

Methodology of the Prophets in Calling to Allaah

Source: Excerpted from the book : “The Methodology of the Prophets in Calling to Allaah – that is the way of wisdom and intelligence” – by Shaykh Rabee hafidhahullaah,

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

All of the Prophets began with correction of matters of ‘Aqeedah, and by waging war upon Shirk and its manifestations – Shaykh Rabee’ ibn Haadee

.. So I am amazed at the situation of many callers today who see the manifestation of shirk in front of their eyes, yet it does not cause them any concern whatsoever and they do not give any attention to it. Indeed what is even worse is that they complain about those who criticise it and who feel pained by this evil state of affairs which remains from the days of ignorance.

.. intellect, wisdom and the natural way therefore necessitates that the starting point is to wage war against the danger of shirk, and that the call of the Prophets and their followers should continue fighting it for as long as anything of it remains, or any form or manifestation of it continues. So if a nation is afflicted by matters damaging to its ‘Aqeedah, and shirk which destroys its ‘Aqeedah, and also is beset by economic and political problems, then where is wise treatment of the problems to begin?! As for the Prophets, then they did not begin except with applying their full efforts to treating problems facing ‘Aqeedah. Then beginning by seeking to treat the most dangerous problem is a matter about which all humans with intellect agree upon.

So, for example, if a person with intellect saw a snake and an ant moving towards a person, then his intellect would lead him to hasten to repel or kill the snake due to the greater danger which it poses to a person. It is not possible that he would divert his attention to the ant, nor even to a thousand such ants. Also if a number of people possessing intellect saw that a fierce lion and a number of rats attacked them all at once, then they would all strive together to prevent the attack of the lion and they would forget all the rats, even if a group of frogs came with them. And if a group of travellers came to a point where they had no choice but to take one of two roads: the first passed by volcanoes which were emitting flames and fire, and flinging out rocks and boulders. Then the second road passed through areas of thorny bushes, and sun-baked ground and was subject to the heat of the sun. Then anyone with intellect would not choose except to take the second road.

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So now let us think about the most severe problems and ills. I mean the problems in political affairs, social affairs and economic affairs, and the worst of these is corruption in matters relating to rulership and judgement. Then let us weigh this against corruption in matters of 'Aqeedah. So are these two things equal in weight with Allaah and with the Prophets, or is it the case that one is more severe, dangerous and worse in its consequences?!! So in the scale of Allaah and the scale of the Prophets the most dangerous of these two, and the one which has the greater demand for attention throughout the ages, and with all the Messengers, is shirk and its manifestations, whose evil and corruption cannot be matched by any other evil no matter how great. So upon this we repeat and say, "All of the Prophets began with correction of matters of 'Aqeedah, and by waging war upon shirk and its manifestations," and this is what is demanded by wisdom and intellect and that is due to the following reasons:

Firstly, that corruption relating to matters of the 'Aqeedah of the people: shirk, false superstitions and beliefs, and the various types of misguidance, is thousands of times more dangerous than the corruption resulting from the corruption in rulership and other affairs. Indeed if we do not say and firmly believe this then we have without knowing it discredited and belittled the Messengers, and we seek Allaah's refuge from misguidance. Indeed this corruption encompasses the ruler and the ruled. So the rulers themselves in every time and place, except for the Believers from them, humble themselves to the idols, false-gods and tombs. They construct them, protect them, worship them and present offerings to them. They firmly believe that they have some supernatural power over and above their own authority. So they hold that these things cause harm and benefit for them due to the unseen power and authority which they think they possess, or at the very least they think they can intercede with Allaah in order for their problems to be reduced. The clearest example of the submission of the rulers to the idols is the example of the despot who claimed divinity, the Pharaoh, who said, boasting:

["I am your Lord, the Most High."]¹

And he said:

["I know of no other god for you besides me."]²

Since the leaders of his people said to him:

["Will you leave Moosaa and his people to cause mischief in the land when they have abandoned worship of you and worship of your gods?"]³

Also Namrood, the king of the Chaldeans who claimed lordship for himself. When Ibraaheem, 'alayhis-salaam, broke the idols, Namrood sought to burn Ibraaheem to take

¹ Soorah an-Naazi'aat (79):24.

