

## Study on Correct Approach and its Advertising Negative Consequences on Religions-Perspective of Education

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**ABSTRACT**— Current spiritual needs of society have attracted the attention of humanities scholars and experts. Islam remains with this historical claim of addressing human spiritual and psychological needs for every generation at any time. It is a mission for every Moslem to advocate Islamic religious thought. Religious advocacy in Islam means communicating facts to the public in form of invitation to follow Divine orders and encouragement to follow prophets' traditions. Advertising has psychological and sociological roles in persuading people. It may take many forms including sensorial, logical, and emotional. Identification of different advertising approaches and learning how to apply them in religious advocacy has profound effect in inviting others to strive for perfection and reach for God. The objective of present study was to examine the principles and theories of teaching advertising methods. Data collection for this study was through library research. The research data was gathered from related books, articles, and sites with the nature and objective of this study in mind. Therefore, the presented data has no quantitative or statistical value.

**KEYWORDS:** Advertising, Religion, Religious Advocacy, Education, Advocate

### Introduction

Rapid communication has shortened the distances making the present world to resemble a small village. The habitants of this village are inundated by onslaught of information floating around from different cultures, organizations, and institutions.

This situation provides opportunities and threats for Islamic religion advocacy. It is an opportunity as it provides a vehicle for clear promotion of Divine message to the world. It is the responsibility of every Moslem to take part in Islam's global mission to free people from bondages. Proper, tactful, and thorough advertising programs provide means to taking advantage of the opportunities. It is a threat as global evil forces use the same vehicle to swerve the public, especially the young generation, toward their own cause. Their objective is to attract worthy and valuable assets of nations toward negative and worthless values, behaviors, and preoccupation. The end result is nothing but psychological, ethical, cultural, and social misbehaviors which in turn take away personal, religious, national, and cultural identities. Religious and cultural crisis in today's world have made societies vulnerable to invasions masterminded by cultural NATO and aimed at dissolving real human identity. Sympathetic individuals and thinkers have taken upon themselves to search for solution to the crisis. Some have called our time the century of psychological and emotional crisis that distance people from religious and spiritual teachings. "Advertising is one of the tools extensively used today by world domineering and exploiting powers. They utilize modern advertising techniques to bring about the results that one day seemed impossible. They depose governments, defeat revolutions, poison public opinion, and inject their perverse made up culture in minds and souls of naïve and uninformed individuals. It is now our duty to pay more attention to these evil actions and counter them by utilizing the same advertising tools to increase public awareness."<sup>i</sup> Religious advocacy involves invitation to the way of prophets and therefore has roots in human nature. Religious advocates should use proper approaches in line with objectives set forth by prophets, i.e. reducing ignorance among followers and promoting spiritual values. Advocates should present heavenly facts and spiritual ideas in new and innovative approaches. Divine order has directed capable people to invite people toward obeying God. This objective can only be achieved through training capable individuals.

"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching ..."<sup>ii</sup> "Our youths are facing numerous questions with majority of them remaining unanswered. We are living in a period dominated by communication, an era marked by satellite providing high tech facilities for cultural invasion. Dominating powers extensively use super media as means to dissolve independent cultures under the globalization banner. One of their accomplishments has been religious alienation of the young. We have more than 30 parallel organizations and institutions (in Iran) that are active in cultural promotional activities. But there is no single organization that is responsible for religious issues and Islamic advocacy. Thus, it is easy to reach to conclusion that Islamic advocacy in our country is inefficient"<sup>iii</sup>. People are subject of cultural advertising in their own homes by foreign media. It is too simple minded to think that religious mission may be accomplished by sending a few advocates around the country. The traditional approach of preaching and oratory fall short of satisfying the current emotional and spiritual needs of the young. Iran

is a country with more than 70% young population. This population imbalance has increased the responsibility of country officials toward country's young generation.

Religious advocacy has been the focus of attention throughout the history. The proof is the wealth of earlier research, books, and theses on the subject. This study is another attempt to emphasize on an important subject that requires continued attention. It was intended to add and update the existing knowledge base by providing new suggestions about religious advocacy.

This study is a detailed examination of advertising methods and their application in religious advocacy. It covers advertising theories and concepts, various advertising techniques, and different approaches used in advertising. This paper goes further on to discuss the importance and significance of advertising in religious advocacy. It hopes the results obtained together with its recommendation provide a roadmap for action on this important subject.

