

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

What was Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH&HP) manner in inviting to Islam?

When it comes to how Islam was spread universally, we hear from many that Islam was spread by sword and bloodshed. However, studying the conduct and manner of all the prophets, and especially Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP), in inviting people to Allah unveils the truth about this issue.

When one decides to start a revolutionary cultural movement, he/she needs to plan for different aspects of this movement. The most important thing is the message he/she wants to convey to the audience. After that, he/she comes to how to spread this message in a way that can be vastly heard, and then it's time to discover how the message should be said and conveyed to attract the audience. This is the most primary rule in media studies, and prophets in their era were well-aware of these rules and if they needed help regarding techniques and concepts, they received guidelines from Allah to help them spread their message in the most influential way.

The messages that prophets were going to convey to people were revealed to them by God Allah. The question "how to spread this message" is discussed as a method of invitation. And the question 'how to make the words influential' is discussed under the title of manners of invitation in this article.

The mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP)

Allah (SWT) highlights the mission of His Prophet (PBUH&HP) as follows:

"O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner. And as a summoner to Allah by His permission, and as a radiant lamp." (33: 45-46)

In this verse, the Prophet (PBUH&HP) is introduced as a "witness" [1]; a person who is present in his society and observes the problems and challenges of people on one hand, and as a person who has the best capability to testify the truth about Allah, His creation, and the hereafter on the other.

He has the responsibility to invite people to Allah, inform and remind them of the mercy and blessings of their lord and warn them of what is harmful to them. He, as a “radiant lamp” lightens the path of his people toward prosperity. [1].

The methods

But, has God Allah provided His prophet Prophet ((PBUH&HP) with any methods to help him guide people?

In some verses of the Quran Allah (SWT) provides the Prophet (PBUH&HP) with the following methods:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and dispute with them in a manner that is best...” (16:125)

Inviting with wisdom

Using this verse, the first step in inviting people to God Allah is to use correct wisdom and reasoning, and since the mission of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH&HP) is to awaken thoughts and ideas and to flourish rational treasures, the best way to achieve this goal is to use logic and reasoning. [2] This method is mostly used for those intellectual people of the society.

1- Inviting with good advice

The verse introduces “good advice” as a method for communicating with the audience who have softer hearts. “Good advice” is the method in which good deeds are reminded and expressed in such a way that the listener's heart is softened by hearing that expression and, as a result, surrenders. Therefore, for some audience gentle speech is more effective than logical arguments. [4]

2- Inviting with dispute

However, for a group of audience who are stubborn and have prejudice on their ideas, the Quran suggests the method of dispute and argument in a way that is best.

The definition of “best despite” can be best understood when recognizing what is a wrong dispute. A wrong dispute or argument as described by Imam Sadiq (AS) is “a disgraceful, immodest argument to deny a right, or to accept a falsehood, as a result of your own intellectual weakness, or to do so as a result of the abuse of a rival's intellectual weakness.” [5]

Therefore, the best dispute is the one in which both parties listen to each other with the intention of learning from and informing each other, and accepting the truth and justice even if it is against our mindset.

3- Based on awareness

In another verse of the Quran Allah (SWT) Commands His prophet Prophet (PBUH&HP) to:

“Say, ‘This is my way. I summon to Allah with insight—I and he who follows me. Immaculate is Allah, and I am not one of the polytheists.’” (12:108)

In fact, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH&HP), by the command of GodAllah, determines his religion and method to invite all people to this path out of awareness and insight. The followers of the Prophet (PBUH&HP) must also invite the people to the divine religion with awareness and insight.

The manners of prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP)

Apart from all the methods that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP) knew them well, it was his manner that attracted people to him and his message.

Mercy to mankind

As Allah mentions in the Quran, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP) was sent to humanity as a mercy and blessing:

“We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.” (21:107)

Although the great manner and behavior of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP) has been admired in the Quran [6], the difficulty of his mission in interacting with people has been so great that Allah puts mercy and gentleness in his heart:

“It is by Allah’s mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have surely scattered from around you. So excuse them and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him.” (3:159)

This verse shows that his kind attitude and his sympathy with people has been one of the main tools he used in inviting people to God.Allah.

From among people

Other absorbing characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HP) are mentioned in another verse of the Quran:

“There has certainly come to you an apostle from among yourselves. Grievous to him is your distress; he has a deep concern for you, and is most kind and merciful to the faithful.” (9:128)

The verse emphasizes on the fact that the prophet Prophet (PBUH&HP) was one of the people, not considering himself higher than them. He was a man who was so compassionate to the people, and his mind was all concerned about their problems and their life in this world and in the hereafter. Although this verse ends with the phrase that he was kind to faithful people, another verse of the Quran shows that he tried so hard to guide and help the unfaithful. So much that Allah (SWT) told him

“you are liable to imperil your life [out of distress] that they will not have faith.” (26:3)

In sum, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH&HP) used all correct logical, psychological, scientific, and behavioral methods to invite people to truth and the soul of his merciful invitation still flows all over the world through the hearts of the truth-seekers.

References:

1. Tabatabaei, M.H, Tafseer-e Al-mizan, <http://www.aviny.com/quran/almizan/jeld-16/mizan-17.aspx>
2. Jawadi Amoli, Abdullah, ‘the Prophet of Islam’s Conduct and manner in inviting to truth’, Pasdare-e Eslam Magazine, No. 296, (2007, July)
3. ibid
4. ibid

5. Muhammad-Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar , vol.70, p. 402.
6. The Quran (68:4), Surah Qalam , verse, 4