

Journal of Social Science and Human Research Studies

Volume: 02 Issue: 03 March-2026

Steadfastness, Patience, And Monotheism in the Era of Secret and Public Islamic Da'Wah

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Published Date: March 26, 2026**Article DOI: 10.65150/EP-jsshrs/V2E3/2026-16**

ABSTRACT: This stage, in its secret and public phases, constituted a severe test of the quality of faith and the sincerity of Monotheism (Tawhid). The creed was not merely slogans to be proclaimed or theoretical concepts to be studied in secret; rather, it was the comprehensive practical methodology through which the hearts of the first believers were tested. It was the crucible that forged resolve, solidified concepts, and distinguished the sincere from the hypocrite. From this perspective, this research highlights and contemplates the three most important pillars that formed the unique civilizational model presented by the noble Companions (Ghuloush, 2000; Shalaby, 2002): the creed of Monotheism (Tawhid), which was the intellectual and spiritual starting point; the virtue of Steadfastness (Thabat), which embodied that Monotheism in practical reality; and the characteristic of Patience (Sabr), which was the effective weapon that maintained the continuity of the mission.

KEYWORDS: Steadfastness, Patience, Monotheism, Islamic Da'wah.

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, by whose grace good deeds are completed, and peace and blessings be upon the one sent as a mercy to the worlds, Muhammad, and his pure and noble family. To proceed, the study of the Prophet's biography (Sirah) is not merely a retrieval of historical events folded away by time, but rather an extraction of living lessons and the divine laws that govern the movement of human history. At the core of this fragrant biography, the Meccan phase of the Da'wah emerges as the foundational brick upon which the towering edifice of Islam was built, representing the greatest educational school in history for building human character and shaping societies.

This stage, in its secret and public phases, constituted a severe test of the quality of faith and the sincerity of that Monotheism. The creed was not merely slogans to be raised or theoretical concepts to be studied in secret; rather, it was the comprehensive practical methodology through which the hearts of the early believers were tested, acting as the crucible that forged resolve, solidified concepts, and distinguished the sincere from the hypocrite.

From this perspective, this research emerges to record contemplative pauses at the three most important pillars that formed the unique civilizational model presented by the noble Companions (Ghuloush, 2000; Shalaby, 2002): the creed of Monotheism, which was the intellectual and spiritual starting point; the virtue of Steadfastness, which embodied that Monotheism in practical reality; and the characteristic of Patience, which was the effective weapon that maintained the continuity of the mission. These three pillars were not separate, but rather connected links in a single chain, as Dr. Ali Al-Sallabi mentions in his book "The Prophet's Biography: Presentation of Facts and Analysis of Events," emphasizing that "Monotheism produced conviction, conviction produced steadfastness, and steadfastness required patience, forming an integrated cycle for building the believing person" (Al-Sallabi, 2005, p. 145).

Recalling this stage and its lessons may help the Ummah today to overcome its ordeal and look forward to its future, as understanding the methodology of change followed by the Prophet ﷺ—which begins with instilling the correct creed to build a steadfast and patient character—is the optimal path for any effective reform project. This was noted by the Islamic thinker Malek Bennabi in his book "Conditions of the Renaissance" when he observed that "any true renaissance must begin with the human being first, by changing the concepts and beliefs within their soul" (Bennabi, 1986, p. 73).

Research Importance

The importance of the research stems from its addressing the fundamental pillars upon which the Muslim personality and the early Islamic society were built, and its importance can be summarized as follows:

- **Defining the Unique Civilizational Model:** The research records contemplative pauses at three pillars that formed the unique civilizational model presented by the noble Companions, namely: the creed of Monotheism, the virtue of Steadfastness, and the characteristic of Patience.
- **Studying the Methodology of Change:** The research focuses on how understanding the methodology of change followed by the Prophet ﷺ—which begins with instilling the correct creed to build the steadfast and patient personality—is the optimal path for any effective reform project.
- **Clarifying the Complementary Relationship:** The research clarifies that these three pillars (Monotheism, Steadfastness, Patience) were not separate, but rather connected links in a single chain, where Monotheism produced conviction, conviction produced steadfastness, and steadfastness required patience.
- **Presenting a Practical Methodology:** The study does not view the creed merely as theoretical concepts, but as the comprehensive practical methodology through which the hearts of the believers were tested, acting as the crucible that forged resolve.
- **A Contemporary Lesson:** The research represents an attempt to recall the lessons and sermons of that era, which helps the Ummah today to overcome its ordeal, because any reform project requires reviving the golden equation: pure monotheism ← steadfastness on principles ← patience in implementation.

Research Problems

Since this research records contemplative pauses at the three pillars, the problems it addresses revolve around how to embody these pillars in practical reality to face challenges, which can be deduced through the chapters and themes it covered:

- **The Problem of Monotheism as a Practical Starting Point:** How did Monotheism transform from a mere theoretical creed studied in secret into an intellectual and spiritual starting point and a fundamental base from which the Da'wah was launched and the believing personality was built?. And what was the content of the Da'wah that the Prophet ﷺ focused on in the secret phase to consolidate this Monotheism?.
- **The Problem of Embodying Steadfastness:** How were the noble Companions able to embody the creed of Monotheism in a practical reality through the virtue of Steadfastness?. And how did they face the various methods of Quraysh aimed at shaking this Monotheism and testing this steadfastness (such as psychological warfare, temptations, and physical persecution)?.
- **The Problem of Patience as an Effective Weapon:** How was the characteristic of Patience the effective weapon that maintained the continuity of the Islamic march?. What are the types of patience that manifested in the Da'wah (patience in obedience, patience in affliction, patience in abstaining from sin), and how was the divine upbringing on this patience linked to Monotheism?.
- **The Problem of the Complementary Relationship:** What is the complementary formula that linked these three pillars, so that Monotheism generates steadfastness, steadfastness requires patience, and patience nourishes Monotheism?.

Chapter One: Monotheism - The Starting Point and Objective

1. The Content of the Da'wah in the Secret Phase: The Islamic Da'wah began secretly in Mecca for three years (Ghuloush, 2000), and its content focused on solidifying the creed and building the believing individual away from the eyes of Quraysh. The core of the Da'wah was the monotheism of Allah Almighty and the abandonment of idol worship, as the Prophet ﷺ called his early companions to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day. Details of this phase were mentioned in the books of the Prophet's Biography, including the Sirah of Ibn Hisham, and Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra (Ibn Sa'd, 1990).

The secret Da'wah included instilling noble morals such as honesty, trustworthiness, and justice, while fighting the injustice and corruption prevalent in the pre-Islamic society. The Prophet ﷺ also focused on liberating humans from superstitions and blind loyalty to leaders, clarifying that worship is exclusively for Allah alone. Ibn Hisham pointed out in the Sirah that this faith-based construction was the foundation of the secret phase. Prayer was the first practical act of worship to be taught, and the early Muslims would pray secretly in the valleys of Mecca.

Narrations by Al-Tabari and others indicate that the Prophet ﷺ met with his companions in the house of Al-Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam, which became a center for faith-based upbringing and building the first generation of Muslims. Among the most prominent who embraced Islam in this phase were: Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, Ali bin Abi Talib, Zayd bin Haritha, Uthman bin Affan, Al-Zubayr bin Al-Awwam, and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas. Sirah books mention that the selection of individuals possessing steadfastness and honesty was intentional to build a strong base from which the Da'wah would launch later (Al-'Amili, 2006).

The secret Da'wah focused on building the creed of pure monotheism in souls, away from the impurities of polytheism. The Meccan verses revealed at that time emphasized the monotheism of Lordship and Divinity and the transcendence of Allah Almighty, as seen in the chapters of An-Nas, Al-Muzzammil, and Al-Ikhlās. Sheikh Safiur Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri explains in "The Sealed Nectar" that "the first thing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called to was the monotheism of worship to Allah Almighty, the rejection of idols, and the belief in resurrection and recompense" (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2003, p. 78).