There are two reasons why religious advocacy should be the focus of attention:

1) Divine order so dictates, therefore, it is the responsibility of every Moslem.

2) Wisdom so instructs, therefore, it is the responsibility of every capable and knowledgeable individual to help ordinary people to increase their understanding of religious teaching. "Any social issue is defined based on its role and effect. The importance of Islamic advocacy is directly related to its global mission, i.e. the freedom of Islamic world and suppressed nations from dominant powers in order to establish a new global order. The success of Islamic advocacy depends on eradicating atheism and cruelty from the earth and replacing it with justice and monotheism."<sup>iv</sup> Advocacy and public awareness is critical in every society, especially for youths and adolescences. The key approach to counter social deviations, obliquity, and aberration is through guidance and education. Religious advocacy is the way to implement this approach. It requires educational programs to train advocates who are to undertake this critical task. "Half a century of advertising by *Omavian* in *Sham* from early days of Islam secured them a long ruling in the name of Islam and as Prophet's successors. It is the simple proof of effective advertising."<sup>v</sup> Imam Khomeini was aware of the role of advertising when he said: "advertising is the top agenda in today's world".<sup>vi</sup> He said in another place, "Learning is a duty, yet, advocacy has a higher stand. Learning is prerequisite of advocacy. It is the start of awareness."<sup>vii</sup> This only proves the significance of training advocates to serve for religious causes.

## Advertising

Advertising means to communicate messages, news, or issues of interest to the public. Advertising is a focused communication with a certain objective. It can only be effective when it is persuasive. Persuasive advertising is any form of communication that is designed to influence its audience. Communicating messages or news is not advertising; it is only publicity. Communication becomes advertising when it connects, influences, and persuades its intended audience. Advertising in sociological context means propaganda. *Introduction to Sociology* defines propaganda or advertising as "an activity aimed at changing public opinion indirectly through means such as language, scripture, image, and illustration. Propagandist resorts to persuasive nature of human being in order to impose his own will on public."<sup>viii</sup> Psychology provides a different definition for advertising. It is a definition that is closer to our cause. One definition of advertising is "the application of any form of communication that is made on a given objective intended to influence opinions, feelings, and behaviors of certain social and national groups for general, military, or political purposes."<sup>ix</sup> Others have mentioned various reasons or objectives for advertising including encouragement to participate in organized efforts, promotion of thoughts and beliefs, undertake continual and orderly actions, intended actions to influence, persuade, or change opinions. Advertising in another definition is: "communication of a message to others with the intention of altering their beliefs and behaviors. Advertising in this definition has three major elements: communicator, receiver, and message. Advertising in our context is an educational activity made for promotion of knowledge, values, and virtues intended to increase political, social, and/or cultural awareness. Its sole purpose is not emotional stimulations and creation of a situation that may persuade receivers to accept the advertising message. Advertising with educational purpose provides guidance to individuals and society. It is not the same as propaganda as used in West. Advertising in the materialistic views of West and East is contrary to providing guidance. Advertising in current materialistic world is the same as propaganda, rumormongering, and hubbub to convince people to accept certain issues or follow a given path without having sufficient knowledge about. This definition does not agree to advertising as guidance because guidance leads to cognitive perception<sup>x</sup>. Advertising in another definition is referred to an approach or a collection of approaches used for mobilization and driving individuals and/or social forces toward certain objectives by exerting influence on their personality, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. The intended objective may be legitimate or illegitimate political, militarily, cultural, or economic gains.<sup>xi</sup> Advertising in terms of communication involves transfer of information in the form of messages. Advertising from psychological points of view is an attempt on the part of advertising source to change attitudes and persuade the targeted people or its audience<sup>xii</sup>. Advertising is sometimes mentioned as an intentional and conscious effort to achieve a certain objective by means of a given communication tool. "Advertising refers to an intentional effort by certain individuals or groups who resort to utilizing a given media with the objective to control, manipulate, or alter attitudes of others. Programmers design advertising plans in such a way that the targeted individuals show a set of desired reactions under certain circumstances<sup>xiii</sup>. Islamic advertising includes any systematic activity that is taken superficially or thoroughly. In this context, inactivity is not considered as advertising. Occasional and non-systematic activities that are not intended to directly increase awareness, influence sentiments, or alter behavior in the targeted individuals are not

advertising. Nor, are those systematic activities that are not directly intended for or has indirect effect on promotion of Islamic thoughts.

