

Among the Methods of Da'wah Success in Surat Yusuf: Preparation and Planning

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Abstract

Among the successful methods of Da'wah (Islamic propagation) found in Surat Yusuf is the way Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) planned and prepared to ensure the success of his mission, tirelessly working day and night to convey his message. Strategic planning is essential for those engaged in Da'wah, just as economists plan for the success of their ideas, and similarly do politicians, cultural figures, social scientists, and practitioners of various arts. Likewise, those devoted to Da'wah must plan and prepare to guide their audiences toward safety. The research problem lies in the misunderstanding of many preachers who isolate themselves from their communities, failing to plan and prepare for the success of their mission, unlike Prophet Yusuf, who carefully planned for their success. Many preachers show little concern for the societies they live in, resulting in minimal impact on the contemporary reality of Da'wah. This study aims to highlight the importance of preparation and planning for preachers to ensure the success of their mission, with a focus on Surat Yusuf, which is rich with examples of planning across various contexts. Preachers are encouraged to reflect on its lessons and ponder its meanings. The research adopts an analytical and deductive methodology to study the verses of Sūrat Yusuf and the actions of Prophet Yusuf within it. The research will emphasize the originality of planning and preparation in Da'wah and affirm that success in this field requires effort, preparation, and dedication to the entrusted mission.

Keywords: Methods, Da'wah, Surah Yusuf, Preparation, Planning

Introduction

Defining the Concept of (التخطيط) Planning in Language and Terminology

In language, the term planning stems from the root "خطط" (khatata), meaning to draw lines or boundaries. It is said "خطط الأرض", (khatt al-ard), meaning to demarcate or prepare the land for construction and to devise calculated plans for economic, educational, or productive

aspects of a state (Ibrahim, n.d). In terminology, planning refers to: "Designing a hopeful future and developing effective steps to achieve it... Planning is an administrative art; the more logical it is and aligned with available resources, the more it becomes a means to achieve effective results" (Al-Khalidi, n.d).

Both definitions illustrate the application of planning in Sūrat Yūsuf, particularly in how Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph), peace be upon him, skillfully prepared, planned, and strategized to elevate his society in various life domains.

Examples of Planning in Sūrat Yūsuf

One of the planning examples mentioned in the blessed sūrat is the story narrated at its beginning about what the brothers of Yūsuf (Joseph) did. When they sensed that their father loved Yūsuf more than them and preferred him over them, jealousy crept into their hearts, and they decided to get rid of him. But what would they do? They discussed the matter among themselves, with some suggesting killing him while others proposed throwing him into the depths of a well. Undoubtedly, the latter idea was less severe than murder, though still highly harsh to a brother.

They debated the matter and concluded that casting him into the well was safer for them. The devilish planning of Yūsuf's brothers continued as they entered the second phase of their malicious scheme. They approached their father to persuade him to let Yūsuf join them on an outdoor recreational trip, assuring him of their care for Yūsuf. They even argued how unlikely it was for a wolf to devour him while he was among their group, which was not small.

The third phase of their deceitful and cunning plan unfolded when they returned to their father at night, crying. Jacob immediately sensed a calamity and prepared himself to hear it. They began by addressing him with "O our father" to evoke sympathy and convince him they had not neglected Yūsuf. Their vile planning culminated in smearing Yūsuf's shirt with blood to "prove" that a wolf had devoured him.

However, their plan had a significant flaw: the shirt was intact. Jacob (Ya'qūb), peace be upon him, immediately noticed the inconsistency. How could a wolf attack and eat Yūsuf without tearing his clothes? The irony of their "kind wolf" became apparent, exposing the falsity of their story.

Jacob reportedly mockingly said: "I have never seen a wolf as merciful as this one, eating my son without tearing his shirt" (At-Tahir, 1997).

