



## Love and Moral Boundaries of Religion as a Reflection of Cultural Da'wah in the “Haramkah” Song by Melly Goeslaw

Bangun Krismu Parikesit<sup>1</sup>, Fakhruddin Mudzakkir<sup>2</sup>, M. Ibnu Naufal Maskuri<sup>3</sup>  
Airlangga University<sup>1,2</sup>, Islamic College of Mulia Astuti Wonogiri<sup>3</sup>

Correspondence Author:

**Bangun Krismu Parikesit** Telp: 087793646732

E-mail: [bangun.krismu.parikesit-2024@pasca.unair.ac.id](mailto:bangun.krismu.parikesit-2024@pasca.unair.ac.id)

### Abstrak

#### Kata kunci:

Cinta, Dakwah  
Kultural, Musik  
Populer, Moral  
Agama, Melly  
Goeslaw

*Dalam konteks masyarakat modern, dakwah Islam menghadapi tantangan dalam menyampaikan nilai-nilai moral dan spiritual secara relevan di tengah dominasi budaya populer dan media hiburan. Musik populer, yang sering dipersepsikan sebagai ruang profan, kerap dipertanyakan kemampuannya sebagai medium dakwah yang efektif dan tidak dogmatis. Berangkat dari persoalan tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis lagu “Haramkah” karya Melly Goeslaw sebagai refleksi dakwah kultural yang menyampaikan nilai-nilai moral Islam melalui media musik populer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis teks lirik, yang dikombinasikan dengan kerangka teori komunikasi Islam dan dakwah kultural. Fokus utama penelitian adalah bagaimana konsep cinta dan batas moral agama diinterpretasikan secara estetis dalam lirik lagu, serta bagaimana pesan dakwah hadir secara reflektif dan humanis tanpa bersifat dogmatis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu “Haramkah” merepresentasikan pergulatan batin manusia modern antara keinginan cinta dan kesadaran moral, di mana liriknya menegaskan pentingnya pengendalian diri dan penyerahan hati kepada Tuhan. Musik berfungsi sebagai medium komunikasi emosional yang menyatukan pesan moral, pengalaman afektif, dan kesadaran religius pendengar. Lagu ini memperlihatkan dialektika antara agama dan budaya populer, di mana nilai-nilai Islam diartikulasikan melalui bentuk yang estetis, mudah diterima, dan relevan dengan kehidupan masyarakat urban. Secara implikatif, “Haramkah” menegaskan potensi dakwah kultural dalam membangun kesadaran moral dan spiritual masyarakat modern, serta memperluas pemahaman tentang transformasi dakwah Islam di era media dan seni populer.*

## Abstract

### Keywords:

Love, Cultural  
Da'wah,  
Popular Music,  
Religious  
Morality, Melly  
Goeslaw

In the context of modern society, Islamic da'wah faces significant challenges in conveying moral and spiritual values in ways that remain relevant amid the dominance of popular culture and entertainment media. Popular music, often perceived as a profane cultural space, is frequently questioned in terms of its capacity to function as an effective and non-dogmatic medium of da'wah. Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyze the song "*Haramkah*" by Melly Goeslaw as a reflection of cultural da'wah that communicates Islamic moral values through popular music. This study employs a qualitative approach using lyrical text analysis, combined with the theoretical framework of Islamic communication and cultural da'wah. The main focus is on how concepts of love and religious moral boundaries are aesthetically interpreted within the song's lyrics, as well as how da'wah messages are presented in a reflective and humanistic manner rather than in a dogmatic form. The findings indicate that "*Haramkah*" represents the inner struggle of modern individuals between romantic desire and moral consciousness, with the lyrics emphasizing the importance of self-restraint and the surrender of the heart to God. Music functions as a medium of emotional communication that integrates moral messages, affective experiences, and the listener's religious awareness. The song illustrates a dialectical relationship between religion and popular culture, in which Islamic values are articulated through aesthetic forms that are accessible and relevant to urban life. Implications of this study highlight the potential of cultural da'wah in fostering moral and spiritual awareness in modern society, while also expanding scholarly understanding of the transformation of Islamic da'wah in the era of media and popular arts.

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Indonesian popular music cannot be separated from the social and spiritual dynamics of its society (Prasetyo, 2020). Music, as a form of cultural communication, is not only a medium of entertainment but also a vehicle for the expression of values, morals, and ideologies that are intertwined in the collective consciousness of society (Khadavi, 2014). In this context, music is a social text that contains representations of religious values, morality, and individual struggles with the prevailing norm system. When a song presents a theme of love that intersects with religious values, it creates an interesting reflective space to be researched, because it contains a dialectic between personal desires and religious moral limits. This dialectic is what makes music not only an aesthetic product, but also a cultural field of da'wah that represents the moral views of modern society.

In the framework of Islamic communication, the theme raised by Melly Goeslaw can be understood as a form of cultural da'wah, namely the delivery of Islamic values through popular media that is close to people's daily lives. This kind of da'wah is not dogmatic, but communicative and reflective. Popular music has become a strategic medium because it is able to penetrate age limits, social class, and even ideological affiliations. The song "Haramkah" is not just a form of entertainment, but a discursive space where moral and religious values are renegotiated in the context of modernity. This shows that da'wah is not always present through the pulpit and religious texts, but also through works of art that touch the emotional side of human beings (Yusuf, 2018).

