

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IN THE PROMOTION OF DA'WAH IN THE CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM SOCIETIES

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Abstract

This paper explores the increasingly significant role of social media as a convenient and powerful platform for Da'wah in contemporary Muslim societies. As digital communication becomes deeply integrated into everyday life, social media offers unprecedented opportunities to disseminate authentic Islamic teachings, clarify misconceptions, and strengthen the correct understanding of **Īmān (faith)** among diverse audiences. The study examines how accessible online tools enable Muslims—both scholars and laypersons—to share knowledge, promote ethical conduct, and counter narratives that misrepresent Islam. It also highlights the responsibilities that come with digital Da'wah, including accuracy, sincerity, and adherence to Islamic principles. By analyzing the potentials and challenges of social media engagement, the paper demonstrates that when used responsibly, social media can serve as a vital means of protecting Islam, nurturing faith, and fostering a more informed global Muslim community.

Keywords: Da'wah; Social media; Islam; Faith.

Introduction

In the digital era, social media has transformed the landscape of religious communication, offering Muslims new and accessible avenues for expressing, teaching, and defending their faith. As global societies become increasingly interconnected through digital technologies, platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) have become powerful tools through which *Da'wah*; the invitation to understand and embrace Islam—can be conveyed with unprecedented ease and reach. This transformation marks a significant departure from traditional modes of *Da'wah*, which relied primarily on face-to-face interactions, mosque-based sermons, and formal religious institutions. Today, the accessibility and immediacy of social media enable Muslims from diverse backgrounds to share authentic Islamic knowledge, engage in spiritual dialogue, and address religious inquiries in real time.

The growing influence of social media also emerges at a critical moment when Islam is frequently misunderstood or misrepresented in global discourse. Misinformation, stereotypes, ideological extremism, and selective media portrayals often distort the true meaning of Islam and the essence of *Īmān* (faith). Within this context, social media serves not only as a platform for outreach but also as a strategic medium for protecting Islam by clarifying fundamental beliefs and correcting misconceptions. Through digital *Da'wah*, Muslims are able to present a balanced and authentic understanding of *Īmān*, which encompasses belief in Allah, His angels, His revelations, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree. These core components of Islamic faith can be articulated vividly through multimedia content, interactive discussions, and educational initiatives that resonate with contemporary audiences, especially youth.



Furthermore, the participatory nature of social media allows for inclusive and dialogical forms of *Da'wah*, where questions can be addressed promptly and diverse perspectives can be engaged constructively. Scholars, preachers, and educated laypersons alike are able to disseminate verified knowledge, provide spiritual guidance, and foster online communities that support the growth of faith. By doing so, social media becomes a significant means of nurturing individual spirituality, reinforcing collective Muslim identity, and sustaining a global sense of Islamic solidarity. At the same time, this digital ease of communication requires ethical responsibility, scholarly accuracy, and adherence to Islamic principles to ensure that the representation of *Īmān* remains truthful and uncorrupted.

Consequently, examining *Da'wah* through the lens of social media is essential for understanding how contemporary Muslims navigate modern communication tools to preserve Islamic teachings and strengthen faith. This study therefore explores the potential of social media as an accessible yet powerful platform for *Da'wah*, emphasizing its role in protecting Islam from distortion while conveying an accurate, comprehensive, and spiritually uplifting picture of *Īmān* in today's rapidly evolving world.

***Da'wah*: A Conceptual Framework**

Da'wah, an Arabic term, means inviting or calling people to embrace Islam. *Da'wah* means “calling” “issuing a summon” or “making an invitation”. Lexically, its connotations cover the ideas of calling, appealing to, invoking, praying, spreading propaganda, engaging in missionary activities, legal proceedings, and making claims. With the advent of social media, *Da'wah* has taken on a modern form, utilizing online platforms to spread the message of Islam.

This term is frequently used among Muslims to refer to the act of Muslims educating others about their religion or explaining to them some essential Islamic concepts. The responsibility of inviting people to the way of Allah is understood from some verses of the Qur'an, such as: “Invite them to the way of your Lord (Islam) with wisdom and fair preaching and argue with them in a better way, truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the best aware of those who are guided”. (Q16:125).

In the verse above, Allah commands the Prophet (and by extension, all believers) to assume responsibility while strictly adhering to the ethics of the duty and keeping in mind that the task is not to drag people into Islam or come to the harsh conclusion that some are on the right path while others have gone astray. The main tools of the activity are wisdom, just preaching, and most importantly, arguing with the greatest degree of kindness. This view is consistent with Islamic sources, as emphasized in the Qur'an. For instance, in Surah An-Nahl, 16:125, Allah instructs the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): “Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best” (Qur'an, 16:125). The verse highlights the need for *hikmah* when engaging in *da'wah*, as understanding the mindset and context of the person being invited can help avoid confrontation and foster a more welcoming environment for faith discussion.

