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Purpose and Implications of Islamic Dawah

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The Methods of Dawah, Purpose of Dawah, Islamic Dawah, and Modern Islamic Movements are some of the titles of importance in our time. There are some of the programs and courses related to the above topics which have been designed to teach to the undergraduate students of International Islamic Universities and elsewhere in the Muslim world. These courses are taught in many universities as required courses. Practicing Muslims consider teaching of these courses as important because Dawah work as such is taken as obligatory for all Muslims.



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What is the purpose of teaching these courses to students? A few objectives of them may be outlined as follows: To study the approaches of Dawah in the Quran and *Sunnah*; to examine the methodologies of Dawah of the other Prophets [pbut]; to expose students to scientific approaches to Dawah; to enable students to employ the effective methods into their Dawah activities.

Some other writers on Islamic Dawah argue that by teaching these courses we intend to prepare preachers so that they can invite people to their religion. Here we need to ask one question: Why do we need to change from one religion to another? **Is the change of religion the purpose of Islamic Dawah? What are the implications of Dawah to life and society?** We need to answer these questions at a time when the entire world is echoing with the slogans of Islamic terrorism, radicalism, fundamentalism, violence, and Islamophobia and also has suffered from Covid-19 pandemic.



Is the Purpose of Dawah Clearly Stated?

([https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.islamicity.org%2F64009%2Fpurpose-and-implications-of-islamic-dawah%2F)

[u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.islamicity.org%2F64009%2Fpurpose-and-implications-of-islamic-dawah%2F](https://www.islamicity.org%2F64009%2Fpurpose-and-implications-of-islamic-dawah%2F)) Dawah is explained in general in terms of calling or inviting people to *religion* of Islam. Some other would say that Dawah for them means inviting people to God or a religion or to the Path of God or to one's Faith. **Does it mean that by**

conducting Dawah we want to invite people to *religion* of Islam so that we can increase the number of *religious* followers of Islam? Is Islam a religion? Is it true that the purpose of Dawah is to invite people to the *religion* or to a new faith



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[status=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.islamicity.org%2F64009%2Fpurpose-and-implications-of-islamic-dawah%2F](https://www.islamicity.org%2F64009%2Fpurpose-and-implications-of-islamic-dawah%2F)) or to God and to the Path of God and to make people *religious* or the followers of God or worshipers of God and *virtuous* or God-fearing for getting salvation on the Day of Judgment?

Is the real purpose of Dawah to invite people to the Path of God in a *religious* sense? Does it mean that God require people to worship Him or follow His Path for He needs them? Most of the writers on Dawah refer to the very famous *ayah*



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[text=Purpose+and+Implications+of+Islamic+Dawah](https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=16:125)) of the Quran from Chapter AL-NAHL, "[O Prophet] Call people to the way of your Lord with *wisdom* and goodly exhortation, and *reason* with them in the best manner possible" [16: 125] (<https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=16:125>).

Hence, they argue we call people to the way of God because it is clearly


instructed in the Quran.  further quote another *ayah*, "I have only created

implications of Islamic dawah%2F) and men that they may worship Me.”[51:56 (https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=51:56)] and contend the purpose of creation of man is to worship or serve God. So we invite people to worship/serve God. Finally, they conclude we have clearly stated the purpose of Islamic Dawah.

MENU **Some other scholars think that Dawah means to invite people to Islam as the way of life.** They say one should not present Islam as a *religion* confining to a few aspects of personal conduct and faith, rather it should be presented “as a way of life, unifying all the individual, collective and metaphysical problems into a meaningful whole offering a solution in keeping with the common sense and in a natural way.” They further argue: “...if Islam had been presented not as a collection of peculiar beliefs and rituals, but as a perfect way of life, the world would have reacted quite differently” and had accepted Islam.

