Conclusion

Islam is the religion of da'wah and the Muslims of the whole world together constitute the Ummah of da'wah. The very purpose of their existence as an Ummah is that they should propagate the Truth and present it to every soul honestly, courageously and without concealing or distorting any part of it. They have to give witness by their every word and deed in favour of the Message of their Lord, -Allah.

Apart from the commandments of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger , history also bears the evidence that da’wah has always been the real force behind the glory of the Muslims.

The world of Islam is, today, passing through a state of decline. Educationally as well as technologically, the Muslims are considered backward in the contemporary world. Worse is the condition with the spiritual aspect of their life. The main cause behind such kind of decline is the Muslims’ apathetic approach towards da’wah.

They had come to guide others, but they left off da’wah and became others’ imitators.
At different stages, the need was felt to revive da'wah and to galvanise the Ummah. Several Islamic organisations strove in this field. These Islamic organisations set lofty objectives before them and adopted specific methodologies to reform the Ummah, on one hand, and to present the Truth before the rest of the nations, on the other. Their achievements were great. But, at the same time, they could not succeed in making Islam a governing force even in their own lands. The reasons were many. The most prominent being that most of these movements strove for gaining power first so that, to them, a radical change could be brought about. With the result there arose conflicts between the Muslim governments and these movements in their own lands. The hypocritic approach of the rulers was no less prominent a factor. The foreign powers could easily find their stooges and puppets in the Muslim lands to continue the colonialism indirectly.

There is a dire need of the hour that Islamic movements should rethink over their methodologies of working. They have to take stock of the modern situation and its demands.

Besides these major organisations, there are various other trends operating in the field of da'wah that need evaluation.

One of these trends is the 'inter-religious dialogue' being held primarily with the aim of removing mistrust and misunderstanding existing among different
religious communities and, at the same time, developing cordial relationships, reconciliation and cooperation between them. 185

Dialogue is performed, mainly, on the basis of common points between different religions. But, so far as the holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger are concerned, this approach has adopted only towards the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians). It is on the basis of the fundamental beliefs (like the belief in the Day of Judgement, revelation etc.) that the People of the Book were invited to cooperate with the Muslims on the basis of common terms. The Qur'anic Ayah:

(Al-Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:64)

"Say: 'O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between you and us: That we worship none but Allâh; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allâh: If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allâh's will)."" (3:64) provides clear guidance in this respect. There is no other example of calling people of other faiths, who differed with the Muslims with respect to the very fundamentals, to cooperate with them. They were, instead invited to Islam very plainly.

The way dialogue between different religions is being performed in the present times, has spread the wrong notion that Islam is a religion as all other religions and that it also strives for unity of religion.

Inter-religious dialogue is also viewed as the Christian missionary's more clever and subtle way of propagating their faith. Being seemingly a moderate and least harsh method, the Christian missionaries have devised the method of dialogue as an effective means, in the contemporary scenario, to carry on with their proselytisation project. It seems that they are trying to get adjusted among the Muslim communities and to gain familiarity with the culture, beliefs and practices of the non-Muslims, to mould their missionary methods accordingly.

The most passionate advocate of this dialogue is a Christian missionary, Phil Parshall, who has spent a considerable time in the Muslim lands. He advocates that dialogue is the best means through which the Christian missionaries can be able to acquire a ground in Islam and the Muslim culture.386

However, since Islamic da'wah is to present the Message of Truth in its pure and pristine form before every people, dialogue can, therefore, be taken as a good opportunity for presenting the Message of Allah before the mankind without distorting or concealing any part of it.

Another trend is that of holding debates with the people of other faiths. The main theme of such debates seems to highlight the weaknesses of other religions, on one hand, and to counteract false propaganda made against Islam, on the other.\textsuperscript{387}

While closely watching the proceedings of these debates, one gets convinced that these are a sort of \textit{Munázîrah}.

But, so far as the nature of da‘wah is concerned, \textit{Munázîrah} before da‘wah has no basis in the Sunnah of the Messengers.\textsuperscript{388}

It follows from this that the people of different faiths must be, first, invited to Islam. And after their refusal and making of arguments, discussions and debates can be held with them, in order to highlight weak points of their own religions, making clear to them, at the same time, the merits of Islam, so that they can get convinced. This can be performed according to the Qur’anic guidance of \textit{Mujâdalah Ahsan}, which is done only after da‘wah has been performed with \textit{Hikmah} and \textit{Maw‘izah ‘Hasanah}.

\textsuperscript{387} In modern times such debates have been systematically conducted by late Ahmad Dîdî, founder member and the former President of the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPC'I), Durban, South Africa. His work is, now, being continued by Zakir Nayak ‘et al’ in India. While in South Africa the debates and discussions are held mainly with the Christians, they are done with the Hindus as well, in India.