Every Muslim must spread Islam, and it is in no way appropriate for someone who is doing this to think of themselves as a saint above others. The duty should not be pursued by someone who lacks the necessary approach and wisdom, among others. Bringing up Sayyid Qutb's (1996) views on the characteristics and obligations of a *Da'i*, and *Sha'rawiy* (1991) notes that *da'wah* requires wisdom because according to Sayyid Qutb, the characteristics and obligations of a *Dā'ī* (caller to Islam) revolve around sincerity, moral uprightness, patience, wisdom, and total commitment to the message of Islam. He explains that a true *Dā'ī* must embody the teachings he conveys, demonstrating exemplary conduct, deep understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and steadfastness in the face of opposition. Qutb further emphasizes that *da'wah* is not merely verbal preaching but a comprehensive mission aimed at reforming individuals and



society according to divine guidance. Thus, the *Dā'ī* must possess intellectual clarity, spiritual discipline, courage, and compassion while maintaining reliance upon Allah in all circumstances.

Similarly, Muhammad Metwally Al Sha'rawi stresses that wisdom (*hikmah*) is indispensable in *da'wah* because people differ in character, levels of understanding, and social background. According to him, effective *da'wah* requires the preacher to use gentle speech, persuasive reasoning, patience, and appropriate methods suited to the audience. Sha'rawi explains that harshness and rigidity often repel people from religion, whereas kindness, wisdom, and good counsel attract hearts toward Islam. He therefore considers the *Dā'ī* responsible for conveying Islam in a manner that nurtures understanding, peace, and moral transformation within society.

You only invite to the way of Allah such that have deviated from the path and anybody who deviates from the path of Allah will be found being friendly and accustomed to wrongdoing. You need to deal with him gently to be able to bring him out of what he is accustomed to and place him on the straight path. Harshness in *da'wah* of this type will further drive him away. This is the more reason why Musa (2014) concluded that even though the *da'wah* is dictated largely by divinely established principles, the social norms and peculiarities of a community must be put into consideration. The adoption of wisdom and persuasion are tools of necessity in *da'wah*. The efficacy of this subtle method of invitation to Islam was acknowledged by Hitti (2002) when he recounted that adherence to these principles is the brain behind the success of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He affirmed that men were persuaded, not forced, to change their worship from that of things other than God to that of the one and only true God. Undoubtedly, this is a method for efficient preaching. The goal of *da'wah* is unequivocally declared to need, among other things, good presentation, refined style, reliance on wisdom and fair preaching, awakening the truth, consideration for the audience and the environment, logical argument, adoption of current technologies, and persuasiveness.

The quote highlights a key aspect of *da'wah*, the Islamic act of inviting others to the faith, emphasizing that effective *da'wah* requires not just knowledge but also a measured, wise approach. The reasoning provided by Sha'rawi (1991) and Sayyid Qutb (1996) aligns with the Islamic principle of *hikmah* (wisdom), which is essential in conveying messages to those who may have strayed from the path. The core argument suggests that someone who is engaged in wrongdoing—being "friendly and accustomed to wrongdoing"—is unlikely to respond well to harsh criticism or aggressive tactics, as this can lead to defensiveness and further distance from faith. Instead, gentleness and wisdom in interaction are more likely to foster openness and encourage a positive response.

Sayyid Qutb's (1996) perspective also relates to the concepts of *ma'ruf* (what is good) and *munkar* (what is wrong), which are central to Islamic teachings on social ethics. According to Qutb (1996), the goal of a *da'i* (one who performs *da'wah*) is to inspire a shift in values through a compassionate approach that aligns with the inner principles of Islam. *Da'wah*, therefore, becomes a transformative practice, aiming to reorient people toward *ma'ruf* through an approach that mirrors prophetic compassion.

The importance of patience and gentleness is also reflected in the Hadith, where the Prophet Muhammad is described as someone who emphasized mercy and avoided harshness. He famously said, "Kindness is not found in anything except that it adds to its beauty, and it is not removed from anything except that it makes it defective" (Muslim). This highlights that effective *da'wah* lies in inviting people with an open heart, as harshness can create barriers that hinder the purpose of guiding others toward Islam.



In academic discussions of Islamic ethics, scholars note that effective *da'wah* is often contingent upon *akhlaq* (character), or the moral virtues of the caller. According to *Mawdudi (1999)*, *da'wah* is as much a reflection of the *da'i*'s moral virtues as it is a theological call, with gentleness and wisdom helping in fulfilling the call with integrity. These virtues of patience and gentleness act as a form of *hikmah* themselves, embodying the essence of compassion within Islam. Thus, the quote underscores that *da'wah* is not only about the content being conveyed but also about how it is done. The success of *da'wah* lies in the ability of the *da'i* to show empathy, convey messages with gentleness, and model the virtues that Islam seeks to instill, which resonates more deeply with those being invited to the faith.

