# Actualization of Islam: Conceptual Analysis and Operationalization of Intellectual Substantive Da'wah by Nurcholish Madjid In Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT:** Islam is a religion that contains doctrine and historical values that are visible in missionary activities. This practice cannot be separated from two aspects of Islam including the development of ideas and social change. Therefore, this research aims to ensure that the practice of da'wah also encourages the development of Islamic thought patterns in the Indonesian context. By searching the literature and sharp interpretation with a hermetic approach to Nurcholish Madjid's preaching thoughts which are scattered in several of his writings and lectures. The results can be seen in the da'wah themes presented as a response to social changes that continue to develop, such as human rights, moral violations, corruption, environmental degradation, religious conflict, politics, intolerance, discrimination, the importance of quality education, and gender equality challenges played by Muslim intellectuals. In addition, ethical values in Islamic doctrine are observed and reconceptualized to ward off moral and social violations, correlated with existing challenges as done by Cak Nur (Nurcholish Madjid). Providing responsive and contextual da'wah practices as carried out by intellectuals appears to be more substantive and targets the conceptual and operational problems of society. Therefore, the contribution of da'wah activities is clearly visible in the change and progress of society.

**KEYWORDS**: Substantive Da'wah, Islam Reconceptualization, Operationalization, Intellectualism, and Social Change.

## INTRODUCTION

Islam is considered a preaching religion as stated by Max Muller, which comprises the teaching and spread of the doctrines to humanity.[1] The religion was first preached by Prophet Muhammad in Mecca, but the community rejected the teachings. Consequently, the Prophet was expelled from the region and migrated to Medina to continue the teachings. Medina, originally named Yathrib, became the region where Islam flourished for approximately 23 years.[2] Da'wah, also known as the preaching of Islam, was carried on by the Prophet's companions and subsequent generations, both individually and collectively. The expansion continued beyond the social and cultural boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula. Currently, da'wah has reached nearly every country or nation globally as practiced by American Muslims, either in the physical or virtual worlds.[3]

Islam was introduced to Indonesia by the Arab, Persian, and Indian (Gujarat) communities through cross-border trade routes among the countries. During the development phase, da'wah is conducted through various activities such as marriage, education, arts, and others, as well as the *ulema's* role (religious scholars).[4] The variety and variants of da'wah continue to evolve from the pre-independence era to the current generation with all challenges.[5]

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[1] Thomas W Arnold, *The Preacing Of Islam A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Lahore: SHM. Ashraf, 1965), 1.

[2] Syed Ameer Ali, *Api Islam Sejarah Evolusi Dan Cita-Cita Islam Dengan Riwayat Hidup Nabi Muhammad Saw*, Terj. HB. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1978), 92-233.

[3] Thomas W Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World: A History of Peaceful Preaching* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2012), 13.

[4] Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam:Tradisi Dan Modernisasi Menuju Millennium Baru* (Jakarta: PT.Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2002), 24.

[5] M. Bambang Pranowo, "Islam Di Indonesia: Mengusung Demokrasi Dengan Basis Budaya," *Jurnal Studia Lslamika* 3, no. 1 (2006): 1–23, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v13i1.579.

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During the New Order era, modernization prompted the "reconstruction of da'wah" to remain relevant by considering the conditions of the *mad'u* (the recipient of da'wah), including cultural systems and social structures. The change was accepted by more progressive Muslim intellectuals, impacting the development of Islamic thought patterns and strategies for the dissemination of da'wah.[6]

Da'wah movement further experiences a formulation change, including the methods.[7] Similarly, the orientation of the movement shifted from emphasizing Sufism to contemporary social challenges, such as moral dilemmas, environmental concerns, politics, violence, and religious intolerance, relevant in the modern context of Indonesia.[8] The question is how to find an Islamic format for da'wah that meets societal needs while preparing for future necessities, such as providing balanced opportunities for rational empowerment and spiritual fulfillment.[9]

The initial step adopted by Muslim intellectuals is constructive criticism, as carried out by Nurcholis Madjid (Cak Nur). The scholar perceived da'wah practice as more prominent and oriented towards the narrative of 'prohibition' (nahi munkar) rather than 'enjoining good' (amar ma'ruf) as observed in religious lectures.[10] Another criticism voiced by Cak Nur relates to the strategy of Muslim community, focusing on the struggle of da'wah through politics. Despite participation in human resource investment, the movement strategically neglects cultural transitions.[11] Studying the concept in this framework is significant in elucidating ideas about da'wah, thereby becoming a reference and guide for future activities.

Cak Nur is among Muslim intellectuals and religious leaders whose thoughts on Islam as well as da'wah deserve recognition. The essence of da'wah in Cak Nur's perspective includes various components such as the segments of thought, innovation, and actualization in Indonesia.

Hermeneutic (interpretation) methods and social theories are commonly used to approach someone's thought products, as frequently practiced by Cak Nur.[12] The interpretation method also signifies the transformation of something or a situation of ignorance into an understandable approach.[13] This method aims to comprehend the text thoroughly and to understand the author's deeply. Consequently, interpretations are made by meticulously clarifying the challenges in advance.[14] Another profound method used in understanding the overall concept of thought is philosophy.[15] The concept of da'wah is deeply comprehended according to Cak Nur's books and journal articles relating to the preaching of Islam through content analysis.[16]

### Cak Nur Biography

Cak Nur, commonly called Nurcholish Madjid, was widely known both domestically and internationally as a prominent Muslim scholar and intellectual leader from Indonesia who evolved in the 1970s. Cak Nur's thoughts were recognized for being open, inclusive, and tolerant, which were qualities acquired during the upbringing in the family environment. Cak Nur's parents were sympathizers of the Council of Indonesian Muslim Associations (Masyumi) but also had close ties to Nahdatul Ulama (NU) through the grandfather, who was very close to the founder of NU named Hadratusyeikh Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari. Cak Nur studied at Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and universities before becoming a religious scholar specializing in Arabic literature from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, in 1961.

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[6] Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986). A. Wahab Suneth, *Problematika Dakwah Dalam Era Indonesia Baru* (Jakarta: Bina Rena Pariwara, 2000), 11.

[7] Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Lentera Hati* (Bandung, Cet.20: Mizan, 2000), 70.

[8] Johan Meuleman, "Dakwah, Competition for Authority, and Development," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 167, no. 2/3 (2011): 236–69.

[9] Tabroni and Syamsul Arifin, *Islam Pluralisme Budaya Dan Politik* (Yogyakarta: Sipres, 1994).