\textsuperscript{388} Refer above to the Munázîrah of Ilhám with Namrud which took place only when the da‘wah of the Messenger had failed in case of the tyrant Xing.
However, the da'wah aspects of such kind of approach is that it makes available clear proofs in favour of Islam and gives answers to various questions raised against the Message of Truth.

There is another trend currently operating in the field of da'wah with the purpose to make all traditional religious doctrines available to the common man, especially to intelligentsia, who shapes ideas and images.

To know how the non-Muslims think about Islam and how the Muslims, themselves, have understood the Message in the contemporary scenario, essay contests are being conducted among the non-Muslims and the Muslims. After knowing the view of the non-Muslims about Islam and its Message, suitable methodologies can be devised to invite them to the Truth. New kind of literature, that will take under consideration the mental attitude of the non-Muslims, can be prepared.388

Da'wah is the dynamism in Islam. Its ways and means are ever changing according to the changing situations, provided they work in consonance with the fundamentals of Islam.

The contemporary age is leading to religion. Every system that man made for his own welfare has failed. He is in need of divine guidance now.

388 Forum For Faith And Fraternity (Cochin, Kerala) is one such organisation which is conducting essay contests on topics like "Islam as I Know" among the Muslims and the non-Muslims.
Islam solves his problems. But it is not so easy to convince him to adopt Islam as the way of life.

All the Muslims generally, and the Islamic organisations particularly, have to come forward with all sorts of qualities that Allah has described in the holy Qur'an desirable for a da'i, to lead the modern man from his inner darkness to the light of Truth. Islam is to be presented both as the revelation of the Truth and as a multi-dimensional problem-solving system (designed by the Creator for mankind), in the Socio-Civilizational terms, catering to all the needs and requirements of man. At the same time, it is necessary for a da'i to understand the mindset and other problems and features of the people he intends to invite to the Message. For this purpose, a critical examination of the various aspects of the modern global civilization is to be made. A da'i who claims to be the bearer of the universal Truth, has a special responsibility in making his contribution towards solving the common problems confronting mankind in the modern times. His call should be such that people should, in no case, get a chance to reject it by simply terming it out of date.

Allah's Message is eternal. It is applicable for all times. Time is dynamic; so is the Message of the Truth. Therefore, it is in the hands of a da'i to take advantage of the modern technology and to enable the call reach every human being.
GLOSSARY

Allah: The true name for the Creator of the universe.

Adhan: The call for the daily prayers performed five times a day.

Du‘a: Supplication.

Durūd: Seeking Allah's blessings on the holy Messenger.

Hadith: The sayings, doings and approvals of Muḥammad ṣa. Św.

Ṣaḥābah: Companions of Muḥammad ṣa. Św. (Singular: Ṣaḥābi)

Tahajjud: Midnight prayers, not obligatory but highly beneficial in spiritual upliftment and highly appreciated in Islam.

Sirah: The life history of Muḥammad ṣa. Św.

Sunnah: Habit, practice, customary procedure, or action, norm and usage sanctioned by the Hadith. The Hadith is part of the Sunnah.
..: This is an expression that the Muslims use whenever the name of Allah is mentioned or written. It means the Pure and Exalted.

..: This is an expression that the Muslims use whenever the name of Muhammad is mentioned or written. It means may the blessings and the peace of Allah be upon him.

..: This is an expression that the Muslims use whenever the name of a Sahabī is mentioned or written. (Plural:ī.)
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Appendix

1. يا الهى الناس اطعمنا دينكى خلفكى والأئمن من
فلك ملأ الكـرير تقونى - (2:21)

2. يا الهى الناس كلامتى في الأرض جحى ولا تتبعوا خطوات الشيطان، إله
لكم وملأكم (2:168)

3. يا الهى الناس انقوا دينكى خلفكى من نفس واحدة خلق منها زوجها
وبت منهما رجالة كثيراً (4:1)

4. يا الهى الناس قد جاء كم الرسول يا حنى من دينكى فأنتو خير الكمم
(4:170)

5. يا الهى الناس قد جاء كumor هان من دينكى وأنزلها البكرى وزويا
مبيعاً - (4:175)

6. يا الهى الناس قد جاء نكرم موعظة من دينكى كفاً لما في المصدر وادهى
(10:57)

7. يا الهى الناس انقوا دينكى زلزلة الساعية كى لا تعلمها - (2:22)

8. يا الهى الناس إن كنتم في زين من البهاء الخ (225)

9. يا الهى الناس ضرب مثل فأسمعوا له (22:73)

10. يا الهى الناس انقوا دينكى وأحسبوا يومًا لا يجوز وألف عن تلية الخ
(31:33)

11. يا الهى الناس لا كروا يحمى الله علتكى الخ (35:3)

12. يا الهى الناس إن وعد الله حق حتى لا تغنى تنكر الخ (35:5)

13. يا الهى الناس انم الفراق إلى الله الخ (35:15)

14. يا الهى الناس إذا خلفنا كمرون كوراً فشي الخ (59:13)