



## **DA'WAH METHODS IN QUR'ANIC INVITATIONS TO REFLECT ON THE UNIVERSE**

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### **Abstract**

The Qur'an commands Muslims to observe and interpret the universe rationally, considering natural phenomena as signs of Allah's existence and guidance for humankind. This study explores the Qur'anic method of da'wah through verses inviting reflection on the universe. Employing a qualitative research design and a thematic analysis approach, the study examines Qur'anic verses related to natural phenomena and their implications for da'wah. Primary data sources include ayat kawniyyah (verses about natural phenomena) from the Qur'an, with secondary data from classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship, tafsir literature, and scientific studies on environmental preservation. The analysis reveals that the Qur'an emphasizes the observation and study of the universe, highlighting its creation, balance, and order by Allah. The study identifies three main da'wah methods: da'wah bi al-Hāl (concrete actions in environmental conservation), da'wah bi al-lisan (rational and scientific argumentation), and da'wah bi al-qalb (fostering opposition to environmental destruction). The findings underscore the importance of integrating spiritual, philosophical, and practical dimensions in environmental stewardship.

**Keywords:** *Al-Qur'an, Da'wah, Universe, Spirituality*

### **Abstrak**

Al-Qur'an memerintahkan umat Islam untuk mengamati dan menafsirkan alam semesta secara rasional, menganggap fenomena alam sebagai tanda-tanda keberadaan Allah dan petunjuk bagi umat manusia. Studi ini mengeksplorasi metode dakwah Qur'ani melalui ayat-ayat yang mengajak refleksi terhadap alam semesta. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dan pendekatan analisis tematik, studi ini meneliti ayat-ayat Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan fenomena alam dan implikasinya untuk dakwah. Sumber data utama mencakup ayat kawniyyah (ayat tentang fenomena alam) dari Qur'an, dengan data sekunder dari literatur keislaman klasik dan kontemporer, tafsir, dan studi ilmiah tentang pelestarian lingkungan. Analisis mengungkapkan bahwa Qur'an menekankan pengamatan dan studi alam semesta, menyoroti penciptaannya, keseimbangan, dan keteraturan oleh Allah. Studi ini mengidentifikasi tiga metode dakwah utama: dakwah bi al-Hāl (aksi konkret dalam konservasi lingkungan), dakwah bi al-lisan (argumentasi rasional dan ilmiah), dan dakwah bi al-qalb (mendorong penolakan terhadap perusakan lingkungan). Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya mengintegrasikan dimensi spiritual, filosofis, dan praktis dalam pengelolaan lingkungan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Al-Qur'an, dakwah, alam semesta, spiritualitas.*

## A. Introduction

As is well known, Allah, through His messages in the Qur'an, commands Muslims to observe the universe and interpret it rationally. In the language of the Qur'an, natural phenomena are considered signs of Allah. The Qur'an regards these phenomena and the order within them, or the patterns that appear, as evidence of Allah's existence and as guidance for humankind. It encourages Muslims to reflect on the natural world, encompassing both physical and psychological events, and to develop a rational view of life and ultimate reality (Qadir, 1989, p. 29).

Among all the creations of Allah visible in the natural world, the Qur'an repeatedly mentions natural phenomena in the context of their benefits to humans. Examples include the sky, sun, moon, stars, night, day, wind, rain, earth, paths, seas, rivers, water sources, mountains, plants, certain fruits like dates, grapes, pomegranates, minerals such as iron, and animals. There are no fewer than 750 verses that explicitly describe these natural phenomena (Q. Shihab, 2011).

This repeated mention serves significant purposes. At least three key points can be highlighted: First, the Qur'an commands humans to observe and study the universe to gain benefits and ease in their lives. Second, the universe and everything within it, including the laws that govern it, are meticulously created, owned, controlled, and managed by Allah. Third, the wording of the verses about natural phenomena is concise, precise, and dense, allowing for varied understandings and interpretations according to the intelligence and knowledge of each interpreter (M. Q. Shihab, 1997).

Thus, researching and further studying the Qur'anic method of da'wah through verses that invite humans to pay attention to the universe is highly intriguing. Another point of interest is why Allah revealed such verses to a largely unlettered community, who at that time did not yet fully understand their own essence. Therefore, the author sees that there are certainly da'wah values worth studying in these verses. Given the background above, the main issue addressed in this paper is: What is the da'wah method conveyed by the Qur'an through the invitation to observe the universe?

