



An Analysis of The Qur'anic Verse 16:125: From Textual to Contextual

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ABSTRACT:

The Holy Qur'an is the authentic elemental source to Muslims. It affords guidelines in every aspect of human life, including da'wah. Verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl includes three central principles regarding da'wah methodology, al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, which continually serve as direction and a reference to the da'i. This article attempted to analyse how these three key principles of da'wah methodology could translate from textual to contextual concepts, which refer to da'wah activities. The method of writing of this research was document analysis by referring to the textual verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl, perspectives of Qur'an mufassir, literature in the domain of da'wah and other pertinent documents. The researchers attended thematic analysis to address research objectives and questions on the usability of verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl in da'wah's context in practice or societal reality. This study confirmed that the three chief principles of da'wah methodology, al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan were apposite. Therefore, it could be applied. Nevertheless, it depends on the sagacity of the da'i to interpret the principles in societal reality and adapt them based on the backgrounds of the mad'u.

1. Introduction

Surah An-Nahl 16:125 is a verse that serves as guidance, manhaj or da'wah's approach by the da'i. This verse explicitly highlights the command of Allah SWT on the call to His path through the methods of al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. Further, the call in this verse is universal without contemplating whether it is specifically for Muslims or non-Muslims. Additionally, Allah SWT generally and completely revealed to Muslims the tips and approaches to practice the call to His path, which is achievable through al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah or al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. Therefore, the da'i needs to consider this verse as their ground and reference when practising da'wah. This article examined two primary constructs. The

first construct was the textual aspect of verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl based on the discussions of mufassir and other literature particularly related to the field of da'wah. The second construct was the usability of verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl in da'wah's context in practice.

2. Textual Analysis of Surah An-Nahl 16:125

2.1. Background of Surah An-Nahl 16:125

This chapter or surah is named Surah An-Nahl, which means 'the bee'. It is the 16th chapter out of 114 chapters in the Holy Qur'an, comprises 128 verses and is one of the chapters in the surah Makkiyah category. This chapter was revealed between the 8th and 10th year of Sayyidina Umar Al-Khattab's conversion to Islam at the same time



as the commencement of the boycotting era in Mecca (Syaari Ab Rahman 2020). It is exciting to note that Surah An-Nahl generally illustrates several bases and cores related to the life of a da'i. It is evident from a review by Syaari Ab Rahman (2020), which linked this chapter to the weight of a da'i to be inventive in delivering the message of Tauhid to humankind. Additionally, this surah also mentions in its chapter of the tale of how the Quraisy tribe challenged the Prophet Muhammad PBUH by demanding to inflict doom upon them, matters of da'wah and the command for the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to migrate to Habsyah (Syaari Ab Rahman 2020).

2.2. Perspectives of Mufasssir

Sayyid Qutb outlined three matters comprised in verse, which are i] there was confusion regarding the faith of Tauhid upheld by the previous prophets and completed by the final Prophet, Prophet Muhammad PBUH, with that of the faith that had been misled by the Jews and disbelievers, ii] the journey of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in continuing the practice of da'wah to the path of Allah, which is Tauhid, through three strategies: al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, and iii] there is no aim for one to practice da'wah other than as a religious obligation and that a da'i should surrender the granting of hidayah and their rewards to Allah. Nonetheless, M. Quraish Shihab (2010d) disagreed by claiming that the main idea at the beginning of the verse is a command from Allah to Prophet Muhammad PBUH to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Ibrahim, father of all prophets, by encouraging others to the monotheism of Allah The One through the three methods. It involves al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan and surrendering the rest of the matter to Allah afterwards.

In defining the three methods in this verse, Sayyid Qutb asserted that a feature to the approach of wisdom or al-Hikmah that a da'i must thoroughly observe is to reflect the circumstances and context as well as the intellectual level of the target to ensure no burden on the mad'u as a result of the da'wah addressed. Furthermore, a feature of wisdom involves da'wah's delivery, wherein

Sayyid Qutb emphasized that the style of discussion and delivery of da'wah to the mad'u must differ according to the condition. In analysing the recommended method of al-Hikmah, (M. Quraish Shihab 2010d) also formulated another feature of al-Hikmah's method in delivering da'wah: al-Hikmah should yield more attractive benefits and convenience rather than harm or trouble. Meantime, in al-Hikmah's context in a da'i, he clarified that a da'i with al-Hikmah's quality should opt for the best and most relevant, depending on what they face. Al-Hikmah involves the truth based on intellect and knowledge. He also particularised that the suitable targets for a da'i to operate al-Hikmah's method are scholars who hold a high level of knowledge; one must surrender da'wah based on intelligence and knowledge of the mad'u.