The issue of love in Islam itself is not a simple theme. He is always surrounded by the ambiguity between spirituality and sensuality, between halal and haram (Muhammad, 2021). When Melly Goeslaw wrote the lyrics "Is it haram for me to love her?", she was not only talking about forbidden love in the context of human relationships, but also raising theological questions about the boundaries between feelings and deeds. This question becomes relevant in the midst of urban society which is often faced with a moral dilemma, how to express love without violating religious values? Thus, this song not only depicts personal anxieties, but also represents the collective moral struggle of contemporary Muslim society.

In addition, it is also important to look at Melly Goeslaw's position as a female figure in the Indonesian music industry. As a creator and singer, she expresses women's voices that are often marginalized in religious discourse. Through the song "Haramkah", Melly not only voices love, but also presents an empathetic and reflective moral perspective on women's experiences. This approach makes the song part of a gender-sensitive da'wah discourse, where Islamic values are articulated humanistically and contextually. He showed that spiritual sensitivity can go hand in hand with social and humanitarian awareness.

Theoretically, this research is also relevant to the Islamic cultural communication approach, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the message of da'wah in the context of local culture and popular media. Da'wah cannot be separated from the medium it uses, because each medium brings its own style, code, and audience (Irawan, 2025). In this case, popular music is a strategic ground for the delivery of moral messages that are not rigid, but adaptive to the emotional language of society. The song "Haramkah" reflects how Islamic values can dialogue with modern aesthetics without losing their ethical substance.

Previous studies that examined Melly Goeslaw's work have generally focused on the gender dimension and expression of feminism, as seen in the study of the song "Why When I Am a Woman" by A. Sari in the journal *Alinea* (Sari, 2024), which highlights women's resistance to patriarchal stereotypes as well as criticism of social restrictions on women's roles in popular culture. Melly is seen as a figure who uses music to articulate women's voices and feminist consciousness, presenting an emancipatory message behind the aesthetic of her romantic songs. However, these studies have not much associated Melly's work with the dimension of cultural da'wah and religious morality as a form of spiritual communication in the context of popular music. This is where the novelty of this research lies. The study entitled "Love and the Moral Limits of Religion as a Reflection of Cultural Da'wah in the Haramkah Song by Melly Goeslaw" offers a new perspective by combining Islamic communication approaches and popular cultural studies, presenting a reading that songs are not just personal expressions or social criticism, but also a medium of cultural da'wah that conveys moral messages about love, loyalty, and religious boundaries in modern life. Thus, this research expands the realm of contemporary da'wah studies that are in contact with popular culture while enriching the literature on Islamic communication and religious music that still rarely highlights music as a reflective and transformative means.

Thus, the study of the song "Haramkah" is not just a study of music, but a study of religious communication that explores the relationship between artistic expression and Islamic morality. Analysis of the lyrics, social context, and listener reception can open up new understandings of how Islam adapts to the modern world. This research seeks to show that through music, the value of da'wah can be conveyed aesthetically, persuasively, and touching spiritual awareness without losing its moral authority. Based on the description above, this research is important to understand how love and religious moral boundaries are represented in the context of cultural da'wah through the song "Haramkah" by Melly Goeslaw. By examining it from the perspective of Islamic communication, this research is expected to enrich the discourse on the transformation of da'wah in the modern era, as well as show that the expression of art and spirituality can synergize with each other in building people's moral awareness. Music, in this case, is not just entertainment, but also a spiritual space that teaches humans to love with awareness and interpret prohibitions with wisdom.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method based on a semiotic approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to

understand the symbolic meanings contained in the song text, not to measure the phenomenon numerically. Through this method, the researcher seeks to interpret the moral, spiritual, and da'wah messages presented in the song "Haramkah" by Melly Goeslaw. An analysis was carried out on lyric texts as cultural objects full of meaning, with emphasis on the process of interpreting signs and symbols that reflect the values of love, religious moral boundaries, and reflection on cultural da'wah in the context of Indonesian popular music. Thus, the focus of this research is not on the intention of the songwriter, but on the meaning born from the interaction between the text and the cultural context of the community.

The object of this research is the lyrics of the song "Haramkah" by Melly Goeslaw, which is analyzed as a text of religious communication in popular media. The data used are sourced from secondary documents and literature, such as official lyric texts, online media articles, and scientific studies that discuss the themes of cultural da'wah and religious music. Data collection is carried out through documentation techniques and literature studies, namely by studying the text of songs in depth and placing them in the social and religious context of modern Indonesian society (Rezky et al., 2025). This approach allows researchers to understand the message of da'wah implied through symbols, diction, and lyrical narratives without the need to conduct direct interviews with the songwriter, because the data analyzed is a public text that has been circulated and has a culturally formed social meaning.

In the analysis process, this study uses Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model which views signs as a triadic relationship between representations (the form of signs), objects (objects referred to by signs), and interpretants (meanings that arise from interpretation) (Rorong, 2024). Every element in the lyrics, whether words, metaphors, or sentence structures, is analyzed as a sign that carries a certain moral and spiritual message. For example, the word "haramkah" is analyzed not just as a statement of prohibition, but as a reflective sign that opens up a space for contemplation of moral boundaries in love. Analysis is carried out hermeneutically, namely by understanding the text through the social, cultural, and religious context of the society that surrounds it (Sibarani et al., 2025). Through this framework, the research seeks to reveal the message of da'wah that is conveyed implicitly through the medium of popular music.

