



ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY: REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY DA'WAH ISSUES

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Abstract

Islam is a da'wah religion, a religion that has a high religious side. Islamic da'wah has enjoyed various eras, from classic to contemporary, producing various da'wah methods and strategies. Rumours of contemporary da'wah have been heard, giving rise to various Muslim intellectual figures at home and abroad. This study aims to understand the concept of contemporary da'wah and the decadence of spirituality of contemporary Muslims. This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach; the case is contemporary preaching and Muslim spirituality. The results of this study show that the da'wah in the contemporary era makes preachers more flexible in conveying da'wah messages, and the methods used get a variety of media. It is easier for Mad'u to access and receive da'wah messages whenever and wherever Mad'u is. However, this causes Muslim spirituality to decline.

Keywords: Muslim Spirituality, Contemporary Da'wah

INTRODUCTION

By human nature and the guidance provided by the Quran and Hadith, da'wah is an invitation or appeal to do good. As long as humanity was sent by Messenger, da'wah, or calling to the way of Allah, it began to spread. As the bearer of good news to his followers, the Messenger always calls for goodness. However,

da'wah is a different phenomenon each time it occurs. The difficulty of da'wah was different for Noah, Jesus, Moses, and Muhammad and is still different today.

As the heir of the Prophet, Prophet Muhammad developed Islam for 23 years. The Khalifaurasyidin and other preachers then continued. Aqidah was more closely related to the phenomenon of da'wah during the time of the Prophet and the Rashidin Caliphs. In contrast, in the next era, in addition to upholding the creed, upholding the law, and expanding Islamic society as a whole, da'is always follow da'wah wherever they are or under any circumstances because da'wah is an obligation that must be fulfilled by all Muslims, men, and women. This research aims to get the truth about contemporary da'wah.

Da'wah had started following the Prophet's revelation. After that, da'wah followed the seasons. In addition, the preacher's da'wah is based on the local culture, so da'wah operates in this way. Da'wah has existed for 15 centuries but will continue until the end. Furthermore, da'wah should be carried out regardless of circumstances or obstacles. Da'wah is closely related to contemporary art, information technology, and international diplomacy in this globalized world. Da'wah has evolved in every era, so it is necessary to reflect on contemporary da'wah issues.

Islam is a religion known for its high spirituality. The implementation of the sunnah and the Sirah of Prophet Muhammad is the main reference for his companions and followers. Deep practice makes a person forget the pleasures of the world. Focusing on divine worship will produce high Muslims (*musyahadah al-*

batiniyyah) to the level of angels who receive revelation. (M. Amin, 2008) Previous research only discussed the issue of classical era da'wah, which was only carried out in classical times. In the research, readers will also be explained how the classical era can be applied in the contemporary era.

The spirituality of Islam in the classical era is no doubt, especially with the figure of the Prophet. After him, there were companions and continued by their successors, which is clear in terms of spirituality more men look compared to the contemporary era. The golden age of Islam (*the Islamic golden age*) is where the classical era, and even then, there is still no technological development like today. Islamic spirituality should still be able to be emphasized to Muslim Uamat in the current era. However, the many distractions, in terms of morale, work demands, and so on, push spirituality aside. (Muttaqin, 2012)

Da'wah carried out in the classical era, was still about religious law, Sufism, and the application of the sunnah of the Prophet. From this maddah da'wah, Muslims become more focused on the practice of Islamic teachings. Thus, Muslims can understand Islam's teachings and its application. This da'wah process tends to provide da'wah material to Muslims directly; the maddah delivered by the preacher is immediately heard at that time. (Usman, 2013)

Scholars often use the contemporary era to determine the meaning of an era being carried out. Not to be left behind, the spirituality of Muslims has also changed; this is also influenced by the da'wah delivered by the preacher with his

da'wah material. Therefore, this research will focus on the shift in the spirituality of Muslims due to contemporary preaching.

