

The Moderation of Da'wah in Empowering Islamic Lifestyle

Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani, Abu Dardaa Mohamad,
Wan Hilmi Wan Abdullah, Muhammad Arif Yahya,
Abdul Ghafar Don, Miftachul Huda and Andino Maseleno

Abstract--- *Islam belongs to all people regardless of race, colour and culture. Muslims have a distinctive lifestyle that possesses good values and behaviour through the Islamic teaching. But today the Islamic lifestyle is seen as oblique and is considered outdated by some. This paper focused on the moderation of da'wah in order to build an Islamic lifestyle. Therefore, to ensure that Islamic lifestyle has a place in the society today, it needs to be presented based on the moderation of da'wah (wasatiyyah al-da'wah). The moderation of da'wah should be seen as a foundation in building an Islamic lifestyle that stands for noble Islamic teachings. To ensure the success of the Islamic lifestyle practice, the moderation of da'wah begins in one's life with understanding the five types of Islamic jurisprudence, understanding the reality (al-waqi'), tolerating disagreements (ikhtilaf), understanding the immutable (thawabit) and immutable (mutaghayyirat), as well as the suitability of approach to society and good management of dissemination. The real and actual understanding of the religion of Islam will be misplaced and lead to a misunderstanding if the moderation of da'wah is not understood and appreciated. It can even lead to non-Islamic lifestyle. Therefore, the moderation of da'wah is vital to ensure that Islamic lifestyle is well practiced in the society.*

Keywords--- *Moderation, Da'wah, Empowerment, Islamic Lifestyle, Good Management.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic da'wah can be accepted, understood and appreciated through the efforts of its preachers. Preachers are the pulse of the spread and practice of Islam to the whole society. While the society can understand Islam as a whole when the preachers deliver da'wah in a proper and perfect way. If happens otherwise, however, the preaching of da'wah will be problematic and will not conform to the true will of Islam. Therefore, the preachers must first form the best of their characteristics so that the implementation of da'wah will not be misguided.

The failure to deliver the *wasatiyyah al-da'wah* (moderation of da'wah) may create extreme and loose society in practicing the Islamic teachings in their lives. As a consequent, the Islamic lifestyle cannot be appreciated in community life, and ironically an un-Islamic lifestyle will probably take place instead. Hence the society will

Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani, Center for Human and Community Well-being, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Abu Dardaa Mohamad, Center for Human and Community Well-being, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Wan Hilmi Wan Abdullah, Center for Islamic Heritage sustainability, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Muhammad Arif Yahya, Center for Akidah and Global Peace, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Abdul Ghafar Don, Center for Human and Community Well-being, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Miftachul Huda, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia.

Andino Maseleno, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Malaysia.

increasingly get far away the Islamic guidance in their everyday life as they are getting familiar with the practices of free lifestyles.

Starting with the steadfastness and dedication of the preachers on the moderation of da'wah, it will lead to the understanding and implementation of da'wah perfectly in the community as preachers are the agents and implementers in the society. The success of da'wah delivery can be achieved with the implementation of Islamic lifestyle to the whole society. Therefore, preachers must be spiritually, mentally and physically trained and educated in order to be able to deliver the Islamic messages into the society without either getting extreme or loose in building a prosperous society.

II. DEFINITION OF *AL-WASATIYYAH*

The word *wasatiyyah* comes from an Arabic root of *waw*, *sin* and *ta*, which becomes *wasat* when put together. It gives a number of meanings such as justice (*al-adl*), the middle between two extremes and the best. According to IbnManzur (1990) in his well-known *Lisan al-Arab*, the word *wasat* means anything to do with justice, and it also means the middle without giving more or less, in other word it means balanced (*al-tawazun*). While, al-Razi (1995) in his *Mukhtar al-Sahah* stated that the word *wasat* means the best and the chosen. In addition, al-Fayumi (2008) mentions that the word shows something in between bad and good, neither to the right nor to the left. As a whole, al-Salabi (2007) combines all the previous Arabic language terms of *wasat* into the best and the justice.

Wasatiyyah from the standpoint of Islamic terms also gives similar meanings. FairuzAbadi (1987) for example in *al-Qamus al-Muhit* explains that the word *al-wasatiyyah* is used to depict something most justice. While IbnFaris (1392H) clarifies in his *Mu'jamMaqayis al-Lughah* that *al-wasatiyyah* refers to justice and middle, while the most justice thing is the most middle one. This is proven in Islam when al-Qur'an says: Meaning: *And thus We have made you median (i.e., just)* (al-Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 143).