To maintain the validity and credibility of the data, the researcher uses the technique of triangulation of theories and literature sources. Theoretical triangulation is carried out by combining the framework of Islamic communication, cultural da'wah theory, and semiotics

so that the interpretation of meaning becomes more comprehensive. Meanwhile, the triangulation of sources is carried out by comparing the results of text analysis with relevant literature such as previous research, academic articles, and media studies that discuss Melly Goeslaw's work and contemporary religious music. The analysis was carried out systematically through three stages, identification of symbols and themes, interpretation of religious meanings, and synthesis of cultural da'wah messages. Thus, this method provides a strong scientific basis for interpreting how love and religious moral boundaries are represented in the song "Haramkah" as a form of contextual and reflective da'wah communication.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Cultural Da'wah and the Transformation of Islamic Communication in the Popular Era

The development of Islamic communication in the contemporary century shows a paradigmatic shift from the traditional top-down and unidirectional da'wah model to a more dialogical, contextual, and cultural model. This change is not just a shift in medium, but an epistemic transformation in how religious messages are produced, distributed, and received (Alfiyatul et al., 2025). Da'wah no longer only places clerics or preachers as the only source of meaning, on the contrary, cultural actors, artists, musicians, filmmakers, and even online communities play an important role in reformulating religious discourse. In this context, the term cultural da'wah emerged as an analytical concept that emphasizes aspects of popular culture as an arena for reproduction and negotiation of religious values.

Cultural da'wah is not just about moving religious content into the form of entertainment, it demands the recontextualization of religious discourse to be relevant to the aesthetic language, social rhythms, and emotional sensitivity of contemporary audiences. Conceptually, cultural da'wah places the medium as a persuasive actor that has its own affordance, namely the ability to frame messages through symbols, narratives, and affective experiences (Fabriar, 2024). Music, as a sensory audio medium, allows moral and theological messages to be conveyed through a combination of lyrics, melodies, and vocal performativity thus facilitating an emotional resonance that traditional ceremonial rhetoric does not easily achieve.

Contemporary Islamic communication approaches that adopt cultural perspectives also emphasize the importance of contextual hermeneutics in reading religious texts as well as their manifestations in cultural practice (Alawiyah, 2024). In practice, cultural da'wah

emphasizes that the meaning of religion is an intersubjective process influenced by the social, economic, and aesthetic conditions of a community (Akilah et al., 2025). Therefore, an effective da'wah message is one that is able to adapt to local idioms using symbols, metaphors, and artistic genres that are familiar to the audience without losing their ethical and theological substance. From the perspective of persuasion theory and media culture, cultural da'wah works on two levels, cognitive (the delivery of arguments and norms) and affective (building emotional bonds and identities). Popular music occupies this affective space effectively because it involves collective memory, aesthetics of pleasure, and intimate consumption practices. A song can be a collective memory device that transports religious values into daily routines from playback on a personal device to use as a soundtrack to emotional experiences so that those values undergo cultural naturalization (Lestari, 2019).

However, this transformation is not without problems. Cultural da'wah faces a dilemma between commercialization and authenticity, when religious values are packaged in a commercial format, there is a risk of reducing the meaning or instrumentality of the message for market purposes. This critique demands an analytical framework that is sensitive to the relationship of economic power in the production of religious culture, who has the capacity to produce, who controls the narrative, and how market conditions determine the form of da'wah messages. Therefore, the analysis of cultural da'wah must integrate the political dimension of the economy of popular cultural production and not just textual aspects. In the Indonesian context, where religion plays a central role in social and political life, cultural da'wah has special urgency (Rohim, 2024). Popular media has become a field for the struggle for religious meaning that influences public discourse from private moral issues to social policies. Therefore, the study of cultural da'wah is not only relevant for the study of communication and art, but also important for the study of the sociology of religion and public policy because it describes how religious values are reconstructed and internalized in everyday cultural practices.

In conclusion, cultural da'wah represents a form of transformation of Islamic communication that is adaptive to today's language and aesthetics, it utilizes popular media including music as a channel of persuasion that works through emotional resonance and symbolic recontextualization. To adequately examine this phenomenon, critical attention is needed to market production relations, variations in social reception, and the integration of interdisciplinary theories. Only with such an approach can cultural da'wah be understood not just as a communication technique, but as a cultural practice that reshapes the religious discourse and experience of modern society.

## Popular Music as a Space for Aesthetic Da'wah and Spiritual Reflection

Popular music has a strategic position in the modern communication landscape because it works not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a medium for conveying values and ideologies (Hidayatullah, 2017). In the context of Islam, popular music has become a new forum for aesthetic da'wah, namely da'wah that relies on the power of taste and symbols, not just normative arguments. This phenomenon shows how religiosity can be present through the form of aesthetic experiences, sounds, harmony, and lyrics that evoke spiritual awareness without having to explicitly quote verses or hadiths. Music, thus, acts as a liminal space between the sacred and the profane, where Islamic values interact with modern sensibilities.

