



The Ethics of the Apostle Da'wah in the Qur'an and its Application in Social Media

Rubino

Program Studies Islamic of Communication and Broadcasting, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

[https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-0536-8210](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0536-8210)

*Corresponding author: rubino@uinsu.ac.id

Aulia Rahma Ritonga

Program Studies of Library, Faculty of Vocational, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1460-0571>

auliarahma@usu.ac.id

Efi Brata Madya

Program Studies Islamic of Communication and Broadcasting, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2695-2407>

efibratamadya@uinsu.ac.id

Hasnun Jauhari Ritonga

Program Studies Islamic of Communication and Broadcasting, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4176-0642>

hasnunjauhariritonga@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

The Qur'an is very concerned about the ethics of *Da'wah* -the act of converting people to Islam- in every verse. Although the Qur'an is very concerned about the ethics of da'wah, there is still rejection on this important aspect from some people. No matter how rational and actual the Qur'anic verse is delivered, if the preacher is deficient and still needs to understand the material and psychology of the people, it is inevitable that the message will be rejected. The purpose of this study is to explain how the ethics of da'wah can be understood from the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn. In addition, what is the relevance of the ethics of da'wah contained in the verses when it comes to social media usage. This researchers used literature methodology with a tafsir (exegesis), approach. The authors analyzed the verses of the Qur'an that contain the equivalent word al-balâgh al-mubîn. The method used is the tafsir al-mawdhû'i method by 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmâwî. To sharpen the analysis used in the interpretation books, academic papers, and journals were used. The data analysis technique was through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that from the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn it can be concluded that the ethics of Da'wah apply to three aspects: verses must follow the rules of logic, morals, truth, and be socialized first. The preacher must have the capability to convey and explain the verse/s, and therefore must be able to master the environment and conditions in which the people exist or their life context. People who can accept the verse are obliged to obey it, and there is no more denial of the notions required to be considered. The ethics mentioned in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn are relevant and must also be applied in social media so that the messages conveyed can be appropriately be received and the community can be effectively and ethically enlightened.

Keywords: Ethics, Apostle, Da'wah, Qur'an, Social Media.



Introduction

The Qur'an is very concerned about the ethics of Da'wah in every verse. The first thing that is done is that the material of the verse to be conveyed is genuinely rational and actual so that it cannot be refuted by anyone. The Qur'an also contains ethics related to preachers, namely prophets and apostles, who master the message material to be delivered (Ariani, 2017). The prophets and apostles appointed as preachers are termed as the Qur'an with al-balâgh al-mubîn. Although the Qur'an is very concerned about message ethics and preacher ethics, there is still rejection from some people (Samosiret al., 2023). This rejection occurs not because the material of the verse is irrational or because the preacher cannot convey the verse, but because the recipients may feel that their interests are disturbed if the message is accepted (Ode et al., 2023). This is in contrast to the rejection of messages by the community lately, which always leads to uproar and chaos (Nasution et al., 2023a). The problem is not with the people but more with the material contained within the verse and the preachers' explanations. The verse must be precise and have specific interests (Nasution et al., 2023b). In addition, the preacher needs an accurate understanding of the verse material and the people's situation and conditions and general life context (Schandorf, 2016).

The ethics of preaching and the ethics of preachers are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. No matter how rational and factual the Qur'anic verses are conveyed, if the preacher needs to understand the material and psychology of the people, but does not, it is inevitable that the message will be rejected (Hendra & Hartati, 2019). Likewise, no matter how good the preacher is, there will still be rejection if the verse delivered is not rational and actual. The Qur'an understands the existence of such conditions well, so the discussion of da'wah ethics focuses more on the ethics of da'wah and preachers than on the people's ethics. The Qur'an also understands that this task is cumbersome, and therefore, it explains that the task of the preacher, in this case, the apostles, is only to convey and explain (al-balâgh al-mubîn) (Rosidi et al., 2022).