"Islamic advertising means communication of Divine messages in an intellectual format by connecting to targeted individuals and persuading them to accept certain contents through utilization of legitimate tools or media in any time and place. The motivation in Islamic advertising is divine, spiritual, and religious – a motivation that stem from the love of guiding people.

Religious advocacy insists on promoting messages as they are without adding anything to them. The message is communicated to the targeted individuals without augmentations or eliminations. The communication of message has to take place only through legitimate media without any deception. The objective here is transmission and clarification of divine and Islamic values."<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Definition of Religion**

The word for religion in Islam is Alladin. The lexical meaning of this Arabic word is retribution. That is why the day of reckoning in Islam the day when all stand for judgment of their own deeds is.<sup>xv</sup> Religion means following and submission to certain rules and rituals with rewards and punishments as parts of the process.<sup>xvi</sup>

"A complete and ideal religion that meets God's satisfaction is the one that Holy God revealed to Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. The details of Islam were revealed to Prophet Mohammad in a period of twenty-three years. *Velayat* verses concluded the message to the last Holley Prophet. They are the verses that contain the nomination of successors to the prophet."<sup>xvii</sup>

"Maintaining a religiosity state is the first and the most common concept in Islam. It is a state where one believes in a holy essence with the wisdom and authority to manage and control all that are related to human life. It is a belief that persuades one to relate to that superior being when praying with love, dismay, humiliation, respect, and admiration".<sup>xviii</sup>

AllamehTabatabayee wrote in his valuable book *Quran in Islam*: "Religion represents those realities that are independent of human being. It is a collection of theoretical rules and principles that define the qualities of Divine being. Religion is a collection of practical terms and conditions that illustrate the way of obedience and servitude. Religion is the way of divine living."<sup>xix</sup>

A religious advocator is a person who communicates religious messages to others as he himself has come to recognize. He is a person who invites others to prophets' traditions with his own words, behavior, and mannerisms. A religious advocator may be anyone with such qualifications. However, religious advocacy has been left exclusively for clergies and teachers, especially religious teachers and instructors.

### **Religious Advocacy Training**

An introduction to advertising types is required as a prelude to identification of various approaches to religious advocacy.

#### ***Types of Advertising***

Mottahhari divided advertising into sensorial, logical, and emotional types. Sensorial advertising directs the message to audio-visual senses of the targeted individuals. Prophets mission was not limited to communication of the Divine messages to senses of the targeted individuals. They pursued higher objectives. In logical advertising, which is a higher form compared to sensorial advertising, the message penetrates in mind and thought of the receivers. "Prophets prefer communication approaches that deliver their messages to the minds. The higher form of advertising is the one that is directed to the hearts of receivers. In this advertising, message first influences the mind and once approved, becomes a part of one's heart. Prophets do not intend to inject some claims into people's minds. The divine message shall penetrate into people's mind and hearts, i.e., the messages shall enter the depth of human soul and dominate his whole being".<sup>xx</sup> In another categorization, advertising is divided into reasonable and non-reasonable. Reasonable advertising is backed up by statistics, figures, and reasons. But, non-reasonable advertising has no supportive facts. Advertising could also be ethical and non-ethical. Ethical advertising is designed in conformance to ethical and moral principles of society. Non-ethical advertising is built around lies, deceptions, dishonesty, and trickery.

#### ***Advertising Approaches***

Advertising uses different and varied approaches depending on the occasion. Advertisers use these approaches based on their own applications.

Quran has mentioned several approaches that may be used for religious advocacy. AnNahl, verse 125 mentions three approaches to religious advocacy, namely, reasoning, preaching, and arguments.

