Abstract

Islam is the only religion accepted by Allah and it is the only way of salvation. Islam is revealed for the success of the mankind in this world and the world hereafter. Islam does not merely put forward a good theory, like other religions, but it also suggests a concrete "mission" for the implementation of its theory. The aim of this mission is to establish the noble principles of life granted by the Creator for the rescue of mankind. This mission is popularly termed as "Da'wah". The Da'wah work entails a systematic study to explore its nature, implication, scope, significance, and its functions.

Islam came into this work through the work of da'wah. Islam spread out through the surface of earth due to the da'wah efforts initiated by the prophets. da'wah is a highly technical job and Allah directly trained His messengers for the presentation of this work. As a matter of fact, da'wah is not only the responsibility of Prophets but each and every Muslim is supposed to take part in it. The work of Da'wah should be carried-out in accordance with the spirit of holy Qur'an and Sunnah. The objective of Da'wah is to call people to Islam by providing them a better understanding of the religion. This complex work deserves a keen and systematic study in the light of holy Qur'an and Sunnah to discover its principles and methodology.

The Prophet was very particular in his mission and steadfast in his principles. Serious threats, tortures or insults could never divert him from the sacred mission. His remarkable features were his consideration with which he treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty, kindness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and he acquired the affections of all around him. His preaching was simple and direct. His presentation was according to the intellectual capacity of the listeners. He consoled his companions in hardship by promising the rewards prepared for them in the hereafter. Towards the end of his life, by the evident help of Allah, he managed to build a strong nation, whose magnificence remains unparalleled even to this day.
In short, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was very meticulous in practically implementing the “Da‘wah principles” vividly projected by the holy Qur‘ān.

A thorough study of these principles and a proper implementation of its methods would give more effective results in the field of Da‘wah. This study aims to highlight the views, arguments and suggestions about Da‘wah kept forward by the well known Indian Muslim thinkers of 20th century. The opinion of these thinkers would be highly benefiting in the field of propagation of Islām and these principles and methods would be highly valuable for the Da‘wah work in the changing scenario of the modern age.

The present study is an outlook on the concept of da‘wah in different views of eminent scholars in India of twentieth century. The study has reviewed the related studies especially the individual efforts made by the scholars as well as the biographers. Most of the studies reviewed are of historical perspectives and biographical in nature. The studies in the field of Islamic thoughts are more concise on personal efforts made by individuals. The diversity of views in Islamic thoughts even in its basic concepts compels towards a collective approach towards the thoughts. The Researcher rightly feels a gap of collective study on the ideological as well as the propagation of Islam. The present study is integrates the dimensions of da‘wah approaches put forward by the eminent Islamic scholars of twentieth century. The Researcher is confident enough that the study would cover the diversified school of thoughts developed by the famous scholars in twentieth century India. The present work is a classification of various da‘wah perceptions defined by the outstanding Indian Muslim thinkers of twentieth century. The thesis aims to highlight the views, arguments and suggestions about da‘wah kept forward by these thinkers which would be highly benefiting in the field of propagation of Islām and the methods would be highly beneficial for the Da‘wah workers in the changing scenario of the modern age.

Though quite different in many respects, these movements shared a common concern about the decline of Muslim fortunes and also expressed a firm conviction that the cure lies in the purification of their societies and in the faithful return to pristine Islam which focuses on the teachings of the Quran and the life of the Prophet.
The research study has divided into five chapters along with an introduction and conclusion. The introduction of the thesis gives a short introduction about eight renowned scholars of twentieth century and also a brief summary of the scope of da’wah.

The first chapter gives the brief outline of da’wah with its Meaning and Importance discussing the famous quotations and the concepts of propagation. The word da’wah (دعوة) is a verbal noun, derived from the verb ‘da’a’ (دعاء). Literally da’wah means to call, appeal, request people either towards the truth or falsehood, appeal for an aid or a call for help, appeal to God or pray. Da’wah also meant an invitation to a meal.

The word da’wah (دعوة) and the verb da’ā (دعاء) from which it is derived, is used with different meanings in the Qur’ān as well as in the ordinary speech. It signifies an “act of invitation”. Its lexical meanings include the concepts of summoning, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer, propaganda, missionary activity, and finally legal proceedings and claims.

