

## **The Role of Da'i as Guardian of the Integrity of the Republic of Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

A preacher as the subject of preaching activities plays a crucial role in determining the direction of the influence of their preaching. However, it is regrettable to observe the reality of preaching conducted by some preachers today, which is filled with condemnation, judgment, and provocation. The duty of a preacher is to convey (tabligh), not to judge or provoke. This phenomenon can trigger actions that may cause division within the Indonesian nation. In fact, several social conflicts have occurred in Indonesia due to judgments and provocations from certain parties. In Indonesia, there have been instances of public property destruction deemed as places of vice by preaching activists. The case of a family in Surabaya on May 13, 2018, conducting a suicide bombing to destroy places of worship for non-Muslims and the provocation of religious figures towards the community during each election event serves as an example.

**Keywords:** Preaching, judgment, provocation, integrity, Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

### **1. Introduction**

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) has served as the home to a vast and diverse nation. With its territory spanning from Sabang to Merauke, hosting over 1300 ethnic groups and 2500 regional languages (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2011). Indonesia's remarkable strength has brought together this nation into a unified whole. This strength lies in the collective awareness of being one nation—the Indonesian nation. However, this strength is now waning due to the diminishing consciousness among Indonesians regarding the importance of unity.

Muslim nationalist fighters have played a significant role in fostering the spirit of unity. Islam was once utilized as a command to unite against violations committed by the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English (LP3ES, 1985). The guerrilla warfare led by General Sudirman, the resistance of Bung Tomo's forces, and the magnanimity of the

Muslim community in approving the change to the first principle of Pancasila are tangible evidence of Muslim fighters' contribution in achieving and preserving independence (Haq, 2009). This illustrates that the goal of their struggle was not to establish a specific home for Muslims but rather a home for a diverse nation that can coexist harmoniously.

Muslims have a duty to engage in da'wah, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and cannot be exempt from the responsibility of shaping and strengthening brotherhood in society. A da'i, as the subject of da'wah, plays a crucial role in determining the direction of the influence of their da'wah. Unfortunately, the reality of da'wah conducted by some da'is today is filled with insults, judgments, and provocations. Yet, a da'i's duty is to convey (tabligh), not to judge or provoke (an-Nur verse 54, Ali-Imran verse 20, an-Nahl verse 82, ar-Ra'ad verse 40). This situation can potentially trigger actions that may divide the Indonesian nation.

Indeed, several social conflicts have occurred due to judgments and provocations from specific parties. In Indonesia, there have been instances of the destruction of public spaces perceived as sinful by preaching activists. One notable case is the bombing carried out by a family in Surabaya on May 13, 2018, targeting a place of worship for non-Muslims. The most tragic religious conflict erupted in 1999, affecting the *Ambon-Manise* community (Kemenko PMK, 2016).

Some of these conflicts are believed to be the actions of Muslim groups, while others see them as a form of manipulation by the West. Regardless, the reality is that a da'i whose preaching is filled with insults and provocations can become fuel for spreading slander, thereby eroding the unity of the Indonesian nation. Hence, the mental revolution of a da'i becomes crucial to introduce Islamic preaching that provides comfort, security, and strengthens Islamic brotherhood through methods taught in the Qur'an.

The question that arises is how the Qur'an teaches good and proper methods of da'wah and how to implement them to revolutionize the mentality or attitude of a da'i in preaching. This paper will elucidate the answers to these questions.

## 2. Research Findings

### 2.1 Guidelines for Da'wah in the Perspective of the Qur'an

In general, da'wah can be understood as an effort to call towards the pleasure of Allah SWT. This can be interpreted as an endeavor to elevate the dignity of human life in both spiritual and physical dimensions within its surrounding environment (Machendrawaty and Ahmad, 2001). The purpose of da'wah is to uphold the principles of enjoining good (amar ma'ruf) and forbidding evil (nahi mungkar), as commanded by Allah SWT. This directive is articulated in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah Ali-Imran, verse 104, which states:

