

The Islamic Advocacy (Da'wah) in the Context of Technological Advancement

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i1/20694>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i1/20694

Published Date: 19 January 2024

Abstract

The study aims to identify the nature of Islamic Advocacy in the context of technological advancement, exploring its latest developments, methods, and approaches that enable Islamic Preachers to reach a wider audience. This is to assist individuals in embracing Islam and expanding the scope of the Islamic community.

This study adopted qualitative descriptive research, presenting the concept of Islamic Advocacy, its significance, means, contemporary methods, and essential pillars necessary for the continuity of the advocacy. The study concluded several key findings, the most important is that the means of Islamic advocacy have diversified and changed with the technical and technological changes that have imposed themselves in every household worldwide. It highlighted that social media networks serve as the primary gateway for preachers in our time because they allow connection with a very wide segment of preachers in Islamic and other societies. Moreover, it emphasized that the methods of Islamic Advocacy employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) remain applicable in the present time, albeit with variations in means. It underscored the importance of Islamic advocacy in guiding people from darkness into light, steering them towards truth and the paths leading to salvation. Additionally, it emphasized the obligation of preachers to positively engage with these modern developments and achievements that can be harnessed and utilized effectively in the mission of the advocacy.

Keywords: Islamic Advocacy, Means of Contemporary Islamic Advocacy, Methods of Modern Islamic Advocacy, Pillars of Islamic Advocacy.

Introduction

Every era has its time, and each period has its message. When the revelation descended upon our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the duty of advocacy to the path of Allah commenced and continues to this day. Our noble messenger, peace be upon him, began calling his family, tribe, and clan to Islam using language and a manner appropriate to them, intending to soften their hearts.

At that time, the Arab clans of Quraysh were known for their eloquence, fluency, and linguistic eloquence, which they used in poetry and literature, distinguishing themselves from others. They took pride in their linguistic skills, as they refined and perfected the Arabic language due to their guardianship of the Kaaba the "House of Allah", which Arabs from all over the world make pilgrimages; then came the Quran, adorned with eloquence, fluency, and organization, serving as the ultimate guide for calling people to Islam. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the Quran, they listened attentively, and their hearts softened. Among them were those whose hearts believed in it but their arrogance prevented them from embracing Islam, while others embraced Islam upon hearing it, being convinced that it was not the speech of a human being (Al-Jbouri, 2015, p. 239).

Then came the pious predecessors "al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ" after them to carry the banner and continue the blessed march. The caravans of faith set out, and the processions of monotheism embarked. The blessed Islamic conquests spread far and wide, reaching every possible place their feet could reach. They hoped to convey the advocacy of Islam and fulfill the trust that Allah had assigned to them. Islam managed to spread across half of the globe, facing various challenges. They etched heroic deeds, displayed exemplary ethics, illuminated histories, and exhibited noble stances that presented Islam in its most radiant form at that time (Hamouda, 2006, p. 3).

In our present era, we reach the entire world from the comfort of our homes through various means of communication and easily accessible social media platforms. When a preacher goes to a neighborhood or a mosque and starts calling people as was done in the Prophet's era (peace be upon him), they might not receive the expected response. This is because people today engage with religion differently; they acquire religious knowledge through their phones and devices. Therefore, the efforts of such preachers might go in vain. Hence, it becomes imperative for them to spread the message of religion through various media channels and in diverse ways. They should study the intellectual orientations of societies and invite them to Allah in a manner suitable for their minds.

The Concept of Islamic Advocacy

In his book "Al-Misbah Al-Munir," Al-Fayoumi defines it as follows: "Calling unto Allah is Dua. I implored Him by asking for His bounties and sought an increase from Him. I called out to Zaid, seeking his attention. When the caller invites people to prayer, he is a caller unto Allah. The plural of which is callers. The Prophet, peace be upon him, called creation to monotheism" (Al-Fayoumi, 1987, p. 194).

The concept of Islamic Advocacy, as defined by the Islamic Scholar Ibn Taymiyyah (1995, p. 157), is "the invitation to have faith in Allah and believe in what His messengers brought by affirming their information and obeying their commands. This includes advocating others to declare the profession of faith (the shahada), Daily prayers (salat), Alms-giving (zakat), Fasting during Ramadan (saum), Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca, and That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil. That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him".

According to Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali, Islamic Advocacy is "considered a comprehensive program that encompasses all the knowledge people need to understand the purpose of their lives and discover the guiding principles that lead them to righteousness" (Al-Ghazali, 1976, p. 17).

