also saw him leading a model life. They were the People who became a model to be followed. As a mortal he was aware of the end of the process of revelation therefore he instructed his community to follow the Book of Allah and his *sunnah*. He is reported to have said:

تركت فيكم أمرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما: كتاب الله وسنتي. ٤٢

I am leaving amongst you two things, you will never go astray if you hold them fast: the Book of Allah and my *sunnah*.

It is also reported from him that he said:

فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين. ٤٣

You must follow my *sunnah* and *sunnah* of the rightly guided caliphs.

For a non Prophetic *da'i* deeper understanding of the message will always depend upon a thorough understanding of these sources. This is a common course of action for every *da'i* of the Muslim Ummah.

1-CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLAH

Another important quality of a *da'i* is his close relationship with Allah, his trust in Him and reliance upon

42- Muslim, K. al-Hajj, bab Haj al-Nabi, 4/41; Abu Dawud, K. al-Manasik, bab sifah, 2/462; Ibn. Maja, K. al-Manasik, bab Hajj al-Rasul, 2/1025.

43- Ibn Maja, al-Muqaddimah, 1/16; Tirmidhi, K. al-'Ilm, ma Ja'a fi' al-Akhdh 5/44; Abu Dawud, K. al-Sunna, bab fi Luzum al-Sunna, 5/14; Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm, 2/180

him. Religious life in its personal dimension is fruitless without a communication with Supreme being. It is a fulfilment of one's spirituality on one hand and an anchor in a stormy situation on the other. The Qur'an uses an illuminative and comprehensive term "ma'a" to describe the nature of human divine relationship. When Moses took the Israelites out of Egypt and was followed by the Pharaoh's host. They were pursuing them and the Israelites saw the danger approaching nearer they cried! "we are sure to be overtaken" The faith of Moses stands in strong contrast to his people. His relationships with Allah and his trust in Him was so strong that he did not waver. He was sure that Allah will surely show him a way to escape and the people will be protected. The Qur'an has recorded Moses strength of faith in the wake of extremely dangerous situation in the following words:

﴿قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ﴾ ٤٤

(Moses said) By no means my Lord is with me soon will He guide me.

Moses used his closer link with his Lord to satisfy his people. He was aware of this closeness for he was assured of it at time of his appointment as Messenger of Allah. Both Moses and Aaron expressed their fear at the time of their appointment as Messengers:

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَى﴾ ٤٥

They (Moses and Aaron) said. "our Lord we fear lest he hasten with insolence against us or lest he transgress all bounds.

44- Al-Qur'an 26/63

45- Ibid, 20/45

Allah assured His closeness with them and this presence by saying:

﴿قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى﴾ ٤٦

He said, fear not for I am with you I hear and see (everything)

The word *ma'iya* (معى) indicates closeness with Divine being which was based on divine assurance already experienced by Moses. When Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was compelled by his opponents to leave Makka he with Allah's permission migrated to Madina. When the news of his departure reached Qurayash they were furious. They wanted him to be killed, therefore they announced reward for his capture. A party was sent also to pursue him and capture him. The Prophet and his close Companion Abu Bakr had taken refuge in the cave of Thawr. They concealed themselves for three nights. The enemies were prowling around in great number in fruitless effort to capture them. The Quraysh party actually reached the extreme of the cave but were unable to enter it. It was at this occasion that Abu Bakr expressed his anxiety and the Prophet consoled him by declaring Allah's closeness with them. The Qur'an has stated Prophetic confidence and Allah's response in the following verse:

﴿إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِي اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ ٤٧

If you help not (your leader) for Allah did indeed help him. When the unbelievers drove him out he had not more than one companion. They two were in the cave and he said to his companion "Have no fear for Allah is with us": Then Allah sent down his peace upon him and strengthened him with forces which you saw not and humbled to the depths the word of the unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights. For Allah is exalted in might Wise.

The faith provided them with peace of mind and Allah gave them safety and protection. They reached Madina, and a glorious chapter was opened for Islam.

The Prophets were chosen people therefore they were experiencing this relationship every now and then but for a common *da'i* this can be achieved through worship and prayer.