Furthermore, *al-wasatiyyah* also means the best choice. Ibn al-Athir (1963) in *al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith* enlightens that if someone is to be said as the most *wasatin* his society, it means that he is the best person to be chosen. He uses an Ayah from *Surahal-Qalam* as a proof. Meaning: *The most just of them said, "Did I not say to you, 'Why do you not exalt (Allah)?'"* (al-Qur'an, al-Qalam 68: 28).

The third meaning of *al-wasatiyyah* from the viewpoint of Islamic terms is a middle position between two corners. According to Ibn al-Athir (1963) again, it refers to all kind of praiseworthy behaviours, as it is in the middle of two corners of indecent acts. Among the uses of the word *al-wasat* with this meaning is as in a hadith, meaning: *"The best among all things are the middle things"* (al-Bayhaqi, *KitabSyuab al-Iman, Bab al-Iqtisad fi al-NafaqahwaTahrimAkl al-mal al-Batil*).

The fourth meaning of *al-wasatiyyah* from the viewpoint of Islamic terms goes more specific as it means the middle between extreme and very loose. According to al-Fayumi (2008), the meaning of *al-wasat* is to balance between two things without going extreme or very loose. While al-Qaradawi (2000) says that the term *al-wasatiyyah* means the middle of two things that are equally true or contradictory. *Wasatiyyah* as Fatimah quoted Hamka (2011) means justice. What is meant by justice here is to give the right to whom it deserves.

From the discussion on the meaning of *al-wasatiyyah* above, it is clear that the word does not only mean moderation or mediation, but against excesses, violence or blindness. At the same time, it also against deviation. On the other hand, the concept is meant to be mediator between two extremes based on justice, kindness, truth and equality. In general, the word means moderate, mediator, brilliant, balanced (*al-tawazun*) and fair (*al-adl*). According to Mohammad Bakrim (1994) all these meanings are acceptable in interpreting the meaning of *al-wasatiyyah* as they complement one another.

III. THE MODERATION OF *DA'WAH*

Da'wah is the call to Islam, and the *wasatiyyah al-da'wah* literally means the moderation of da'wah. It further means that the call to Islam should not be done in an extreme way or approach. In other words, neither very tight nor very loose. While the target group of da'wah itself is the measurement and determination of tight and loose. An approach may be seen to be tight and strict for certain targets but not to others. Simply put, the same approach is appropriate to one group and is not suitable for the other. More clearly, the *wasatiyyah al-da'wah* means to place an approach according to the suitability and needs of the target.

Therefore, it is not the moderation of da'wah if the approach is very tight and strict such as making compulsory what is not in the religion which resulted the perception that Islam is a difficult and burdensome religion while it is not. It is also not the moderation of da'wah if the approach is very loose such as ignoring the prescribed principles, rules and laws which resulted making permissible what is prohibited by the religion.

In general, the moderation of da'wah is a balance in performing the da'wah duties according to the needs and does not exceed the limitations set by Islam. The implementation of da'wah is neither extreme nor loose so it does not deny the nature of Islamic religion that covers the entire human life.

Islamic Lifestyle

Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus (2004) defines lifestyle as a set of attitudes, habits, or possessions associated with a particular person or group. It is very much related to time and technology. The more technology goes advance, the more it affects the lifestyle. Moreover, lifestyle itself effects the life of any community either in positive or negative way (Christine Safwat et al 2012). Therefore, the lifestyle of Muslim communities must follow the Islamic guidance in order to get benefit from the religion.

The Islamic lifestyle can be summarized as practicing Islam in a holistic and integrated way of life by providing physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual equilibrium. It is a way of life that conforms to all the dimensions of the religion and the essence of it.

IV. THE MODERATION OF *DA'WAH* AS THE FOUNDATION OF ISLAMIC LIFESTYLE

Gyda M. Sindre (2018) examines the issues of moderation movement within secessionist group. Several examples for these particular group were highlighted such Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Polisario Front in Western Sahara and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In his study, Gyda has revealed that attempts have been made by certain groups in those organizations to adapt moderate approach in their movements.

Joseph Mello (2016) in his article “Reluctant Radicals: How Moderates Shape Movements for Social Change” reviews three books within the southern history literature on the white moderate's response to the civil rights movement; Kevin Kruse's *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (2005), Matthew Lassiter's *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2006), and Jason Sokol's *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945–1975* (2006). In his article, he examines how white moderates impacted the struggle for African American civil rights, and explore how this dynamic can help us understand the trajectory of the current debate over gay rights in the United States. He argues that while the US public ultimately came to support equal rights for African Americans, and has grown more tolerant of gay rights recently, they have been willing to do so only when these rights claims are framed as benefiting “deserving” segments of these populations. This shows that rights are, as Mello adds that to some extent, contingent resources, available primarily to those citizens who fit certain ideal types, and suggests that those individuals who are unwilling (or unable) to live up to this ideal may ultimately fail to benefit from these movements.

