

Exploring the Repository of Religious Texts to Explore the Universe: Risale-i Nur Approaches

Siti Fatimah Mohd Tawil, Celal Akar³

Abstract

This paper aims to accentuate and discuss the existences of *kauniyah* verses (Quranic verses of the universe signs) infolded within the repository of Risale-i Nur. This study has specifically delved into the universe phenomena accumulated in the *kauniyah* verses within the collection of Kalimat and Lama'at by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. In addition, this paper aims to elaborate on the lessons beyond the existence of each of the *kauniyah* verses in both books. A library research-based has been conducted throughout the study especially in analysing the content of *kauniyah* verses in the collection of Kalimat and Lama'at. The exploration found that Bediuzzaman Said Nursi presented various *kauniyah* verses reflected the signs of the universe as a way to bring human to ponder on the greatness of ALLAH. Besides, this study also emphasizes that the occurrences of the *kauniyah* verses in the Risale-i Nur exposed its strength while referring to the ultimate authentic sources of Islam. This research has succeeded in enlightening specific discussion on the *kauniyah* verses in terms of its frequency and core themes as well as the lessons and wisdom could be learned from each of the verses. All *kauniyah* verses available in the two collections were identified and analysed based on Said Nursi pattern of approaches.

Keywords: Knowledge repository, Risale-i Nur, *Kauniyah* verses, Lama'at, Kalimat

³ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, University of Islamic Science Malaysia,

استكشاف مستودع النصوص الدينية لاستكشاف الكون: مناهج رسائل النور

سيدي فاطمة محمد، جلال آقار

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى إبراز ومناقشة وجود الآيات الكونية (آيات قرآنية من آيات الكون) الموجودة في كليات رسائل نور. لقد بحثت هذه الدراسة بشكل خاص في الظواهر الكون المترابطة في الآيات الكونية ضمن مجموعة الكلمات والمعاني للإمام بديع الزمان سعيد النورسي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تهدف هذه الورقة إلى توضيح الدروس في كلا الكتابين. تم إجراء مكتبة قائمة على البحث طوال فترة الدراسة، وخاصة في تحليل محتوى الآيات الكونية في مجموعة الكلمات والمعاني. استكشفت الدراسة أن بديع الزمان سعيد النورسي قدم آيات كونية مختلفة تعكس علامات الكون كوسيلة لجلب الإنسان إلى التفكير في عظمة الله. إلى جانب ذلك تؤكد هذه الدراسة أيضًا أن تكرارات الآيات الكونية في رسائل نور كشفت قوتها مع الإشارة إلى المصادر الأصلية النهائية للإسلام. نجح هذا البحث في تنوير نقاش محدد حول الآيات الكونية من حيث تواترها وموضوعاتها الجوهرية والدروس والحكمة التي يمكن تعلمها من كل آية. تم تحديد وتحليل جميع الآيات الكونية المتوفرة في المجموعتين بناءً على نموذج سعيد النورسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مستودع المعرفة، رسائل نور، الآيات الكونية، المعاني، الكلمات.

Introduction

Many ways can be carried out by Muslims to enhance their faith towards the Almighty ALLAH. Among others are to reflect and ponder upon the Quranic verses that highlighted on many aspects and themes related to life. This process requires men to involve in a deep contemplation towards the surroundings life including the vast creation in the universe. The ability to pause and ponder to Quranic verses would connect one to not only the internal life but particularly the living environs life. Most of the verses in the Quran has relation whether directly or indirectly to the life of human and its verses are perpetually worth to be reflected as a means to be a better servant of Allah. In chapter Ali 'Imran verses 190 – 191, ALLAH mentioned in His saying:

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason. They are those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth and pray, “Our Lord! You have not created ‘all of’ this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire”.

From the perspective of information science, a repository can be defined as a physical space in the form of building, room or area which is used for permanent storage backup or temporary storage. It usually stored manuscripts, rare books, government documents, papers, photos or any related documents (Reitz, 2014). As referring to this educational inscription, Risale-i Nur could be reflected as some sort of a repository that warehoused various imperative documents comprising profuse religious texts specifically on the Quranic commentaries and exegesis. Furthermore, it also illustrates numerous enlightenments in accordance to human intellectual capacity towards this worldly life and the hereafter. Hence, this study concentrated on exploring the *kauniyah* verses in the two abovementioned selected collection of Risale-i Nur.