Historically, religious music in Indonesia has evolved along with social dynamics and media technology. If in the 1990s da'wah through music was synonymous with nasyid or kasidah groups, then in the 2000s until now, a new wave of religious pop music has emerged that is more personal and reflective (AMALIA et al., 2025). This type of music is not only about obedience, but also about inner struggles, doubts, and the search for spiritual meaning. Artists like Melly Goeslaw display a face of religiosity that is humanist that is not rigid, but close to the existential experience of urban humans. This approach expands the meaning of da'wah from simply conveying teachings, to an effort to build empathy and self awareness.

The main strength of popular music as an aesthetic preaching space lies in its ability to process collective emotions. Lyrics and melodies serve as signifiers that activate the association of religious meanings in the listener's mind. Soft melodies and minor harmonies, for example, are often used to create a contemplative feel that leads the listener to an introspective mood (Bramantyo, 2017). In the theory of musical semiotics, the spiritual experience is born from the relationship between the musical structure, the lyrical text, and the social context that frames its reception. In other words, music is not just a beautiful sound, but a symbolic construction that moves consciousness.

In Melly Goeslaw's work, the aesthetic and spiritual aspects often merge. Melly is known for her expressive style that combines emotional honesty with moral reflection. The song "Haramkah", for example, does not feature a religious message directly, but invites listeners to reflect on the boundaries between love and moral prohibition. The aesthetic of the lyrics is ambivalent, romantic as well as religious, building a space for dialogue between human feelings and divine norms. It is at this point that aesthetic da'wah works not through instruction, but through the experience of taste that fosters spiritual awareness. This kind of

phenomenon shows that da'wah through popular music does not always have to be verbal or dogmatic. The spirituality born of music is often affective and sublime, transcending the boundaries of discursive rationality. Music can touch the deepest side of humanity, loneliness, longing, and the need for meaning (Alexander & Utami, 2024). In the Islamic tradition itself, this kind of spiritual expression is not new. Sufis since the Middle Ages have used music and poetry as a means of getting closer to God (Hanif & Fathy, 2023). Thus, the practice of aesthetic da'wah through popular music can be seen as a contemporary form of Sufi spirituality adapted in the context of modern media culture.

Apart from being a means of spiritual expression, popular music also serves as a space of resistance to the formalization of religion. In a society that often judges religiosity based on rituals or outward symbols, music opens up alternative paths to understanding faith as a fluid and personal inner experience. Melly Goeslaw, for example, rejects the categorization of black and white in her works, she invites listeners to reinterpret the meaning of morality in the context of human emotional reality. In this case, aesthetic da'wah becomes a form of liberation from restrictive dogma, presenting a more empathetic and contextual spirituality

From the perspective of spiritual communication, popular music serves as a medium of transcendence in secular spaces. When the song "Haramkah" is played in a public space or digital platform, it creates a religious experience that is not tied to a particular ritual. Listeners can feel religious values in the midst of worldly activities, making spirituality a part of their daily lives. This shows that the transformation of Islamic da'wah that is increasingly fluid and interactive no longer belongs to the worship space alone, but is present on headphones, in cars, or in cafes. Da'wah is an experience that is brought into personal space without coercion, through aesthetic resonance. In addition, popular music also facilitates the formation of the religious identity of the younger generation who live in the midst of the current of cultural globalization. Through music, Islamic values can be communicated in a more inclusive and universal style. Lyrics that speak of love, regret, or the search for meaning are not only relevant for Muslims, but also for anyone who is experiencing existential struggles. Religious pop music thus expands the scope of da'wah into the realm of cross-identity, making Islam appear as a dialogical, not exclusive, religion.

Thus, popular music can be understood as an aesthetic space of preaching that connects religiosity with the human experience as a whole. Through its symbolic, affective, and performative powers, music is able to be a bridge between moral messages and the

emotional reality of listeners. In Melly Goeslaw's work, especially "Haramkah", da'wah is present not as a moral instruction, but as a reflective process that invites the audience to reconsider the relationship between love, sin, and faith. That is the essence of contemporary cultural da'wah that works through taste, builds awareness, and revives grounded spirituality.

## Representation of Love and Moral Limits of Religion in the Song "Haramkah"

Figure 1.1 Lyrics of the song Haramkah by Melly Goeslaw

Haram haramkah aku  
 Bila hatiku jatuh cinta  
 Tuhan pegangi hatiku  
 Biar aku tak jadi melanggar

Aku cinta pada dirinya  
 Cinta pada pandangan pertama  
 Sifat manusia ada padaku  
 Aku bukan Tuhan

[\*]  
 Haram haramkah aku  
 Bila aku terus menantinya  
 Biar waktu berakhir  
 Bumi dan langit berantakan

[\*\*]  
 Aku tetap ingin dirimu  
 Tak mungkin hatiku berdusta  
 Hanya Tuhan yang bisa jadikan  
 Yang tak mungkin menjadi mungkin

[\*\*\*]  
 Aku hanya ingin cinta yang halal  
 Dimata dunia juga akhirat  
 Biar aku sepi aku hampa aku basi  
 Tuhan sayang aku

[\*\*\*\*]  
 Aku hanya ingin cinta yang halal  
 Ingin dia tentu atas izinnya  
 Ketika cinta bertasbih  
 Tuhan beri aku cinta ku menanti cinta

Source: <https://meliriklagu.wordpress.com/2010/07/26/ost-kcb-haramkah-melly-goeslaw/>

The song "Haramkah" opens with the reflective sentence "Haram, haramkah aku / when my heart falls in love?". This question becomes the semantic center of the entire work. The word "haramkah" is not just a moral question, but a symbol of the spiritual unrest of

modern humans who live among religious desires and norms. In the context of cultural da'wah, Melly Goeslaw presents a dialogue between love and sharia through aesthetic language, a form of religious communication that does not patronize, but invites reflection. This question represents the position of humans who want to remain holy, but are not spared from their nature as loving creatures.

