TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF *DA'WAH* TO MUSLIM YOUTH

By:

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Abstrak

Artikel ini cuba memberi kefahaman lengkap mengenai da'wah terhadap belia Muslim. Menerusi artikel ini, penulis menerangkan hubungkait di antara gerakan dakwah dan golongan belia berdasarkan keterangan al-Qur'an, al-Sunnah dan amalan generasi awal dalam sejarah Islam. Penulis kemudiannya, menjelaskan beberapa cabaran besar masa kini yang sedang dihadapi oleh golongan belia dan mencadangkan beberapa strategi spesifik untuk mengatasi cabaran tersebut. Di akhir artikel ini, penulis menganalisis dan membuat penilaian terhadap aktiviti-aktiviti dakwah yang dijalankan oleh beberapa organisasi dakwah di Malaysia, khususnya yang memberi tumpuan terhadap kegiatan dakwah di kalangan golongan belia dan remaja.

INTRODUCTION

Youth as the future leaders of the Muslim *ummah* are the most important assets of the community. Hence they need to be trained, educated and well prepared. *Da'wah* is an important means to achieve this noble objective. This article attempts to define the term youth, highlight the significance of youth in Islam, and explain their role in the early phase of Islam.[1] An effort is made to explore and evaluate prevalent atti-

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[1] The following are some related references which have been written on the topic in English:

a) Alam, Mohammad Manzoor (1983), *Role of Muslim Youth in the Reconstruction of the Contemporary World,* Delhi: Hindustan Pub. The main related topics discussed an introduction, a very brief discussion on youth in Islam followed by fundamental characteristics which are demanded of Muslim youth and then the author devotes the rest of the book for the challenge before Muslim youth, pp. 32-57.

b) Kamaluddin, Abuzar, *Role of Muslim Youth and Students in the Islamic Movements,* Calcutta: Hilal Pub. This book addresses the issue of youth as *du'āt* (preachers) using Islamic Movements as a channel. Whereas this article aims at dealing with youth as *mad'ūwīn* (receivers of the message).

c) Shuraydi, Hasan (1983), *The Medieval Muslim Attitude Towards Youth,* Michigan: University Microfilms Int.. This dissertation could be considered as a collection of selected

tudes of the youth with special reference to the Malaysian context. Lastly, the article anticipates the major contemporary challenges facing the Muslim youth and underlines its possible resolutions.

STUDY OF *DA'WAH* AND YOUTH: GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Majority Muslim scholars consider a youth to be in the age limit of 15-30 years.[2] As a term, "youth" is a social construction, varying between cultures, and is subject to reconstruction over time. For the last hundred years or so, the term has increasingly been linked with the period known as adolescence, the part of the life which leads into adulthood.[3] In terms of qualities, "youth is a symbol of strength, power, vitality and energy. It is a well known fact that the time of youth is universally considered to be the time during which a person's physical, mental, intellectual and moral faculties and talents blossom forth to their optimum level. It is the time when the mind shows its intensive and imaginative capabilities in the best form.[4]

Through the history of Allah's message to humanity most of - if not all - the chosen Prophets and Apostles were young. Allah the almighty says:

"They said: We heard a youth talk of them. He is called Abraham". (Al-Anbiyā': 60).

And said about Mūsa (peace be upon him);

"When he reached full age, and was firmly established in life, We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge." (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 14).

The same thing has been said about Yūsuf (peace be upon him). (Yūsuf: 22). Allah also says:

"They were youths who believed in their Lord." (Al-Kahf: 13).

Ibn Kathīr interpreted the verse:

"They were the youths who readily accepted the truth and followed the right path than the elders who rejected the message because of their indulgence in sins and immoralities. Therefore, most of those who obeyed Allah and His

medieval poetry that reflects the attitude of some poets toward youth. The author has done a good job and a thorough study in defining the term "youth". Where he exposes the reader to many different views regarding the Arabic terminology and stages of youth, pp. 1-10.

