

Spreading the Message: Public Relations and Communication in the Life and Work of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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Islam is a religion of freedom of speech, right to communication, tolerance and the respect of human beings no matter what they are and who they are. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, (PBUH) as a catalyst and an advocate of Islam and as a messenger of Allah used extensively communication and public relations to introduce new religion and new way of life to the people of Kureish and the Arabic peninsula. The task was not easy, given the fact that people had already their beliefs, traditions and habits. A huge work of persuasion, public relations and communication was necessary to spread the word and explain the new religion to the population of Kureish. The new religion was a radical transformation in the lives, values and habits of people. Life in Kureish before the advent of Islam was based on a tribal system dominated by force, power and by the rule of the strong and the powerful at the expense of justice, equality, law and peace. The whole land was dominated by ignorance, lack of justice, and immorality. People of Arabia were always at war with each other living in an atmosphere of anger, hatred and revenge. When Arabs were not fighting, wine, women and song were their most favorite pastime.

Islam is a universal religion intended for all humanity. It is a religion based essentially on communication and public relations. For Prophet Muhammad, the messenger of Allah and the catalyst and advocate of the new religion, the task was very challenging, very difficult and in some instances almost impossible. Prophet Muhammad was spreading the new religion which was a true and radical revolution in Kureish and the Arabic peninsula. To disseminate and propagate the new religion, its values and its teaching Prophet Muhammad needed extraordinary skills of public relations

and communication to introduce the new religion and convince people to quit their old habits and practices and embrace new way of life.

Through Quran, Hadith and Sunnah (Essira Anabawia)- the life and conduct of the prophet Muhammad- this paper highlights the use of public relations and communication by prophet Muhammad to disseminate and convey Islam to the population of Kureish, the Arabic Peninsula and in the world. The essence of modern public relations, as stated by the late Edward Bernays in his book “Crystallizing Public Opinion”, lies in modifying attitudes, actions behaviors and efforts to integrate attitudes and actions of an institution with its publics, and of publics with those of that institution.

This means, consent, persuasion, mutual understanding, two-way communication, mutual respect, credibility, good will and cooperation. Prophet Muhammad’s mission was to prepare the minds, beliefs and convictions of people to adopt a new set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. In other words, Muhammad through the Quran, Hadith and Sunnah was crystallizing public opinion to reach consent and to persuade the people to embrace Islam as a new way of life based on peace, justice, equality, freedom of expression, solidarity, and respect. The paper looks at the verses (surates) in the Quran that emphasized communication as well as the Hadith and Sunnah (Sira Anabawia), the sayings and the conduct and behavior of the Prophet Muhammad through which he used extensively communication and public relations to explain the teachings of Islam to his followers and to elaborate on issues that needed further details. Khan writes on the life of the prophet:

His own personal life was a perfect example for mankind. Because he himself was made to experience all kinds of special conditions, he was able to provide a model for living both at the individual and social levels. He showed us the life that god would like us to live on earth, for in all matters each and every one of his actions was in accordance with the will of god. Not only did he establish the perfect pattern for the worship of god, but he also showed how god helps those who truly devote their lives to His service. We can see from his life how, if one fears God, there is nothing else that one need fear (Khan, 2000:9).

His preaching mission extended over a mere twenty-three years. It was during this short time that he brought in a revolution among the Arab tribes, the like of which the world had never seen. It ushered in the age of the press, ensuring the preservation of the Quran for all time. It brought the age of democracy and freedom of speech to the world, removing all artificial barriers that had obstructed preachers in their call to truth. It made new discoveries possible in the world of science, enabling religious truths to be proven and explained on a rational, intellectual level. (Khan,2000:19).

Public relations in Islamic culture dates back to as far as fourteen centuries. It has been extensively used during the prophet Muhammad era to disseminate the new message, the new religion, thus a new way of thinking, behaving, and living peacefully with others.(Aldemiri,1988). Then, public relations was perceived and conceived within the confines of the teachings of Islam, democracy (Echourra) and the respect of man and other people and nations, no matter what their color, race and religion are.(Mustapha:1989).

Historical Roots of Public Relations:

Although public relations is a twentieth-century phenomenon, its roots are ancient. Seitel asserts:

Leaders in virtually any great society throughout history understood the importance of influencing public opinion through persuasion. For example, the Babylonians of 1800 B.C. hammered out their messages on stone tablets so that farmers could learn the latest techniques of harvesting, sowing and irrigating... a good example of planned persuasion to reach a specific public for a particular purpose, in other words, public relations.

