

THE ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN DA'WAH AND EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper titled the role of Muslim women in Da'wah (conveying Islamic messages) and education traces the origin and development of education in Islam right from the birth of Islam. It started with the Prophet (S.A.W) receiving the first revelation at the cave of Hira where he used to seclude himself seeking for higher communion from Allah (S.W.T). Da'wah and education are simultaneously carried out with Muhammad (saw) as the teacher and his companions as students including the women who taught and disseminate Islamic education among other women in the community. It traces the origin of education in Islam with the revelation of the first five verses of the Qur'an which commands the Prophet and the companions to equally search for knowledge. Having search for knowledge on one hand to convey it (da'wah) is another important aspect which women have a role to play based on the numerous hadiths of the Prophet (saw) encouraging Muslims to search for it, the methodology adopted for the study was a documentary analysis from the Qur'an and sunnah which direct women to take part in the da'wah activities in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations guiding their activities. Life of Muslim women companions such as Sumayyah and Aisha in the field of Hadith narration was taken as an exemplary measure for Nigerian women. It was concluded that women have a place in the education and tarbiyya of their children and other women according to the teachings of the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) that everyone is a shepherd in one way or the other and he will be asking about the way he govern them. It was recommended therefore, that women should be allowed to conduct da'wah among their women wing and to utilize every opportunity within their ability.

Keywords: Da'wah, Muslim, Women and Education

Introduction

Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of education both in theories and practices largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Glorious Qur'an. The Qur'an serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society as the primary source of knowledge. The advent of the Qur'an in the seventh century was quite revolutionary for the predominantly illiterate Arabian society which enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but now the Qur'an was considered the word of God and needed to be the

originally interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words (Ibrahim 2020). Hence, reading and writing for the purpose of accessing the full meaning and blessings of the the Qur'an was an aspiration for most Muslims including Women. Thus education in Islam unequivocally derived its origins from a symbiotic relationship with religious instructions which needed to be conveyed to the whole humanity through Da'wah which Muslim women has role to play so as to achieve happiness and development here and hereafter.

If one should have a casual look at da'wahwork and the position of women in it today one can easily find that, there is a deficiency in the capabilities of da'wah work among and by women, a neglect of omission of women in planning the Islamic da'wah, absence of tarbiyyah and lack of knowledge in daiyat in their field of da'wah and women's da'wah programmes as well as overall da'wah programmes and institutions are rare and not well organised. It is on this background that the paper seeks to assess the role of women in da'wah and education among the Ummah (ommunity)

Historical Origin and Development of Da'wah and Education in Islam

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) after his marriag with Khadijah, frequently visited a cave of Hira, (a small mountain) not far from Makkah and devoted himself to meditation. he pends one month of every year in deep meditation in the Hera cave (Rahim 2001). He thought about the wretched cond noition of the people, their misbelief, and social evils, and sought for divine light and guidance to lead them to the path of true religion and morality and better social order and system.

The Prophet (S.A.W) was brought up in the environment where reading and writing was not popular. He too is referred to as al- Ummiy (unlettered) in many verses of the Glorious Qur'an though referred to as such, he was destined to initiate a system of education that would be responsible for bringing favours to the world through civilization. The present western civilisation is indebted to a lo for Islamic education. The development of education therefore, is traceable to the coming of Islam itself. It started with the Prophet (S.A.W) receiving the first revelation from his Lord thus:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ - خَلَقَ
الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ - اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ - الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ - عَلَّمَ
الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ﴾

“ (1.) Read! In the Name of your Lord Who created. (2.) He has created man from a clot. (3.) Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. (4.) Who has taught by the pen. (5.) He has taught man that which he knew not.” (Q.96: 1- 5)

Iqra'a may mean 'read', or 'recite' or 'rehearse', or 'proclaim aloud', the objective was to understand the devine message of Allah (swt).The Arabic words for teach and knowledge

as used in this five verses of the chapter are from the same root. It is impossible to produce in a translation the complete orchestral harmony of the words for 'read', 'teach', 'pen' (which implies reading, writing, books, study, research), 'knowledge' (including sciences, self-knowledge, spiritual understanding), and 'proclaim' an alternative meaning of the word for 'to read'. This proclaiming or reading according to Dalhatu (2016) implies not only the duty to blazoning forth God's message as going with the Prophetic office, but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the truth by all who read and understand it including women. The comprehensive meaning of Qara'a refers not only to a particular person and occasion but also gives a universal direction including the women. And this kind of comprehensive meaning as seen, runs throughout the Qur'an - for those who will understand not minding men or women.

