ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The World Stability within Cosmology As Inspired by Risale-i Nur

Wan Kamal Mujani, Ermy Azziati Rozali and Mohamad Zaidin Mat@Mohamad

Department of Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

The cosmos is a manifestation of greatness by The Ultimate Creator as it agrees with and supports Quranic statements. Moreover, symbolically, it portrays the unique quality of human beings as ‘trustees’ in managing the cosmos as decreed by The Creator. Hence, this article will focus on how should human nurture their awareness on their role and responsibilities through observations and studies of the cosmic phenomenon around them. This article will focus on a few perspective of Risale-i Nur on human’s role and their relations with the cosmic phenomenon described as ‘The Book of Universe’.

Key words: World stability, cosmology, Risale-i Nur, Al-Nursi

Introduction

This article is a preliminary glimpse towards seeing the importance of men observing the cosmological phenomenon designed by the Almighty Creator in such beauty and perfection. The cosmological phenomenon has various wisdoms and lessons to be learnt by human beings because Allah never created anything in vain. Risale-i Nur is among the books placing great importance in matters of cosmological phenomenon to bridge the relation between man and his Creator. Among the greatest wisdom is how can mankind gathers wisdom from his natural surroundings as the best approach to form an interaction between mankind and civilization.

The Definition of Cosmology:

Cosmology is a discipline related to natural phenomenon. In Islam, the understanding of natural phenomenon is really important as it shows the sign of the Creator (Awang, 2003). Due to this importance, there are those who perceive that the study of the cosmos is the first spark towards the birth of science in Islam (Rahman, 1991). The universe literally refers to all creation (‘Umar, n.d) whilst technically it is understood as a representation of all other than Allah including humans, animals, plants etc. The word ‘Rabb al-‘Alamin’ in Surah Fatihah for example signals the diversity of universe unfathomable by the human minds.

Risale-i Nur and Cosmology:

Risale-i Nur as mentioned by Al-Nursi is an interpretation to the Quran towards strengthening the faith and belief of mankind towards his Creator. The observation of natural phenomenon surrounding mankind is the most important method in strengthening the faith in Risale-i Nur. This is due to cosmology being the manifestation of the Creator’s greatness and His unique creation unfuted by humans. Thus humans are compelled to acknowledge weakness and humility when confronted by the greatness of the Creator (Al-Nursi, 1993b). Al-Nursi’s observation compelled him to label the universe as ‘the visible book’. A term so special and highly commendable as among the function of this ‘visible book’ is to complement the Quran which he labeled as ‘the readable book’ (Al-Nursi, 1999). In fact, the observation of cosmological phenomenon is a recommendation of the Quran for mankind to search for evidence of the greatness of Allah. Al-Nursi views this method as strength of the Quran as it can be pondered and accepted by all tiers of society (Yesilhark, 2008). Therefore, Al-Nursi himself applied this method in Risale-i Nur. This can be proven when there are 932 references to the word universe in the entire Risale-i Nur. This also shows how serious Al-Nursi was in inculcating the method of cosmological observation. The word of al-Kawn (cosmos) in Risale-i Nur is as follows:

Corresponding Author: Wan Kamal Mujani, Department of Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: inamal@yahoo.com; Tel: +603-89215622; Fax: +603-89213152.
The Objective of Cosmological Observation:

As described earlier that the main objective of observing cosmological phenomenon is to strengthen the faith towards the Creator. However, questions shall arise as how can it happen? From the 932 repetitions of the word universe in Risale-i Nur, we can conclude a few elements that can affect those really observing cosmological phenomenon as follow:

i) Able to witness the miracle of Allah’s creation.

ii) The universe is a book, of which the arrangement of words and the writing style is of profound beauty, and every book has its author then this universe also has an author, who is Allah.

iii) The universe depicts the love of the Creator to all human kind because all creation in the universe is created for man.

iv) The universe depicts the ability of Allah in creating another universe that is the Hereafter as a place for retribution for all the deeds of human in this world.

v) The universe exposes the weakness of human being and the need of human being towards Allah by submitting fully to the Creator.

vi) The universe proves that there is only one Creator capable of fully managing the entire universe (Al-Nursi, 1992).