Later on, the Greeks put a high premium on communication skills. The best speakers, in fact, were generally elected to leadership positions. Occasionally, aspiring Greek politicians enlisted the aid of Sophists (individuals renowned for both their reasoning and their rhetoric) to help fight verbal battles. Sophists would gather in the amphitheaters of the day and extol the virtues of particular political candidates...The Romans, particularly Julius Caesar, were also masters of persuasive techniques. When faced with an upcoming battle, Caesar would rally public support through assorted publications and staged events... Even the catholic church had a hand in the creation of public relations. In the 1600s, under the

leadership of Pope Gregory XV, the church established a college of propaganda to “help propagate the faith.” (Seitel, 1998: 25-26).

Prophet Muhammad was no exception; he used communication and public relations to crystallize public opinion, persuade people and convince them to embrace a new religion with new principles, new rules, new way of life based on the respect of human beings, equality, justice, peace and harmony. The Quran generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion, going into details in very rare cases. The details were generously supplied by the Prophet Muhammad himself, either by showing in his practice how an injunction shall be carried out, or by giving an explanation in words. The Sunnah or Hadith of Prophet Muhammad was not, as is generally supposed, a thing of which the need may have been felt only after his death, for it was very much needed in his lifetime. Without communication, public relations, good conduct and good governance the prophet would have never been able to propagate, and convey the teachings of Islam to the population of Kureish and the Arabic peninsula and the whole world. The success of Muhammad in his extremely difficult mission was due to a large extent to his communication skills, public relations, his conduct, morals, ethics, modesty, generosity, tolerance, personality, character and his command of crystallizing public opinion and reaching consent.

Modern Public Relations: Concepts and Definitions:

In 1923, the late Edward Bernays defined public relations as follows:

Information given to the public, persuasion directed at the public to modify attitudes and actions, and efforts to integrate attitudes and actions of an institution with its publics and of publics with those of that institution. (Bernays, 1961a).

Public Relations Society of America offered two definitions:

Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.

Public relations is an organization’s efforts to win the cooperation of groups of people. (Seitel, 1998:6)

Sharpe argues that public relations is a process that harmonizes long term relationships among individuals and organizations in society. This process according to him is based on five principles:

1. Honest communication for credibility.
2. Openness and consistency of actions for confidence.
3. Fairness of actions for reciprocity and goodwill.
4. Continuous two-way communication to prevent alienation and to build relationships.

Environmental research and evaluation to determine the actions or adjustments needed for social harmony. (Seitel, 1998:7)

Public relations; therefore, is the crystallization of public opinion; meaning that an opinion is the expression of an attitude on a particular issue. When attitudes become strong enough, they develop into the form of opinions. When opinions become strong enough they direct behaviors and actions of human beings.

Bernays argues that public relations is the use of persuasive communication techniques to reach various goals for the organization. (Bernays, 1961a). Grunig and Hunt developed a typology consisting of four models explaining the practice of public relations. The two-way symmetrical model, for instance, is a model where public relations practice is based on research, two-way communication, feedback, mutual respect and understanding between the organization and its publics. Later on, Grunig added a contingency model to explain the customization of public relations to its environment. (Grunig and Hunt 1984) (The two-way symmetrical model and the contingency model were used in the conduct and work of prophet Muhammad in his preaching and Dawaa). Another public relations paradigm based on the Chicago School of social thought sees public relations as a practice and activity to foster community relations. (Kruckeberg, and Starck, 1988). (we will see later in this paper, prophet Muhammad was a good illustration of this paradigm in conveying and disseminating Islam and building the Islamic Umma not only in Kureish, but in various parts of the world as well).

In politics, public relations is the cornerstone of any success, and no politician can reach his goals without professional and effective public relations. Gandhi notes:

Public relations is one of the lubricants of democracy. Governmental and industrial processes are becoming increasingly complex. It is through public relations that these processes can be made intelligible to the people and enable them to leave their impress on the shaping of policies. (Cutlip and Center,1971:529).

As the impact and extent of government increase, the need for adequate communication between public officials and citizens becomes more urgent. Government has become increasingly a matter of administration. A vast machinery of commissions, boards, bureaus-bureaucracy-has grown up to meet the complex problems in society. There is a need in today's large and complex government for mechanisms devoted solely to receiving, examining, and channeling citizens' complaints, and securing expeditions and impartial redress. Effective administration must grow out of the lives and problems of the people rather than be imposed from above. Skilled, conscientious practitioners can contribute much to solving these urgent problems. Zechariah Chafee, Jr. Said: "Government information can play a vital part in the cause of good administration by exploring the impact of new social forces, discovering strains and tensions before they become acute, and encouraging a positive sense of unity and national direction." (Cutlip and Center,1971: 531).

"Democracy will live where there is free communication of dependable information." Government activities embraced by the term "public relations" have developed naturally. They are part of the administrative system evolving to bridge the gap between popular and bureaucratic government. The justification for government public relations rests on two premises: A democratic government has to report to its citizens; and effective administration requires citizen participation and voter support.