Although it is limited to conveying and explaining, the Qur'an still makes signs or ethics that the preacher must heed. These signs or ethics can be recorded from the word al-balâgh al-mubîn which is mentioned seven times in the Qur'an. The ethics of al-balâgh al-mubîn are believed to be very suitable to be applied when preaching on social media (Khasanah, 2019). Based on the description above, the main questions raised in this paper are two. First, how can the ethics of da'wah be understood from the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn? Second, what is the relevance of da'wah ethics in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn to the ethics of da'wah on social media?

Literature Review

Previous studies have learned that the Qur'an motivates da'i (those who engage in da'wah, the act of inviting people to Islam) to succeed in their da'wah endeavors (Nirwana, 2019). Similarly, another study stated that Islamic media should understand the counter-radical narratives propagated by other media (Nirwana et al., 2020). As in a study that examined all the Qur'anic verses containing the expression "People of the Book" ostensibly referring to da'wah, the basic principles of da'wah were given, and all five are essential for any da'wah situation. The "branches of da'wah" presented in this study guide one on how to deal with the specific and diverse situations that often arise (Firestone, 2019). In addition, one study found that the word 'da'wah' is fundamental to the study of Islam, and the word commonly appears in the Qur'an, its commentaries, classical Islamic texts, and more (Kuiper, 2017). Different studies have explored how the work of da'wah, i.e., "Da'wah," by some American Muslim missionaries influenced conversions to Islam (Chen & Dorairajoo, 2020).

It is essential to understand that Da'wah is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman (Ansari, 2019). In addition, the purpose of da'wah is to direct people to live a life following the



Creator's plan (Ibrahim & Riyadi, 2023). Da'wah emphasizes that the ethics of Muslims cannot be separated, and morality is a unity in all heavenly messages (Mostafa Hassan et al., 2019). In addition, Da'wah must be carried out with respect for the dignity of shared humanity and carried out patiently and steadfastly. Da'wah should be conducted through communication channels to inform others about Islam. These ethical principles emphasize the importance of preaching politely, patiently, and ethically to direct people toward life according to the Creator's plan (Safi, 2011).

Methodology

This research uses a literature review or library methodology with an interpretive approach. Library research methodology involves various techniques and strategies to effectively find and evaluate information sources. The authors searched and evaluated information sources, using various techniques and resources to find the most relevant and credible information (George, 2008). The authors tried to analyze the verses of the Qur'an that contain the equivalent word, namely *al-balâgh al-mubîn*. The method used is the method of *tafsir al-mawdhû'i* version of 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmâwî. Given that the study of this paper is Islamic Da'wah, not the study of Islamic law, only four steps are used (Al-Farmâwî, 1977). The reason for choosing the *al-mawdhû'i* method of interpretation is because this method, according to Nawawi, entirely depends on the acquisition of truth in the vocabulary and structure of the Qur'an. The difference is in the assumption of the text itself (Nawawi, 2016). To sharpen the analysis, *tafsir* books, papers, and academic journals were used. Data analysis techniques were through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Richards, 1998).

Results and Discussion

The Urgency of Da'wah in the Quran

The uproar that often occurs in society when receiving a verse is caused by three factors. First, the material of the verse to be conveyed has yet to be understood by the people because it has not been socialized beforehand. Second, there is an impropriety in the verse, so the people feel disadvantaged. Third, the preacher himself does not understand the verse well and also does not understand the rules of Da'wah (Ansari, 2013; Budiman, 2017; Mudjiono, 2012; Nurhadi & Kurniawan, 2017; Rokhim et al., 2022; Syatar et al., 2020; Wisman, 2017).