## B. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using a thematic analysis approach, specifically the maudhu'i (thematic) method, to examine Qur'anic verses related to natural phenomena and their implications for da'wah (Al-Farmawi, 1997). Primary data sources include Qur'anic verses identified as ayat kawniyyah, with secondary data sourced from classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship, tafsir literature, and scientific studies on environmental preservation. Data collection involves identifying relevant verses, reviewing scholarly interpretations, and compiling secondary sources. Data analysis is conducted in three stages: thematic coding of verses, interpretive analysis, and integration with scientific concepts. Validation and reliability are ensured through triangulation, expert review, and consistency checks.

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. The Qur'anic View on the Universe

The universe is a creation of Allah, not something that exists on its own, as materialist philosophers would argue. The universe was created through a process of perfection. In the Qur'anic verses, such as in Surah Al-A'raf (7:57) and Surah Yunus (10:3), it is stated that "Allah created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and at that time, Allah was upon the Throne, and the Throne was upon water."

These verses illustrate that the creation of the heavens and the earth followed a determined process. According to Ibn Rushd, this process began with water (Al-Ahwani, 1965, p. 45). This view led some Muslim philosophers to believe that the universe was created from something pre-existing, namely water. This perspective contrasts with the theologians (*mutakallimīn*) who hold the view of *creatio ex nihilo*, meaning creation from nothing (Nasution, 1973, pp. 50–51). Despite differing opinions among Muslim scholars of the past about the process of creation, they unanimously agree that the universe is created, not self-existent.

The vast universe is a cosmos, not chaos. This view was held by ancient Greek philosophers (Mohammad Hatta, 1980). The Qur'an, although with a different paradigm, also affirms this (Surah Al-Furqan 25:2 and Surah Abasa 80:19). The Qur'an describes the creation of the universe and various natural phenomena within it as *āyāt* (signs) of Allah's power.

In another part of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Imran (3:190-191) states: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding." Because the creation of the universe and various natural phenomena are signs of Allah, understanding them strengthens the belief in the oneness of Allah. This understanding was absent in the ancient Greek cosmic view. Thus, the Islamic cosmic view is an embodiment of the *tawhid* (monotheistic) perspective, a view that places Allah as the ultimate existence and the origin and final destination of all creation, and also as the sustainer of all beings (Nasr, 1995).

For Muslims, the universe is akin to a mosque (a place of prostration). As a mosque, the universe is a place to worship Allah. Prostration is a sign of a servant's closeness to the Creator. Prostration is performed by lowering the head to touch the ground, symbolizing humility before Allah. Prostration also reminds humans of their origin from the earth. It instills awareness of the human essence, which is from a lowly (earth) and noble (spirit) origin. Prostration fosters a sense of connection with the universe since humans physically interact with the earth during prostration. This can lead to a love for the earth, the solid ground upon which humans and various animals and plants stand.

Islamic doctrine also teaches that the universe is a sacred home. A sacred home is a pure dwelling place. It is pure because it is flawless (Surah Al-Mulk 67:3-4). The universe is well-organized, beautiful, neat, and orderly. The laws governing the universe are balanced. In the universe, all creatures find their needs met. Allah has arranged it this way (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:29). All creations receive their sustenance within the universe. The universe provides various comforts and pleasures for human life. The universe is subjected to humans (Surah Luqman 31:20). To live comfortably within it, humans must adhere to its laws, known as *sunnatullah*. Violating *sunnatullah* can make the universe an uncomfortable place, as indicated by the occurrence of natural disasters. Therefore, humans must maintain its laws and live in harmony with its balance.

This universe is a temporary home or a transient abode for humans. Like a long journey, the universe is a transit point before continuing to the final and eternal destination, the afterlife (Surah Al-An'am 6:32; Surah Al-Ankabut 29:64; Surah Muhammad 47:36). While in this world, humans must remain vigilant and maintain their piety. Allah commands humans to leave behind their best deeds on earth, which can become ongoing charity (*amal jariyah*). The best deeds are those that benefit other humans for a long time.

## 2. Verses Inviting Reflection on the Universe

The Qur'an, comprising 6,236 verses (Zarkasyi, 2006), addresses various aspects of life, including the universe and its phenomena. These descriptions are often referred to as *ayat kawaniyyah* (verses about natural phenomena). There are no fewer than 750 verses that explicitly discuss these matters (Jauhari, n.d.). This number does not include verses that implicitly reference them. Despite the abundance of such verses, the Qur'an should not be seen as a "Book of Science" or aimed at explaining scientific truths. When the Qur'an introduces itself as *tibyānan likulli shay'in* (a clarification of all things) (Surah Al-Nahl 16:89), it means that it provides fundamental guidance concerning worldly and hereafter happiness (Syaltut, 2009).

