

The Objectives of Da‘wah in the Qur’anic Perspective: an Analytical Study of Q.S. Al-Kahf : 29

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the objectives of da‘wah from the perspective of the Qur’an, with a particular focus on Qur’an Surah Al-Kahf :29. The verse provides a significant foundation for understanding the orientation of da‘wah, especially concerning the respect for freedom of belief, the clarity of conveying truth, and the moral responsibility of individuals in choosing their life path. This study employs a qualitative approach based on library research, utilizing both classical and contemporary exegetical works to explore the meaning of the verse comprehensively. The findings indicate that the objectives of da‘wah as reflected in Qur’an Surah Al-Kahf : 29, extend beyond persuasive and argumentative communication of religious teachings; the verse also emphasizes the principle of rejecting coercion in matters of faith. Furthermore, it highlights that the purpose of da‘wah is to guide individuals toward divine awareness, intellectual illumination, and ethical accountability for their religious choices. These findings contribute theoretically to the development of a more humanistic and adaptive concept of da‘wah that aligns with Qur’anic values within contemporary socio-religious contexts.

Keywords: Da‘wah, Qur’anic Perspective, Islamic Exegesis, Humanistic Da‘wah.

A. Introduction

Da'wah is one of the fundamental obligations in Islamic teachings, aimed at guiding people toward the path of truth, enhancing their piety toward Allah, and fostering a society grounded in faith and noble character. To achieve these objectives, a clear understanding of the direction and message of da'wah is essential so that da'wah activities do not merely become routine acts of religious communication, but truly generate positive transformation for individuals and communities. Therefore, interpreting Qur'anic verses related to da'wah becomes highly significant as both a philosophical and practical foundation for the implementation of da'wah.¹

Da'wah constitutes one of the central pillars of Islamic teachings, playing a vital role in guiding humankind toward a life that earns the pleasure of Allah. As a call to righteousness and truth, da'wah is not merely an act of communicating religious teachings, but a comprehensive effort to shape human character and conduct in accordance with divine values. The Qur'an, as the ultimate source of guidance for Muslims, provides clear and holistic directions regarding the essence, principles, and objectives of da'wah, ensuring that da'wah activities rest upon a strong normative foundation.

The objectives of da'wah in the Qur'an extend far beyond the verbal transmission of religious messages. Da'wah encompasses spiritual, moral, and social transformation, aiming to lead people from darkness to light (*min al-zulumāt ilā al-nūr*), strengthen faith, uphold moral integrity, and establish a just and virtuous society. Through these objectives, the Qur'an positions da'wah as a crucial instrument for cultivating a harmonious and peaceful social order grounded in divine guidance.²

In the contemporary context, the implementation of da'wah faces increasingly complex challenges. The rapid development of information technology, shifts in lifestyle, and the diversity of thought patterns within society demand da'wah approaches that are more relevant, humane, and adaptive. Many da'wah efforts today tend to emphasize the transmission of religious knowledge while giving insufficient attention to character formation, gentle persuasion, and respect for individual freedom values explicitly emphasized in the Qur'an. This reality highlights

¹ Aziz, Mohammad Ali. *Ilmu Dakwah: Edisi Revisi*. Jakarta: Kencana, 2017. Hal. 75

² Anshari, Endang Saifuddin. *Wawasan Dakwah dan Perubahan Sosial*. Bandung: Gema Insani Press, (2004). Hal.

the need for a deeper understanding of the objectives of da‘wah so that its practice does not merely become a routine activity but genuinely contributes to meaningful transformation at both individual and societal levels.

Therefore, examining the objectives of da‘wah from the Qur’anic perspective is essential. Through an in-depth study of Qur’anic verses, one may obtain a comprehensive understanding of the divine orientation of da‘wah from strengthening monotheism and cultivating moral character to developing a virtuous society and affirming human freedom in matters of belief. Such an understanding serves as a conceptual foundation for formulating da‘wah strategies that are both effective and responsive to contemporary needs while remaining firmly rooted in Qur’anic values.³

