

## Religious Counselling Institutions In Islamic Culture \*

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Nurullah ALTAŞ\*\*

### Özet

#### İslam Kültüründe Dini Danışmanlık Kurumları

Dini danışmanlık, Hıristiyan kilise geleneği içinde oluşmuş ve dini veya din dışı problemlerin çözümünde bireylere inandıkları dinin değerleri ile ilişki kurarak yardım sağlamayı amaçlayan bir yardım meselğidir. İslam geleneği de bireylere dini danışmanlık sağlayan kurumlara sahiptir. Araştırma, dini danışmanlık kavramının içeriğinden hareket ederek İslam kültürü içinde dini danışmanlık kurumlarının oluşumuna hizmet eden motifleri belirlemeyi ve kurumların sağladığı destek alanını ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu amaçla, İslam kültürünün temel belirleyicisi olan Kur'an ve Hadislerdeki danışmanlık ilişkisi içeren motifler belirlenmiş, ardından İslam geleneğindeki dini danışmanlık hizmetleri veren kurumlar hakkında bilgi sunulmuştur. Araştırma, günümüz insanının hangi alanlarda dini danışmanlık hizmetlerine gereksinim duyduğunu belirleyen bir model öneri ile tamamlanmıştır.

Bu araştırma, daha önce Ankara İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 41. Sayı, 327-350. sayfaları arasında yayımlanan "Dini Danışmanın Teorik Temelleri" başlığını taşıyan ve "Dini Danışma" kavramının analizinin yapıldığı araştırmayı tamamlayıcı ve bütünlüyci bir nitelik taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Religious Counselling, Religious Education, Islamic Culture, Education

\* The study entitled "Theoretical Basis of the Religious Counselling" which was published in Ankara University Review of the Faculty of Divinity, Volume 41, pp. 327-350 have a general concept analysis on religious counselling. This research aims at exhibiting reflection of religious counselling in the Islamic tradition. It is also by this characteristic attendance and supplementary of the said study.

\*\* Assoc. Professor, Divinity Faculty of Ankara University, e-mail: altas@divinity.ankara.edu.tr

## A. INTRODUCTION

People are in need of counselling as long as they live together. This need is among the innate qualities of man. He begins to learn about life through his parents' guidance. His closest relatives keep their counseling untill he shows that he can live on his own. In the later stages of life, man always needs counseling in the varying degrees. It is a fact that there are some areas that man cannot act on his own, even if he gets older and gains experience.

One of the areas in which individuals face with difficulties to act on their own and, need counseling is the religious life, even if they have completed their personal growth. People ask some questions about the life in which they live and find the answers of some of them via religion. And they hold the pillars of religion which gives answer to their questions, and attempt to arrange their lives in accordance with these religious principles. But, in this attempt, it is always possible to face with some problems resulting from both cognitive aspect and faith-practice conflicts. And it is in this point that we meet with the religious counselling practices which aim to solve people's problems, abandoning the classical process of psychological counseling and guidance.

While religious education institutions run the religious education process through educational activities in formal and informal forms, religious counseling undertakes a central role to answer the religious problems of students and adults in this process. In our tradition, it is accepted that the mystic organisations, Imams and, in part, magicians have undertaken this role, as well as classical institutions of education. Since people began to live together, the centres finding divine-based solutions to their problems have been always the main sources sought help. Religious leaders such as magicians and shamans whom we can still observe in primitive clans have fulfilled this function. No matter how strong and conscious education was provided, it could not be prevented these motives surviving in society within various forms. For centuries, our people have regarded the mystic centres, men of religion and magicians as help centres and gone to them.

In the institutionalization process of Islamic education, the spiritual training was excluded from madrasas, and thus the private institutions for spiritual training were established. Nizamiyya madrasas as an important cornerstone of Islamic education were founded for this reason. Although an approach dealing with the religious education in madrasas in two sided was tried to be constructed, with al-Ghazzalî's influence, spiritual training was separated from religious education, and thus the ground was prepared for the emergence of *ribats* and *takkas*.<sup>1</sup> The above mentioned separation in Islamic Education, deprived madrasa education of spirit and takka

<sup>1</sup> Dephna Ephrat, *Learning in the First Century of the Madrasah in Baghdad*, Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review, Vol. 3, 1-2, 1996, pp. 91-92



education of knowledge. The sign of this mutual privation was that takkas performed the function of being solution centres to the religious problems on the one hand, and that personnel for formal education institutions were trained by madrasas on the other hand. Though the mystic organizations brought solutions to the problems for a long time, they finally turned into the centres producing problems rather than solving.