The line "God holds my heart / let me not be transgressed" shows the form of prayer and self-control. The lyrical subject is aware of the potential for transgression, but begs God to be the controller of his heart. It indicates an active, not passive, religious awareness. In Islamic communication theory, the act of handing over control to God is a form of tawakal which also signifies vertical communication (*hablun minallah*) in the midst of inner conflict. Melly uses emotional expressions that are familiar to pop listeners, but full of spiritual meaning.

When Melly writes "I love her/him / love at first sight", she is photographing the human side of the love experience. Love at first sight is a symbol of emotional spontaneity that cannot be controlled by logic or dogma (Mokorowu, 2016). However, the following lyrics "Human nature is in me / I am not God" becomes a form of ethical recognition that humans have moral limitations. Here it is clear that Melly's cultural da'wah message does not oppose religious values, but acknowledges the weak human nature but remains faithful.

The line "Haram, haram am I / when I keep waiting for it?" emphasizes the recurring inner conflict between loyalty to feelings and the moral imperative to refrain from self-restraint. The repetition of the phrase "haramkah me" serves as an introspective mantra, inviting the listener to reflect on moral boundaries in love. From a semiotic perspective, this repetition creates the ritual effect of the word "haram" into a kind of moral *dhikr*, not just a prohibition word. Melly seems to present da'wah in the form of a sense of not command, but awareness.

The next section "Let time end, earth and sky fall apart / I still want her" displays the existential dimension of love. Love here is not only a worldly feeling, but also a determination of heart that pierces time and space. However, this sentence can also be read as a form of test of faith, how humans put love to creatures without shifting love to the Creator. In the context of da'wah communication, this reminds that the beauty of worldly love can be a means to spiritual awareness if addressed with faith.

The line "It is impossible for my heart to lie / Only God can make the impossible possible" shows the theological turning point of this song. The lyrical subject acknowledges his limitations and surrenders his destiny to God. This is a transcendental form of communication that is typical of cultural da'wah that spiritual solutions are not always found through formal religious logic, but through personal and aesthetic inner experiences (Ainiyah & Zainuddin, 2020). God is presented as a figure of love, not just a judge.

When Melly sang "I only want halal love / in the eyes of the world and the hereafter", her da'wah message reached the top. Here it can be seen that love does not want to challenge religious morality, but rather seeks spiritual legitimacy. The word "halal" is a symbol of the divine order of love that is not only emotional, but also ethical and sacred. This message affirms that the song "Haramkah" is not about rebellion, but about the longing to love in the corridor of faith. Cultural da'wah comes in a gentle way that grounds religious values through human experience.

The passage "Let me be lonely, I'm empty, I'm stale / God loves me" has a deep theological meaning. The lyrical subject realizes that obedience can lead to loneliness, but still believes in God's love. It describes the phase of spiritual examination, as in Sufism loneliness is not a sign of loss, but a process of self-purification (Muvid, 2020). Melly wraps the theological concept in a light diction, making it acceptable to lay listeners without losing the depth of meaning. This is where the power of aesthetic da'wah lies: instilling value through taste.

The lyrics "When love blesses you, God gives me love" echo the most religious symbol in this song. The word "beads" carries the connotations of dhikr, purification, and resignation. The love in this song is no longer just a feeling for humans, but has been sublimated into a love that is rooted in sincerity. At this point, Melly displays the harmony between spirituality and pop aesthetics, between the profane and the sacred.

Overall, the song "Haramkah" represents a paradigm shift in da'wah in the era of popular culture, from lectures to reflections, from texts to taste, from law to humanity. Melly Goeslaw presents da'wah not as a normative discourse, but as an aesthetic experience that arouses awareness. Through the medium of pop music, he builds a bridge between religiosity and modern expression. This song proves that Islamic communication can be reflective, inclusive, and full of empathy that behind the word "haram", there is always a longing to be holy.

### **Dialectics of Religion and Pop Culture in the Context of Cultural Da'wah**

The phenomenon of the song "Haramkah" by Melly Goeslaw marks the emergence of a new dialectic between religion and pop culture in Indonesia. This song is not just a musical work, but a symbolic field where the two poles of spirituality and modernity interact dynamically. In the context of cultural da'wah, this dialectic is important because it shows that religious messages do not only live in the space of ritual, but also in the expressive space of society. Pop music, with its universal language, became an arena where Islamic values were rearticulated in an aesthetic form that was easily accepted by the urban generation.

