

PUT HIS LUGGAGE ON YOUR HEAD!

SOME DAWAH
EXPERIENCES

Translated by:

Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf

gain
peace
com.au

Published by GAIN PEACE AUSTRALIA



Gain Peace Australia is initiative of iCAN, collaborating with Gain Peace USA, to spread the message of Islam to fellow Australians and people of neighboring regions. We utilize several mediums for dawah, including electronic, print, face-to-face, and social media platforms. We are also working on producing Dawah videos.

If you have inclination for Dawah Work among Non-Muslims along with skills/experience that can help the cause, including website designing, poster designing, managing social media accounts and more, opportunity is waiting for you to fulfill your obligations towards spreading the true and final of religion of God: Islam.

We are currently registering individuals to volunteer for these tasks as per their availability and expertise. If you're interested, kindly contact our team for more details.

Contacts:

Rashid Khattak - 0470 282 281 |

Hammad Syed - 0416 146 034



In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, The Always Merciful

PUT HIS LUGGAGE ON YOUR HEAD

DAWAH AMONG NON-MUSLIMS: A FEW EXPERIENCES

Written by: Sufi Muhammad Akram

(Published in Tarjuman ul Quran Monthly in November 2006)

Translated from Urdu to English by Gain Peace Australia team

This article was written considering the possible options for Dawah in Pakistan. However, the concepts conveyed in the article are equally applicable in other Muslim-majority as well as Muslim-minority countries. The responsibility for dawah among non-Muslims is even more important in the countries where Muslims are a minority. From this article, we can learn some of the important conversation starters and the paramount importance of great Akhlaq and ethics. If we develop a dawah mind-set, the opportunities to convey the message can be found in abundance and they are present all around us.

When it comes to the concept of Dawah, our common approach is that we look at it from the perspective of dawah to Muslims alone and ignore

non-Muslims. In our day to day life, there can be several opportunities that can become a means of dawah to the non-Muslims. In Pakistan, there is a reasonable population of Hindus and Christians. It is incumbent upon us to adopt effective ways for doing dawah among them in accordance with the responsibility of being witness on to the mankind (Shahadat-i-Haq)¹ that has been given to us by Allah swt and His messenger ﷺ. This is what is required of us if we want to fulfil this responsibility and wish to be among the successful ones in the court of Allah swt.

I have done some dawah work among non-Muslims and through this article, I wish to share a few experiences to trigger thinking, reflection and action.

An encounter with a Hindu family

In our daily life, all of us inevitably travel. During travelling, we come across many opportunities for dawah. I also came across such an opportunity. Once I was travelling from Islamabad to Lahore through bus. There was a Hindu family in that bus too. Utilizing an opportunity to interact with them, I initiated a conversation with a young man sitting next to me. I came to know that he belonged to Nawab Shah² and was travelling to Lahore for site-seeing and recreation. His name was Raj Kumar. I invited him to stay at our place during his visit. Our bus reached Lahore in the early hours – 4.00 am. I said to his father, “Where would you go to look for accommodation in such early hours; you have come to visit my city, you are my guests.” He was a bit hesitant to accept the offer initially. However, later he agreed and said that if his children don’t have a problem with that,

¹ Further details about this concept can be found in the book ‘Witness onto the Mankind’ written by Maulana Syed Abul Aala Maududi and translated by Khurram Murad R.A. This is a Quranic concept which has been conveyed at multiple locations within the Quran.

² Nawabshah (Sindhi and Urdu: نوابشاہ) is a city in Sindh province, Pakistan. It is the 27th largest city in the country.

he would be fine too. I addressed his son to seek his approval, “Raj Kumar, I hope you are staying with us, don’t you?”. He accepted the request. All of us, including Raj Kumar’s family, came with me to my house. We served them well and looked after them very hospitably. I was of full realization that our religion commands us to look after the non-Muslims. Our love and care would mend their hearts and also create a soft-corner for the true religion of God. I also took them to Model Town Park which is not far from where we live. They expressed interest to go to Sikh Temple near Badshahi Masjid. I asked them surprisingly: “Isn’t that temple for the Sikhs?”. They informed me that the Hindus go there too. I made arrangements for them to go there too.

