
Henning Wrogemann

THE CALL TO ISLAM

(da'wa islamiyya)

A BRIEF HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY
APPROACHES



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A Brief History and Contemporary Approaches



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Introduction

1. Islamization of the World – Threat or Contribution?

When using the term “Islamization”, different people will have very different associations with it. Looking at Muslim-majority countries around the world, one might ask what such Islamization should consist of? What are the characteristics of a truly “Islamic society”? If you look around in different countries, you will notice big differences. In Iran, for example, the “Islamic Republic of Iran” was founded after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, in which a religious police force currently ensures that public order functions according to (what the government regards as) Islamic principles. This includes women being forced to wear a headscarf. There have been protests against this for years, as large numbers of people oppose the enforcement of this kind of religious norms.

Another example would be Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of Western troops and the takeover of power by the Taliban, it can be observed that the Taliban are trying to exclude women from the education sector. Iran, on the other hand, is completely different, where women currently make up more than 50 percent of university students. So what does it mean for a society to be “Islamized” when ideas about what is “Islamic” vary widely? One of the core elements of Islamization is certainly that as many people as possible in a given nation should adopt the Muslim faith.

Apart from that, however, it seems difficult to agree on common standards of “being Islamic” or “being Muslim”. But how did it come about that the call for society to be Islamized has been getting louder and louder since the 1960s? As will be shown, this is related to developments in the 20th century, when the question of national identity arose in many areas of the world with the establishment of nation states as territorial states. The “Call to Islam” was propagated in many places against governments that were perceived (by *da‘wa* movements) as unjust and a social reality that was perceived as un-Islamic.¹ The bat-

¹ The transliteration of Arabic terms into English (i. e. *da‘wa* or at some places *da‘wah*) is not always uniform, as different types of transliteration occur in the literature. – When quoting, the original source text is quoted, regardless of errors in the source text itself.

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tle cry was, for example in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, “Islam is the solution”.

Since then, there have been conflicts and struggles between regimes on the one hand and Islamist organizations on the other. The latter invoke “true Islam” and criticize and fight what they consider to be un-Islamic societies, but they also turn against capitalism and communism or Western countries in general. It is clear that many activists hope that the spread of “true Islam” will bring about a just society. However, one has to realize that over the decades many movements and organizations have discredited themselves, so that Muslim societies are deeply divided on the question of how they stand on democracy and human rights and what the path to a better future can and should look like.

At the same time, there are now *da’wa* activities and *da’wa* organizations in the diaspora, for example in North America and Europe, which feeds the fear in these areas that these are movements and organizations whose understanding of Islam or “true Islam” cannot be reconciled with the principles of a liberal, secular and democratic society. What is a hope for *da’wa* actors is therefore often perceived as a danger by other people.

Whatever one’s view of it, it is important and useful to inform oneself about the phenomenon of the Call to Islam and Islamization and to perceive the differences that can be identified here. This book intends to serve this goal. It’s about differentiation, it’s about understanding *da’wa* from the foundations of the Islamic religion, and it’s also about recognizing the range that can be observed in theological reflections and in the practical implementation of *da’wa*. Only this differentiation makes it possible to deal constructively with the question of who, based on which phenomena, believes that *da’wa* and Islamization are either a contribution to society or a threat to society.

2. The Call to Islam – Modes of Islamization

In the contemporary Islamic discussion, the word *da’wa* undoubtedly serves as a technical term for the active propagation of Islam among both Muslims and non-Muslims. From a history of religion perspective, however, we should ask whether contenting ourselves with studying the history of the concept of *da’wa* and the history of the *da’wa* discourse is sufficient for us to claim to have adequately grasped the history of the propagation of Islam. Upon closer inspection, it turns out that this is not the case. Historically speaking, the history of Islamic expansion and the use of *da’wa* terminology are not congruent. Looking at the long centuries of continual Islam expansion (roughly speaking,

For the sake of brevity, I have refrained from providing extensive references in the footnotes.

from the 10th on to the 18th centuries), we find hardly any extant evidence of *da'wa* discourses during this period. The historical findings put paid to the notion that there existed within Islam a uniform concept of *da'wah* as the active propagation of Islam. We need to ask why *da'wa* discourses were intensively pursued in certain epochs, while at other times the sources essentially remain silent. In order for us to understand these correlations, we will need to consider the sociocultural circumstances of each epoch. Furthermore, when it comes to history, we should bear in mind that much of what happens in history was never intended to happen. Many activities which ended up contributing to the propagation of Islam were not primarily intended as such.