Next, according to Sayyid Qutb, the al-maw'izah al-hasanah or good lesson is applied by using words coupled with kindness and avoiding condemnation and defaming the mad'u by exposing their faults as a result of their ignorance. Besides, M. Quraish Shihab (2010d) defined that this method is relevant for the public by furnishing them advice and analogies due to their moderate level of knowledge. Apart from designating the target for al-maw'izah al-hasanah, M. Quraish Shihab (2010d) also pitched the specialities for this method in which the maw'izah refers to something involving good. In contrast, al-maw'izah al-hasanah refers to something that has a heart-touching impression on the mad'u in terms of the delivery, action and role-modelling as portrayed by the da'i. Lastly, al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan or the best of debate, according to Sayyid Qutb, is handled without humiliating and defaming the mad'u and must avoid perceiving the objective of the debate to win; instead, it is to convince the mad'u of the truth. Additionally, the best of debate entails that the act of debate or al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan does not excessively pressure the mad'u. Other than that, out of da'wah's three methods presented, Sayyid Qutb advised how crucial it is for a da'i who is inspired and profoundly devoted about exercising it following its decorum to ensure that the da'wah does not exceed specific boundaries. It is because Allah has given a reminder in the final verse that hidayah belongs to Allah. Thus, a da'i must



surrender the matter of enlightenment to Allah (Asy- Syahid Sayyid Qutb Rahimahullah 2000d).

Nevertheless, there was a minor dispute in the view of M. Quraish Shihab (2010d), who did not describe the best debate without humiliating and defaming the target or mad'u, but he perceived the best debate is inherently logical and rhetorical and without violence. He concluded that debate or al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan separates into three: wrong, good, and the best. A wrong debate occurs harshly, denotes false arguments and evidence or dalil, and ignites the opponent's anger. Meanwhile, a good debate concerns a well-mannered form and involves arguments and evidence in which the opponent admitted the truth in them. Lastly, the best of debate as recommended in the Holy Qur'an includes an exemplary manner and encompasses the use of arguments and evidence that are valid to the extent of suppressing the opponent into silence. As for the two other methods of da'wah, M. Quraish Shahib (2010d) also stipulated that for the al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan or debate method, the targets for this da'wah method are the People of the Scripture and believers of other faiths.

3. Literature Review

The excerpt from Surah An-Nahl 16:125 has been discussed by researchers and writings that utilize this verse as the discussion centre. Therefore, the researchers concluded it is essential to analyse literature that concentrated their keywords on Surah An-Nahl 16:125 as complementary to the theoretical foundation explained by mufasssir. Therefore, this section reviewed several thematic aspects of the following da'wah methods: al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. The aspects link the definition and features of each method.

3.1. Al-Hikmah

Al-Hikmah is one of the first words mentioned in Surah An-Nahl 16:125, which confirms that al-Hikmah is one of the eldest methods of da'wah to be applied by da'i. Following some earlier investigations that recognised the meaning and definition of al-Hikmah, the researchers split the definition of al-Hikmah into two, which are i)

wisdom and ii) the Holy Qur'an. The term al-Hikmah as elucidated in Mu'jam al-Wasit (Al-Arabiyah 2004), described al-Hikmah as ma'rifah afdhal al'asy'ya bi afdhal ulum. In essence, al-Hikmah is the best of information towards a piece of knowledge. For instance, in da'wah's context, a da'i may speak as fluent as other da'is in conveying da'wah's message. Nevertheless, one embodies al-Hikmah when the da'i delivers a logical message, analogical advice and information that makes the target of da'wah speechless due to the truth in the message presented.