The main topic of our article, in this framework, is based on an inquiry of the foundations of term of religious counseling, which theoretically was appeared in the West, in Islamic Culture. In this study, we shall research the theoretical bases of religious guidance institution on the basis of the primary sources of Islamic Culture, the Holy Qur'an and the examples from the Prophets life and try to put the practice fields of this institution in the present Islamic world.

## **B. MAN'S NEED FOR COUNCELING ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN AND REVELATION-GUIDANCE RELATION**

Religious counselling, today, survives as a crucial institution in the West which represents the Christian Culture. Our people react willingly or unwillingly to the institutionalization of a western origin term within their own culture. It is indispensable to face with some difficulties when a term is transferred from a culture to the other without considering the internal dynamics of two cultures.

Man is an existence who needs guidance from the very beginning of his creation. It is man's first experience of counselling when God taught Adam the names, all of them, and placed him before the angels.<sup>2</sup> There had been also an imploring in Adam's repentance of his error under the counseling of his Creator through the words he took from Him.<sup>3</sup> Mankind had felt himself in need of counseling from the very beginning of his creation and his first experience in the world onwards.

As a result of that mankind came to live in a strange milieu and that he increased, his facing with much more serious problems caused the mankind to be in need of counselling much more than before. Man's counselor in his first experiences in the world was his Creator who sent him to the world for testing. And the Creator got his contact through guides whom He chose amongst people. Those who follow the instructions of the guide nor shall they fear, neither grieve.<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Qur'an is the last document through which God got in contact with people. This document also mentions how some societies were warned from the very beginning of history of mankind when they deviated from basic human values. The God's main purpose in His referring to the contact gotten by Him with these people is to lead them to think of how they alienated from themselves and to take lessons so as not to make the

<sup>2</sup> 2/ al-Baqara, 31.

<sup>3</sup> 2/ al-Baqara, 37

<sup>4</sup> 2/ Baqara, 38

same errors once again.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as a result of this guidance, it was necessary to give some examples/illustrate so that people might come out from the darkness arisen from peoples' errors, to the lights<sup>6</sup> advised for solution.

When the revelation is considered in the context of information given in the Qur'an on the basis of common characteristics in the definitions of guidance, it can be regarded within the formal limits of guidance. When we examine the general characteristics of revelation on the basis of common aspects of guidance, revelation-guidance relation will become more clear.

#### Revelation Looks Man

*Do just estimate of God do they make when they say: "Nothing doth God send down to man (by way of revelation)".<sup>7</sup> With this verse the Creator totally refers to all helps He makes by means of revelation. Revelation provides man to recognize his own general abilities, interests, attitudes, strong and weak sides and, thus, helps him realize himself and adapt to the milieu in a harmonious and sound way. .*

The following verses give some information about the human characteristics: *And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right...<sup>8</sup>. We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low.<sup>9</sup> Verily We have created man into toil and struggle.<sup>10</sup> And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling.<sup>11</sup> We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid there of. But man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish.<sup>12</sup> Truly man is, to his Lord, ungrateful, and to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds).<sup>13</sup>*

#### Revelation is a Kind of Help.

The natural result of man's knowing himself, according to the Qur'an, also means his knowing his Creator. For this purpose, God helps man whom He got in contact with through revelation. There is no compulsion in the activity made through revelation. *And We showed him the two highways.<sup>14</sup> We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his*

<sup>5</sup> 4/ al-Nisa, 82; 38/ al-Sad, 29; 47/ Muhammad, 24

<sup>6</sup> 57/ al-Hadid, 9

<sup>7</sup> 6/ al-An'âm, 91.