2. Steadfastness on the Methodology: The secret phase of the Islamic Da'wah in Mecca witnessed tremendous steadfastness from the Prophet ﷺ and his companions despite social and religious pressures. This steadfastness formed the foundation for the success of the Da'wah later on, as mentioned in the Sirah of Ibn Hisham and the History of Al-Tabari.

- **A - Steadfastness of the Prophet ﷺ on Monotheism:** The secret Da'wah focused on the monotheism of Allah and the rejection of polytheism, and the Prophet ﷺ remained steadfast on this principle despite the resistance of Quraysh. Ibn Hisham confirmed this aspect in his Sirah (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 198).

- **B - Patience against Harm and Affliction:** Early Muslims faced harm and torture but remained steadfast in their faith, and Ibn Sa'd mentioned numerous situations confirming this in *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, Vol. 3, p. 179).
- **C - Faith-based Upbringing in the House of Al-Arqam:** The house of Al-Arqam was a center for building faith-based steadfastness, where the Prophet ﷺ taught his companions faith and patience. Al-Tabari narrated details of this in *History of the Nations and Kings* (Al-Tabari, 2001).
- **D - Selection of Strong Elements:** The Prophet ﷺ chose spiritually strong figures to bear the burdens of the phase, such as Abu Bakr, Khadija, Ali, Uthman, and Al-Zubayr. Ibn Hisham pointed out the strength of these figures' personalities and their steadfastness (Ibn Hisham, n.d.).
- **E - Continuation of the Da'wah Despite Circumstances:** The Da'wah continued without interruption, and narrations from *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* state that prayers were performed secretly in the valleys to preserve the secrecy of the Da'wah.
- **F - Trust in Allah's Victory:** The Prophet ﷺ instilled in his companions the certainty of divine victory, and Al-Tabari affirmed that this certainty was an important factor in the steadfastness of the believers.

Chapter Two: Steadfastness - The Practical Embodiment of Monotheism

Detailing the Methods of Quraysh in Confronting the Da'wah (Testing Steadfastness and Patience) Quraysh's confrontation with the Islamic Da'wah was not a random reaction, but a multifaceted strategy that escalated in intensity as the steadfastness and patience of the Muslims increased. These methods can be detailed as follows:

1. Psychological Warfare and Mockery (Attempting to Shake Monotheism):

- **Mockery and Skepticism:** Initially, Quraysh met the public Da'wah with mockery, accusing the Prophet ﷺ of madness sometimes, and of sorcery at other times, describing him as a poet or a soothsayer. The goal was to shake the believers' confidence in their message and to present an "irrational" image of Monotheism to other tribes.
- **Pressure on Followers:** Quraysh focused on mocking the followers of the Prophet, especially the weak among them, to ridicule their faith and affect their morale.

2. Negotiations and Temptations (Attempting to Compromise Steadfastness):

- **Material and Political Temptation:** As the research mentioned in summary, Quraysh offered the Prophet ﷺ explicit proposals to compromise on the principle. They offered him wealth to be their richest, kingship (authority) to be their master, and women.
- **Failure of Compromise:** The Prophet's categorical rejection of these offers was a practical lesson in steadfastness, demonstrating that the creed of Monotheism is not a commodity to be bought or sold. His response came clearly as recorded by (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 350): "By Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand on condition that I abandon this matter, I would not abandon it until Allah makes it prevail or I perish therein".