[10] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Kerakyatan Dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), 200.

[11] Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam Dan Negara: Transformasi Pemikiran Dan Praktik Politik Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), 123.

[12] Acep Aripudin and Mudhofir Abdullah, *Perbandingan Dakwah* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014), 27.

[13] Lauren Swayne Barthold, *A Hermeneutic Approach to Gender and Other Social Identities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 79.

[14] Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Hermeneutika Inklusif-Mengatasi Peroblematika Bacaan Dan Cara-Cara Pentakwilan Atas Diskursus Keagamaan* (Jakarta: ICIP, 2004), 89.

[15] Fred Dallmayr, *Critical Encounters: Between Philosophy and Politics* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1987), 135.

[16] Klaus Kripendorff, *Content Analysis: Intoduction to Its Theory and Methodology* (Jakarta, Tr. F. Wajdi : Rajawali Press, 1991), 48.

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During the student years, Cak Nur, born on March 17, 1939, was active at the Al-Azhar Grand Mosque in Kebayoran Baru and became close to prominent leaders of Islam in Indonesia including M. Natsir, Andi Mapaseng Fatwa, and Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka).[17] Cak Nur's intellectuality and leadership skills were developed in Muslim Students' Association (HMI) after participation in the Indonesian Islamic Student (PII) before becoming branch chairman. The Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) did not exist at that time, while the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (PMII) was a minor initiative.[18] Cak Nur was also active in the Southeast Asian Student Association (Pemiat) as chairman, which allowed visitation to cities in the United States and the Middle East.[19] Due to the visitation across the region, Madjid became close to various Indonesian leaders in the organization including Soejatmoko, Ruslan Abdul Gani, Gus Dur, and Anwar Ibrahim, thereby broadening the insights and experiences.

On January 2, 1970, Cak Nur presented a groundbreaking study on "the liberalization of Islam" (secularization, freedom of thought, and the idea of progress) at the Taman Ismail Marjuki Building in Jakarta. Cak Nur's name became increasingly popular and valued by the media due to various ideas. An example of the experience was being a reviewer in seminars and workshops funded by the Ford Foundation through LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences) in 1976, endorsed by Leonard Binder. This program served as conditioning before departing to the University of Chicago in the United States.[20] Cak Nur pursued studies in political science at the university campus in 1978 and subsequently commenced Islamic philosophy under the guidance of Leonard Binder and Muslim neomodernist Fazlur Rahman. The education focused on the *Kalam* thought of Ibn Taymiyyah until returning to Indonesia in 1984.

Cak Nur resumed several unfinished tasks during the education period, such as teaching at the Graduate School of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, establishing the Paramadina Waqf Foundation, sponsoring the idea of founding the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), establishing and becoming the rector of Paramadina University as well as Madina Education Foundation. Other activities included participating in seminars, writing articles and books, engaging in social activities, and delivering religious lectures, which was perceived as the operationalization of da'wah ideas. Cak Nur passed away on Monday, August 29, 2005, leaving a profound loss in the Ismal community.

**Islamic Da'wah Context in Indonesia**

The entry and spread of Islam in Indonesia were manifestations of the success of da'wah. Agents who contributed to the spread of Islam or da'wah included Muslim traders from various parts of the Islamic world, specifically Gujarat and India in the Middle East and South Asia, respectively.[21] Furthermore, Sufism (*tasawuf*) served as a dominant strategy, both factually and conceptually,[22] for the Islamization of the archipelago due to the social and cultural considerations of the local community. This strategy distinguished the da'wah from the power-centric Islamization methods in other Islamic regions such as the Middle East and the fringes of Europe.[23]

Indonesia as a new territory for Islamization possessed a dynamic and heterogeneous social culture posing complex cultural challenges to da'wah, particularly in terms of ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures. An approximate of 260 million individuals inhabited about 7,000 large and small islands with 633 major ethnic groups, comprising 1,331 subgroups. Additionally, there were between 456 to 749 regional languages in the country. This diversity presented opportunities and challenges in the operationalization of da'wah, distinguishing the movement from the practices in more homogenous Islamic regions.

Various methods were used for operationalizing da'wah in Indonesia. Besides Sufism method producing prominent preachers including the Walisongo, there were organizational strategies, exemplified by Muhammadiyah,[24] Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and other Islamic organizations. Furthermore, polarization existed in diverse forms, patterns, and methods grounded in the concept of da'wah as well as Islam in general.[25]

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[17] Muhamad Wahyuni Nafis, *Cak Nur Sang Guru Bangsa Biografi Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Nurcholish Madjid* (Jakarta: PT. Kompas Media Nusantara, 2014), 31.

[18] M. Wahyuni Nafis, *Cak Nur Sang Guru Bangsa Biografi Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Nurc*holish Madjid, 39.

[19] Jane Farlez, "Moderate Islam," *New York Times*, 2005. https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/01/world/asia/nurcholish-madjid-66-advocate-of-moderate-islam-dies.

[20] Nafis, *Cak Nur Sang Guru Bangsa Biografi Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Nurcholish Madjid*, 79.

[21] Hamka, *Sejarah Umat Islam: Pra-Kenabian Hingga Islam Di Nusantara* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2020), 47.

[22] AH Johns, "Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism," *Southeast Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (1993): 37.

[23] Arnold, *The Preacing Of Islam A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 93.

[24] Meuleman, "Dakwah, Competition for Authority, and Development," 182.

[25] Hamidulloh Ibda, "Thuggery and Cultural Da'wah: A Case Study of Jama'ah Pasrah Foundation, Pati, Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian* 16, no. 1 (2019): 1–18.

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Sufism method in da'wah was among the earliest strategies adopted by Islamic advocates because it resonated closely with the community's social culture. In this current era, the methods persisted through various tariqas *(*Sufism orders) with all innovations, including in education. The methods used included *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *riyadhah* (spiritual exercises), as well as therapeutic strategies targeting individuals with mental or psychological challenges.[26] Tariqas generally engaged in da'wah using a traditional method similar to that practiced in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Therefore, tariqas and Islamic boarding schools often played similar roles that were difficult to separate.[27]

Pesantren was a traditional Islamic institution and subsequently developed similarly to tariqas. The school was not only a place for Islamic studies but also a center for the spread of Islam in Indonesia, eventually advancing educational institutions such as *madrasas diniyah* (Islamic schools).[28] Before independence, the contributions of Islamic Boarding schools and religious institutions were significant in the struggle against colonialism alongside other Islamic forces under the motto "*jihad"*.[29] This struggle further laid the groundwork for the evolvement of political Islam until the Indonesian independence period. Furthermore, the forces' influence was observed in the early and final stage of the post-independence period in Indonesian social and political change processes.[30]

The shift in the orientation of Islam from the cultural to the political sphere was situational, therefore, the influence cannot be disregarded as a historical process impacting the patterns and practices of da'wah in Indonesia. The pattern of "political da'wah" was advocated by Islamic groups, such as those aspiring to establish the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) in the sense of Islamic political ideology.[31] Although this political method formally failed due to the lack of historical roots in the Islamic tradition,[32] the mission to preach Islam continued individually or collectively through Muslim organizations or institutions.