Sheikh Youssef Khattar defined it as "the earnest request to enter Islam wholeheartedly, in belief, word, and action, whether explicitly or implicitly" (Mohammed, 2002, p. 18).

Islamic Advocacy is "the knowledge by which all various technical attempts aiming to convey Islam to people in terms of its beliefs, laws, and ethics are recognized" (Al-Shadhili, 1988, p. 22).

The concept of contemporary Islamic advocacy involves the concerted effort of scholars and preachers to enjoin right and forbid wrong, convey religious matters to people, and rectify them, and spread the religion worldwide in all languages to expand the reach of the Islamic world through all available means.

Means of Contemporary Islamic Advocacy

The message of Islam remains relevant until Judgment Day, with its primary goal being to guide people towards the right path and the straight path. Conveying and spreading Islam is the responsibility of the preachers who follow the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Under this responsibility, the means of advocacy vary based on the place, time, and skill of the preacher. The process of conveying the message and calling others is not limited to specialized scholars only but extends to every person according to their knowledge and ability.

Since the descent of the message upon Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the call to Islam began. The Prophet himself was the first preacher around whom people gathered to learn about the new religion. At that time, he relied on the mosque as a center for preaching and used traditional available means, which continue to be part of contemporary Islamic advocacy means, such as public speaking, sermons, lessons, messages, and books.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) selected certain companions who had memorized the Quran and possessed skills in the methods of advocacy prevalent at that time, sending them to different parts of the world to spread the religion of Allah.

Islamic means of advocacy have diversified and changed with technological changes that have become prevalent in every household around the world. Some means of contemporary Islamic advocacy include

1. Sermons: When Islam emerged, advocacy through sermons became one of the most significant means of conveying the message and calling. The Friday sermon, an integral part of Islamic rituals, should not be delayed except for reasons enumerated by scholars. It was customary for rulers and caliphs to take on this task themselves to effectively convey their intended messages to the people. Allah has mandated various sermons, such as the sermons for both Eid occasions, the sermon on the day of Arafat, and the sermon for praying for rain.

As the sermon is a means of calling people to Allah, it is permissible for the preacher to stand and address the congregation whenever the need arises. This includes calling for acts of charity and generosity, clarifying any recent religious developments by referring them back to their roots in the religion, distinguishing between what is permissible (halal) and what is forbidden (haram), and warning people against straying from the straight path.

During the Friday sermon, preachers use this platform to urge people towards acts of worship, obedience, maintaining family ties, charitable giving, emphasizing the importance of Zakat, and other matters that could elevate the community towards improvement (Abu Al Hadid, 2017, 99)

2. Books: Undoubtedly, Islamic books have a tremendous impact on advocacy. They serve as the primary station for anyone seeking to learn or deepen their understanding

of the religion. These books are an infinite source for acquiring correct comprehension. Within them lie answers to any question regarding religion and its essence. The scholars, may Allah continue to bless them abundantly, left no aspect of the religion, be it minor or major, without clarification and detailed explanation in their writings. We must not overlook the mention of translated interpretations of the Holy Quran into numerous languages worldwide, helping non-Muslims in the West to familiarize themselves with the Quran and Islamic teachings.

Islamic books have been a valuable medium for calling people to Allah since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) until today. It is undeniable that the emphasis on books dates back to ancient times, surpassing the current era. However, today, there remains a considerable number of individuals who rely on books as a means to acquire knowledge, gain deeper understanding, and find answers to all their inquiries. Obtaining any desired book has become easier due to the fact that almost every religious book is available in digital format on the internet, allowing easy access. This significantly helps in the rapid and accessible dissemination of religion.

3. **Conferences and Scientific Lectures:** This means holds significant persuasive influence, especially conferences and scientific lectures held in non-Muslim countries. Attendees exchange viewpoints on the presented subject, fostering mutual understanding and easing future efforts in propagation. Preachers in these scientific conferences sense their influence and the power of their voice, spreading Islam through scientific methods and rational arguments. They address issues in a civilized manner during a time when people are often neglectful or retracting from their faiths.