Fundamentally, researchers (Sham and Badlihasham Mohd Nasir 2009; Mohammad Raj Azzahari Bin Radin 2018; Ipah Latipah 2016; Mubarak and Halid 2020; Salmadanis 2010; Arkiang and Adwiah 2019; Rifai and Salahuddin 2020) demonstrated al-Hikmah as wisdom, but each of them particularized the meaning of al-Hikmah in their writings. The word Hikam, synonymous with knowledge as related by Ibnu Sina, explains what can be defined as al-Hikmah (Sham and Badlihasham Mohd Nasir 2009). Al-Hikmah entails acquaintance and the combination of knowledge and intellect (Salmadanis 2010; Ipah Latipah 2016) that moulds a person to evaluate how they must place something in its rightful place.

The definition of al-Hikmah is elaborated in detail as its basis is knowledge and intellect; in fact, al-Hikmah in da'wah also includes the circumstance of situation and condition of the target wherein it refers to the needs of a da'i to highlight their delivery of da'wah according to the capability of the mad'u without overwhelming the mad'u of the related delivery (Mohammad Raj Azzahari Bin Radin 2018; Mubarak and Halid 2020). This matter has been clarified further by (Rifai and Salahuddin 2020), who elucidated that al-Hikmah includes the delivery of da'wah based on the cognitive ability of the target, but it must also cover deductive reasoning and proof. Nonetheless, (Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020) linked Surah An-Nahl to education methods of humanity-religion. He affirmed that al-Hikmah is the best option that matches the needs and choice of a da'i to acquire the accuracy in evaluation and arrangement in addressing da'wah. Then, the second meaning and concept of al-Hikmah concern



the Holy Qur'an itself. This definition has been illustrated in depth by Safrodin (2019), who revealed that al-Hikmah is the argument and evidence from the Holy Qur'an or acquired from a revelation that is authentic in its evidence, whether it be from the aqli source or naqli reference. Ipah Latipah (2016) further refined that al-Hikmah includes one's knowledge of the Holy Qur'an content and Sunnah and is a trait maintained by only those chosen. All of the definitions of al-Hikmah defined in this section represent the specifications of wisdom as a whole. Wisdom is something unique owned only by certain people. Similarly, in the context of da'wah, wisdom or al-Hikmah requires scrutiny towards the combination of two quintessential aspects in a da'i. These aspects are knowledge and intellect, mad'u's environment and background, and delivery of the message depending on the level of intellect and knowledge of the mad'u. Their condition must also be taken into deliberation as wisdom does not deviate from the Holy Qur'an as the second definition of al-Hikmah. The Holy Qur'an completes the wisdom possessed by the da'i because they consider the arguments and evidence from the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, be it attributed as aqli or naqli.

Besides, another features of al-Hikmah as examined by researchers, who cited Surah An-Nahl 16:125, are separated into five: i] traits of being strict, courageous and wise with a noble lesson, ii] scholars as the targets of da'wah, iii] involvement of soft skills, psychology and communication in da'wah, iv] it is adaptable to the passage of time, and v] the use of logical, clear and factual arguments and evidence. The first characteristic of al-Hikmah, being strict, courageous and wise with a noble lesson, has been demonstrated by particular researchers (Mubarak and Halid 2020; Safrodin 2019; Nazirman 2018) who related this feature to al-Hikmah. This first feature is fundamental when associated with the arguments and evidence delivered by a da'i to da'wah's target. These features are indispensable to the character of a da'i to convince and subdue their opponent (Safrodin 2019). The first feature has also been emphasized by Nazirman (2018), who observed wisdom in da'wah as being informed, calm and pacific. Consequently, the first feature explains the traits

within the scope of al-Hikmah that must exist in the character of a da'i, which refer to strictness, courage and wisdom in a noble lesson, be it wisdom in the aspect of delivery or approach

The target of da'wah for the method of al-Hikmah has also been discussed in previous studies. Most studies accepted da'wah's targets for the al-Hikmah method as scholars holding an outstanding level of knowledge (Mubarak and Halid 2020; Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020). Nonetheless (Safrodin 2019; Rifai and Salahuddin 2020) placed da'wah's targets for this method to be intellectuals who bear love for thinking. In fact, (Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020) suggested that the relevant means of da'wah for this group of scholars or intellectuals is through dialogues for the message to be delivered relatively according to their levels of knowledge and intelligence. In this case, the researchers believed, based on what has been described by previous researchers, that the targets of da'wah for this method are those of higher-level thinking skills than the public. It is due to the definition of al-Hikmah as well as the features attributed to this method.

