

**A REVIEW OF THE BOOK TITLED
*ESSENTIAL MANUAL FOR DA'WAH PRACTITIONERS***

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Dedication: Late Hon. Justice Abdulkadir Orire (RTD) CON (1934-2021), The Pioneer Grand Kadi, Kwara State Shari'ah Court of Appeal and First Sarkin Mallami of Ilorin Emirate
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The decision to undertake a review of this volume is informed by two principal considerations: first, the distinguished personality in whose honour the book is produced; and second, the thematic focus of the work. Honourable Justice Abdulkadir Orire remains an enduring and formidable figure in the annals of Islam in Africa and beyond. Indeed, no tribute appears excessive in honouring the pioneer Grand Kadi of the Kwara State Shariah Court of Appeal. The central theme of the book, *da'wah*, is equally significant. The Muslim *ummah* derives its distinctiveness from its commitment to *da'wah*, encapsulated in the Qur'anic injunction to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong (Q. 3:110). It is therefore unsurprising that the Prophet accorded the scholars of his community a status comparable to that of the prophets of the Children of Israel. Consequently, *da'wah* constitutes a collective obligation upon all qualified members of the *ummah*. Neglecting this duty in the face of pervasive social vices invites consequences reminiscent of the condemnation pronounced upon the Children of Israel (Q. 5:78–79).

Within this context, the initiative of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, deserves commendation for pioneering a Certificate Programme in Da'wah and Imāmship Practice (CDIP), thereby setting a precedent for other faith-based institutions in Nigeria. Such a programme is poised to produce intellectually and spiritually conscious *du'āt* who are attuned to the needs of contemporary society and capable of communicating the message of Islam with wisdom (*hikmah*) and effective exhortation (*maw'izah hasanah*). The relevance of this initiative cannot be overstated in an era marked by the pervasive misuse of social media platforms, where vice, immorality, and social misconduct are often amplified, while virtuous content receives comparatively limited attention. Despite the proliferation of preachers across electronic and print media, their impact appears diminished, even as religious programming continues to receive philanthropic support. Meanwhile, societal ills, such as corruption, adultery, kidnapping, and ritual killings, continue to escalate, sometimes implicating individuals expected to exemplify moral leadership. Rather than offering constructive moral guidance, some religious figures engage in public disparagement of their peers, thereby undermining the ethical foundations of the community. It is therefore evident that certain preachers have either abdicated their primary responsibilities or lack the requisite qualifications for effective *da'wah*. Against this backdrop, the present work is both timely and pertinent, as it not only diagnoses the contemporary challenges confronting *da'wah* but also proposes practical remedies.



The book, titled *Essential Manual for Da'wah Practitioners*, serves as a compendium of course materials for the CDIP programme of Al-Hikmah University. Published by the Centre for Islamic Heritage and edited by Professor Lateef Folorunsho Oladimeji, Dr. Nafiu Ahmad Arikewuyo, and Sikiru Atanda Adenigba, the manual is dedicated to Honourable Justice Abdulkadir Orire (Rtd.), CON. Comprising six chapters within 116 pages, the work is preceded by introductory materials, including a portrait and biographical profile of the honouree, a foreword by Professor Muslih Tayo Yahya, Executive Secretary of the Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN), a preface by Professor L. F. Oladimeji, and acknowledgements by Professor Shu'ayb Ologele Assayuti, Director of the Centre for Islamic Heritage.

Structurally, the manual may be divided into two broad thematic sections. The first, encompassing Chapters One, Four, and Six, addresses various dimensions of *da'wah*, including its etymology, definitions, characteristics, objectives, and methodologies. In particular, Badmus Qowiyy provides a comprehensive analysis of the qualifications required of a *dā'iyah*, spanning academic, moral, ethical, and practical domains, as well as the categorisation of audiences and the appropriate strategies for engaging them. Complementing this, Sanusi Haruna Lafiagi examines contemporary challenges confronting *da'wah*, such as inadequate Islamic knowledge, the proliferation of unqualified preachers, extremism, and methodological deficiencies, and proposes solutions including the establishment of training and certification centres, capacity-building initiatives, and the development of Muslim media platforms. Nafiu Ahmad Arikewuyo further enriches the discussion by identifying essential resources for effective *da'wah* while cautioning against literature that may distort the audience's understanding.

The second section of the manual, comprising Chapters Two, Three, and Five, focuses on leadership, mosque administration, and the culture of disagreement, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence. Leadership, a recurrent source of discord within the Muslim community, is examined within both historical and contemporary contexts. In Nigeria, particularly in Yorubaland, disputes over imāmship have led to prolonged conflicts, sometimes resulting in the closure of mosques. Various selection methods, ranging from hereditary succession and hierarchical arrangements to zoning and rotational systems, are critically highlighted, alongside emerging practices such as selection through interviews or the controversial requirement of leading the *janāzah* prayer of a deceased imām. These diverse approaches underscore the necessity for structured education and training in imāmship, as well as a clearer articulation of the multifaceted roles of imāms as religious, social, and community leaders.

The chapter on the culture of disagreement, co-authored by Professor L. F. Oladimeji and Nafiu Arikewuyo, addresses theological and ideological divergences among Muslim scholars, particularly as manifested in contemporary media. Issues such as the use of prayer beads, variations in Tarāwīḥ practices, the recitation of *qunūt*, the obligation of *niqāb*, and other contentious matters are examined within a framework that advocates tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence.

Similarly, the chapter on the administration of mosques and Muslim organisations, authored by Habbeblai Jumah, outlines the qualifications and responsibilities of an imām, the organisational structure of mosque administration, and the roles of various office holders. The discussion also extends to the involvement of Muslim elites in mosque governance, as well as the advantages and challenges associated with the proliferation of Muslim organisations. In Chapter Three, Abdulkadir Ismail offers a broader perspective on leadership and human management, identifying essential



qualities such as knowledge, consultation, piety, integrity, humility, and the capacity for delegation, while cautioning against traits indicative of arrogance.

In concluding this review, it is pertinent to note certain areas for improvement. The adoption of a uniform referencing style, whether APA, MLA, Turabian, or Chicago, would enhance the scholarly consistency of the work. Additionally, the inclusion of practical exercises at the end of each chapter would facilitate the assessment of learning outcomes. Expanding the scope of individual chapters to incorporate additional relevant topics would further strengthen the manual.

Notwithstanding these observations, Al-Hikmah University, through its Centre for Islamic Heritage, deserves commendation for its commitment to advancing Islamic scholarship through specialised certificate programmes. This initiative underscores the breadth and depth of Islamic Studies as an academic discipline, one that necessitates focused specialisation due to its vast scope. It also highlights the imperative of continuous human capital development through the training and retraining of religious practitioners in response to evolving societal challenges. Furthermore, such programmes broaden access to university education and contribute to the sustained growth of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Ultimately, the university has fulfilled its institutional responsibility by providing this valuable opportunity for both aspiring and practising *du'āt* and imāms. It is incumbent upon these individuals to avail themselves of this platform to enhance their knowledge and acquire contemporary skills necessary for effective religious engagement. The manual thus stands as a significant resource, offering guidance on fulfilling *da'wah* responsibilities in accordance with the Qur'anic directive to *da'wah* with wisdom and exemplary exhortation.