From the above mentioned facts we can sum up that moderation can be interpreted from various perspectives and accordance with different moderation movements around the globe. As refer to Islamic da'wah, it has also own interpretation regarding to moderation. In this case, the Islamic da'wah lifestyle has a solid foundation in establishing the well-being of the community, and the foundation we propose is the moderation of da'wah. A concept that is based on Islamic teachings to purifies human life.

The preachers to Islam are indeed the pulse of the Muslim communities. If they are good, then the society will be good. But if they are bad, then the society will also be bad. Therefore, the preachers must be the agents that build a society that understands what the Islamic lifestyle is. Abd al-Rahman (1999) stated that most of the teachings presented to the community call upon exaggeration (*al-Ghuluw*) and they practice Islam by exceeding the reasonable bounds.

This state of affairs is widespread in the Muslim societies so it becomes a weird and contrary thing to the truth if there are preachers who want to spread da'wah in a moderate way as they face various allegations. Thus, there are a number of ways that the moderation of da'wah can empower the Islamic lifestyle and build the Muslim nation. Among the things that the preachers to Islam must pay attention are as follows:

a. Understanding the Five Types of Islamic Jurisprudence (*al-Fiqh*)

The importance of understanding the five types of the Islamic jurisprudence by all the preachers to Islam is something undeniable. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2001) suggested that all preachers must understand the five main types of Islamic jurisprudence in order to accurately deliver the Islamic messages, namely; (i) *Fiqh al-Maqasid* (objectives), a jurisprudence that touch upon the five universals of Islam taught by al-Shatibi. (ii) *Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat* (priorities), a type of jurisprudence that al-Qaradawi speaks about in length in a specific book with the same title. (iii) *Fiqh al-Sunan* (nature), a type of knowledge that teaches about understanding the nature in order to understand the society. (iv) *Fiqh al-Muwazanah* (reasoning or consideration), it means to reason between benefit and harm (*bayna al-masalihwa al-mafasid*) which is based on research and comprehension. (v) *Fiqh al-Ikhtilaf* (juristic disagreement), there is a scholarly disagreement on a certain issue. Therefore, it is impermissible to condemn a

person who follows a position that is different from one's own. The requirement to command the right and forbid the wrong does not apply when a juristic disagreement occurs upon a position.

b. Understanding the Current Affairs (*al-Waqi'*)

The preachers to Islam must understand the life and current affairs (*al-waqi'*) of their targets or audience. Abd al-Rahman (1999) explains that prophet Muhammad himself received various reactions from his people including acceptance and rejection. Human are different in their understanding and beliefs. Hence, the approach to convince them should also be different according to their conditions.

Thus, understanding the current affairs is among the most important elements in delivering the da'wah of Islam so that the approach is accurate and appropriate to the life of the audience. Furthermore, in order to understand the current affairs of the audience, the preachers have to do some research on their lives and backgrounds.

c. Tolerating the Disagreements (*al-Ikhtilaf*)

A preacher who can understand and tolerate disagreements (*al-ikhtilaf*) will be accepted more by the society than he who cannot. Disagreement is something that cannot be avoided in this life. What important most is how the preachers tolerate and manage it in order to establish the strength and unity of the ummah. Accordingly, understanding and tolerating *al-ikhtilaf* is very important in order to achieve the goal in delivering the da'wah of Islam. Mustafa Murad (2004) enlightens that there are two categories of juristic disagreements in Islam namely praiseworthy (*mahmud*) and blameworthy (*madhmum*). The distinction between praiseworthy and blameworthy *ikhtilaf* are sincerity and devotion.

Whether the purpose is a worthy one, such as the advancement of sound *ijtihad*, or tainted by selfish interest. Intention plays a crucial role in determining the merits of *ikhtilaf*.

Since disagreement is something that cannot be avoided, it has to be well managed in order to ensure that it does not lead into conflicts. Every preacher must understand the concept of *ikhtilaf* in Islam and be able to tolerate and accept the truth. Likewise, he has to tolerate the disagreements with maturity and to put Islamic brotherhood into priority. This will inevitably generate the Islamic lifestyle in the society.

d. Understanding the Immutable (*Thawabit*) and Mutable (*Mutaghayyirat*)

The success of da'wah comes with understanding immutable (*thawabit*) and mutable (*mutaghayyirat*) in Islam. The *thawabit* are things that do not change and cannot be reformed, unchanged and unaffected by the setting. For instant, our basic understanding of God, our basic understanding of Prophecy, our basic understanding of eschatology, of what happens after life; these things are fixed and eternal, they do not change with time and place. While the *mutaghayyirat* are things that are interchangeable included in the religious texts which are not definitive, so their rulings are open to analysis, commentary, interpretation and *ijtihaad* (Jawiah & Faisal 2012).