Risale-i Nur is among the most well-known Quranic commentary established by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and it has been discussed abundance of wisdom that is very close to human comprehension. Its repository of the collection encompasses the learning emphasis and contemplation to the various types of Quranic verses. Among others is the contemplation on the *kauniyah* verses (Quranic verses of the universe signs) which has informed great lessons and insights from the living being on earth. Indeed, the Quran has remained the greatest treasure for the rich themes

related to universe in its verses. Therefore, Risale-i Nur facilitates further clear interpretations of the texts. Risale-i Nur comprises over 130 epistles in books such as *Kalimat*, *Maktubat*, *Lama'at*, *Shu'a'at*, *Isharat al-I'jaz fi Mazan al-Ijaz*, *al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri*, *Shayqal al-Islam* and *al-Malahiq*. Risale-i Nur aimed to protect and uphold the strength of faith by explaining the essence and facts of the Quran especially the disputes on multifaceted issues that address the oneness of Allah, the hereafter world, and many others impending topics.

As an introduction to the founder of Risale-i Nur, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was a revered Islamic scholar and preacher in Turkey. He was born in Bitlis, East Anatolia, in 1877, in the late period of the Ottoman Empire, in a remote village of moderate Kurds. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was very well recognized with “*Badi' al-Zaman*” which means the “Miracle of the Age” because of his ability to master and comprehend the traditional religious wisdom and modern science at a very young age. Until today, he remains a prominent figure in Turkey (Biro Kajian Ilmiah Altinbasak, 2011).

***Kauniyah* Verses Contemplation and Its Importance to Muslims Faith**

As the primary source of Islam, the Quran encourages for observation, reflection, investigation, inquiring, logical reasoning, critical thinking, justification, validation and rationalization (Machouche, Bensaid & Ahmed, 2019). In *Shayqal Islam* (2011), Bediuzzaman Said Nursi once expounded that the light of mind is the scientific knowledge and the light of heart is the religious knowledge. This illustrates the importance of demonstrating comprehension upon the *kauniyah* verses. Most of the discussion and reflection on the universal verses are to highlight the themes of monotheism and strong reliance upon the One and Only God, Allah The Almighty. An in-depth contemplation towards the *kauniyah* verses in Quran enlisted countless beneficial impacts and effects for Muslims spiritually, intellectually and even psychologically. However, the illustration and profound discussion towards these kinds of verses seem scarce and inadequate. This concern of discrepancies has been highlighted by Purwanto (2009) with regard to the discussion related to *kauniyah* verses in the Quran. He emphasized that while the verses of jurisprudence and law only amount to one-fifth of the verses of *kauniyah*, it has consumed almost all the energy of scholars and Muslims in terms of the examination, analysis and interpretations. On the other hand, the *kauniyah* verses, although they are vast in number, has apparently been neglected. Perhaps, science

as a normative manifestation of the *kauniyah* verses seems unrelated and does not lead Muslims to heaven or hell so that it has never been discussed in either the scientific area or in the recitations (Purwanto, 2009).

However, it is undeniable to remark that to this date, there are ongoing efforts in uplifting and rejuvenating the motivation towards Quranic *tadabbur* (contemplation on the meaning and wisdom) activities not only on the verses contained the law and rules but also the discussion on the *kauniyah* or universal verses. This is elucidated by Usama and Athar (2016) to complement that hundreds of occasions in Quran have ordained by God for Muslims to wander in the world simultaneously to observe and to reflect upon nature and creations. This act is for the purpose of understanding more not only about the objective reality of the creation but ultimately about the Creator Himself. One of the prominent Islamic scholars, Sheikh Dr. Salih Fauzan mentioned in one of his popular books that the verses of Allah relate to His creations are countless, both in the heaven and on earth, including all the creatures that exist in between. There are numerous of them, and we do not know their numbers. All of this is an evidence shows that He is the only *Rabb* in this world and as a confirmation of His power and His majesty (Salih Fauzan, 2000).