Soon after, the revelation continued to flow teaching the Muslims the dictates of their religion which principally centered on the worship of only one Allah. As Muslims began to increase in number, the need for collective educational pursuit was felt, and the house of Arqam bin Arqam was used as the first school of the Prophet (S.A.W) where the Companions received lessons (Rahim 2001). From the very beginning, women have played very vital roles in the propagation and spread of Islamic education and da'wah, this can be seen from the sacrifices of Sumayyah, to the collected Hadiths of Aisha (RA). Unfortunately, during these times, the Islamic revival suffers from weaknesses in its properly qualified personnel, which limits its spreading and restrict the da'wah activities to some elitist group activities with finite and limited efforts of da'wah and tarbiyyah being focused on women.

Later when the Prophet (S.A.W) migrated to Madina, he built his mosque and made it a center for education where various Qur'anic sciences were taught in the masjid (mosque). Different circles in the name of schools were formed, teaching and studying different sciences ranging from Islamic sciences, social interaction, political leadership, military organisation for the defence of Islam and economic education were taught (Rahim 2000). The basis for this system of education and its curriculum is the revelation (the glorious Qur'an) which provide divine information on all these sciences conveyed to all humankind in the name of da'wah i.e. teaching and conveying the message of Islam according to the teachings of the Prophet (SAW).

The Concept of Education in Islam

Islam has, right from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition, Knowledge (ilm) occupies a significant position within Islam, Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of educational theories and practices largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Qur'an. The Qur'an serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and is the primary source of knowledge. The advent of the Qur'an in the seventh century was quite revolutionary for the predominantly illiterate Arabian society. The Arab society had enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but the Qur'an was considered the word of Allah (SWT) and needed to be originally interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words. Hence, reading and writing for the purpose of accessing the full blessings of the Qur'an was an aspiration for most Muslims. Thus, education in Islam derived its origin from a symbolic relationship with religious instructions (Abdullahi, 1984)

Education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rationale, spiritual, and social dimensions (Naquib al-Attas

Muhammad 1979), the comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is directed towards the balance growth of the total personality of the individual through training of mans' spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality.

In Islamic education theory, knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being, from an Islamic perspective the highest and most useful model of perfection is the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the Qur'an reads:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

*“ Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah
you have a good example to follow for
him who hopes in Allah and the Last
Day, and remembers Allah much.
“(Q.33:21)*

This Ayah is an important principle, to follow the teachings of the Prophet (SAW) in his teachings and actions or deeds as in da'wah activities, to this end Hossein (1984) wrote that while education does prepare humankind for happiness in this life, its ultimate goal is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity.

Education in Islam is twofold: acquiring intellectual knowledge (through the application of reason and logic) and developing spiritual knowledge (derived from divine revelation and spiritual experience), According to the worldview of Islam, provision in education must be made equally for both sexes. Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

*“Seeking for knowledge is an
obligation upon every Muslim” (Ibn
Majah 224)*

Acquiring knowledge in Islam according to this Hadith is not only the responsibility of men but also women are inclusive and it is not intended as an end but, as a means to and stimulate a more elevated moral and spiritual consciousness, leading to faith and righteous action, Women who understood their role, would educate themselves and achieve their right to education and Tarbiyah. Look at the Hadeeth of the prophet (S.A.W) narrated by Abu Saeed that a woman said to the prophet (SAW).

*“The men are keeping you busy and
we do not get enough attention from
you. Would you specify a day for us,
women? He promised them a day to
meet them and educate them”
(Bukhari 1:101).*

The fruits of this understanding and concern by the women companions of the prophet (S.A.W), shows that women can receive education and educate others through any one or all of the da'wah means, methods and techniques. Not only this, many verses in the Qur'an obligate Muslim women to do da'wah, and enjoin good and forbid evil. Example, Allah says:

“Let there arise out of you group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam). Enjoining good and forbidding evil. And it is they who are successful” (3:104).

An understanding of this verse according to Ali (1968) is that, calling to Allah becomes obligatory upon everyone male or female according to each person's individual ability. If one lives in a town or city where there are others carrying out this task and are conveying the affair of the religion sufficiently, then calling to Allah takes the ruling of being recommended in relation to everyone in the area, the ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts or doubts, sure of itself, strong, united, and prosperous: because it invites to all that is good, enjoins the right; and forbids the wrong.

Women have been expressly addressed with the duty of the da'wah because Allah (S.W.T), says:

“O wives of the prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty (to Allah) then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire, but say that which is ma'roof “(good) (Q.33:32)

Ibn Abbas understood Allah's injunction to the prophet's wives, to “say good”, to mean that they have to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. This can be taken as a general address to all Muslim women. Allah also says:

“The believers, men and women are Auliya (helpers, protectors) of one another, they enjoin the good and forbid the evil, they perform Salah and give away Zakah and obey Allah’ (Q.9:71)

It is clear in this verse that women are addressed with this task of education and da'wah, just as men, whenever they are capable of discharging it. Da'wah is used as an instrument of educating people in matters that could promote their religious faith as well as promote their life in the world. In view of this, the first assignment given to all Prophets was to educate people about this essence. The following Qur'anic verse substantiates the statement:

Say, this is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. and exalted is Allah; and I am

not of those who associate others with Him". (Q12:108)

Everyones effort fills a need of some kind. A Muslim scholar will address his counterpart with refined style and scholarly content, while a layman will reason with his equals in practical terms, each having a role complementary to the other. Therefore, every individual of the Muslim ummah male or female is obligated to be actively engaged in whatever way he can to guide people to the right path and to support, morally and materially.

