

Advantages and Disadvantages of Information Media

Friday Sermon Presented by

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In the Perfect Revealed Holy Book, the Exalted Allah said: "**Invite {all} to the way of thy Lord**", i.e., call to Allah's path that leads to every goodness.

Certainly, this path leads to nowhere but to goodness?

"**Invite {all} to the way of thy Lord**" is an obligation set by the Exalted Allah to man, the vicegerent who is guided by Him. This guided man is asked to convey guidance to people so that they may be led to the path of Allah; the path of the welfare of humanity.

"**with wisdom**". Wisdom means righteousness, i.e., to be on the right in what you have to choose. Righteousness can be achieved only when one understands the addressee, and use the means of address in a way that suits circumstances, environment, and time, in addition to applying the up-to-date data.

"**Invite {all} to the way of thy Lord with wisdom**", i.e., when you choose the method of proselytizing to lead people to the path of Allah after explaining and clarifying it, you have to employ the best and most comprehensive means.

"**And beautiful preaching**" is a method that makes man get out of the circle of materialism, and reminds him of Allah and his servitude to Him. Moreover, it reminds man of the fact that he is not left without paying his account. The Exalted Allah said:

"Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you would not be brought back to Us {for account}? Therefore exalted be Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth" (Al Mu'minun. 115-116).

When the proselytizer uses beautiful preaching, he helps, thereby, everyone who listens to him (if he has readiness to listen) to get out of his abstract materialism which makes him equal to the other creatures. Moreover, man might deteriorate to the level of being more deluded than animals.

"And argue with them in ways that are best and Most Gracious". i.e., in your proselytizing, be rational and use preliminary evidences that may eliminate difficulties from the way, in addition to its being supporting and helping means.

The word 'argue' necessitates interaction. Moreover, it necessitates the presence of two parties, each presents what they have: one side present their suspicion, and the other present clarification and explanation of the path of Allah and its righteousness that would save humanity from their loss and confusion.

Consequently, "and argue with them" requires not only one instructing side. It rather requires interaction between two sides.

"Speak fair to the people" (Al Baqarah, 83). That is how the believer behaves and be benevolent in his speech, his deeds and his states.

"For thy Lord knows best, who has strayed from His path, and who receives guidance" (An Nahl, 125). The proselytizer should make use of the knowledge of Allah, Who is the Best Knower of the people that stray and those who are guided, so that he, the proselytizer, benefits from this knowledge in calling to Allah.

I have presented this introductory honored verse to raise one of the issues that we should not disregard, nor should we forego. Nowadays, proselytizing is not restricted to calling to Allah by an individual who meets another individual or a community. A lot of means have been presented to make the remote regions very near that the world is about to be changed into a small village, as it is said. In such a time, we are taken by surprised to find that the non-Muslims know well enough this game to realize that these means are able to reach any place in the world. Consequently, they achieve priority in spreading their ideas and cultures, at a same time when the Muslims -- the people of the right, virtue and high principles -- are late in employing these means.

The industry of media information has become a scientific field of specialization that depends on experience and employs developed tools. But sorrowfully enough, our Islamic societies have not attained the level of this developed specialization.

Consequently, alien cultures have broken violently into every home of ours, at a time when we – the owners of Islamic culture and principles of virtue – are unable to rival them. Accordingly, we have been changed into "acted upon" instead of being "acting". This leads to another more detailed issue when we focus the light on the negative effects that go on in our social fields, and the positive role that we have to perform.

Nowadays, recent means on T.V., on the websites, or on the 'entangling' internet or the internet, have become an insurmountable fact, and all the momentum and development they imply have become a reality, willy-nilly.

Films are manufactured in specialized cities, television programs are produced by widely expert specialists, and the internet that implies so and so has become an open space that connects the remote with the close. It represents the scientific present with all its advantages and disadvantages.

Consequently, and out of the present reality we witness today in the world, we have to be aware that we cannot disregard these means and be like the ostrich that hides its head in the sand heedless of what is going on around it. These recent means have become an actual present in the life of our children, our youth, our women, and of the young and the adult.

No one can deny the influence of the T.V. on children, and the influence of websites, or internet, on the youth, as well as the bad effect of the programs that are successively imported to the young and the adult. In fact, they have become a reality that we can never disregard.