[2] Mohammed Azmi Abdul Salam, Dr. (1985), *al-Ta'ṣil al-Islāmī li-Ri'āyah al-Shabāb*, Cairo: Dār al-Ṣaḥwah, pp. 24-29. Others regard 13-30 years or 15-25 years as the age duration for the youth.

[3] Gill Jones and Claire Wallace (1992), *Youth, Family and Citizenship*, Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 3.

[4] Alam, Mohammad Manzoor, *Role of Muslim Youth*, p. 25.

Messenger were youths whereas the elders of Quraysh remained firmly attached to their erroneous creeds, and only few of them embraced Islam."[5]

LESSONS FROM THE PROPHETIC TRADITION

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave due emphasis to educate the youth of this ummah. It was reported that the Prophet asked every Muslim to be accountable to "make proper and effective use of youth before one gets old." The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned seven groups of people whom Allah will, on the Day of Judgement, protect under His "shade". One of these seven is "a young man who grew up in devotion to Allah."[6]

According to Mohammad Manzoor Alam: "Islamic youth has potentiality, power, commitment *(tasdīq),* will and action *('amal)* to awake the *ummah* from its slumber and lethargy to achieve the objective of *khilāfah.*"[7] A thorough study of the *sirah* shows that, most of the companions of the Prophet were young men. The Prophet educated and equipped them with knowledge and wisdom. For example; one of the great scholars among the companions was 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās who was very young at the time of the Prophet. The effort to educate them was coined with *du'ā.* The Prophet used to say the following supplication for Ibn 'Abbās: "O Allah! grant him the knowledge of interpretation of the Qur'an". It has been reported that Ibn 'Abbās said; "no scholar has acquired his knowledge except during his youth."[8] This might explain what has been narrated by Imām Bukhāri that 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said; "seek knowledge before you get elder."[9] The Prophet also entrusted the youth to defend Islam. Ibn Mas'ūd said: "We used to participate in the battles with the Prophet when we were young."[10] This could also be seen in appointing Usāmah Ibn Zayd at the age of eighteen years - by the Prophet - to be the commander of the Muslim army against the mighty Romans, whereas there were other companions who were older, more experienced and might be better qualified than him such as the four *khulafā',* Khālid Ibn al-Wālid and Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, to name just a few.

Majority of companions who were among the first to embrace Islam were young. 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib was eight, Asmā' binti Abū Bakar was ten, Talḥah ibn

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5   Ibn Kathīr (2000), *Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 9, revised edition. Cairo: al-Farouq Pub., p. 109.

6   Related by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

7   Alam, Manzoor, *op.cit.,* p. 27.

8   *Ibid.*, p. 26.

9   Related by Imām al-Bukhārī.

10   Related by Imām Aḥmad.

'Ubaydullah was eleven, Mas'ūd bin Rabi'ah was seventeen, Ja'far bin Abī Ṭālib was eighteen, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān was twenty years and 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb was twenty seven years when they embraced Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) entrusted young qualified companions with prestigious posts. He appointed Mu'ādh bin Jabal as a judge to Yemen.[11] The Prophet (peace be upon him) approached youths in cordial and affectionate manners. To different individuals he gave proper and relevant advice to their own situations. To some the message was "do not get angry"; to other, he said: "respect and obey your parents"; to a third, he taught the etiquettes of eating; and to a fourth one, he drew the attention towards the positive perception of fate (qaḍā' and qadar), to rely on Allah and to fear only to Him and that nothing can neither benefit nor harm him except by the Will of Allah.[12]

