

DA'WA IN ISLAM: A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM SCHOLARLY DISCOURSES

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ABSTRACT

Da'wa is one of the notable/substantial topic in Islam. Numerous works have been written on the subject, its modus operandi, philosophies, pedagogy, prominence, tactics, and other interconnected aspects in distinctive languages especially Arabic, Urdu and English. In South Asia, the enormous da'wa literature produced by the scholars is in Urdu. A significant portion of literature, however, has been produced, both originally as well as through translations, in English to fulfill the needs of da'uāt in South-Asia as well as global level. In this context, the study attempts to present an appraisal of three English works (produced in 1990s to 2000s) authored by the South Asian scholars. These books are: Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi, da'wa in the West: The Qur'anic Paradigm (1992 [1991]); Abdus Salam, da'wa Guide (1996); and Amin Ahsan Islahi, Da'wat-i dīn Aur Uska Tāriqa-Ka'ar/Islamic Faith and the Mode of its Preaching (2005[1951]). The main themes, collectively, highlighted in these works, reveal both theoretical, and practical aspects; pedagogy and methodology of da'wa in Quranic paradigm; practical aspect from Prophet's life; modes and stages in dawat-i dīn; qualities; language; principles and the style of articulation; wisdom and broadness of da'i; da'wa and its harmony with time and space (Modern age). The study, with a tri-fold aim, seeks to: (i) explore their approaches and methodology in their discussions on da'wa (ii) evaluate critically their stance on modern-day challenges of da'wa and (iii) highlight the relevance of their interpretation in providing solutions to the contemporary challenges vis-à-vis da'wa. The major argument put forth in the article is that these selected books make a significant contribution in understanding the pros and cons of da'wa through their contents; approach and style; construct a momentous contribution to da'wa literature in the English language and thus accomplish the need of da'uāt globally.

Keywords: *Da'wa Literature, Urdu language, South-Asia, Da'i, Pedagogy, Dawat-i-Din*

INTRODUCTION

The term *da'wa* is a verbal noun, derived from the Arabic word *da'ā*, literally meaning 'to call', 'appeal', 'calling people towards the truth or falsehood' and 'an invitation to a meal' (Marius 2001: 168). Its lexical meanings encompass 'the

concepts of summoning, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer, propaganda, missionary activity and legal proceedings and claims' (Walker 1995).

In the Qur'an, the word *da'wa* and its variants occur over two hundred times. For

instance: *Shahād'a* (Qur'an, 16: 125); *Bayān* and *Thabyān* (Qur'an, 2: 160); *Nās'eha* (Qur'an, 7: 68); *Thable'eg* (Qur'an, 6: 19); *Tabshēr* (Qur'an, 48: 8); *Inzār* (Qur'an, 16: 2); *Thāzk'er* (Qur'an, 6: 125) and *Hujjāh* (Qur'an, 4: 165) etc. These variants signifies an 'act of invitation' towards Islam and indicates other similar meanings. Sometimes it has other/secular meanings as well. Such as invitation to someones's house (Qur'an, 28: 25, 33: 53), calling witnesses to observe a financial transactions (Qur'an, 2: 282), or being called to battle (Kuiper 2021: 22). It also signifies other meanings like; 'calling upon idols', 'calling upon Satan' and 'to call the birds' etc (Walker 1995).

The Qur'an, however, uses these terms exclusively for inviting people towards Islam (Qur'an, 2: 186; 7: 55-56)¹ or an invitation addressed by God and His prophet towards the belief in religion of the Islam (Marius 2001: 168). Thus, the Qur'an summons its listeners to give proper *da'wa* to one God and designate the procedure of calling or inviting mankind towards the truth or to the right path prescribed for mankind by their lord "*invite (people) to the way of your lord with wisdom and good counsel*" (Qur'an, 16: 125).

For Muslims, God is the first and ultimate preacher or *da'i*. As Kuiper argues, that "from the prespective of Islamic theology, the very existence of the Qur'an is the result of God's own *da'wa*" (Kuiper 2021: 24). After God, the prophets done the huge chore of *da'wa* that has kept the candle of faith and morality blooming throughout the centuries. For instance, Prophet Noah (AS) according to the Qur'an was sent by God to warn his people of a 'painful punishment', but the people reject his *da'wa*. As the Qur'an mentions:

"He said, I have called my people night and day, but my call did not cause them to progress but in running away. And whenever I called them, so that you forgive them, they put their fingers

into their ears, and warpped their clothes around themselves, and grew obstinate, and waxed proud in extreme arrogance. Then I call them loudly, then I spoke to them in public and spoke to them in private." (Qur'an, 71: 4-9).

Along with Prophet Noah (AS), other prophets who dilvered *da'wa* include Prophet Ibrahim (AS), who is introduced in the Qur'an as rejecting polytheism and giving *da'wa* to 'his father and his people' to worship the one God (Qur'an, 6: 74-83, 19: 41-45, 37: 83-98), and Prophet Isma'il (AS), who is commanded as one who summoned his family to maintain prayers and give alms (Qur'an, 19: 54-55). The Qur'an also includes many retelling of the *da'wa* of Prophet Musa (AS) (Qur'an, 7: 103-141, 26: 11-66), Prophet Ilyas (AS) (Qur'an, 37: 123-132), Prophet Hud (Qur'an, 7: 65-72), Prophet Salih (AS) (Qur'an, 7: 73-79), Prophet Shu'ayb (AS) (Qur'an, 7: 85-93), Prophet Yusuf (AS) (Qur'an, 12: 35-41) and Prophet 'Isa (AS) (Qur'an, 3: 49-57, 61: 6). In short, all the Prophets were preachers of a common message as the Qur'an mentions itself: "*And We did raise a messenger among every people, with the message, worship Allah and stay away from the Rebel.*" (Qur'an, 16: 36).