In short, cosmology is created with the sole purpose of enabling man to know himself and his Creator. Based on Al-Nursi’s thought, cosmology is the main instrument capable of explaining verse 56 of Surah al-Dhariyat: And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me’. He quotes: ‘Because the wisdom and the purpose of man coming to this world are to know the Creator of cosmology, believing and worshipping Him’ (Al-Nursi, 1993b).

The Relation between Cosmology and Human Harmony:

The universe is Allah’s creation for human as a test field to decide as to who is really capable of taking the role as caliph because only the caliph is able to utilize the universe according to the wish of the Creator. Every human must play the role of caliph because everyone is living in this universe and at all times whether conscious or not are using this universe for good or bad. According to Al-Nursi (1992), as caliph man has to implement the gift of knowledge and skill in managing the universe. Any mistakes or failure in doing so will bring a bad effect to the universe and himself. Man has to realize that nature’s threat to the life of human the like of plague, quakes, tsunamis and the like is not just natural phenomenon but rather a reminder and warning from the Creator for all misdeeds of humans towards the gift of nature. The understanding of cosmology will be much clearer if we understand what Allah says: ‘Mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware’ (Quran, al-Hujurat: 13).

Based on the verse above, there are four main things that need to be considered:

i) The element of human similarities: clearly Allah has stated that all human originates from Adam and Eve. Human since the beginning until Judgment Day shares the same ancestry and the same element which is clay (Muslim, 1996). From this aspect there are neither advantages nor priorities affiliated to any parties. This is the similarity labeled by a few Islamic scholars as ‘the human family’ (Jaydal, 2004). When the matter was mentioned in the beginning of the verse, it seems to signal that this is the core element that has to be placed forefront in human relation.

ii) The element of human differences: from the core element above, Allah has created diversities as a sign of Allah’s greatness. Apart from it, this is also the unique qualities of man and the base of Allah’s test for them. However, the diversities are commonly misinterpreted by most people that it is seen as a weakness and the cause of clashes between mankind and civilizations. The thinking is clearly wrong (Daoudi, 2005). What matters are human should accept the diversities as Allah’s gift that is eternal and unaltered by any powers. To create a great and unique human civilization as mentioned, man has to look for positive values in diversities because man has to revert back to the core of their creation which is they are humans who need to strengthen the unity of
mankind for mutual good. Never evaluate the diversity as differences that can lead to turmoil and enmity. Quran described the diversity among mankind as the Allah’s decree like the meaning of His saying: ‘And if thy Lord had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing, save him on whom thy Lord hath mercy; and for that He did create them. And the Word of thy Lord hath been fulfilled: Verily I shall fill hell with the jinn and mankind together (Quran, Hud: 118-119).

iii) Ta’aruf (knowing each other) as the Way: Allah has given a strong foundation on how diversity could be shaped into strengthening the unity of man. Islam placed the role of Ta’aruf highly in strengthening human relations that it is deemed the foundation of the concept ‘universal humanity for international relations’ (Al-Bash, 2005). Thus Ta’aruf in the above verse has a wide meanings. It covers a few main dimensions which are: 
   a) Knowing others closer. This must be based on true and precise knowledge. Ta’aruf itself comes from the same root word with knowledge which is ‘Arafa. The knowing factor in dialogue partners is vital in conducting a fruitful dialogue,
   b) Understanding each other in accepting and acknowledging the differences as an element that leads to another unique situation and,
   c) Cooperating in creating a harmonious life thus striving to build a better civilization (al-Tuwayjri, 2009).