"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".<sup>xxi</sup>

### **Reasoning**

An advocator uses reasoning that corresponds to understanding level of his targeted individuals. In this approach, messages that are backed up with logical reasoning and proofs are communicated to audience. Individuals with higher degree of confidence accept logical reasoning that are solid and has valid support. Messages can be simple or complex. Some people eagerly welcome complex messages. They undertake upon themselves to decipher the message and this effort helps them get the core of the

message. Complex messages are not easy to understand for some people. The complexity may take away their attention from the main point of message. Holy Quran has convincing messages for both groups. Some messages contain philosophy and wisdom for the wise men. Some other messages provide examples, comparisons, and stories for the laymen. Reasoning is the best and most suitable approach in religious advocacy. It is based on thoughts and logic. Rational advertising contributes to social development and elevates cultural level. Reasoning and logic may satisfy those who are open to wisdom and seek to increase their level of understanding without resistance and obduracy. An advertising which uses the power of reasoning and logic may only be understood by a certain group of people who are talented enough to get the message. Otherwise, those lacking the required talent may not be lucky enough to get the message. Holy Quran is full of examples that use wisdom and reasoning in conveying the intended message.

### **Preaching and Advising**

Positive preaching can be used as a substitute way for those who are not well versed with logic and wisdom. Some people take guidance by way of examples, stories and narratives. "Most people understand by their hearts and feelings, rather than their mind, logic, and thoughts. Preaching deals with the heart of people."<sup>xxiii</sup> Preaching and lecturing are more effective ways to target them. Preaching is the second approach recommended by Quran for religious advocacy. It differs with the wisdom in many ways. Wisdom involves teaching while preaching involves admonition. Wisdom is to inform and preaching is to awaken. Wisdom fights ignorance, yet, preaching fights negligence. Wisdom deals with mind and thoughts but preaching addresses hearts and emotions. Wisdom trains and preaching reminds. Wisdom strengthens intellectual capacities while preaching prepares intellect to utilize its capacities. Wisdom is enlightening, yet, preaching is eye opening. Wisdom encourages thinking, but preaching promotes attentiveness. Wisdom is mind's verbiage and preaching is heart's message. The personality has important role in preaching, but has no role in wisdom. Wisdom requires active exchange between souls, while preaching is a one Way Street – it flows from preacher to listener. Preaching is penetrating when comes from heart; otherwise, it is only noise to ears".<sup>xxiii</sup>

### **Gracious Argument**

Quran directs one to resort to "gracious argument when facing a person who is not interested in discovering facts, understanding the truth, and whose only intention is to argue and criticize by keying on words that can be used to ridicule, harass, and nag. Gracious argument requires fairness, impartiality, and truthfulness."<sup>xxiv</sup>

The one who engages in gracious argument has no intention to defeat, humiliate, or insult his opponent just to gain advantage. He only tries to prove where his opponent is wrong and find ways to influence his soul, thoughts and beliefs. "Argument does not only require strong rational, but also needs a correct form of talking and arguing. A free discussion should be carried on with kindness and affection free from aggression. Many knowledgeable individuals with capacity to break the facts fail to influence others because of ignorance about gracious arguments and productive discussions. Influencing someone's mind and thought is not enough to win an argument; it requires persuasion of heart as well."<sup>xxv</sup>

### **Caution and Enunciation**

Caution is associated to punishment and threat. Enunciation is associated to rewards and encouragement. Quran uses caution and enunciation in many occasions. Caution is "driver" and enunciation is "leader". Caution pushes from behind and enunciation pulls from front. Caution and enunciation are both required in religious advocacy. Both are prerequisites but not sufficient alone. These two words are usually mentioned together in Holy Quran because psychological properties of human lead him toward gains and away from losses. Ominous and harsh illustrations of punishment versus glorious and appealing illustrations of God's blessings produce the desired effects on people. A trained advocator knows how to use these opposing effects to convey his message. As God's blessing surpass his punishment, so an advocator should emphasize more on enunciation and rewards and less on caution and punishment. This is the approach that produces the desired motivation and eagerness in people when receiving the message from religious advocates. "Enunciation is a double-edged sword that cuts both ways. It may be used to deceive, exploit, and take advantage of the targeted individuals. It may also be used to educate and purify them. The latter has special status in Islamic education and advocacy so much so that all prophets and Shia's Imams, peace be on them, realized that their success was largely depended on the recognition of those who promoted the rules and percepts of Islam as well as those who have become believers in God and Quran."<sup>xxvi</sup> Religious teachings advise a balance between dismay and hope. It is up to advocators to resort to proper levels of caution and enunciation in order to produce the required balance where and when needed.