B. Definition of Da‘wah

Etymologically, the term *da‘wah* originates from the Arabic root *da‘a-yad‘u-da‘watan*, signifying “to call, to invite, to summon, or to petition.” This root is closely related to *du‘ā*, which denotes supplication or invocation. The semantic range of this root demonstrates that the concept of *da‘wah* is inherently expansive, encompassing various forms of communicative acts aimed at directing individuals toward a particular orientation whether through invitation, clarification, persuasive reasoning, or aspirational guidance. Within the Qur’an, the term *da‘wah* and its derivatives appear more than two hundred times, underscoring its foundational role in the Islamic epistemological and theological framework. Qur’anic usage reflects multiple dimensions: the call toward moral excellence, earnest supplication to the Divine, and the articulation of religious truth each of which is framed within the principle of non-coercion.⁴

Terminologically, *da‘wah* is conceptualized as a deliberate and purposeful endeavor undertaken by an individual Muslim or a collective to guide humanity toward the practice of Islamic teachings. This encompasses adherence to divine commandments and the avoidance of prohibitions as a pathway to attaining holistic well-being in both worldly and eschatological realms. Scholarly discourse on *da‘wah* generally synthesizes several core components: the *dā‘ī* (the agent or caller), the *mad‘ū* (the audience or recipients), the doctrinal content conveyed, the

³ Syukir, Asmuni. *Dasar-dasar Strategi Dakwah Islam*. Surabaya: Al-Ikhlash, (2020). Hal. 60

⁴ Dalinur. M. Nur, “Dakwah Teori, Definisi Dan Macamnya,” *Wardah* 12, no. 2 (2011). Hal. 70

communicative media employed, the methods or strategies utilized, and the transformative impact generated at individual and societal levels. In this sense, *da'wah* is not merely a religious exhortation but a structured communicative process intertwined with pedagogical, ethical, and socio-cultural dimensions.⁵

A variety of scholarly perspectives on *da'wah* converge on the general understanding that *da'wah* is a process of guiding individuals toward the path of truth through wise and thoughtful means. *Da'wah* is not merely an effort to encourage people to believe in and practice Islamic creed, law, and ethics; it also represents a transformative endeavor aimed at improving the human condition in accordance with divine principles. Consequently, *da'wah* encompasses actions intended to promote positive spiritual, moral, and social change whether through counsel, exemplary conduct, or the transmission of knowledge.

C. Elements of Da'wah

The Qur'an outlines several essential elements that must be present in any *da'wah* activity. These elements ensure that the process of delivering Islamic teachings is systematic, ethical, and aligned with divine guidance. The fundamental components include the *dā'ī* (the caller), the *mad'ū* (the audience), the *maddah* (the message), the *wasīlah* (the medium), and the *ṭarīqah* (the method). Each of these elements plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness and integrity of *da'wah*.

1. The *Dā'ī* (The Caller or Preacher)

The *dā'ī*, or the agent of *da'wah*, is an individual who carries out *da'wah* activities through speech, writing, or exemplary conduct, whether performed individually, collectively, organizationally, or through institutional frameworks. The term *dā'ī* is often equated with *muballigh* (someone who conveys Islamic teachings), although the latter carries a narrower connotation limited primarily to verbal communication. In contrast, a *dā'ī* encompasses broader modes of calling others to Islam, including written, verbal, and behavioral forms of guidance. A *dā'ī* is expected to possess wisdom in conveying Islamic teachings, particularly those related to monotheism, the natural order, and the broader dimensions of life. Moreover,

⁵ Syah Ahmad Qudus Dalimunthe, "Terminologi Dakwah Dalam Perspektif Al- Qur'an," Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai 7, no. 1 (2023). Hal. 41

a *dā'ī* should be capable of assisting others in addressing their life difficulties, consistently guiding them toward goodness, truth, and sound judgment.⁶

2. *The Mad'ū* (The Audience or Recipients of Da'wah)

The recipients of da'wah encompass all human beings, whether individuals or groups, regardless of whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. For those who have not yet embraced Islam, da'wah focuses on strengthening the message of monotheism and encouraging belief in Allah so that they may be guided toward the truth. For Muslims, da'wah aims to enhance the quality of their faith, practice of Islam, and spiritual excellence (*īmān*, *islām*, and *iḥsān*). This illustrates that Islamic teachings are universal in nature and embody the principle of *raḥmatan li-l-'ālamīn* (a mercy to all creation). Thus, human beings as the target of da'wah—referred to as partners in da'wah—are invited either to recognize and accept the message of Islam (for non-Muslims) or to continuously improve the quality of their monotheism and religious practice (for Muslims).