METHODS

This research takes a historical perspective on the phenomenon of da'wah and uses a qualitative descriptive research approach. The cases are contemporary da'wah methods and Muslim spirituality, as well as theories related to the research problem, which are used to generate data collection. The comprehensiveness of this article has been enhanced by previous research written by da'wah scholars and included as mobile data sources. This analysis aims to show what happens when contemporary preachers preach. According to the discussion, the scientific postulates of da'wah can also be used during the process. These arguments will be confirmed by conducting a literature review of the phenomenon of contemporary preachers' da'wah on the spirituality of Muslims.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary Da'wah

Sunnatullah is the Islamic term for social change in a society. Social shifts today are very complicated. Rapid changes not only bring good things but also bring bad things. Changes are not only in the political and economic arenas but also in law, culture, and morality. (S. M. Amin, n.d.)

The process of da'wah in society is also affected when social change occurs. Against the phenomenon of societal diversity, people's perspectives, ways of

thinking, and ways of acting change drastically. In this scenario, da'wah must maintain a balance between societal shifts to direct events in a positive direction. (Ghozali, 2017)

Preachers or da'i must be *concerned about* reading about the development of society through the various forms of social change mentioned above. According to the findings of the previous reading, a da'i must be able to offer creative solutions that adhere to Islamic teachings, norms, and ethics that are dynamic, transformative, and conditional. Thus, the da'i can inspire society to overcome all forms of backwardness and embrace faith and scientific progress.

Although da'wah is increasingly widespread and the da'wah organization movement is growing rapidly in society and Islamic universities, it does not necessarily mean that da'wah issues disappear from the advanced da'wah movement. Difficulties often accompany missionary movements. In general, da'wah issues can be broken down into internal and external categories. (M. Amin, 2008)

There are two categories of internal problems. *First*, the data I need help understanding religious concepts as the core of da'wah and the methods and quality of the da'i. *Second*, evangelizing institutions that need more professional management.

The da'wah movement is hindered by external issues, which stem from national and international political structures that experience system interdependence, the rise of *ghazw al-fikr*, Western imperialism, the da'wah apostasy movement, and the development of science and technology. These factors

should be the focus of Islamic preaching because they have destroyed ethics, morals, and morality and displaced almost all human spiritual potential. (Sari, 2011)

At least two conditions must be met to overcome the problematic difficulties caused by da'wah discussed earlier. *First*, humanization da'wah must contribute to the environment and human values, creating a healthy, dynamic, and prosperous socio-cultural structure. *Second is liberation*, a series of actions to free humans from wrong thinking, ignorance, backwardness, poverty, and negative values imposed by mixed social and cultural structures. (Sari, 2011)

If you look a little towards the East, Turkey, there is a famous Islamic figure, M. Fetullah Gulen. Gulen provides his perspective on contemporary da'wah through dialog, education, and economic da'wah. (Gülen, 2010) The three methods offered by Gülen are one of the alternative preachers to ground da'wah in the contemporary era because, indeed, mad'u in this era requires an approach with dialogue, education, and economy.

Gülen sees dialog preaching as a tool for cosmopolitan societies to learn from each other and achieve peace. (Carroll, 2007) Without mutual understanding and tolerance, there can be no dialog. He sees dialog as a way to accept others and get along well. Through cooperation and mutual understanding, Gülen encourages civilizational dialogue. He emphasizes that a mutual trust and respect climate is necessary for dialogue. Gülen seeks to resolve the conflict between Islam

and the West in this way. He longs to build social harmony and cohesiveness across the global community. (Aras & Caha, 2000)

The education offered by Gulen is because, initially, religion did not have a sufficient portion of the world of education. So, Gülen believed that the religious side should be included in education. This was very quickly responded to by local education because, indeed, the next generation needs religious education.