2-WORSHIP

Worship is an important source for the attainment of the nearness of Allah. Prostration is an essential element of ritual prayers and it has been described a mean to achieve divine nearness. The Prophet (Pbuh) was thus commanded.

﴿وَأَسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ﴾ ٤٨.

But bow down in adoration and bring yourself closer (to Allah).

The Prophet (Pbuh) has informed us about the significance of prostration in these words:

عن أبي هريرة، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أقرب ما يكون العبد من ربه وهو ساجد فأكثرُوا الدعاء. ٤٩

Abu Hurayrah reported: The Messenger of Allah said: The nearest a servant comes to his Lord when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state)

worship is a way to come closer to Allah (SWT) and thus one develops love and trust in Allah (SWT). In one of *Hadith Qudsi* this closeness has been explained in a unique way. Following is a portion of long narration:

ما يزال عبدي يتقرب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبته فكنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به ويده التي يبطش بها ورجله الذي يمشي بها وإن سألني لأعطينه ولئن استعاذني لأعيذنه. ٥٠

My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing *nawafil* (doing non obligatory prayer and good deeds) till I love him, when I love him, I become his sense of hearing with which he hears and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hands with which we graps and his foot with which he walks and if he asks me I give him and if He asks my protection, I protect him.

3-Du`a

Du`a plays an importan role in strengthening a close relationship of human being with his creator. *Du`a* is only an expression of the servanthood and submission of a person but

49- Muslim, *K. al Salat, bab ma yuqal fi al-ruku' wa'al-sujud*, 2/49-50

50- Bukhari, *K. al-Riqaq, bab al-Tawadu'*, 7/190; *Musnad*, 6/256

also an acceptance of the power of an absolute authority, and unlimited mercy and forgiveness of Allah (SWT). *Du`a* links a person with Allah and soften his heart for doing good to others.

A *da`i* through *du`a* attains closeness of Allah and sophistication of hearts and mind. *Du`a* is to seek continuous guidance and help from divine source in all situations and circumstances. The Prophet in various utterances explained the usefulness of *du`a* He said *du`a* is the essence of worship (الدعاء مع العبادة) Elaborating it further he said:

إن الدعاء هو العبادة ثم قرأ: وقال ربكم ادعوني استجب لكم.. ٥١

Surely *du`a* is worship and then recited the Quranic vers: And your Lord says: "call on Me I will answer your prayers.

Since a *da`i* is always working for Allah therefore, he can face a terrible situation in which one is confused and does not know the way out. It is *du`a* which helps and guides him through that situation. Qur'an has given the characteristic of those who are closer to Allah (SWT). They are the people who remain in touch with their Lord through *du`a*. Qur'an says:

﴿تتجافى جنوبهم عن المضاجع يدعون ربهم خوفاً وطمعا﴾.. ٥٢

Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in fear and hope.

51- Tirmidhi, K. al-Du`a, bab ma Ja`a fi Fadl al-Du`a, 5/456

52- Al-Qur'an, 32/16

﴿واصبر نفسك مع الذين يدعون ربهم بالغداة والعشي يريدون وجهه﴾.

٥٣

And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face.

The Prophet has encouraged believers to engage themselves in *du'a* because they would be able to get the bounty of Allah (SWT) He is reported to have said:

سلوا الله من فضله فإن الله يحب أن يسئل وأفضل العباداة انتظار

الفرج. ٥٤

Ask Allah (SWT) for His favour and grace. Surely Allah loves to be asked. And the best worship and prayers is to wait for pleasure and comfort.

Worship and prayer brings a *da'i* so close to Allah that he forgets his difficulties and is completely absorbed in the love of Allah. Every step he takes and every word he utters become source of pleasure and joy. Because of the love of Allah and his devotion to him he faces all difficulties with smile, courage and resolve

53- Ibid, 18/28

54- Tirmidhi, K. al-Du'a, bab Intizar al-Faraj, 5/565

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

Patience and perserverance are the essential qualities of a *da'i*. No *da'i* can withstand the difficulties and sufferings in the way of *da'wah* unless he possesses these qualities. The Qur'an has used *sabr* (صبر) and *istiqamah* (استقامة) to indicate these qualities.