Attempts at *da'wa* and *da'wa* discourses come to be located in the discursive field of political and social claims to power. Accordingly, *da'wa* as the call to Islam or, more pointedly, as the call to *true* Islam thus either serves to legitimize the existing balance of political power in a particular social context, or, conversely, to call it into question and to challenge it. So we must consider the question: Which sociopolitical dynamics gave rise to certain *da'wa* discourses in the first place? Who invoked the call to Islam, and with which intention? These questions are relevant both for a historical retrospective and for an interpretation of the present. As a discourse of power, the question of *da'wa* today is also about the legitimacy of political or of social power in general. The call for the implementation of a certain form of Islamicity touches on the question of the state of society and its key dynamics. These observations contribute significantly to the understanding of *da'wa* activities.

3. Methodology

With regard to methodology this study will investigate the *da'wa* material in an attempt to answer three interrelated questions. In the process, we will need to consider three contexts: (1) The way in which *da'wa* theories take recourse to theological tradition; (2) the way in which they reference the respective societal parameters; and (3) how the relationships to other religions and worldviews in their capacity as possible competitors within this context are defined.

Tradition: Every kind of *da'wa* activity must be anchored within the framework of one's religious tradition. What exactly is meant by the invitation to Islam, and what kind of Islamic practice is being called for? For Muslims, the manner in which this *da'wa* is to be carried out is specifically mandated by tradition (*sunna*) - i.e. in the literature of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*. Thus we will need to study the theological justification behind the different *da'wah* theories. Which aspects of the theological tradition receive special attention? Which motives are suppressed or disregarded? In what ways is *da'wa* theology imple-

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mented as *da'wa* actions? Which of these actions are preferred, and which are generally (on the part of other *da'wa* actors) rejected?

Society: A second line of questioning seeks to locate the theological rationales within the framework of different power discourses. Why is it appropriate in one or the other particular social context to decide on certain theologically motivated behavioral patterns? How do people view the link between *da'wa* activity and the social environment? How do they interpret this environment from a theological point of view? How do they justify the strategies used to transform this environment along the lines of a progressive Islamization?

Religions and worldviews: If other religions and worldviews in a given social context compete for how people view reality, then how are these religions and worldviews themselves interpreted, appreciated, or criticized? How do people define their relationship to these religions? How do they interpret their truth claims? What possibilities do they see for dialogue with these religions? Which forms of behavior do they advocate or mandate when it comes to inter-religious encounters or relations? Is it possible to come up with perspectives allowing for the coexistence of these different religions on a permanent basis?

4. Sources

The present study is based – on the one hand – on source texts in English, Arabic and German, and on the other hand a wealth of detailed studies on the history of *da'wa* as well as on various *da'wa* activists, *da'wa* organizations and *da'wa* institutions. The material is listed in the bibliography. A much more extensive bibliography can be found in my habilitation thesis “Missionarischer Islam und gesellschaftlicher Dialog” (“Missionary Islam and Dialogue in Civil Society”) that appeared in 2006.² Since then, numerous other studies have been published, but none that provide an overview of the overall topic.³ This study aims to close this gap. It’s about different forms of *da'wa* in history, about *da'wa* organizations, *da'wa* theologies / theories and *da'wa* approaches

² H. Wrogemann, *Missionarischer Islam und gesellschaftlicher Dialog. Der Ruf zum Islam im internationalen sunnitischen Diskurs* (Frankfurt/M.: Lembeck, 2006), 451–500. (“Missionary Islam and Dialogue in Civil Society. The Call to Islam in International Sunni Discourse”)

³ Among the latest studies cf. I. Weismann; J. Malik (eds.), *Culture of Da'wa. Islamic Preaching in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press 2020); M. J. Kuiper, *Da'wa and Other Religions. Indian Muslims and the Modern Resurgence of Global Islamic Activism* (London / New York: Routledge 2018).

within Sunni Islam. However, the topic of “*da‘wa* on the Internet” cannot be discussed here.⁴

5. Structure, Content and Aim of this Book

This study subscribes to the hermeneutical principle that a religion is to be understood to the greatest extent possible on the basis of its own presuppositions. In *Part I* we will therefore begin by outlining the different phases of the expansion of Islam up to the early twentieth century using a history of religion typology. In the process, we shall need to highlight the fundamental changes the Islamic world has undergone since the nineteenth century.