These lectures and conferences awaken the human spirit, allowing the mind to contemplate the validity of the paths they follow. Recently, watching impactful conferences and scientific lectures has become easily accessible through the internet. The impact of calling to Allah through these means has significantly increased, reaching a large number of those called to Islam, and achieving the goal in a faster and easier manner. (Al Samerai, 2013,72)

4. **Radio:** Despite the emergence of numerous advanced media platforms following the radio, they have been unable to negate its role due to its advantages and distinctive characteristics. Media experts have established a principle in this regard, stating, "A subsequent media platform cannot eliminate a previous one." This is because each medium possesses unique qualities that differentiate it from its counterparts. The radio, for instance, excels in its impact on the listener, something not achieved by written words. It assists the audience in strengthening their imagination and focus on topics concerning public opinion, religious, scientific, and cultural matters. Moreover, the radio is user-friendly, as people can listen to it while driving or during leisure time. Therefore, it is essential for preachers not to overlook the radio and to create specialized stations and programs dedicated to calling people to Allah. (Jalo, 2009, 30)
5. **Television:** There is hardly any disagreement regarding the importance and distinctiveness of television compared to other previous media. Its reliance on both sound and visuals, considered crucial senses for humans in acquiring knowledge and information, distinguishes it. Television broadcasts events live with both audio and visual elements, making it more likely to capture viewers' attention and engage their focus. This has enabled television to surpass other media in delivering information, altering viewers' inclinations, and implanting new concepts. It is considered a mean with dual potential, similar to other means, being used for both good and evil. Hence,

the opinions of preachers vary in their assessment of this means. Some participate in it, hoping to rectify some of its current issues and reduce its corruption. They have their opinions and evidence. Conversely, others combat its existence, forbidding its entry into households. Despite the diversity of stances towards television, there has been no change in its widespread presence and impact. Its influence remains significant on both adults and children, with people embracing its content, whether it brings good or evil. (Al Shoum, 2007,164)

6. **Social Media:** Social media platforms represent a distinctive gateway for preachers as they enable connections with an extensive audience, encompassing both Islamic and non-Islamic communities. Therefore, it's imperative for preachers to develop programs and strategies that keep pace with this advancement in contemporary societies. The internet has become the language of the era, understood by most people worldwide. Islamic advocacy is in great need of utilizing these mediums effectively to explain the principles, values, and stances of Islam regarding the various issues prevalent in different domains: religious, political, economic, social, ethical, military, humanitarian, and more, in an advocacy manner. (Fadel, 2014,67)

One of the reasons for the success of Islamic advocacy on social media is the preacher's understanding of what they advocate for, possessing good conduct and behavior, an engaging style, articulate speech, strong argumentation supported by evidence, and enduring patience in facing adversity. (Shaheen, 1993,12)

Social media platforms continually impress us with the significant updates they undergo. It seems like there's a new update every day on YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and so forth. Each platform possesses its unique features and advantages that set it apart from others. Therefore, it's crucial for a preacher to have knowledge about these platforms and understand where people converge so that their preaching can strike a chord in their hearts and bring about change.

For instance, the idea of short videos, known as "Reels," has widely spread across these platforms today. It's noticeable that millions of people worldwide are drawn to these short videos. Hence, preachers should allocate time to create impactful short religious videos and seek assistance from producers and technicians to ensure the professionalism of these videos, aligning them with the high quality of other content. Subsequently, these videos should be shared on these platforms to make a significant Islamic impact whenever there's a new trend. Therefore, it's essential for preachers to stay vigilant and keep an eye on all that is new in social media platforms to utilize them effectively for Islamic advocacy and spreading the religion.

Methods of Islamic Advocacy in Our Current Time

The Importance of the Methodology in Islamic Propagation

It's not hidden from a reasonable person the significant importance of the methods of advocacy in the response of those invited, acceptance of the truth, and the dissemination of Islamic Advocacy (Da'wah) consists of two halves: the first includes the substance, methodology, and the second half is the style of the preacher.

To illustrate this, consider the example of a sheikh who delivered the Friday sermon discussing the topic of monotheism with a sound methodology, presenting valid principles regarding the subject matter, providing step-by-step progression, and offering evidence to the attendees. However, despite the material quality and gradual presentation, the sheikh appeared harsh

in his choice of words, had a frowning face, and displayed weakness in his voice, either speaking too loudly or displaying monotony in his intonations and disorganization in his thoughts. Choosing difficult expressions and adopts an aggressive approach in his delivery. If a preacher possesses these qualities or even some of them, they will not succeed in their preaching. Instead, they will be seen as a loser and repelling people, despite their knowledge and the validity of their approach.