Consequently, upon pondering on the *kauniyah* verses, humans are able to think rationally about all-natural phenomena that occur and do not relate them to the myths that frequently developed in society. These are also among the importance of studying the knowledge on space or the universe, such as astronomy. By studying the knowledge of the universe, Muslims are able to explore the greatness of Allah through the solar system and all of His creations. The study of the *kauniyah* verses also teaches humans to live always in a balance between intellectual expertise and spiritual wisdom, considering that in studying the *kauniyah* verses, humans are able always to remember Allah as highlighted the earlier section in verse 191, Surah Ali Imran. Besides, the process of contemplation and reflection could eventually shape and mould a religious personality as a Muslim, grow the competence character as well as develop a solid faith in Allah the Almighty (Haidi, 2013). It is indeed through the process of *zikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *fikr* (contemplation), there will be a balance between intellectual and spiritual sides in the Muslim personality. These noble acts are repeatedly recommended and emphasized by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in Risale-i Nur on the acts of *zikr*, *shukr* (gratitude) and *fikr* (thinking) (Nursi, 2012). According to a prolific and eminent professor in Islamic Studies, Seyyed Hossain Nasr

emphasized that nature is “the theatre where in are manifested His signs”. Thus, it is an apparent proof that every creature deserves attention and reflection for its relation to the divine (Gada, 2014).

In addition, Rusydi (2018) as well as Hisan (2018) explained that the ability for men to pause and ponder upon the perusal and discourse of *kauniyah* verses would be a manifestation of faith towards the greatness of the Almighty Allah and comprehensively instil a balanced and holistic understanding to the scientific existences. In the most current research by Fadly and Rochmahwati (2020) utilizing *kauniyah* verses as the basis of learning, it is confirmed that seekers of knowledge would have the ability not only to have a philosophical reflective thought but also to considerate and enhance the communicative thinking skills through learning the *kauniyah* verses in the Quran. Remarkably, Said Nursi in Risale-i Nur, states that (reading in the name of Allah) means either reading al-Quran (Kalam Allah), or reading the universe or *Kauniyah* verses to reflect on Allah’s wisdom of creation and also reading from the teaching of our prophet (Sunnah).

Methodology

This study has undergone a library research-based methodology utilizing the content analysis and content capture techniques in order to extract the related essence of the research work. Besides, it is considered as descriptive and analytical research which explores all content of the *kauniyah* verses positioned in the collection of Kalimat and Lama’at. All *kauniyah* verses have been identified throughout the process and later categorized following the enfolded themes encompassed each of the verses according to the commentaries made by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.

The Essence of Kauniyah Verses in the Risale-i Nur Repository: Kalimat and Lama’at Books

The study has extracted the themes of discussion for all the *kauniyah* verses consisted in the book of Kalimat and Lama’at from the repository of Risale-i Nur. They are all later classified and highlighted based on the themes as well as on the essence of the learned lessons and wisdom. The layout of themes, lessons and

wisdom are various but connected to the *kauniyah* verses interpretations. The excellence commentaries on the core-focused topics could be scrutinised from the highlight of the findings. Table 1 indicated the details elements of 24 *kauniyah* verses presented throughout the collection of Kalimat and Lama'at.

Table 1. Extraction of Themes, Lessons and Wisdom from *Kauniyah* Verses

Name of Surah & <i>Kauniyah</i> Verses Number	Name of Extracted Sources	Themes of Discussion	Lessons & Wisdom (<i>Hikmah/ 'Ibrah</i>)
Al-Baqarah: 60	1st Kalimat	The creation of plants	The indefinite strength in relying upon Allah SWT
Al-Anbiya: 69	1st Kalimat	The creation of plants	All creatures of Allah move in the name of Allah SWT
Al-Baqarah: 60	1st Kalimat	The creation of plants	There are unparalleled strengths and blessings in relying on Allah SWT.
Al-Anbiya: 69	1st Kalimat	The creation of plants	All creatures of Allah move in the name of Allah SWT
Al-Baqarah: 3	2nd Kalimat	In faith, there is happiness and amusement.	All entities in this universe from the smallest to the largest are mirrors that reflect the names of the Supreme Creator if viewed with the lens of faith.
Al-Baqarah: 21	3rd Kalimat	Worship is a delighted trade.	Like hereafter, the happiness of the world is also found in worship. Humans could obtain infinite happiness through countless weaknesses and poverty
Al-Nahl: 128	5th Kalimat	Establishing prayers and not committing major sins are a very supreme duty of a humanity	Leaving prayer for the sake of living will lead us to the valley of great sins