In *Part II*, we will consider some of the main *da‘wa* movements of the twentieth century, namely the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt), Tablīghī Jamā‘at (Pakistan, India and beyond) and Jamā‘at-i Islāmī (Pakistan). This is not only a matter of different *da‘wa* strategies, but also of their respective organizational and institutional manifestations. We will end this part by summarizing new emphases in the *da‘wa* discourse of the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Part III will present four approaches among contemporary *da‘wa* theologies. These are represented by internationally renowned Muslims coming from different contexts of the Islamic world of Sunni Islam, most of whom are associated with influential *da‘wa* institutions.

Part IV will outline the developments of the early twenty-first century, namely the strands of a Political *da‘wa*, an Apolitical *da‘wa*, a Jihādi *da‘wa* and a Popular *da‘wa*. We will conclude with comparative observations and a discussion of the consequences of contemporary *da‘wa* theologies and *da‘wa* activities for the context of plural societies of democratic countries.

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⁴ F. Harms, *Cyberda‘wa. Islamische Mission im Internet: Voraussetzungen, Analyse und Vergleich von da‘wa-Sites im World Wide Web* (Düren: Shaker Verlag, 2007). (“Cyber-da‘wa. Islamic Mission in the Internet”)

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such as Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon and Ethiopia. My hope is that scientific studies will help to better identify, describe and address challenges in the field of interreligious relationships. A task that remains urgent.

I. Da‘wa from the Beginnings Until the 19th century

§ 1 The Call to Islam in the Qur’ān and in Early Muslim History

The basis for the Islamic understanding of cross-border proclamation is found in the Qur’ān. Consequently, we should proceed by investigating the semantic field this opens up: What do we find when we study *da‘wa* in the Qur’ān?

1. Da‘wa in the Qur’ān

The word *da‘wa* is derived from the verb *da‘ā*, which has many possible nuances of meaning.⁵ Derivations of the root *da‘ā* occur in different grammatical contexts in more than 200 places in the Qur’ān.⁶ In the *primary and profane* sense, *da‘wa* means something like an *invitation*, or possibly a *call*, an *appeal*, or a *summons*.

(1) In the field of *interpersonal relationships*, the stem is used in a range of different contexts, all of which can be simplified into three categories: Firstly, *Da‘wa* can be understood as *expressing a wish* or *request*. For example, *da‘wa* can be used to express an invitation to a meal or a wedding; in this sense, generally speaking, it refers to the proffered invitation itself. Secondly, the verb *da‘ā* can be used to express a direct *summons*. Thirdly, it can be used reflexively in the sense of *wishing* for what one would like to receive. It should be noted that in daily life, it is possible for the *call* to be expressed by something

⁵ M. Mendel, The concept of “ad-Da‘wa al-Islamiyya”. Towards a discussion of the Islamic reformist political terminology, in: *Archiv Orientali* 63 (1995), 286–304; P. E. Walker, Art. Da‘wah: Qur’anic Concepts, in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 343–346.

⁶ E. M. Badawi; M. A. Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage* (London/Boston: Brill, 2008), 307–309.

other than a human agent, such as a personified force of nature. For example, a flame of fire can be said to call out to people.

Da'wa has a different emphasis when *used as a performative expression*. The word can mean an *oath*, for instance, i.e. a binding word spoken between two persons or groups, but it can also mean a *vow*, i.e. a voluntary obligation. The spoken word thus enacts a powerful or legal reality. It can denote a *curse* as well.

The word *da'wa* also has a third possible meaning when *used in the legal sense*: In the legal context, *da'wa* serves as a technical term for *pressing charges*. Since pressing charges is a necessary first step in taking legal action, *da'wa* can also refer in a broader sense to the judicial *process* as a whole.

(2) In the *relationship between God and human beings*, we can distinguish between different constellations. Firstly, *human beings calling to God* (in prayer), and also, conversely, *God appealing to human beings*. Secondly, the Qur'ān also speaks of a series of *prophets propagating God's call*, culminating in *the prophet Muḥammad*. The concept of the Islamic *umma* implies the ongoing propagation of the call after *Muḥammad's* death, since the *umma* is obliged to invite people to Allah.