The Prophet asks the youth who memorizes the Qur'an (ḥāfiz or qārī) to lead the prayers, and instructs them to care for the elders and crying children by not making the prayer too long.[13] He advises the youth to be strong and not to be careless or reckless: "The strong believer is better in the Eyes of Allah, and Allah loves him more than the weak believer, though there is some nobility in each of them". Then comes the command: "Be keen for whatever is beneficial for you and seek help from Allah, and never be reckless."[14] It can be clearly inferred from the above examples, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to train the Muslim youth to always be responsible.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to care for youth and solve their problems. A young lady asked him whether she has to accept her father's decision to marry someone she does not like. The answer of the Prophet was in negative, and the principle was established for similar cases: "a father has to seek the approval of his daughter before marrying her to someone."[15]

In major and crucial events, tasks were delegated to them, and everyone had a role to play according to his capacity and qualification like in the incident of hijrah. He selected Abū Bakr to accompany him during the journey, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib to lie down on his bed to keep Qurayshites away from following the Prophet and also to return the peoples' dues on the Prophet (peace be upon him). He also assigned

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[11]　Mu'ādh bin Jabal embraced Islam at the age of eighteen and was less than thirty when he was appointed as a judge at Yemen.

[12]　This advice was given to 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) and it is related by al-Tirmidhī.

[13]　Related by al-Bukhārī.

[14]　Related by al-Tirmidhī

[15]　Related by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

'Abdullah bin Abū Bakr to keep them informed with the latest news of Makkah, Asmā' bint Abū Bakr to provide them with food, and 'Āmir bin Fuhayrah to efface the footsteps of 'Abdullah and Asmā' with his cattle.[16] The Prophet (peace be upon him) would present himself as a living example to motivate youth to exert their utmost for the betterment of the community by being the first to volunteer such as in building al-Masjid al-Nabawī, and digging the trench around Madīnah to protect from its enemy in the case of *al-Ahzāb*.[17] The needy young companions were given the rare of the prophet's mosque as shelter for the homeless of *al-Muhajirūn* and the rich farmers of Madinah were asked to provide dates as good lasting food for them.[18]

In 35 years time during the caliphate of *al-khulafā' al-rāsyidūn*, Islam spread out to all over the world; al-Sham, Bukhara, Egypt, Iraq, Tripoli and North Africa, China, and some parts of Europe. All these achievements were successfully reached by Muslim Youth. 'Uqbah bin Nafi', Qutayba al-Bāhili, Muhammed al-Fatih, were among the exceptional and brilliant youth leaders of Islam. Zayd bin Thābit was entrusted with the greatest task for ever which is the compilation of the Qur'an during the khilāfat of Abū Bakar al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).[19]

GLIMPSES ON *DA'WAH* AND MUSLIM YOUTH IN THE MODERN ERA

According to a paper presented to an International Conference entitled "Educating Muslim Youth and the Role of Universities"[20] the world Muslim population is 980 million where the youth constitutes is 355 million, which is higher than the number of youth in many Western countries. How this great number of Muslim youth is dealt with in terms of *da'wah?* Who is approaching them, and in what way? Are *da'wah* programs successful in approaching them? What can be done to improve *da'wah* practices towards our Muslim youth?

Generally speaking, mosques, religious schools, colleges and Islamic universities could be taken as institutions of *da'wah* where youth are their target groups. Association of Islamic schools of thoughts and Islamic groups form another type of *da'wah* institutions. International and national Islamic Organizations such as World Assembly

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[16]   Ibn Hisham (1375AH), *Al-Sīrah,* vol. 1. Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābi Pub., pp. 483-487.

[17]   *Ibid.,* vol. 2, p. 224.

[18]   Akram Diyā' Al-'Ūmari (1991), *Madinan Society at the Time of the Prophet,* vol.1, translated by Hudā Khattab. Herndon: IIIT Publications, pp. 91- 92.

[19]   Related by al-Bukhāri.

[20]   'Abdullah bin Abdul Muhsin al-Turki, Dr. (1988), "The Proceeding of the Conference on Educating Muslim Youth and The Role of Universities, *Nadwah Tarbiyyah al-Shabāb al-Muslim,* Riyadh: Imām Muhammad bin Sa'ūd Islamic University Publications, p. 31.

of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and Islamic Call Society (ICS) constitute a third category.