*“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.”*

Based on the concise interpretation of the Noble Qur'an (2015), in this verse, Allah commands the believers to invite people to goodness, enjoin righteous deeds (ma'ruf), and forbid evil deeds (munkar). Among you, the believers, there should be a group of people who consistently call to virtue, which includes the guidance of Allah, enjoining what is righteous, such as ethics, behavior, noble values, and customs that are in line with religious values, and preventing what is evil, namely something deemed harmful and rejected by sound reasoning. Indeed, those who engage in such activities hold a high position before Allah, and they are the fortunate ones who attain salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah (1990), in the above-mentioned verse, there is an indication of the obligation to enjoin what is ma'ruf and forbid what is munkar from several perspectives: Firstly, the phrase "And let there be" is a form of command (amar), and the form of al-amr implies an obligation (ijab). Secondly, in the verse, there is emphasis (ta'kid) that prosperity is associated with "enjoining" and "forbidding." This is a stylistic

language of specification and restriction (takhsis wa al-hashr), where Allah states, "and they are the successful ones." Thirdly, prosperity is only specific to those who carry out and fulfill the obligation. If everyone does not do so, then everyone capable of doing it will share the blame. Fourthly, in the mentioned verse, there is an indication that it is a collective duty (fardhu kifayah), not an individual duty (fardhu 'ain). When some fulfill it, the obligation is lifted from others. This is because it is not stated, "Let each of you enjoy what is ma'ruf," but Allah, SWT, says, "*And let there be among you a group of people...*"

Regarding the duty of preaching, it is emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, through his saying:

*"Remember! By Allah, you must enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; prevent the wrongdoers and call to the true righteousness" (Al-Mundziri, 2016).*

According to Muhyiddin, one of the tasks of da'wah (Islamic outreach) is to shape public opinion about what is good or bad with the aim of establishing the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil (Asep, 2002). The essence of da'wah includes inviting people to Allah with the best words (ahsana qaulan) and the best deeds (ahsanu amalan), while first proving oneself (da'i) as an implementer of the da'wah message (QS. Fuslihat:33).

The duty of a da'i as an executor of da'wah includes calling to virtue, implementing and advocating for what is ma'ruf (good), and distancing oneself from and preventing evil. Through the da'i, Islamic teachings are constantly present in every aspect of human life (Zainuri, 2016). The success of da'wah is not measured by the number of followers successfully influenced but by the consistency and patience in carrying out the task. The obligation of a da'i is limited to conveying the message, as guidance is the prerogative of Allah SWT. As emphasized in the Qur'an, Surah Yunus, verses 99-100, it is Allah SWT. who wills to guide. It is easy for Allah to make all humans on Earth believers, but

Allah SWT. does not do so as a test of patience for da'is and a means to earn maximum rewards through da'wah (Husna, 2009).

According to Shomad (2007), the true roles of community development pursued by da'i individuals and da'wah institutions are: Tabligh (conveying the message), Tau'iyah (developing Islamic awareness), Taujih (guiding potentials for positive contributions), Tarsyid (guidance of potentials already developed), and Himayah (preserving and safeguarding the existence and capabilities of Islamic da'wah). Tabligh involves delivering Islam both internally and externally. Internally, da'wah seeks to socialize Islam to Muslims, while externally, da'wah functions as an organization based on the Islamic principle of "Rahmatan Lil-'alamin" (a mercy to the worlds). Tau'iyah plays a role in developing Islamic consciousness among the community, Taujih directs the potential of the community to contribute positively, Tarsyid guides the potentials that have been directed, and Himayah involves preserving and safeguarding the existence and capabilities of Islamic da'wah. The role of Himayah encompasses efforts to preserve the da'wah values against:

- a. Distortions and deviations (tahrif) in the da'wah efforts.
- b. Safeguarding the community from sectarian tendencies (tajzi'ah) that may lead to fragmentation.
- c. Preserving the teachings of Islam from distortions (tasywih) that could result in the deterioration of the image or stigmatization of the Ummah.

There are conditions and ethics that a da'i must possess in order for their preaching to be successful and achieve its objectives. The conditions for a da'i in preaching to establish enjoining good and forbidding evil include: a) being gentle in conveying the message (QS. Ali Imran:159); b) being wise in preaching (QS. An-Nahl:125); c) understanding the character of the audience (mad'u); d) having a good personality. Meanwhile, the ethics in preaching follow the guidelines set by the Qur'an and Hadith, such as consistency between words and actions (QS. As-Saff:2-3), no compromise on

matters of faith (QS. Al-Kafirun: 1-6), no discrimination based on social status (QS. Al-Hujurat:13), maintaining distance from sinful activities, not insulting the deities of non-Muslims (QS. Al-An'am:108), not conveying unclear or beyond one's capability, and not setting fees or honorariums (Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik, 2013).

Ethics in preaching will lead those who adhere to them to always uphold noble conduct. Furthermore, a da'i who preaches while observing ethical standards will be able to have a positive impact on others, promoting harmony among neighbors and in society at large. Thus, understanding and practicing ethical preaching will bring about harmony in human life, both implicitly and explicitly (Zainuri, 2015).