To ensure that *wasatiyyah* is practiced in life, Islamic teachings should be taught and practiced as they are and not be exaggerated or reduced. The teachings are already to balance between two things without going extreme or very loose. Therefore, the preachers can be misled and fail in da'wah if they do not understand and cannot distinguish between the constants and the variables.

e. Suitability of Approach to Society

Ahmad Ghalwash (1979) states that the Islamic da'wah requires enhancement in its tools and approaches in order to build a truly sincere generation in calling upon the *wasatiyyah al-da'wah* either to Muslims or non-Muslims. Similarly, the preachers' call to Islam should be in line with the current demands, especially in the age of information and technology.

While Abd al-Mun'im (2012) lists a number of suggestions that have to be kept in mind when talking about the suitability of approach to the society. i.e: (i) to ensure that preachers understand the concept of *wasatiyyah* in Islam by performing da'wah in accordance with the concept of wisdom (*al-hikmah*) and good advice (*maw'izah al-hasanah*) so as not to be trapped in extremism. (ii) to open more academic institutions that can produce preachers who are capable of understanding the *wasatiyyah* of Islam as a method of thought and life. (iii) Not to give space and opportunity to those who are not qualified to deliver da'wah in mosques and any religious programmes. (iv) To expand the Islamic media so that Islam is growing with the right understanding by its followers. (v) To organise conferences and meetings between Muslim preachers in building the unity of *wasatiyyah* in the Muslim world.

f. Good Management of Dissemination

Good management of da'wah dissemination needs to be appreciated by the preachers and community in order to apply the moderation of da'wah. The da'wah which is managed and organised in a proper manner will surely produce good results. A famous Arabic proverb says that an unconstrained truth can be defeated by a well organised falsehood. Thus, Muslim preachers and communities should not forget that in delivering and disseminating da'wah, good management is also needed in order to be successful.

Presentation and dissemination should be managed in accordance with six steps namely receiving, describing, revising, spreading, hardworking and firming. Receiving and describing refer to every information that is received must be first described and defined according to the knowledge that one has. Revising refers to anything that is doubtful must be corrected first by referring to someone who is knowledgeable. When everything is clearly right and true, then spreading should be taking the place. Once spreading has already taken the place, the preachers should do it in a proper way and keep firm to his decision (Mohamad Zulkifli & Abu Dardaa 2017).

Sustainable Green Islamic Lifestyle

Naveen Kumar Arora (2011) states that environmental sustainability is one of the biggest issues faced by the mankind at present. Increasing population along with tremendous escalation in anthropogenic activities has raised several questions on the sustainability of natural resources on our planet. No part of the Earth is now untouched by the effect of human activities or pollution. Ever increasing human population and increment in per capita consumption has put great constraint on the natural resources. In addition to this, urbanization, industrialization and modern agricultural practices have polluted the water resources, air and soil all around the globe. The natural resources are thus not only being over-exploited but also becoming contaminated with toxic chemicals making it difficult for the survival of future generations. This statement by Arora signifies the earth current situation which are threaten by human activities.

In relation to moderation of da'wah and the current situation of earth, it is therefore green Islamic lifestyle need to be sustain for the sake of promoting balance in human life. Da'wah efforts among other must tackle the issues related to green the earth which are part of moderation principle. As far as Islamic da'wah is concerned, the earth and our globe must be kept balance and green. Thus, the Qur'an criticise the acts or activities that would harm and cause destruction to earth (Q, 2:60, 7:85, 10:85, 29:36 & 42:183). At the same time, the Qur'an rather urges mankind to develop, preserve and sustain the balance of the earth (Q, 11; 61). By promoting wasatiyyah in human lifestyle related to greening the earth, life becomes pleasant and harmony.

V. CONCLUSION

The character of the preachers is very important in making the moderation of da'wah applicable to the society. The implementation of this matter must begin with the pre-empowerment of the preachers to produce individuals who fully understand the concept of moderation of da'wah before the spreading of Islam to the society. This implementation covers thoughts and practices in all aspects of life.

The society will be good if the preachers are good. Therefore, there are many things needed to be taken into consideration to produce preachers with calibre and credibility. That is to understand the five types of Islamic jurisprudence, understanding the reality (*al-waqi'*), tolerating disagreements (*ikhtilaf*), understanding the constants (*thawabit*) and variables (*mutaghayyirat*), as well as the suitability of approach to society and good management of dissemination. Good preachers are those who really understand what they are saying and disseminating.

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