3. Physical Persecution and Torture (Testing Patience):

- **Targeting the Vulnerable:** When psychological warfare and temptations failed, Quraysh resorted to direct violence. This violence was systematically directed against those who had no tribal protection (such as slaves and clients).
- **Blatant Examples:** Bilal bin Rabah is considered the most prominent example, as his master tortured him in the scorching heat of Mecca and placed a boulder on his chest. Bilal's resilience with the word "Ahad, Ahad" (One, One) was a practical embodiment of transforming theoretical "Monotheism" into practical "Steadfastness" under extreme pain (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 320).
- **Martyrdom of the Family of Yasir:** The family of Yasir was also severely tortured, and Sumayyah became the first female martyr in Islam. The Prophet ﷺ would pass by them to encourage their steadfastness and remind them of the ultimate goal, saying: "Patience, O family of Yasir, for your promised destination is Paradise" (Al-Naysaburi, n.d.).

4. Economic and Social Siege (Testing Collective Patience):

- **Boycott in the Valley of Abu Talib:** This siege represents the peak of confrontation before the Hijrah. The siege was not directed at individuals, but against an entire group (Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib) to protect the Prophet ﷺ.
- **Patience through Hunger:** The boycott lasted for three years, in which "patience against affliction" was tested in its harshest forms. This test was necessary to raise a generation capable of building a state, rather than merely maintaining individual steadfastness in faith.

Second Additional Section: The Role of the House of Al-Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam (Center for Building Monotheism and Nurturing Steadfastness) In the midst of the secret phase of the Da'wah, the Islamic movement was not without organization. "Dar Al-Arqam" formed the first organizational and educational nucleus, and its role as a center for building "Steadfastness" can be analyzed through the following points:

1. Strategic Headquarters (Secrecy and Security):

- **Location:** The house was chosen carefully; it was located on Mount Safa, relatively far from Quraysh's gatherings and decision-making centers (Dar Al-Nadwa), which provided a cover of secrecy for the early Muslims' meetings.
- **Symbolism:** The fact that Al-Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam was from Banu Makhzum (the rival tribe to Banu Hashim) meant that the gathering of the Prophet (a Hashemite) in the house of a "Makhzumi" was itself a practical application of breaking tribal partisanship in favor of the creed of Monotheism.

2. Educational Function (From Theoretical Monotheism to Practical Steadfastness):

- **Quranic School:** The house was the place where the Companions received the early Meccan verses directly from the Prophet ﷺ (Al-Sirjani, 2010). This reception was not passive, but was a "comprehensive practical methodology," where the Prophet explained the objectives of Monotheism to them, purified their souls, and raised them upon new morals.

- **Building the "Crucible":** This house is the "crucible that forged resolve." In it, the early Muslims learned how to be patient and how to stand firm. They studied the stories of previous prophets and their patience with their people (as found in Meccan Surahs) as a curriculum for nurturing steadfastness.

3. Organizational Center (Building the Nucleus of the Group):

- **Melting Pot of Classes:** In Dar Al-Arqam, the master sat beside the slave, the rich beside the poor, and the youth beside the elder. This early social melting, based solely on "Monotheism," is what created a cohesive group capable of collective patience.
- **Graduating Leaders:** The "graduates" of Dar Al-Arqam were the ones who bore the burden of the public Da'wah later. The conversion to Islam of a strong figure like Umar bin Al-Khattab was a declaration that the phase of building internal "Steadfastness" had succeeded, and the time had come to move to a broader confrontation.
- **The Family of Yasir (Ammar, Sumayyah, and Abu Yasir):** They were severely tortured for the sake of Allah. Sumayyah died from a spear thrust, becoming the first female martyr in Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ would pass by them and say: "Patience, O family of Yasir, for your promised destination is Paradise" (Narrated by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak).

Examples of Steadfastness:

1. Examples of Steadfastness Derived from Monotheism in the Secret Phase:

- **Bilal bin Rabah, may Allah be pleased with him:** His master, Umayyah bin Khalaf, would bring him out during the midday heat, lay him on the scorching sand of Mecca, place a massive rock on his chest, and command him to abandon Islam. Bilal's response, at the peak of pain, was: "Ahad, Ahad" (One, One). His monotheism of Allah was the source of his steadfastness. Ibn Ishaq narrated this story in detail in his "Sirah" (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 320).

