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HIGHLIGHTED HANDOUT

ISL3668

Al-Dawah wal Irshad

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Al-Dawah wal Irshad

STUDY HANDOUT

A complete topic-wise study handout for ISL3668 Al-Dawah wal Irshad (Da'wah and Guidance), prepared from Islamic propagation lecture series. Covers the meaning and Quranic basis of da'wah, the Prophet's seerah as a model caller, methods and wisdom of invitation, qualities of the da'i, the concept of irshad (guidance), and contemporary da'wah - with key verses, hadith, definitions and exam pointers. 

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Table of Contents

1. Meaning and Concept of Da'wah
2. Quranic Basis of Da'wah
3. Da'wah in the Seerah: The Makkan Period
4. Da'wah in the Seerah: The Madinan Period
5. Hikmah: Wisdom in Da'wah
6. Maw'izah Hasanah: Good Counsel
7. Jidal: Dialogue and Debate
8. Qualities of the Da'i
9. The Concept of Irshad
10. Da'wah to Non-Muslims: Principles
11. Da'wah Among Muslims: Islah
12. The Family as a Da'wah Field
13. Da'wah Through Media and Technology
14. Contemporary Challenges to Da'wah
15. Women in Da'wah
16. Revision: Midterm Practice Set
17. Revision: Final-Term Practice Set

Lecture 1: Meaning and Concept of Da'wah

Key terms: da'wah, invitation, tabligh, amar bil ma'ruf

Da'wah literally means 'invitation' or 'call'. In Islamic terminology it is the call to Allah - inviting people to Islam, to worship of the One God, and to righteous living through wisdom and good counsel. It is broader than tabligh (conveyance of the message): da'wah includes teaching, nurturing and guiding. Closely related is 'amar bil ma'ruf wa nahi anil munkar' - enjoining good and forbidding evil, which the Quran describes as the defining mission of the Muslim ummah.

- Da'wah is both fard kifayah (collective duty) and, in some situations, fard ayn (individual duty).
- The caller (da'i) invites to Allah, not to himself, a group or a personality.
- Every Muslim participates in da'wah according to knowledge and capacity.

EXAM POINTER: Define da'wah and distinguish it from tabligh - a standard opening exam question. 

Lecture 2: Quranic Basis of Da'wah

Key terms: Quranic verses, Surah an-Nahl 125, Aal Imran 104

The Quran commands da'wah repeatedly. 'Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best' (16:125) lays down the three methods: hikmah (wisdom), maw'izah hasanah (good counsel), and jidal billati hiya ahsan (gracious dialogue). 'Let there arise from you a group inviting to good' (3:104) establishes it as a communal duty, while 3:110 honours the ummah as 'the best nation raised for mankind' precisely because it enjoins good and forbids evil.

- 16:125 - the charter verse of da'wah methodology.
- 41:33 - 'Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah and does righteous deeds?'
- The Quran presents earlier prophets as callers, making da'wah a prophetic tradition.

Lecture 3: Da'wah in the Seerah: The Makkan Period

Key terms: Makkan period, secret da'wah, public call, persecution

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) began with private invitation - to Khadijah, Ali, Abu Bakr and Zayd - then the command 'warn your nearest kindred' (26:214) moved da'wah to the clan, and 'proclaim what you are commanded' (15:94) made it fully public. Thirteen Makkan years show patience under persecution: the boycott, the insults, yet no compromise on tawhid and no violent retaliation - the model of principled, peaceful invitation.

- Stages: private (3 years), clan-based, then fully public proclamation.

- The Prophet adapted the message's presentation, never its content.
- Persecution was answered with patience, prayer and continued invitation.

Lecture 4: Da'wah in the Seerah: The Madinan Period

Key terms: Madinan period, constitution of Madinah, letters to kings

In Madinah da'wah expanded into statecraft: the Constitution of Madinah organised a plural society, treaties secured peace, and letters invited Heraclius, Khosrow and the Negus to Islam. The conquest of Makkah demonstrated da'wah by character - a general amnesty that won hearts. The farewell sermon summarised the message: sanctity of life and property, rights of women, brotherhood of believers.

- Da'wah by state conduct: justice, treaty-fulfilment, mercy in victory.
- Letters to rulers show da'wah addresses power as well as people.
- The Madinan model joins invitation with institution-building.