Personal da'wah was largely carried out by da'is (Islamic preachers) with varying ideologies and actions. Religious lectures characterized the phenomenon of da'wah in urban and rural areas, leading to the stigma that preaching of Islam solely included lectures and tabligh da'wah (to make known about Islam) emphasizing oral skills.[33] Furthermore, tabligh da'wah produced popular da'is such as Kosim Nurseha, Abdullah Syafi'i, A.F Ghazali, Tuty Alawiyah, and Zainuddin MZ.[34] Young da'is further evolved, including Abdul Shomad, Das'ad Latif, Jujun Junaedi, and Ade Hidayat, who appeared in the popular culture media.[35]

Da'wah practice was performed by intellectual da'is who were active in social, political, and economic spheres with cultural methods. The Islamic teachers included Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), Jalaluddin Rakhmat, M. Quraish Shihab, Adi Sasono, M. D Raharjo, Alwi Shihab, and Cak Nur. These teachers were better known as Muslim intellectuals, although the preachers' thoughts and activities were deeply rooted in religious perspectives. The da'is mentioned have a significant fundamental commitment to publishing and implementing ethical values of Islam to society as well as internationally.

Muslim intellectuals not only delivered religious lectures but exceeded that by engaging in fundamental reconceptualization and reorientation of da'wah, in response to the evolving developments. After the fall of Soeharto and the 1998 reform era in political parties such as the Justice Party (PK), Crescent Star Party (PBB), and the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (DDII), the teachers critiqued da'wah carried out by Salafi and ideological Muslims who remained enthusiastic.[36]

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[26] Sri Mulyati and Zahrotun Nihayah, "Sufi Healing in Indonesia and Malaysia: An Updated Study of Rehabilitation Methods Practiced by Qadiriyya Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order," *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf* 20, no. 20 (2020): 1–32, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/esoterik.v6i1.7085.

[27] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 46.

[28] Karel A Steenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah Sekolah Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Modern* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986).

[29] B.J Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (Netherlands: Springer, 1986), 37.

[30] Alvin Noor Sahab Rizal, "Pergerakan Islam Indonesia Masa Jepang (1942-1945)," *Jurnal Indo-Islamika* 4, no. 2 (2014): 1–22, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15408/idi.v4i2.17394.

[31] Karl D Jackson, *Kewibawaan Tradisional, Islam Dan Pemberontakan Kasus Darul Islam Jawa Barat* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1990), 72.

[32] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dan Masalah Kenegaraan: Studi Tentang Percaturan Dalam Konstituante* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES), 1985), 67.

[33] Julian Millie, *Oratorical Innovation and Audience Heterogeneity in Islamic West Java* (Jostor: Cornell University Press, 2012).

[34] Idris Thaha, *Dakwah & Politik Da'i Berjuta Umat K.H. Zainuddin MZ* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997).

[35] Eva F Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Daʿwa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Jurnal ASIASCAPE: Digital Asia* 1, no. 5 (2018): 1–16.

[36] Meuleman, "Dakwah, Competition for Authority, and Development," 92.

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Da'wah method was observed to be unresponsive, unsubstantive, and counterproductive, as it was irrelevant to the strategic themes for the advancement of the community. These themes included education, freedom of speech and association importance, political ethics, corruption, environmental issues, religious intolerance, and wealth disparity problems in the community.[37]

Muslim intellectuals have increasingly justified da'wah method in the mid-New Order and the current reform era. Political da'wah faced more challenges and appeared to be gradually marginalized, while a more substantive cultural method became urgent in terms of improving the quality of community resources and welfare. Therefore, the relevance and significance of Cak Nur's ideas should be mapped in the context of Indonesian Islamic da'wah.

**Cak Nur's Da'wah Perspective**

Cak Nur's thoughts on da'wah were inseparable from general views with a specific limited study on the preaching of Islam. Studies typically addressed Cak Nur's thoughts both domestically and internationally on religious themes such as politics, human rights, democracy, civil society, pluralism, and others.[38] However, Cak Nur paid attention to da'wah issues in the broader framework of the thought, comprising various aspects of human life in the context of Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity.

Da'wah was a dimension of Islam where the teachings contained doctrines calling on humanity and the community to "be Islamic," as experienced and practiced by Muhammad as a prophet and messenger (QS, Yunus (10):10, 25; an-Nahl (16):125).[39] Referring to the Qur'an, da'wah was often interpreted as a "call," "invitation," and "summons" to Islam, or in a specific sense, a call to Allah.[40]

Cak Nur interpreted da'wah to be similar to the interpretation by the Qur'an, derived from the Arabic word, دعا – يدعو- دعوة (da'a-yad'u-da'watan). The word suggested to call or summon, to affirm or defend, and to propagate, with the understanding of da'wah as a request filled with hope.[41] Furthermore, Cak Nur re-interpreted the basic definition of the word da'wah and explored the term with explanations from other Qur'an verses such as the comprehensive interpretation of what was right and wrong.[42] This action unintentionally revised the previous understanding of da'wah as often expressed by activists and scholars.[43] The re-interpretation also categorized da'wah as providing an Islamic understanding in the context of Indonesian identity and modernity to Muslim community.[44]

The idea of Cak Nur about da'wah was gleaned from articles such as *"Dakwah Dengan Hikmah"* (Da'wah with Wisdom) in Tabloid Tekad,[45] and a study titled *"Dakwah Islam di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme dan Perubahan Sosial dalam Masyarakat Plural"* (Islamic Da'wah in Indonesia: Challenges Post-Colonialism and Social Changes in Plural Society).[46] Cak Nur's role as a renewer of Islamic thought was challenging due to insufficient discussions on da'wah. However, the thoughts on Islam appeared comprehensive for all to understand.