This meticulous and calculated plan by Yūsuf's brothers was one of their methods to rid Jacob of his love for Yūsuf. However, the will of Allāh prevented its completion. This planning and preparation to get rid of Yūsuf are exemplified in the verses: "Verily, in Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brethren, there were Āyāt (proofs, pieces of evidence, lessons, signs, etc.) for those who ask. When they said: "Truly, Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are a strong group. Our father is in a plain error. "Kill Yūsuf (Joseph) or cast him out to some (other) land, so that the favor of your father may be given to you alone, and after that, you will be a righteous folk (by intending repentance before sinning)." One from among them said: "Kill not Yūsuf (Joseph), but if you must do something, throw him down to

the bottom of a well; some caravan of travelers will pick him up." They said: "O our father! Why do you not trust us with Yūsuf (Joseph) though we are indeed his well-wishers?". "Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and we will take care of him. He [Ya'qūb (Jacob)] said: "Truly, it saddens me that you should take him away. I fear lest a wolf should devour him while you are careless of him." They said: "If a wolf devours him, while we are a strong group (to guard him), then surely, we are the losers." So, when they took him away, and they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well, (they did so) and We revealed to him: "Indeed, you shall (one day) inform them of this their affair when they know (you) not." And they came to their father, in the early part of the night, weeping. They said: "O our father! We went racing with one another and left Yūsuf (Joseph) by our belongings, and a wolf devoured him, but you will never believe us even when we speak the truth." And they brought his shirt stained with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your selves have made up a tale. So (for me) patience is most fitting. And it is Allāh (Alone) Whose help can be sought against that (lie) which you describe." (Sūrat Yūsuf: 7–18).

Additionally, the attempts of the wife of Al-Aziz to seduce Yūsuf when he reached maturity also involved multiple calculated steps to achieve her desire. Moreover, Yūsuf demonstrated planning in bringing his brother Benjamin from Palestine to Egypt, along with many other instances of strategic planning found in the story, which often go unnoticed.

The King's Dream and Prophet Yūsuf's Planning to Save Egypt from Impending Famine

One of the remarkable examples of planning in Sūrat Yūsuf, which serves as guidance for successful da'wah efforts, is evident in the following verses: " And the king (of Egypt) said: "Verily, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows, which seven lean ones were devouring, and seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry. O notables! Explain to me my dream, if it be that you can interpret dreams." They said: "Mixed up false dreams, and we are not skilled in interpreting dreams." Then the man who was released (one of the two who were in prison), now at length, remembered and said: "I will tell you its interpretation, so send me forth." (He said): "O Yūsuf (Joseph), the man of truth! Explain to us (the dream) of seven fat cows, which seven lean ones were devouring, seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry, that I may return to the people, and that they may know. [(Yūsuf (Joseph))] said: "For seven consecutive years, you shall sow as usual and that (the harvest) which you reap you shall leave it in the ears, (all) except a little of it which you may eat .Then will come after that, seven hard (years), which will devour what you have laid by in advance for them, (all) except a little of that which you have guarded (stored). "Then thereafter will come a year in which people will have abundant rain and in which they will press (wine and oil)."' (Sūrat Yūsuf: 43–49).

These noble verses present a clear and shining example for those calling to Allāh of the importance of planning and preparation for the success of their mission. Prophet Yūsuf, peace be upon him, provided one of the finest examples. He interpreted the dream: The fat cows and green ears of grain symbolize years of abundance, while the lean cows and dry ears represent years of drought. Yūsuf then gave them glad tidings of a year when people would be relieved with rain, the land would yield its produce, and people would press olives, sugarcane, dates, grapes, and more as they usually did. This revelation about future events was a divine inspiration from Allāh, not merely a dream interpretation. It was a prophecy of a blessed, fertile year of great prosperity in the fifteenth year after the dream's interpretation, conveyed through divine revelation (Az-Zuhaili, 1997).

"You will plant, meaning sow wheat and barley diligently and tirelessly for seven years. Whatever you harvest, please leave it in its ears to preserve the grains and provide straw for your livestock. This is a scientifically precise method for preserving the crop. Do this for the entire harvest, except for a small portion that you will eat. This interprets the seven fat cows and the seven green spikes. After this, seven difficult years will follow, marked by drought and scarcity, consuming the reserves stored during the previous years, except for a small portion kept for seeding. Then, after all this, a year will come with abundant prosperity, in which people will be aided with rainfall, good harvests, and protection from pests. During this year, you will press juices from sugarcane, fruits, grapes, sesame, and olives, among other things. This final revelation about the prosperous year is part of divine inspiration, not merely the interpretation of the dream." (Hijazi, n. d).

"Since Allāh decreed it that Yūsuf (peace be upon him) would be the one to interpret the dream at that time, Allāh restrained other hearts from understanding its meaning. The king felt no comfort until Yūsuf interpreted it, demonstrating that He facilitates its means when Allāh wills something. It is said that Allāh distinguished Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) among his peers with the beauty of form and exceptional knowledge. His beauty became the cause of his trials, while his knowledge became the cause of his salvation, highlighting the superiority of knowledge over other traits. Hence, it is said: Knowledge is granted, even if delayed." (Al-Qushayri, n. d).