² Soorah al-Qasas (28):38.

³ Soorah al-A'raaf (7):127.

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revenge for these idols, because they were the gods which he worshipped. Likewise the kings of India and Persia worship idols and worship fire. The kings of Rome in the past and the present-day rulers of Europe and America worship the cross and worship images. And how many of the past and present-day rulers of the Muslims are afflicted by the trial caused by the dead, so that they build tombs over them, and their hearts are attached to them in love, hope and fear. They fall into that which Allaah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) feared for his Ummah and which he warned against. So the seriousness and the soundness of the methodology will therefore be clear to you, and also the importance of the firm stance taken by the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with regard to idols and tombs. Furthermore the wisdom of Ibraaheem will become clear to you, and the depth of his thinking and its extent when he made the enduring call which resounds in all corners and in every generation.

[“And keep me and my sons far removed from worshipping the idols. O my Lord, they have caused the misguidance of many of the people. So whoever follows me in what I am upon ('Eemaan in Allaah, making worship purely for Allaah and disassociation from the worship of idols) then he is from my people (upon my way and religion), and whoever disobeys me, then indeed You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.”]⁴

So you see Ibraaheem, who was fully upon the truth and the right way, seeking Allaah's refuge from the evils and danger of the idols, and not seeking His refuge from the evils and danger of the rulers, despite the level of their corruption and their danger.

Secondly, the people were upon a single religion (Islaam), upon guidance, but then they diverged from it, so Allaah sent the Prophets as bringers of good tidings of reward for the obedient Believers, and warners of Allaah's punishment for the disobedient unbelievers.

Allaah, the Most High, says:

[“We do not send Our Messengers except with good news for the obedient that Paradise and success on the Day of Resurrection is the reward for obedience to Me, and with a warning for those who disobey and reject My commands that We will punish them, so that they may die aware of that. So whoever believes the Messengers and acts righteously in this world by following what they are upon then there will be no fear upon them when they meet their Lord, nor will they grieve about what they justify behind in the world.”]⁵

And Allaah, the Most High, says:

“Messengers who were sent with the good news of Allaah's reward for those who obey Allaah, do as He commands and believe in His Messengers, and warners of Allaah's punishment for those who disobey Allaah, contravene His commands and disbelieve in His

⁴ Soorah Ibraaheem (14):35-36.

⁵ Soorah al-An'aam (6):48.

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Messengers, so that those who disbelieve in Allaah and worship others besides Him may have no excuse to avoid punishment after the sending of the Messengers.”⁶

Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **“There is no one to whom granting excuse is more beloved than Allaah, therefore He sent the bringers of good-tidings and the warners.”⁷**

Allaah, the Most High, says:

[“So are the Messengers charged with anything but to clearly convey the Message?”]⁸

Allaah, the Most High, says:

[“The Messenger’s duty is but to clearly convey the Message.”]⁹

Allaah, the Most High, says:

[“So if you deny Our Messenger, O people, and reject his command for you to worship your Lord and to free yourselves from the worship of idols, then nations before you denied their Messengers who called them to the truth, so Allaah sent His punishment upon them and will do the same with you. The Messenger’s duty is but to clearly convey the Message.”]¹⁰

So this duty of warning and bringing good tidings and conveying the Message is a very exalted, sublime and lofty duty. It is enough in this regard that it was the duty of the Prophets and fully concurred with their lofty station, since it is the hardest and the greatest task taken up by mankind. It was then taken up by their inheritors from the true and sincere callers who follow their methodology, therefore Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **“The people who are most severely tried are the Prophets, then those most like them, then those most like them.”** We have also already mentioned the extent of the difficulties faced by the caller to Tawheed and that others are unable to persevere in this sphere.