These are the generally agreed upon objectives for a planned, continuing program in government:

- To win consent for new laws and new reforms dictated by the needs of an ever changing, technological society. This involves a deep,

fundamental shift in our theory of government and has dangerous applications.

- To overcome apathy and bewilderment toward new and complex functions of government; also, to provide reliable information for the voter seeking to make an intelligent decision at the polls.

- To keep the citizen informed of the services and the functions provided so that he may participate and gain full benefit from them.

- To give the citizen usable devices for relaying his views and opinions to the administrator without employing intermediaries.

- To interpret public opinion to the law enforcement agencies so that regulations will be realistic and acceptable.

- To crystallize public sentiment and pave the way for non-coercive compliance. This requires convincing the citizen of the need for the administrative rules and assisting him in understanding them.

- To build a reservoir of support for an agency which it may tap when the going gets rough; to have friends in time of need when a conflict develops with other agencies, with the legislature, or with the public. (Cutlip and Center, 1971: 534-535).

Freedom of Expression in Islam:

Islam praises freedom of expression, which is considered as an integral part of the pride and dignity of the Muslim. Freedom of expression in Islam is based essentially on the following principles:

- 1- Sacred human rights: Human being as a creature of Allah is respected and enjoys human rights without distinction or segregation. There is no superior race and inferior race. The only difference between human beings in Islam lies in faith, work and knowledge.

- 2- Respect of others, no distinction and no segregation on the basis of color, sex, and religion.

- 3- Advice: "Religion is advice", this is to help others in their daily life. Advice here is conceived as expressing one's point of view, speaking out by denouncing what is against the teachings of Islam and the interests of

the Umma. Advising others to reach the welfare of all is an important mission and duty of any Muslim.

4- Freedom of expression is related to a score of principles in Islam such as the respect of the dignity of the human being, consultation (Shoora), justice, equality, good will, solidarity, tolerance and social welfare. Islam attaches great importance to consultation. Everyone has the right to put forward his or her point of view. (Khan, 2000:57)

5- The right of expression in Islam is an inalienable right. The citizen in society achieves his dignity and his pride through this right. The right to know and to be educated is also a duty to pursue and acquire knowledge to use it for the welfare of the Muslim community. The Prophet said "seeking knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim man and woman." Implicit in that statement is the centrality of an information-rich environment for Umma. The value of information does not rest in its individual acquisition, but rather in using it for the general good of the community.

6- Everybody is subjected to criticism and disagreement no matter what his/her status in society is. The right to express an opinion involves the duty to speak out. If the individual believes something is wrong, he does not have the right to remain silent about it. The Prophet said: "He who remains silent about truth is a dumb devil." This principle is congruent with the concept of commanding good and forbidding evil. In matters of public concern, individual interests are subordinated to those of the general public to safeguard the highly-cherished ideals of the community.

7- The opposition has the right to express and convey its views and opinions. In Islam you don't have to agree with the ruler or the majority in order to express your opinions and views. The right of political opposition and of honest criticism of authorities is also a duty. The first Muslim Caliph Abu Bakr, in his inaugural speech said: "If I do wrong, correct me." The second Caliph Omar asked "what will you do if I do wrong? One of those present stood up and said: "By God Omar! We will put you right with the edge of our swords." Omar replied: "If you don't do so, You'll lose Allah's blessings, and if I don't accept your correction, I will lose God's blessing." (Ayish and Awad, 1994).

8- The ruler is accountable for those who elected him and accepted him as their leader, thus they have the right to know what he is doing, and to control him and to sue him when he misbehaves.(Albalwi,2005:33-36).

Shoora- Democracy in Islam:

Shoora means consultation and deliberation to bring forth ideas and opinions from peoples' minds. Shoora is no more than a procedure of making decisions. It can thus be defined as “the procedure of making decisions by consultation and deliberation among those who have an interest in the matter on which a decision is to be taken, or others who can help them to reach such a decision”. (‘Shoora and Democracy: A Conceptual Analysis’, www.islam.com). The important matter on which Shoora is made can be an individual level, or a group of individuals level, or the whole public level (Umma).

Islamic shoora is not a political system, because most of the principles and values according to which society is to be organized, and by which it should abide, are stated in that higher law. The proper description of a political system that is based on those principles is that it is Islamic and not shooraic, because Shoora is only one component of it.

This characteristic of Islam made society immune to absolute tyranny and dictatorship. There have been Muslim rulers who were despotic, but they were so only in that they were not chosen by the true representatives of the Muslim people, or that they were not strict in abiding by some of the Islamic teachings; but none of those who called themselves Muslim rulers dared, or perhaps even wanted, to abolish the Islamic law. Shoora, therefore is a way of life and a culture that cannot be practiced in real life without effective communication, and public relations and without establishing a healthy and a democratic relationship between the ruler and the citizens of the Umma. Shoora, is the practice of political public relations in Islam.