On the other hand, another sheikh delivered a sermon to the audience, speaking gently, smiling, moderate in his voice, eloquent in his speech, presenting simplicity in his discourse, and using relatable examples within sound principles and understandable language. He smiled at the audience, making eye contact with everyone present. Such a preacher would be successful in their invitation, and greatly admired by those invited because the human psyche is naturally inclined towards kind words, attentive and pleasant communication, being influenced and responding positively to the speaker. (Al Aruor, 2011, 313)

When we discuss the attitude of a preacher in our present time, we are essentially talking about half of the entire process of advocacy. The significance of different styles in Islamic advocacy is crucial to study and practice. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) began his call to Allah, he employed various methods to persuade the people of his time about the truth of this noble religion. He aligned it with human nature, calling them to abandon their ignorant customs and idol worship. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used numerous advocacy methods that remain essential and relevant for our time. Some of the most important methods include

1. **Wisdom:** The approach of wisdom in calling people to the path of Allah holds significant importance and profound influence on those being called to accept the advocacy. Therefore, divine guidance emphasizes placing wisdom at the forefront of methods used in advocacy. In the context of advocacy, wisdom dictates that the preacher should comprehend their purpose, be well-versed in the best ways to achieve the objective in the most excellent manner, and possess knowledge of the principles of advocacy concerning each group or category of those being called. Wisdom involves putting things in their proper places, requiring the preacher to be aware of their surroundings, considerate of the circumstances in which they are calling, and mindful of the needs and sentiments of people so as to effectively reach their hearts. It allows the preacher to perceive with the insight of a believer, recognizing the needs of people and addressing them in accordance with the prevailing conditions. When wisdom is attributed to Allah, its meaning is: knowing things and placing them in a manner of utmost correctness. If attributed to humans, its meaning is: understanding existence and performing acts of kindness (Al-Jabri, 2019).
2. **Good Advice:** It is known that preaching is an advocacy towards what is good and beneficial, and a warning against what is evil and corrupt. The preacher is the person who guides the ignorant, alerts the negligent, and addresses wayward souls along with their inclinations, to restore them to their sound nature and assist them in inclining towards virtues while refraining from vices. All of this is attributed to the skill of the preacher in employing proper advocacy methods with wisdom and possessing a deep understanding of knowledge to differentiate between truth and falsehood, and between what is commendable and what is reprehensible. This is coupled with attentiveness and good conduct. Good counsel is a method among the various

approaches to invite towards Allah. Through it, Allah's argument is established upon His creation, allowing for recourse to Allah. It is hoped that those invited to benefit from it, and the preacher expects reward and recompense from Allah. Good advice is a significant gateway among the gates of advocacy, and neglecting it is a precursor to punishment because it paves the way for corruption. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the preacher to advise those invited, show them compassion, genuinely love their well-being, and possess an intense desire to rescue them from the sources of corruption. They should fear Allah's wrath and punishment for them in this world and the hereafter (Al-Nouri, 2019, p 3).

3. **The Best Form of Argumentation:** Various terms synonymous with argumentation have been mentioned, such as debate and dispute. If the intention is truly noble, then argumentation is commendable; otherwise, it is blameworthy. The intention distinguishes between commendable and blameworthy argumentation. 'Argue with them in a way that is best' is the practice of presenting evidence to establish the truth. A preacher might be compelled in a situation against a stubborn opponent to use compelling arguments and persuasive dialogue. When dealing with an obstinate opponent, argumentation should only occur out of necessity. It should be based on convincing reasoning, gentleness, kindness, and magnanimity. This approach is more effective in extinguishing the fire of their anger, reducing their stubbornness, and rectifying their situation. It achieves the purpose of the invitation and leads to the truth without anything else (Al-Nasaburi, 1996, p. 316).
4. **Gradation:** The use of a graduated approach in our present time is no less important than it was at the beginning of Islam. Those entering Islam are akin to newborns, and their condition is in dire need of care and attention. This religion is robust and should not be delved into except with gentleness. It is not appropriate to burden someone beyond their capacity or be stringent with them initially. The Prophet - peace be upon him - used to start with the most crucial matters for new Muslims, then move to the less critical ones. Presenting the entirety of Sharia at once, especially to those newly embracing Islam, is not feasible. This is what a preacher should follow with a new Muslim, commencing with teaching them about monotheism and ensuring their comprehension, then progressing to prayer and explaining the five pillars of Islam, obligatory upon every Muslim. After Islam takes root in their heart, the preacher begins teaching them the pillars of faith and beliefs gradually, allowing time for the new Muslim's faith to solidify and for them to be receptive to learning more (Al-Luhaidan, 2010).
5. **Good Example:** It is among the most significant and impactful methods; as exemplary behavior yields tremendous benefits in conveying messages. The existence of a role model or exemplary figure with high ethical standards, and a considerable commitment to religious, cultural, and political aspects, evokes a great deal of admiration, appreciation, and love. Preachers are under constant scrutiny by people; they are observed closely, and their behavior influences others without their awareness. Preachers have been cast in a mold as the ideal and best model to emulate. A good example is one that translates the teachings and principles of Sharia into practical behavior, making it a palpable reality for all people (Jaber, 2020, p. 132).