At-Taubah: 111	6th Kalimat	Trading oneself and properties to Allah SWT.	Being a servant and a soldier to Allah SWT is a glory that is with a great pleasure that is very difficult to be defined
Al-Baqarah: 255 Ali 'Imraan: 19 Hud: 56	8th Kalimat	The reality of this world and the human soul in them as well as the reality of religion.	If there is no true religion, then the world will be a prison and human beings will be the most unfortunate creatures
Al-A'raaf: 54 Al-Jumu'ah: 1 Al-Israa': 44 Ali 'Imraan: 6 Ar-Ra'd: 2	13th Kalimat: 3rd Maqam	Comparison between philosophy and Quranic knowledge	Indeed, through its distinct explanation, al-Quran Mu'jiz al-Bayan has torn the veil of customs and practices called by the name of ' <i>adiyat</i> in the universe and is an extraordinary and miracles that exist above <i>maujudat</i> . It has revealed these miraculous facts to those who are sensible and thus attract their views. Then he uncovered a trove of knowledge that is abundant for the minds.
Yaasiin: 82 Al-Nahl: 77 Qaaf: 16	14th Kalimat: 4th Issue	The creation of beings is uncomplicated for Allah SWT.	Allah SWT is very close to all beings while all beings are very far from Him.
Ali 'Imraan: 185	14th Kalimat: Finale	The meaning behind the life of this world	Limiting the view of the world turns noble delicacies into excruciating pains
Az-Zalzalah: 1-5	14th Kalimat: Additional	The wisdom behind <i>Zalzalah (The Quake)</i>	As the recipient of revelation and inspiration, on its movements and earthquakes, this earth vibrates with the command of Allah Almighty.
As-Sajdah: 7	18th Kalimat: 2nd Nuktah	Secret behind the verse أَحْسَنَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ	In every single thing, even the seemingly as the worst one still they have the angle of true beauty.

At-Tiin: 4-6	23rd Kalimat: 1st Fasal 1st Nuktah	Advantages of Faith to hellfire.	With the light of faith, man can ascend to the level of <i>a'la 'illiyin</i> and get a value worthy of heaven. The darkness of disbelief descends it to the level of <i>asfala safilin</i> as a worthy position
Al-Baqarah: 257	23rd Kalimat: 1st Fasal 1st Nuktah	Advantages of Faith	Just like faith, the light that illuminates human beings and makes all the writings of <i>as-Samad</i> written on human beings readable, so it also illuminates the universe
Ibrahim: 10	23rd Lama'at (The Universe Messages)	Evidence for the Existence and the Oneness of Allah SWT.	Nothing happens or created alone by themselves. <i>Asbab</i> or nature are not the creator
Az-Zariyat: 48	30th Lama'at	<i>Tajalli</i> on the name of Al-Quddus	All beings in this universe from the smallest to the largest are the mirror that reflects the name of the Most Holy Creator.

On the further notes of the discussion, the extracted Quranic verses encompass the universal verses 24 verses, involved 14 sections in the book of Kalimat and 2 sections in the book of Lama'at. In terms of themes coverage, it can be inferred that there are 7 direct themes are related to the phenomena of the universe signs and another 11 themes are indirectly involved in the discussion related to the universe. The 7 verses highlighted in grey refers to the 7 direct themes of the *kauniyah* verses about the topic related to the universe while the rest are the latter. The 7 themes underlined by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi related to the creation of plants, the creation of beings, the quake and the Oneness of God are all in close contemplation of the wisdom which connected to the divine power: The Almighty Allah.

Intriguingly, the underlying lessons and wisdom in all of the indirect 11 themes from the 17 *Surahs* accentuated by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi brought the sparks in the paradigm of thought and contemplation for Muslims especially in indulging with the real meaning of life in this world and the meaning of servanthood. Moreover, the lessons and wisdom extracted from those related *kauniyah* verses could support the faith of the believers in the manner that when the pearls of wisdom are pondered deeply, they evidently contained richness of beneficial messages to all Muslims.

It is with a crystal understanding and realisation that Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's reflection and examination throughout the lessons and wisdom encompasses in all the *kauniyah* verses in his both abovementioned books are interconnected with the substance and purposes of strengthening the faith and building the strong belief system in the Muslim intellect and character. The article by Gada (2014) has complemented Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's opinion on the nature as "*the book of the universe*" and the universe "*as a whole and a meaningful book of the Eternal One; and all beings from the ground to the Divine Throne are a miraculous collection of Divine missives.... and since they act as mirrors to the Almighty Allah and have a relationship with that Sovereign, the value of all things infinitely surpasses the individual value*".