These means use all audiovisual effective elements. Moreover, by means of recent development, the presented programs surpass reality, i.e., with audiovisual effects they have become far superior to reality, as they have the ability to make the listener or the spectator be attracted to them.

They are so developed that they have considerable influential on the listener and the spectator. Their influence surpasses that of reality. They are able to change the sensed into the imaginative. They are able to manufacture superstition, and make the improbable normal.

However, we face a reality that we have to deal with without disregarding its presence.

A researcher on recent studies said:

"The third father is now these means that have been newly inserted into our life. The first parents are the mother and the father, while the new means, namely the T.V., and the other

different information media that are present in every house, is the third father. Accordingly, the generation receive knowledge from the three parents simultaneously.

This is the report some researchers presents through inductive social studies.

Observed Disadvantages after Study and Research:

1- The excessive use of these means has bad bodily effects on a great layer of children and youth. As a result, their daily life, as well as their sleeping time, becomes disorderly. Consequently, man's ordinary disciplined activity becomes confused.

Indeed, rational people cannot be included within the circle of this great layer, for they value time and discipline it. They know well man's duty and what he has to do. I rather refer to the great enthusiastic layer of children and youth. A research study in the U.S. stated the following:

"Children spend yearly (15.000) hours watching television versus (13.000) hours they spend at school".

As a result, this study states that children spend yearly (2000) hours in watching T.V., (that is only one of the media means) more than they do in the educational institution.

In addition to the other means, the result would lead (if the generation is not well guided) to the phenomenon of addiction. The excessive use of these means would have negative effect on the bodily growth of man on the one hand, because of the confusion of the spent time. As a result, the time of man's sleep as well as the time of performing his duties would become less. On the other hand, absent-mindedness was observed by the researchers, because the dealing with these means, as I mentioned formerly, is dealing with superstition and non-reality. Consequently, this will have a negative effect on the youth or the child, so he becomes absent-minded. This

phenomenon of distractedness was observed among children in specialized centers.

2- **The state of negative reception and haphazard absurd interaction** with these means is divided into two parts:

- The means with which man does not react, such as T.V., change man into a negative recipient. Instead of his being a giver, a converser, a thoughtful man, he is changed into a negative inactive recipient personality, i.e., he is changed into a statue made as they is required of him to be.
- On the other hand, if we move to the means that give the opportunity of debate and reaction, we face another problem. It is the problem of haphazard absurd reaction where the guide or instructor is missing in most of these discussion forums. The Prophet (pbuh) held debates with his companions, and they also did the same, but they used to depend on a guiding point in their debate. This guiding point as well as reaction is missing in the discussion forum of today. There is only a mixture of ideas that depends on no fundamentals, and the result of which is generally absurd reaction that leads to mixed disorganized cultures.

Consequently, we face two cases: in the first case, reaction is missing, therefore it leads to inactive passive personalities that have no reaction whatsoever. In the second case, there is haphazard absurd interaction that does not lead to a clear way as is observed in reality: "**Verily, this is my way, leading straight**" (Al an'am, 153).

There is a clear Heavenly method that Allah guides humanity to. But, in such reality, dependence on scholars as reference has become non-existent. I have chosen some of the negative sides because I do not intend to make this hour allotted wholly to one specific subject. I rather aim at making it a reminder, so

that a wide door might be open in the future for more details to make this subject the center of concern for every specialist or whoever is desirous of goodness for our Ummah.

2-Most often, imported programs -- that usually stray from the level of the ideas they present -- **produce behavioral deviation**. Then we are taken by surprise to find that the majority of children and youth, who rebel against our values and against the fundamentals of the right and the virtuous, is gradually increasing as a result of the corruption that is presented to us rapidly and successively, while we are unable to compete with it, and most often we become consumers only.

4-There is deterioration on the linguistic level of the Arabic language because of the wide spread of the vernacular dialects. We no more find the education that the past generations received, an education that directed them to a cultural level. We do not refer to the Arabic Language of the Pre-Islamic period during which the Arabs were well versed in the syntactical rules. We rather talk about the language that should, at least, maintain the Arabic identity. This is a question related to the reality of the Arabs today. Even on the level of other languages, the linguistic level has deteriorated. We have seen how new usages, which are not concerned with the rules of grammar and are not used properly in the text, have been incorporated into the languages. The new alternatives have become destroying to the moral spirits on the Arabic and non-Arabic levels.