The first step should be to provide understanding to the community that the verse to be conveyed favours the interests of the community itself. To provide understanding to the community, it must be done through special efforts such as conducting socialization, counseling, and even upgrading so that the community's acceptance of the verse does not seem coercive in any manner. Rejection also often occurs because the message could be more explicit, impromptu, full of political nuances, and neutral (Nasution et al., 2023b). Ideally, the verse to be conveyed should be rational, transparent, and firm, not ambiguous or multi-interpretive. In addition, the situation and condition of the community when delivering the verse should be the primary consideration. Therefore, according to Sahrin Harahap, humans face the challenge of globalization of values, which on the other hand, can also experience information anxiety (Kuntowijoyo, 2003; Afnibar et al., 2023). People collect as much information as possible but need help managing it well (Harahap, 2013).

The urgency of Da'wah in delivering verses has become a separate study in the Qur'an. The statement that the Qur'an is a book of guidance for humans to organize life on earth shows that all verses of the Qur'an are Da'wah messages. As a book of guidance, all the Qur'an contents must be adequately conveyed to humans. The effort to convey this is called Da'wah, which certainly has ethical aspects with which the messages can be adequately conveyed. In the Qur'an, there is always a statement that the rules of Da'wah need to be considered in every message. One of the verses of the Qur'an emphasizes that bad Da'wah will lead to



failure. In other words, Da'wah, which does not respect ethics, will not be able to influence the disbelievers to enter Islam; even on the contrary, people who have entered Islam will leave Islam because of it (Q.S. Âli 'Imrân verse 159).

The above statement shows that the verse to be conveyed (the Qur'an) is undeniable in its rationality and actuality. Even if there are still those who refuse, it is not because the verse material is unsuitable but because the preacher is not good at conveying information related to the faith. Therefore, a person who becomes a preacher must understand the rules of Da'wah so that the message delivered can be appropriately received. As the perfect, holy book, the Qur'an has ethical descriptions in delivering verses. Therefore, the Qur'an never delivers provocative verses, immoral verses, verses that offend an ethnicity (racism), and other lousy value verses. The Qur'an is also very selective in choosing people with high capability and integrity as preachers. This ethic is the benchmark for Muslims in delivering verses to spread messages with good ethics to possible adherents of the faith.

The verses conveyed by the Qur'an are goodness and truth, so the Qur'an always invites humans to think. This is also what should be of concern to Muslims in order to be able to spread good verses because God gives all humans the advantage to think in order to filter good information. According to Asep Saiful Muhtadi, Da'wah is a bridge that connects the simplicity and complexity of diversity so that there is an exchange of thoughts, sending messages to each other, expressing feelings, and so on (Muhtadi, 2019). The ethics of Da'wah in the Qur'an are very complex and should be emulated by all humans to establish good relationships. Ironically, this is inversely proportional to the situation in this technological age. Social media makes it easy for specific individuals to spread hoax news, slander, hate speech, divide and conquer, racist messages, and others.

To avoid negative messages on social media, it is necessary to pay attention to the capabilities (skills) of the preacher in delivering verses. No matter how excellent and rational a verse is, if the preacher who delivers it needs to understand Da'wah's rules, the delivered verse can be rejected. Therefore, Allah chooses among His servants those who are considered capable of preaching, namely the prophets and apostles, so that they are required to have four characteristics, namely shiddîq (honesty), amânah (responsibility), tablîgh (conveying a message transparently) and fathânah (intelligence) (Hidayat, 2019). According to the author, every preacher must also possess the four mandatory traits of the prophets and apostles. Because according to Nur Arfiyah Febriani, the teachings contained in the holy book and implemented in the social interactions of the prophets became a demonstration of the bearers of revelation with the surrounding nature (Febriani, 2017).

Moving on from these four traits makes the prophets and apostles always more likely to succeed in conveying verses. Of course, the community only accept their success in conveying verses, which requires a long time. The success of the prophets and apostles should be used as ethical examples in every preaching. At least three components must be considered. First, the verse delivered is true. Second, preachers who understand the rules of Da'wah. Third, the time that requires socialization for the people to understand the verse first. In the author's opinion, all of these components are summarized in the sentence al-balâgh al-mubîn.