Apart from these prophets, the Qur'an also introduces Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) as *da'i* (preacher, caller), *rasūl* (messenger), *nabī* (prophet), *bashīr* (announcer), *nadhīr* (warner), *mubashshir* (preacher of good news), and *shahīd* or *shāhid* (witness) (see. Qur'an, 12: 108, 33: 45-46, 46: 31-32). His (SAAS) *da'wa* is local as well as universal. On the one hand, he being an Arab messenger (Qur'an, 2: 151, 9: 128) and brings an Arabic Qur'an so that they may warn Arabs (Qur'an, 42: 7, 6: 92). On the other hand, he has sent to the People of the Book (Qur'an, 5: 15) and to the all humanity (Qur'an, 4: 79, 7: 158). In short, God's message is now made decisively through Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), the 'seal of prophets' (Qur'an, 33: 40). Thus, the Qur'an portrays God as the ultimate *da'i*, and it considers God's prophets and messengers, especially Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), to be the primary

¹The English translations of the Qur'anic verses, in this article, are taken from (Shafi 2008).

means by which God communicates his *da'wa* to the world. Also the Qur'an endowed those who accepted this *da'wa* and become Muslims with certain responsibilities like; embracing God's oneness, dissociating from unbelief, prayer, fasting, and so on. Along with these things, *da'wa* is also among the responsibilities the Qur'an holds for Muslims in general (Qur'an, 3: 104, 3: 110, 16: 25). For instance, one of the verse says: "*And there has to be a group of people from among you who call towards the good, and bid the Fair and forbid the unfair. And it is these who are successful.*" (Qur'an, 3: 104). The Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) also laid the responsibility of spreading the message of Islam on the shoulders of the *Ummā*. On the historical occasion of *Hajjathul Wida*, he said; "... *it is incumbent upon those who are present to convey it (the message of Islam) to those who are absent*" (al-Bukhari, H. no: 7078).² Thus, in both the Qur'an as well as in Prophetic traditions every Muslim has the responsibility to carry on this prophetic mission (*da'wa*) of inviting people towards Islam.

Muslims, though, being the responsible for carrying the *da'wa* have worked hard to bring the message of Islam to the world, in all possible means. Along with other means, they have also produced a significant literature on *da'wa* and its interconnected aspects as well. Numerous works have been written on the theme – its modus operandi, philosophies, pedagogy, prominence, tactics, and other interconnected aspects in distinctive languages especially Arabic, Urdu, and English. Amongst the Muslim scholarship, South Asia has a unique distinction for their contribution to Islam and things Islamic. Though among diverse aspects of their scholarship, *da'wa* holds a significant place in their writings. In this background, the study attempts to explore their approaches and methodology in understanding the duty of spreading the message of Islam (*da'wa*), evaluate critically their stance on modern-day challenges of *da'wa*, and highlights

the relevance of their interpretation in providing solutions to the contemporary challenges vis-à-vis *da'wa* by analysing a number of their works. The major argument put forth in this article is that these selected books make a significant contribution in understanding the pros and cons of *da'wa* through their contents; approach and style; construct a momentous contribution to *da'wa* literature in the English language and thus accomplish the need of *da'uāt* globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The South Asia Muslims scholarship stands out for their contribution to Islam and things Islamic – be it Islamic sources or Islamic history, thought or philosophy, thinkers or personalities, trends or movements, issues or challenges. Though among diverse aspects of their scholarship, *da'wa* holds a significant place in their writings. The enormous literature produced on the *da'wa*, its shepherding moralities, philosophies, pedagogy, prominence, strategies, significance, and other interconnected aspects are mostly in Urdu. Some of such examples are: Islahi 1951, Qasmi 1950-51, Azad 1971, Tanzeem 1975, Umari 1969/ 1979; 1980, Mawdudi 1981, Nadwi 1981, Muhammad 1983, Yakan 1997, Ilahabadi n.d, Qadari n.d, Khan 1997, Rahman 2000, Ali 2003, Ilahi 2007; 2010, Khan n.d.³ These books collectively highlights the *da'wa*—its practical as well as theoretical aspects. Despite the sub-Continent Islamic scholarship has a great deal in Urdu language. A significant portion of literature, however, has been produced, both originally as well as through translations, in English to fulfill the needs of *da'uāt*— both at local as well as global level. Among these works are: Nadwi, 1981, 1983, 1992, 1993, 1996, 2005; Salam, 2000; Islahi, 2005, to name only a few.