The term da’wah which is used in Qur’ān and hadith, denotes a number of meaning. However, in modern period “da’wah” often refers to Islamic missionary activities, which are increasingly characterized by long range planning. Competent utilization of the media, establishment of study centers and mosques, earnest urgent preaching etc. In religious sense “da’wah” refers to an invitation addressed to men by God and His Prophets towards the belief in the religion of Islam. Ādam A’bd Allah al-Alūrī traces the origin of da’wah to Ādam, the first Prophet, and defines the term as a call to save mankind from deviation.

The term da’wah (دعوة) and its verbal forms, which used in the Qur’ān and ahadith, do not always represent as the “invitation” towards Islam. It also indicates other meanings such as one who invokes (دعاء) Allāh, “calling upon” (بدعون) idols by the pagans, “calling upon” (بدعون) Satan, the “invitation” (بدعون) by the polytheist towards fire, to “call” (دعاء) the birds. one, who has been “invited” (دعتم) for a meal, for whatever the people “demand” (دعاء) “Calling” (بدعوى) the calls of the ignorance, one who “invoked” (دعاء) for rain, one who “invites” (دعاء) towards astray, being “called” (دعاء) from the gates of paradise etc.
Mostly Qur’ānic verses and ahadīth use the term “da’wah” exclusively for “inviting” towards Islām.

Besides the word “da’wah” which is applied to the “invitation” towards Islām, there are many terms in the Qur’ān and ahadīth which are applied synonymously with the term da’wah or at least in relation to da’wah. Ādam ‘Abd Allāh al-Allūnī, a Nigerian scholar, in his book *Tarikh al-Da’wah ila Allāh bayna al-ams wa-al-yawm* (History of call to God between yesterday and today) interprets wa’z (sermon), irshād (guidance), tadhkir (reminding), bishārah or tabshīr (good news), indhār (warning) and hisbah (moral censure) as forms of da’wah.

Those incapable should persuade the capable ones to perform it. In other words, those capable are to perform it while those incapable are required to persuade the capable ones to perform the duty. Both capable and incapable are thus entrusted with the responsibility of its performance. Such an interpretation of the point under discussion is should be acceptable to all.

From the above discussion it is clear that the propagation of Islām is the duty of every Muslim. The world is essentially a battle field of the forces of light and the hazard of darkness and it is the duty of a Muslim to illuminate his own person with the light of Islām and then act as a torch bearer to those groping in the dark. If the Muslims have perceived this duty and acted upon it, a new chapter will be opened in the history of Islām.

The second chapter Philosophical approach to da’wah, comes out with the relative measures of philosophy of da’wah. Allama Iqbal propagated Islam as a philosophy of life. Also his views and writings are emerged as a text of philosophy in da’wah. As far as the philosophical approach concerned the chapter mainly discuss the Iqbal’s philosophy as well.

The Qur’ān is the Book that essentially deals with the philosophical aspects of socio-religious life. It discusses various philosophical issues and expressions such as God, His creations including the world, the individual soul, the relationship between God and His creations and the inter-relations of these; good and evil, free-will, the life after death, etc. While dealing with these issues it also throws light on such conceptions as appearance and
reality, existence and attributes, human origin and destiny; truth and error, space and time, permanence and change, eternity and immortality. The Qur'an gives an exposition of universal truths regarding these problems. It was an exposition couched in a language of which the local people, the Arabs were familiar. With the intellectual background they had at the time of its revelation easily understood it. Even the people of other lands, and other times, speaking other languages, with their own intellectual background could easily interpret it.

The period of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and khulafa al-rashidun (rightly guided successors), provides a potent and living example of the actual realization of Islamic principles because the apostle of Allah himself directed and channelized all the matters of the community on the will of God; and the successors (caliphs) too followed him in true spirit. A crisis on both intellectual and social levels originated during Umayyad period and expanded on a larger scale during the Abbasid rule.

Due to the diverse elements like dynastic and monarchical rule, the Greek and the Christian philosophic and cultural influences, deviation from the straight path took place and strong efforts have been made to resolve the crisis and set the community once again on its right path.

The philosophical and the sufī movements of medieval times also played their own role in moulding the ethos of the Muslims. Philosophers like Ibn Sina, (980-1037) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) propounded that truth is one which may be approached or expressed through religion and philosophy. The philosophical movement thus which rated upon the re-interpretation of some Greek philosophical doctrines in new environment. This philosophical thinking was, however, refuted by Ghazali on the ground that its doctrines and conclusions were philosophically flawed and were contradictory to those of the Islām. The philosophical doctrines of eternity of the world and religion as a symbolic form of intellectual truth and the division of being into necessary and contingents were strongly rejected by Ghazali as well as by Muslim traditionists. Philosophical movement though met with criticism and strictures of traditionists still continue to operate in one form or other.
Due to which the reformative movement came to existence. Ghazali (1058-1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1625) were remarkable personalities of this reformative movement in Muslim history till the seventeenth century A.D. Their emphasis was on following the Qur’ānic doctrines and the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) with firm devotion and conviction for which reason and intuition worked as interpreting tools.