Overview of the Ethics of Da'wah in Verse Al-Balâgh al-Mubîn

The word al-balâgh affixed with the adjective al-mubîn (al-balâgh al-mubîn) is mentioned in the Qur'an seven times in different suras. The combination of these two words is found in Q.S. al-Mâ'idah verse 92, Q.S. al-Nahl verses 35 and 82, Q.S. al-Nûr verse 54, Q.S. al-'Ankabût verse 18, Q.S. Yâsîn verse 17 and Q.S. al-Taghâbun verse 12 (Abdel-Baqi, 1988).



Da'wah generally consists of three aspects: verses, preachers, and people. Based on the verses referenced above, in addition to the three aspects mentioned, there is one more aspect: the message maker. This additional aspect exists because the verse (Al-Qur'an) does not come from the preacher but from Allah the Almighty. It is the same with the Law where the preacher appointed to socialize is not necessarily involved in formulating it. Allah says in Q.S. al-Taghâbûn which reads: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. If you turn away, it is only the duty of Our messenger to convey (the message) clearly." (Q.S. al-Taghâbûn verse 12).

The verse above explains that the message has been socialized first. The indicator of this socialization can be seen in the sentence facing *walla*, which means "if they turn away." The sentence facing *tawallau* indicates that the message has been previously socialized to the people, and they can accept it, but after that, they turn away. The word *tawallau* can be found in Q.S. al-Mâ'idah verse 9, Q.S. al-Nahl verse 82, Q.S. al-Nûr verse 54 and Q.S. al-Taghâbun verse 12.

The implementation of the delivery of the verse first can also be inferred through the expression of the polytheists "If Allah wills, we will not worship anything but Him" (Q.S. al-Nahl verse 35). This shows that the polytheists had understood God's absolute power from the beginning but did not want to break away from the traditions of their ancestors who worshipped idols. The people in this verse are polytheists who persist with their polytheism by mocking the essence and existence of God. This mockery can be seen when they carry the name of God as if what they do is following His will because the God they are taught is God the Almighty.

Furthermore, it is also mentioned that the disbelievers committed a lie when the messenger delivered the message (Q.S. 'Ankabût verse 18). Typically, this denial arose because previously, there had been socialization, and the verse was accepted, but because of the strong dominance of their ancestors; they denied the verse. The existence of this socialization can be seen as a form of ethics in preaching. As for the verse material to be delivered, there must be a guarantee from the owner of the verse about the truth, accuracy, and actuality of the message. This can be seen from the command to obey Allah, His Messenger, and the command to be careful and the threat if you turn away. This statement is found three times in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn. It can be evidence that the verse material dramatically determines the success and failure of a da'wah can be seen as follows:

1. Q.S. al-Mâ'idah verse 92:

"And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and be cautious. If you turn away, then know that the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey (the message) clearly".

2. Q.S. al-Nûr verse 54:

"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; if you turn away, then indeed the Messenger's duty is only that which is imposed upon him, and your duty is only that which is imposed upon you. If you obey him, surely you will be guided".

3. Q.S. Al-Taghâbun verse 12:

"And obey Allah and obey the Messenger. If you turn away then surely the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey (Allah's message) clearly".



However, it should be noted that no matter how well the verse is delivered or how clear the preacher is in delivering and explaining a verse, everything is up to the people. That is why one of the verses of *al-balâgh al-mubîn* provides restrictions that the preacher's task is only to convey and explain, while the results return to the Owner of the message (Allah) (Ulinuha, 2017). Given that there is a guarantee from the Owner of the message (Allah), the commands and threats contained in the verses of *al-balâgh al-mubîn*, according to M. Quraish Shihab, contain quite severe threats. It is as if Allah states that if people violate what has been conveyed and explained by the apostles, they have committed acts of abuse. Given that the apostle is in charge based on God's orders, their harassment of the apostle is the same as harassing God. Therefore, they are dealing with Allah if they do not heed it (Shihab, 2004).