Al-Ghazali's view was considered extreme when he argued that "all kinds of knowledge, past, present, and future, are contained in the Qur'an." He based this on verses like, "Our Lord's knowledge encompasses all things" (Surah Al-A'raf 7:89) and, "And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" (Surah Al-Shu'ara 26:80). He concluded that since Allah can heal, He must know all diseases and cures, implying that the Qur'an, as Allah's word, must also contain medical science. This view, found in his book *Jawahir al-Qur'an*, equates knowledge and divine speech, two concepts that are not always synonymous (Al-Ghazali, 2001).

On the contrary, Al-Syathibi's view also exceeds moderation when he claims that "the companions of the Prophet knew the Qur'an's content best, yet none of them held such views." According to Al-Syathibi, we should understand the Qur'an as the companions did, with their level of knowledge. He seems to forget that the Qur'an's command to reflect on its verses was not only for the companions but also for subsequent generations, who must think according to their contemporary intellectual developments (Al-Syathibi, 1997).

The Qur'an frequently discusses human nature, as highlighted in Surah Fussilat (41:53): "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves." This verse indicates that both the universe and human beings contain signs of Allah's power. These signs are the secrets of the universe and human nature. Unveiling these secrets makes humans knowledgeable. Among the verses that invite reflection on the universe are:

- 1) Surah Yunus (10:101): "Say, 'Observe what is in the heavens and the earth.' But of no avail will be signs or warners to a people who do not believe."
- 2) Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88:17-20): "Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And at the sky, how it is raised? And at the mountains, how they are erected? And at the earth, how it is spread out?"
- 3) Surah Yusuf (12:105): "And how many signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by while they turn away from them?"
- 4) Surah Al-Hajj (22:23): "Indeed, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearl, and their garments therein will be silk."
- 5) Surah Al-Nur (24:43): "Do you not see that Allah drives clouds? Then He brings them together, then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it. And He sends down from the sky mountains [of clouds] within which is hail, and He strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills. The flash of its lightning almost takes away the eyesight."
- 6) Surah Al-Qasas (28:71-72): "Say, 'Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you light? Then will you not hear?' Say, 'Have you considered:

if Allah should make for you the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you a night in which you may rest? Then will you not see?"

- 7) Surah Al-Ankabut (29:20): "Say, "Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed, Allah, over all things, is competent."

When the Qur'an discusses natural phenomena such as the sun, moon, plants, and rain, its purpose is not to teach scientific theories about these objects but to draw attention to the evident signs demonstrating Allah's greatness. Why does the Qur'an not discuss these aspects purely scientifically? The Qur'an's purpose is to provide spiritual guidance that connects the human soul with the "higher realms" and introduces them to Allah. If the Qur'an addressed every aspect scientifically, it would never be complete, as human intellect continuously evolves and uncovers new truths. Initially, humans understand one reality, and over time, they discover new ones. However, the Qur'an has addressed some scientific truths in a remarkably elegant manner, so much so that scholars recognize the Qur'an's explanations as surpassing their intellectual level, and laypeople find joy in its recitation. Thus, laypeople understand it according to their level of knowledge, and scholars grasp scientific truths beyond their intellectual capacity.

### 3. Aspects of Da'wah Methods in Inviting Reflection on the Universe

Islam is a religion of mercy for all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), encompassing teachings on various matters, including the universe. The messages about the universe can be found in numerous Qur'anic verses, generally providing guidance on a Muslim's perspective towards nature, its utilization, and preservation. Most of these messages about the universe carry profound philosophical and Sufi meanings, forming a worldview for Muslims regarding the universe

The key points of this worldview include: first, the universe is not owned by humans but is a creation and property of Allah. Second, the universe has balance and order (*sunnatullah*), which are subjected to humans as Allah's *khalifah* (representatives) on earth. Third, in managing and enjoying the universe, humans must act morally (based on *taqwa*, or God-consciousness). Fourth, Islam obligates humans to study and understand the signs (*ayāt*) of Allah in the universe. These points should underpin the Islamic message of environmental preservation.

The Islamic message of da'wah regarding the invitation to reflect on the universe can be summarized into three main points:

- 1) Concrete Efforts in Environmental Preservation (*Da'wah bi al-Hāl*): These efforts are oriented towards a vision of environmental conservation, viewing nature as a place of prostration, a sacred home, and as signs of Allah. This vision of conservation is prophetic and divine, representing the concretization of Allah's will on earth.
- 2) Intellectual Jihad in Environmental Reflection (*Da'wah bi al-Fikrah*): This involves the elaboration of Qur'anic and Sunnah concepts integrated with scientific principles for environmental preservation.
- 3) Embodiment of Ideals to Consistently Reject Environmental Destruction (*Da'wah bi al-Qalb*): This entails fostering attitudes or ideals that consistently oppose actions harmful to the environment.