One of the successes of such proselytizing is recognized as the economic success of the Gülen Movement. In secular Turkish society, Gulen wanted to harmonize religion and economy. He advised Muslims to participate in the global economic cycle. Gulen emphasized that Islam is practiced in the private sphere, while Muslims are required to follow public rules and be willing to engage in economic activities in the public sphere. Gülen supports both market economics and neoliberal economics. Islam, in particular, is considered to be most compatible with these economic models. Gulen is a proponent of the free market. He offers ideas that show how Islam and neoliberal market economics fit together. (Patton, 2008)

Da'wah can be broken down into two main categories. First, it is the realization of the error function, and second, it is a means to show mercy li al-'alamin. As an actualization of the function of the message, the essence of da'wah is an effort to continue the "prophetic tradition" of Muhammad's apostolate as the Messenger of Islam to all people.

The essence of da'wah, which is a manifestation of *rahmatan li al-'alamin*, is an effort to make Islam a source of concepts for people to use in their daily lives because Islam prioritizes universal theocentric humanist values. For everyone, both are an interconnected and integrated whole. (M. Amin, 2008)

With the above formulation, it is hoped that da'wah can again play a role and function in a life full of new nuances to realize divine wisdom as human wisdom. As one way to participate in responding to social changes that occur amid community life, the da'wah movement must also be able to provide solutions to problems that arise in society.

In addition, da'i carry out the same functions and roles as da'wah, namely restoring balance, directing liberation, offering solutions to da'wah problems, placing da'wah patterns in various perspectives, and changing da'wah patterns. Through the transformation of Islamic moral and ethical values towards a civilized life, society towards more decent conditions, spiritual and physical, and the integrity of clothing, food, and shelter.

Da'wah preachers are rightly proud of their noble character as they carry out their mission to direct people towards God. Before a da'wah conveys his da'wah material, the mad'u's view is focused on what is seen and heard from the nature and characteristics of the da'i's personality, which is the urgency of noble morals for da'is. Likewise, the personality of the da'i is very influential on the interaction between the mad'u and the da'i, even determining the success or failure of the da'wah material delivered. A da'ida ' i is a community member when he is involved

in the practice of da'wah. Dai cannot act at will because his actions or attitudes in his personal life are noticed and used as a point of comparison for what is acceptable and unacceptable. The mad'u will even imitate those attitudes and movements.

In addition to reducing or eliminating his appeal, what the individual sees or hears from his personal life can also increase his authority and add to his appeal as a da'wah bearer. Mad'u knows the sermons delivered by preachers. As for the apostle and his da'wah, they will not separate the da'i from the da'wah. Like spirit and body, the two are in a relationship. If a preacher is inconsistent, the recipients of the da'wah will regard him as a controversial figure whose actions contradict his words, thus reducing his value and success.

Prophets are not always accompanied by scripture, and God often sends prophets to force people to worship God alone, not other gods. However, God never sends down scripture without first sending a prophet to translate its contents into everyday life.

This shows that scripture alone cannot influence behavior if it is not accompanied by a human figure who is a role model and example. Exemplification shifts the focus of da'wah from theory to practice, from words to actions, and from theory to practice. Da'wah, which includes concrete evidence that what is preached can be practiced, is exemplary. As a result, the success of da'wah is greatly influenced by uswah, or exemplary.

Therefore, exemplary da'wah is the first and main da'wah that can guide individuals in following the footsteps of the glory of life and high civilization so that humans achieve dignity (Akram al-Akram). Second, da'wah can arouse and help individuals behave in an orderly manner free from pollution that injures their conscience. Third, da'wah encourages noble behavior, deep contemplation, and wealth of knowledge, producing high cultural products (although not a little). Fourth, da'wah can bridge the opposite poles of different orientations. Fifth, da'wah, a solution that can balance between various non-dawah information offers.

The success of da'i is supported by several criteria, according to some scholars, including comprehensive specialized knowledge and extensive religious and general knowledge. Second, living a morally upright life can be a role model for others. Third, having a solid and unbroken personality; fourth, understanding and realizing the state of society well. Fifth, being good at preaching.