The main methods of *da'wah* being used by most of these institutions are lectures, conferences, forums, workshops, camping, training, TV broadcast, contests, recitation and memorization of the Qur'an *(tilāwah* and *talfidz al-Qur'ān), 'id* celebrations, sports, various publications such as books, booklets and magazines, establishing religious schools, and building more mosques *(masjids)*. To get a closer and more specific view, Malaysia will be taken - later on - as an example to explore and evaluate present *da'wah* practices.

MUSLIM YOUTH AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

In this twenty first century, the world has has turned into a global village due to many factors such as communication revolution, technology advancement, change of lifestyle, and globalization with its multifaceted aspects.

Muslim youth of today encounter great challenges, firstly, who is an exemplary model? With media influence on the perception, thoughts and attitudes of youth, the issue of "who is the model?" becomes a serious one. Is it a movie star? A famous athlete? or a political figure? The precept of Prophet Mohammed being the best model becomes questionable if not at all neglected. This requires *du'āh* to be alert and sensitive to this issue. Producing a simpler, attractive and practical version of the *sirah* of the Prophet, which is more suitable and convenient to our Muslim youth, turns to be a must. Creating awareness among Muslim parents about this challenge and educating them how to handle it properly becomes one of the major *da'wah* concerns.

Secondly, the change of lifestyle. The world, families, institutions, organizations, life style and almost everything is changing rapidly at two levels; namely what can be noticed, observed and seen and where the change is taking place. Technology, media and world-order are some contributing factors.

For the youth, the matter is even more complicated because they are facing two kinds of changes, the inside intrapersonal psychological one, and the outside interpersonal and intercultural sociological one. This explains some negative phenomena among youngsters, where the Muslims are no exception, such as school dropout, drug addiction, developing bad habits like smoking, aggressiveness etc. What could *du'āh* do about it? What is their responsibility? And how could they tackle the situation?

The following are some strategies that could greatly help overcome the problem.

Qualified researchers should engage themselves in deep research works and magazine articles, which analyze the problems, identify its causes, point out possible avenues and design effective approaches to deal with the challenge. We should identify the talents and potentials of our youths to engage them in meaningful activities and to train them on how to manage their time. Youth associations and institutions could be set up where they can find care, attention, guidance and supervision. Most importantly, Muslim countries should improve the content of school curricula especially at high school level to suit contemporary change of social life and to face the future challenges.

Thirdly, the technology misuse. Being exposed to internet, where there are millions of websites, and a significant part of which are designed by evildoers and promoters, young Muslim generation are subject to be victims of such evil act, especially, if we have less control over the use of the multimedia facility. Unrestricted use of internet might lead youngsters to develop misunderstanding about Islamic creeds and values. They would adopt negative ethical and moral attitudes, spoil their inherent *fiṭrah* through viewing pornographic materials, waste precious time sitting unwisely in front of the computers which may very much affect their school and co-curricular achievements, develop health problems due to lack of movements and exercise resulting in the weaking of family ties and relations and neglectful of obligations towards parents and other family members.

What should be role of the *du'āh* towards this challenge? The *du'āh* could promote Islamic and educational quality websites to create awareness about the problem among the youths, and to educate how they could use internet properly and positively to the extent that they might even create their own websites. A *da'ī* should inculcate in them an inner control to be self-accountable and conscious of what is permissible *(halāl)* and what is forbidden *(ḥarām)*. They could also design more websites to cater the needs of a modern youth. Relevant issues to youth with simple, attractive presentations, meaningful and educational games, related school material to help them understand their school subjects, youth journals and internet clubs managed by *du'āh* and educators where youths can chat and exchange views with their peers should be highlighted.