The concept of cultural da'wah introduced by Asep Saeful Muhtadi emphasizes that da'wah is not only a process of transferring dogma, but also communicating contextual meaning (Muhtadi, 2016). The song "Haramkah" reflects this principle by presenting Islamic moral values through the medium of popular entertainment. Melly Goeslaw does not position herself as a formal preacher, but as an artist who brings religious values to life through inner experience. This is called soft preaching, a da'wah approach that touches feelings, not judges. In this approach, pop culture becomes a bridge between religious texts and complex social realities.

Religion in the song "Haramkah" does not appear in the form of verses or commands, but in the form of the inner struggle of modern humans. Lines such as "God holds my heart" and "I only want halal love" represent human efforts to dialogue with God in the midst of the fast-paced and open dynamics of life. Here, religion exists not as a system of prohibition alone, but as a source of value that leads individuals to find a balance between love and faith. This form of expression contains the spirit of religious humanist da'wah as a healer, not as a threat. Meanwhile, pop culture acts as a forum for flexible and adaptive communication. It has the power to package moral messages into forms that are relevant to the audience's everyday experience. In an increasingly digitized society, conventional da'wah tends to lose its appeal because it is distant from the public's emotional reality (Muhtadi, 2016). Melly Goeslaw harnesses the power of emotion, melody, and narrative music to revive religious values in a format that can be felt, not just understood. Thus, the song "Haramkah" shows how pop culture can be a reflective da'wah space that is in line with the spirit of the times.

The dialectic between religion and pop culture in this song is also seen in the way Melly processes religious diction without losing its universal nuance. He did not use religious jargon explicitly, but chose words such as "God," "halal," and "love with blessings" that resonated across borders. This shows that Islam's moral message can be communicated

with inclusive language, building empathy across faiths and cultures. Cultural da'wah here is dialogical, religion communicates with culture, not dominates. This is a mirror of the Islamic da'wah model that rahmatan lil 'alamin embraces, not judges. In the framework of cultural communication theory, the interaction of religion and pop music can be understood as a process of cultural negotiation of values between the sacred and the profane. Melly Goeslaw, as a cultural figure, became a symbolic mediator who transferred moral values into popular culture idioms. He negotiates Islamic morality through modern aesthetics, not by force, but by evocative. This shows that da'wah does not have to be in a "religious vs. secular" dichotomy, but can be present as a form of dialogue that lives in the midst of contemporary society

Music as a medium of cultural da'wah emphasizes that religious expression can take place through aesthetic experiences. The melody and harmony in "Haramkah" act as an emotional channel that unites messages and feelings. Da'wah through music no longer speaks to rational consciousness, but to the affective consciousness of the listener. Melly utilizes the beauty of sound to form spiritual awareness, an approach that is in line with Al-Ghazali's view of *al-sama'* (listening to music) as a path to purification of the heart (Anam, 2017). Thus, music is not just entertainment, but also a means of contemplating faith. In the context of urban society, this song also serves as a form of counter discourse against rigid moral narratives. Melly presents religion in a gentle, unpatronizing, and loving face. Messages like "I just want halal love" affirm moral values without intimidation, but rather through empathy. This proves that cultural da'wah has an important role in building the moral consciousness of modern society which is becoming saturated with dogmatic approaches. Music becomes a space of dialogue where religious norms and human experience can complement each other (Hasanah & Sos, 2025).

Ideologically, "Haramkah" rejects the dichotomy between the "sacred" and the "worldly". This song actually brings the two together in a harmonious reflection space. Melly Goeslaw shows that love, even though it is profane, can be a path to holiness when framed in the value of faith. This is where the power of cultural da'wah lies, it does not reject reality, but reinterprets it through a spiritual perspective. This approach makes religion not alienated from popular life, but organically present in it. Thus, the dialectic between religion and pop culture in the song "Haramkah" shows a new direction for Islamic communication in Indonesia. Da'wah is no longer a monopoly of religious institutions, but can also be done by artists, musicians, and cultural creators. Melly Goeslaw proves that religious messages can be conveyed in a modern style without losing their moral substance. This song is a

symbol of the success of cultural da'wah in instilling values, not through lectures, but through feelings, not with threats, but with beauty. This is where the uniqueness of "Haramkah" lies in da'wah that is alive, grounded, and vibrating.

### **The Implications of Cultural Da'wah Through Music on People's Moral Awareness**

Cultural da'wah in the context of popular music such as "Haramkah" shows that the delivery of Islamic values does not have to be present through formal and verbal forms alone. This song shows that morality can be instilled through aesthetic experiences that touch the emotional side of the listener. Music serves as a universal language that transcends social, ideological, and even religious barriers. In this way, religious messages become more inclusive and resonant in the midst of modern societies that often move away from dogmatic moral approaches. The social implications of the song "Haramkah" are seen in its ability to facilitate dialogue between religious norms and the reality of daily life. In an urban society colored by individualism and moral relativism, this song presents an ethical reflection that is close to everyday life, love, longing, and self-control. Listeners are invited to reflect on the value of "halal" not just as a religious rule, but as a form of spiritual responsibility for human love and desire. Music in this case acts as a communicative and grounded moral medium.