The implementation of preaching has an influence on all aspects of life and is related to ongoing efforts for improvement that never truly conclude. As long as humans inhabit the earth, the confrontational process between truth and falsehood, enjoining good and forbidding evil, the project of goodness and the project of wickedness, continues as a means of trial and testing for human life. Those who are adept at discerning and choosing truth (al-haqq) as a principle and purpose of life will pass this test (Zainuri, 2015).

## **2.2 The Role of Da'i in Safeguarding the Integrity of the Republic of Indonesia**

A da'i is required to serve as a reflection and exemplary figure for humanity. It is imperative that preaching does not fall into the euphoria of freedom, leading some preachers and Muslim activists to become increasingly absorbed in their own environments and more fervent in their proselytizing efforts (Haq, 2019). Such preaching is inconsistent with the methods prescribed by Allah SWT, as articulated in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125, which states:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided."

In this verse, Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad SAW to call people to the path of Allah with wisdom, meaning clarity, truth, and wisdom, and with good instruction. Additionally, when engaging with those who reject, oppose, or doubt the call, one should argue with them in the best possible manner. Indeed, your Lord, the Most Guiding, knows best who has deviated from His path and who has received guidance (Tafsir Ringkas al-Qur'an al-Karim, 2015).

Through this verse, Allah SWT teaches da'is the appropriate methods for preaching to establish enjoining good and forbidding evil. There are three methods that should be applied in preaching, namely *Bi al-Hikmah* (with wisdom), *al-Maw'idza al-Hasanah* (with good instruction), and *Wa jadhilhum bi al-lati hiya ahsan* (argue with them in the best possible manner).

#### 1) *Bi al-Hikmah*

Dakwah *bi al-hikmah*, meaning preaching with wisdom, entails consistently considering the emotions, situations, and conditions of the audience (*mad'u*). This involves employing relevant and realistic methods in response to challenges and needs, while taking into account the intellectual, psychological, and socio-cultural context of the audience (Asep, 2002). Thus, it can be concluded that dakwah *bi al-hikmah* is a form of preaching that adapts to the rational, linguistic, and environmental conditions of the audience while adhering to the boundaries of faith.

This approach is exemplified by the preaching of Prophet Musa (Moses) to the arrogant Pharaoh. Despite Pharaoh's arrogance in rejecting his message, Prophet Musa and Prophet Harun continued to call with wisdom. Regardless of Pharaoh's harsh words in opposition, the wisdom in Prophet Musa's speech remained present in his preaching (Husna, 2009). This reflects the ideal character of a da'i, aiming to present Islam as a religion of mercy that upholds the spirit of brotherhood amid diversity.

Islam offers a myriad of universal values and norms for all times and places (*likulli zamanin wa makanin*) to humanity (Machendrawaty and Ahmad, 2001). In the current

context of Islam in Indonesia, it ideally contributes significantly to affirming the unity of NKRI. Da'is, tasked with conveying Islamic teachings, including universal values and norms, play a crucial role in emphasizing the obligation of Muslims to maintain unity and avoid division.

In reality, some Indonesian da'is are preaching without wisdom, injecting personal emotions into their messages, vilifying others, and distorting honorable titles into insults. Leading up to the 2019 presidential election, there was a rise in less-than-wise preaching. Some da'is openly judged and vilified specific political factions, directly or indirectly provoking both their audience and those opposing the content of their preaching.

Da'is in Indonesia should remember that they are preaching in the democratic context of Pancasila. Thus, as elections approach, da'is should highlight dakwah bil-hikmah that adapts to the prevailing conditions. Their role is not to incite division among the people in the midst of a democratic celebration that should be a healthy and quality democratic process. Ideal religious lectures should address real needs without neglecting sacred aspects (Muis, 2001).

Currently, the real need of the nation is the integrity of NKRI despite differing choices in every election, be it presidential elections (pilpres), legislative elections (pileg), or regional elections (pilkada). Therefore, the duty of da'is is to present dakwah bil-hikmah themed on the beauty of unity amid diversity. This involves continually instilling the universal values and norms from Islamic teachings as a mercy to all of creation.

## *2) Al-Maw'idzah Al-Hasanah*

Dakwah Al-Maw'idzah Al-Hasanah is characterized by its distance from egotism, emotional agitation, and apologetics (Machendrawaty and Ahmad, 2001). In this context, the role of a preacher is that of a guide, close companion, compassionate figure, providing all that is beneficial, and bringing joy to the mad'u (audience). The concept of

benefit in this context extends beyond worldly matters to include providing benefits that contribute to the happiness of the mad'u in the hereafter.