It is expected that youth would be more attracted to the new telecommunication device of the new millennium: the telleputer. As such *du'āh* have to be prepared to be among the first to design *da'wah* and educational programs to be included in this new instrument. *Du'āh* can treat this as a golden opportunity to produce more effective attractive and influential *da'wah* programs. In the present age of the 21st century, where the people face various challenges of misuse of science and technology, it becomes imperative on the *du'āh* to channel them towards Islamic line, to

transform them from being instruments of sins and immoralities towards spreading virtues and moralities.

Fourthly, deviant sects and groups. This issue is related to the negative aspect of *da'wah* to youth. There are deviant sects and groups who are extremist in their views and approaches and the main victims are the youth who become the easy preys. The *du'āh* could present a pure, unadulterated views of Islam which would create awareness among the youth and the *ummah* at large about the problem. They could remove misconceptions, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations created by those deviant sects and groups. Most importantly educate our youth and equip them with necessary critical, analytical, and evaluative thinking skills by which they could assess evidence, identify logical fallacies and how to make the right decision.

Fifthly, Christian Missionaries. In many African and Asian Muslim countries youth are the victims and a direct target group for the Christian Missionaries activities through educational institutions. There are 16,671 Christian colleges, 500 faculties, 489 theology schools and 1,113 kindergartens in Africa where one million Muslim students are enrolled. There are 4 famous Christian schools in Pakistan where 6,450 Muslim students are enrolled.[21] Some Muslims are trying to build private schools to overcome the challenge but it is not sufficient due to its limited number and high tuition fees which most of the Muslim families cannot afford.

The International Islamic organizations should play more positive roles in building more schools and colleges in those countries and provide qualified committed teachers to teach them. International Islamic universities should allocate more scholarships to students from those countries. *Du'āh* of those Muslim countries should create awareness among the Muslim families about the risk and negative consequences of registering their kids at the Christian schools, and remind them about their responsibility that Allah would count them in the hereafter for making the wrong choice.

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE *DA'WAH* ACTIVITIES: MALAYSIA AS A CASE STUDY

Historically, most of *da'wah* activities were conducted by scholars *('ulamā')*, and *sufis*. The traditional Islamic schools *(pondok)* played a major role in disseminating knowledge pertaining to religion. Besides scholars and religious schools, there are various *da'wah* groups in Malaysia. Groups such as Islamic Missionary of Malaysia (YADIM), The Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (ABIM), The National Union of

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[21]   *Nadwah Tarbiyyah al-Shabāb al-Muslim,* p. 152.

Malaysian Muslim Students (PKPIM),[22] Muslim Welfare League (PERKIM), The Reformation Organization of Malaysia (JIM), Jama'ah Tabligh Malaysia (JTM) etc, were very active in educating people about Islam as well as calling the non Muslims to Islam. In the recent years the *da'wah* activities have also been taken up by various