These books produced by the scholars of South Asia originally as well as through translation

²In the article, the Alhadith are retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/>

³Out of the above mentioned books, ten (10) are reviewed in Parray (2018: 19-42).

highlights the different dimension of *da'wa*. For instances, Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi describes the *da'wa* as a perennial source of guidance for the *Ummah*. For Nadwi, *da'wa* and guidance have priority over the commands and *Shari'ah* in the Qur'an. It is because the foundation of faith and guidance and 'to believe' depends on *da'wa* which is paraphrased as an invitation to Allah (Choughley 2018: 30). Throughout the history of Islam, Abdus Salam argues, *da'wa* played an important and strengthening role both numerically and qualitatively (Salam 2000). Salam's argument is furthered by Kuiper, who argues that *da'wa* is one of the primary reason by which Islam became a world religion and cultural phenomena of immense scale, astonishing diversity and global impact (Kuiper 2021). Similarly, for Pattrick Sookhdeo, the *da'wa* is one of important and main reason for the process of Islamisation at a discrete and integrated level (Sookhdeo 2015). Amin Ahsan Islahi contends that *da'wa*, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong was the mission of all prophets. Afterward, it is now the obligation for every Muslim to carry on the mission of prophets (Islahi 2005).

RESEARCH METHOD

This article, in this context, is concerned/engaged with three books: Nadwi (1992[1992]), Salam (2000), Islahi (2005)] by the South Asian scholars with decades of experience and research, emphases on the different dimensions of *da'wa* with distinct approaches. All focus on the theme of *da'wa* in Islam and its *modus operandi*. The primary reason for selecting these three books is their significant contribution in understanding the *da'wa* through their contents, approach and style as they constitute a momentous contribution to *da'wa* literature in English Language. Besides, the discursive space of *da'wa* discourse is occupied by a myriad connected questions. For instances, what is the nature of *da'wa* in Islam? What is the *modus operandi* of *da'wa*? And what are the errors in *modus*

operandi? and others. These questions are at the kernel of this discourse connects these books and helps us in setting them in conversation with one another. For instance, Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi focuses on *da'wa*, its importance and preaching among the non-Muslims. Abdus Salam provides a complete guide for a *da'i* (one who performs the *da'wa*). Amin Ahsan Islahi affords an account of common mistakes in *modus operandi* of *da'wa* on both theoretical/philosophy and practical levels. The books are thematically as well as chronologically organized. Initially, the brief discussion of the contents of these works will be reproduced. Then a critical analysis will be given, followed by a comparative assessment and concluding remarks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Discursive Analysis of Nadwi (1992), Salam (2000), and Islahi (2005)

Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi (henceforth Nadwi) (1914–1999) was a prominent Muslim intellectual of contemporary times whose services to Islamic literature are known and appreciated throughout the world. In recognition to his outstanding service to Islam, he became the recipient of the prestigious King Faisal Award in 1980.⁴ Nadwi travelled to Europe and USA many time during the period 1936–96. For example, the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies (OCIS) invited him to present a paper on *Islam and West* (Nadwi 1983). The paper was later published in a book, *Islam and West* (1983). Similarly, on 3rd September 1991, he was invited by the Islamic Foundation, Leicester for a lecture. In the following year, Syed Jafar Masud Nadwi transcribed the lecture which has been revised with slight changes and accumulations by Nadwi himself. The book originally published in Urdu and later translated

⁴For a biographical account of Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi, See (Choughley 2012).

into English by Abdur Raheem Kidwai⁵ (1992) under the title *Da'wa in the West: The Qur'anic Paradigm*.

Nadwi relates the following Qur'anic verses which according to him provides a graphical account of how to carry *da'wa* in any time and space; how to introduce Islam present Islam; how to invite people to it; how to highlight distinctive features; how to guide man in both this life and next. Which reads as:

Have you not see how Allah has set forth a parable; A good word is like a good tree, having its roots firm and its branches in the sky. It brings its fruits at all times with the will of its lord. And Allah sets forth the parable for people, so that they may take lessons (Qur'an, 14: 24-25).

Making these two verses as the reference point, Nadwi discusses four important aspects of *da'wa* in Islam; Qur'an as a model for *da'uāt*; requisites of *da'wa*; and challenges of *da'wa* with an illustration from history of Islam. Pointing out the practical facets from these verses, Nadwi argues that first part of verse reflects on “a good word” implying that the first and foremost condition for *da'uāt* is that the message and objective should be good. Hence, goodness is the central requirement for the triumph in *da'wa* (Nadwi 1992: 10). The unique feature of Islamic *da'wa* is that it not only stress on the externals of the message; well articulation and vivid presentation like other world literature, but also emphasizes upon intrinsic value – i.e. the gracious of message. Thus the fundamental

requirements for successful *da'wa* is that the message should comprise of good words, free from linguistic finesse and rhetorical niceties, leading to the good objectives. Then he points out that “good word” has been equated to a “good tree” in the verse. Various other entities were at hand for this similitude but the analogy of a “good tree” in bringing home the fruitfulness and eternal value of the “good word” makes it the most appropriate one (Nadwi 1992: 11). Extending the simile to “having its roots firm and its branches in the sky” the Quran makes a reference to the revolutionary gist of the Prophet's *da'wa* in that it transmutes the entire nations, changes the course of history, affects the human thought and spreads to every nook and corner of the world (Nadwi 1992: 11). Therefore, a simple/good word conveyed with utter sincerity, from the deep recesses of heart can change the course of history. To lay more emphasis on sincerity and simple word, Nadwi recounts a historical event of conversion of *Tuqluq Timur Khan* by quoting T.W. Arnold's “*The Preaching of Islam*” and other Turkish and Persian sources (Nadwi 1992: 12). Nadwi discusses the qualities of *da'i* from the third part of the verse “with the will of its lord” this tree will go on yielding its fruits in each season. The tree was implanted by the last Messenger in the Arabian Peninsula, the most backward area in term of Scio-political, intellectual and economic conditions. However, “with the will of its lord” Islam reached every corner of the world. Its spread and conquest have given rise to numerous universities, scholars, thinkers, men of letters and plethora of literature on virtually every subject (Nadwi 1992: 15). Hence, the “good word” with utter sincerity and hope on Allah Almighty articulated first in Arabian Peninsula has re-echoed across the world, brings its fruits at all times like a good tree. He outlined six (6) basic requisites for the success of *da'wa*. First, (i) one should be fully acquainted with human psychology, (ii) hold a good command on language, (iii) awareness of the mental make-up of audience (*Ma'du*), (iv) *da'wa* should be