Aspects of Public Relations Practices in the Era of Prophet Muhammad:

Public relations in Islam revolves around the individual and the community. It seeks to build up individuals and communities – Umma - within the principles and teachings of Islam. Communication and public relations are practices intended to achieve the interests of all. These tools

should be used within the context of the morals and the ethics of the Islamic society. The philosophy of public relations in Islam is based on the following:

- Public relations in Islam is the task and responsibility of every Muslim in the Umma: It has a holistic and macro approach with the intention to build the Islamic Umma on the principles and the teachings of Islam.

- Public relations in Islam is based on ethics, credibility and the welfare of all and not only the rich and the wealthy, and those who have the means and the power. The principle here is, once you have healthy and decent relations between members of the Umma and its organizations you will reach a society based on the teachings and the principle of Islam.

- Public relations in Islam starts from the family: This is a micro approach to the philosophy and practice of public relations in Islam where the family is the corner stone of society. The family in Islam should enjoy harmony, respect, solidarity –Takaful- and love . The conduct and the behavior of the family from inside and with the outside world should be dictated by the teachings and principles of Islam.

The Methods and practices of Public relations in Islam are centered around love, care and harmony in the Islamic Umma. Good relationship between the ruler and the citizens. The duties of the ruler vis-à-vis the ruled are clear. He is accountable to Allah and to them, and he is subject to control, questioning and investigation. Citizens in the Umma have also their duties vis-à-vis the ruler, and the community as a whole. Everybody works within the confines and teachings of Islam for the welfare of the Islamic Umma. Furthermore, the Islamic state has to establish healthy, ethical and fruitful international relations with countries and nations in the world built on mutual understanding, benefits and cooperation.

The principles of public relations in Islam are based on good conduct, mercy and forgiveness, modesty, justice, loyalty, ethics. The objective here is to be a good Muslim to serve Allah, the Islamic Umma and the Muslims. These applies to the ruler, the organization, the family and the citizen. (Kuhail, 1985: 156-214).

All actions undertaken by organizations toward their general publics in the community are motivated by an ultimate conviction in the betterment and empowerment of the community to help establish the perfect Umma of believers. Public relations in Islam is also based on the general human relations that ought to prevail in the Islamic Umma, among individuals, and between socio-political and economic organizations, on the one hand, and community members, on the other hand, though in an institutional framework. The notions of solidarity, mutual benefit, responsibility, trust, and fraternity which characterize human relations in the Islamic community also mark public relations in general. The end objective is solidarity, cohesion, spirit of the community and the welfare of all in a harmony dominated by faith and belief in Allah. (Two-way symmetric model, and community relations paradigm).

The success of organizations in the community is assessed through their success in developing and advancing their relations with the community, rather than in terms of material profit making. Both organizations and publics are seen as homogeneous players committed to the development of the community in accordance with the commandments of Islam.

Public relations in Islam is best conceived of as an integral part of an intricate web of human relations prevailing in the community, and therefore, are governed by Islamic principles and values. In its institutional manifestations (involving organizations and general publics), public relations is a process of reinforcing social solidarity "takaful", and fostering a sense of affiliation and loyalty to the community.

It is now evident that an Islamic model of public relations would be a community-oriented model in which publics and organizations are not viewed as two opposing elements but rather as two components of one community, working together for its advancement and welfare. Relations with members of Umma, are viewed not as means of maximizing the interests of the organization itself to the detriment of those of the community. In the holistic view of Islamic community, the organization is the community and the community is the organization. (Ayish and Awad, 1994).

Public relations in the Islamic Umma is the responsibility of all – organizations and individuals- to build up a public consent and a social consciousness based on the virtue of Islam, faith and the belief in Allah. The objective, here, is to strengthen the community orientations of organizations. Organizations can build schools, hospitals, homes for the poor, the needy and the elderly, mosques and health centers. They can sponsor cultural, educational and sporting events ...etc. Ayish and Awad assert:

In the broad Islamic concept of ibadah (worship), all these activities are acts of worship carried out to win the pleasure of God. An organization might sponsor the building of a school, a mosque, a cultural club, or a health center as a form of voluntary public support to the community. The fact that such sponsorship is highly encouraged in Islam would serve as a catalyst for further attachment to the community on the part of the organization. While the original intention behind such support is based on religious convictions, organizations may still benefit from it in establishing relations of trust and respect with their publics. . (Ayish and Awad, 1994).

Public relations in Islam is conceived of as a vehicle of creating a healthy environment and atmosphere for both the individual and the organization to set up and establish the Islamic Umma which should be characterized by harmony, mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual interest governed by the Islamic principles and values. The final objective is to reinforce social solidarity and a strong community in terms of faith and welfare.