<sup>8</sup> 91/ Shams, 8, 9

<sup>9</sup> 95/ Tin, 4, 5

<sup>10</sup> 90/ Beled, 4

<sup>11</sup> 32/ al-Sajda, 9

<sup>12</sup> 33/ Ahzâb, 72

<sup>13</sup> 100/ al-Âdiyât, 6-7. The Qur'an focusses on man's weaknesses which formed the obstacle in the way of self-realization, rather than his abilities. For more information on the man's weaknesses see 10/ Yûnus, 12, 21, 22, 23; 11/ Hûd, 9; 12/ Yûsuf, 53; 16/ al-Nakhl, 4; 17/ Isra, 11, 67, 83, 100; 43/ al-Zukhruf, 15; 75/ al-Qiyâma, 20; 80/ Abasa, 17; 91/ Shams, 7, 10;

<sup>14</sup> 90/ al-Balad, 10



will)<sup>15</sup> *Verily this is an Admonition: Therefore, whoso will, let him take a (straight) path to his Lord.*<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Revelation Comes Down Within A Process

According to the Qur'an, God has gotten in contact with man whenever and wherever he has needed, and by way of revelation He has guided him. *Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for his own benefit. Who goeth astray doth soto his own loss. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another, nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We sent an apostle (to give warning.*<sup>17</sup> God's contact with man went on without an interruption. Staying in contact with man whenever he alienated from himself and thus wronged himself, God helped him come together, once more, with his innate qualities in his character. With the help of this meeting, man gained the opportunity to know himself once again.

### Revelation is Specialist Originated

God, according to the Qur'an, is a Supreme Being who created man and let him live within the conditions He determined. Also, there is no one who can know man's abilities and weaknesses better than God.

The Qur'an speaks of the fact that God had stayed in contact with all communities who had had serious troubles. Throughout history, there has been no community that God did not send apostle and warned. While this divine guidance had an positive effect upon some of them, upon others it had no influence and thus those peoples, as mentioned in the Qur'an, could not receive guidance.<sup>18</sup> The Qur'an gives some examples of contact gotten with those people and their reactions to the contact in question.

Speaking of the fact that Abraham was bestowed on guidance, righteousness and the power of knowledge, the Qur'an mentions about his guiding people who worshipped the senseless tocks and stones.<sup>19</sup> Abraham broke the idols, all of them, to pieces but left the biggeest idol untouched, and said to his people who asked who had done this that the biggest one did. By doing so, Abraham had guided his people who were unaware of their own physical and spiritual potential to the extent that they sought the aid of lifeless creatures, and to whom the reasoning, which was one of the foremost blessing bestowed on them by God, came difficult. With this conduct of Abraham, people began to think of the senselessness of seeking help from such useless impotent creatures. Here, Abraham help them know about themselves. It is one another example mentioned in the Qur'an that Abraham guided his father and advised him about the unprofitability of seeking help from lifeless creatures.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 76/ al-Insan, 3

<sup>16</sup> 73/ al-Muzzammil, 19

<sup>17</sup> 17/ Isra, 15

<sup>18</sup> 16/ al-Nakhl, 36; 28/ al-Qasas, 59

<sup>19</sup> 21/ al-Anbiyâ, 51, 68.

<sup>20</sup> 19/ Maryam, 41, 50

Moses had left Aaron as a guide upon his people in Mounth Sinai. Aaron tried to fulfil his mission of guidance attempting to keep them back from adopting other gods but Allah. But After Moses left his people, they forgot what Moses taught them and so they took the calf for worship. Despite his all warnings, Aaron could not prevent them from this error.<sup>21</sup>

The guidance of Luqmân for his son is also one another example mentioned in the Qur'an. Instructing his son not to join in worship others with God, to be good to his parents, that anyone who has done good, shall see it, to establish regular prayer, to enjoin what is just and to forbid what is wrong, to bear with patient constancy whatever betides him, not to swell with pride at men, not to walk in insolence through the Earth and to lower his voice, Luqmân aimed at his son's adapting to the milieu in which he lived within a harmonious and sound way.<sup>22</sup>

Joseph's conversation with two youngs in prison who came to him to interpret dreams may be regarded as one of the activities of guidance. These youngs had come to Joseph to interpret their dreams. And before the interpretation of the dreams, saying that the source of knowledge bestowed him was God and he never attributed any partners whatever to God, Joseph fulfilled his duty of guidance.<sup>23</sup> In these examples, on the one hand the Creator drew attention to his contact with people, on the other hand He gave information about the concequences of this guidance.