During a conversation, I asked Raj Kumar: “What are your plans for future?”. He said that he is currently studying and would explore the career options at some later stage. I then asked him about what he has thought about life. “Have you ever wondered about the purpose of life?”, I questioned. He said that he has never thought about this question. I then stated to him that the King of the world and its owner is Allah swt which you call “Bhagwan”. We are all His slaves. For spending our lives, it is He whose guidance we should look forward to. It is for our guidance that he sent the Messengers or Avatars³ and revealed the divine books. Listening to this, his father also commented that it is a very important point to reflect about and they had never looked at it this way. At that time, I had a book with me – “Khutbat”⁴ by Syed Abul Aala Maududi. We then read

³ The word Avatar carries several connotations in Hindu religion. One of its uses is to express the meaning of a guru or revered being who is sent to guide the humanity.

⁴ This book explains the essential concepts of Islam from a logical point of view. Originally written in Urdu, this book has been translated in many languages. One of its English translations (edited by Khurram Murad R.A.) is titled as ‘Fundamentals of Islam’. Another version is titled as ‘Let us be Muslims’. For further reading, refer to Australian Islamic Library: (www.australianislamiclibrary.org).

together a few pages of that book and they also liked it.

I was trying to attain closeness with them and then give them the dawah about Islam. This was an attempt that I did to convey the message of truth to a family that I came in contact with by chance.

An encounter with Christian brothers

Once a few friends of mine invited me to a Dars-e-Quran⁵. When I reached the venue, I saw a few people standing outside. They looked like Christians. I thought I should also invite them to the Dars-i-Quran. I went closer to them, shook hands with them and hugged them. I told them that you are sons of my father, i.e. Adam A.S. and hence you are my brothers. I invited them, “let’s read and understand the words of your and our Lord. Let’s see what guidance He has sent for us.” They liked the idea and accepted to join us.

When we were about to enter the house, the host said to me in my ear, “Who have you brought with you? They look like Christians.” I asked him, “Are they not the creature of God like us and our brothers in humanity? Is it not their right that we should convey the word of God to them? He understood my point.

The Dars was on the topic of the hereafter. In the end, an announcement was made, “Our Christians brothers were also present with us in today’s dars and we are very glad about this.” We also asked them to express their opinions about the program. They explained that they found the program to be very beneficial. “The concept of hereafter is common between Islam and Christianity”, they said.

⁵ Dar-i-Quran refers to a lecture that discusses some verses, called ayat, from the Quran.

The question for us is that have we ever tried to convey the message of Islam to Christians, the people of the book? Do we consider it as our responsibility? Have we ever felt a pain for them and trembled about where they will end up in the hereafter if they don't believe? In Pakistan, a significant number of Christians are employed in cleaning services in the municipalities. Many of the house-maids are Christians. What sort of behavior do we display with them? If Allah has brought them closer to us, our approach should have been to deal with them kindly and lovingly, respect them, serve them, and mend their hearts and invite them to Islam. Our approach, on the contrary, is that we have cut them off from us! Do we consider them the untouchables and low just like how Hindus deal with the Shudar cast? Is this sort of mentality and behavior aligned with the Islamic principles? With this state of affairs, would we be able to provide any acceptable answer in front of our Lord when we would be asked whether we conveyed them the message or not.

An encounter with Sikh brothers

Once I was driving my car on a road when I saw a few Sikhs. I thought that I should talk to them. I therefore parked my car and went to them. "You have come to my city and are therefore my guests. Please come to my car and I will drop you wherever you want to go", I gave them the invitation. They initially excused and said that they do not want to cause me any inconvenience. But when I insisted, they agreed and sat with me in my car.

I asked them if they found any difference between Lahore and India. "We couldn't find anything significantly different", they said. I thought that there should at least be some difference between a Muslims and a non-Muslim country. I then asked them the purpose of their travel. They said that have come for holidays and to visit the historical sites in Lahore.

I quoted to them a famous folk saying, "The one who has not seen Lahore is not really born yet". They got surprised to hear this. Adding further to

my point about Lahore being so special, I offered them that I can give them a tour of Lahore so that they can see it by themselves; they agreed. I took them to various sites and also took good care of their needs and food to the extent that my status and condition allowed. During this, I also talked to them about the purpose of life and linked this discussion with the teachings of Baba Guru Nanak⁶ whose call was also centered on worship of only One God.

When they were about to depart, I asked them: “Do you find some difference between here and India now?”. “Yes, we can feel the difference now”, they expressed. They continued, “It is for the first time that someone has so lovingly and with such closeness entreated us to think about the purpose of life and invited to worship the ONE Lord; that is the key difference between India and Pakistan”. I felt a little relaxed now that at least they could find some differences between the two countries.

