

One to One Tabligh

Today I want to address the topic of One to One tabligh. Most of the points that I will make today I have made in previous Khutba's, but I feel it's important to go over this from time to time so that we do not forget these important points. One to One tabligh is definitely the most important and the most effective form of tabligh, so it is very important that the subject is covered often. The focus will not be on tabligh arguments or theology, but on how you approach people when doing tabligh. Often the way you approach will draw them close or push them away. We also need to understand that different cultures have different sensitivities and what is effective in one culture may not be in another.

Tabligh a Primary Objective of the Jamaat:

Holy Prophet (SAW) said that the Promised Messiah would "Break the cross and kill the swine". Which refers to tabligh to Christians, clearly shows a primary purpose. America is in great need of tabligh as American society as a whole has strayed as far away from God as anyone. This is apparent by the social ills they are prevalent in American society. Alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, gambling, etc, have become ingrained in American culture. Sadly, most Americans are proud of such wrongdoings and see nothing wrong with it. Religiously many Americans have turned away from God altogether and have become agnostics or atheists and many more merely give lip service to belief in God. It is clear that we have a great responsibility to take up the task of tabligh to save this great nation from self-destruction. Tabligh is as important in America as anywhere else in the world, if not more. Unfortunately, I've sensed that tabligh in the US has declined instead of improving since I have been an Ahmadi. Let us not neglect this duty, we should lead the charge and give our best effort in tabligh here in Portland.

Who can do Tabligh?

Anyone can do tabligh, whether you think you can or not. Personalized One to One tabligh is most important, and the good thing about it is that everyone can do it. We should understand that there are two basic ways of doing one to one tabligh. The common way is to talk to someone and teach them about Islam and Ahmadiyyat. The second way is to preach Islam through your actions. This is done by demonstrating good Islamic behavior and through providing an environment of love and brotherhood. This is something that we are all capable of doing, whether or not we know much about Islam or other religions. I consider this to be as or more important than preaching verbally as actions speak louder than words. Behavior and example has more effect on others than your preaching. If your faith does not make you a better person, then how is it going to help them? In order to get someone to hear the message you must open their heart by showing love and kindness. Tabligh becomes most effective when you have multiple people working together in a community like atmosphere. It must be done with a balance of preaching and demonstrating Islamic behavior while showing brotherhood and hospitality.

The Courage to Do Tabligh.

One of the biggest hurdles that the jamaat faces is that many are afraid to do tabligh. Many are afraid of what people will think about them. They are worried that others might think you're crazy or strange and that it may affect your standing in society. The way you should think about it is whether you are more concerned with what they think or more concerned about what Allah thinks. If you are more concerned about them, then you are certainly lacking in faith. If the person thinks you're crazy because of your faith, then why are you worried about them anyway? Is this the kind of person that you want to associate with? The truth is, if you haven't shared your faith with them, then they probably already think you're crazy. Most people already have misconceptions through the media about Muslims, such as Muslims being violent, abusing women, etc.. If you haven't cleared these misconceptions with them, then they probably think you believe in these misconceptions or that you are just a nominal Muslim who doesn't really believe at all.

Then there are those who are afraid that they don't know enough to do tabligh; they're afraid they might misrepresent Islam. You don't have to worry about this, showing kindness and a good example is best form of tabligh. If you don't know the answer to a question, you can always research it later. This is an excellent way for you to learn, most of what I know came through someone raising a question and then, in turn, researching and finding the answer. If you need help, it is always available.

Some don't do tabligh because they are concerned that they will anger the person and damage an existing friendship. In my experience this is highly unlikely, and if they are offended by your faith, then what kind of friendship is this anyway?

Purpose of Tabligh

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and a goodly exhortation and argue with them in a way that is best. Surely, thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His way; and He also knows those who are rightly guided.” Qur'an 16:126

The purpose of Tabligh is to call people unto the way of the Lord. This needs to be remembered when we are doing tabligh. Our objective is not to simply collect baiats and gain numbers regardless of whether or not we are bringing in true believers. Such an attitude will only gain faithless converts who may do more harm than good for our jamaat. The purpose is not to show off to others how good we may be at doing tabligh or how much knowledge that we have. If this is your intention, then do not expect Allah's blessings. As the verse states: We are to call unto the way of the Lord. In other words our intentions should be to bring the person closer to Allah and to help turn them into a faithful believer and follower of the Holy Prophet (SAW). We want them to accept Islam and Ahmadiyyat, because we know that this is the best way of achieving that objective.