The following features of al-Hikmah also suggest soft skills, psychology and communication in da'wah. Stressing psychology in da'wah is also one quality to a feature of al-Hikmah which one form of psychology that ought to be highlighted is the inclusion of humour, but one that still resides within the boundaries of shariah and education (Mubarak and Halid 2020). Besides that, being courteous, thoughtful and well-mannered in presenting da'wah, be it a message of command or prohibition, has also been suggested by Rifai and Salahuddin (2020) in their article titled Psychology of da'wah a rhetorical approach to the surah An-Nahl 125. They foregrounded the necessity for a da'i to maintain sympathy and love towards the mad'u in encouraging them to the path of truth. At the same time, an essential element to this attribute is persuasiveness and motivation towards the targeted mad'u. It has been emphasized by Ipah Latipah (2016), who related it to the context of educational practice.

On the same feature, soft skills in da'wah associate



psychology in da'wah and involve communication. Soft skills that refer to communication correlates to words relevant to the knowledge of da'wah's target. It has been explained by Muhammad Insan Jauhari (2020), who added his explanation on communication in da'wah by proposing dialogues with the targets. Furthermore, Muiz et al. (2018) associated the soft skills of communication in da'wah with the presentation of evidence and arguments. In other words, anything conveyed by a da'i must be in line with the evidence and truth. In refining it further, he afforded an example of how Prophet Musa AS delivered his da'wah to Firaun (Pharaoh). He did not only summoned the Firaun to the right path; in fact, Prophet Musa AS proved the truth with a miracle bestowed upon him (Muiz et al., 2018). Finally, in soft skills, communication in da'wah has

also been highlighted by Rifai and Salahuddin (2020) regarding the language used in surrendering da'wah's message. The language must grasp the communication and spoken language of the mad'u. It is to expedite the mad'u's process of learning towards the message conveyed without stress. In this matter, the researchers established that both soft skills do not naturally exist but must instead be fostered and enhanced steadily. The atmosphere and background of the da'i before they become active in the da'wah arena can also impact the growth of soft skills.

The second last feature of al-Hikmah is that da'wah must be adaptable to be in line with time. This feature is related to the da'wah approach recommended in Islam because the practical approach adapted according to the passage of time can contribute to the da'wah's success in reaching a more comprehensive range of listeners or target audience (Rahim and Hilmi 2018). The final feature of al-Hikmah is the use of relevant, clear and genuine arguments and evidence. According to Saifudin (2019),

Who cited al-Razi's perspective in highlighting that one approach of al-Hikmah is made through arguments and evidence being delivered in a logical and factual sense. Delivering one's arguments based on logic and facts is imperative to convince the target of the matter at hand; in fact, it can make the target speechless to accept the truth of the

message conveyed. The arguments and evidence presented by the da'i have also been explored by (Nazirman 2018), who contributed a particular

example in explaining logic and facts by placing the aspect of comparison (muqaran), analogy and example (amsal) and vow (aqsam) in one's argumentation.



Figure 1: Summary of the features of *al-Hikmah* based on An-Nahl 16:125: literature review

3.2. Al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah

Next is the second word mentioned in Surah An-Nahl 16:125, which is al-maw'izah al-hasanah. According to the dictionary al-mu'jam al-wasit, al-maw'izah is derived from al-wa'iz which means man yansohu wa yazkuru wa ya'muru bil ma'ruf wa yanha 'ani al-mungkar (Al- Arabiyah 2004). Meanwhile, al-maw'izah is defined as ma yu'azubihi min qaul aw fi'l (Al- Arabiyah 2004). In short, al-maw'izah relates to the delivery or act of encouraging ma'ruf and preventing wickedness. Furthermore, hasanah means didhu al-sayyi'at min qawl aw fi'l or, in other words, everything is related to the concept of sound, be it words, presentations, actions or deeds of an individual.