Aspects of Communication Practices in the Era of Prophet Muhammad:

The following verses show the communication and public relations aspect of the dissemination and propagation of Islam. They show the universal characteristic of Islam. The prophet is asked to reveal the book to the population of the mother of the cities and the rest of the world, and to give tidings and admonition. Muhammad is sent to convey the message and to advise the followers on how to deal with their daily encounters and problems. Spreading Islam on a universal basis means a lot of

communication and public relations work based on knowing the book and knowing the people who are supposed to adopt it.

[Al Anam:92] 'And this is a book which we have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that thou mayest warn the mother of cities and all around her. Those who believe in the hereafter, believe in this (book), and they are constant in guarding their prayers'.

[Al furqan:56]. 'But thee We only sent To give glad tidings And Admonition'.

[Saba, :28]. 'We have not sent thee But as a universal (messenger) To men, giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (Against sin), but most men Understand not'.

Allah's revelation, through the prophet, was not meant for one faith or tribe, one race or set of people. It was directed to all mankind, to whom, if they turn to Allah, it is a message of the glad tidings of his mercy, and if they do not turn to him, it is a warning against sin and the inevitable punishment.

Through the following verse Allah conveys to Muhammad a mission facing many enemies and dangers, but he has to go forward to proclaim the message and fulfill the mission, trusting Allah for protection, and unconcerned if people who had lost all sense of right rejected it or threatened him. The prophet is called here, through international communication with leaders and kings, to spread the message throughout the world, and not only in a specific place on earth. Through his companions and missions, the prophet established channels of communication with other nations and kingdoms to convey and disseminate the message. His dealings with kings, dignitaries, delegations and later on pilgrims were characterized by respect, modesty and harmony.

[Al maidah:67] 'O messenger proclaim The (message) which hath been Sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou Wouldst not have fulfilled And proclaimed His mission. And Allah will defend thee From men (who mean mischief). For Allah guideth not Those who reject Faith'.

Islam has a global, holistic and universal perspective. Muhammad's mission consisted of conveying the book which is an explanation, a guide, a mercy and a gospel for all mankind. Islam is a way of life valid for all times, all nations and all peoples in the world. Islam is not restricted to particular people or a particular nation, it is intended to all mankind.

[Al Nahl:89] 'One day we shall raise From All peoples a witness Against them, from amongst themselves. And we shall bring thee As a witness against these (thy people): and we have sent down to thee a book explaining All things, a guide, a Mercy, And Glad Tidings to Muslims'.

[Al Kahf:54] 'We have explained in detail in this Quran, for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude: But man is, in most things, contentious'.

Islam is a religion of communication. Disseminating and spreading Islam is an act of communication. The Quran, Hadith and Sunnah have to be conveyed, explained and interpreted to the believers. The Prophet had to convey the Quran, to explain it and in some instances, he had to elaborate on issues that needed explanations and illustrations. The conduct of Prophet Muhammad was an aspect of communication to introduce the new religion to the people (trade, marriage, parenting, imam, ruler, teacher, judge, husband, father, neighbor, in-law...etc). Prophet Muhammad used interpersonal communication and oral communication. The Quran was in itself a channel of communication because the whole new way of approaching things and interpreting them revolves around it. Hadith was another means of communication. Through it, the prophet Muhammad explained Islam and went into details where they are not found in the book. Speeches were also widely used in the period of Muhammad to communicate and explain the new religion to the followers. Mosques are daily forums of spreading the religion of Islam, explaining it and discussing any issue that needs to be elaborated fully and extensively. Pilgrimage is another aspect of communication; it is an international conference where every Muslim in the world can attend and perform the fifth pillar of Islam. During Hajj at the time of Prophet Muhammad, many encounters occurred between foreign pilgrims and the prophet giving ways and forums to discussions. Friday preaching is another aspect of communication in Islam devoted to the interpretation of the religion in the light of the issues and

problems encountered by Muslims in their life. Prophet Muhammad used also missions to communicate and propagate Islam through sending his companions to other nations and civilizations. He used also to receive foreign delegations and convince them to embrace Islam as a religion of justice, peace and harmony. Intercultural communication or communication between civilization was another method of communication used in Prophet Muhammad's era. (Kuhail,1987:123-211).

Sunnah or Hadith is the second source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. Hadith literally means a saying conveyed to man. Hadith means sayings of the Prophet, his action or practice of his silent approval of the action or practice. Hadith and Sunnah are used interchangeably, but sometimes these are used for different meanings. To deal with the topic it is necessary to know the position of the Prophet in Islam, because the indispensability of Hadith depends upon the position of the Prophet. Three situations emerge.

1. The duty of the Prophet was only to convey the message and nothing more was required from him.

2. He had not only to convey the message but also to act upon it and to explain it. But all that was for the specified period and after his death Quran is sufficient to guide humanity.