⁵Kidwai (b.1956) is a noted scholar and expert on the Qur'anic studies, Professor of English and the Director of K. A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), India. He has to his credit two doctoral degrees in English, one from the University of Leicester, UK, and the other from the AMU. Kidwai has authored more than thirty books on the Qur'anic Studies, Literary Orientalism, etc. (see, Kidwai, 2007, 2011, 2013 and 2018). Abdur Raheem Kidwai has contributed significantly to the field of the Qur'anic Studies, especially in the sub-area of English Translation of the Qur'an. See Kidwai (2007; 2011; 2016 and 2018). For the contribution of Abdur Raheem Kidwai to the Qur'anic and Islamic Studies, See; Choughley (2019).

articulated well, (v) knowledge and scholarship – the most important component, and (vi) sincerity (Nadwi 1992: 16,17). Nadwi further mentions those people who have misconceptions regarding *da'wa* believe that in 21st century with the fabulous improvement in all realms, there is no lengthier scope of *da'wa*. On this count the Qur'an gives a very uplifting assurance that the *good word* will continue to have effects in all epochs and in all spaces (Nadwi 1992: 18). On a concluding note, Nadwi urges that the *da'wa* platforms should not represent the opinions of a particular school of thought nor for publicizing a particular organization (Nadwi 1992: 19).

Abdus Salam's *Da'wah Guide* (1996) makes an argument on *da'wa* and its various related aspects in question format like what is *da'wa*? Why should we do *da'wa*? *da'wa* where? *da'wa*—how? The second part discusses the stages and modes in *da'wa*, and the third portion explains the qualities of the *da'i* and *da'wa* in the modern age. *Da'wa*, in all ages, Abdus Salam (hereafter Salam) played an important and strengthening role both numerically and qualitatively. In contemporary times, it is the responsibility of every organization and individual to strength it as per their own abilities, resources and opportunities. Nonetheless, sincerity/good intention is the significant factor for the success of *Dawat-i-Din*, Salam argues. The urge to please Allah should be the primary purpose not only in *da'wa* but also behind every conscious performance of a Muslim. Salam highlights some basic methods for *da'uāt*. For instance, the *da'uāt* should choose distinctive groups with convenient strategy flexible to specific groups like apprentices, young activists, oppressed, rationalists, sceptics, atheists, religious people and institutions, and the methodology should be adopted accordingly. For him, *Tauheed* (oneness of God) has to be the prime component of every *da'i* as the Prophets did, in spite of different time and space *Tauheed* was always their first concern. In the meanwhile, a *da'i* should be polite, he should avoid unnecessary

disputes, he should choose the right time and should motivate people to think themselves (Salam 2000). These 'Qualities of *da'i*' are discussed in the light of the Qur'an and the life of different Prophets in general and the Prophet Muhammad in particular as role model for *da'i*. For him, the Quran, Life of Prophet, Islamic history, contemporary models and *Dai'ees* own experience are the sources of *da'wa* (Salam 2000). He argues, *da'uāt* should first try the traditional methods of communication, but shouldn't rely upon any single method. The author also explains Prophet's style of *da'wa* – used very few words, chosen carefully according to the occasion, exemplars according to the addressees (*Ma'du*) profession. The *da'i* should bear in mind that the message (*Da'wa*) should be brief and comprehensive, and should acquire a virtuous character in himself and such virtuous qualities that his addressees should hold him with high esteem (Salam 2000: 110-114). Then the author emphasizes on *da'wa* (preaching) among different non-Muslims groups—like atheists, polytheists, Jews and Christians, etc. and their common questions which almost every *da'i* faces. He concludes this chapter with an advice that they should not convey everything in one sitting, and should recommend the different books to addressees (Salam 2000: 126). Then the author points out the ten important qualities of *da'i*: faith, trust, love, fear of Allah, devotedness to Allah, affinity with the Quran, Prophet's love, consciousness of *Aakhirah*, knowledge, and sincerity (Salam 2000: 128-142). Two important points regarding the *da'wa* in modern age which the author emphasizes upon are (i) prevalence of Islam (ii) means for the effective propagation of Islam. He also encourages *da'uāt* to use the modern means of communication – electronic and print media – to craft a good image of Islam before world (Salam 2000: 144).

Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904–1997) was an Indian born, Pakistani intellectual, famous for his Urdu commentary of the Qur'an '*Tadabbur al-Qur'an*' based on thematic and structural

coherence.⁶ The book *da'wat-i dīn Aur Uska Tāriqa-Ka'ar* (1951) is basically the collection of Amin Ahsan Islahi's (henceforth Islahi) articles published in the monthly magazine, *Tarjaman ul-Qur'ān*. The book was translated into English titled *Islamic Faith and the Mode of its Preaching* by S. S. Khan (2005). Moreover, some parts of this work have been translated into English by Dr Shahzad Saleem (affiliated with Al-Mawrid Institute, Pakistan) and its second chapter, 'Errors in the Current Mode of Preaching' by Mustansir Mir (Professor of Islamic Studies at Youngstown University, USA).