Hence, there is a decline in the linguistic level because of the lack of depending on reference. As dependence on valuable reference is missing, so is the case with depending on linguistic reference.

In the past, the student used to receive knowledge from his instructor who corrected his ideas, his knowledge, as well as his language. But nowadays, the relationship between the student and the teacher is missing. Unfortunately, even in universities, this relationship has vanished. Presenting knowledge has become in writing. Consequently, graduates get

their university degrees without being proficient. They might be good at writing. Most often, mistakes in writing are no more considered important. What is important is the piece of information the student presents.

5 - in our Islamic societies we can see totally alien hybrid cultures, because these programs have been imported from an environment very different from ours. Moreover, in the cultural environment we live in, there is no specialized production able to compete with the imported one. Consequently, we import, dub and translate ...

Thus, we find ourselves before hybridization by cultures totally alien to our ethics, our values, and our cultural assets ... In the near future, this will result, (in case we do not redress this situation) in presenting identity-less and non-belonging generations.

The Prophet (pbuh) told about what would happen in the Last Time. He said:

"The Hour will not take place until the wicked {ignoble} {worthless} person who has descended from a wicked person {and who believes neither in Allah nor in His Prophet} becomes the happiest one in the world", i.e., the non-belonging, identity-less, and rootless person. This is what the Prophet (pbuh) foretold.

When the Exalted Allah talks about nations and tribes in the Holy Qur'an, He emphasizes their affiliation, and makes communication among them based on acquaintance. He said: **"O mankind! We created you from a single {pair} of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other {not that you may despise each other}"** (Al Hujurat, 13).

He does not cancel affiliation. He rather employs it so that man may be promoted to the level of human acquaintance in which there is mingling, and positive mutual mixing that rises to the level of knowing each other. He said: "that you may know

each other". It is a relationship that does not make man be deteriorated to the precipice of randomness and confusion.

Suffice these models of the negative aspects so that I move to present what **might be a matter of observation, not exclusion.**

I say: "through this presentation I aim at raising an issue that is absent from the minds of many people who aspire to be developed, and look forward to renaissance, but they have random behavior .

Depending on the verses from the Holy Qur'an we have already read: "Invite {all} to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and Most Gracious" and: "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire", (At Tahrim, 6), the following should be adopted:

1 - **We should have a sense of responsibility**, because the duty of proselytizing as well as protection from Fire makes it incumbent upon us to assume responsibility. If we do not do that, and everyone of us asks himself: "Have I prayed?" (on the individual level), and "have I performed some individual moral duties?" disregarding the common duty, and if he does not commit himself to the principle: "Invite {all} to the way of you Lord", and "Save yourselves and your families from Fire", such a person will not have a sense of responsibility, and he will be far away from the positive performance of his duty.

Through this responsibility, we should know that production of good educational and cultural programs – by means of specialist educational and scientific commissions that make use of executive committees of advanced performance and high technical expertise -- is an essential part of our duty to call to the Exalted Allah. Moreover, it is the duty of protecting our society and our families from Fire referred to in the Exalted Allah's verse: "Save yourselves and your families from a Fire",

and: "Invite {all} to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching".

The production of educational and good cultural programs through this specialized environment is certainly the duty of proselytizing, and if we do not realize this duty, time will pass us by, and we shall be emotional consumers who are wanted to be by the others, and not to be as they will.

2 -We should be aware that high principles have started to vanish. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, while we talk about the duty of producing programs that use these means, to realize the duty of enlivening virtuous values that are the safety valve for our cultural existence, such as love for Allah's sake, love of the homeland, adhering to virtue, the desire to do good, and the desire for communication among family members, between children and parents, among brothers, etc

We should care for these values that have become absent, or made absent, so that we guarantee our cultural cohesion in the future, otherwise, we shall be very far from our cultural identity that was established after the mission of the Prophet (pbuh).

3 -We should be careful to expand the circle of contemporary knowledge, and to direct these means, whether through television or on the internet, to build a generation capable of dealing with this time and its sciences on all its advanced levels.