Therefore, a preacher must fulfill at least two main requirements. To be a role model for the community, there is a scientific requirement first and a personality requirement second. What is described in the Qur'an surah al-Ahzab verse 21, which means: "*Verily there is in the Messenger of Allah a good example for you all.*" As a result, the Prophet began to emulate his heirs, including da'is and all human beings, so that his example could be passed on to them.

The decadence of Islamic Spirituality in the Contemporary Era

We have been using the term "New Age" to describe the growing phenomenon of people seeking spirituality in life since the mid-1980s. However, is the New Age a new way of life or just a temporary surge in spiritual needs? The latter option is correct. In other words, the New Age movement signifies a spiritual awakening in contemporary society. (Melton et al., 1991; Vardey, 1996)

The emptiness felt when people achieve material success indicates that emptiness does not lie there, but rather in a more profound (otherworldly) part. Of course, despite the emergence of other strange reactions, people today have created what Naisbitt calls a sophisticated, high-contact quirk. According to him, the more subtle innovations are brought into life, the more people seek a high-contact balance: religion, craftsmanship, elective medicine, etc. According to him, the more complex innovations are brought into present life, the more people seek a balance of high contact: religion, expertise, elective medicine, etc. In this particular circumstance, the opposite appears as a multiplication of otherworldly networks in large urban communities. (Anis, 2013)

In the current era, several spiritual management businesses are flourishing like mushrooms. Hence, it is unsurprising to observe a stock trader asking for prayer beads or an executive grooming a beard. Group recitations are becoming increasingly popular in luxury buildings in major cities. Celebrities, socialites, and even officials often attend dhikr and tasawwuf gatherings in elite locales.

When it comes to their presence in an urban society increasingly influenced by postmodern culture, the presence of these spiritual classes is both promising and concerning. It is a concern because postmodern culture is often described as being full of paradoxes and self-contradictions, which can result in a special paradox of spirituality. In a society full of turmoil and the pursuit of unlimited desires, the discussion of spirituality has the potential, on the one hand, to be a kind of gatekeeper for "purity of spirit." However, if its seduction cannot be stopped, there is a concern that spirituality may become entangled in the mechanisms of the "desire machine" of postmodern society. Since it is possible that the growth of spiritual communities is merely the commercialization and capitalization of spirituality, it is possible. (Piliang, 2000)

In addition, the growing movement of spiritual fundamentalism is another factor that has contributed to the tendency to return to the spiritual world. The emergence of this phenomenon is interesting to observe because the pattern is not only different from formal religions but also contradictory, if not stated. The faith usually takes a personal journey and is distinct from other religions. Extreme spiritual cults and sects such as David Koresh of the Clan Davidian, who committed suicide after being surrounded by American troops; Reverend Jim Jones' invitation to his congregation to commit mass suicide in the forest, and Shoko Asahara's Aum Shinrikyo sect emerged as a result of those who shot and killed people on the subway, and so on. (Anis, 2013)

The anthropomorphic and secularized nature of modern thought, as well as the absence of principles in its various branches, especially science, both contradict the tenets of traditional Islamic thought, just as the modern conception of man that gave birth to the patterns of thought derived contradicts the traditional Islamic conception of man. This contradiction is so obvious that no further explanation is needed here. The theory of evolution, on the other hand, is one of the features of modern thought that needs to be discussed in more detail because its patterns are widespread in the modern world and have a deadly impact on the thinking and religious life of Muslims who are affected by it.

There is one more important feature of contemporary thought that is related to all that has been mentioned above. Lack of sensitivity to the sacred is this trait. Modern man is almost certainly the kind of man who has lost sensitivity, and his thinking shows a lack of respect for the sacred. Given that secularism and modern humanism are inseparable, this cannot be the case. A mentality that lacks the fragrance of the sacred and substitutes human sources and inspiration for the divine order will never be accepted by the Islamic tradition. (Nasr, 1987)

If the primacy of the sacred in the Islamic perspective and its absence in modern thought were not taken into account, the conflict between Islam and modern thought would not be serious. Even placing secular ideas in a legitimate position prevents Islam from dialoguing with them. He can only see secularism as the negation and denial of the sacred, which can ultimately be said to be distinct from the profane or secular, which only appears.