An encounter with a Qadiani⁷

Once I was at Brandreth Road, Lahore when someone asked me about

⁶ Guru Nanak (15 April 1469 – 22 September 1539) was the founder of Sikhism and is the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak is said to have travelled far and wide across Asia teaching people the message of *ik onkar*. Ik Onkar is a phrase in Sikhism that denotes ‘the one supreme reality’. Ik is interpreted as "one and only one, who cannot be compared or contrasted with any other" which conveys a meaning closer the Arabic word, “As-Samad”. This message of Tauheed or oneness of God appears in the very beginning verses of the Guru Granth Saheb, the religious scripture of the Sikhs.

⁷ Qadiani’s are those who do not believe in the finality of the Prophethood of the Muhammad ﷺ, countless peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Though they call themselves Muslims, however, the Pakistani supreme courts as well as Muslims jurists around the world do not consider them to be within the fold of Islam on account of their disagreement with one of the most fundamental beliefs of Islam.

Ram Gali (translated as 'God's street'). I told him, "There are many streets here with the name 'Ram Gali', which specific one do you want to go to?". After a little hesitation, he informed me that he is an Ahmadi⁸ and he wishes to go to their Markaz (i.e. their religious center). He was a Qadiani. I told him the location of the street, *put his luggage on my head* and went along with him. He stopped me from doing so but I told him that this is the way of my beloved Prophet⁹ ﷺ. It is an opportunity for me to fulfill this sunnah. While walking along with him, I questioned him about why he hesitated to ask about the address. He told me, "people do not consider it right to go there; we sometimes have to lie because of this." I said, "If you consider that your belief is right than why do you tell a lie. If you are confident about it being truth then you should live with full confidence and conviction." I then asked him a question, "When did you become an Ahmadi?". He informed me that he is Ahmadi by birth. I said to him that even Mirza Ghulam Ahmed was not a Qadiani by birth, how come he be so? "You should ponder about your religion, reflect on its teachings and then accept it", I opined. I then presented a few more points for him to reflect upon. In the meanwhile, we arrived at the Ahmadi Markaz. I off-loaded his luggage and pointed out the location of the Markaz. He bade me a very warm farewell and said, "The amount of love with which you dealt with me and the way in which you triggered my thinking, I have never experienced that with any other Muslim before". He also took my address.

A few days later, he came to my house and told me that when he

⁸ The word 'Ahmadi' is often used synonymously with 'Qadiani' though some differences in theology are believed to exist between the two groups of people.

⁹ Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Charity is obligatory everyday on every joint of a human being. If one helps a person in matters concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it, or by lifting his luggage on to it, all this will be regarded charity. A good word, and every step one takes to offer the compulsory Congregational prayer, is regarded as charity; and guiding somebody on the road is regarded as charity." - Sahih al-Bukhari 2891

questioned his elders in faith about the truthfulness of the Qadyani beliefs, they were unable to satisfy him. He had therefore decided to repent and accept Islam. I became very happy and took him to the Imam of a near-by masjid. He took his shahadah¹⁰ there and became a Muslim. I gifted him a few books of Maulana Maududi¹¹. I asked him to read about Islam so that he can attain conviction and confidence in the belief and faith that he has chosen to accept. I thanked Allah swt that due to His favour and mercy, this outcome became possible.

Dawah and Akhlaq

I also had a bitter experience. I was conversing with a Christian and I invited to him to think about the command of Jesus to his companions that they should follow the one ﷺ that would come after him. I invited him that if he is a true Christian, he should follow this teaching of Jesus and believe in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He is the one about whom Jesus gave the news of his arrival. He made a very painful comment: “What you are saying is right. I can even accept Islam upon your invitation; however, when I look at the character and dealings of the Muslims, and compare it with that of Christians, I think it is better to remain a Christian”. He said this and went away and left me grieving that it is our character and manners through which we are pushing people away from the most beautiful religion and the most profound system of life communicated by Allah swt and His messenger ﷺ!

¹⁰ Shahadah refers to the declaration of faith, i.e. “I declare that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad ﷺ is his slave and messenger”.

¹¹ Many people have reverted to Islam after reading the books of Syed Maududi. It is because of the logical way and appealing way in which he explains the fundamentals of the faith of Islam.



gain
peace
.com.au