The *Da'wah* and the *Da'i* (Propagator of the message of Islam)

The term "*da'i*" refers to any individual or group engaged in *da'wah*; specifically, it refers to someone or organization working to influence a situation to bring it into compliance with *shari'ah*. *Da'wah*'s message may serve as a motivation (*Bashiiran*) or a caution (*Nadhiiran*). *Da'wah* is to spread knowledge and information containing Islamic teachings and principles to people. All Muslims must spread Islam. Regardless of their socio-economic situation, every Muslim, man, and woman, should carry out this Islamic obligation. Importantly, every subject of *da'wah* *da'i* is expected to have certain fundamental characteristics.

According to *Muhammad Sayyid Al-Wakil (2002: 24)*, every *da'i* should have the following character:

1. *Da'i* should put into practice the admonition given in his or her sermons or teachings. It can be demonstrated through a person's day-to-day activities by the Qu'ran.
2. *Da'i* should fully and thoroughly practice Islamic teachings. *Da'i* should keep the Religion as sole source of power in daily life.
3. *Da'i* ought to be considerate of others' needs, capacities, and times. As a result, before entering the *da'wah* field, *da'i* will adequately arrange all necessary materials.
4. *Da'i* should speak in a manner that is both conscientious and appealing to the audience. They ought to be effective public speakers;
5. *Da'i* needs to get rid of undesirable attitudes and personalities. They aren't supposed to be envious of anyone. His *da'wah* objective would be tainted by this and they would suffer the consequence.
6. *Da'i* must be fully aware of every characteristic and state of the individuals to whom they intend to impact the *da'wah* program. They ought to adhere to their personality, customs, etc.

These six qualities reveal the character of a *Da'i*. In this light, a human is "a functional being" who has obligations to his God, himself, his society, and the universe. The dignity and privilege accorded to humans as the chosen creature and as the creature with the learning capacity underpins their position and responsibilities. Therefore, in the process of Islamic preaching, humans have a strategic role and obligation. On the other hand, we should keep in mind that the main component of *da'wah* activity is sincerity. Every *da'wah* procedure should only be carried out for Allah's sake.

Prophet Muhammad served as an example of this virtue by submitting every act and aspect of his life to Allah. He serves as a model for *da'i*. A Muslim's *da'wah* activity will result in the process of transmission, actualization, and transformation of *da'wah* Islam when he or she can follow the style of the Prophet's *da'wah*. Prophet Muhammad consistently maintains a focus on the truth and persuasive arguments, moral eloquence, an Islamic mindset, and, political acumen when carrying out his *da'wah*. These four guiding principles serve as models for all *da'i* while addressing current *da'wah* issues.



Role of Social Media Platforms in the Promotion of *Da‘wah* in Contemporary Muslim Societies

In recent decades, social media has emerged as one of the most transformative tools for religious communication and community-building. For Muslim societies in particular, platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become indispensable channels for disseminating Islamic teachings, promoting ethical behaviour, building networks of believers, and addressing contemporary socio-religious challenges. The growing significance of social media in *Da‘wah*—defined as the propagation, invitation, or call to Islamic faith and practice—reflects broader shifts in global communication, technological accessibility, and the evolving expectations of Muslim audiences.

One of the most prominent advantages of social media is its convenience and accessibility, which democratizes *Da‘wah* beyond traditional scholarly circles. Historically, religious authority and dissemination of Islamic knowledge were primarily mediated through scholars (*‘ulamā’*), mosques, and formal learning institutions. Social media has expanded this scope, enabling not only trained scholars but also educated lay Muslims to share religious content, reflections, and guidance with vast audiences. As Anderson (2013) notes, digital platforms have reshaped authority structures by empowering individuals who may lack formal credentials but possess communicative skill and digital literacy. This democratization increases the volume and diversity of *Da‘wah* voices, making Islamic knowledge more accessible to younger generations who increasingly rely on digital sources for spiritual guidance.

Moreover, social media facilitates real-time interactions, creating dynamic spaces where Muslims can seek clarification, ask questions, and engage in dialogue on matters of faith and contemporary life. Such immediacy enhances the relational aspects of *Da‘wah*, allowing religious educators to build rapport with their followers and address misconceptions swiftly. For example, live streamed sermons, interactive Q&A sessions, and Instagram or TikTok “micro-sermons” have become common avenues for engaging with global Muslim audiences. These forms of digital *Da‘wah* resonate particularly with youth, who often prefer concise, visually engaging content aligned with their media consumption habits.