The article titled "Dakwah dengan Hikmah" by Cak Nur, signifying the main idea expressed about da'wah commenced with a quotation from the Qur'an, "*It was ˹only˺ those who were faithful and did not tarnish faith with falsehood1 were guaranteed security and ˹rightly˺ guided*" (QS, Al-An'am 6: 82). According to Cak Nur, da'wah provided a sense of security, peace, and understanding as a manifestation of Islam to the world.[47] Unlike other ulema and intellectuals who defined da'wah in long and boring sentences with the formalization of religious language, Cak Nur explained the teaching of Islam in a short and essential

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[37] Madjid, *Islam Kerakyatan Dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

[38] Mark R Woodward, "Piety and Politics: Nurcholish Madjid and His Interpretation of Islam in Modern Indonesia," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 22, no. 2 (2007): 289–94.

[39] Mubasyaroh, "Da'wah Model of Prophet Muhammad In Madina," *Jurnal QIJIS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2014): 1–19.

[40] Ken Chitwood, "Da'wah," in *Encyclopedia of Latin American Religions* (Springer, 2017).

[41] Ibn Mandzur, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, Jilid XIV (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1990).

[42] Nurcholish Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997), 172.

[43] Toha Yahya Umar, *Ilmu Dakwah* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1985), 37.

[44] Nurcholish Madjid, *Khutbah Jumat Cak Nur Menghayati Akhlak Allah Dan Khutbah-Khutbah Pilihan Lainnya. Seri Legenda Ulama Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 114.

[45] Nurcholish Madjid, *Cendekiawan Dan Religiusitas Masyarakat Kolom-Kolom Di Tabloid Tekad* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 36.

[46] Nurcholish Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997).

[47] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kerakyatan, Dan Keindonesiaan Pikiran-Pikiran Nurcholish Muda* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), 18.

statement as "an invitation or call to what was good and better".[48] Therefore, da'wah was a continuous process that was relatively progressive and futuristic rather than being in a stagnant state.

The interpretation of da'wah by Cak Nur was dynamic, constantly increasing, and evolving according to the demands of space and time.[49] This explanation also reminded the public of the legal maxim in fiqh, "*al-muhafdzatu ala al-qadim as-Shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah*" (retaining the good from the past while accepting even better innovations from the present), which Cak Nur often cited as the basis for the renewed movement.[50] As defined by Madjid, the practice of da'wah was negative-oriented, instilling fear, opposition, criticism without providing solutions, and denigration. Essentially, da'wah depended more on resistance, but less towards goodness, unity, and ideals.[51] Cak Nur also observed this tendency in sermons, sharing a similar orientation with general da'wah practices lacking emphasis on promoting what was right.[52]

According to Cak Nur, this attitude consequently led to the society's underproactiveness in participating in the development or modernization role of Muslim community.[53] The role that Cak Nur referred to was da'wah through a cultural method and not the political aspect. The slogan "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No" in the context of the idea was relevant because political methods often resulted in suspicion of Muslim community.[54]

Cak Nur referred to the idea as suggesting to Muslim community to adopt rational, modern, dynamic, scientific, and objective attitudes. Muslim community should experience secularization to achieve this objective. The secularization was not to implement secularism as understood in Western countries[55] but to change the traditional mindset of Muslim community into a modern structure, as explained in Cak Nur's ideas about modernization. Cak Nur's method was observed to approach Islam more substantially and ethically.[56] To strengthen the argument, Cak Nur referred to the Qur'an (QS, 3:104) in the sentences of *da'wah ilal khair* related to idealistic goodness, *amar ma'ruf* with practical goodness, and *nahi munkar* implying the prevention or prohibition of bad things.[57] All three sentences were interconnected and should not be separated from each other or treated alone.

Various instances of da'wah focused more on nahi munkar, which was emotionally easier than performing *amal ma'ruf*, frequently lacking a basis in the speaker's understanding. Emotional and sentiment-driven speeches have more probability of gaining the audience's attention, resulting in applause for the speaker. Consequently, *amal ma'ruf* required additional perseverance, analysis, problem-solving, and rationality, which may appear colder and less appealing to lay audiences and those less educated.[58]

The Qur'an references to da'wah were *ila al-khayr*, *al-amru bi al-ma'ruf*, and *nahy an al-munkar*. When rendered into a verbal noun form in Indonesian, *al-khayr* and *al-ma'ruf* signified "goodness", although the word implied in the two definitions have different connotations. The initial reference expressed universal and ideal goodness applicable in all situations, conditions, as well as places. Conversely, the second reference denoted temporal and contextual goodness bound by space as well as time.[59] *Al-khayr* represented normative goodness operating "as it was," and *al-ma'ruf* signified temporal goodness operating in "how it should be". "As it was" referred to the goodness as stated in the teachings of Allah, while "how it should be" suggested temporal goodness and how it should be implemented in space as well as time.

Operating solely in the domain of normative goodness presented challenges in the implementation due to clashes with the conditions of space and time without considering the counterproductive surrounding society, which may cause antipathy promoting virtue. Therefore, the community should consider temporal virtue such as socio-cultural context to actualize normative

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[48] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 120.

[49] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 123.

[50] Nurcholis Madjid, *Islam, Kemodrenan, Dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 72.

[51] Madjid, *Islam, Kemoderenan*…, 92.

[52] Madjid, *Islam Kerakyatan Dan Keindonesiaan*,..200.

[53] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 97.

[54] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam*, …, 198.

[55] Harvey Cox, *The Secular City, A Celebration of Its Liberties and an Invitation to Its Dicipline* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), 63.

[56] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 97.

[57] Madjid, *Islam Kemoderenan*, …., 98.

[58] Madjid, *Islam Kemoderenan*, ….., 99.

[59] Madjid, *Islam Kemoderenan*, ….., 201.

goodness and implement *al-khayr*. A compelling example was the obligation to protect the aurah (body parts to be covered) as a normative and applicable aspect at all times and places. However, it included customs and traditions during implementation.[60]

Da'wah normative goodness was necessary but grounding the teaching in reality required adaptation into practical goodness and comprised intellectual insights, such as knowledge about society, culture, and history with all variations.[61] The orientation of da'wah towards amar ma'ruf should be interpreted ethically and not by-passing judgments such as labeling things forbidden, disbelief, hypocrisy, and misguidance. Consequently, it should be done sympathetically by offering peace and tranquility, as well as providing the audience with accurate understanding, good choices, and opening space for dialogue and reflection.