Commonly, the definition of al-maw'izah al-hasanah, as discussed in previous studies, is about a noble lesson (Arkiang and Adwiah 2019; Ipah Latipah 2016). In addition, al-maw'izah al-hasanah is also defined as advice or good news that moves the target's heart alongside an example or personality (Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020; Junaidi 2020; Salmadanis 2010). In fact, it does not only involve the touching of the heart or soul (Mubarak



and Halid 2020) but also in their statement that analogies also complement al-maw'izah al-hasanah. It demonstrates that the vision of al-maw'izah al-hasanah requires advice or words of goodness coupled by a noble character portrayed by a da'i and the aspect of analogies in delivering da'wah to complete the definition.

Another trait of al-maw'izah al-hasanah is that the method concentrates on da'wah's target being those of the same faith. In other words, al-Qardhawi mentioned similar faith or among Muslims (Ismail and Uyuni 2020). The feature focuses on da'wah's target was also mentioned by other researchers who stressed that the relevant targets for the method of al-maw'izah al-hasanah are the public (Safrodin 2019). As refined by researchers (Sham and Badlihisham Mohd Nasir 2009; Fuad and Siti Makbulah 2018), the public is a category for al-maw'izah al-hasanah as this population thinks at a moderate level and non-critical, reflecting their moderate level of education. Muhammad Insan Jauhari (2020); Mubarak and Halid (2020) added that the approach for the public is through pieces of advice or role-modelling with a heart-touching impression on the target in which their level of knowledge is moderate. Thus, it is apparent that, for the method of al-maw'izah al-hasanah, the category of the target audience for da'wah as determined by the majority of prior studies is the public without the mention of only Muslims or comprising of non-Muslims. Meanwhile, only a few declared that the targets should be those of similar faith.

Providing good advice is another point of al-maw'izah al-hasanah. Good advice is evident from conveying a message that produces a heart-touching influence on the target audience to ensure that they can remember its emotional force (Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020). A bit of good advice is also visible in an outlined step-by-step fashion and an argument in the language of the target themselves (Salmadanis 2010). Despite this, (Nafisah et al. 2019) maintained that they perceived good pieces of advice as not only good news or good messages, but that the messages cover guidance, lessons, tales or prohibitions, as are the contents in the Holy Qur'an. (Prianto, Hamisi, and Octaviana 2020) added that good advice is not only

to that extent but also comprise of past tales and moral values or lessons as narrated in the Holy Qur'an. Besides emphasizing good advice with a heart-touching effect and conversing the same language as that of the mad'u, al-maw'izah al-hasanah is to draw humankind closer to the Creator and aid their progress, not burdening them.

The next peculiarity highlighted in past studies for al-maw'izah al-hasanah is communication between conveying a message and the action or deed of the da'i. This point is indispensable to guarantee that delivery and action are aligned, convincing the target to accept da'wah's message more effectively. When both aspects correspond to each other, it consequently supports a heart-touching effect on the mad'u (Muhammad Insan Jauhari 2020) and transforms into why the target shifts for the better and accept the quality delivered. Junaidi (2020) established this, who emphasized that a da'i with a noble character and personality would become the additional pull that attracts the mad'u in communication. It is more interesting when the method of al-maw'izah al-hasanah is completed by factual arguments other than good pieces of advice. Muiz et al. (2018) stipulated that demonstration-based communication, which refers to someone who advocates for good, must manifest in the bits of advice given regarding the facts and the convincing data.



Figure 2: Summary of the features of al-maw'izah al-hasanah based on An-Nahl 16:125: literature review

3.3. Al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan

The final method to be explored is al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, a combination of two words which are mujadalah and ahsan. Based on the dictionary al-Mu'jam al-Wasit, the first word al-Mujadalah means al-munazhoroh li izhari al-showab bal li ilzami al-khasmi (Al-Arabiyyah 2004). In contrast, the word ahsan, a complementary to the



first word, means *fa'ala ma huwa ahsan* (Al-Arabiyyah 2004). Therefore, the general sense of the method *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* is altering one's thoughts or considering to reach the truth in which there would usually be a contrast in views among those interacting, but the discussion takes place in the most favourable of form without a fight between those associated.

The final word and term mentioned in Surah An-Nahl 16:125 is *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan*. It is the last method of *da'wah* recommended in the Holy Qur'an. This term has also been discussed in previous studies that focus on this verse. Usually, the definition of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan*, as determined by researchers, is to debate, exchange thoughts and discuss civilly (Sham and Badlihisham Mohd Nasir 2009; Safroodin 2019). (Arkiang and Adwiah 2019) added that *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* is done in an exemplary style, links forgiveness and engages the target or opponent in the best of discussion. Accordingly, in short, the meaning of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* comprises a conversation carried out in an exemplary manner that takes place between the *da'i* and *mad'u*.