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No doubt, whatever is explained so far in books as quoted above seem to be quite true. In spite of this don't we need to reflect afresh on the purpose of Islamic Dawah? We are asked in the above-mentioned *ayah* to use wisdom and reason in the best possible manner. **Can we say the above-mentioned style of presentation of purpose of Islamic Dawah be suitable for our time and people?** Has it not created some misunderstandings about Dawah and its real purpose?

In modern world especially in the West, for example, the purpose of Islamic Dawah is understood in the context of 'missionary' zeal and it is equalized with Christian evangelicalism. As a matter of fact many Muslims claim that Islam is a missionary *religion*. It encourages for preaching and conversion. Some other think about the purpose of Dawah and perceive it in terms of 'expansion of the Muslim faith' or 'propagation of religion' or 'missionary activities' or 'the conversion of individuals' or 'missionary competition.' Based on these observations, majority of people conclude and argue that there is little question that one of the goals of Dawah is the expansion of the Muslim faith, domination of Islam as a religion or supremacy of Islam or implementation of Islam. The call or the 'invitation' to 'the way of God,' is taken in a *religious* sense. This implies that one is invited to abandon whatever belief or faith he/she possesses for the sake of other belief and  **Reviving the Islamic Spirit 2020**
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tantamount to converting people to the Islamic *religion*. Furthermore, it is also contended that, "it is difficult to know whether conversions were desired for religious reasons or whether they were seen as a means to economic and political ends."

Purpose of Islamic Dawah in a Proper Perspective

To avoid misunderstandings and to make Dawah more relevant and useful to our contemporary world and people, we need to put Dawah and its purpose in a proper perspective. Most of our Muslim scholars have presented the case of Dawah in terms of *religion* and religious obligation. A very famous scholar, for example, argues that through the methods of Dawah, "one has to inform people about Allah, His Prophet, and their teachings." Another scholar explains that Islam is "...a missionary religion from its very inception. The Muslims are... missionaries of a world message and representatives of the greatest world movement." Some other argues the aim of Dawah is, "to make Islam better known...by way of delivering lectures and issuance of publications...to generally acquaint the ...public with the realities about the Muslim world." There are some other scholars and activists who see modern man and his society lack the moral and ethical values, hence, they set the goal of Dawah to call people to faith in God and to work for the establishment of an equitable and just Islamic order. It is also argued by some scholars that Enlightenment rationalism has effectively relegated religious beliefs to private life so it is necessary to bring back *religion* through Dawah to the mainstream of society.


Other than this, most of the Muslim scholars and activists who are involved in the Islamic movements and organizations contended that the purpose of Dawah, which in fact has repeatedly been mentioned, is to Islamize every aspect of life and thus to establish an Islamic order and Islamic state. For them, Islam is an all-embracing Deen [way of life] which regulates every aspect of life. All these arguments and explanations seem, no doubt, to be true but the question here is: is this kind of presentation of objectives of Dawah in line with the Qura'nic objectives and suitable in our contemporary times? We need to know how far this kind of presentation produced good result. **I would contend here that**



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this way of presentation has caused several misunderstandings and sidelined the main purpose of Dawah. We should not intend to defeat practically the purpose of Dawah. My question here is: should we need to continue this way of presentation? I think we should not demonstrate, at any cost, our incapability to make significant contributions to the cause of Dawah. We must avoid a reactionary as well as *religious*, cultural, and environmental approach. We should exhibit our ability to respond positively to the demands of the Quran for the purpose of Islamic Dawah. I would like to argue here that **the presentation of the purpose of Dawah in the Quran is not religious but rather reflects the universal concern about truth and reality and humanity.**

To avoid misunderstandings and to make Dawah more relevant and useful to our contemporary world and people we need to put Dawah and its purpose in a proper Quranic perspective of universal truth and reality.