*We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him. We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismâ'îl, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon and to David We gave the P̄salm̄s.*<sup>24</sup> In the following verses God says that Muhammad was told the story of some Apostles by way of the Qur'an, but of others he was not, emphasizing that they were sent as the bringer of the glad tidings (*bashîr*) and warner (*nazîr*). In these verses, it also appears that one of the missions of the apostles was to guide and counsel, i.e. to get in contact with people to help them.<sup>25</sup> Here, it is also emphasized that after apostles were sent to people, they will not have any justification saying that "there was no one to guide them". But it is the consequence of this guidance that the people cannot find any excuse and not ask God to forgive them due to their errors they committed.<sup>26</sup>

### C. THE PROPHET' COUNSELING

The prophet Mohammad is the last apostle<sup>27</sup> choosen amongst people in order to carry out the mission of getting God in contact with people.<sup>28</sup> In

<sup>21</sup> 20/ Tâ-Hâ, 88, 94

<sup>22</sup> 31/ Luqmân, 13, 19

<sup>23</sup> 12/ Joseph, 36, 38

<sup>24</sup> 4/ al-Nisâ, 163

<sup>25</sup> 4/ al-Nisâ, 165

<sup>26</sup> 4/ al-Nisâ, 166, 169

<sup>27</sup> 17/ Isra, 93; 18/ al-Kahf, 110; 41/ al-Fussilat, 6



order to fulfil his mission of *tabligh*, he guided and counseled a people who had forgotten their humanity not behaving in accordance with the reasons for their being created. Neither did he claimed that treasures of God were with him, nor did he say that he knew the invisible (*ghaib*) and that he was an angel, but fulfilled his duty in line with the Qur'anic teaching.<sup>29</sup> The guidance principle that the Qur'an showed him was not to force people to be drawn towards a certain direction, but only to show the alternative ways of life apart from theirs and thus helping them choose the rightest one for them.

Likewise, Allah wants his apostle to talk as follows: " *Now have come to you, from your Lord, proofs (to open your eyes): If any will see, it will be for (the good of) his own soul; if any will be blind, it will be to his own (harm): I am not (here) to watch over your doings.*"<sup>30</sup>

This method, with which last apostle was charged by the Qur'an, coincides with the contemporary understanding of guidance and counseling. What is expected from guidance is to provide a person with developing his abilities through believing in them and giving him education and guidance in harmony with them, and to help him in his being a perfect and excellent person.<sup>31</sup>

That the Prophet's assigning the wrong actions to God's will, and that the Qur'an's reminding him that he is charged with an only mission of clear *tabligh*<sup>32</sup>, and that he is addressed with this verse " *If they turn away, your duty is only to preach the Clear Message.*"<sup>33</sup> against people who do not change their actions despite his all efforts shows that this principle has been supported.

The most striking activity of the Prophet among his counselling activities is the one in the Sura al-Abasa. Using a wrong method within guidance activities, the Prophet was warned with very severe expressions in this sura. When the Prophet steadily continue explaining Islam towards those who say that they do not accept any way except theirs, a blind man comes to the Prophet and wants him to explain Islam for him. At that moment, the Prophet was not pleased with coming of the man who he underrated. And he resumes talking to the people, to who he attaches importance. But, the warning from God is really remarkable: " *But could tell you but that perchance he might grow (in spiritual understanding)?-Or that he might receive admonition, and the teaching might profit him?*"<sup>34</sup> The Qur'an determines that the Prophet is not responsible unless he bring a

<sup>28</sup> 5/ al-Mâida, 67

<sup>29</sup> 6/ En'am, 50

<sup>30</sup> 6/ al-An'âm, 104

<sup>31</sup> Otto F. Mathiasen, *Rehberliğin Manası*, Translated by Hasan Tan, Maarif Basımevi, Ankara 1956, p.12

<sup>32</sup> 16/ al-Nakhl, 35

<sup>33</sup> 16/ al-Nakhl, 82

<sup>34</sup> 80/ al-Abasa, 3, 4

man, who considers himself as excluded from Prophet's explanations and persists in his stubbornness, to a pure and purified position. After being reminded that the Qur'an is reminder and advice, and that anybody can listen to it and take its advice, it is underlined that a man who is ready to listen to him is more worthy, and the Prophet is warned.<sup>35</sup>