EXAM POINTER: Trace the stages of the Prophet's da'wah from secret to public to state-level. 

Lecture 5: Hikmah: Wisdom in Da'wah

Key terms: hikmah, wisdom, gradualism, context

Hikmah means putting the right thing in the right place: choosing the right words, time, audience and approach. It includes gradualism (tadarruj) - the Quran itself prohibited wine in stages - and audience awareness, speaking to people at their level of understanding. Wisdom also means prioritising: tawhid before details, foundations before branches, and distinguishing the open-minded from the hostile.

- 'Speak to people according to their understanding' - a prophetic principle.
- Gradualism: the Quran's staged prohibition of alcohol is the classic example.
- Wisdom without compromise: method flexes, the message does not.

Lecture 6: Maw'izah Hasanah: Good Counsel

Key terms: maw'izah, counsel, targhib, tarhib

Maw'izah hasanah is beautiful, heartfelt exhortation - reminding of Allah's mercy and punishment, of Paradise and Hell, of the fleeting world and the lasting Hereafter. Its tools are targhib (encouragement, glad tidings) and tarhib (warning). The Quran pairs them constantly; effective counsel balances hope and fear, love of Allah and awe of Him, and always comes from genuine concern for the listener.

- Stories of prophets and righteous people are Quranic maw'izah in action.

- Counsel must be sincere - the listener senses whether you care.
- Harshness repels: 'had you been harsh, they would have dispersed from you' (3:159).

Lecture 7: Jidal: Dialogue and Debate

Key terms: jidal, dialogue, debate, apologetics

Jidal billati hiya ahsan - arguing 'in the way that is best' - is reasoned dialogue with opponents. The Quran models it: with the People of the Book, 'come to a common word' (3:64); with deniers, logical arguments for resurrection and divine unity. Rules: knowledge of the subject, calm manners, no mockery, conceding valid points, and stopping when debate becomes quarrel. The goal is guidance, not victory.

- Dialogue begins from common ground, not from attack.
- The Quran's debates with idolaters use their own premises against error.
- Walk away from mockery: dignity outranks winning an argument.

Lecture 8: Qualities of the Da'i

Key terms: da'i, sincerity, knowledge, patience, character

The caller must first embody the call. Essential qualities: ikhlas (sincerity - seeking Allah's pleasure alone), ilm (knowledge - never speak without it), sabr (patience with slow results and hostility), husn al-khuluq (beautiful character - the Prophet's character was the Quran), and rahmah (mercy toward people). A da'i whose life contradicts his words discredits the message he carries.

- Sincerity: da'wah is worship; showing off corrupts it.
- Knowledge protects from misguiding others and embarrassing the cause.
- Character is the silent sermon - most converts cite Muslim conduct.

EXAM POINTER: List and explain five essential qualities of a da'i with evidence.

Lecture 9: The Concept of Irshad

Key terms: irshad, guidance, counselling, murshid

Irshad means guidance - directing someone rightly. While da'wah invites the outsider to Islam, irshad often guides the insider: counselling a Muslim toward better practice, advising rulers (nasiha), and spiritual mentoring (the murshid-murid relationship in tasawwuf). The Prophet said 'religion is nasiha (sincere counsel)' - to Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the leaders and the generality of Muslims.

- Da'wah: invitation to the path; irshad: guidance along the path.

- Nasiha to rulers must be private and respectful, not public shaming.
- Counselling requires confidentiality, empathy and practical wisdom.

Lecture 10: Da'wah to Non-Muslims: Principles

Key terms: non-Muslims, People of the Book, common word

Da'wah to non-Muslims rests on clarity about tawhid, respect for their dignity, and honest dialogue. With the People of the Book there is special common ground - shared prophets, scriptures and values - so the Quran proposes 'a common word: that we worship none but Allah' (3:64). With others, the call begins from fitrah (innate disposition) and observable signs in creation. Coercion is forbidden: 'no compulsion in religion' (2:256).

- Present Islam, don't attack other faiths - contrast by beauty, not insult.
- Answer real questions; most seekers ask about purpose, justice and the afterlife.
- Respect religious figures others revere; mockery closes every door.