SABR (صبر)

Originally *sabr* means to refrain, abstain and desist. The Arabs say (ريسا)⁵⁵ which means he refrained from something. Al-Jawhari is reported to have said: patience is to control oneself at the time of anguish and anxiety.⁵⁶ According to Ibn Manzur patience is antonym to anguish.⁵⁷ On the basis of linguistic meaning one can say that a person who has controlled himself in difficult circumstances, refrained from being impatient and kept himself steadfast in dangerous situation would be called a patient person.

The Qur'an has used this word in this sense. For instance describing the attitude of unbelievers and their continuous refusal to the call of the Prophet Qur'an says:

ان كاد ليضلنا عن آهتنا لولا أن صبرنا عليها ٥٨

55- Lisan. 4/438

56- bid, 4/438

57- Ibid.

58- Al-Qur'an, 25/40

He indeed would well-nigh have misled us from our gods, had it not been that we were constant to them.

At another place it is said:

وانطلق الملائمة ان امشوا واصبروا على آلهتكم ان هذا لشيء يراد ٥٩

And the leaders among them go away impatiently saying walk ye away and remain constant to your gods for this is truly a thing designed (against you).

Although this word has been used in the Qur'an in these meanings, however, a slight difference in the shades of meaning can be observed. For instance it is used for waiting for an appropriate time, not to be impatient to face the difficulties bravely, to ignore and to be steadfast and to do the needful in spite of all difficulties and obstacles.

If we look at all these meanings it becomes evident that the spirit of the term is to control and resist. There are moments in the lives of the individuals and nations when they are faced with failures or enjoy a success. These are the moments of their test, either they show control over their senses and strength of their character or they lose patience and destroy everything. The Qur'an has beautifully analysed the psychological condition of humans under such circumstances. The Qur'an says:

ولئن أذقنا الإنسان رحمة ثم نزعنا منه أنه ليوس كفور. ولن أذقناه نعماء بعد

ضراء مسته ليقولن ذهب السيئات عني انه لفرح فخور إلا الذين صبروا

وعملوا الصالحات. ٦٠

59- Ibid. 38/6

60- Al-Qur'an, 11/9-11

If we give man a taste of Mercy from ourself and then withdraw it from him, behold: he is in despair and blasphamy. But if we give him a taste of our favour after adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, "all evils have departed from me; behold! he falls into exultation and pride. Not so do those who show patience and constancy and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness and great reward.

The Qur'an while describing the characteristics of the Prophets mention with special importance the quality of patience in them.⁶¹

A student of the Qur'an will notice that the Prophet of Islam has been commanded by Allah (SWT) to be patient in all circumstances. For instance it says:

فاصبر على ما يقولون وسبح بحمد ربك قبل طلوع الشمس وقبل غروبها. ٦٢

Therefore be patient with what they say, and celebrate constantly the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting.

At another place the Qur'an says:

فاصبر لحكم ربك فإنك بأعيننا وسبح بحمد ربك حين تقوم. ٦٣

Now await in patience the command of your Lord for verily you are in our eyes and celebrate.

61- See: Al-Qur'an, 3/146, 32/24, 12/18, 38/44, 37/103

62- Al-Qur'an, 20/130

63- Ibid, 52/48

The Prophet of Islam was commanded to adopt patient attitude as earlier Prophets had adopted it. It says:

فاصبر كما صبر اولوا العزم من الرسل ولا تستعجل لهم. ٦٤

Therefore patiently persevere, as did all the Messengers of unflexible purpose: and be in no haste.

Patience has a special place in the ethico-moral aspects of the Prophetic personality. The social conditions in which he started his *da'wa* and the difficulties and the challenges he faced have no parallel. It was the quality of patience that enabled him to face the opposition of the Qurayshites and the hardships created by them. *Hadith* and biographical sources are full of the detailed accounts but we confine ourself to a few examples.