The idea of positive-oriented da'wah comprised several logical consequences in the application, including (1) should be performed with a pure, clean, and humble heart, (2) should be based on noble morals and awareness of inclusive religious manifesting Islam as a mercy to all creation, (3) providing security to humanity by exploring solutions and improving conditions for all, (4) avoiding from negative words, and (5) offering space for dialogue and thought to the audience, thereby fostering a dialogical atmosphere and keeping away from fanaticism and communalism.[62] The objectives of da'wah were implicitly stated by Cak Nur as follows, (1) "Fundamentally, the preaching of Islam served as an avenue of teaching religion aimed at becoming a mercy for all and introducing positive values including peace (al-amn), tranquility, as well as coolness", and (2) according to the Qur'an. "Those who believed and did not taint the faith with injustice were the ones who will obtain peace" (QS, 6:82). Therefore, da'wah aimed to communicate religious teachings in correlation with Islam's compassionate stance, serving as a mercy to all creation.[63]

Examining Cak Nur's thoughts about humanity was considered necessary regarding the more detailed objective of da'wah. Humans were Allah's vicegerents on Earth, gifted with knowledge and *fitrah* (natural disposition) that could not be changed including the spirit of exploring goodness, beauty, truth, and refinement (*Hanif*). Vicegerents were active, creative, and rich in wisdom, possessing broad knowledge, free-thinking, broad-mindedness, and openness. The representatives were also tolerant, forgiving, and willing to follow the truth wherever it came from. Negative tendencies, such as causing harm and hostility, excessive love for life, wealth, pleasure, idolizing desires, being constantly tempted by demons, as well as being weak, hasty, and forgetful were the attributes of the vicegerents. Consequently, da'wah was essential in enabling humans to develop significant qualities and avoid being dominated by detrimental attitudes due to the positive and negative aspects.[64]

Based on religious teachings, da'wah aimed to keep humans in fitrah condition, fulfill the vicegerency mandate consistently, enhance moral character, and instill *taqwa* towards Allah as well as noble virtues.[65] Essentially, it was formulated that the objective of da'wah in Cak Nur's thought was to motivate humans to fulfill the roles of *Abdullah* (servants of Allah) and as *khalifatullah* (vicegerents of Allah) in the context of nationhood and statehood.

## Operationalization of Da'wah

Referring to Cak Nur's concept of da'wah, the perspective appeared highly idealistic. However, the idealism about da'wah was possible to implement because it showed consistency in administering the concept built in terms of material, message, subjects, methods, themes, and targets of da'wah (its objects). The targets of da'wah comprised social issues, as examined by the author.[66]

Cak Nur's da'wah material consisted of all messages of invitation and calls with themes covering various aspects of life, including human relations with Allah and nature in vertical and horizontal methods, respectively. Barton's analysis showed that Cak Nur's thought was a convergence between the community, faith, and the nation. Cak Nur strived to obtain the truth[67] and echoed Islam through Indonesia, explaining modernity and da'wah until both understandings became inseparable.

Da'wah provision methods referred to Allah's command in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125, in summoning humans with good teachings and discussions. The content of da'wah was the teachings of Islam, which implied submission to Allah. The definition was broader and deeper than Islam in historical-sociological terms because it was the universal message of prophethood and

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[60] Nurcholish Madjid, *Tradisi Islam Peran Dan Fungsinya Dalam Pembangunan Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 108.

[61] Madjid, *Tradisi Islam*, ……, 93.

[62] Madjid, *Tradisi Islam*, ….., 94.

[63] Nurcholish Madjid, *Budaya Nasional, Masyarakat Madani Dan Masa Depan Bangsa: Jika Rakyat Berkuasa, Upaya Membangun Masyarakat Madani Dalam Kultur Feodal*, Tim Maula (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999), 97-100.

[64] Nurcholish Madjid, *Indonesia Kita* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2004), 194.

[65] Budhy Munawar Rachman, *Ensiklopedi Nurcholish Madjid Pemikiran Islam Di Kanvas Peradaban* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 97.

[66] Ahmad Aiman Ismail, A. Munawar, Mujani, Wan Kamal, Juhaily, "Methods of Da'wah and Social Networks in Dealing with Liberalism and Extremism," *Islamiyyat* 40, no. 2 (2018): 73.

[67] Greg Barton, "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual Ulama: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 8, no. 3 (2011), 1–10.

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prophecy as the core of da'wah applicable throughout time and space.[68] The explanation did not imply da'wah's message to be solely about religion but rather that faith should be human governance activities core on Earth in various fields, such as religious, political, and educational matters.

Concerning religious affairs, Cak Nur started by interpreting all aspects related to modernization. According to Cak Nur, modernization should be interpreted as being or often identical to rationalization.[69] This suggested a transformation of old irrational patterns of thought and work to new rational patterns.[70] The positive attitude towards modernization was subsequently correlated with the Qur'an verses, such as the truth (*haq*) and not falsehood (*bathil*) (QS. 16:3; 38:27), the dominated sunnah of Allah (QS. 7:54; 25:2), the Creator of the universe with goodness, pleasure, and harmony (QS. 21:7; 67:3), the commandment to observe and study the laws presented in Allah's creation (QS. 10:101), and to be critical (QS. 2:170, 43:22-25). [71]

Cak Nur responded to some Muslims' ideas about modernization that religion or belief was important in modern society. Without religion, a society or nation cannot have a noble civilization. Modernization should be accepted and not synonymous with secularism, which needed to be rejected due to the rise in liberalism and Westernization as well as the separation of religion and politics. Humans were not to be free from Allah's supervision according to the measure of Islam.[72] However, Harry J. Benda stated that the separation of religion and politics in Islam was unrealistic as well as a temporary symptom of the religion experiencing decline.[73] In the era of Islamic revival, the separation of religion and politics cannot be sustained, either in independent or non-Muslim Islamic countries.[74]

Cak Nur began a renewal of Islamic thought with two interrelated actions namely, freeing oneself from traditional values and exploring values oriented toward the future (liberalization).[75] Among the three elements of liberalization, secularization was the most important component because it comprised the other two factors, namely the process of liberation (liberating development) including *worldizing* values that should inherently be worldly and giving freedom to Muslims from the tendency to desacralization of the religion "weakening the spirit of ijtihad."[76]