4 – We should care for entertainment, fun and thrilling, provided that they are included in permissible humanitarian. However, entertainment and fun are not prohibited, and no one of the Muslim Scholars said, nor is it mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, that thrilling, entertainment, or fun are prohibited. We are a laughing, crying Ummah.

We are the Ummah of happiness and sadness ..

We are an Ummah that reads in the Holy Qur'an: "That it is He Who grants Laughter and Tears" (An Najm, 43).

The Prophet (pbuh) used to laugh and smile, and according to what Aisha said: "He was laughing and smiling".

Thus, we should take care of this aspect, provided that it does not exceed the limit of the permissible, or the circle of virtue or the values of our cultural identity..

Moreover, we should not reach the limits of being anomalous and deviated that are clothed in the aspect of fun and entertainment.

Today, the Koran is trifled with in the name of entertainment and stimulation, and so is the case with Islamic rites on behalf of entertainment and anecdote. Moreover, our great fundamentals are made fun of in the name of entertainment and fun ..., because we are absent.

5 - Education should not be restricted to the young and youth only, but care must be given also to the adults, so that they learn the foundations of sound education.

Nowadays, a generation of fathers and mothers who know nothing about education has appeared. One may marry and become a father, but he is away from the meaning of education. How can such a father educate his children when he, himself, is unconsciously uneducated?

I have formerly presented, frequently and repeatedly, this issue and said that it is incumbent upon us to establish courses for the graduation of fathers and mothers. The young man should learn the meaning of the father, and the girl should learn the responsibilities of the mother before they get married. But in reality, what we witness today is nothing but sexual permitted relationships. As for the role of the parents and their characters, choosing the girl by the youth, or vice versa, this has become completely missing. This is because responsibility has become absent from the mind, and the sense of duty, identity, and affiliation are lost. The relationship between the two sexes is changed into a sexual permitted relationship void of any sense of educational duty whose virtue we used to sing at school and say:

**The mother is a school. If you adapt her,
You will have adapted a noble nation.**

But where is the mother who is a school today?

Where is the parent who assumes the role of the father?
Sorrowfully, they have become absent....

The sixth issue is an educational remark:

6 – The father or the mother should not use these means as a cause for a punitive procedure, that is, the father or the mother should not say to his\her children: "If you do so and so, I shall punish you by preventing you from these means", because this would be a strong impetus for them to be attracted to these means randomly, as the prohibited is usually desired.

7 – The adult should participate with the young in dealing with these means, for when they do so, there will be participation on the part of the adults.

There is a barrier between adults and children. This barrier makes the adults walk in a direction different from that of the children.

the distance between adults and children should be come nearer to each other, and this is part of the educational sound methods we referred to. In other words, they should participate in watching what is presented and the dialogue that goes on in these programs so that the adults present their experience in the beneficial and the harmful. When your child is your friend, you can direct him to the beneficial and draw his attention to the harmful through this friendship and mutual trust.

8 – The adults should be aware that the youth as well as youngsters are keeping an eye on them. If the adults have the illusion that they can direct the youth or the youngsters by means of mere words, and in their personal behavior they contradict this instruction, they are mistaken. Consequently, the

adults should be aware that they are closely watched by youngsters.

If adults do not have self-control through which they feel the surveillance of Allah over them, their instruction to their children will be of no use. If you do not become righteous, your children will not be righteous. If you are straightforward, your straightforwardness will be conveyed to your children.

9 – Training to have a strong will and the ability of control is a necessity. Adults or mentors say: These means are before you, but you have to control them through the power of will, and be careful of falling in addiction.

Mentors or adults say: "We do not prevent you from doing that, but we want you to have a strong will so that this process becomes marginal in your life and it happens at leisure time so that you may not fall in the pit of addiction.

10 - We have to consider financial support for the production of these specialized programs a necessary Islamic duty at this stage, and if we do not employ some of our wealth (and rather a great deal of it), in order to support this process, we will be asked to pay the account for our negligence and failure to achieve our duty. Moreover, history will pass us by, and the coming generations will achieve this duty while we will be deprived of this great honor.

In conclusion, negative sides exist, but we can play a positive role even if we are not aware of them quite well. If we do not begin with a practical active specialized action –I emphasize specialization, and access to this area should not be without specialization –we would have secluded ourselves and entered into the cave and would have disregarded the moral fire that is going on in our social areas.

Allahum..., guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.