The polytheists of Makka were exercising all sorts of pressures to stop the Prophet (Pbuh) from *da'wah* work. Physical torture and persecution were the obvious choice. Weaker followers were the easy targets but the Prophet was no exception. Bukhari has recorded an incident which shows the gravity of the situation. He has recorded it at various places and narrated it from Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As and 'Amr b. al-'As. Following is the full account of the incident:

عن عروة بن الزبير قال: سألت ابن عمرو بن العاص قلت أخبرني بأشد شيء صنعه المشركون بالنبي؟ قال بينا النبي يصلي في حجر الكعبة إذا أقبل عقبة بن أبي معيط فوضع ثوبه في عنقه فخنقه خنقا شديدا فأقبل أبو بكر حتى أخذ بمنكبيه ورفعاه عن النبي قال: اتقتلون رجلا أن يقول ربي الله.

64- Ibid 46/35

65- Bukhari, K. Bad'al-Khalq, b. Ma Laqiya al Nabi wa A shabuhu min al-Mushriken, 4/245, Ibid, K.al-tafsir, b. Sura al-Mu'min, 6/34, Ibid, K.al-Manaqib, b. Manaqib Abi Bakr, 4/19

‘Urwa b. Zubayr says that he asked Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As to tell him about the gravest sufferings of the Prophet at the hands of polytheists. He said that once the Prophet was praying in the *Hijr* of the Kaba, suddenly ‘Uqba b. Abi Mu‘ayt came and put his garment around the Prophet’s neck and throttled him violently. Abu Bakr came and caught him by his shoulder and pushed him away from the Prophet and said, “Do you want to kill a man just because he says, “My Lord is Allah”.

The second incidence has also been recorded by Bukhari in the following words:

عن عبد الله، قال بينا النبي ساجد وحوله ناس من قريش جاء عقبة بن أبي معيط بسلي جزور فقفه على ظهر النبي فلم يرفع رأسه فجاءت فاطمة عليها السلام فأخذته من ظهره ودعت على من صنع فقال النبي: اللهم عليك الملاء من قريش أباجهل بن هشام وعقبة بن ربيعة وشيبة بن ربيعة وأميمة بن خلف أو أبي بن خلف شاك فرأيتهم قتلوا يوم بدر فآلقوا في بئر غير أمية أو أبي تقطعت أو صاله فلم يلق في البئر. ٦٦

On the authority of ‘Abdullah it is narrated that while the Prophet was prostrating, surrounded by some of Quraysh, ‘Uqba b. abi Mu‘ayt brought the intestine (i.e. abdominal contents) of a camel and put them over the back of the Prophet. The Prophet did not raise his head, (till) Fatima came and took it off his back and cursed the one who had done the harm. The Prophet said, “O Allah : Destroy the chiefs of Quraysh, Abu

66-Bukhari, K. Bad‘al Khalq, bab ma laqiya. 4/239

Al-Tabari in his book has recorded this incident from Abu Salmah. al- Rahman and al-Nasair and Ibn Abi Hatim have narrated it with slight variation from amr b. al- ‘As instead of his son.

قال: -قل: ربي الله ثم استقم.

Jahal b. Hisham, 'Utba b. Rabi'a, Shaiba b. Rabi'a, Umayyah b. Khalaf or Ubayy b. Khalaf." (Shu'bah, is not sure of the last name).

I saw these people killed on the day of Badr and thrown in the well except Umayya or Obayy, whose body parts were mutilated but he was not thrown in the well.

'A'isha reports that the Prophet (Pbuh) said that he used to live between the two nastiest neighbours - Abu Lahb and 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayat. Both of them used to throw dirt and filth at his door.⁶⁷

The main cause for Hamza's embracing Islam was the torturous attitude of Abu Jahl toward the Prophet. It is narrated on the authority of Tariq b. 'Abdullah al-Muharibi that he once saw the Prophet preaching, 'There is no god save Allah'. A man followed him and ruthlessly flung stones at him. The Prophet was profusely bleeding and wicked fellow cried: O men! be on your guard he is a liar.⁶⁸

The Prophet was facing all these insults and persecutions with patience and steadfastness. His companions and followers meted out with same kind of treatment. Bilal, the slave of Umayyah b. Khalaf, was severely beaten by his master when the latter came to know his conversion to Islam.⁶⁹

67- Aurqani, sharh Mawahib, 1/251.