(a) According to the Qur'ān, *Allah* extends the actual *call to the people*. In this address, he summons human beings to answer to him (and him alone). The *locus classicus* of this understanding is Sura 13:14: "The only true prayer is to Him: those they pray to besides Him give them no answer any more than water reaches the mouth of someone who simply stretches out his hands for it – it cannot do so: the prayers of the disbelievers are all in vain."⁷

True prayer (Arab. *da'wat 'al-ḥaqq*) is therefore the only possible way for people to respond to the appeal of Allah. Elsewhere, this is expressed positively in the phrase: "God invites [everyone] to the Home of Peace, and guides whoever He will to a straight path." (10:25) To walk the right path means to submit to God and His will, and thus to become a Muslim. In this way, the Qur'ān establishes a close link between *da'wa* and Islam. The intended response of the invitation is to confess that there is no God except God. *Da'wa* thus embodies the epitome of Islam, just as Islam is inconceivable without *da'wa*.

(b) In addition to the root meaning of *da'wa* as *invitation*, it can also be used in the sense of a *call*. A call in the sense of an *appeal* signifies *prayer* as the *invocation of Allah*. In Sura 2:186, *da'wa* is understood as prayer addressed to Allah: "If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I respond to those who call Me, so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may

⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the Qur'ān in this volume are taken from the following edition: M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Unless otherwise indicated, phrases in square brackets within these quotations are taken directly from the original.

be guided.” The phrase *those who call Me* (or: *the Call of the Caller* = *da'wata ad-dā'i* in Arabic) refers to people praying to Allah. Muslims respond to the call of Allah by calling in prayer on him alone, and by worshiping him their entire lives. According to Islamic teaching, the true worship of God can be seen by way of example already in the persons of the pre-Islamic prophets. In this sense, *da'wa* therefore also refers to the prayers of the rightly-led prophets who predated *Muḥammad* – to the prayers of, say, *Moses* and *Aaron*, or to the prayers of other prophets like *Abraham*.

Calling people to be guided down the *right path* presupposes the existence of false paths and thus also the possible invocation of false gods. The Qur'ān repeatedly warns against the invocation of false gods or powers. Those who call on other gods besides Allah act in vain, because they cannot hear them (26:72) or intercede on behalf of anybody (43:86); on the contrary, such people will have to give an account to God (23:117) and should expect God's punishment (26:213). To invoke some other deity besides Allah is therefore as futile as it is harmful. The fact that people allow themselves to be led down false paths is due not only to their refusal to listen, but also to the call of Satan, of which Sura 14:22 says: “When everything has been decided, Satan will say, ‘God gave you a true promise. I too made promises but they were false ones: I had no power over you except to call you, and you responded to my call, so do not blame me; blame yourselves.’”

(c) The call itself is extended by Allah, but he sends *prophets*, each of whom extends an invitation from God to the nation from which he comes and to which he is sent. Each prophet has his own *da'wa* which he is instructed to extend to a particular nation. Hence people should not only worship God alone, but they should also respond to the *da'wa* of his prophets in which God's call manifests itself. However, a common factor in the stories of the prophets is that people did not respond to their call. Noah is said to have lamented as follows: “My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but the more I call them, the further they run away: every time I call them, so that you may forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection, and grow more insolent and arrogant.” (71:5-7)

The concept of the prophetic *da'wa* clearly shows that the call is made with the intention that an entire nation should respond to the call of Allah, i. e. follow it. In essence, this is not about an individualistic event, but about a collective one.

(d) *Muḥammad* is also referred to as the *caller of Allah*. According to the Qur'ān, he is instructed to carry out his mission to his own nation just as former prophets did to theirs. *Muḥammad* has his own *da'wa*. This is described in Sura 23:73 as follows: “*You call them to a straight path.*” *Da'wa* is thus the invitation or the call to the *right* or *straight* path. The straight path is the true religion itself. *Da'wa* is thus equated with the straight path and the religion of Islam.

This call also evokes *criticism and opposition*. According to the teaching of the Qur'ān, *Muḥammad* had to endure criticism just like the prophets before him. Sura 40:41–43 reads (presumably, this is a statement by an Egyptian believer): “My people, why do I call you to salvation when you call me to the Fire? You call me to disbelieve in God and to associate with Him things of which I have no knowledge; I call you to the Mighty, the Forgiving One. There is no doubt that what you call me to serve is not fit to be invoked either in this world or the Hereafter: our return is to God alone, and it will be the rebels who will inhabit the Fire.”