Islahi contends, *da'wa* was one of the collective obligation of all the prophets and highlights its *modus operandi* by discussing the life of some famous prophets in detail. According to him, there are some common mistakes in the current *modus operandi* of *da'wa*. On the one hand, there are three theoretical errors; (i) communalistic angle of vision, (ii) trivial issues, and (iii) barren literature. For him, Islam has been the religion of God (Allah) from the inception of the world. Every Prophet irrespective of place and time preached Islam. Islam is not the religion of any specific community, but the religion of entire mankind. People kept spoiling Islam and playing many strategies with it and God kept reintroducing and reviving it by sending more Prophets until through Prophet Muhammad. But the blind communalistic zeal that Islam as religion of Muslim community only and, as such, as a religion antagonistic to other religions, is not

only preached by ordinary pulpiteers and writers but also by those illustrious authors whose books were the only means to understand Islam, for Muslims as well as non-Muslims. This is what he called the communalistic angle of vision. While explaining the trivial issues points out that Islam was not represented as a complete system of life and guiding in all sorts of problems in a rational manner. Instead, Islam is introduced as a set of certain dogmas and customs, our preachers (*Da'uāt*) stress on a set of certain issues like eternity of matter, reincarnation, the divinity of Christ, and the Trinity. The third theoretical error, that all literature on Islam is of four classifications; purely academic, polemical, apologetic and theo-scholastic. This literature adds more knots to a problem *bit cundo a single knot* (Islahi 2005: 5-11).

On the other, Islahi highlights the five practical errors; (i) duality, (ii) wrong targets, (iii) hollow words, (iv) cheap tactics, and (v) incompetence, which are no less glaring (Islahi 2005: 14-21). Islahi argues, Muslims on one hand claim to be the principled community – a community raised on the principles of Islam, on the contrary, they possess all the qualities which might describe a notion born of ethnic, historical, or cultural homogeneity. They grant that Prophet Muhammad is unique guide in every sphere, and yet they have entrusted the reins of authority to those who totally disregard with his teachings. With loud profession they support the complete ethico-practical of Islam and assert that one cannot diverge from it without ceasing to be a Muslim, but they themselves demonstrate each vice and every immorality that can be found in other nations and still their Muslimhood remains unharmed. They urge that the world's only hopefulness of salvation lies in embracing the comprehensive structure of Islam, but in exercise they beat the bounds of Europe and America in order to find out whether the British or the American system is more Islamic or vice versa. Thus, in short, the Muslim community is unprincipled and the deeds are opposed to their words and is called *duality* (Islahi 2005:15-16).

⁶Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904–1997) was born at Bam-hur, a small village in Azamgarh (U.P), India. He graduated from Madras Al-Islah in 1922. He remained with Maulana Hamiduddin Farahi till his death in 1930. After Farahi's death, he studied Hadith sciences from Abdur Rehman Mubarkhpuri – a renowned Hadith scholar (Muhaddith) of Indian sub-continent. In 1936, he established Da'irah-i-Hamidiyyah – a small institute to disseminate the Qur'anic thought of Farahi. In 1981, Islahi founded the Idara-i-Tadabbur-i-Qur'an –u-Hadith, which remained until his death on 15th December 1997. Besides his famous Urdu exegesis *Tadabbur-al-Qur'an*, Islahi has authored a number of books in Urdu on various important themes of Islam. Which included: *Tazkiyah-i-Nafs*, *Islami Qanun ki Tadwin*, *Mabadi Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, and *Mabadi Tadabbur-i-Hadith*, etc.

In the second practical error, Islahi points out that the *wrong target* among Muslims is always aimed to convert the downtrodden sections of society instead it should be those classes of the society whose thoughts and philosophies are governing the social system and crafting an analogy with a heart and the other organs of body. A healthy heart makes the entire body healthy, but with the heart gone bizarre, plastering and massaging the body will be of no avail. The third *hollow word* is that Muslims have preached with words only, they never tried to live Islam. The practical life will produce high beneficial results instead praising the system of Islam. Silent action is greatly more effective than loud protestations. The fourth practical error, *cheap tactics*. For Islahi, Muslims have adopted some methods used by Christian and Arya Samajis like misleading juvenile children and actually running away with them. In salacious motives, some Hindu women eloped with libertine Muslim, it has been hailed as an invaluable preaching trophy because it resulted in business out of changing faith. In the sunrise they would get a shoulder-ride from Muslims announcing them that they have joined them, in the dusk they would extract money from other isms. In the fifth error, *incompetence*. Islahi explores very important point that is indeed rampant among Muslims that there are two jobs for which no expertise is required: Leading prayer in the *masjid*, and preaching religion. There was an epoch when prayers were led either by the political authority of state himself or by the man assigned by him, and there is a period when Muslims assigned this job to those men, who are completely incapable of doing anything else (Islahi 2005: 16-21). For him, what today goes by the name of preaching is entirely different from the preaching done by the prophets, they (two kinds of preaching) infact are contrary to each other in purpose and method as well. The aims and techniques of present preaching is an imitation of the preaching of non-Muslims (Islahi 2005: 9).