68- Kanz al-'Ummal, 6/302

69- Sirah, 1/240

Family of yaser.⁷⁰ Suhayb b. Sanan⁷¹ and Khabbab b. al-Arat⁷² were the people to suffer the most. They were the weaker members of the society and their sufferings and persecutions could be understood but it is strange to note that even the members of honourable families were not spared. Their own Kith and kin were keen to persecute them. 'Uthman b. 'Affan, Zubayr b. al- 'Awwam, 'Umer b. al Khattab, Khalid b. Sa'id and others were among those who suffered at the hands of their own relatives for the mistake of conversion to Islam.⁷³

The Greatest example of Prophetic Patience

The greatest example of the Prophet's patience can be seen during his journey to Ta'if. He went there with the companion of his, Zayd b. Haritha, his freed slave, and approached the family of 'Umyr who was reckoned among the nobility of the town.

70- Ibn Sa'd. 1/249. The Prophet said to the family: oh family of yasir! be patient, (al-Isti'ab, I/178.)

71- When suhayb migrated to Madina he was forced to leave all his belongings at Makka. Reaching Madina he was greeted by the Prophet by these words; Suhayb has benefited from this dealing. (Ibn Sa'd, 3/161)

72- Khabbab was the slave of Umm-e-'Ammar and was severely punished by her after his conversion to Islam (Al-Isaba, 2/195.)

73- Ibn Hisham has given all the details (Sirah, 1/339-343)

The leadership was in the hands of three sons of 'Abd Yalayl, Mas'ud and Habib. He approached them but to his disappointment all of them turned a deaf ear to his message. Instead they stirred up the slaves and vandals to tease, abuse and chase him out of the town. The people hooted him through the streets, pelted him with stones and at last obliged him to flee from the city pursued by a relentless rebble. Blood flowed down upon his legs; and Zayd endeavouring to shield him was wounded in the head. According to Ibn Sa'd they did not desist until they chased him to the foot of surrounding hills. There wearied and exhausted he took refuge in one of the numerous orchards and rested against a wall of vineyard which belonged to 'Utba and Shayba, sons of Rabi'a, the wealthy citizens of Makka. They watched with pain the conditon of the Prophet and moved by compassion, sent to him one of their christian servant with a tray of grapes. The Prophet accepted the fruit with pious invocations; "In the name of the Lord."

At that time it seemed to him that as if the whole world had turned against him. He turned to his Lord and betook himself to prayer in the following touching words. He was weary and wounded but confident of the help of his Lord. The text of this touching prayer has been recorded by al-Tabari, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hisham, and others.

أَللّٰهُمَّ إِلَيْكَ أَشْكُوا ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي وَقِلَّةَ حِيلَتِي وَهُوَ أُنِي عَلَى النَّاسِ، يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ أَنْتَ رَبُّ الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ، وَأَنْتَ رَبِّي إِلَى مَنْ تَكَلَّنِي إِلَى بَعِيدٍ يَتَجَهَّمُنِي؟
أَمْ إِلَى عَدُوِّ مَلِكْتِهِ أَمْرِي أَنْ يَكُنْ بِكَ عَلَى غَضَبٍ فَلَا أَبَالِي وَلَكِنْ عَافَيْتَكَ

هي أوسع لي. أعوذ بنور وجهك الذي أشرفت له الظلمات وصلح عليه أمر
الدنيا والآخرة من أن تنزل بي غضبك أو يحل على سخطك لك العقبى حتى
ترضى، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بك. ٧٤

O Lord: To thee alone I make complaint of my helplessness, the paucity of my resources and my insignificance before mankind. Thou art of the most merciful of the mercifuls. Thou art the Lord of the helpless and the weak, O Lord of Mine! Into whose hands wouldst Thou abandon me: into the hands of an unsympathetic foe who would sullenly frown at me, or to the enemy who has been given control over my affairs? But if Thy wrath does not fall upon me, there is nothing for me to worry about but Thy grace is more than enough for me. I seek protection in the light of thy Countenance, which illuminates the heaven and dispels every darkness and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that, Thou shouldst be wrathful to me. And there is no power nor resource but Thine alone.