From a spiritual perspective, this song creates an affective religious awareness. Through the repetition of the lyrics "God holds my heart" and "I only want halal love", Melly Goeslaw presents the experience of dhikr in musical form. The listener not only listens, but also feels the tension between love and faith. This shows that music can be a tool of spiritual contemplation that fosters sensitivity to religious values without having to go through verbal instructions. Da'wah here occurs through the resonance of the sense not of commandment, but of appreciation. The song "Haramkah" also has important implications for people's understanding of the relationship between religion and art. He refutes the assumption that music and religiosity are two contradictory things. Instead, through this song, Melly shows that music can be a form of aesthetic worship, which is an effort to get closer to God through beauty and reflection. This view is in line with the concept of ihsan in Islam, where beauty (jamal) is part of spirituality. Thus, music is not a threat to faith, but rather an alternative path to hatin purification (Utomo & Hidayatullah, 2024).

Sociologically, "Haramkah" contributes to the formation of a collective moral consciousness which is more empathetic and humane. The approach of cultural da'wah carried by this song rejects the style of da'wah that is scary, replacing it with a narrative of love and hope. Listeners are invited to understand that being a man of faith does not mean

rejecting feelings, but purifying feelings through ethical awareness. This is in line with the vision of humanistic da'wah that prioritizes love, dialogue, and tolerance as the foundation of social ethics (Habibi, 2015). Another implication is a change in the way society understands the meaning of "haram" in the modern moral context. This song shifts the meaning of haram from just a legal category to a space for moral reflection. The question "is it haram for me to fall in love?" opens up a new discourse that religious prohibitions should be read in the framework of affection, not punishment. Melly Goeslaw has succeeded in reviving the discourse of Islamic ethics in a gentle, relevant, and non-intimidating form. This is cultural da'wah that changes perceptions through art and taste.

From the perspective of Islamic communication, "Haramkah" shows how the message of da'wah can be internalized through the medium of convergence. In the digital age, music is disseminated through streaming platforms, social media, and visual content. This means that aesthetic da'wah messages like this have the potential to shape spiritual awareness broadly without geographical boundaries. Listeners who initially only seek entertainment are exposed to deep religious values. Thus, cultural da'wah through music serves as a transformative communication model connecting religious values with the modern media ecosystem. The long term implication is the emergence of a new awareness of spiritual citizenship, that is, piety that is not limited to rituals, but also to public ethics. The song "Haramkah" teaches that halal love is not only about personal relationships, but about social order and moral responsibility towards others. Music is a tool to instill a collective awareness that religious values can be the foundation of an empathetic, not exclusive, civilization. This is a form of da'wah that is oriented towards the formation of character and civilization, not just normative compliance (Rahman & Kom, 2024).

In addition, the success of "Haramkah" opens up space for other artists to make their work as a means of reflective da'wah. This aesthetic da'wah model fosters a new tradition in Islamic communication where beauty, creativity, and spirituality are intertwined. Music, film, and fine arts have become a new field of humanist and contextual da'wah. Thus, cultural da'wah not only serves to convey teachings, but also reconstructs the image of Islam as a religion that is gentle, rational, and relevant to modern life. Overall, the implications of cultural da'wah through the song "Haramkah" show that beauty can be an instrument of piety, and art can be an effective means of da'wah in the post-digital era. Melly Goeslaw has succeeded in proving that music is not just entertainment, but also a reflective medium of da'wah that forms moral awareness without coercion. Cultural da'wah like this emphasizes that Islam is not rigid, but elastic in being able to dialogue with popular culture without

losing its theological substance. In the end, the song "Haramkah" is proof that the soft voice of art can penetrate the human heart more deeply than a loud cry.

## CONCLUSION

The research entitled "Love and the Moral Limits of Religion as a Reflection of Cultural Da'wah in the Haramkah Song by Melly Goeslaw" emphasizes that popular music can be an effective medium in conveying Islamic values through cultural and aesthetic approaches. The song Haramkah is not just about human love, but is a representation of the spiritual struggle between desire and submission to the moral limits of religion. Reflective questions such as "Am I haram if my heart is in love?" describe an inner tension that is very close to the reality of the modern generation seeking to love without violating divine provisions. At this point, this song functions as a soft, humanist, and communicative da'wah space.

From the analysis of lyrics and cultural context, it was found that Melly Goeslaw uses emotional and symbolic language to present da'wah that is not patronizing, but invites the listener to reflect. Through the cultural da'wah approach, moral messages are conveyed through aesthetic experiences that touch the deepest side of human spirituality. Music here acts as a two-way communication medium between artists, religious values, and listeners that allows the creation of a natural process of internalizing Islamic teachings. Love in this song is not presented as a form of transgression, but as an impulse of nature that requires ethical awareness in order to lead to halal and blessings.

Overall, this study shows that cultural da'wah through popular music is a form of transformation of Islamic communication that is adaptive to the dynamics of modern society. Melly Goeslaw through Haramkah shows that religious messages can live in public spaces without losing the sanctity of their meaning. The moral values, spirituality, and love presented in musical format are proof that da'wah does not have to be in the form of lectures, but can be present through beauty, reflection, and taste. This aesthetic da'wah model has the potential to expand people's moral awareness, bridge the gap between faith and reality, and reaffirm that true love is always anchored in God's limits and pleasure.