Thirdly, Allaah, the One free of all imperfections, and the Most High, did not start by commanding and making it a duty upon them, as is seen from the stories of their lives, that they should establish states and cause the downfall of others, and this is perfect wisdom since the call to establish a state attracts the seekers of this world, and those who seek after self-elevation and positions of power, and those who have personal goals and grudges, and aspirations and ambitions.¹¹ So these types of people quickly respond to the call to establish

⁶ Soorah an-Nisaa (4):165.

⁷ Reported by al-Bukhaaree (Eng. trans. (9/378 no.512) and Muslim (Eng. trans. 2/782 no.3572) and Ahmad (4/238) and ad-Daarimee (no.2233).

⁸ Soorah an-Nahl (16):35.

⁹ Soorah an-Noor (24):54.

¹⁰ Soorah al-Ankaaboot (29):18.

¹¹ As has happened with many political calls, and from the latest of them the call of the Ikhwaanul-Muslimeen who have been joined by the like of those called “the free officers” and many people with self interest.

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a state which they think will enable them to attain their goals, their desires and their ambitions.

Due to the like of these considerations, and Allaah knows best, and due to other reasons known by Allaah, the Creator, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, the calls of the Prophets and their methodologies were far removed from using these flashy and attractive slogans or those which clearly appeal to short-term ambitions and desires. Rather they followed a methodology which is wise, unblemished and noble. It involves being tried and tested. So they are followed upon this way and believed in by every true and sincere person free of selfish ambitions and personal goals. Such a person does not desire through his 'Eemaan, his Tawheed and his obedience to Allaah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) except Paradise and the Pleasure of his Lord. He does not fear except from His Anger and His severe punishment. Therefore they are only followed generally by the poor, the needy and the weak. Allaah, the Most High, says, quoting what the people of Nooh said:

["They said, 'Are we to believe in you, O Nooh, and affirm what you call us to, when it is only the lowly people who follow you?'"¹²

He said concerning the people of Saalih:

["The heads of the people who haughtily rejected Faith said to those who they held to be lowly, to those who believed in and followed Saalih and what he came with, 'Do you really know that Saalih is one sent by Allaah?' They said, 'We indeed attest and believe in the truth and guidance which Allaah has sent him with.' The haughty ones said, 'We deny and disbelieve that which you believe in.'"¹³

Also amongst the questions which Heraclius asked Aboo Sufyaan was, **"Is it the noble of the people who follow him or the weak amongst them?"** Aboo Sufyaan replied, **"Rather it is the weak amongst them."** So Heraclius said, **"I asked you 'Is it the noble of the people who follow him or the weak amongst them,' and you mentioned that it is the weak amongst them, and it is they who are the followers of the Messengers."** So the call to establish a state is far far easier, and people respond more quickly to it since most people are seekers after this world and followers of desires.

Also because of the reasons, the consequences and the difficulties in the way of the calls of the Messengers we find that they are not followed except by a small number of people. So Nooh remained, for nine hundred and fifty years,¹⁴ calling to Allaah, yet despite this:

["None but a few believed along with him."]¹⁵

¹² Soorah ash-Shu'araa (36):111.

¹³ Soorah al-A'raaf (7):75-76.

¹⁴ Soorah al-'Ankaaboot (29):14.

¹⁵ Soorah Hood (11):40.

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From Ibn 'Abbaas, radiyallaahu 'anhumaa, who said, "Allaah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, 'The nations were presented before me, and I saw a Prophet and with him was a small group of people, and I saw a Prophet along with one man or two men, and a Prophet accompanied by nobody. Then I saw a huge crowd of people and I thought that they were my Ummah. So it was said to me, "This is Moosaa and his people. But rather look to the horizon." So I looked and saw a huge crowd, so it was said to me, "This is your Ummah, and from them are seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without any reckoning."'"¹⁶

As for Ibraaheem, the chosen and beloved Friend of Allaah, who refuted and silenced the Mushriks with irrefutable and clear proofs. Allaah says regarding him and those who believed along with him:

["So Loot believed in him and attested to the truth of what he came with, and Ibraaheem said, 'Indeed I will emigrate (to the land of Shaam) for the sake of my Lord. Indeed He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.'"]¹⁷

With regard to Loot and those who were saved from the punishment along with him, and perhaps they were his daughters alone:

["So We brought out those who were Believers from the town, and We did not find there except a single household of Muslims."]¹⁸

But none of this diminishes the rank of the Prophets by the slightest degree, rather they are upon the highest rank and are the noblest and most distinguished of the people and the most honourable. They stand above all the people in manhood, bravery, excellence of language and eloquence, and in their clarity of explanation, their sincerity and sacrifice.

They also established their duty of calling to Tawheed, propagating the Message, giving the good tidings and the warnings, and they fulfilled this in the most complete manner. So the fact that they had few followers or some of them had no followers, is purely the fault of the nations which refused to accept the call since, in their view, they did not satisfy their lowly goals. Then it may be that they respond to his call, or a large number of them do so, and so they gain a state, as a goodly fruit due to their 'Eemaan, their affirmation of what the Prophet came with, and their righteous actions.

They thus establish the obligation upon them of fighting Jihaad to raise up the Word of Allaah, and of following and applying the Sharee'ah and the prescribed punishments and other matters prescribed for them by Allaah. This is what happened with our Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his noble Companions. Allaah crowned their 'Eemaan, their righteous actions, and their exemplary perseverance when facing the harm and oppression

¹⁶ Reported by al-Bukhaaree (Eng. trans. 7/407 no.606 and 8/359 no.549) and Muslim (Eng. trans 1/141 no.625) and Ahmad (1/271).

¹⁷ Soorah al-'Ankaaboot (29):26.

¹⁸ Soorah adh-Dhaariyaat (51):35-36.

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of the Mushriks, by aiding them and making their Deen uppermost, and by establishing them upon the earth as Allaah, the Most High, says:

[“Allaah has promised those who truly believe (have true 'Eemaan) amongst you, and act in obedience to Allaah and His Messenger, that He will grant them rulership upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them, and that He will establish their religion for them grant them authority to practice the religion which He chose for them and ordered. And He will certainly change their situation to one of security, after their fear, providing that they worship and obey Me, not associating anything else in worship with Me.”]¹⁹

Then sovereignty was offered to Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in Makkah but he refused and he continued calling to Tawheed and waging war against shirk and the idols. So when Qur’aysh became troubled by the call of Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) they sent ‘Utbah ibn Rabee’ah and he came to Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and said, “O son of my brother, you know the excellence you hold amongst us with regard to your position in the tribe and your lineage, but you have brought a matter which is very serious for your people. Because of it you have split their united body, caused their youth to behave foolishly and you have abused their idols with it, and their religion. You have also declared their fore-fathers to be infidels because of it. So listen to me and I will offer you some things which you may consider, and hopefully some of them will be acceptable to you.” So Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “**Speak, O Abul-Waleed, I will listen.**” He said, “O son of my brother, if what you desire by this matter that you have come with is wealth, then we will gather wealth for you from our wealth until you are one of the richest of us. And if you wish by it for high position, then we will give you such authority that we will not do anything without your approval, and if you wish by it for sovereignty, then we will make you sovereign over us. But if it is the case that what comes to you is a demon which you see and cannot get rid of, then we will seek after a medical cure for you and will expend our money until we can get you cured of it. Since a demon may take hold of a person until he is cured and relieved of it,” or as he said. Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was listening to him, then he said, “**Have you finished, O Abul-Waleed?**” He said, “Yes.” He said, “**Then listen to me.**” He said, “I will do so.” He said:

“In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. Haa Meem. This Qur’aan is the Revelation sent down by the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. A Book whose Aayaat are made clear, a recital in pure Arabic for those who know (the pure Arabic language), bringing them good tidings of Paradise if they believe in it and act upon it, and as a warning to those who disbelieve in it and do not act in obedience to Allaah,

¹⁹ Soorah an-Noor (24):55.