3. *The Maddah* (The Content or Message of Da'wah)

The *maddah*, or the content of da'wah, refers to the Islamic teachings that must be conveyed by the *dā'ī* to the *mad'ū*. This content encompasses the entirety of Islamic doctrine derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith. The universal nature of *maddah* allows da'wah to address a wide spectrum of human life, guiding individuals toward becoming *insān kāmil* (a complete and virtuous person) and fostering the implementation of *amr bi-l-ma'rūf* and *nahy 'an al-munkar*. Broadly speaking, the content of da'wah is categorized into three fundamental components: *'aqīdah* (creed), *sharī'ah* (Islamic law and practice), and *akhlāq* (ethics and moral conduct).⁷

4. *The Wasīlah* (The Medium or Means of Da'wah)

Wasilah refers to the means or instruments used to convey the content of Islamic da'wah to its intended recipients. Traditionally, da'wah media include verbal communication such as

⁶ Abdul Pirol, "Teologi Dakwah (Telaah Eksegisis Dalam Materi Dakwah)," *Al-Tajdid* VI (2011): 47

⁷ Natsir, Mohammad. *Fiqhud Dakwah*. Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 2022. Hal. 48

sermons, *public* lectures, and khutbah written forms such as books, pamphlets, and articles, as well as visual media such as posters and infographics. In the modern era, however, the concept of *wasilah* has expanded significantly to include digital platforms such as social media, videos, and various online applications. Contemporary tools such as social networking sites, blogs, video-sharing platforms, and other digital channels have become highly effective media for da'wah. Through these digital avenues, the message of Islam can reach a far broader audience across regions, generations, and social boundaries, unrestricted by space and time. Therefore, da'wah media play a crucial role in ensuring that da'wah remains relevant and responsive to the needs of modern society. Da'wah must not remain confined to classical methods alone, but must adapt to technological advancements and the evolving communication landscape.⁸

5. *The Ṭarīqah* (The Method or Approach)

Ṭarīqah refers to the wise and deliberate approaches employed to achieve and fulfill a particular objective, plan, system, or framework of human thought. An appropriate method is indispensable for a *dā'ī* in delivering the messages of Islamic teachings. Even a message grounded in ultimate truth may fail to be received effectively by the *mad'ū* if it is not conveyed through a suitable and thoughtful method. Thus, *ṭarīqah* functions as the procedural mechanism that facilitates the internalization of the principles of *amr bi-l-ma'rūf* and *nahy 'an al-munkar*. It becomes evident that the most effective methods of da'wah are those rooted in Qur'anic principles, which serve as the fundamental sources of guidance, reference, and inspiration for Islamic da'wah.

D. The Qur'anic Perspective on the Objectives of Da'wah

In general, the objective of da'wah according to the Qur'an is to guide human beings toward a life that is pleasing to Allah a life grounded in faith, obedience, and righteousness. Da'wah functions as a means of directing individuals from darkness to the light of divine guidance by restoring them to their true nature of sound belief. The Qur'an portrays da'wah as an endeavor

⁸ Ibnu Kasir and Syahrol Awali, "Peran Dakwah Digital Dalam Menyebarkan Pesan Islam Di Era Modern," *Jurnal An-Nasyr: Jurnal Dakwah Dalam Mata Tinta* 11, no. 1 (2024).hal. 59

to save humanity from spiritual deviation, moral disorder, and ethical corruption, leading them instead toward tranquility, safety, and peace of life based on Allah's teachings. Thus, the overarching purpose of *da'wah* extends beyond merely conveying religious doctrines; it seeks to lead human beings toward happiness in both this world and the hereafter while protecting them from all forms of deviation that may harm their personal and social lives.⁹

In addition to its general objectives, the Qur'an also provides more specific directions for the implementation of *da'wah*, including the following:

1. The implementation of Islamic teachings in a holistic manner carried out correctly and grounded in genuine faith is one of the specific objectives of *da'wah*. Such implementation aims to cultivate a community that upholds religious life by practicing Islam comprehensively (*kāffah*). This objective can be derived from Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208, which indicates that the purpose of *da'wah* is to form believers who wholly submit themselves to Allah in every dimension of life, through both their inner convictions and outward actions, whether minor or major. Based on Sayyid Qutb's interpretation, it can be understood that the Qur'an seeks the emergence of a fully committed and sincere believing community, rather than a partially faithful or hypocritical one.
2. The realization of an ideal Muslim society within a just, prosperous, peaceful, and harmonious national and civilizational order under the abundance of Allah's mercy and forgiveness. This objective can be understood through Qur'an Surah Saba' verse 15, which describes the flourishing and prosperous life of the people of Saba', who lived in well-being and enjoyed divine protection and forgiveness. Sayyid Qutb explains that the blessings granted to the people of Saba' namely a good land and divine pardon were manifestations of Allah's grace in response to their gratitude and His generosity in forgiving their shortcomings. This depiction represents the Qur'anic ideal of an Islamic society, one that becomes a model of moral, social, and economic excellence amid the challenges of the contemporary era.

⁹ *Iftitah* Jafar, "Tujuan Dakwah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Mempertajam Fokus Dan Orientasi Dakwah Ilahi," *MIQOT* 34, no. 2 (2010): 285

3. The cultivation of proper religious conduct within society. The Qur'an contains numerous verses that portray the ideal vision of *da'wah*, namely guiding human beings to follow the straight path prescribed by Allah so that they may attain salvation in both this world and the hereafter. This objective also signifies an invitation to transform human conditions toward a better state physically and spiritually moving them *min al-zulumāt ilā al-nūr* (from darkness into light), as articulated in Qur'an Surah Yusuf verse 108.¹⁰

E. The Interpretation of Qur'an Surah Al-Kahf : 29 in Relation to the Objectives of Da'wah

Artinya: Katakanlah (Nabi Muhammad), “Kebenaran itu datanganya dari Tuhanmu. Maka, siapa yang menghendaki (beriman), hendaklah dia beriman dan siapa yang menghendaki (kufur), biarlah dia kufur.” Sesungguhnya Kami telah menyediakan neraka bagi orang-orang zalim yang gejolaknya mengepung mereka. Jika mereka meminta pertolongan (dengan meminta minum), mereka akan diberi air seperti (cairan) besi yang mendidih yang menghanguskan wajah. (Itulah) seburuk-buruk minuman dan tempat istirahat yang paling jelek. (Q.S. Al-Kahf : 29)

This verse emphasizes that in the context of *da'wah*, the responsibility of the *dā'ī* is solely to convey Allah's message clearly and truthfully, not to compel others to believe. Every human being is granted the freedom to choose whether to accept or reject the teachings of Islam. Thus, *da'wah* must be carried out without coercion, pressure, or any form of intimidation. This principle demonstrates that genuine faith must arise from personal awareness and conviction, not from compulsion. The preacher remains obliged to communicate the truth and offer warnings, yet the final decision ultimately rests with each individual recipient of the message.¹¹

F. The Internal and External Challenges of Conducting Da'wah

In every form of activity, obstacles are inevitable, and the same applies to the practice of *da'wah*. A *dā'ī* must be aware from the outset that *da'wah* will not always proceed smoothly; therefore, strategic preparedness is required to confront the various challenges that may arise

¹⁰ Hamidah, “Perspektif Al- Qur'an Tentang Dakwah Pendekatan Tematik dan Analisis Semantik,” *Intizar* 19, no. 1 (2013): 20

¹¹ Mohammad Bashri Asyari, “Fiqh Dakwah Dalam Kisah-Kisah Surat Al-Kahfi,” *El- Umdah* 2, no. 2 (2019): 188

during its implementation. When facing difficulties, a *dā'ī* must avoid attitudes or actions that could damage the image of *da'wah* or create misunderstandings within the community. Attitude may be understood as an individual's evaluative tendency toward an object, event, or person, manifested through feelings and responses. Meanwhile, a challenge refers to any situation or condition that demands determination and enhanced capability to overcome it. Thus, in the context of *da'wah*, the attitude and readiness of the *dā'ī* in responding to challenges play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the message and the extent to which *da'wah* is accepted by society.¹²

The Qur'an provides a clear depiction that *da'wah* is inseparable from trials and obstacles. This is reflected in Qur'an Surah Āl 'Imrān (3):186, which affirms that human beings will be tested through their wealth, their own selves, and through hurtful speech from various groups. However, Allah explains that patience and piety are the primary keys to confronting such challenges. This verse serves as a reminder that life's journey including the struggle of *da'wah* does not always proceed in a stable, linear manner; rather, it is marked by periods of hardship and ease, decline and progress, ebb and flow. Therefore, the verse functions as a source of spiritual reinforcement, teaching that no matter how strong the opposition to truth may appear, such adversaries remain subject to the natural course of life that ultimately ends in death, just like all other human beings.