Reaction of a common person to such a terrible experience would be one of anger and vengeance, but the Prophet had shown an example of a *da'i* who was model for patience and compassion 'A'isha has narrated Prophetic reaction which indicates his greatness and mercy. Bukhari, Muslim and Nasa'i have recorded the Prophetic statement in the following words:

عن عروة أن عائشة حدثته أنها قالت للنبي هل أتى عليك يوم كان أشد من يوم أحد؟ قال: لقد لقيت من قومك ما لقيت وكان أشد ما لقيت منهم يوم العقبة إذ عرضت نفسي على ابن عبيد باليل بن عبد كلال فلم يجيني إلى ما

أردت ما انطلقت وأنا مهموم على وجهي فلم استفق إلا وأنا بقرن الثعالب
 فرفعت رأسي فإذا أنا بسحابة قد أظلني فنظرت فإذا جبريل فناداني
 فقال: إن الله قد سمع قول قومك لك وما ردوا عليك وقد بعث إليك ملك
 الجبال لتأمره بما شئت فيهم. فنناداني ملك الجبال فسلم على ثم قال: يا
 محمد فقال ذلك فيما شئت إن شئت أن أطبق عليهم الأخشبين فقال النبي
 بل أرجو أن يخرج الله من أصلابهم من يعبد الله وحده لا يشرك به شيئا. ٧٥

It is reported by 'Urwa that 'A'isha told him that she once asked the Prophet, "Have you encountered a day harder than the day of the battle of Uhud". The Prophet replied, "your tribe has troubled me a lot and the worst trouble was the trouble on the day of 'Aqba when I presented myself to Ibn Abd Yalayl bin 'Abd Kulal and he did not respond to my demand. So I departed overwhelmed with excessive sorrow and proceeded on and could not relax till I found myself at Qarn al-Tha'alib where I lifted my head towards the sky to see a cloud shading me unexpectedly. I looked up and saw Gabriel in it. He called me saying, "Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they have replied back to you, Allah has sent the Angel of Mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people." Angel of the Mountains called and greeted me, and then said, "O Muhammad! order what you wish. If you like, I will let al-Akhshabayn (i.e. two mountains) fall on them." The Prophet said, "No but I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah alone, and will worship none besides Him."

It is evident from the above Prophetic statement that it is the quality of patience which helps a *da'i* to stand firm in all difficult situations and is a key to success.

75- Bukhari K. Bad'al-Khalq, b. Dhikr al-Malaika, 4/83;
 Muslim K. al-maghazi, b. Ma Laqiya al-Nabi min Adha
 al-Mushrikin, wa'al-Munafiqin, 5/181

ISTIQAMA

Istiqama (استقامة) is from *qawama* (قوم) which means to be upright, straight and even. The Arabs say that: (قام الشيء واستقام: اعتدل واستوى ٧٦) i.e a thing is balance, straight and even. Abu Zayd says that *istiqamah* is evenness, uprightness and straightness (الاستقامة اعتدال الشيء واستواءه ٧٧). With reference to human attitude it means to stand firm for a right cause even if there are difficulties, dangers and oppositions. To remain firm on ones stand is called perseverance.

PERSEVERANCE AND THE PROPHET (Pbuh)

The Prophet had a difficult mission. He was being opposed by every one. Ridicule, humiliation abuse and persecution was the order of the day. The Prophet and his followers were always threatened by dire consequences. It was this situation when Allah commanded the Prophet to be steadfast:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ۚ وَبِئْسَ لِلْمَشْرِكِينَ حَافِظٌ ۖ ۝ ٧٨﴾

76- Lisan, 12/498

77- Ibid, 12/498

78- Al-Qur'an 41/6

Say: I am but a man like you; It is revealed to me that your God is one God; so stand true to Him and ask for his forgiveness and woe to those who join gods with God.

Opposition to the *da'wa* was increasing everyday and Makkah and its surroundings were becoming a hell for the believers. Even to breath peacefully was forbidden. The person of the Prophet, inspite of his noble tribal position, was not spared from the torture. The condition of a common believer was unimaginable. The more they were persecuted the more they were asked for patience and perseverance. The Qur'an says:

﴿فَلْذَلِكْ فَادَعِ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ ٧٩.