## REFERENCES

- Ainiyah, N., & Zainuddin, F. (2020). KOMUNIKASI TRANSENDENTAL DAN EPISTIMOLOGI ISLAM:(PERSEPEKTIF EMPIRIS-METODIS: BURHANI DAN IRFANI). *Maddah: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Konseling Islam*, 2(1), 23–35.
- Akilah, U., Safi'e, M., Rahmatullah, I., Fadlan, M. A., & Shobahiyah, Q. (2025). *Konektivitas Budaya Dengan Jiwa Keagamaan*. Penerbit: Kramantara JS.
- Alawiyah, T. (2024). *Metodologi Studi Islam: Pendekatan Kontemporer Dan Tradisional*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Alexander, M., & Utami, L. S. S. (2024). Konstruksi Nilai Kesedihan dalam Lagu Pop. *Koneksi*, 8(2), 313–323.
- Alfiyatul, N. A., Naqmal, S., Jenar, B. M., & Sswanto, A. H. (2025). Transformasi Hakikat Dakwah: Dari Komunitas Tradisional ke Masyarakat Multikultural. *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara*, 1(6), 725–733.
- AMALIA, N. Y., OS, S., & M SOS, M. C. E. (2025). STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI DAKWAH RADIO DI ERA KONVERGENSI MEDIA. *Naba Edukasi Indonesia*.
- Anam, K. (2017). Musik Spiritual. *Unpublished Master Thesis. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia*.
- Bramantyo, T. (2017). *Apresiasi Musik*. Panta Rhei Books.
- Fabriar, S. R. (2024). *Dakwah di era digital: Potret aktivitas dakwah Nawaning*. Penerbit NEM.
- Habibi, I. (2015). *Dakwah Humanis: Cinta, Toleransi dan Dialog Paradigma Muhammad Fethullah Gulen*. Penerbit A-Empat.
- Hanif, A., & Fathy, A. (2023). Dimensi Spiritualitas Musik Sebagai Media Eksistensi Dalam Sufisme Jalaluddin Rumi. *Fitua: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 4(2), 111–128.
- Hasanah, R., & Sos, M. (2025). *Revitalisasi Dakwah Dalam Era Pop Culture Pada Gen Z*. Pena Cendekia Pustaka.
- Hidayatullah, R. (2017). *Lanskap musik nonteks*. Arttex.
- Irawan, D. (2025). Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah (Studi Analisis Dakwah Tradisional dengan Inovasi Digital). *Syi'ar: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Penyuluhan Dan Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam*, 8(1), 1–16.
- Ismail, A. I. (2018). *The True Da'wa: Menggagas Paradigma Baru Dakwah Era Milenial: Edisi Pertama*. Prenada Media.
- Khadavi, M. J. (2014). Dekonstruksi musik pop Indonesia dalam perspektif industri budaya. *Jurnal Humanity*, 9(2).
- Lestari, D. T. (2019). *Musik, Konflik, dan Perdamaian: Studi Etnomusikologis*. PT Kanisius.
- Mokorowu, Y. Y. (2016). *Makna Cinta: Menjadi Autentik dengan Mencintai Tanpa Syarat Menurut Søren Kierkegaard*. PT Kanisius.
- Muhammad, K. H. H. (2021). *Islam; Cinta, Keindahan, Pencerahan, dan Kemanusiaan*. IRCISOD.

- Muhtadi, A. S. (2016). *Komunikasi Dakwah Teori, Pendekatan, dan Aplikasi*.
- Muvid, M. B. (2020). *Tasawuf Kontemporer*. Amzah.
- Prasetyo, N. (2020). *Spiritualitas Dalam Musik*. Deepublish.
- Rahman, D., & Kom, M. I. (2024). *Membangun jembatan dakwah di dunia digital*. Penerbit Adab.
- Rezky, N., Hasanah, R., & Azkia, N. H. (2025). MAKNA DAKWAH DALAM SYAIR LAGU 'RAHMATUN LIL'ALAMEEN': PENDEKATAN ANALISI WACANA KRITIS. *Risani: Jurnal Riset Dan Pengabdian Islam*, 1(1).
- Rohim, A. (2024). Dakwah Islam Moderat dan Realitas Politik di Indonesia. *Ad-DA'WAH*, 22(1), 17-33.
- Rorong, M. J. (2024). *Semiotika*. Deepublish.
- Sari, A. (2024). Analisis Pendekatan Feminisme Pada Lagu Melly Goeslaw " Mengapa Bila Aku Perempuan". *Alinea: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pengajaran*, 4(3), 515-523.
- Sibarani, R., Mendrofa, J., Hutabarat, T. J., Sipahutar, J., & Sipahutar, M. A. (2025). Relevansi Hermeneutika Kontekstual dalam Studi Agama Modern. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah Multidisipliner*, 1(04), 799-805.
- Syamaun, S., & Kholil, S. (2023). MEDIA BARU DAN BUDAYA POPULER DI ACEH (Kajian Nilai-Nilai Dakwah Transformatif Dalam Aceh Pop Culture Fest Di Kota Banda Aceh). *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam*, 6(2), 1-20.
- Utomo, A. N. A. A., & Hidayatullah, R. (2024). Relasi Seni Dan Spiritualitas Perspektif Iqbal Dan Relevansinya Bagi Pemahaman Keagamaan Kontemporer. *Philosophy and Local Wisdom Journal (Pillow)*, 3(1), 1-29.
- Yusuf, M. (2018). Seni sebagai media dakwah. *Ath-Thariq: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 2(1), 237-258.