As social beings, humans are inherently interconnected with one another, and their lives are intertwined with communal existence. Hence, everything one does has the potential to influence and hold meaning for the broader community, and conversely, societal occurrences can impact the personal development of individuals within it (As, 2002). This principle also applies to the influence of preaching conducted by da'is. If a da'i engages in preaching that involves vilification and judgment of specific groups, the mad'u may perceive it as a truth, whether consciously or subconsciously.

Similarly, within the context of NKRI, when da'is engage in preaching with unethical behaviors such as insults and vilification, it serves as a lesson for the mad'u. This type of preaching can potentially divide the human community, particularly the Indonesian nation. What da'is articulate in their vilification of one political faction supporting their respective choices may be echoed by the mad'u. Consequently, there is a reciprocal exchange of insults between factions supporting their respective choices, both directly and through social media.

The use of foul language, cursing, or invoking damnation, whether directed at humans, animals, or other entities, falls under the category of verbal transgressions. Islam prohibits Muslims from engaging in defamation or mockery (As, 2002). Therefore, it is incumbent upon a da'i to embody the principles of Islam as a proponent of peace. A da'i should refrain from vilifying or passing judgment on others in their preaching. Instead, their preaching should embody the spirit of Dakwah Al-Maw'idzah Al-Hasanah—calling to good counsel and benevolence.

### 3) *Wa jadhilhum bi al-lati hiya ahsan*

The method of dakwah discussed here involves the effort to propagate through reasoned argumentation, discussion, or debate conducted in the best manner, with courtesy, mutual respect, non-arrogance, and without seeking victory or defeat. One

form of verbal transgression is engaging in debates and arguments solely for one's own triumph without respecting others. Such debates can only breed animosity and hinder the perfection of one's faith (As, 2002). As stated by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.: "The faith of a person is not complete until he abandons arguing even if he is right."

In engaging in dialogue, several considerations need to be observed to avoid descending into "fruitless debates." Among them, the goal should not be to determine who is right or wrong, and there should be respect for the religion and beliefs of others (Rachmat, 2015). Unfortunately, some forms of dakwah in the shape of unfavorable debates have surfaced in Indonesia, especially leading up to every electoral event. Opinions about who is better or deemed unworthy start to emerge through the undesirable methods employed by some da'is. They transform the pulpit of dakwah into a low-quality debating platform.

Unfavorable debates among da'i activists currently set a poor example for the general public. Unethical debates abound, especially through social media accounts, and such behavior can lead to division within a nation. Hence, it is incumbent upon da'is to prevent this by refining the system of low-quality debates into discussions conducted in a more favorable manner.

Many debates can serve as examples for da'is, one of which is the debate involving Zakir Naik. The debate was conducted with a high regard for mutual respect and honor for each other's opinions and beliefs. This is what da'is should bring to the forefront amidst the diversity of the Indonesian nation, especially during moments leading up to elections, to ensure that differences in choices do not lead to division and the destruction of brotherhood. Therefore, a da'i preaching with the method of "Wa jadhilhum bi al-lati hiya ahsan" can contribute to maintaining the unity of the Republic of Indonesia.

### 3. Penutup

The success of nationalist fighters cannot be separated from the strong sense of Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah islamiyah*) built by scholars and *da'wah* activists during the pre-independence era. However, with the passage of time, the role of *da'wah* activists in strengthening Islamic brotherhood to maintain the unity of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) has diminished. Hence, a mental revolution of *da'is* is required – a movement aimed at fostering and developing new methods of *dakwah* to preserve the unity of NKRI. There are three methods that can be applied in preaching with the mission of preserving the unity of NKRI: *Bi al-Hikmah*, *al-Maw'idza al-Hasanah*, and *Wa jadilhum bi al-lati hiya ahsan*. The implementation of these three methods will encourage *da'is* to be wise in their preaching, imparting good lessons, and engaging in debates in a positive manner when faced with challenges. Through the establishment of a united *da'wah* institution throughout Indonesia, *da'is* can collectively remind and develop their preaching abilities based on these three methods. Ultimately, the expected outcome of *dakwah* employing *Bi al-Hikmah*, *al-Maw'idza al-Hasanah*, and *Wa jadilhum bi al-lati hiya ahsan* is to contribute to the preservation of the unity of NKRI.

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