Now then, for that reason, call (them to the faith) and stand steadfast as thou are commanded, nor follow thou their vain desires.

The commandmant of perseverance is not confined to the Prophet; his followers and believers are included as well. One can perceive the wisdom of this order by looking at the situation of that time. As mentioned earlier the whole atmosphere was highly charged against the small minority of believers. Every kind of torture and pressure was used against them to retreive them back to polythesim. The inhumance behaviour of Makkan was on the increase so were the sufferings of the believers. Under this hopeleseness and

despair there was a danger that some weaker heart might waver and forsake the Islamic Movement; therefore the Qur'an time and again reminded the Prophet and the believers of patience and perseverance, because this was the source of their strength. Addressing to the Prophet the Qur'an says:

﴿فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾ ٨٠.

Therefore stand firm (in the straight path) as thou art commanded, thou and those who with you turn (unto God) and transgress not from (the path); for He seeth well and all that you do.

The Qur'an has described uprightness and perseverance as a process of psychotherapy for the committed believers in difficult circumstances. According to the Qur'an it not only provides spiritual satisfaction and inner strength but also induces angelic favour and divine grace. The language and expression used by the Qur'an for the description of *al-istiḡama* has not been used for any other moral and ethical quality. The Qur'an says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ - نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ نَزَلْنَا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ﴾ ٨١.

In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is God" and further stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time) fear ye not:

80- Al-Qur'an, 11/112

81- Al-Qur'an, 41/30-32

(they suggest), nor grieve: but receive the glad tidings of the garden (of bliss) to which ye were promised. We are your protector in this life and in the hereafter, therein you will have all that your souls desire and therein you will have all that you ask for, a hospitable gift from one oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

PERSEVERENCE AN ESSENTIAL MORAL QUALITY

Perseverance is the most important quality for a worker of *da'wa* Ila-Allah. Referring to the history of *da'wa* the Qur'an has mentioned *istiqama*'s special significance. History of *da'wa* is full of examples of patience and perseverance.

There was no period of *da'wa* activity when the *da'is* were not persecuted, difficulties were not faced by them or the opponents have not made life miserable for them and the *da'is* were not compelled to seek refuge in Allah from the oppression of the unjust and brutal opponents of *da'wa*. From amongst many examples we will confine ourselves to a few only. The Qur'an while referring to early *da'is* has recorded sentiments and emotions of some of the workers and gave advice to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) by saying:

﴿إِذَا مَكَامُ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخِلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْمِ

البأساء والضراء وزلزلوا حتى يقول الرسول والذين معه متى نصر الله ألا
إن نصر الله قريب ﴿٨٢﴾

or do you think that you shall enter the paradise without such trials as came to those who passed away before you.? They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: when (will come) the help of God?“. “Ah verily, the help of God is always near:

A famous companion of the Prophet Khabbab b. al-Arat says that when he complained to the Prophet about the sufferings and persecutions faced by him in the path of Islam, the Prophet referred to the difficulties of the earlier believers. Bukhari has recorded the whole story in the following words:

يقول: أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهو متوسد وهو في ظل الكعبة وقد لقينا من المشركين شدة. فقلت: ألا تدعوا الله فقد وهو محمر وجهه فقال: لقد كان من قبلكم يمشط بمشاط الحديد مادون عظامه من لحم أو عصب ما يصرفه ذلك عن دينه ويوضع المنشار على مفرق رأسه فيشق باثنين ما يصرفه ذلك عن دينه وليتمن الله هذا الأمر حتى يسير الراكب من صنعاء إلى حضرموت ما يخاف إلا الله. ٨٣

Khabbab narrated: I came to the Prophet while he was leaning against his sheet cloak in the shade of Ka'ba. We were suffering greatly from the pagans in those days. I said (to him):, “will you invoke Allah (to help us)”? He sat down with a red face and said, “A believer among those who were

82- Al - Qur' An. 2/214

83- Bukhari K. Bad' al-Khalq, b.Ma Laqiya Rasul Allah 4/239

before you used to be combed with iron combs so that nothing of his flesh or nerves would remain on his bones: yet that would never make him desert his religion. A saw might be put over the parting of his head which would be spilt into two parts, yet all that would never make him abandon his religion. Allah will surely complete this religion (i.e. Islam) so that a traveller from San'a to Hadramaut will not be afraid of anybody except Allah".