3. No doubt he had to convey the Divine Message but it was also his duty to act upon it and to explain it to the people. His actions and explanations are a source of guidance forever. His sayings, actions, practices and explanations are a source of light for every Muslim in every age. ('The Hadith-Sunnah', www.islamonline.com)

Thus, prophet Muhammad used extensively and effectively public relations and communication to convey the message, explain it and illustrate it through his sayings, speeches, explanations, interpretations, as well as, through his daily conduct, deeds and acts. He had to elaborate and explain so many issues and answer so many questions. His daily behavior was a real example of a true, honest and dedicated believer and messenger. In addition, his actions reflected and illustrated his sayings.

"And verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the last day and remembereth Allah much." [Al-Ahzab 31]

According to this verse, every Muslim is bound to have the good example of the Prophet as an ideal in life. In another verse he has been made a 'Hakam' –judge- for the Muslims by Allah Almighty. No one remains Muslim if he does not accept the Prophet's decisions and judgments:

"But no, by thy Lord, they can have no real faith until they make thee judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions but accept them with the fullest conviction." [An-Nisa: 65].

While explaining the qualities of Muslims the Quran says:

"The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His apostle, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this: They say: we hear and we obey." [An-Nur: 51]

In many places the Quran has given its verdict on this issue. The Quran says:

'For he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good and pure and prohibits them from what is bad and impure. He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them.' [Al-Araf: 157]

'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.' [An-Nisa 59] and *'Whatever the Messenger giveth you take it and whatever he forbiddeth abstain from it.'* [Al-Hashr: 7]

Quran is very clear in expressing its view on the position of the Prophet. According to the Quran the Prophet has four capacities and he must be obeyed in every capacity. He is a teacher, educator and a judge, one who explains the Quran, he is a law-giver and judge, and he is a ruler. In all these capacities, he is an ideal example for the Muslims. Here are few verses of the Quran that illustrate the prerogatives of Prophet Muhammad:

'Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them an apostle from among themselves rehearsing unto them the signs of

Allah, sanctifying them in scripture and wisdom while, before that, they had been in manifest error." [Al-Imran: 164] "And We have sent down unto thee the Message that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them." [An-Nahl: 44]

'O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything amongst yourselves refer it to Allah and His Apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day.' [An-Nisa: 59]

'It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman when a matter has been decided by Allah and His apostle to have any option about their decision. If any one disobeys Allah and His apostle, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.' [Al-Ahzab: 36]

In all these verses, the Quran has explained various aspects of the Prophets personality. One can judge the importance of the Prophet from these verses. This is another important verse of the Quran, which is actually a verdict against those who do not believe in Hadith as an authentic source of law:

'If any one contends with the Prophet even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge.' [An-Nisa: 110]

The Quran while pressing the Muslims to obey the Prophet, goes a step further when it announces that the Prophet hood of Muhammad (PBUH) is above all the limitations of time and space. He is the last Prophet and is a Messenger of Allah for the whole of humanity for all time to come. Hadith is nothing but a reflection of the personality of the Prophet, who is to be obeyed at every cost.

Any student of the Quran will see that the Holy Book generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion, going into details in very rare cases. The details were generously supplied by the Prophet himself, either by showing in his practice how an injunction shall be carried out, or by giving an explanation in words. The Sunnah or Hadith of the Holy Prophet was not, as is generally supposed, a thing of which the need may have been felt only after his death, for it was very much needed in his

lifetime. The two most important religious institutions of Islam are prayer and zakat; yet when the injunction relating to prayer and zakat were delivered, and they were repeatedly revealed in both Mecca and Madina, no details were supplied. Keep up prayers (aqimoo as-salaah the Qur'anic injunction and it was the Prophet himself who by his own actions gave details of the prayer and said: (Salloo kamaa ra'aytamoonnee usaallee) "Pray as you see me praying." (Indispensability of Hadith, www.islaam.com)

Payment of zakah –alms or charity- is again an injunction frequently repeated in the Quran yet it was the Prophet ((PBUH)) who gave the rules and regulations for its payment and collection. These are but two examples; but since Islam covers the entire sphere of human activities, hundreds of points had to be explained by the Prophet ((PBUH)) by his example in actions and in words.

The importance of the Sunnah, even as a second source of Islam, was a settled issue for the companions of the Prophet. Here is one of the many examples: that of Mu`az ibn Jabal who said to the Prophet that he would decide according to the Sunnah if he did not find the solution of a problem in the Quran. Hamidullah writes:

"The importance of Hadith is increased for the Muslim by the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not only taught, but took the opportunity of putting his teachings into practice in all the important affairs of life. He lived for twenty three years after his appointment as the Messenger of Allah. He endowed his community with a religion, which he scrupulously practiced himself. He founded a state, which he administered as the supreme head, maintaining internal peace and order, heading armies for external defense, judging and deciding the litigations of his subjects, punishing the criminals and legislating in all walks of life. He married and left a model of family life. Another important fact is that he did not declare himself to be above the ordinary law which he imposed on others. His practice was not mere private conduct, but a detailed interpretation and application of his teachings." ('Indispensability of Hadith', www.islaam.com)

The man, therefore, who embraced Islam stood in need of both the Quran and the Sunnah. Actually Hadith is so important that without it one

cannot fully understand the Quran and Islam, or be able to apply it to one's life and practice.