Since the 1980s and 1990s, Cak Nur began to propose various views on Islamic universalism that were not bound by exclusivity due to geographical, racial, and linguistic barriers. The main basis was the Islamic ideology concerned with humanity because barriers were not bound. The ideology existed with humans without limitation by space, time, and material qualities.[77] Islamic universalism substantively comprised the word "Islam" including the attitude of submission to Allah, signifying that religious matters were not by compulsion but by human beings. The true religion was the attitude of submission, as taught by the Qur'an and the Prophet as a natural *fitrah* that implied a tolerant and inclusive pluralism.[78]

Pluralism comprised building internal interactions among and between religious communities, enabling harmonious and peaceful coexistence, as well as being willing to solve common issues actively and proactively. This signified that pluralism guaranteed both religious and social freedom simultaneously.[79] Although religious inclusivity was more prominent, it consisted of cultural interaction, ethnicity, race, and others. The interactions should be understood as genuine engagement of diversities within the bonds of civility.[80]

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[68] Madjid, *Cendekiawan Dan Religiusitas Masyarakat Kolom-Kolom Di Tabloid Tekad*, 97-100.

[69] Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan*, 172.

[70] Madjid, *Cendekiawan Dan Religiusitas Masyarakat Kolom-Kolom Di Tabloid Tekad*, 173.

[71] Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan*, 173.

[72] Madjid, *Islam Kemoderenan*, 175.

[73] Harry J Benda, *Bulan Sabit Dan Matahari Terbit Islam Indonesia Pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang*, Terj. D. D (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1980), 79.

[74] Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan*, 177.

[75] Nurcholish Madjid, *Keharusan Pembaruan Islam, Dalam Islam Keindonesiaan Dan Kemodernan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1989), 207.

[76] Madjid, *Keharusan*, 176.

[77] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin Dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis Tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan Dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 425.

[78] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin*, 432.

[79] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi Nurcholish Madjid Pemikiran Islam Di Kanvas Peradaban*, 2694.

[80] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi*, 2676.

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According to Cak Nur, pluralism did not suggest all religions to be equal but acknowledged each faith's right to exist and practice freely.[81] This attitude was interpreted as a hope for all existing religions and humanity to surrender to the One God until the truth, common platform, or ground was discovered.[82]

Concerning the religious mission brought by each faith, there should be a spirit of mutual respect, appreciation, and tolerance. Additionally, the Prophet emphasized that the best religion in the sight of Allah was *al-hanifiyyah samhah*, implying the spirit of exploring tolerant, broad-minded, un-fanaticism, and un-shackle truth. The important implication of this idea can be understood as the essence of being crucial in religion. While the instruments were more dynamic and not the sole avenue for advancing Islam, it became increasingly evident that Cak Nur was oriented toward substantive Islam.[83] When Islam equated with other principles including political ideology, both philosophies became equal signifying dangerous consequences.[84]

Cak Nur perceived the basics of the 1945 Constitution in Indonesia as Islamic, equated with the Charter of Medina providing a foundation for tolerance among diverse communities. This constitution served as a formulation of the agreement between Muslim community in Medina under the leadership of the Prophet and various non-Muslim groups to build a common political society. In this context, religion played a role not only in politics but also broader than the intention. Therefore, the struggle for religion should serve as a source of inspiration rather than passing through political parties.[85] Political affairs should be inseparable from religion, with human jurisdiction based on ijtihad governing formal structures and technical aspects. Historical Islam has experienced various variations across time and region, though not all have been considered doctrinally valid (except during the time of the rasyidah caliph).[86]

The relationships between Islam and politics, as well as Pancasila with the Charter of Medina, was an important example of realizing a civil society. This was evident in a society with three distinct characteristics namely, democracy, civil society, and civility. According to Cak Nur, democracy was the home of civil society, while civility was perceived to be an ethical quality,[87] such as tolerance, openness, and responsible freedom. Other specific characteristics included pluralism, tolerance, ethics (ethics and morality), legal order, predictability, and justice[88]. Additionally, the ability to realize an egalitarian, participatory society, and portray a fair, open, as well as democratic society,[89] as pioneered by the Prophet.[90]

Cak Nur observed the significant importance of education in operational aspects in achieving the central aspirations. Education served as an investment in humans, with the outcome solely felt after passing through a generation that was motivated, empowered, and civilized[91], including Islamic education (*tarbiyah*).[92] Cak Nur emphasized comprehensive education for the holistic development of individuals, comprising cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.[93] As a manifestation of the operational idea, various educational institutions were established, such as Paramadina University, Madania High School, and the religious academy in the Religious Studies Club (KAA).[94]

Further observation proved that Islamic education still focused on the cognitive aspect including fiqh, and neglected philosophy, Sufism, tafsir (the Qur'an interpretation), and other disciplines.[95] However, the primary and highest objective of educational efforts was the enhancement of human values sanctity in the innate nature bestowed by Allah, both *khalifatullah* and *Abdullah*. The aim was to enhance character and high skills by improving knowledge as mandated by the Qur'an.[96]

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[81] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi*, 172.

[82] Rachman, Ensiklopedi, 809.

[83] Rachman, Ensiklopedi, 126.

[84] Nurcholish Madjid, *Cita-Cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 46-47.

[85] Madjid, *Cita-cita*, 57.

[86] Nurcholish Madjid, "Islam Dan Politik Suatu Tinjauan Atas Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Dan Keadilan," *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam PARAMADINA* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–15.

[87] Madjid, *Cendekiawan Dan Religiusitas Masyarakat Kolom-Kolom Di Tabloid Tekad*, 144.

[88] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi Nurcholish Madjid Pemikiran Islam Di Kanvas Peradaban*, 1746.

[89] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin Dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis Tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan Dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 114.

[90] Madjid, *Cita-Cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi*, 10.

[91] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi Nurcholish Madjid Pemikiran Islam Di Kanvas Peradaban*, 2430.

[92] Nurcholish Madjid, *Pesan-Pesan Takwa: Kumpulan Khutbah Jum'at Di Paramadina* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000), 83.

[93] Nurcholish Madjid, *Reorientasi Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Pajar Dunia, 1999), 3.

[94] Nafis, *Cak Nur Sang Guru Bangsa Biografi Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Nurcholish Madjid*, 25.

[95] Nurcholish Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren Sebuah Potret Perjalanan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 64.

[96] Madjid, *Pesan-Pesan Takwa: Kumpulan Khutbah Jum'at Di Paramadina*, 95.