Lecture 11: Da'wah Among Muslims: Islah

Key terms: islah, reform, enjoining good, forbidding evil

The greater da'wah field today is Muslims themselves - islah (reform) of belief, worship and conduct. The method is graduated: hand, tongue, heart - action where one has authority, speech where one has a voice, and inward disapproval at minimum. Forbidding evil has conditions: knowledge that it is evil, ability without greater harm, and likelihood of benefit - vigilantism is not da'wah.

- Begin with yourself and your family - the Quranic order (66:6).
- Private sins are advised privately; public evils may be addressed publicly.
- The goal is reform of the person, not punishment or exposure.

Lecture 12: The Family as a Da'wah Field

Key terms: family, tarbiyah, children, spouse

The first congregation is the family. The Prophet taught: command children to pray at seven, and nurture them with love before discipline. Da'wah at home is lived example more than lectures - children absorb parents' honesty, prayer and kindness. Spouses invite each other through gentleness; Luqman's counsel to his son (31:13-19) is the Quranic model of parental da'wah: tawhid first, then gratitude, prayer, patience and humility.

- Luqman's advice: the complete syllabus of home tarbiyah in seven verses.
- Example outweighs instruction - children copy what they see.
- Never use religion as a weapon in family disputes.

Lecture 13: Da'wah Through Media and Technology

Key terms: media, social media, digital da'wah

The minbar has extended to the microphone and the smartphone. Classical scholars permitted every lawful means to spread truth, and today's da'i uses video, podcasts, articles and social media - with the same ethics: verify before sharing, avoid sensationalism, respect privacy, and match the medium's language. Digital da'wah reaches millions but demands the same sincerity; virality is not validity.

- Verify before forwarding - spreading falsehood is a major sin.
- Short, clear, beautiful content outperforms long polemics online.
- Online harshness contradicts 16:125 - manners apply on screens too.

Lecture 14: Contemporary Challenges to Da'wah

Key terms: Islamophobia, secularism, materialism, challenges

Modern da'wah faces Islamophobia fuelled by media stereotypes, aggressive secularism that privatises religion, materialism that dulls spiritual thirst, and sectarianism that confuses seekers. Added to these are internal weaknesses: ignorant callers, harsh rhetoric, and disunity. The answer is not despair but better da'wah - knowledgeable, merciful, united, and confident that truth has an inherent appeal to the fitrah.

- Stereotypes are defeated by lived counter-examples, not angry denials.
- Seekers respond to authenticity - admit what you don't know.
- Unity of callers multiplies impact; public quarrels destroy it.

EXAM POINTER: Discuss three contemporary challenges to da'wah and how a da'i should respond. 

Lecture 15: Women in Da'wah

Key terms: women, female scholarship, Aisha, da'wah

Women have always carried da'wah: Khadijah was the first believer, Aisha taught Companions, and countless women scholars transmitted hadith. Women reach audiences men cannot - other women, children, families - and their counsel often lands where formal preaching cannot. The conditions are Islamic modesty and knowledge; the field is vast, from home tarbiyah to writing, teaching and digital outreach.

- Aisha's fatwas and teaching: the precedent for female scholarship.
- Women's da'wah often works through relationships, not podiums.
- Modesty rules govern manner, not the fact, of women's public contribution.

Lecture 16: Revision: Midterm Practice Set

1. Define da'wah and explain its Quranic basis with two verses. (10 marks)
2. Explain the three methods of da'wah in Surah an-Nahl 125. (10 marks)
3. Trace the stages of the Prophet's da'wah in the Makkan period. (10 marks)
4. Distinguish da'wah from irshad with examples. (5 marks)
5. Write short notes on any two: hikmah, maw'izah hasanah, jidal. (10 marks)

Lecture 17: Revision: Final-Term Practice Set

1. Describe the Madinan model of da'wah (constitution, treaties, letters). (10 marks)
2. Explain five essential qualities of a da'i. (10 marks) 
3. What are the conditions for forbidding evil? Illustrate. (10 marks)
4. Discuss da'wah through modern media: opportunities and ethics. (10 marks)
5. Write a 150-word note on the role of women in da'wah. (5 marks)

End of Handout - Good luck with your exams!