The Prophet (Pbuh) has described *Istiqama* as the greatest virtue after the faith. It is evident from his sayings that *Istiqama* has the complementary position to the faith itself. Following *hadith* of the Prophet is clear proof of it.

عن سفيان بن عبد الله الثقفي قال: قلت يا رسول الله: قل لي في الإسلام قولاً لا أسأل أحداً بعدك وفي حديث أبي أسامة غيرك قال: قل آمنت بالله ثم استقم. ٨٤

It is narrated on the authority of Sufyan b. 'Abdullah al-Thaqafi that he said: I asked the Messenger of Allah to tell me about Islam a thing which may dispense with the necessity of my asking anybody after you. In the *hadith* of Abu Usama the (words) are: other than you. He (the Prophet) remarked: say I affirm my faith in Allah and then remain steadfast to it.

The Prophet himself set illuminating examples of perseverance. His biographical and *hadith* sources contain such examples. Although Makkan period was full of

84- Muslim, K. al-Iman; b. Jami ' Awsaf al-Islam, 1/47.

Trimidhi has reported it in the following words

K. al-Zuhd, b. Hifz al-Lisan, 4/607

قال قالت: يا رسول الله! حدثني بأمر اعتصم به

قال: قل: ربي الله ثم استقم.

sufferings and tortures for all believers but the Prophet was to face the brunt of it.

The Qurashite abset by continuous preaching of the Prophet approached his uncle Abu Talib and pressurised him to stop his nephew from preaching his new faith. Abu Talib seemed to scumb to their pressure and politly advised the Prophet to find a way of reconciliation. Disappointed by the situation and realising the weakening of his uncle's help his faith grew stronger and his trust in God became deeper and firmer. His answer to his uncle is a glorious example of perserverence and rectitutde. He said:

يا عم! والله لو وضعوا الشمس في يميني والقمر في يساري على أن أترك
هذا الأمر حتى يظهر الله أو أهلك فيه، ما تركته. ٨٥

"O my uncle: by God! if they put the sun in my right hand and moon in my left on condition that I abandon this course, until God has made me victorious, or I perish therein I would not abandon it."

The Prophet continued his *da'wa* activities at Makka inspite of all odds. He faced all the hardships, sufferings and persecutions and migrated to Madina only when the divine command came to leave for Madina. The Madinan life brought another type of difficulties. It was physical clash with

the Makkans because they were determined to wipe the nascent community out. Madinan experience was the one of survival. It was a matter of life and death for the community. It was this period that he along with his followers had to go to the battle field. During these battles there were occasions when even the bravest warrior would not dare to stand. His companion witnessed his bravery, strength of character, will power and trust in God at the times when death was prevailing every where.

One of such occasion was the battle of Hunayn. For the Muslims it was the biggest armies that had hitherto assembled under the Prophet. So some of them felt greatly elated with their numbers and with their preparation for war. Hawazin were skilled in archery and they had occupied every point of vantage. They had posted the best of their archers on various hills. When suddenly the enemy sprang from his ambushade and charged furiously upon them. Staggard by the unexpected onslaught column after column fell back and choked the narrow pass. Aggravated by the obscurity of the hour and the straightness of the rugged road panic ceased the army. They all turned and fled.⁸⁶

Amidst such adverse circumstances with the exception of a few of the Prophet's devoted friends and admirers there

86- William Meur, Life of Muhammad, 402

was a general confusion. Muhammad (Pbuh) called out with a loud and dignified voice:

أنا النبي لا كذب أنا ابن عبد المطلب.

I am the messenger of Allah, I am no imposter, I am the descendant of 'Abd al-Muttalib.

This imparralel example of the Prophet created such sort of moral courage and perseverance that they themselves proved to be glorious of human history. Family of yasir, Khabbab b. Aratt, Bilal, Suhayb are always quoted as a symbol of patience and perseverance. There are numerous examples of other companions of the Prophet who showed resilience and courage against all odds for the cause of *da`wah*.