All most all scholars and writers who refer to the *ayah* (16: 125) (<https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=16:125>), "Call people to the way of your Lord," have focused more on the Path of God instead of the best possible manner. In this way they have diverted the attention of people from the truth and reality of life to the purpose of *religion* in a *religious* sense. Here is exactly the relevance of the above mentioned *ayah* we need to reflect on it afresh. **Look at the *ayah*, particularly at the second part of the *ayah*.** It is said here: "*Call people...with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and reason with them in the best manner possible.*" Our  scholars argue for calling people to the way of

God one should use wisdom and goodly exhortation. But, here one can ask one simple question. Why can't we invite people in a simple way to the Path of God? Why did God ask us instead to use wisdom and intelligent ways? Why the use of wisdom is needed? Why it is said that 'reason with them in the best manner possible.' And what is that wisdom and best manner?

In this *ayah* we are in fact asked we should be more wise and intelligent enough in inviting people to the Path of God. Why do we invite people to the Path of God? Why do people need to come to the Path of God? And what is that Path of God? Is it a religious path for salvation in the hereafter? Does God need people or do people need the Path of God? Here is the need to use wisdom, good exhortation and present the message in the best possible manner. **How to do Dawah in the best possible manner?** Before we answer this we need to know: what is that best possible manner? Where is the emphasis in the *ayah* either on the Path of God or use of wisdom and best possible manner or elsewhere and what is that Path of God? This is the most important point which has been neglected by our writers and activists who are involved in Dawah. Hence, they focus on the Path of God and neglect emphasis on wisdom. They took it in a different way. For them wisdom means knowing some important aspects of people who are called towards Dawah.

To conclude we need to revisit the question about the actual purpose of Dawah: Is calling people to the Path of God the sole purpose of Dawah? We need to ponder upon the true purpose of Dawah for which all the Prophets of Islam [pbut] had been sent down along with Revelations [Books of Knowledge and Wisdom], the Quran being the last one.

It was to invite people to follow a religious Path of God and become religious, pious, morally sound, and spiritually elevated.

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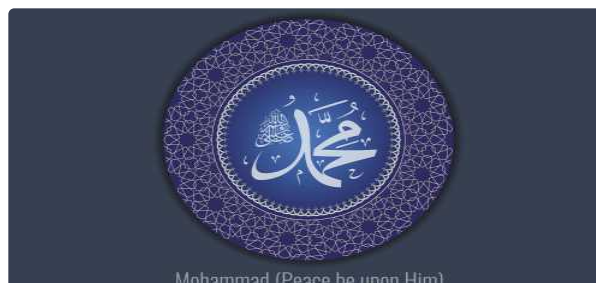
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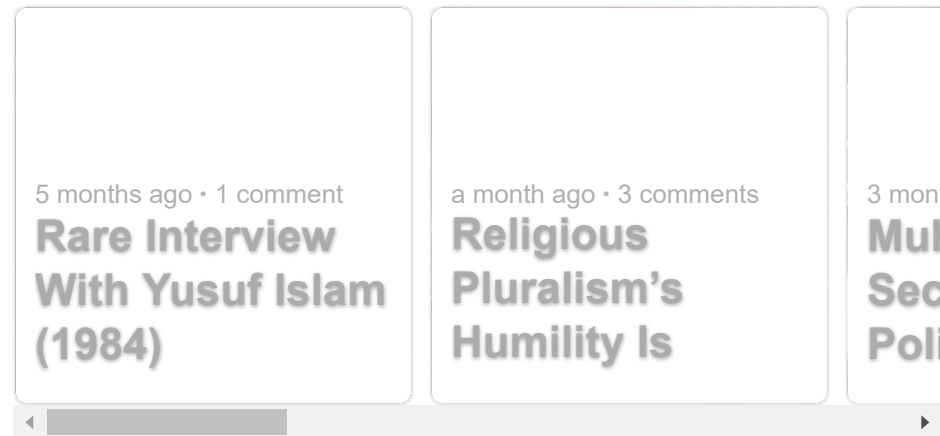
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