In Iqbal’s conception of God, Iqbal rejects the traditional arguments of Western thought—cosmological, ontological, and teleological arguments. He criticizes them on their logical inconsistencies and deficient view of God.

The rejection of the ontological and the teleological arguments by Iqbal is not because reason has no role to reach God but it is on the ground that they create dualism in reality, the dualism between thought and being. The real significance of the arguments can be realized only when the gulf between thought and being is bridged. Iqbal, thus, sees the validity of the arguments in their true spirit.

As far as Iqbal’s insistence on a reformulation of religious doctrines is concerned, one has to keep in mind (1) inherent scope within the teachings of Islām for reinterpretation, and its realistic, dynamic and forward-looking approach towards life, and, (2) the actual predicament of the Muslims in the twenty first century—their backwardness in technological, economic, political and intellectual fields—in the wake of dazzling progress made by the West. He could ill-afford to side with retrogressive forces operating in the form of ritualism, obscurantism and fanaticism. So, Iqbal’s attempt at harmonizing religion and philosophy was motivated largely by practical consideration. His main aim was the renaissance of dormant Muslim community by countering the forces of decadence and not merely to indulge in abstract, academic discussion.

In a nutshell Iqbal can be found to be philosopher who gives logical foundations for the teachings of Islām and presents Islām as a perfect religion before the mankind. Iqbal fully appreciated the worth of Muslim learning and believed that its revival in the contemporary era can bring new hope for mankind as whole. Iqbal appears to have drawn up
some sort of a programme for bringing about this renaissance first by discovering the
original works of Muslim savants and then by disseminating the true spirit of Islamic
religio-philosophical thought among the Muslims. For this purpose he visualized the need
for educating and training young Muslims in the fields of Islamic philosophy, history,
thought and jurisprudence as well as in modern Western thought.

The third chapter entitled Political Approach to da‘wah deals with the political
aspects of Islam as well as da‘wah. Moreover Islam is not only an ideology but also a
system. Sayyid Abul A‘la Mawdudi was the advocate of political approach of Islam that the
chapter mainly discuss the different dimensions of political approach. Islam gives due
importance to the institution of State. The Islamic State is a religious obligation because it is
the foremost instrument of the execution of Qur‘anic laws. Without a political support and
the availability of State execution, the Qur‘anic laws could not be implemented totally.
Islam seeks to establish a world community with complete equality among peoples, without
any distinction of race, class, or country. It seeks to convince the people by advice, laying
no compulsion in religious beliefs and every individual being personally responsible to God.
To Islam, government signifies a trust in which the functionaries are supposed to serve the
people and never exploit them.

Da‘wah also means struggle in the way of Allah. This is because jihād in Islam is a
struggle to reform people and to implement the laws of Allah in this world. There are many
levels of jihād in Muslim’s life such as jihād by tongue, jihād by hand and finally jihād bi al
qitāl, which is the struggle to fight against the evil forces. The word jihād basically means
an endeavor towards a praiseworthy aim, though it bears many shades of meaning in Islamic
context. Jihād may be expressed as a struggle against one’s own evil inclinations and save
oneself from being corrupted. To struggle for the righteousness and to rectify the ummah as
a whole is also its purpose.

Sayyid Abul A‘la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was one of the most influential and prolific
contemporary Muslim thinkers. His interpretive reading of Islam has contributed greatly to
the articulation of Islamic revivalizing thought and has influenced many thousands around
the globe. Mawdudi recognized that the pen alone was not enough to affect the course of events significantly and became interested in the organizational ideas. He therefore encouraged the Nizam’s government to reform Hyderabad’s Islamic Institutions and to promote the veritable teachings of the faith. The government’s subsequent inaction disheartened Mawdudi and led him to lose trust in the existing political structures and instead to look for a new all-inclusive socio-political solution.

Mawdudi was convinced that his potentials could be utilised in leading his community to political and religious salvation. So he designed programmes for upgrading and protecting the Muslim rights and demanded severance from all cultural, social and political ties with Hindus in the interest of purifying Islam. He was of the opinion that the Muslims should have a separate state where, the Islamic laws could be implemented and thus an ideal Islamic state could have been established.