### **Emotional Stimulation**

Another approach currently being used in advertising is emotional stimulation. This approach has to be supported by reasoning, logic, and thinking. Otherwise, it loses its effectiveness because of its short sustainability. Targeted individuals who are initially attracted through emotional stimulation may be lead in any direction afterward. Emotional stimulation is only beneficial for its initial attraction. Emotional stimulation is a common approach in advertising. It may target different feelings such as fear and

happiness. Psychologists have expressed varied opinions about this type of advertising. Some believe that the messages that are not threatening or do not induce fear are more effected. Some others believe that the advertising messages that contain fear or some other disturbing elements may activate the defensive mechanisms in recipients, so much so that the fearful or disturbing element is totally ignored. Quran uses emotional stimulation frequently. Numerous verses address believers using the phrase *O ye who believe*. It is a tender loving way of Holly God to invite believers to become closer. Believers are more open to accept the message once they feel close to God. Another tender loving phrase is - *Ye my servants who believe*. It produces higher degree of closeness in the receiver. Luqman uses the phrase *O my son* to communicate his religious message to his son, i.e. - *O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah*. He then supports his message with the reason; - *for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing*.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Emotional stimulation can be very effective if it includes three elements: 1) emotional stimulation, 2) communication of message, and 3) the supporting argument.

### Using Examples and Stories

Another effective approach in religious advocacy is using examples and stories. Advertising messages use examples and stories to give receiver an opportunity to put himself in place of the leading character and think about what might happen. This approach is used in conjunction with others. Its major advantage is that it indirectly delivers its intended message. Quran uses the same approach in Al-Jumu'ah/5:

*The similitude of those who were charged with the obligations of the Mosaic Law but who subsequently failed in those obligations is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes but understands them not. Evil is the similitude of people who falsify the Signs of Allah: and Allah guides not people who do wrong*.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Quran uses examples to make people think and recall.

*Such are the similitudes which We propound to men that they may reflect*<sup>xxix</sup>

*So Allah sets forth parables for men in order that they may receive admonition*<sup>xxx</sup>

"The best way to make people understand complex issues, especially those who are not well educated, is to provide them in forms of understandable examples suitable for the special occasion - examples that can easily perceived by senses. This is unlike rational issues that require thinking to understand".<sup>xxxi</sup> Using stories in advertising is one way to influence the targeted audience. The effect of the stories may last for years. Holy Quran uses this artistic method frequently. Quran stories are historical, factual, diverse, and attractive. God refers to them as "the best stories":

*We narrate to you the best of narratives, by Our revealing to you this Quran*<sup>xxxii</sup>

Quran follows some objectives when narrates these stories.

*And all we relate to you of the accounts of the messengers is to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth and an admonition, and a reminder to the believers*<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Examples and stories influence every different group of society. They provide applicable samples. Those individuals who are endowed with less power of logic look for simple explanations. The same is true in the case of the young.

### Posing a question

Questioning may be posed with variety of purposes. One important form of questioning is to seek information. Sometimes questioning takes place for purposes other than understanding. This form of questioning has a high stance in eloquence. Quran poses a question in numerous occasions to explain an important issue. The intention for posing the question may be to notify, assert, prove, reprimand, envisage, and chastise. It is to invite reader to further reflect and think about the subject. Questioning is an indirect approach of communicating the advertising message and is designed to make the targeted people contemplate. Some great scholars never answer questions. Instead, they pose secondary questions in order to force people to think and make them search for the answer. A few common examples shall illustrate how Quran applies questioning in its teaching. *O you who believe! shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chastisement?*<sup>xxxiv</sup> This question is posed to direct and guide. In another place, the intention is to reprimand. For example in Al Wagheh, verses 68-69.

68. Have you considered the water which you drink?

69. Is it you that send it down from the clouds, or are We the senders?

Quran may pose a question to assert and prove like the one in Al-Sharh/1.

*Have We not expanded for you your breast*

The questioning posed in advertising is intended for audience to seek information and think about the issue. The understanding gained through this approach is not real. The questioning is only posed as part of eloquence.

### Propose a Model

Another way of communicating an advertising message is to propose a model. This form of advertising illustrates a personality model and pegs the message to the model. It is an approach effectively used by Quran in many occasions. Some Quran verses and narrations include role models as a way of inviting people to follow Islam.

*Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar* <sup>xxxv</sup>

Proposing Messenger of God as an exemplar is to invite people to act like him as the proper conducts and complete obeying of God's command. It is the only way for a Muslim to become a true believer. Quran proposes Ibrahim as another exemplar in AL-Momtahneh/4. *Indeed, there is for you a good example in Ibrahim and those with him when they said to their people: Surely we are clear of you and of what you serve besides Alla.* <sup>xxxvi</sup>

This verse proposes Ibrahim and his followers as exemplars who opposed polytheism and abhorred worshipping anything other than God. Quran mentions two women in Al-Tahrimas models for all Muslims irrespective of gender.

*And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh (Firon) when she said: My Lord! Build for me a house with Thee in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh (Firon) and his doing, and save me from the unjust people;* <sup>xxxvii</sup>

*And Marium, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her of Our inspiration and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was of, the obedient ones;* <sup>xxxviii</sup>

The significant and undeniable position of role models as means of influence on social and cultural norms, especially among young, has reached such standing that is practically difficult, if not impossible, to teach or guide without introducing real models. That is the reason that advertising agencies and film producers in western world are making heavy investments to introduce role models whom they can use to inject their own thinking and mannerisms among other nations. <sup>xxxix</sup>

### **Suggestion and Instillation**

Suggestion and instillation are two effective approaches in education. They could also be useful in religious advocacy. Advertising applies these techniques to create self-esteem and self-confidence. These two terms are not synonym but they are closely related. They have a positive direct relation with each other. When one of them is elevated, the other one follows, or vice versa.

Self-esteem produces feelings of competency and sufficiency. It is a feeling close to self-efficacy. Self-confidence, in other hand, relates to self-value. Therefore, these two terms are not the same. Advertising is more effective on individuals with higher self-esteem. An advocator with high level of self-esteem and self-confidence is more effective and successful.

Quran resorts to suggestions to elevate self-esteem among Muslims.

*So lose not heart nor fall into despair; for you must gain mastery if you are true in faith.* <sup>xl</sup>

God elevates self-confidence by enforcing self-esteem to save believers from giving in to words, torments, persecution, and vexing of non-believers to prevent them from falling victim to advertising of pagans and impious. A quote from Imam Ali from *NahjolBalagheh* may be another good example. <sup>xli</sup>

*If you are not patient, pretend as if you are*

Bragging in conflicts and chanting *God is great* at the time of onslaught at enemy are forms of instillation.

### **Artistic Application**

People recognize and appreciate arts even if they do not possess artistic abilities. Aesthetics is one quality of human being. Religious advocates may increase their rate of success many folds if they apply arts in their practice. The application of arts may turn religious advocacy into indirect advertising which is more influential and effective than direct advertising. Domineering powers apply arts to their advertising messages to penetrate positively or negatively in depth ones' hearts. They resort to theater, movies, pictures, animation, paintings, graphics, inscription, imagery, sculpture, or any other artistic production that may serve their purpose when conveying their messages to the targeted people. Muslim advocates use direct speech and preaching to spread their message around the world. They tell people directly what is good and what is not good, what they ought to do what they ought not to do. Their direct approach is not always effective. Western world applies arts to steal the souls and hearts of our young to captivate them with their aberrant tenets. The same way opponents of Prophet Moses, Sameri, decorated a calf with jewelry and introduced it as the God of Moses to swerve his followers. <sup>xlii</sup>

An indirect artistic approach with audio-visual effects may be more effective in conveying the underlying message than hours of direct sermon to the targeted people. Quran in cause of Habil's murder sets up a scene to teach his murderer brother Ghabil how to bury Habil's corpse. Or Prophet Mohammad said in teaching how to setup a prayer— *pray as you see me pray.* <sup>xliii</sup>

### **Lecture and Sermon**

Another artistic approach used in religious advocacy is lecture and sermon. A lecturer or preacher can be very persuasive and convincing when he is a master of oratory and can deliver his message according to time, place, and occasion. Religious advocacy through lecture or sermon is a direct approach. It may be even more effective when augmented with other indirect approaches like providing examples and stories or speaking of history and experiences. Lecturer or preacher should be aware of oration techniques and use of eloquent speech when delivering his message. Other qualifications such as sincerity and honesty may make speech even more effective and persuasive. These qualifications should follow with sufficient reasoning to make the effects of speech lasting. Our Supreme Leader expressed an opinion about advertising. "The traditional ways of religious advocacy that are still maintained by Hozeh (religious school), including preaching and sermon, should not be abandoned or their