The character of turning away from the polytheists and lying to the disbelievers shows that the material of the message conveyed cannot be disproved because of its truth so that they can accept it at first. This is what makes Allah, as the Owner of the message, threaten them. This threat is further reinforced by the harassment they have done to the messengers as preachers. The apostles appointed by Allah as preachers are selected human figures capable of carrying out the task of *al-balâgh al-mubîn*. *Al-Balâgh al-mubîn* consists of two words whose status is *al-shivah* and *al-maushûf* (attributes and the attributed). In this context, the word *al-mubîn* is an adjective, while the word *al-balâgh* is what is being described. The word *al-balâgh* is translated into Indonesian with "delivery," and the word *al-mubîn* is translated with "bright or clear." M. Quraish Shihab interprets the combination of these two words as "delivery with light."

The preacher's ability to convey verses to the people through words and others is called *al-balâgh*. In contrast, the ability to explain previously vague meanings or find alternative solutions to various difficulties is called *al-bayân*. The message conveyed must be actual, namely following the situation and conditions. This can be done well if it meets five categories. First, *bayân al-taqrîr* is a statement that is not multi-interpretation. Second, *bayân al-tafsîr* can explain hidden meanings. Third, *bayân al-taghyîr* is the ability to change the message by proposing several exceptions (exceptions). Fourth, *bayân al-dharûrah* is the ability to act in a precarious atmosphere. Fifth, *bayân al-tabdîl* is the ability to explain changes from old messages to new messages (Al-Jurjânî, 1403).

The apostles, certainly appointed by Allah as preachers, already have the five categories described above. Therefore, the two words (*al-balâgh al-mubîn*) mentioned in each of these verses are ethics in preaching that have crystallized in each apostle. The implication of the ethics of Da'wah that they have is what makes the apostles always successful in conveying and explaining the verse. According to Ibn 'Shûr, the word *al-balâgh* is suffixed with the word *al-mubîn* to convince the people by presenting strong arguments ('Shûr, 1984). According to al-Khathîb, the meaning of *al-balâgh* is to convey to them what has been revealed to you, while the word *al-mubîn* is "clear" so that all doubts are dispelled and rejected (Muhammad al-Khathîb, 1383).

All the messengers sent by Allah have conveyed the call of Allah as clearly and plainly as possible, nothing less. If it were the case that the guidance of a person or a people depended only on the will of Allah, with no effort on the part of that person or people, what would be the need for Lord Allah to send His messengers repeatedly and successively? Furthermore, why was the messenger told to convey it as clearly as possible? Aman must use the reason and endeavour that God has given him (Hamka, 1983). Allah has praised the success of the messenger as a preacher who conveys messages in the Qur'an. The repeated statement in the verses of *al-balâgh al-mubîn*, which means "your duty, O messenger, is nothing but to convey and explain," can be understood as a form of recognition from Allah for the success of the messenger in conveying and explaining the message.



The Urgency of Implementing Quranic Da'wah Ethics in Social Media

Humans are social creatures Aristotle (w. 322 BCE). As a creature that relates to one another, humans must certainly do Da'wah through oral, written, or signaling (Susanto, 2016). Among these three types of Da'wah, written Da'wah has the widest reach and can last longer.

Social media is the fastest and most appropriate means to influence public opinion, following the jargon that says, "controlling the media is the same as controlling the world" (Majid, 2019). Some people have recently utilized the freedom of preaching on social media to channel personal and group interests, so the material delivered has been uprooted from the roots of Eastern preaching ethics. The messages conveyed seem dry from the touch of educational values; even those that appear are often highly provocative. It is strongly suspected that Da'wah like this will gradually threaten the stability of national unity and integrity.