Both the prophets and the believers are to hold their ground in the face of this criticism and opposition, and to respond in a very specific way. One of the most frequently cited Surahs in this context, Sura 16:125, reads as follows: “[Prophet], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Argue with them in the most courteous way, for your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way and who is rightly guided.” These words are addressed to *Muḥammad* in view of his opponents. *In terms of its content*, this appeal is defined in greater detail in Sura 3:101–104, where it says: “Whoever holds fast to God will be guided to the straight path. You who believe, be mindful of God, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment. ... Remember God’s favour to you: ... you became brothers by His grace ... Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and for’s what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones.”

This text is about a community of Muslims (*umma* in Arabic) which is itself determined by the good and accordingly invites (or is supposed to invite) others to this very good. *Da'wa* serves the worship of the only God in a communal order which corresponds to his will. It thus comprises not only individual, but also and especially corporate aspects. So *da'wa* and *umma* are therefore closely interrelated.

(e) In Sura 3:104–110, the concept of the *da'wa* is associated with the idea that those who accept the *da'wa* of Allah are joined to form an *umma* of believers. The text reads: “(104) Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones. ... (110) [Believers], you are the best community singled out for people: you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in God.”

Here the concept of a *da'wa* (realized by a single prophet) is broadened to incorporate the concept of a communal observation of *da'wa*. The link between *da'wa* and *umma* may be seen as a development within the Qur'ānic *da'wa* theology. This concept can essentially only be found in the Medinan Surahs dating from the years 622–632 AD.

This give rise to two things: (1) Bearer of the *da'wah*: After *Muḥammad*'s death, the *da'wa* is assigned to the *umma* as a whole. (2) The content of the *da'wa* is more narrowly defined: What characterizes the *umma* is that it *urges*

what is right and forbids what is wrong. (3:104) In a way, we can say that when rightly led, the *umma* itself is *da'wa*, not only in the sense that its assignment is the propagation of the invitation of Allah, but also in the sense that it incorporates the essential directive of this *da'wa*, namely *to urge what is right and to forbid what is wrong*. Hence *da'wa* should be understood as an invitation to the *umma*, precisely because the *umma* is characterized by doing what is right. This distinction tends to broaden the concept of the *da'wa*, making it rather unwieldy. The term becomes imprecise, and all the more so since its essential directive – to urge what is right etc. – makes it appear to be an expression of this essence, namely of religious law. This implies that instances where *da'wa* is equated with *umma* or *sharī'a* may therefore be understood as conditioned by the conceptual link between these three entities.

(f) For human existence, the call to God reaches its objective when the dead are called from this earth. After the *call from the earth*, which is also carried out by angels on behalf of God, comes the time in the grave, followed by the call to the resurrection. According to tradition, and with reference to Sura 30:25 (“*In the end, you will all emerge when He calls you from the earth*”), this call will be uttered by the angel Gabriel. In terms of systematics, we come full circle: The call to worship God leads to submission to the will of God in this world, transitions into the call from this world, and comes to its conclusion as people are called into God's world in the beyond.

(g) In the Qur'ān, messengers of God are referred to not only as callers (*du'āt* in Arabic), but also using various other terms. Our context unfortunately prohibits us from carrying out an in-depth analysis of these terms here. Suffice it to say that the list of terms includes the following (by no means exhaustive) selection:

- *rasūl* (messenger): Again and again it is emphasized that to each nation a messenger was sent. “We sent a messenger (*rasūl*) to every community (*umma*), saying, ‘Worship God and shun false gods.’” (16:36)
- *shahīd* (witness): Words derived from the root *sh-h-d* occur frequently in the Qur'ān and constitute an entire *theology of witness*. The following verse deserves mention as an important reference: “The day will come when We raise up a witness (*shahīd*) from every community (*umma*), when the disbelievers will not be allowed to make excuses or amends.” (16:84)
- *nabī* (prophet): All the different aspects of being sent are reflected by the character of the prophet, but they are certainly not limited to prophets. “Mankind was a single community, then God sent prophets to bring good news and warning, and with them He sent the Scripture with the Truth, to judge between people in their disagreements.” (2:213)
- *nadīr* (warner): “Whenever We sent a messenger before you to warn a township, those corrupted by wealth said, in the same way, ‘We saw our fathers following this tradition; we are only following in their footsteps.’” (43:23)

20 I. Da'wa from the Beginnings Until the 19th century

- *bashīr* (messenger of joy): “We have sent you with the Truth as a bearer of good news (*bashīr*) and warning (*nadīr*). Every community (*umma*) has been sent a warner.” (35:24)