role degraded. When we speak of strong advertising tools and approaches, we do not mean to neglect preaching and sermons or deny their effectiveness. What we mean is to strengthen our traditional approaches with new and more effective methods. Oratory should be conducted in its traditional and proper way. By traditional, we do not mean that all its original specifications should remain the same as in the past ... contents should be changed and presented in modern advertising formats. However, taking up new presentation approaches should not degrade the traditional approaches of religious advocacy.<sup>xliiv</sup> Religious advocators should follow the steps of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. They should make Prophet Mohammad their role model. They are to observe Prophet's tradition, if they expect to be successful in their endeavor. This is how Islamic religious advocacy has performed during past 1400 years to make the Islamic world of today to include one fourth of global population with more becoming Moslems every day. Training competent, talented, motivated, faithful, and knowledgeable religious advocators that are equipped with advertising tools and speak world common languages is necessary if we were to succeed in the endeavor to awaken the rest of world population. These advocators should be fluent in Quran and know Prophet's tradition by heart if they are to convey them effectively to the interested people and win their hearts.

### Conclusion

Religious advocacy attempts to convey its messages through interaction. Its intention is to bring about changes in attitude, views, and behavior. Advertising is one technique that may be effectively used in religious advocacy. Advertising has numerous classifications. One classification divides advertising into sensorial, rational, and emotional. They may be used depending on the occasion. Advertising may be direct or indirect. Indirect advertising is the most effective because the intended individuals do not sense being targeted. Using indirect approach has been recommended for religious advocacy in Islam. Our Imam's words guide us to apply indirect approach in religious advocacy. Religious advocacy uses various approaches depending on the occasion. One approach may produce positive results for an advocator in a given time or place under certain circumstances. The same approach may produce negative results for another advocator in similar time, place, or circumstances. Taking the right approach is critical in religious advocacy and enough attention should be paid to its selection.

### Suggestions

1. Our mass media should employ assistance of psychologists, sociologists, and theologians to better utilize various types of advertising techniques in religious advocacy. They would better apply sensorial, rational, and emotional advertising techniques based on time, place, and occasion. Applications of indirect advertising through TV movies are more effective in religious advocacy. However, direct approaches for religious and ethical education shall not be neglected as the occasion may demand.
2. More effective and attractive sites to be designed by experts in the field. Special chat rooms to be arranged and moderated by experienced and trained religious advocates.
3. College courses in advertising to be offered to those who are to be trained as religious advocates. These courses should introduce various advertising techniques to the participating students. Production of training films that can practically show how advertising techniques may be used in religious advocacy maybe most beneficial. Ministry of Higher Education may participate in defining projects to produce the required training films.

<sup>i</sup> Khomeini, R. (1997) in *Search of Imam*, Book 8, v. 20, Imam Works Publishing Institute., p. 176

<sup>ii</sup> *Quran*, An Nahl, Verse 125.

<sup>iii</sup> Hoamyoon, M. H. (1995) *Sociology of Religion*, Islamic Advocacy Institute, p. 17.

<sup>iv</sup> Zoragh, M. H. (1989) *Advertising Fundamentals*, Seda-va-Sima Publishing – Sorosh, p. 23.

<sup>v</sup> Frahmand Pour, F. (1999) *Policy Analysis of a Half a Century of Religious Advocacy in Sham*, Tehran: Amir Kabir, pp. 10-12

<sup>vi</sup> Khomeini, R. (1993) *Sahifeh Noor*, v. 24, Imam Works Publishing Institute., p. 34

<sup>vii</sup> Khomeini, R. (1993) *Sahifeh Noor*, v. 15, Imam Works Publishing Institute., p. 249

<sup>viii</sup> Agbern and Nimvof (2001), *Introduction to Sociology*, (Aryanpour, Trans.), Tehran: Negah Publishing, p. 190

<sup>ix</sup> Nasr. S. (2001), *Psychological War*, (HaghighatKashani, M., Trans.), 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Soroosh Publishing, p. 427

<sup>x</sup> Rahbar, M. T. (1992), *A Research on Advertising*, Nashr-e SazmanTabliqatEslami, p. 86

<sup>xi</sup> Karami, R. A. (1999), *Advertising Methods*, Qom: Darothaqalayn, p. 14

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