The Importance of Islamic Advocacy in Our Current Time

Calling Allah is among the significant obligations, which the honored prophets and messengers were specifically tasked with. They made it a mission and a message for those who followed them and adhered to their methodology. It became incumbent upon them to convey the religion of Allah to humanity at every time and place until the Judgment Day. Through calling Allah, the nation bears the eternal message of Islam to the far corners of the earth, clear and pure, to draw people out of darkness into light, steering them toward truth and the paths leading to salvation

Given that modern times have witnessed numerous advanced civilizational achievements in various fields and domains, especially in the realm of communications, technology, and information transfer, preachers calling towards Allah are required to positively engage with these modern developments and accomplishments. These advancements can be harnessed and utilized in the mission of calling towards Allah. Among the most prominent and significant of these modern means is what is known as the information network, which enables its users to benefit from tens of different services and interact with other users. It serves as a window to the world, showcasing its diverse peoples, cultures, and sciences. It also serves as a means of communication between researchers, businessmen, departments, and sectors with mutual interests (Al-Sudlan, 2002, p. 57).

The Pillars of Islamic Advocacy

The pillars of Islamic advocacy form the foundation of the call towards Allah. These pillars are essential for the existence and maturity of this task. The absence of any of these pillars signifies the absence of the entire endeavor, and the weakness of one pillar leads to the weakness of the entire effort. Al-Jabri, in her book *"The Path to Advocacy"*, divided the pillars of Islamic advocacy into three main components: the caller, the one called, and the one called to.

The caller: If the caller is not present, the call itself will not exist. The caller is the pillar upon which the other pillars depend. The presence of the caller does not necessarily mean physical existence; rather, it implies the presence in terms of engagement and activity. The caller must actively engage and be concerned with the advocacy. (Al-Jabri, 2019,26)

The one called: This refers to the individual towards whom the call is directed, whether they are near or far, Muslim or non-Muslim, male or female. The one called is the fundamental element in the call towards Allah. The Prophet, peace be upon him, and the previous messengers always considered the situations of those they invited with wisdom and addressed them effectively. Allah created people with varying traits, appearances, perceptions, and knowledge.

The one called to: It refers to the comprehensive content of the call, its dissemination, teaching, and implementation. Its content differs from other messages in various life domains. The call to faith in the six pillars of belief, the call to practice the five pillars of Islam - the profession of faith (the shahada), Daily prayers (salat), Alms-giving (zakat), Fasting during Ramadan (saum), Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca - and the call to (Ihsan), which completes a Muslim's faith. These pillars encompass beliefs, actions, and conditions. (Matarid and Others, 2019, p. 188).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is possible to review the most important findings reached by this research

1. All scholars unanimously agree on the necessity of advocacy towards Allah and disseminating His religion, utilizing various concepts that emphasize the use of all methods and efforts to call people to embrace Islam. They aim to introduce individuals to Islam through approaches and methodologies that suit their diverse backgrounds.
2. Islamic Advocacy utilizes various means to achieve its objectives, including sermons, religious lessons, books, conferences, academic lectures, radio, television, and currently, the most important among them, social media platforms.
3. Means of Islamic Advocacy have diversified and evolved with the technological advancements that have imposed themselves in every household worldwide.
4. Social media networks are considered the best entry point for preachers in our present time because they enable connection with a very wide spectrum of those being called in both Islamic and non-Islamic communities.
5. The methods of Islamic advocacy used by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) remain valid for the present time, differing only in the means used.
6. The significance of Islamic advocacy lies in guiding people from darkness towards light, directing them toward the path of truth and salvation.
7. Preachers are required to positively engage with these modern developments and achievements that can be harnessed and utilized in the mission of advocacy.

Recommendations

1. Optimal utilization of all media channels for Islamic advocacy, as there is no more successful means in this field.
2. Working on spreading religious pages across all social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram, sharing impactful images, videos, and short articles suitable for all demographics and age groups.
3. Dissemination of religious culture, including Quranic knowledge, Prophetic traditions, stories of companions and successors, parables, and their application to current events.
4. Encouraging researchers to write more studies related to contemporary Islamic advocacy and discovering the most effective methods that can resonate with people, instilling a love for their religion and distancing themselves from anything that displeases Allah Almighty.

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