Cultural signs in the ethics of the Qur'anic Da'wah based on social media are about unity, cooperation, and equality in the unity of the people. In the Qur'an, there are two cultural ethics, namely connotative and denotative meanings. Connotative is the meaning that arises from personal behaviour and additional criteria applied to conceptual meaning. While denotative explicitly means in the sense of justice. In principle, the ethics of Da'wah contained in the Qur'an are not much different from those of Da'wah on social media, but what makes it different is the preacher's purpose. The Qur'an emphasizes that preachers must always consistently hold the principle of truth, while preachers on social media are sometimes inconsistent. This difference can certainly be resolved if the ethics of Da'wah mentioned in the Qur'an are used as a guide in the ethics of Da'wah on social media.

Humans, who are social creatures, cannot be separated from Da'wah activities in conveying verses from preachers to the people. The importance of Da'wah ethics as a reference in verse selection is to create positive feedback as well. Social media is complicated because it is heterogeneous regarding age, culture, religion, and social class. Therefore, Da'wah's ethics are very important to anticipate the negative impact of using social media (Irhamdi, 2018).

Some social media lately have been colored by posts that are not educational such as pornographic images and pornographic stories, news that arouses hatred, and information that cannot be accounted for. Directly or indirectly, this kind of news contributes to the emergence of immoral acts such as free sex and rape, fights between groups, and destruction of houses of worship, and it can also destroy a person's career. Events like this are strongly suspected to be influenced by news in some social media where preachers ignore preaching ethics. In addition, the ease with which people accept news without any attempt at clarification first adds to the chaos of provocative news (Kusumastuti et al., 2021).

In principle, freedom of expression is considered valid as long as it adheres to the ethics of Da'wah. The ethics of Da'wah in question apply not only to preachers but also to the people. In terms of priority, preaching ethics must first come from the preacher. Recently, misunderstandings have often occurred, the consequences of which are always fatal due to the influence of preaching on social media that ignores preaching ethics. This neglect of preaching ethics can lead to clashes in the community. Given the magnitude of this influence, every social media should heed the ethics of preaching.

In the previous sections, it has been described that the ethics of Da'wah in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn are brief and concise. At this level, these verses strongly emphasize the importance of ethics in preaching because civilization-building is the goal to be achieved. Likewise, social media should have a noble goal of conveying the truth so that people are intelligent and have good ethics. One of the ethics of Da'wah exemplified in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn that social media should emulate is the guarantee that if the messages conveyed can be obeyed, they will certainly be guided, as in Q.S. al-Nûr verse 54.



"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; if you turn away, then indeed the Messenger's duty is only what is imposed upon him, and your duty is only what is imposed upon you. If you obey him, surely you will be guided". (Q.S. al-Nūr verse 54).

This statement shows that the message conveyed can be guaranteed by the truth and contains educational values. This guarantee of truth and education is built by the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn, and social media should do the same. The urgency of applying the ethics of Da'wah in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn for social media is very important, considering the many deviations that occur in today's technological age. The verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn have started the importance of Da'wah ethics with the foundation of truth, a foundation that should also be used as a guideline for social media usage. Likewise, the ethics of the message conveyed in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn, which aims for enlightenment, shows that the role of social media should also be able to provide the same enlightenment to all levels of society.

Conclusion

The results show that the four traits that made the prophets and apostles, never failed to empower them convey a verse as it ought to have been conveyed. Three components must be considered. First, the verse delivered must be true. Second, preachers must understand the rules of preaching. Third, the time that requires socialization for the people to understand the verse first must be correct. In the author's opinion, all of these components are summarized in the sentence al-balâgh al-mubîn. Based on the analysis of the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn, it can be concluded that the ethics of Da'wah apply to three aspects: verses must follow the rules of logic, morals, truth, and socialization first. The preacher must have the capability to convey and explain the verse, and therefore, the preacher must be able to master the environment and conditions of the people. Thus, people who can accept the verse are obliged to obey it, and there is no more denial permissible on their part. The ethics mentioned in the verses of al-balâgh al-mubîn are relevant to be applied in social media so that the messages delivered can be received properly and the community is enlightened as desired.

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