Muhammad the Great Communicator and Public Relations Practitioner:

Performing Adawaa

The Messenger of God was the last and the greatest of all the prophets sent to provide guidance to all classes, ranks and grades in every age, time and clime. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi writes on the Prophet's character:

"A model which can serve for every class of the people acting under different circumstances and states of human emotions will be found in the life of Muhammad peace be upon him. If you are rich, there is the example of the tradesman of Mecca and the master of Bahrain's treasure; if you are poor, you can follow the interneer of Sh`eh Abi Talib and the emigree of Medina; if you are a king, watch the actions of the Ruler of Arabia; if you are a vassal, take a look at the man enduring hardships imposed by the Quraysh of Mecca; if you are a conqueror, lay your eyes on the victor of Badr and Hunayn; if you have suffered a defeat, take a lesson from the one discomfited at Uhad; if you are a teacher, learn from the holy mentor of the school of Suffah, if you are a student, look at the learner who sat before Gabriel; if you are a sermoner, direct your eyes to the discourser delivering lectures in the mosque of Medina; if you are charged to preach the gospel of truth and mercy to your persecutors, observe the helpless preacher explaining the message of God to the pagans of Mecca... if you are an orphan, do not forget the child of Amina and 'Abdullah left to the tender mercy of Halima; if you are young, see the character of Mecca's shepherd... in short, whoever and whatever you may be, you would find a shining example in the life of the Prophet to illuminate your behavior."("A Comprehensive and Eternal Model", www.islaam.com).

[Yusuf:108] 'Say thou: "This is my way: I do invite unto Allah- On evidence clear as The seeing with one's eyes- I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Allah!'

[Al Shura:15] 'Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the faith), And stand steadfast as thou art commanded, Nor follow thou their vain desires: but say: "I believe in the book which Allah has sent down; and I'm

commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our lord And your Lord: For us (Is the responsibility for) Our deeds, and for you For your deeds. There is No contention between us And you. Allah will bring us together, And to Him is (our) final goal.'

[Al Hajj: 67] 'To every people have we Appointed rites and ceremonies Which they must follow: Let them not then dispute With thee on the matter, But do thou invite (them) To thy Lord: for thou art Assuredly on the right way'.

Islam rests on the highest social and religious needs of man, and if people are convinced that they are on the right way, they should invite all to join them, without entering into controversies about such matters.

[Al Nahl:125] 'Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom And beautiful preaching; And argue with them In ways that are best And most gracious: For thy Lord knoweth best, Who have strayed from His Path, And who receive guidance'. This verse explains the basics of professional public relations and communication. It laid down the principles of preaching and religious teaching which should be based on wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow or very wide. Preaching must be, not dogmatic, not self- regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate and such as would attract their attention.

[Fussilat:33] 'Who is better in speech Than one who calls (men) To Allah, works righteousness, And says, "I am those who bow in Islam?', Abdullah Yusuf Ali interprets this verse as follows:

Better in speech: i.e., speaks better counsel; or is more worthy of being listened to.

That his word reaches the highest mark of human speech is evidenced by three facts: (1) that

he calls all to the truth of Allah, showing that his thoughts are not centered on himself;

(2) every deed of his righteousness, showing that there is no divergence between his preaching and his conduct; and (3) he completely associates himself with the will of Allah, showing that he is the full

embodiment of Islam. What a fine description of the holy prophet. (Ali, 1996: 1238)

The propagation of Islam was the mission of all the prophets and messengers of Allah. There was never a prophet who was not a preacher and teacher. All of them preached the same message: 'Worship Allah, you have no other god but Him.' They all called to their people saying: 'I do not seek any reward from you for this work.'

There are five approaches to the Islamic call that reflect a tremendous communication and public relations work:

First: sincerity and truthfulness with Allah, and to seek his favor. Allah says: '*And withal, they were not enjoined aught but that they should worship God, sincere in their faith to Him alone.*' [Al Bayyinah:5]. The holy Prophet (PBUH) foretold that the first with whom the fire of hell will be lit are three; among them a scholar who acquired knowledge so that people would say he is learned. And it was indeed said of him.

Second: To practice what one preaches. Actually it is a scandal and disgrace that a person's actions contradict his words. Allah derides such people in His Quran: '*Do you bid other people to be pious, the while you forget your own selves – and yet you recite the divine writ? Will you not, then, use your reason?*' [Al Baqarah:44].