Challenges to *da'wah* may arise from two directions. Internal challenges originate from the preacher (*dā'ī*) or the internal condition of the Muslim community, such as psychological weakness, competition among preachers, inadequate communication skills, and various personal or mental barriers. External challenges, on the other hand, stem from factors outside the preacher, including resistance from the target audience, cultural differences, multicultural environments, and rejection from non-Muslim groups. Furthermore, contemporary challenges to *da'wah* include:

1. Personal Aspect (Nafsiyyah)

This barrier originates from the internal condition of the *da'ī*. In other words, before encountering external challenges, a preacher may be hindered by weaknesses within himself.

¹² Shihab, M. Quraish. *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*. Bandung: Mizan, 2013.

Desire for Popularity, da'i may find his preaching activities hindered when his primary focus shifts from conveying the truth to seeking fame or public recognition. When popularity becomes the main objective, the sincerity of the da'wah diminishes, and the message risks turning into a means of self-promotion.¹³ Hastiness, Some da'is expect rapid results from their preaching. They hope for immediate change analogous to "harvesting fruit before its season." Such impatience may lead a preacher to become easily discouraged when the outcomes of da'wah do not meet expectations or when the audience (mad'u) shows no observable change in a short period of time. Lack of Self-Confidence (Inferiority and Self-Doubt) Low self-confidence can significantly hinder a da'i in delivering the message of da'wah. Feelings of inferiority, fear of making mistakes, or perceiving oneself as unworthy of speaking in front of others may prevent the message from being conveyed effectively. This factor often emerges from comparing oneself to other preachers or from a lack of experience.

2. External Aspects

External obstacles originate from factors outside the da'i, whether from the social environment or from worldly temptations. The first, Wealth, material temptations can weaken one's commitment to da'wah. When an individual prioritizes financial gain or personal comfort, da'wah activities may be neglected or even abandoned altogether. Women, in this context, the term does not refer to women as objects, but rather to the temptation arising from inappropriate or unhealthy relationships that may divert a da'i's focus from his mission. If a preacher fails to maintain proper boundaries and ethical conduct, his reputation and the integrity of the da'wah may be compromised. Power, the ambition to obtain certain positions or authority can shift the orientation of da'wah from serving religious interests to pursuing personal or group agendas. When power becomes the primary objective, the sincerity and integrity of the da'wah are diminished.

To address these various obstacles, a preacher must employ appropriate approaches that align with the conditions of the community. Social, cultural, anthropological, and religious approaches can be utilized to understand the community's characteristics and to determine the most effective

¹³ Shihab, M. Quraish. *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, (2002). Hal. 90

da‘wah strategies. A wise attitude in confronting challenges will make the da‘wah process lighter and easier to carry out, especially when supported by strong determination and confidence in Allah’s help. The history of the Prophet’s mission demonstrates that no matter how great the obstacles, da‘wah can succeed when it is undertaken with patience, proper strategy, and steadfastness.¹⁴

G. Conclusion

Da‘wah is a process of inviting people to the path of Allah through a wise, comprehensive approach grounded in the values of the Qur’an. The essential components of da‘wah such as the preacher (da‘i), the audience (mad‘u), the message, the media, and the method must operate harmoniously to ensure that the message is conveyed effectively to society. The objectives of da‘wah in the Qur’an are not limited to guiding people toward faith, but also include shaping individuals and communities to become morally upright, intellectually sound, and socially responsible. The interpretation of Q.S. Al-Kahf: 29 demonstrates that da‘wah encompasses the call to monotheism (tawhīd), gentleness in nurturing the community, the formation of individuals with *ulū al-albāb* (people of sound reason), and respect for human freedom in choosing their faith. Therefore, da‘wah must be carried out with sincerity, patience, and relevant strategies in order to address contemporary challenges and bring about positive transformation in society.

¹⁴ Siti Fahimah, “Ayat-Ayat Dakwah: Kandungannya Dalam Bingkai Penafsiran Al- Qur’an,” *Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 4, no. 1 (2020): 69

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