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[22] PKPIM is the main national Muslim Student Movement to cater the need of Muslim students throughout Malaysia. Founded in 1961, PKPIM has been consistent in upholding its ideals within the International Chain of World Islamic Movements. Its main struggle is to achieve and realize the objective of upholding the sovereignty of Islam. Therefore in realizing and trying to translate the ideals and vision of Islam, PKPIM has adopted *da'wah* and *tarbiyyah* as its orientation in its activities and approaches. PKPIM believes that a *da'i* is not a clown neither is he an orator who attacks his opponents, rather he is a divine trustee who advocates and preaches good and prohibits evil amongst the people. An organized and preplanned *da'wah* must be based on scientifically researched data, the use of an up-to-date techniques, the determination of target group according to their priorities and ability to choose precise theme for the betterment of society *(islāh)*. Among of the line of action taken by PKPIM including organizing different set of programs to different level of target groups within the range of the youth. In doing this, PKPIM has classified five main target groups to be approached. First are the members within the organization. Second are the student leaders at the secondary school level. Third are the problematic students and youth. Fourth are the masses in general. Fifth are the non-Muslims. In developing the fellow members, PKPIM focuses on its basic *tarbiyyah* programs such as *usrah* and *tamrīn* as its primary programs. These programs aimed instilling the right perception and understanding towards Islam as well as to equip them with different types of skills as the Islamic missioners or *da'i*. Secondly, PKPIM also reaches the students at the secondary school with a cadreship program, which includes leadership training program and motivational type of program. The objectives of such programs are to develop the potential *da'i* as well as to cadre more members in the *da'wah* activities. Thirdly, in responding to the new challengers of the social predicaments amongst the Muslim youth nowadays, PKPIM has offered different sets of programs in approaching different levels of youth who are facing social decadence. Among the activities includes fostering understanding of the Islamic principles and practices. Fourthly, in educating the general public pertaining to any Islamic issues, PKPIM organizes programs such as community service projects, seminars, *mudhākarah,* dialogues, lectures and group discussion. Finally, as the Islamic *da'wah* movement, PKPIM believes that it should not forever be exclusive and reverberate only within the Muslim sphere, but those outside of Islam gain nothing except panic on being haunted by frightening scenario projected by the Western media. Therefore, PKPIM also organizes series of programs such as inter-religious dialogues to improve the overall perception towards Islam. Besides PKPIM also organizes social services activities in order to attract the non-Muslim community such as "orang asli" or the indigenous people through portraying a good example or *maw'izah hasanah*. (An interview by the author with Br. Asyraf Wajdi Hj. Dusuki, Wed, 25 October 2000).

groups, institutions and organizations to educate the Muslims as well as non Muslims about Islam.

In terms of the conduct of *da'wah*, specifically to the youth, *da'wah* activities can be categorized into two main categories, i.e. specific and general.

Firstly, specific activities which are confined only to members of an organization such as group discourse *(usrah)*, and *(tamrin)*, annual general meeting *(mu'tamar)* and youth camps.

It can be said that group discourse *(usrah)* is the main form of activities of the various *da'wah* groups in Malaysia, such as ABIM, PAS, JIM, etc. The name implies "a family" whereby the gathering involve several members of the group who meet regularly (usually weekly) to learn and discuss about Islam. These types of gatherings are a kin to the *halaqah* type of gatherings. The aim of these gatherings is to foster close ties between the various *usrah* members such that a family - like environment amongst the *usrah* members is achieved. An *usrah* comprising group of youths would usually be led by the most senior member of the group, or even an *ustādh* who usually is a member of the *da'wah* group. In these sessions various topics of the *Dīn* from various Islamic books will be presented and discussed. The topics may range from *tawhīd, fiqh, tafsīr*, and *akhlāq* to *da'wah*. Sometimes memorization of certain *sūrahs* (verses of the Qur'an) may be part of the agenda. The way of conducting the *usrah* and the items of its program became a routine where no changes were entertained over the years and decades. This necessitates the need for revising procedures, methods of carrying out the activity to make it more appealing to our youth and in order to meet their needs.

Tamrin is a larger *usrah*, whereby several groups of *usrah* meet together in a big gathering. In these gatherings, more "complicated" and higher level issues are discussed. *Mu'tamar* is an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of a specific *da'wah* group for their members, held annually at the organization's headquarters. In these meetings, elections would be held to appoint the organization leaders and representatives. Major Islamic and *da'wah* issues are discussed and resolutions made to plan out the activities of the organization in the following year.

Youth camps and picnics are outings for the young Muslims, mainly those who are in schools and universities. These are organized as a different alternative to the usual activities held indoors. In these camps the youths are taught about outdoor survival as well as companionship. Usually these programs contain activities such as talks, simple workshops, entertainment *(nashīd*, sketches, etc) and nightly prayers *(qiyām al-layl)*. At the moment many institutions organize these types of programs such as academic institutions and student groups, Islamic Consultancy and Motiva-

tional companies, mosques and the various *da'wah* groups.