Third: gentleness in presenting the message. Allah advised Moses and Aaron to adopt this measure with Pharaoh, the greatest tyrant of his time: '*But speak unto him in a mild manner, so that he might bethink himself or [at least] be filled with apprehension.*' [Taha:44].

And to Muhammad, he also cautioned: '*And it was by God's grace that thou [O Prophet] didst deal gently with thy followers; for if thou hadst been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from thee*' [Al Imran:159]. Hence it was on this basis the Prophet (PBUH) declared: '*Make matters easy and do not make them difficult. Give glad tidings and do not drive people away.*'

Fourth: A gradual approach to propagation. Do as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did in his mission by beginning with the most important matters; then follow them up in order of priority. This was clearly

demonstrated in the advice he gave to Mu`adh before he sent him to Yemen. *"You will come upon a People of the Book (Jews and Christians), the first thing you should invite them to is to bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they respond positively to this, then inform them that Allah had ordained for them five prayers each day and night."*

Fifth: address every people with what is suited for them and their needs. There is a

special approach to the people of the cities and another approach to the villagers. Similarly, there is a special approach to the Bedouin. The intellectual has his position and the ignorant has his position. So too, there is a style for the argumentative and an entirely different one for the submissive. *'And whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted wealth abundant.'*

In terms of perfection of qualities, the Prophet,(PBUH) had a smiling face that made him loveable to the people who submitted to him and followed him. He was also wise, discerning and patient. Severe trials used to make him stronger. He was the most disinterested in the worldly pleasures. He was the example of modesty. He was kind to all, he used to walk in the markets and sit on earth. He was distinguished from his Companions only with shyness and silence.

One of the Prophet's most honorable attributes was his extreme tolerance. The Arabs showed him hatred and animosity but that made him kinder and more merciful. He showed neither wrath nor vengeance but for Allah's sake. He fulfilled the promise and kept the covenant.

As for the virtues of the Prophet's speech. Muhammad had an extreme wisdom and the comprehensive knowledge that surprised his contemporaries. He had a strong capacity to learn by heart, he forgets not even a single information as regards his Message. He explained his laws and teachings with very clear proofs. He incited his people for virtues and good conduct, and interdicted jealousy, hatred and all that is abominable. He gave a clear answer whenever asked and a strong proof whenever he argued. He kept his tongue from altering or perverting speech, till he became known as

truthful. He expressed what he wanted in a perfect manner. He was the most eloquent person who had clear meanings and lucid words.

The Virtues of Prophet's Deeds consisted of his good conduct, combining at the same time mercy (for followers) and awe for those who opposed him. His Shari`ah (law) is a just one, moderate between intemperance and negligence. 'And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character' (Al Qalam:4). He took from this world just what is sufficient. He explained his teachings and the rule of worship in such a clear manner that no law other than his is required.

Combining his inviting to the religion with arguments and his readiness to fight the enemies till he was victorious. His courage in fighting and strong desire to rescue the needy and the frightened. He enjoyed exemplary generosity, modesty, generosity and forgiveness. He was an exceptional example of a professional communication and public relations practitioner.

Conclusion:

Prophet Muhammad was a great communicator. He used public relations extensively to disseminate and spread the new religion. His task consisted of convincing people to change their attitudes by forming opinions and then transform such opinions into actions. This means the early followers of Muhammad had to quit their old habits and way of life and adopt new values, morals and ethics. The prophet was challenging a system that has existed for ages, and worked hard to introduce new principles and faith which destabilized a system based on coercion, force and injustice. Muhammad had many foes and enemies, but with his tolerance, sense of justice, high skills of communication and effective public relations, he was able to make everybody admire him. Jews, atheists and infidels ended up adopting and embracing Islam because they saw in him the sense of justice, equality, tolerance and the respect of human beings. Through Islam prophet Muhammad established a new society based on equality, tolerance, solidarity, justice and social harmony.

Prophet Muhammad didn't use force and coercion to convey the message and introduce the new religion to Kureish and to the population of the Arabic peninsula. Rather, his work was based on tolerance, modesty,

persuasion, conviction, communication, public relations, freedom of expression and freedom of speech. The way he approached people, dealt and interacted with them, including his enemies, to embrace the new religion, and therefore dissociate themselves from ignorance, injustice, war, hatred and revenge was an example of professional communication, persuasion and public relations. Prophet Muhammad was sincere and truthful with Allah. He practiced what he preached and was gentle in presenting the message. He also adopted a gradual approach to disseminating Islam. Finally, the prophet addressed the people according to their needs, socio-economic status and what was suited to them. Prophet Muhammad was a great communicator and a professional public relations practitioner to spread the message and to explain Islam not only through words but through his daily conduct and behavior as well. Through Hadith and Sunnah Muhammad was performing his communication and public relations skills to introduce Islam to the daily life of his followers.

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