In a Hadith, Khuraym bin Fatik (RA) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever spends a sum in the cause of Allah, it is recorded for him seven-hundred-fold." If anyone makes a contribution towards Allah’s path, seven hundred times as much will be recorded to his credit." (Tirmidhi, 1625)

In view of the importance attached to Da’wah activities, the Prophet (S.A.W.), received the revelation of the ultimate book, containing all guidance that touches every aspect of man’s need, Allah the Almighty says:

"...We have sent down to you the Book, as clarification for all things, and as guidance, and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims. (Q16:89)

The Prophet (SAW) therefore, used the Qur’an as a guide to educate people in matters of their religion and worldly affairs. The comprehensive nature of the Qur’an in dealing with all matters of importance is an indication that Da’wah has its fundamental mission of promotion of knowledge and every worthwhile value. In view of this the Prophet (SAW) commanded for the conveyance of all knowledge as from him. He says:

وَلَوْ آيَةٌ عَنِّي بَلَّغُوا

"Convey from me even if it is a Sentence" (Bukhari vol. 4. 3461)

This means that any Muslim could perform da’wah either male or female and thus, educate the Ummah to the extent of his own knowledge and ability. The Prophet (SAW) also emphasized the obligation of enjoin what is right and forbidden what is wrong to include all sexes by saying:

"All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock. The Imam is a shepherd, and he is responsible for his flock. The man is a shepherd among his family, and he is responsible for his flock; and the woman is a shepherd in her husband’s

home, and she is responsible for her flock.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

The prime mission of Da'wah is to guide people to what is better. In this regards a Da'i (a person who undertake the work of education and Da'wah) is commanded to carefully study circumstances in relation to individual/group and offer Islamic guidance accordingly. The Da'wah activities were not geared to imposition on people but rather to develop the sense in people to receive guidance of the religion. The Qur'an states:

There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong So. Whoever disbelieves in taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is most Hearing and all Knowing. (Q2:256)

The above verse shows that One needs to understand that the Qur'anic command and prohibitions are directed to both sexes including such verses enjoying da'wah. Example:

And let there be arising from you a nation inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidden what is wrong, and those will be the successful (Q.3:110).

The above verse has been taken to mean general, meaning that all members of the Ummah has this function in respect of whether male or female (Kassas2005) Darraz in kassas (2005) had a contrary view that da'wah is compulsory only on those capable few with the assistance and cooperation of all, if it is not done by any one, they will be blameworthy. Some verses mention women specifically along with men in order to put emphasis on the fact that they are included.

Da'wah work for a woman may be somewhat specialized, since recipient are often family members, neighbors or women's circles. The home is her first base, and the Islamic upbringing of her children is the primary duty about which she will be questioned on the day of judgement according to the sayings of the Prophet (SAW) in the hadith above. Mothers have great influence over their children since the child is by nature most attached to her, especially in the formative stage or years. Moreover, many wives have ability to influence their husbands in positive ways. Besides the home there are other fertile fields for education and da'wah by women in social groups, schools, hospitals, workplaces even in the female sections of the prison.

A woman scholar will address her counterpart with refine style and scholarly content, while a lay woman will reason with her equals in practical terms, each having a role complementary to the other. Therefore, every individual of the Muslim Ummah including the women is obligated to be actively involved and engaged in whatever way he can to

educate, guide and convey (da'wah) people to the right path and support, morally and materially.

Kassas (2005) quoting ash-Shatibi said: “inviting people to Islam is wajib (imperative) because its implementation is obligatory upon all”. Thus, one can rightly conclude concerning the ruling may be drawn that general propagation of Islam should be done by all Muslims both male and female according to the circumstances and abilities. In addition, women are best suited for da'wah and education of other women. Hence there should be participation by both men and women and cooperation between the. The Qur'an reads in this regards:

أُولِيَاءَ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾

“The believers, men and women, are supporters of one another; they enjoin good, and forbid evil; they perform the Salah, and give the Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His mercy on them. Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (Q.9:71)

It is upon said that da'wah is only the responsibility of specialist in the field of Shariah and not others, or that it is required of men and not women. This assertion shows ignorance of Islamic principles. Once Caliph Ma'mun tried to prohibit a caller from his activity, declaring that Allah (SWT) said:

﴿الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ﴾

“Those who, if We give them power in the land, (they) establish the Salah, enforce the Zakah, and they enjoin the good and forbid the evil.” (Q.22:41)

Ibn Hatim in ibn kathir (1989) was of the view that this Ayah was revealed concerning us, for we had been expelled from our homes unjustly only because we said: 'Our Lord is Allah.' Then we were given power in the land, so we established regular prayer, paid the

Zakah, enjoined what is good and forbade what is evil, and with Allah rests the end of (all) matters.