Another significant contribution of social media to *Da‘wah* lies in its ability to counter misinformation and Islamophobia. Misrepresentations of Islam—whether in mainstream media or fringe online communities—necessitate proactive corrective efforts. Muslim scholars, activists, and organizations leverage social media to disseminate accurate Islamic teachings, contextualize scriptural sources, and present Islam's moral and ethical framework in ways that appeal to non-Muslims and Muslims alike. Abbas (2019) argues that online Islamic communication plays a critical role in shaping global perceptions of Islam and fostering intercultural understanding. Through carefully crafted messages, Muslims can reclaim narratives, challenge stereotypes, and promote peaceful coexistence, thereby turning social media into a tool for what some refer to as “digital apologetics.”

Despite these advantages, the use of social media for *Da‘wah* also carries inherent responsibilities and challenges. The open nature of digital platforms increases the risk of misinformation, oversimplification of complex theological issues, and the rise of unqualified individuals presenting themselves as authorities. Al-Olayan (2020) warns that without proper scholarly oversight, digital religious content can lead to fragmentation, misunderstandings, or the spread of extremist interpretations. Consequently, scholars emphasize the importance of authenticity, accuracy, ethical conduct, and sincerity (*Ikhhlās*) in all forms of digital *Da‘wah*. Muslim content creators are encouraged to verify sources, avoid sensationalism, uphold respectful dialogue, and adhere to Islamic ethical guidelines in both content and interpersonal interactions.



Additionally, social media's algorithm-driven environment incentivizes popularity over depth. Content that is controversial, emotional, or provocative may attract more engagement, potentially overshadowing more nuanced or scholarly messages. This dynamic raises concerns about the commodification of religious content and the potential dilution of *Da'wah's* spiritual objectives. Nonetheless, when used responsibly, social media remains a powerful tool for protecting Islam, strengthening faith, nurturing informed communities, and enhancing global Muslim solidarity.

Eickelman and Anderson (2003) argue that new communication technologies have contributed to the emergence of a Muslim public sphere in which religious ideas, identities, and interpretations are increasingly debated beyond traditional institutional settings. Their analysis demonstrates how media technologies expand opportunities for *Da'wah* by facilitating broader participation in religious discourse and enhancing access to Islamic knowledge.

Similarly, Larsson (2011) observes that Muslim engagement with communication technologies has historically evolved from debates surrounding print and broadcast media to contemporary discussions on internet and social media usage. According to him, digital platforms provide significant opportunities for Islamic education, identity formation, and global connectivity, while simultaneously presenting challenges related to religious authority, authenticity, and misinformation. These observations underscore the importance of responsible social media *Da'wah* in preserving an accurate understanding of *Īmān* and Islamic teachings.

The central argument of the scholars is that new media technologies have contributed to the development of what we can describe as an “emerging Muslim public sphere.” In the Muslim context, the public sphere refers to spaces where individuals discuss public concerns and religious matters through communication and debate. This sphere allows Muslims from different geographical, cultural, and ideological backgrounds to participate in discussions about religion, politics, social reform, and identity beyond the traditional confines of mosques, religious institutions, and state-controlled media. This transformation has allowed ordinary Muslims to become active participants in religious discourse rather than merely passive recipients of religious teachings.

Conclusion

This paper discusses the Islamic concept of *da'wah* and the *da'wah* approach of the Prophet. While discussing this, it was stressed that the best methodology or approach for Islamic *da'wah*, as employed by every learned and mature Muslim, has undoubtedly been offered by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The main tools of *da'wah* activity, as expounded in this paper, are wisdom, just preaching, and most importantly, arguing with the greatest degree of kindness. Also, some of the fundamental characteristics expected of a *da'i* were mentioned, which are to be strictly adhered to. Apparently, the rise of social media has significantly transformed the landscape of *Da'wah* in contemporary Muslim societies. Its convenience, global reach, and interactivity make it an effective medium for sharing Islamic teachings and fostering spiritual engagement. At the same time, the digital environment demands a heightened commitment to accuracy, ethics, and scholarly integrity to ensure that *Da'wah* fulfils its core objectives of guiding, educating, and uplifting the Muslim community. When approached responsibly, social media represents not only a technological innovation but also a vital religious resource capable of addressing modern challenges and enriching the global Islamic discourse. *Da'wah*, with unique opportunities to disseminate authentic teachings, correct misunderstandings, and nurture *Īmān* across diverse publics. Realizing that potential requires combining Islamic scholarship, ethical standards, digital literacy, and an awareness of platform dynamics. When these elements align, social media can be a powerful means of preserving and communicating the true spirit of the faith; when they do not, the same tools may amplify error and division.



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