Moreover, The author explored some

important aspects of *da'wa* that the mission of all Prophets was preaching good thing and prohibiting bad thing, and is obligatory for every Muslim. The main aim of Muhammad's (SAAS) Prophethood was to unite the world under the banner of Islam. The two dimensions of Prophethood are the particular and general: particular for the Arabs and generally for rest of the world. In the same way, Islam (Prophet's Mission) too has two important dimensions. The first one is that the Qur'an remains free from every sort of errors and its protection is taken by God Himself as Qur'an mentions "*We, Ourselves have sent down the Dhikr (the Quran) and We are there to protect it*" (Qur'an, 15: 09). The second one is that a group will remain till the day of resurrection on the right path (*Tayafa al-Mansurah*) as mentioned in many authentic prophetic narrations, who will carry on the mission – *Da'wa* – of Prophet Muhammad.

Additionally, Islahi laid down six important conditions for *da'uāt*: Faith and its knowledge; testimony by words; practice by actions; the work (*da'wa*) shouldn't be for exhibiting the views of a specific school of thought or for publicizing a particular organization, and should be free from every sort of sectarian bias; the preaching (*da'wa*) should be of whole *dīn* (religion) and the last is; *da'wa* should be done whole heartedly (Islahi 2005: 22-37).

According to Islahi, leaders (*Arbab-i-Asr*) were first addressed by Messengers, and substantiate it with the examples of Prophets like *Ibrahim* (AS) *Moosa* (AS), *Isa* (AS), and *Muhammad* (SAAS) etc. The methodology adopted by these Messengers was not mere coincidence but there are some important reasons (Islahi 2005: 38-53). Nonetheless, these Prophets first adopt as lenient nature by calling them; "O! People", "O! My nation" and other such idioms. The pedagogy continued till these people begin to oppose the truth, started campaigning against them and even planned to murder these Messengers, then they used to migrate and this is the time when Messengers cast them off with the names like; "O! disbelievers; proclaim the

faith”, and “O! polytheists; accept the oneness of God” etc (Islahi 2005: 54-61). He argues that the prophets always kept the psychological consideration of the addressees’ mind and then accordingly provides the arguments. For him, arrogant, opportunist and negligent, are always opposite to *da'wa*, while as former competitors, adherents, weak and hypocrites are mostly in favour of *da'wa*. For him, the *da'wa*, *Hijrah* (Migration) and *Jihad* are the stages of *dawati-din* (Parray 2018: 19-42).

Analysis and Evaluation

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi in *da'wa in the West: The Qur'anic Paradigm* (1992) presents the Qur'anic vision of *da'wa*. For him, linguistic competence and sincerity are effective communicators of *da'wa*. It should be conveying with heartfelt conviction in order to bring about real changes of the audience. Therefore, these distinctive features should be emphasised while keeping in mind the intellectual temperament of non-Muslims in west. His lecture in this regard is a best example. Nadwi, while demonstrating the eternal guidance for *da'wa* embodied in these verses in the context of west, explains the Qur'anic phraseology, simile, coherence and their relevance with *da'wa*. He also recounts a historical event of conversion of *Tuqluq Timur*, keeping in mind his western audience, he accordingly quotes the western author T.W Arnold's *The Preaching of Islam*. This speaks of his profound scholarship and expertise. Despite being an *Alim* (*madrassa* scholar), his outstanding mode of describing the “challenges of *da'wa*” illustrated his familiarity, experience and keeping in mind the intellectual temperament of addressees. As it is put by the Qatari based scholar, Shaykh Yusuf Qardawi, the vision of integration of traditional Islamic discipline with modern knowledge of *Nadwatul Ulum* (a religious seminary in India) was best represented in Nadwi's multifaceted career (Choughley 2018: 29).

Nadwi emphasis on English and other western languages, history, geography, and

technology. In other words, he did not remain insulted from the benefits of science and technology, nonetheless, he was not a blind imitator of west. He steered away from a polemical approach towards west and adopted a course that would serve as sign post for both civilizations (Choughley 2018: 45).

Da'wa Guide: Towards Performing Da'wa (1996) is a simple and well informed. One of the important feature is that the book abnegates/debunks many misconceptions regarding Islam in contemporary time. For instance, ‘Islamic terrorism’, Muslim mercenary and unity of religion (*Wahdati Adyan*). Salam provides *da'wa* as the remedial measures to overcome the modern-day challenges of Islam as well as Muslims. However, the name “*Da'wa Guide*”, in the very first instance gives the impression that the book acts as a ‘complete guide’ – providing complete basic information (A-Z information) about the *da'wa* and *da'uāt*. But after the content analysis it appears clearly that the title “*Da'wa Guide*” is not apt because; (i) the author neither focuses on Prophetic narrations (*Ahadith*) nor gives sufficient examples from his life vis-à-vis *da'wa*; and (ii) he not even discuss anything about the role of women in *da'wa*. Moreover, Salam discussed some unnecessary/out of context things in the book which seem incoherent. For instance, in the third chapter, while exploring different groups with whom *da'wa* can be performed, author emphasized on unnecessary information about these groups. Likewise, in chapter four, he discusses the style and language of the Qur'an, etc (Salam 2000).