Conclusion

The scrutiny of the *kauniyah* verses also needs to be cultivated in line with the fields of study and their respective areas. In order to give a discourse interpretation and understanding of the Quran and invite people to be able to think more deeply about God's creation that exists in this universe. The pattern of *kauniyah* verses have been analyzed and the occurrences of their existences in the Risale-i Nur collection have been extensively explored; specifically, in Kalimat and Lama'at. It is vital to highlight that the discussion on themes, lessons and wisdom presented by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is insightful and profound. Thus, the significance of reflecting and exploring the universe via the availability of religious texts especially the *kauniyah* verses is indisputably could contribute to the enhancement of humanity and enlighten the servitude of *insan* (human) to the Almighty Allah and as a caliph in this transient world.

References

Al-Quran Al-Karim. (2010). Saheeh International. Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust. London: England.

1. Akar, C., & Zainal Abidin, M. S. A. (2019). Prophetic Lifestyle: Prophetic Principles Practiced by Imam Said An-Nursi in Dietary. *AL-ABQARI: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol. 17 Special Edition) March 2019: 57-64
2. Gada, M. Y. (2014). Environmental ethics in Islam: Principles and perspectives. *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, 4(4), 130-138.
3. Haidi, H., Syafi'i, W., & Mahadi, I (2013). Analysis of the Validity Level of Biology Textbooks based on the 2013 Curriculum with the Integration of Ayat Kauniyah. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(4), 849-863.
4. Hisan, I. H. (2018). Ayat-Ayat Kauniyah dalam Juz 30: Studi Komparatif Tafsir Al-Jawahir karya Thanthawi Jauhari dan Tafsir Salman ITB karya Tim Salman ITB. Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung).
5. Hidayat, M. C., & Arifin, S. (2020, May). Integration Science Technology with Islamic Values: Empowering Education Model. In 1st Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities, Economics and Social Sciences (BIS-HESS 2019) (pp. 966-970). Atlantis Press.
6. Fadly, W., & Rochmahwati, P. (2020, June). Kauniyah verse-based science learning: reconstruction of the 21th century science learning program. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1567, No. 4, p. 042035). IOP Publishing.
7. Khoirudin, A. (2017). Islamic Science Based on The Reasoning of Universal Verses. *At-Ta'dib*, 12(1), 195-217.
8. Maulida, U. (2016). Characteristic of Yunan Yusuf's interpretation on kauniyyah verses in Tafsir Juz Tabarak (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Walisongo).
9. Muslim World Science Initiative. (2016). Report of İhsanoğlu Task Force on Islam and Science, London and Islamabad.
10. Pamil, J., & Munir, A. A. (2020). Kauniyah Verses and The Principles of Their Study: A Descriptive Analysis Study Using A Thematic Interpretation Approach. *Journal of Hupo_Linea*, 1(1), 12-27.

11. Purwanto, A. (2009). *Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Sisi-Sisi Al-Qur'an yang Terlupakan*. Cetakan ke-3. Bandung: Mizan.
12. Reitz, J. M. (2020). *ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science*. ABC-CLIO, LLC.
13. Rusydi, A. (2016). Te Exegesis of *Ayatul Kauniyah*. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*. Vol. 9, No. 17, Januari-Juni 2016.
14. Said Nursi, Badiuzzaman. (2012). *Kalimah-Kalimah Kecil*. Bandar Baru Bangi: Pusat Penterjemahan dan Kajian Ilmiah Altinbasak.
15. Said Nursi, Badiuzzaman. (2011). *Shayqal Al-Islam*. Cairo: Syarikat Sozler.
16. Salih Fauzan Abdillah Al Fauzan. (2000). *Al Khuthab Al Mimbariyyah Fil Munasabaat Al 'Ashriyyah*. (5/65-72). Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah.
17. Machouche, S., Bensaid, B. and Ahmed, Z. (2019). Crossroads between Islamic spirituality and the instruction of science. *KEMANUSIAAN. The Asian Journal of Humanities*. 26 (Supp.1): 23–45.
<https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2019.26.s1.2>
18. Usama, H. & Athar, O. (2016). *Muslim Responses to Science's Big Questions: Summary Report*. Islam and Science. London.