Sayyed Hossein Nasr emphasized the general condition of Muslims, especially about concerning the guiding principles of Islamic civilization, in relation to the importance of Islamic spirituality. (Anwar, 2016) He claims that several aspects of life, especially morals, politics, economics, and science, are experiencing tremendous Westernization at a time when the Westernization of Muslims is at its peak. As a result, distinguishing Islamic figures can be a challenge. People's love for Islam was strong in the past when Western culture had not been fully embraced. Now that the love has become less and less deep, it is hard to tell who cares and is enthusiastic about Islam inside and out and who does not. (Dodi, 2018)

The underlying cause of it all is their muddled decision-making about life. In the face of an increasingly difficult life, they were confused and lost control. Their minds and souls are actively searching but still determining what they are looking for. According to Sayyed Hossein Nasr, spirituality is often overlooked as a psychological phenomenon. This development cannot be separated from the impact of humans following modernization. As a result, people started looking for a safe place and were quickly satisfied. The next step is to join spiritual and fundamentalist groups.

Da'wah in this contemporary era, which is identical to the narrative of life, romance, and rarely about Islamic law, has resulted in mad'u who are less steeped in religion. Thus, the spirituality experienced by Muslims tends to decline. Many

religious lecture materials lack an in-depth study of Islam. Therefore, the spirituality of Muslims is lost and only focuses on the pleasures of the world.

Especially with the development of this technology, many preachers have sprung up who show their existence through social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and so on. (Santoso, n.d.) The clarity of this preacher is still ambiguous and does not necessarily have a clear scientific lineage. Although we believe that the development of this technology is a new forum for carrying out the teachings of Islam through social media, it is also necessary to ensure that all people, from those who do not understand religion to those who have mastered it, can use this social media.

Therefore, Muslims are expected to be smarter in selecting and sorting out religious lectures that only use religion as a manifestation of wealth, with those that use media as a new method of da'wah. Grounding Islam is indeed evolving in accordance with the times. However, these changes must be balanced with spirituality that remains strong in Muslims. Because the destruction of Islam depends on the education of the next generation of Muslims.

Contemporary preachers focus more on the number of followers and listeners on social media. The material presented tends to be light and focuses more on young people, teenagers, and the productive age of using social media. If the material presented contains heavy elements such as tasawwuf, fiqh, and others, it is more for recitations held in pavilions boarding schools and conducted face-to-face. Because the understanding received by social media and face-to-face

audiences will be different, this is what makes the spirituality of Muslims in the contemporary era decrease compared to the Classical Season. Because of the classical era, da'wah is still using the *mauidhah al-hasanah* method without social media.

With the rapid development of media, the spirituality of Muslims should also increase. However, with a lot of da'wah material that rarely carries the above themes, it produces mad'u who need more spirituality. However, many opinions say that contemporary-era da'wah is in line with the development of social media and is an effective da'wah method. However, this effectiveness needs to pay more attention to the main purpose of da'wah, which is to understand those who do not understand and provide deepening for those who already understand.

CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic da'wah goes hand in hand with technological advances. The contemporary era bears witness to the fact that da'wah can coexist with world developments. Dai has more and more platforms to channel his da'wah. The message of da'wah, which has so many motives, and mad'u, which is so universal, makes the preachers more eager to spread the teachings of Islam.

Conditions involving social media, namely the contemporary era, make mad'u able to access da'wah material easily. However, with the ease of accessing this da'wah material, mad'u can only absorb part of the da'wah message delivered by the preacher. So, the result is that the spirituality of the mad'u decreases. This

results in the religious process of mad'u only being limited to application, not to the deepening of their role as Muslims.

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