The author also focused on the lexical or philosophical meaning of the Qur'anic phrase *Hikmah*. Once he translates *Hikmah* as wisdom, and on the second occasion he mentions that “wisdom in *da'wa* means conveying the message with due consideration of the intellectual level, social background, status, susceptibilities and sensitivities of the addressees” (Salam 2000: 88-89). Nevertheless, he failed to highlight one of its widely acclaimed meaning. For example; the Qur'an, on several occasions, identifies itself

as a book of *hikmah* and mentions the word four times as one of the Prophet's recommended (responsibilities) *da'wa* (Qur'an, 2: 129, 151; 03: 64; 62: 2). In Qur'an, the term *hikmah* is used in conjunction with other three duties including the recitation of the book (the Qur'an), imparting its teachings, and thus refining the people of their imperfections from contemplation and endeavour. Which means it refers to *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. A more understanding of the phrase is found in Imam Shafi's (767-820) magnum opus *Al-Risalah*, who harangued that the Qur'anic usage of the phrase *hikmah* refers to the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad. According to Imam Shawkani in *Fatih al-Qader*, everything which is opposite to foolishness is *hikmah*. That means everything, which is clear, evident and right in itself is *hikmah* and thus applies in every respect to the Qur'an and then to the *Sunnah* (Shafi 2006). Moreover, Mufti Muhammad Shafi contends that *Hikmah* has been used in Qur'an for several meanings. Some exegetes have taken *hikmah* to mean the Qur'an, while others refer it to both the Quran and *Sunnah* (Shafi 2008: 5, 31).

Both Nadwi and Salam emphasises on the requirement of knowledge for *da'i* at last stage which is ironically not appropriate. The Qur'an repeatedly instructs the believers to acquire knowledge and then to fulfill its corresponding demands. As it mentions, *so know for sure that there is no god but Allah* (Qur'an, 47: 19). Mufti Muhammad Shafi argues that it is addressed to Prophet through an imperative verb, ordered to know there is nothing worthy to worship besides Allah. It is quite obvious that every Muslim has the knowledge of this – let alone the leader of the Muslims, Prophet who should have its knowledge more profoundly. Then why is he enjoined to acquire this knowledge? There can be two responses to this question: it can either mean that the Prophet is asked to be steadfast in the worship of Allah or it could mean that he must fulfill the demands of his knowledge. Shafi cites *Imam Qurtabi*, who records the incident of *Safyan Ibn Uyaynah*, who was asked about

the significance of knowledge, he replied: Did you not read the verse nineteen (19) of *Surah Muhammad* (the above mentioned verse). It is prerequisite in this verse that knowledge should be acquired before action (Shafi 2008: 8, 46-47). However, it is necessary to mention here that one who calls people towards righteousness (Islam) should have the correct understanding of what he is calling to – though he does not have to know the entire religion – as Prophet said, “*convey from me, even if it is one verse.*” (al Bukhari, H. No: 3461). Therefore, if a person understands what he is calling people (*Mad'u*) to, it makes no difference whether he is a great or prominent scholar or a seeker of knowledge; who is serious in his pursuit thereof, or common Muslim who has certain knowledge of the issue. In the *Hadith*, Prophet did not stipulate that the *da'i* should reach the high level of knowledge, but it is essential that he should have knowledge of what he is preaching as *da'wa*; anything based on ignorance is not permissible.

Amin Ahsan Islahi's *Islamic Faith and the Mode of its Preaching* (2005) was one of comprehensive book and it encompasses almost all the aspects related to *da'wa*. However, there are several reservations correspondingly; like while exploring the first theoretical error 'communalistic angle of vision' the author writes; the mistake was not made by the common preachers, pulpiteers, and authors but likewise by those illustrious authors – whose works were the only means of understanding Islam for Muslims and non-Muslims. Take a guise at the books written by these authors and you will find in them so many venomous utterances about the other Prophets that you will be driven to conclude that, like Jews and Christians, Muslims too have developed the pernicious habit of discriminating against certain prophets (Islahi 2005: 11). This passage noticeably bares either the locution “illustrious authors” is used as sarcasm or an exaggeration because claiming such a big thing should have evidences or in academic language we can say that there should be references, however, Islahi

fails to substantiate the argument.

On another juncture, author points out “Muslims too have developed the pernicious habit of discriminating against certain prophets”, this again is an exaggeration. The Qur'an is univocal on the issue by mentioning “*We have no distinction between any of his Messenger*” (Qur'an, 2: 285). Take for example, the exegete Muhammad Shafi, who while discussing this verse points out; the verse stressed that the believers of this *Ummah* will do nothing as was done by the past communities when they planted seeds of discord among Messengers of Allah by accepting some as prophets and denying the status of others (Shafi 2008: 1: 722). If the Qur'an explicitly explained the matter, then the wondering is how can the “illustrious author” do that. In theoretical error, Islahi writes “(Islam) and does not assert its absolute superiority over the other divinely religion” (Islahi 2005: 11). However, the Qur'an mentions; “*Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have pelted My blessing for you, and chosen Islam as a Din for you*” (Qur'an, 05: 03). This verse was revealed in such sophisticated locale with very special apprehensions. And has its secret in the message, it conveys a great news, a solemn reward and an abiding hallmark of distinction for the *Ummah*. In nutshell, the message is that the ultimate standard of true faith and divine blessings which was to be bequeathed to human beings in this world has reached perfection, the faith and the blessing in its final form has been bestowed upon the last of the Prophets and to his *Ummah* on that numerous day. Thus, the climax of the divine blessings in the shape of true faith which begin with Adam and continued in later times, when the offspring of Adam in every time and space kept receiving a part of this blessing in proportion to their prevailing conditions. “It goes without saying that this bestowal primarily highlights the excellence and the distinction of the last and the foremost Prophet Muhammad among the community of Prophets, Messengers and Apostles. But, it also proves that *Ummah* has a distinct status among other traditional