The values of Islamic da'wah in reflecting on the universe are the philosophy and wisdom in calling for environmental reflection, forming the Islamic mission in this regard. These can guide da'i (preachers) with wisdom and philosophical approaches. Broadly, delivering Islamic da'wah messages, including on environmental reflection, can be categorized into *da'wah bi al-Hāl*, *da'wah bi al-lisan*, and *da'wah bi al-qalb*.

**a) *Da'wah bi al-Hāl in Reflecting on the Universe***

As the final and complete religion, Islam emphasizes that actions (*'amal*) are most effective in implementing its mission, compared to conceptual efforts or abstain (*da'wah bi al-qalb*) to solve problems. In the context of the universe, Islam offers wisdom in practical environmental preservation. Key points include:

- Awareness of the Khalifah Mandate: Every effort in environmental preservation should be based on the awareness of the human mandate as Allah's *khalifah* on earth. As such, every concrete action must be for Allah's pleasure. Since the universe is Allah's property, humans are temporarily entrusted to prosper it, adhering to the balance laws established by Allah.
- Worship through Environmental Preservation: Practical efforts in environmental preservation are acts of worship to Allah. A Muslim should view environmental conservation as an investment in the hereafter. Actions with a permanent impact on humanity and nature become ongoing charity (*amal jariyah*).
- Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Orientation: Actions in environmental conservation should be aimed at being a mercy to the universe. A Muslim should avoid damaging ecosystems, burning forests, or causing environmental destruction, realizing the responsibility to protect the living creatures in these environments.

**b. *Da'wah bi al-Lisan in Reflecting on the Universe***

*Da'wah bi al-lisan* involves preaching through argumentation, whether orally or in writing. Muslims should engage conceptually in environmental preservation through *da'wah bi al-lisan*, leveraging the richness of Islamic concepts derived from divine revelation and science. The approach can be divided into:

- Scientific Rational Approach: Targeted at policymakers, thinkers, and environmental activists, conveying Islamic philosophy and wisdom on environmental preservation. Key aspects include integrating spiritual insights with Islamic scientific perspectives.
- Traditional Scientific Approach: Aimed at the general public, using scientific terms wrapped in traditional language. This involves culturally relevant calls for environmental preservation, ensuring the message resonates with the community's cultural and social context.

**c. *Da'wah bi al-Qalb in Reflecting on the Universe***

*Da'wah bi al-qalb*, or preaching through attitude, is the last resort if *da'wah bi al-Hāl* and *da'wah bi al-lisan* cannot be performed. It involves showing antipathy towards environmental destruction. This can exert pressure on those harming the environment and can become an effective form of protest. Activists must empower communities, instill enthusiasm and ideology, and encourage participation in environmental awareness. This way, even passive resistance can be a form of *da'wah bi al-Hāl*. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "If you see an evil, change it with your hand; if you cannot, then with your tongue; if you cannot, then with your heart (abstain), and that is the weakest of faith."

Therefore, antipathy towards environmental destruction can serve as a powerful, organized form of passive protest, embodying the principles of da'wah bi al-qalb.

#### D. Conclusion

The Qur'an's guidance to observe and reflect on the universe provides a comprehensive framework for understanding nature as divine signs. This perspective, integrating philosophical and Sufi elements, forms an Islamic worldview that sees the universe as a meticulously created and balanced cosmos. It emphasizes the necessity for humans to study these phenomena to strengthen their faith and fulfill their role as Allah's stewards on earth. This paper explores the Qur'anic method of da'wah in inviting reflection on the universe through three approaches: da'wah bi al-Hāl, da'wah bi al-lisan, and da'wah bi al-qalb. Da'wah bi al-Hāl involves concrete actions in environmental conservation, viewing nature as a sacred trust and an act of worship. Da'wah bi al-lisan uses rational and scientific argumentation, targeting both policymakers and the general public. Da'wah bi al-qalb focuses on fostering an attitude of opposition to environmental destruction, emphasizing community empowerment and participation. The analysis highlights the importance of a holistic approach to environmental stewardship, integrating spiritual, philosophical, and practical dimensions. This approach enhances Muslims' spiritual connection to nature and promotes ethical interactions with the environment.

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