iv) God fearing (Taqwà) is the benchmark in deciding advantages and priorities. Islam has set a very high standard in deciding advantages and priorities for Allah. Undeniably that the main criteria for God fearing is holding fast to the teaching of Islam. However, just being a Muslim without any belief and practice will not bring the sense of God fearing. Logically each god fearing is Islam but not necessarily each Islam leads to god fearing. God fearing is the basis for Allah’s recognition towards Muslims as ‘the best ummah’ (Quran, Al-Imran: 110). The gift of ‘best’ to the Muslims requires the enforcement of Islam in each and every aspect of life involving matters related to human relation. This means Muslims must coordinate the pledge of God fearing to all Muslims and non Muslims. 

Cosmology and the Spirit of Cooperation:

Humanity is a small universe which is a portion of a greater universe (the earth and the solar system). Every creature in this universe has been obliged by Allah to complement each other. Like the earth for example is complemented by the sky and such is the rotation of day and night. Human clearly fill the role of complementing the plant universe and vice-versa. Human supplies carbon monoxide whilst plants supplies oxygen to humans. Such is the natural system organized by the Creator, which is Allah with His Ultimate Wisdom so that humans who were appointed as supervisors the earthly universe will always know their place. If all universe other than human can cooperate to benefit humans and if man could cooperate with the plants, why then do they have to fight each other? The ultimate organization signifies the knowledge and the wisdom of the Creator, along with His infinite strength and will (Al-Nursi, 1992). Cosmology, according to Al-Nursi, is ‘one’ though there are various universes composing it, i.e. the universes of the humans, plants and animals. These diverse universes converge and complement each other like layers of colors that create the beautiful rainbow. The unity of the universe is proving of Allah’s ‘Oneness’. Therefore, cosmology should be viewed as a “unified diversities” under the sole management of the One and Only. The unity serves as a system of balance for Cosmology that can never be separated from each other (Al-Nursi, 1993a).

An intelligent man will see and understand how Allah with His wisdom synchronize the cooperation among His creatures. The advantages and weaknesses found in each universe is actually the element that cements the cooperation among universes. The human universe abundant with carbon dioxide but lacking oxygen and the plant universe abundant with oxygen but needs carbon dioxide from the human universe. All glory be to Allah who never do anything without purpose. The relation between the human and plant universe explains the dire need of cooperation among creatures because all are created with advantages and weaknesses. Thus cosmology taught us as humans on the true picture of life and how should we manage this life. The difference that exists among man and plant is unique and special as it highlight the ‘give and take’ and ‘win-win’ relation which transpire naturally among them through the processes which called ‘respiration’ and ‘photosynthesis’. Reverting back to the human universe, we saw part of humanity seeing their differences as a source of enmity. Huntington (1996) for example, through his idea ‘clash of civilization’ sees the differences as the main cause that leads to horrifying wars. Views like this actually did not comprehend the true nature of man. Like any other universe man is created with differences in structure, advantages and goals, thus man is created different from each other. Islam taught people on this truth. Look at how the Quran taught human to comprehend the truth behind their natural diversity: And of His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge’ (Quran, al-Rum: 22) and, ‘O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know
one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware’ (Quran, al-Hujurat: 13).

The Quran explains that man is indeed created in different languages and skin colors. The differences are influenced by regions inhabited by humans in all corners of the world. The differences as explained above are a sign of Allah’s greatness with the main goal is for man to form a network of cooperation and friendship through knowing each other. A race will never be able to live alone without the aid and support of other races. Moreover, to bring prosperity to this vast land as required by the Creator. The harmony and prosperity of the universe calls for commitments from all who live in the four corners of the earth because all live in the same world. What befalls the North shall spread to the South and what happens in the East will surely be felt in the West. Didn’t the spread of H1N1 flu proves all this? Why didn’t human learn the true nature of cooperation from the animal as little as the ant? Didn’t the ants explained through lisan al-hal to the humans that the weaknesses prevalent through their small body structure taught them the importance of cooperation in life! Here we need to take an example of Al-Nursi who is sensitive and caring towards his surroundings. Al-Nursi taught us to be ever searching for knowledge regardless from whom, even from a small ant. The ‘republic principle’ and the love for cleanliness are the two elements in the ant colonies held in high regard by Al-Nursi (Vahide, 2000). Thus Al-Nursi always fed the ants and reminds his students to leave the ants alone. According to Al-Nursi the ‘republic principle’ has been practiced by the Companions in their administrations (Al-Nursi, 1993b).