(Those who, if We give them power in the land....) Then he said, "This is not obligatory only for those who are in authority, it also applies to those who are governed by them. Shall I not tell you what you can expect from your governor, and what duties those who are ruled owe to him Your rights over your governor are that he should check on you with regard to your duties towards Allah and restore the rights that you have over one another, and that he should guide you to the straight path as much as possible. Your duties towards him are that you should obey him without cheating and without resentment, and you should obey him both in secret and openly.

Women have the role to reform or rectify conduct and reinstitute many erroneous practices that have come to be social phenomenon in the society, Women have the role of recognizing the ills of evils and blocking the way to them the process of da'wah is that of change, it gives new knowledge or re-affirms the old knowledge already acquired leading to a change in spiritual and social awareness of an individual. Attitude to God and society changes as bits and pieces of new knowledge and convention are acquired and the individual begins to understand his position in the entire creation and his responsibility to the Creator and Society at large Prominent Women In the Field of Da'wah.

The Qur'an clearly states that women have equal rights, the muslim women played vital roles in the propagation and education of the ummah or the divine message of islam. Ibrahim (2020) stressed that Muslim women played a great role in sacrifices and services for the religion of Allah. He gave the following instances when Sumayyah gave up her life when Abu-Jahl killed her for becoming a Muslim; Khadijah the first wife of the prophet, who was very rich, spent of her money to support the da'wah; Umm Salamah left her husband and saw her children persecuted when she migrated; Umm Imarah fought in defense of the prophet (S.A.W), in the Uhud battle. Tending the wounded in battles was the role Muslim women played through history. Women have a definite responsibility and role in education and da'wah, no less important than that of men. Except for specific instances which are clear in context, the Qur'an's command and prohibitions are directed to both sexes, including those verses enjoining dawah. Moreover, the Quran makes these two statements:

“The hypocrites, men and women, are one from another; they enjoin evil, and forbid the good, and they close their hands. They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them. Verily, the hypocrites are the rebellious. Allah has promised the hypocrites men and women and the disbelievers, the fire of Hell; therein shall they abide. It will suffice them. Allah has cursed them and for them is the lasting torment. “(Q. 67 - 68)

“The believers, men and women, are supporters of one another; they enjoin good, and forbid evil; they perform the Salah, and give the Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His mercy on them.

*Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.”
(Q.9:71)*

It is clear in this verse that women are addressed with this task, just as men, whenever they are capable of discharging it. Furthermore, the following points, when properly put into perspective also lead to the understanding that women are as responsible for carrying out Da'wah as men are:

Because Islam prohibits the free mixing of men and women and the maintenance of Hijab, it becomes vital, as well as practical, to have qualified women to do Da'wah work among women in the community.

Some of the shariah rulings were reported from the prophet (saw) only through women companion. Sometimes it is difficult for the male Du'at to carry out all that the Da'wah among women requires because women have some private conditions that they may not feel comfortable revealing to men, and would rather convey them only to other women.

“Allah has promised the believers men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever, and beautiful mansions in gardens of `Adn (Eden; Paradise). But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success” (Q. :72.)

Conclusion

From the foregone discussion, it can be concluded that da'wah amongst women deserves, and should get far more attention than it does. So far, except in a few instances, women have been distanced from the field of da'wah and education work, almost every woman can find subtle ways to perform da'wah in her own home and reap the reward of it in this life even before the next. Thus, one can rightly conclude concerning the ruling may be drawn that general propagation of Islam should be done by all Muslims both male and female according to the circumstances and abilities I.e. the obligation to educate and carry out da'wah is not restricted to males and women are often effective and implement all in reforming entire family. In addition, women are best suited for da'wah and education of other women. Hence there should be participation by both men and women and cooperation between them.

Recommendations

It is recommended therefore, that:

- I. Those women who are unmarried or who no longer have children at home and have some free time can study the possibilities, evaluate their capabilities, and then branch out into one or more of these fields in accordance with their particular circumstances and personal preference.
- II. Islamic schools should provide educational activities and curriculum which can be used for guidance of girls students as well as women teachers and staff

- III. The masjid: Women should be allowed to go to the masjid to benefit from the lessons held there.
- IV. The mosque should be a suitable place for some of the women activities such as Qur'an study groups and other training.
- V. Women should be involve in the planning and organisation of Da'wah activities that concerns women wing.

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