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Character education had two dimensions in practice, namely the dimension of divinity and humanity. The divinity dimension commenced with the fulfillment of formal religious obligations in the form of worship accompanied by individualized appreciation through the cultivation of Islam, faith, excellence, piety, sincerity, reliance, gratitude, and patience. The dimension of humanity was embodied in the divinity facet and concerned with the realization of behavior that gives rise to noble character or morals (*akhlakul karimah*), such as fostering relationships, brotherhood, equality, justice, good intentions, humility, keeping promises, openness, trustworthiness, chivalry, thriftiness, and generosity.[97]

The secondary objective of education was the advancement of students' skills and morals strengthening. The Qur'an motivated Muslim community to be cautious about leaving behind weak offspring who could cause concerns (QS, 4:9).[98] Both the primary and secondary objectives should be the basis for fostering the spirit of Allah to obtain Allah's consent and fear.[99] Education for Cak Nur was continuous between processes and objectives, not overly segmented as al-Attas portrayed.[100]

Cak Nur's effort of continuity-synthesis between traditional and future-oriented education resulted in convergence. This synthesis was conducted to avoid dangerous educational dualism that would result in a split of personality, as observed in Western countries.[101] Therefore, the educational curriculum should be built comprehensively, comprising the development of Islamic knowledge as well as mastery of general technology-related sciences, such as chemistry, physics, and others.[102]

Cak Nur's perspective on other aspects of da'wah contributed to a clearer understanding of both the concept and operationalization of da'wah. In Cak Nur's studies, two aspects of da'wah can be distinguished but inseparable, namely concerning content, substance, and form, as well as message, essence, and method. The material or content, substance, message, and essence of da'wah were always universal and not bound by space or time. Furthermore, the second aspect regarding form, format, and delivery method mentioned in the Qur'an as sharia and *minhaj* have a temporal dimension varying according to space and time demands.[103]

Regarding this issue, Cak Nur quoted the words *syi'ah* and *minhaj* (QS. Al-Maidah: 48) and (QS, 45: 18-19), with *Minhaj* serving as the thariq (path, method) (QS, 72: 16-17). An Arabic proverb stated that al-thariq ahammu min al-maadah, the method, was more important than the material. This was further subdivided by Ibn Rusyd's perspective on the levels of human beings in receiving and achieving truth into three categories, namely those who attained the truth through the *burhani* (demonstrative), *jadali* (dialectical), and *khitabi* (rhetorical) methods.[104] These three levels of human beings were confirmed textually by the Qur'an in Surah an-Nahl verse 125: "*Invite all to the Way of the Lord with wisdom and kind advice, while only debating in the best method*."

Although humans differed in intellectual levels, Cak Nur advocated the wise Arabic saying that "the language of reality was better than the language of speech". Therefore, the awareness of the importance of da'wah with this "language of reality" can be interpreted as an approach rooted in essence rather than formality. This signified that the burhani or jadali methods should be prioritized, thereby motivating individuals to prioritize essence over formality.[105] The variety of levels of these methods was also practiced by Cak Nur on every occasion, specifically in the regular post-Jum'at prayer dialogue in the hall of the Paramadina Foundation.[106]

Motivating critical historical and philosophical thinking was crucial to fostering freedom of thought, promoting critical analysis and broad insight, as well as motivating openness to diverse information and positive thinking.[107] With this method, Cak Nur aimed to cultivate open-mindedness and tolerance among Muslims, essential for building a pluralistic and diverse civil society. The consequences of the material and methods of da'wah proposed by Cak Nur's main operational targets included students (the

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[97] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural*, 1997, 18.

[98] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam Di Indonesia: Tantangan Pasca Kolonialisme Dan Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Plural*, 1997, 19.

[99] Madjid, *Dakwah Islam di Indonesia*, 20.

[100] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (Bandung: Mizan, 2018), 11.

[101] Madjid, *Tradisi Islam Peran Dan Fungsinya Dalam Pembangunan Di Indonesia*, 77-78.

[102] Madjid, *Cita-Cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi*, 9.

[103] Madjid, *Budaya Nasional, Masyarakat Madani Dan Masa Depan Bangsa: Jika Rakyat Berkuasa, Upaya Membangun Masyarakat Madani Dalam Kultur Feodal*, 99.

[104] Ibn Rusyd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Filsafat Dan Syari'at*, terj. Nurc (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1994), 214-1125.

[105] Rusyd, *Makalah*, 217.

[106] Ahmad Gaus AF, *Api Islam Nurcholish Madjid: Jalan Hidup Seorang Visioner* (Jakarta: Kompas Media Nusantara, 2010), 12.

[107] Juhaya S. Praja, *Filsafat Dan Metodologi Ilmu Dalam Islam Dan Penerapannya Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), 193-205.

educated), such as Muslim Students' Association (HMI) and the Indonesian Islamic Students Association (PPI).[108] For students, Cak Nur introduced the Basic Islamic Values (NDI) and initiated the concept into the 9th HMI Congress in Malang to be formalized into the organization's official document.[109] Additionally, other targets of da'wah included Islamic community organizations that have been criticized as being stagnant, including Islamic parties through the renewal efforts.[110]

The slogan "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No" sounded sharp in the ears of Islamic politicians and political groups as a new idea.[111] Cak Nur appeared disappointed because Islamic parties failed to build a positive and sympathetic image as well as the opposing groups. Simultaneously, it was a criticism of Islamic politicians who still considered an individual's faith based on party affiliation.[112] Since 1971, Cak Nur advocated the idea of the need for a loyal opposition party in Indonesia to remain grounded in the constitution as a check and balance in the political sphere.[113] During the period, there was only a single ruling party called Golkar, which was the government group in parliament.[114] Therefore, another target of Cak Nur's da'wah was the ruling authority or government in the form of constructive criticism, including the request for the long-sitting president to step down.[115] When Gus Dur became president and criticized various challenges caused by the leadership style, such as economic issues and the incomplete implementation of openness, accountability, and transparency, patience was considered necessary.[116]

Through the Islamic renewal movement, Cak Nur had a tremendous influence on the lives of the Indonesian nation, particularly Muslim community.[117] The steadfast attitude, not swayed by the currents and the wise teachings, was voiced, transcending religion, age, and groups, making Cak Nur a figure of inquiry for various segments of society. The educational approach during dialogues with Cak Nur made anyone feel intelligent. Not just a scholar but an inspiration to the nation, with ideas that often preceded the time.[118]