Creating an Environment for One to One Tabligh.

When beginning to do tabligh the first thing you need to do is create some trust and friendship with the person you are calling unto Allah. Get to know the person by finding out what their background is. Learn their beliefs, faith, sensitivities, needs and interests. This may take several visits with the person showing kindness and hospitality. But by this time you will have built a friendship with the person where they begin to trust and respect you. When you have gotten to this point, then their heart will be opened and they will be more receptive to accepting Islam. During this period, it is important to show a good example. You must behave like a good Muslim, otherwise they will not respect you when you do your tabligh.

How to Communicate

When you begin actually teaching someone about Islam, you should begin talking about subjects that they are interested in. You should be able to determine these subjects by your previous conversations. There is a tendency to begin talking about what you want to talk about instead of what they want. This will usually bore them and turn them away and quite often, they will think that you are trying to show off. I remember an occasion where I brought a friend to the mosque who was an atheist. During his visit, some jamaat members began talking to him about Jesus trying to convince him that he was not God, that he didn't die on the cross, etc., assuming that he was a Christian. He was turned off by the visit and thought that all we did is bash Christians. He was simply approached the wrong way. We must remember this is all about them and what will guide them, it is not about you and what you want to talk about. Do not try to force a conversation on a topic, if a person is interested they will bring up the point and ask questions. I have come up with some points that we should remember when doing tabligh:

- When you give answers, they should be short and concise. This will encourage them to ask more questions. **Avoid long winded answers.** If you take 10 minutes to answer a 30 second question, then I guarantee you are going to bore them and they will not want to ask you another question.
- Do not be a stage hog and dominate a conversation. Allow them plenty of time to speak and express their views. Dominating a conversation is very rude and is likely to turn them away. Allowing them to speak will encourage conversation and give you more of a chance of learning about them and how to approach them.
- Don't overload the person with too much information. This will just confuse them. The object is to give them enough to think about without confusing them. You are not going to convert somebody in one visit, so don't even try. This is an ongoing process, don't get impatient.
- Don't pretend to know everything. If you don't know an answer just say so, and get back to them after you have found the answer. If you act like you know everything, then you will just come across as an arrogant know it all and probably turn them away. You also run the risk of giving a wrong answer. If a person finds out that you gave a wrong answer, then they may think you are a liar and not trust anything you say. Make it clear to the person if you are uncertain of answer that you are giving. If you find later that you gave an incorrect answer, then go

back to them and tell them the correct answer. Tabligh is about the truth and we need to make it clear.

- Avoid arguing with the person and stay civil and cordial. Do not let your conversations degrade into an aggressive debate. You should simply state your positions and arguments and leave it at that. If you start to make them angry, then they will only become defensive and stubborn and at that point you will not be able to change their point of view no matter how ridiculous it may be.
- Avoid giving too much of your own personal opinions and too much talk about politics. Remember that jamaati Ahmadiyya is not a political organization and that just about everyone disagrees on politics no matter what your religion is. Delving too much into politics will probably only complicate your tabligh efforts and create more of a chance for disagreement and argument.
- Always keep in mind that this is about them and doing what you can to guide them to Allah. This is not an effort to make yourself look good or feel important among the jamaat. We should only be trying to look good in the sight of Allah by guiding others to him. Do not make your tabligh an effort to satisfy your ego. This is not a contest and not a debate. You win absolutely nothing unless you are guiding someone to Allah in sincerity and in practice. Remember that we are “Calling unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and a goodly exhortation”. We should not let our selfish desires get in the way of this noble objective.

The Most Important Activity is Prayer

It is important to remember to pray throughout the entire tabligh process. Make sure you say your 5 daily prayers and also try to say the tahajjud prayer. Ask your family and other jamaat members to pray for your efforts. Most importantly, write Hazoor and request his prayers. Hazoor’s prayers reflect the prayers of the entire community and are the most powerful. Tell the person you are preaching to, to pray for Allah’s guidance. If they pray for Allah’s guidance, he will certainly show them a sign. Always keep in mind that it is Allah who is Al-Rasheed, the one who guides to right path. Remember that despite your efforts no one can be guided unless Allah wills it.

May Allah guide us in our tabligh efforts and shower his blessings on our efforts. Let us move forward with our efforts with full enthusiasm and confidence. May he make us good effective Daeen illallah (Callers unto Allah) who are enabled by him, to guide many souls to Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Ameen.