An another example in the Qur'an concerning the Prophet's counselling activities is mentioned in the Sura al-Mujâdala. A woman from *al-Ansâr*, whose name was reported as Hawla or Huwayla in the accounts,<sup>36</sup> had asked the Prophet to help for settling of a problem taken place between her and her husband. Although the Prophet had tried to solve this problem as to the tradition of that time, he had failed to settle the problem and troubled her. This woman, who had to divorce from his husband and had small children, wanted the Prophet to judge in her favour. The settling of the problem was only carried out through the revelation. In the verses, it was asserted that the statements of that woman had been heard by God, and the maintenance of her marriage would be possible in return for her husband's expiation of his words.<sup>37</sup>

As expressed in many verses in the Qur'an, an important part of the Prophet's activities was the conveyance of the revelation coming down him.<sup>38</sup> That the revelation was especially came down to settle a problem to be faced in life was increasing its significance and getting its guidance more clear.

However, besides his providing God get contact with people, the Prophet had counselling and guidance activities, apart from the revelation but based on it. In this sense, the Prophet dealt with people's problems which they connected with the religion but indeed were temporal and guided them on the one hand, he was religious counselor dealing with their value problems arisen from their questions related to ethic and the day of Judgement on the other hand.

He explained, in detail, to a woman who asked whether she should pray or not for her continuing illness not to give up her prayer and perform it,<sup>39</sup> showed the way to those who asked who was the most best and worst of mankind,<sup>40</sup> the most superior of Muslims,<sup>41</sup> the most valuable of worships,<sup>42</sup> and replied to a person who wanted him to define goodness and badness concretely as "*the goodness is the thing that relaxes your heart,*

<sup>35</sup> 80/ al-Abasa, 8, 16

<sup>36</sup> Süleyman Ateş, Yüce Kur'an'ın Çağdaş Tefsiri, Yeni Ufuklar Neşriyat, İstanbul 1991, 9/305

<sup>37</sup> 58/ al-Mujadala, 1, 4

<sup>38</sup> 74/ al-Muddaththir 1, 2; 5/ al-Mâida, 67; 87/ al-A'lâ, 9, 10

<sup>39</sup> al-Bukhârî, Al-Jâmi' al-Sahîh, Kitâb al-Wudû', Bab: 63, Çağrı Yayınları, İstanbul 1981

<sup>40</sup> Tirmizi, Sünen, Kitabu'l-Fiten, 76. Bab, Hadith No: 2263, Çağrı Yayınları, İstanbul 1981; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, V..5, p.40, Çağrı Yayınları, İstanbul 1981

<sup>41</sup> Bukhari, al-Sahih, Kitab al-İman, 5. Bab; Tirmizi, al-Sunan, Kitâb al-Imân, 12. Bab, Hadith No: 2628

<sup>42</sup> Al-Bukhârî, Sahih, Kitâb al-Imân, 18. Bab



*but the badness is the thing that disturbs your hearts.*"<sup>43</sup> Here, one may question whether the Prophet's education activities contain the answers given to the questions by him. At first sight, although it can be thought that an education activity was carried out through the answers given to the questions, seen from another vantage, it can be noticed who brought a question or problem was not the Prophet and some of questions were about the practices outside the mosque. Namely, there is a problem arisen from individual himself and his environments; and his social agreement has been realized through being this problem solved within the framework of teachings of the religion which he adopted.

After explaining, in detail, to a companion, who said that he had been suffered from a disease and asked what he should do, that he had to be treated, the Prophet guided him by saying: "*Verily, God has not given any illness without curing.*"<sup>44</sup>

Besides he made counselling for those coming and talking to him about their problems, the Prophet drew attention to the problems of people who were not aware of their problems by asking several questions to them, and he carried out his counselling mission, since, with the help of the question, man were led to make an observation and notice the problem. Guidance comes after his making the problem be noticed. One day, during a conversation in the mosque, the Prophet directed a question asking "*There is such kind of a tree among trees which does not lose its leaves that is similar to an excellent muslim. Tell me what it is?*" People started to count the trees in the hillsides one by one. Abd al-Allah b. Umar who reported the tradition added that he found that this tree was the date-palm, but he was ashamed of saying it. When the Companions could not know (the answer), they said "*O the Prophet! Tell us what it is*". So he said that it was date-palm.<sup>45</sup>