The *umma* itself can be described as *shahīd*: “We have made you [believers] into a just community (*umma wasāṭan*), so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you.” (2:143) To paraphrase, the community finds itself between the revealed guidance on the one hand and the guidance which is to be proclaimed by warning and witness on the other hand. Witness becomes the task of the entire *umma* of Muslims. This is tantamount to the task of extending the invitation to Allah. The entire *umma* of the faithful is expected to extend this invitation: “Be a community (*umma* - i.e. a community of believers) that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones.” (3:104)

Another expression which describes the task of the emissaries in general is the phrase “delivery of the message.” This is expressed in Arabic by forms of the verb *b-l-gh* (especially Form IV). The delivery of the Qur’ānic message is generally described as a commission given to the prophets. This commission flows from God’s unalterable decision and finds its culmination in *Muḥammad*: “This was God’s practice with those who went before - God’s command must be fulfilled - (39) [and with all] those who deliver God’s messages and fear only Him and no other: (...) (40) Muhammad is (...) the seal of the prophets.” (33:38-40) The commission is universal. This is expressed in the fact that the delivery of the message is linked to the statement that a prophet has been sent to every nation.

However, the broad scope of the topic of propagation in the Qur’ān and the diverse terminology employed do not alter the fact that in Islamic history, the term *da’wa* increasingly came to serve as the technical term for the spread of Islam. Although various other words could be used to explain the term, it was never sidelined or replaced by any of them. In the next section, we will attempt to trace the development of the term on the basis of various phases of the history of the spread of Islam.

2. A Short History of the Early Expansion of Islam

The *history of the spread of Islam* has always attracted the attention of Western authors. For a long time, Islam was said to have spread using “fire and the sword.” In contrast, at the end of the 19th century, the English Islamic scholar *T.W. Arnold* argued in his work *The Preaching of Islam* that Islam had expanded

in an essentially peaceful manner.⁸ This may be, as scholars like Tilman Nagel and David Cook have shown, a rather onesided opinion.⁹ Recent research, especially that of Englishman *W. Montgomery Watt*, has shown that it is in fact necessary to distinguish between the spread of Islamic rule on the one hand and the spread of the Islamic religion on the other.¹⁰ He argues that the spread of Islamic rule has not *in and of itself* led to efforts to convert indigenous population groups. This thesis has been further substantiated and elaborated upon by quantitative research, in particular by the work of *Richard W. Bulliet*.¹¹ *Bulliet* offers a detailed analysis of individual areas on the basis of lists of names. His analysis shows that the Islamization of areas ranging from North Africa to Iran was a lengthy and exceedingly complex process. According to *Bulliet*, it was the establishment of an institutionally secure and privileged “Islamic milieu” in particular which led to an increase in conversions.

While the term *daʿwa* in the Qurʾān is essentially linked to divine revelation and the call to people to submit to the will of God, its meaning changed over time to the effect that the term took on political and legal connotations. These changes occurred after *Muḥammad* and his companions emigrated from Mecca to *Yathrib* (later called Medina) in the event known as the *hijra*. In order to maintain a basis for communal life in Medina, *Muḥammad* first concluded an alliance agreement between the so-called *emigrants* (*muhājirūn* in Arabic) and the tribes already living in the city of *Yathrib*. This alliance agree-

⁸ T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam. A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 2. ed. (London, 1913).

⁹ T. Nagel, *Muhammad's Mission: Religion, Politics, and Power at the Birth of Islam* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020); D. Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, 2nd ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 13: “Because of the miracles of the conquest [during the first two centuries of Islam, HW] jihad emerged as one of the core elements of Islam. Without the conquests, religion would not have had the opportunity to spread in the way it did, nor would it have been the attractant that it was. Islam was not in fact >spread by the sword< – conversion was not forced on the occupants of conquered territories – but the conquests created the necessary preconditions for the spread of Islam. With only a few exceptions (East Africa, Southeast Asia, and to some extent Central Asia beyond Transoxania), Islam has become the majority faith only in territories that were conquered by force. Thus, the conquests and the doctrine that motivated these conquests – jihad – were crucial to the development of Islam. While the Qurʾān provides the basis for the doctrine of jihad, it is the tradition literature of Islam that describes how Muslims perceived it as they were fighting and what they were fighting for.”

¹⁰ W. M. Watt, *Islamic political thought: the basic concepts* (Edinburgh, 1968); *W. M. Watt; A. T. Welch*, *Der Islam I. Mohammed und die Frühzeit – Islamisches Recht – Religiöses Leben* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980).

¹¹ R. W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period. An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge / London, 1979).