Secondly, the general activities which are usually open to other members of the public who may not be members of the *da'wah* group. Certain *da'wah* groups may organize *talks, seminars,* and *forums* with various institutions such as universities, schools or even mosques focusing on current issues. In addition, now the mosques and small mosques *(suraus)* are also active in organizing talks aimed at youth, whereby these functions may take place as short as one to two hours or as long as one to two days seminars. A well-reputed scholar is usually invited to conduct these talks, seminars or forums.

Workshops are held to either discuss in detail certain religious issues in order to arrive at a solution or resolution, or even as a mode of training to the youths who attend them. Sometimes these workshops are organized in conjunction with a *tamrīn* or *mu'tamar* and sometimes these are held independently.

Occasionally some institutions such as schools, tuition centers and Islamic Consultancy and motivational companies do organize *short courses* aimed at the youth. Motivational courses such as motivational courses, preschool preparation, Arabic short courses, al-Qur'an "clinics", courses on prayer, etc have been organized in the past. These courses which are usually held during the school holidays are aimed at ensuring that youths have beneficial activities during their school breaks as well as to focus on issues which they could hardly learn at schools.

All *da'wah* groups and many mosques have regular publication which contains topics relating to many issues in the *Dīn* such as *tawhīd, tafsīr, hadīth, sīrah, akhlāq,* current issues as well as questions and answers on *Dīn* related matters.

A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

These programs were successful in creating awareness among Muslim youths about their religion, producing thousands of students who fully memorized the Qur'an and enabling innumerable youths to recite the Qur'an properly. Religious schools prepared students to pursue their higher education in Islamic studies. *Fard 'ayn* courses made Muslim youths more accountable in fulfilling their Islamic obligations.[23]

Nowadays with the proliferation and increasing usage of the internet, most *da'wah* groups, institutions and some mosques have their own websites. These

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[23] There are more activities by Islamic organizations. According to a program produced by leadership and student development unit of JIM 1998: there are seven programs for the university students level as follows: weekly *usrah*, spiritual program, seminars, camp, *ziyārah* and *jawlah*, trip *(rihlah)*, and sports.

websites contain information about the group or institution, various articles about Islam, major activities as well as forums for discussion.

In evaluating the *da'wah* work in Malaysia, Dr. Jamil Hashim pinpoints the duplication of programs because of lack of cooperation and coordination, the limited number of *du'āh*, some restrictions on student activities, inadequate knowledge of Islam and educational programs, shortcomings in administrative and management skills and financial problems as some of the major challenges.[24]

Most Muslim *da'wah* groups in all Muslim communities suffer from similar shortcomings with varying degrees. These shortcomings need to be thoroughly discussed and studied by Muslim scholars and intellectuals in order to overcome them.

To improve *da'wah* work, *da'wah* organizations should act as facilitators and they should have respect for each other. In settling disputes and clashes, dialogues should take place, which may help minimize serious differences to a very minimum level. They should embrace the principles of encouraging what is good and discouraging what is evil *(al-amr bi al-ma'rūf and al-nahyu 'an al-munkar)*, commanding for virtues and prohibiting from vices, the principles of prioritizing and the principles of evaluating between benefits and harms. The organizations should have an integrated approach towards revealed knowledge and human sciences. They should also adopt a participative leadership style.

It is only through strategic thinking and management, continuous assessment, evaluation, mutual consultation *(shūra)* and advice *(naṣīhah)* that *du'āh* could improve their programs and activities to meet the essential requirements while dealing with contemporary challenges faced by Muslim youth.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion clearly shows that Muslim youth is a very important target group for *da'wah* activities. The *da'wah* organizations should prepare suitable programs using proper methods through effective channels to desiminate required knowledge to them. The *du'āh* should help them to overcome challegers facing by them or even expected to face them in the future.

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[24] Jamil Hashim, "An Analytical Survey on the Development of *Da'wah* Movement in Malaysia From 1970 Until 1980," Master Thesis at UIAM, March 1993, pp. 118-123.