Communities” (Shafi 2008: 3, 55-57). Moreover, *Bukhari* reported an event; Narrated by Umar bin Al-Khattab; Once a Jew said to me; O the chief of believers! There is a verse in your Holy book which is read by all of you (Muslims), and had it been revealed to us, we should have taken that day as a day of celebration” Umar asked, which is that verse? the Jew replied, “*Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have pelted My blessing for you, and chosen Islam as a Din for you*” (Qur'an, 05: 03). Umar replied, no doubt, we know when and where this verse was revealed to the Prophet. It was Friday and the Prophet was standing at *Arafat* (the day of Hajj) (al-Bukhari, H. No: 38). In sum, the discussion reveals that the Islam have superiority over all other divinely religions. Again in the second theoretical error ‘trivial issue’ the author points out some preachers whose greatest emphasis is on a certain trivial issues “these issues, for example, of the eternity of matter, reincarnation, the divinity of Christ, and the Trinity” (Islahi 2005: 12). These, in fact, are not trivial issue, but related directly or indirectly to ‘*Tauheed*’ (Oneness of God) – the message which was common among all Prophets regardless of space and time as the Qur'an mentions; “*And we did raise a Messenger among every people, with the message, worship Allah and stay away from the rebel*” (Qur'an, 16: 35). Similarly, in a hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas; the Prophet sent *Mu`adh* (Prophet's companion) to Yemen and said; “invite the people that none has the right to worship but Allah.” (al Bukhari, H. No: 1395). Despite being *Ahl-Kitab* (Jews and Christians), who have the faith on Oneness of God (worship none but Allah) as the Qur'an mentions; “*Say, O people of the book, come to a word common between us and you that we worship none but Allah*” (Qur'an, 03: 64), still Prophet commanded him (*Mu`adh*) first invite them to the Oneness of Allah. Ironically, Islahi also discouraged *da'uāt* that preaching such issue is wastage of time and energy. In practical errors while discussing “wrong targets” the author points out that “the solidly based reformation and rational

movement taken root only when they work from top to down” (Islahi 2005: 17). This seems either because of his political influence or strangeness of Islamic history. All the Prophets instead of different time and space, started their work from bottom upwards. So, in nutshell the deeper investigation would reveal that there are some other points on which it is vulnerable.

CONCLUSION

The study divulges that some of the common themes emphasized in these books, though adopting different methodology and formwork of *da'wa* are; *da'wa* procedures espoused by several Prophets and conducting philosophies/principles from the Qur'an and Ahadith about *da'wa*, *da'wa* and its harmony with time and space as well as the other necessary dimensions that are required while performing *da'wa* and takes a step further and talk about the importance, procedure, and strategies of *da'wa* outwardly. The study also reveals that the scholarship on the theme is noteworthy and admirable as well. For instance, Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi's outstanding mode of describing *da'wa* and its other aspects illustrated his familiarity, experience and observation acquired by visiting Islamic and Western world. His emphasis on English and other Western languages, history and geography explores his visualization, vigilance of foreseen future generations and shrewd participation in *da'wa*, although there are some dissimilarities about *da'wa* methodology and approach. Abdus Salam, enlightens *da'wa* as remedial measures to overcome these worldly ills, in all ages and performed a central and bolstering role both numerically and qualitatively, is a unique notable exposition. The methodology of Amin Ahsan Islahi while pointing out several common errors in the current mode of preaching (*da'wa*) on both theoretical and practical levels is very compelling. Thus, as the paper demonstrates in the foregoing, it is apparent that these books have a noteworthy locus in English literature on

the theme. Reservations apart, these books are rich in gist and reveal immeasurable phases of *da'wa* in both theoretical as well as practical ranges. These scholarly works, collectively, make a significant contribution in understanding the pros and cons of *da'wa* through their subjects, methodology and bravura, construct a considerable contribution to *da'wa* literature in English language and thus someway satisfy the need of *da'uāt* globally. The analysis of these books reveals that *da'wa* is the occupation of the Prophets and Messengers and those following their examples amongst scholars and reformists. These books communicate about the concerns of *da'wa* within, for it was still the prime concern. If the internal building was resilient and enduring, then all the challenges and compression will fade away.

For Muslims it is obligatory to convey the message of Islam. If the Muslims didn't take this responsibility on their shoulders, they will lose the distinction as the cream of creation – a distinction on which God has created this *ummah* according to Muslim belief. So, in brief, *da'wa* has an important role in reshaping the world internally as well as externally. To debunk media imperialism, and to craft a good image of Islam and to achieve desired objectives, *da'wa* literature proves to be much helpful. Although *da'wa* has been stressed upon in every age, given the profusion of vice and people's increasing distance from Islam, the present age is in an ever more acute need of it. As Poston put it, *da'wa* is an inter-personal as well as the external-institutional missionary approach. The external-institutional missionary approach is unrealistic in contemporary society. Nonetheless, the internal-personal approach which wishes at the conversion of individuals, and seeks to influence society from bottom upwards is very realistic in the contemporary times (Larry 1992). Thus, Nadwi puts that it is the responsibility of every organization and individual to strength *da'wa* as per their own abilities, resources and opportunities (Nadwi 1992). The *da'uāt* also ought to seek methodological validity and the straightness of the way and to renew methods and

ways of study, and to observe the performance of *da'wa* in its strong periods and the weak ones, to stay relevant for the foreseen future.

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