The conversations which the Prophet carried on in the mosque and which we can consider within the framework of group counseling, institutionalized and, in time, formed the basis for preaching institution. It is clear that preaching (*wa'z*), thought literally, means to guide, is an activity of showing the way and guiding in a religious field.<sup>46</sup> Cemal Tosun, who has placed a title about preacher's relation with guidance in his work named *İlahiyat Fakültelerinde Vaizlik Eğitimi* (Preaching Education in the Faculties of Divinity), says that, seen common concepts and definitions on the issue of guidance, many of them are also valid for education through preaching. According to him, some cases such as that person's demands and requirements in certain fields are supplied, and that his skills related to those fields are grown, and that he makes decisions on religious issues and

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, V. 4227, p. 227

<sup>44</sup> Tirmizi, Sunan, Kitab al-Tıbb, 2. Bab, Hadith No: 2038

<sup>45</sup> Ahmed Naim, Sahih-i Al-Bukhârî Tecrid-i Sarih Tercemesi, DİB Yayınları, Ankara 1975, 1/68

<sup>46</sup> Cemal Tosun, *İlahiyat Fakültelerinde Vaizlik Eğitimi*, A.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, C.XXXVI, pp.185-187, Ankara 1997



makes plans and that he interprets the religious dimension of life exist in preaching and he includes preaches in the definition of group guidance because of their peculiar features.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, it is possible to consider public address (*khutba*) and preaches as institutionalized forms, in time, of the Prophet's group counseling activity.

#### D. RELIGIOUS COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE (*IRSHAD*)- CONVEYANCE (*TABLIGH*) RELATIONS

Irshad derives from the root of an arabic verb *r-sh-d* which means making divinely guide, showing way and leading to true way.<sup>48</sup> In Islamic literature, irshad shows the way of living rightly, right guidance and Islam to others. Its opposite is deviation from right way (*dalâla*) and temptation (*ghayy*). Irshad is a term having a wide usage such as to show right way, to awaken intellect and heart to heedlessness through persuading words, to indicate the right way, to define the principles of Islam and the judgements of the religion, to instruct the right and realities. Those who carry out irshad activities are called as *rashîd*, *râshid* and *murshid*. Also guide and evidence are used in the same meaning. Da'wa means call or missionary activity. It is used in the meaning of calling to accept Islamic realities and follow them. Mission, in this words, is adverted in the Qur'an mostly as the Prophet's mission in addition to its basic meaning.

It is natural that man who is furnished with the ability of doing goodness and badness, needs guidance so that he is led to goodness. Beyza Bilgin, who asserts that education in general and religious education in particular perform a function of guidance in man's directing towards goodness, states that the mission of these disciplines, as has been in irshad mission, is to help for man and to provide his being a perfect and good person. Bilgin underlines that a special view is required to achieve this mission, otherwise, all education activities will be unfounded without a *Weltanschauung* supplying it.<sup>49</sup> Actually, both education activities and guidance activities are based on *Weltanschauungs* and values. Without those values and views, the questions of "whom will be helped and how?" will be left unanswered. Dealing with the issue from the angle of counselling, we see that values and measures played important role in help relations in order to support a man.

Da'wa means to call, to invite, to pray and to direct towards God.<sup>50</sup> It is used in the Qur'an in the meaning of call to right way in 31 times. What is meant by right way is calling to accept Islamic realities and follow them. The mission in this words is adverted in the Qur'an for the most part as the Prophet's mission besides its basic meaning.

<sup>47</sup> Tosun, p. 187

<sup>48</sup> İbn Manzur Muhammad b. Mukarram, *Lisan al-Arab*, Beirut 1988, 5/219; Tahir Ahmad Zawi, *Tartib al-Qamus al-Muhit*, Cairo 1971, 2/340-341

<sup>49</sup> Beyza Bilgin, *İrşadda Evrensel Sorumluluk*, I. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri, DİB Yayınları, Ankara 1995, I/171

<sup>50</sup> *Tartib al-Kamus al-Muhit*, 2/187



Conveyance (*tabligh*) is literally used in the meaning of reaching a purpose, arriving at end in respect of both place and quality.<sup>51</sup> In the Qur'an it is used in the meaning of conveying God's revelation to people. As seen from the verse: "The duty of the Messenger is only to convey. Allah knows what you proclaim and what you hide",<sup>52</sup> in this word person who conveys it has not impact on the conclusion. He carries out his mission without intervening the contents neither including nor excluding anything, of what he is charged to convey.