As with *al-Hikmah* and *al-maw'izah al-hasanah* in which the appropriate targets of *da'wah* were discussed, the method of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* also has a determined target audience. For *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan*, the targets are those of different faith. This has been deliberated by some researchers (Mubarak and Halid 2020; Prianto, Hamisi, and Octaviana 2020) wherein *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* should be performed in a *da'wah* mission targeting those of different faith and applied in the best manner in a debate that requires the use of implicit logical and rhetorical arguments far from violence. Not only arguments are emphasised on as Muhammad Insan Jauhari (2020) said that *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* can take on three forms. *Bad al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* refers to harsh delivery, inciting the opponent's fury and the use of false arguments. The second *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* refers to *da'wah's* excellent form when it is delivered politely coupled with valid arguments accepted by the opponent. In contrast, the final *al-Mujadalah*

billati hiya ahsan takes on the best form in which *da'wah* links in an exemplary

Manner coupled with valid arguments that make the opponent speechless. Hence, logical and rhetorical thoughts complement the different forms of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* as supposedly necessary of this method. Nonetheless, Fuad and Siti Makbulah (2018) argued in which they excerpted from Sheikh Muhammad Abduh. He determined that the target of *da'wah* for *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* is the group of people between the intellectuals of *al-Hikmah* and the public or moderate and non-critical thinkers of *al-maw'izah al-hasanah*. The targets for *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* are those who can exchange thoughts and be led to think accurately in an advanced way.

In that case, the features of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan*, as decided by previous researchers, not only involve the relevant target of *da'wah*. Another feature of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* involves the formats of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* that involves a considerable fraction that asserted *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* takes on the format of dialogues or discussions. This statement is elaborated on to include the requirements for dialogues, such as the choice of polite words, effective arrangement of sentences and portrayal of courtesy (Rifai and Salahuddin 2020). A *da'i* who delivers *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* as their method of *da'wah* should not provoke the opponent or target by using displeasing or emotionally disturbing words (Mubarak and Halid 2020) regardless of their argument being valid as the *da'i* should formulate and support a peaceful atmosphere throughout a dialogue than dialogues and discussions as practical formats of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* as discussed in previous studies, question and answer (Q & A) session is another method *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* as suggested in the Holy Qur'an (Salmadanis 2010; Ipah Latipah 2016). According to Salmadanis (2010), Q & A tends to occur among intellectuals wherein the topic discussed is beyond the knowledge maintained by the target or opponent. Therefore, it is imperceptibly distinctive from the format of discussion in which the topic of knowledge discussed is within the scope of



knowledge of the target or opponent. Besides, the final feature of al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan is that those who attend the method must be aware that, in achieving the best result of al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, the objective is to look for the truth, not to win in presenting arguments (Rifai and Salahuddin 2020) in dialogues, discussions or al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. One must recognise that the objective is to search for the truth. This objective can simultaneously suppress one's emotional urge to debate for a victory. Finally, a feature of al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan is to stimulate the target or opponent into thinking and to communicate their opinions. This feature has been presented by Muhammad Insan Jauhari (2020) in the scope of education of humanity-religion. He believed it is necessary for al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan to encourage the target or opponent to think about what is being argued on and discussed between those involved in a dialogue, discussion and Q & A session.



Figure 3: Summary of the features of *al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* based on An-Nahl 16:125; literature review

4. Analysis and Discussion

Based on the above discussions and reviews on the three approaches and methods of da'wah as recommended in the Holy Qur'an, it is apparent that a da'i is provided with a series of alternatives to choose from to approach their mad'u correctly, be it by implementing the method of al-Hikmah, the method of al-maw'izah al-hasanah or the method of al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. Each method has been explained in depth through a discussion on