The Value of Planning in the Contemporary Reality

Regarding the value of planning in our contemporary reality as derived from the lessons of this blessed sūrat, Dr. Abdul Basir Ali Al-Huqrah states: "We can extract the features of successful planning and its implementation methods to achieve its desired goals in our current reality. These goals should serve as a guiding light, as demonstrated by Yūsuf's statement: {I am trustworthy and knowledgeable} (al-Quran, 12:55). This was not a mere claim but a proven reality, reflecting truthfulness and confidence in bearing responsibility, as evidenced by the outcomes. Among the key factors contributing to successful planning in the contemporary reality are:

1. The realism of the plan in terms of its goals, the methods it employs, and its alignment with the community's circumstances, resources, economic and social systems, as well as ensuring public participation in its preparation and implementation out of conviction.
2. The consistency and coherence of the plan, ensuring harmony between its methods and goals, and including success factors to prevent bottlenecks in specific sectors or fields.
3. Minimizing the costs of preparing and implementing the plan while achieving economic efficiency by utilizing resources optimally and adopting the most suitable methods.
4. The plan's flexibility to adapt to different circumstances and address potential economic changes during its implementation.
5. Monitoring and follow-up of implementation to evaluate performance, address challenges, overcome obstacles, and use the lessons learned in plans." (Al-Huqrah: n.d).

This method of planning adopted by Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) is precisely what we need in our contemporary reality to ensure the success of our efforts in spreading the message of Islam. Dr. Al-Khalidi notes: "An examination of current efforts in Islamic outreach reveals a lack of planning, which has contributed to the loss of many efforts and weakened the outcomes of many initiatives. Many programs are implemented merely for execution

without achieving their intended objectives. Undoubtedly, one of the essential qualities required of a preacher is insight in its broadest sense. This includes not only knowledge of the subject of their call but also a comprehensive understanding of the goals and purposes of their mission, familiarity with legitimate means to achieve these goals, and anticipation of the obstacles and challenges they may face" (Al-Khalidi, n. d).

How desperately we need such opportunities, which are available to all of us and for which we will be held accountable before Allāh! As Allāh stated after this blessed sūrat: "Indeed, in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding." (Sūrat Yūsuf: 111).

Allāh bestowed upon Yūsuf the blessing of planning as he realized that:

"The country would experience seven years of abundance, followed by a seven-year economic crisis characterized by drought, famine, and scarcity. This required leadership distinguished by integrity and knowledge... including expertise in management, planning, organization, execution, production, and the principles of equitable distribution during the years of hardship. Yūsuf demonstrated the ability to guide the nation through the crisis by encouraging maximum production and resourcefulness, reducing consumption, and ensuring economic growth" (Ashwi, 2007).

If a preacher dedicates themselves to their mission with the same sincerity and diligence as they devote to their food and drink, they will succeed as Yūsuf was granted success on Earth. He became: "A high-ranking official under divine care, committed to excellence in work, improving agricultural methods, including irrigation, cultivation, harvesting, storage, and distribution. During the years of prosperity, production had to exceed consumption, with a carefully calculated reserve of resources to meet societal needs during the crisis years." (Previously cited source).

Advantages of Planning for Advancing Da'wah Work

From the previously mentioned examples of planning as a method employed by those calling to Allāh, we can highlight the key contributions that planning can offer to advancing and improving da'wah efforts, ensuring their objectives are achieved by Allāh's will and through the efforts of sincere preachers. Dr. Yahya bin Ubaid Al-Khalidi (n.d) outlines the following significant advantages:

1. **Clarification of Objectives:** Planning defines the goals of preachers and the aims of da'wah programs and projects. It also enhances performance during implementation and allows for precise evaluation afterward. Clarity of purpose, though often missing among many involved in da'wah, is crucial. While they may grasp the general goal of delivering Allāh's message, they frequently lack awareness of the specific objectives of each program, leading to frequent shortcomings. Any da'wah work must achieve three primary outcomes: "Preservation of faith, performance of obligations, and avoidance of major sins."
2. **Selecting Appropriate Methods:** Planning helps choose suitable and effective methods for each preacher, aligned with their capabilities and the program's nature and objectives while ensuring adherence to the most pious course for each initiative.

