

12913 - Advice for daa'iyahs travelling abroad

the question

We are young men who are travelling to the west to call people to Allah. We hope that you could give us some advice that will help us during our trip. May Allah preserve you and take care of you.

Detailed answer

Calling people to Allah is one of the most essential duties, and it is the way of the Prophets and Messengers and their followers, namely the scholars, daa'iyahs and reformers. Hoping that you will be able to fulfil the purpose of your da'wah trip and make the most of your precious time with which you seek to earn reward from Allah, we offer you the following advice:

1 - Fear Allah (taqwa) and be aware that He is watching you in secret and in public. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Fear Allah wherever you may be..." (narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1910; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 1618). Fearing Allah is the main thing, and it is the means of being granted strength in this world and reward in the Hereafter. And seek reward with Allah and have sincerity of intention towards Allah in all that you say and do. "Actions are but by intentions and every man shall have but that which he intended." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1; Muslim, 3530). These are things which will help the daa'iyah and make his actions blessed, just as fearing Allah is the main thing, and it is the means of being granted strength in this world and reward in the Hereafter.

2 - Be a good example in your words, appearance, eating and sleeping. In all of that, follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his words and actions.

3 - Strive to lower your gaze, especially in countries where display of women's charms is prevalent and there is no veiling.

4 - It is preferable to wear Arabic clothing because that serves many interests. It is not preferable to wear European clothing. With regard to what is said about the dangers of wearing Arabic clothing abroad, these are merely rumours and have no basis in reality. One may take off the headcover and wear only the cap if necessary.

5 - The siwaak is one of the Sunnahs of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it is rare in most countries, so it is a gift which will be appreciated by many Muslims.

6 - Use your hand-luggage for clothes, because it is possible that luggage may be lost in those countries. This also frees up room in your suitcases for the books you will need. Change your money into dollars so that you will have it available to spend during your trip.

7 - Take all the necessary precautions before travelling, such as vaccinations against the diseases that are prevalent in the countries to which you are travelling. Take the yellow international vaccination card with you.

8 - Take all the addresses that you will need with you, such as the addresses of the embassies of some Arab and Muslim countries, and the addresses of well known and trustworthy Islamic centers and organizations.

Beware of giving the impression to the Muslims with whom you mix that you have come to offer them material help, because this opens the door to requests for help and personal demands. Indeed, some people may think that you have a lot of money with you and will lie in wait to do you harm. But this does not mean that you cannot take some zakaah and charity with you, to give to needy people once you are sure of their need, but this must be done with caution and secretly.

9 - Do not indulge in unnecessary talk, and beware of referring to matters of marriage, even in a joking manner, especially with interpreters. There have been unfortunate cases

where some daa'iyahs got married at the beginning of their trips and got divorced at the end, which has led to tarnishing of the reputation of the daa'iyahs and neglect of children and wives.

10 – Equip yourself with the following:

- A pocket-sized copy of the Qur'aan, preferably with a translation of the meanings and footnotes describing the reasons for revelation.
- A book or two about 'aqeedah (beliefs, doctrines), especially Tawheed (Divine Oneness) and refutation of misguided groups such as the Sufi tareeqahs.
- One or two books on the fiqh of worship, especially the fiqh of tahaarah (purity), prayer and fasting.
- Riyaadh al-Saaliheen by Imam al-Nawawi, which is a comprehensive resource, especially which regard to the fiqh of tahaarah and fasting.
- Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (fatwas of the Standing Committee)
- A selection of lessons and lectures recorded on tapes, so that one may make use of them especially during long car journeys.
- Keep with you a compass for determining the direction of the Qiblah and an alarm clock. It is preferable to buy a small tape recorder to record some words and interviews with local inhabitants when necessary, as well as da'wah meetings.

The things mentioned above will help the daa'iyah to prepare talks, lessons and lectures, and to answer questions. It will also help him to organize his time and make the most of it, in sha Allah.

11 – Use your time as much as possible to benefit the da'wah, so that your visit will be a gain for the Muslims in that country. Make the most of every opportunity to do good and do not hesitate. That should be done by coordinating with the brothers in charge of organizing.

12 – When discussing any topic or issue, pay attention to the fact that people may be lacking in knowledge or ignorant, and that there may be differences of madhhabs. Avoid indulging in controversial issues or stereotyping people, and try to explain the truth without criticizing individuals.

13 – Wisdom is one of the most important basics in calling people to Allah, especially when travelling. It is essential when prioritizing and outlining the steps to be taken to achieve one’s goals, and it is also required when dealing with different types of people. It is wise to show due respect to people according to their status and to acknowledge their positions.

14 – The daa’iyah will find that some questions of fiqh are posed to him during his trip, especially after giving lessons and talks. He should be deal with this matter in a proper way, replying to questions with evidence and quoting the words of the scholars, or else saying “I don’t know”. It was said that “the one who says ‘I don’t know’ has issued a fatwa (answered the question).” There is nothing to stop you delaying giving an answer until you have had time to review the matter.

15 – It is better for the members of the group to take turns in giving lessons and talks. We do not think that only one person should take all the responsibility so that he becomes the mufti and khateeb and preacher, even if he is more capable, because one of the aims of these trips is to offer practical da’wah training to the daa’iyahs. These trips offer a valuable opportunity for training in preaching and giving khutbahs, especially for brothers who find it difficult to do that in their home country because there are so many scholars and seekers of knowledge there.

16 – Getting to know about the situation of the Muslims, by finding out about the Islamic situation in general and the situation of local Islamic organizations and institutions, both official and non-official, in particular; writing down their addresses and reports on their activities; finding out about prominent and influential Muslim personalities in the society; attempting to win them over by visiting them and speaking to them nicely, so as to advance the cause of Islam and the Muslims. All of this must be done within the guidelines of sharee’ah. We must also try to find out about anti-Islamic activities in the region.

17 - Strengthening ties with official religious bodies, by holding friendly meetings, giving gifts of Islamic books and audio materials, etc. This will make your work much easier for you and will be more effective in spreading the message.

Finally, we ask Allah to give you strength and make you steadfast. Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.