prior studies. It incorporates the perspectives of mufassir concerning all three methods. Moreover, studies have determined each feature for al-Hikmah, al-maw'izah al-hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan in the forms of graphics to facilitate readers' understanding of the unique features of each method overall. Based on the features of al-Hikmah as previously discussed, a da'i must possess and mirror the features for efficient delivery of da'wah, such as having soft skills, adaptive to the passage of time, and applying logical as well as factual arguments and evidence. Practicing da'wah following the mainstream is one of the features of the method of al-Hikmah. In the context of today's world, the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic actively encourages the da'i to take prompt action by utilizing social media to deliver a message of da'wah and ensuring its success in reaching the mad'u wherein the range of mad'u to receive the message can be more widespread. A clear case is a da'wah activity conducted at a mosque but includes utilizing an online sharing platform accessible by an extensive range of listeners and viewers due to the maximized use of social media Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, and WhatsApp. For example, the following two pictures depict how da'wah continuously transpires despite the pandemic situation restricting people's movements to many places.



Figure 4: Poster of a da'wah activity that took place during the COVID19 pandemic

Practicality in a da'wah activity that involved a physical meeting in a da'wah programme following the SOP; in fact, broadcast through social media is employed to cover a higher number of viewers and listeners



Then, for the method of al-maw'izah al-hasanah, the features include submitting good pieces of advice, combining them with a commendable demeanour as the appearance of the da'i and assuring the arguments delivered are factual. Based on the features listed, good advice is the essence that defines this method. In the context of advice, the method places urgency on language in meeting the mad'u. In practice, it is apparent that the effective implementation of this method is on da'wah activities towards Orang Asli Muslims in research attended by Sad and Aini (2017) in which a vital aspect highlighted by the da'i in actualising da'wah towards the group mentioned above is by ensuring the correspondence between the words of the da'i and the da'i's character. As quoted from a respondent in the study and translated afterwards, "Trust me; they have to convince the Orang Asli first. For example, it has to be (achieved through) their character and speech. (The) prove (of)[one's] words through [one's] actions." It explains that in ensuring the trust of the mad'u towards the message of the da'i, it is evident through the examples portrayed by the da'i. Meanwhile, the final method is al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, which targets an audience among non-Muslims or believers of different faiths. The features directly correlated to this method are the main aim of discussions, dialogues or Q & A carried out to find the truth and not to achieve victory for either interacting sides, and more or less involving the aspect of logic in exchanging arguments to convince the mad'u.



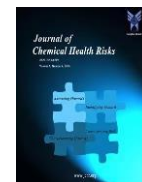
The final feature is as so because, typically, in a situation where an exchange of arguments with non-Muslims takes place, they tend to dislike when

a da'i speaks and delivers da'wah by quoting the Holy Qur'an. They consider it a reference for Muslims; logical arguments originate a contrasting nuance and act as supplements to da'wah's message as anyone with an intellect, regardless of religion, can think logically and rationally. The application of logic is one of the features of al-Hikmah in previous studies; in fact, logic is an ingredient that is the best jidal, which is the third stage of jidal as described in prior studies. As a matter of fact, in practice, the method above can be recognised in how a Muslim Indian da'i explains the concept of divinity to non-Muslims by linking Surah Al-Ikhlâs with logical and rational arguments. He stated, "If there is more than one God, what will happen? That is right, and they would fight, (they) have different opinions, different perceptions. It is sure that if there is more than one God, conflicts will take place. Thus, it is logical that there can only be one God" (Shah Kirit Kakulal Govindji, n.d.).

5. Conclusion

Based on the earlier analysis, it is confirmed that there is a need for some standard for Muslim da'i. Some of the criteria are confidence, recognising the target group, holding da'wah's skills, following the contemporary situation, and reasonable arguments. The verses 16: 125 has provided a guideline for Muslim da'i's in following the da'wah activities. Predominantly, comprehensive specifics from the contextual analysis on da'wah's activity in practice are obvious explanations from textual discussions of Surah An-Nahl 16:125 that elucidates da'wah's methods.

Ergo, the concepts of al-Hikmah, al-Maw'izah al-Hasanah and al-Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan are germane in the context of da'wah in a diversified society. The da'i is allowed to direct the activities of da'wah in line with the culture, intellectuals, and community strategies. Therefore, it is quintessential to manage an in-depth investigation in evaluating and analyzing textual contexts in the Holy Qur'an Al-Kareem from the aspect of practicality in the modern world for people to comprehend the pertinence of the verses as guidance to all Muslims.

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