2. Examples of Steadfastness in the Public Phase:

- **Resisting Temptation:** When Quraysh offered the Prophet ﷺ wealth, kingship, and women to stop his Da'wah, his response, as mentioned by Ibn Hisham, was: "By Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand on condition that I abandon this matter, I would not abandon it until Allah makes it prevail or I perish therein" (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 350).
- **The Prophet's ﷺ Steadfastness in Ta'if:** When he went to Ta'if to call them to Islam, they rejected him, harmed him, and stoned him until his honorable feet bled. In this moment of human weakness, his heart remained steadfast through Monotheism, and he raised his hands to pray with a supplication recorded in Sirah books: "O Allah, to You I complain of my weakness, lack of resources, and my humiliation before people... You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my Lord..." (Ibn Hisham, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 520).

Chapter Three: Patience - The Weapon Prepared by Monotheism

1. Types of Patience Manifested in the Da'wah:

- **Patience in Obedience:** Such as the Muslims' patience in performing prayers secretly at the beginning, and then publicly after being commanded to do so.
- **Patience in Affliction:** This was clearly evident in the Muslims' patience with torture and the social and economic boycott (the boycott of Banu Hashim in the valley of Abu Talib). The Quran recorded this meaning in the Almighty's saying: "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When is the help of Allah?' Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near." (Al-Baqarah 214).
- **Patience in Abstaining from Sin:** The Muslims' patience in refraining from taking revenge on those who harmed them, and their commitment to the divine command: "Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better" (Al-Mu'minin 96).

2. Divine Upbringing on Patience: Many verses were revealed in Mecca educating believers on patience and linking it to Monotheism, as Sayyid Qutb mentions in "Fi Zilal al-Quran" that "the Meccan Quran was raising the first generation on patience and steadfastness as a foundation for the Islamic movement" (Qutb, 2002, Vol. 6, p. 387). Among these are verses from the chapters of Al-Muzzammil and Luqman.

Chapter Four: The Complementary Relationship between Monotheism, Steadfastness, and Patience

This relationship can be represented in a hierarchical form: Base: Monotheism, Pillar: Steadfastness, Protective Cover: Patience.

SUMMARY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

- **Monotheism Generates Steadfastness:** The stronger the faith in Allah, the stronger the adherence to His principles.
- **Steadfastness Requires Patience:** Steadfastness cannot exist without continuous patience with the consequences of this steadfastness.
- **Patience Nourishes Monotheism:** The more a servant is patient, the more their faith increases and their monotheism strengthens, confirming the Almighty's saying: "And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs." (As-Sajdah 24). This is a verse that commentators, such as Al-Tabari in "Jami' al-Bayan," see as linking the status of leadership and guidance with patience and certainty (Al-Tabari, 2001, Vol. 20, p. 145; Ibn Kathir, 1999; Al-Sa'di, 2000).

CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNED

- **Methodology in Change:** The study shows that the success of the Da'wah was the result of a clear methodology: starting with building the creed (Monotheism), which produces the strong, steadfast personality (Steadfastness) capable of bearing the responsibility of change (Patience).

- **The Power of Creed over the Power of Circumstances:** The experience proved that a person who believes in their cause can challenge the harshest circumstances if their creed is firmly rooted.
- **Practical Role Model:** The Prophet ﷺ did not merely teach the Companions patience and steadfastness theoretically; he was the ultimate exemplar in applying them, acting as the best helper for them, as stated in his advice to Abdullah bin Abbas: "And know that victory comes with patience" (Ibn Hanbal, 2001).
- **Contemporary Lesson:** Any reformist or advocacy project today needs to revive this golden equation: pure monotheism ← steadfastness on principles ← patience in implementation. Without the foundation of monotheism and faith, the structure collapses at the first test.

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