Cak Nur's ideas about secularization, liberalization, modernization, and others have opened the minds of Muslims from the captivity of romanticized history. The thoughts of Cak Nur on pluralism, democracy, human rights, civil society, and education have placed the preacher as a national teacher, a place where any individual desires.[119] Both NU and Muhammadiyah have welcomed Cak Nur's presence, as well as non-Muslims connect and sometimes misunderstand the guardianship. Hardline Muslims considered Cak Nur to be weak and over-tolerant towards other religions. However, followers of other religions perceived Cak Nur to be a true santri (a student of Islam) who spreads Islam in a cool, intellectual, and sympathetic method.[120]

The cultural Islamic movement seemed to have been successfully developed by Cak Nur with the evolvement and strengthening of the Islamic middle class. Many individuals performed the Hajj pilgrimage and engaged in worship activities in places that represented pop culture. According to Robert Hefner, this movement triggered the evolvement of Islamic intellectuals in government agencies or the business world, making Muslims a group with political power alongside the formation of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) in 1990.[121]

The movement provided a new awareness for Muslims to advocate for Islam beyond the political domain from a cultural perspective.[122] The intellectuals who spearheaded this renewal, as Leonard Binder stated, "played a role as a cultural bridge

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[108] Nurcholish Madjid, *Dialog Keterbukaan Artikulasi Nilai Islam Dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), 80.

[109] Nurcholish Madjid, *Gagasan Dan Latar Belakang Perumusan NDP HMI", Dalam, HMI Menjawab Tantangan Zaman* (Jakarta: Gunung Kulabu, 1990), 9.

[110] Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan*, 204.

[111] M. Syafii Anwar, *Pemikiran Dan Aksi Islam Di Indonesia. Sebuah Kajian Politik Tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), 50.

[112] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin Dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis Tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan Dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 205.

[113] Madjid, *Dialog Keterbukaan Artikulasi Nilai Islam Dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer*, 7.

[114] Rachman, *Ensiklopedi Nurcholish Madjid Pemikiran Islam Di Kanvas Peradaban*, 2146.

[115] www.tempo interaktif.com, edisi. 28/XXXIV/05-11 September 2005, di akses 11 Mei 2011

[116] Nurcholish Madjid, "Manusia Modern Mendamba Allah: Renungan Tasawuf Positif" (Jakarta: IIMaN & Hikmah, 2002), 105-106.

[117] Fachry Ali, *Dialog Keterbukaan Artikulasi Nilai Islam Dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), 11.

[118] www.kompascom/kompas-cetak di akses 11 Mei 2011

[119] www.kompascom/kompas-cetak di akses 12 Mei 2011

[120] Kompas Cetak Online, Selasa 30 Agustus 2005, di akses 14 Mei 2011

[121] Jamhari, *Islam Di Indonesia, Dalam Ensiklopedi Tematis Dunia Islam*, Jilid 6 (Jakarta: PT. Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 2001), 345.

[122] Jamhari, *Islam*, .346.

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between Islam and Indonesian new national culture".[123] The newest culture regained momentum when the nation was threatened with disintegration by radicalism claiming to represent Islam.[124] This was reported in several cases related to religious radicalism, acts of violence, and social unrest, such as those reported by the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS)[125] as well as incidents in Cirebon.[126]

As a pluralistic nation consisting of various ethnicities, languages, cultures, customs, and religions, Indonesia showed vulnerability to numerous forms of violence, including religious, political, and economic nature. In this context, Cak Nur summoned Muslim community to unite with other communities, without theological barriers, to build the nation based on universal values of equality, freedom, and mutual respect toward realizing a civil society. To achieve the aim, it was necessary to develop attitudes of pluralism, inclusiveness, openness, freedom, tolerance, and others among religious communities, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and followed by *Khulafa al-Rasyidin*.[127]

Polytheism included various attitudes such as exclusivism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and cultism which were to be avoided.[128] Cak Nur's thoughts on da'wah felt relevant and contextual to be appreciated by Muslims in the present era. The idea of da'wah emphasized *al-khayr* (goodness) and *al-ma'ruf* (what was right) rather than *nahy al-munkar* (forbidding evil). The aim was to motivate Muslims to play an active role in development and develop positive change. This ma'ruf-oriented da'wah will steer Muslims away from feeling self-righteous and the prevention from adopting negative as well as destructive attitudes.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, da'wah in the conceptual framework of Cak Nur motivated Muslims to actively participate in societal, national, and state affairs. This action was accompanied due to the capacity of Muslims to be the vicegerents of God on Earth by comprehensively understanding Islamic teachings. The aim was a call oriented towards positive da'wah (commanding what was right) rather than focusing on negative Islamic teaching (forbidding what was wrong). Furthermore, the objectives were to motivate individuals to have piety, noble character, broad insight, and awareness of social realities, as well as possess knowledge, openness, and a polite and inclusive personality.

Islamic teachings formed the subject of da'wah, comprehended in the framework of Indonesian identity, Islam, as well as modernity, comprising religious, political, educational, and other themes, all based on piety towards Allah. The content included the necessity of constantly renewing Islam through secularization, liberalization, and rationalization as efforts to contextualize Islamic teachings. This laid the foundations for democracy, pluralism, human rights, the realization of civil society, the development of intellectualism, the cultivation of divine awareness, and religious devotion through education, among other aspects.

The strenuous efforts made by Cak Nur regarding da'wah and Islam were closer to the substance of da'wah and the ethical values of Islamic teachings. However, this ideal passed through stages of arduous struggle by exploring the epistemology in the Islamic tradition. The exploration included the application of dialogical methods such as jadali or burhani providing space for thought and the intellectual development of the community in a historical-sociological context. Therefore, the universal messages of Islamic teachings could be implemented contextually in a specific time and space, targeting a more elite audience such as intellectuals and educated society.

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[123] Bahtiar Effendy, *Masyarakat Agama Dan Pluralisme Keagamaan* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001), 125.

[124] M. Zaki Mubarak, *Geneologi Islam Radikal Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008), 23.

[125] http://crcs.ugm.ac.id/posts/general/582/Siaran-Pers-Launching-Diskusi-Laporan-Tahunan-CRCS-2010.html, Kompas. Com., Selasa, 21 Juni 2011, diakses 21 Juni 2011

[126] http://www.detiknews.com, http://magazindo.info/bom-bunuh-diri-di-masjid-polresta-cirebon/, http://www.republika.co.id/

[127] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin Dan Peradaban* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), 18.

[128] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan Membangun Tradisi Dan Visi Baru Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2003), 134–36.

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