3. Anticipating Obstacles: Planning makes it easier to foresee challenges that may arise during or before the program. Planners can minimize risks and unexpected setbacks by utilizing collected data and information, ensuring safer and more fruitful efforts.
4. Prioritizing Tasks: Planning aids in arranging priorities for workers involved in the da'wah program, helping them address conflicts or overlaps and make informed decisions about introducing or canceling specific programs.
5. Enhancing Coordination and Efficiency: Planning fosters harmony and consistency in the preacher's activities, preventing program duplication or conflicts. This helps conserve efforts and time that can be allocated to other initiatives.
6. Optimizing Resources: Planning reduces unnecessary financial expenses and human efforts due to weak or absent planning. These saved resources can then be redirected toward other da'wah programs. The absence of a precise budget forecast for program implementation is often a result of poor planning.
7. Scheduling Activities: Planning sets clear timelines for starting and completing activities, enabling preachers to evaluate their adherence to these schedules. It also ensures proper timing of programs and prevents clashes with other activities.
8. Encouraging Innovation: Planning promotes renewal in the methods and tools of da'wah, avoiding monotony and reliance on traditional approaches while adhering to the principles of the correct methodology in da'wah.
9. Facilitating Coordination: Planning enhances collaboration among da'wah workers or organizations, whether through geographic distribution or program specialization. It prevents duplication and ensures that no essential programs are overlooked.
10. Evaluating Reality: Planning enables assessing the da'wah environment and identifies weaknesses in plans or execution methods, allowing for corrections in future strategies. This avoids repeating mistakes and ensures comprehensive reviews after each plan to evaluate results, achievement levels, and strengths and weaknesses.
11. Comprehensive Activity Management: Planning simplifies tracking programs, activities, and plans, helping steer da'wah's efforts correctly.
12. Identifying Training Needs: It highlights weaknesses in human capabilities, enabling the design of training programs to improve da'wah-related skills, including practical, administrative, and leadership competencies.
13. Performance Evaluation: Planning helps establish standards for monitoring the performance of preachers and program participants, assessing their contribution to achieving program objectives.
14. Defining Roles and Responsibilities: It clarifies the tasks of workers within a da'wah program or plan and ensures proper management and direction to meet desired goals.
15. Improving Decision-Making: Planning enhances the productivity and efficiency of program managers by providing clear, specific objectives to guide decisions that align with the set goals.
16. Exploiting Opportunities: Planning helps seize da'wah opportunities by enabling early preparation, optimal timing, and gathering relevant information to ensure programs are well-executed and timed correctly.
17. Ensuring Inclusiveness: Planning makes programs and plans more comprehensive and balanced. This prevents certain sectors of society or specific aspects of programs from being overemphasized while neglecting others. Instead, planning ensures da'wah efforts maintain a well-rounded approach.

18. Ensuring Continuity: Planning supports the sustainability of da'wah efforts by mitigating disruptions caused by unforeseen events like funding cuts, poor execution, or mistimed initiatives. Planning also provides alternatives for such emergencies.

These are the key advantages of planning for those calling to Allāh. If preachers adopt and develop these practices, they will significantly progress in da'wah efforts and elevate their effectiveness. Advancing da'wah ultimately contributes to the overall improvement of life across all fields.

Findings

Preachers to Allāh must engage with all segments of society to address and correct the thoughts of individuals who require guidance. Maintaining consistency in today's world is increasingly complex. When people's faith weakens or when confusion spreads, it becomes an essential duty for preachers to step in and provide correction and reform. This act of guidance is crucial in maintaining the integrity of religious teachings and ensuring the spiritual well-being of individuals.

Furthermore, the importance of thorough planning and preparation for the success of da'wah work cannot be overstated. According to their abilities, each Muslim has a responsibility to plan and prepare for their efforts in da'wah, ensuring that they are executed effectively and with purpose. Proper planning enables preachers to reach their audience more efficiently and have a lasting impact on their spiritual growth.

In today's world, preachers must also use modern technological tools to assist in planning and preparation. These tools, especially those that cater to non-native speakers, provide an opportunity to extend the reach of da'wah and ensure that the message of Islam is communicated clearly and effectively across different cultures and languages.

Ultimately, the success of da'wah depends on the commitment of preachers to Allāh in preparing their work carefully. Without proper planning and preparation, da'wah cannot be truly effective, as it requires careful thought, strategic communication, and an understanding of the challenges faced by those receiving the message.

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