The fourth chapter, Educational approach to da’wah concerned with the Islamic education. Islamic education as per the Qur’anic vision is the process of shaping character within the Islamic worldview. The Muslim community requires exposure of the children and adults to all knowledge as a means of understanding the parameters set in the Qur’an for a constructive relationship with God, other human beings and nature. The Muslims regard the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as their primary source for knowledge and guidance. Mawlana Shibli Nu’mani was the proponent of educational approach to da’wah as the chapter deals with the variegated aspects of Islam and education.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had a profound love for learning. A number of prophetic sayings indicate the importance of education. The Prophet (SAW) emphasized not only on the acquisition of knowledge but also on its transmission to others. The earliest teachers of Islam were the Qur’an readers (Qurrah). During the Khalifate period, these Qur’an readers were mainly responsible for the spreading of Qur’anic teachings and Prophet’s traditions among the Arabs as well as the non-Arab Muslims. The Khalifs took special interest in appointing them in various parts of the Islamic empire to spread the teachings of Islam. The elementary education was thoroughly established in the early Umayyad period.
The public in search of knowledge reported to the mosques, which besides being places of worship, also served as educational centers. During the Abbasid period, the Muslims came under the influence of the Greek literature and philosophy. It was also in this period that the Arabs became acquainted with the Indian sciences particularly Medicine, Mathematics and Astronomy. In this period the efforts towards the formalization of the educational system was intensified.

Shibli Nu'mani was the main protagonist of this section of religious elites who labored for the rapprochement between the Islamic revivalists and modernists. This agonizing and tortuous task needed a thorough investigation and analysis of the ideological derivatives of both the movements. He realized that one of the reasons of their rejection of modern knowledge was their outdated intellectual training, which was incompatible with the new tools of research and investigation. The Muslim intellectuals of religious orientation were not adequately trained and prepared to meet the occidental challenges.

Shibli’s zeal for restructuring the theological contents of the Islamic educational institutions, his zest for excellence in Muslim scholarship, his devotion for painstaking researches in the vast storage of theological wealth, his passion for the reassertion of distinct Muslim identity, his pursuit for co-operation amongst the protagonists of different streams of thought, his concern for Muslim apathy to the acquisition of modern knowledge, his biographies of Muslim thinkers and conquerors, his advocacy for independent Muslim educational institutions and his endeavours for the promotion of Urdu were motivated to reinvigorate the Muslims to earn a distinctive place in the Indian sub-continent as well as a place of honour in the world community. Shibli’s experiment on Muslim education may provide a clue to solve the educational crisis of the Muslim community in India and abroad as well as it may help in evolving a synthetical and integrated pattern of Muslim education in the twenty first century.

The fifth chapter was the Reformative Approach to da’wah consist of the issues concerned with reforms in Islamic propagation. Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas was the proponent of reformation approach to da’wah where the chapter is concisely to the views and
reviews of him. Bringing about "Islāh" (reformation) among the people was the duty of the Prophets. The word da‘wah also covers Islāh (reformation) because it is the purpose of da‘wah. Reformation carried out by Da‘wah movements embraces the reformation of the people and society.

Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas, the founder of the Tablīghi Jama‘at, is arguably one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century Islām. Despite his enormous contribution towards the development of a powerful grass root Islāmic Da‘wah movement, Mawlana Ilyas has not received much attention in the literature on modern Islāmic movements.

Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas believed that Muslims had strayed far from the teachings of Islām. Hence he felt the urgent need for Muslims to go back to the basic principles of their faith, and to strictly observe the commandments of Islām in their own personal lives and in their dealings with others. He wrote nothing about his own project of reviving Shariah and he felt that practical work for the sake of Islām was more important than writing about it. The malfuzat and maktubat of Mawlana Ilyas, which were compiled by Mawlana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi and Mansoor Numani, are the expression of his anxiety for the fate of the Muslim community in both - its worldly conditions as well as its digression from the Prophetic model. Ilyas was convinced that community’s triumph depends on strict observance of Shariah. He believed that the troubles of the Muslims are due to their straying from the path of God and adopting the ways of the disbelievers. Equally distressing to Ilyas was the widespread practice among many Muslims of the Hinduistic and polytheistic customs. It regarded the need for the reform of popular traditions. The reformatory approach of da‘wah propounded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas was emerged as the movement of Tablīghi Jama‘at. However the study on the various approaches of da‘wah precisely touches every segments of the Islamic propagation in twentieth century.