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that they will receive punishment and dwell forever in Hell in the Hereafter. But most of them turn away haughtily and refuse to listen to it.”²⁰

Then Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued reciting it to him. When ‘Utbah heard it he remained silent and sat with his hands behind his back, resting upon them and listening. So when Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came to the Aayah of prostration in it he prostrated and then said, **“You have heard what you have heard O Abul-Waleed, so now it is up to you...”** So ‘Utbah went back to Qur’aysh and when he sat with them they said, “What has happened with you, O Abul-Waleed?” He said, “What happened is that I heard the like of which, by Allaah, I have never heard. By Allaah, it is not sorcery, nor poetry, nor divining. O Qur’aysh, obey me and let the decision be mine. Leave the man and let him continue in what he is upon. Keep away from him since, by Allaah, his saying which I heard will come to have great importance. So if the (other) Arabs kill him, then you will be rid of him due to the action of others, and if he conquers the Arabs, then his sovereignty is your sovereignty, his power is your power and you will be the ones fortunate with regard to him.” They said, “By Allaah, he has performed magic upon you with his tongue, O Abul-Waleed.” He said, “This is my opinion with regard to him, you may do whatever you see fit.”²¹

Ibn Ishaq reports with his chain of narration to Ibn ‘Abbaas that a group of Qur’aysh gathered and made an offer close to the offer made by ‘Utbah and his saying to Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) answered them by saying, **“I am not afflicted by what you say. I have not come with that which I have come with seeking your wealth, nor seeking status above you, nor sovereignty over you, but rather Allaah has sent me as a Messenger to you, and has sent down a Book to me, and has ordered me to be a bringer of good tidings and a warner to you. So I have conveyed to you the revealed Messages from my Lord, and I have sincerely advised you. So if you accept what I have brought to you then you will have your share in this world and the Hereafter. But if you refuse to accept it from me then I will patiently await Allaah’s Order, until Allaah judges between me and you...”**²²

Likewise Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) rejected the request of one of the tribes that they should be in charge of the affairs after his death, if the report is authentic. Ibn Ishaq said that az-Zuhree narrated to me that Allaah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came to Banoo

²⁰ Soorah Fussilat (41):1-4.

²¹ Reported by Ibn Ishaq in his Seerah, he said, “Yazeed ibn Abee Ziyad narrated to me: from Muhammad ibn Ka’b al-Qurazee who said: It was related to me that ‘Utbah ibn Rabee’ah...” And he reported the narration: as-Seerah of Ibn Hishaam (1/293-294). It also has a supporting witness in the hadeeth of Jaabir which is reported by ‘Abd ibn Humayd and Aboo Ya’laa which has preceded.

²² As-Seerah of Ibn Hishaam (1/295-296): Ibn Ishaq said: A person of knowledge narrated to me: from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr and ‘Ikrimah the mawlaa of Ibn ‘Abbaas: from ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Abbaas, radiyallaahu ‘anhumaa, who said, “A group of Qur’aysh gathered: ‘Utbah ibn Rabee’ah, Shaybah ibn Rabee’ah and Aboo Sufyaan...” And this strengthens the previous narration, each of them supporting the other.

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'Aamir ibn Sa'sa'ah and called them to Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, and presented himself to them. So a man from them called Bayharah ibn Firaas said, "By Allaah, if I were to take hold of this young man from Qur'aysh I would devour the Arabs with him," then he said, "If we give you our pledge of allegiance upon your affair, then Allaah gives you victory over those who oppose you, then will we be in authority after you?" He said, "**The affair is for Allaah, He places authority wherever He wills.**" So he said to him, "Are we to risk our necks before the Arabs for you, then when Allaah grants you victory, authority will be for other than us?! We have no need of your affair." So they rejected him.²³

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²³ Ibn Hishaam's Seerah (1/424-425) and as-Seeratun-Nabawiyah of adh-Dhahabee (pp.189-190).