Differences Colors of Life:

Although many sees differences as source of clashes, however cosmology exposes that differences brought colours to the life of humans. It is like the world of flora and fauna of which their diversities brought beauty and joy. The diversity of forest dwellers, big or small, timid or wild has crafted an artistic forest life filled with wisdom. Such was the difference in the colors of flowers calls for calmness and beauty of a garden. Allah has created cosmology in such unique and beautiful way so that human can learn from the examples to be practiced in their life. That is the two forms of life forms which inhabited this world and cheer it with diverse species be it flora or fauna. If ever Allah created the families in diversity thus is so with the life of humans inhabiting this planet. In a small family for instance, the differences and diversity already exist when the husband, wife and children, each has their interest, taste, and tendencies which is different from each other. Is it proper for us to say that these differences destroy the harmony within the family? When those in their right mind and able to view things positively will perceive otherwise. They will say that the differences bring cheer to family life. Better yet, it is the differences that bring maturity in human thought and action because each decision taken will take into account each family member so that harmony can be maintained.

If differences in a family can’t be avoided, how can we ever avoid differences and diversities in a big family inhabiting this entire world, covering the four corners? Differences can’t be avoided as it is the decree of the Creator. The responsibility of man as supervisor is on how to manage differences so that the world can maintain peace and harmony. Cosmology taught man consciously or not that all differences prevalent among man or civilization like the difference in religion, culture, view, education, and economy is not the reason for clashes. The differences should be the catalyst to building a better civilization. Wasn’t it due to differences, intellect arise in various field of life; medical, education, economy, administration, military, etc. If the wisdom behind the creation of man with differences is so great, what then is the cause of clashes?

Ego is the Source of Clashes:

Ego is the feeling that self is better, greater, more perfect and advance than others. The truth is, ego is the main cause of all crime because ego causes a person or party to reject truth and degrade others (Al-Humaydi, 2002). Ego is the cause of the first enmity in the angelic universe which is the enmity of the devil towards man and the first enmity in the worldly universe which is the enmity of Qabil towards Habil. Such is the effect of enmity caused by ego that it leads to the eviction of the devil and Adam from Heaven and the death of Habil by the hands of his own brother (Al-Tabari, 2000). 

Cosmological phenomenon seen in the light of human and plants relation shows a symbiotic relation. Thus is supposed to be in human relation. Each race has to accept and respect the differences in others. However the dictionary of ego does not dictate respect, cooperation, and universal harmony, all that matters is how selfish interest can be preserved and fulfilled with no regards to others. Propelled by ego, man will use every means to achieve his selfish interest be it the political instrument, economy, social, legal, and even religion.

Conclusion:

Indeed the Risale-i Nur approach in leading the mind of readers towards cosmological phenomenon is interesting and easily understood. This indirectly proves the truth and the strength of the Quran as the guide in
life when many of the verse call for man to think and observe the creation of Allah around him. Lessons from nature if really understood by man will shape a good relation between man and his Creator. At the same time, man will be able to cement a good relation amongst them. This what emphasized by Allah in the Quran (Al-Imran: 112): ‘Ignominy shall be their portion where so ever they are found save (where they grasp) a rope from Allah and a rope from men’. In short, Al-Nursi and Risale-i Nur has taught people the meaning of worship towards the Creator and teaching them the truth of human brotherhood through observations of cosmological phenomenon.

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