Although there are some rules to be followed for conveying the message, the above-mentioned verse also contains the following messages: That the man can not see every way permissible for success, he has not have an absolute guarantee for success; he should not afford more than his ability; that the success will be achieved in its natural course. The word in question is also used for other apostles. It gives an impression that it is rather used for the prophets' missions. In the Qur'an, for education activities made by other people for the most part the expressions "advice" and "to enjoin what is just and to forbid what is wrong" have been used. Also it is stressed that a group who has to carry out the functions of *irshad* and *tabligh* must be existed.<sup>53</sup>

The origin of religious counseling dates back to prophecy, from Adam to Muhammad, by which God aimed to lead people to the straight way. After the last prophet Muhammad, *tabligh* and *irshad* missions have been assigned to scholars that their mission boundaries were determined in the verse. In this sense, it is remarkable that in the Prophet's time, some services, even if not clear, were done by those among the Companions who took the special instruction from the Prophet in Suffa, and that the teachers sented to the new-converted communities were also chosen among the people who stayed in Suffa and benefited from the special instruction of the Prophet.

During the period after the Prophet, the rapid changes occurred in the social structure, the troubles faced in realizing the demands of Islam which overtook the individual life and could be performed within a community, and appointment of officials who would carry out this service and their training made some regulations indispensable. Here, it is not our purpose to analyse the historical process profoundly. However, among these religious services in respect of our subject, we want to mention to those which have been institutionalized and contain, in its essence, help relation with people.

In accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet, *tabligh* and *irshad*, which must be carried out were performed by servants called with various titles during the history. Today, they have been carried out by muftis, preachers, teachers of Qur'an course, imams and muazzins. However, our dealing, here, only with them does not mean that the mission

<sup>51</sup> Tartib al-Kamus al-Muhit, I/316

<sup>52</sup> 5/ Maide, 99

<sup>53</sup> 3/ Al 'Imrân, 104

will be carried out only by them. There have been also civil foundations carrying out the mission of irshad and tabligh in the society, although they have not an official title. Neither is possible to say that these foundations have been institutionalized, nor is it necessary to deal with them in detail, due to the fact that their functions, fields of work and effect and education systems are the subject of another study.<sup>54</sup>

Though religious counseling is considered foreign to Islamic World in respect of its being an institutionalized concept, it is clear that the mission of irshad and tabligh, which are mentioned in the Qur'an and have appeared during the history as the important dynamics of Islam, created a kind of help-relation with people. Guidance and psychological counseling are included in these concepts. That the missions of irshad and tabligh have carried out so far without taking the meanings in their contents into consideration does not justify to carry out this mission through traditional methods. The guidance and consultation are included in all activities of irshad, tabligh and religious education. Both the irshad and tabligh, including religious education, and their the objectives, contents and methods must be reconsidered in the light of an understanding especially we faced in the recent years which identifies the guidance with individual education.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Nurullah Altaş, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığında İrşad Hizmetleri ve İlgili Kurumlar, Yayınlanmamış Yük. L. Semineri, A.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara 1996, s.2.

<sup>55</sup> See for this study, an essay on the issue, Mualla Selçuk, 2000'li Yıllara Girerken İrşad Anlayışımız Üzerine Bazı İlk Düşünceler. It was presented in the second Religious Assembly held on November 23-27 in 1998 in Ankara. The general board assembled on 26 November in 1998 negotiated the reports of committees and arranged the 5th article of Conclusion as follows: *Irshad is an important public service. Therefore, irshad has a close relation with the geographical situation, economical development or regression, education and cultural level etc. For this reason, a "Religious Counseling, Research and Guidance Centre" should be established under the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which will make use of the findings of Religious and Social Sciences, be able to put the methods of irshad in accordance with the knowledge and needs of modern man.*