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Rhetorical Strategies in Qur'anic Theological Debates: A Hermeneutical Analysis

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Abstract

Studies on debate verses in the Qur'an have generally focused on linguistic aspects, thematic interpretation, or the ethics of dialogue, while relatively few have specifically examined the rhetorical strategies employed in theological debates through a thematic-hermeneutical approach. This study aims to analyze the rhetorical strategies of theological debate verses in the Qur'an by tracing the lexical roots of *jadala*, *ḥāja*, and *khaṣama*, and subsequently interpreting them through Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical method, this research integrates thematic Quranic Tafsir and hermeneutical approaches. The data were analyzed through verse identification, thematic contextual analysis, mapping of rhetorical forms, and contextualization of their universal values in relation to contemporary communication challenges. The findings reveal twenty-three verses that contain theological debates. The rhetorical strategies identified include rational argumentation, rhetorical questioning, negative labeling, affirmation of prophethood, descriptions of consequences, semantic contrasts, and historical narratives. Through the lens of Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics, the study formulates three universal principles: rational coherence, the cultivation of ethical consciousness, and communicative integrity. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of rhetorical analysis, thematic Quranic Tafsir, and double-movement hermeneutics to examine verses of theological debate. Its contribution is the development of an ethical-rhetorical framework for religious communication in the digital age, particularly in addressing skepticism, disinformation, emotional manipulation, and the crisis of public trust.

Keywords: Double Movement Hermeneutics, Theological Debate, Rhetorical Strategies, Thematic Quranic Tafsir

Abstrak

Kajian mengenai ayat-ayat perdebatan dalam Al-Qur'an umumnya berfokus pada aspek kebahasaan, tafsir tematik, atau etika dialog, sementara penelitian yang secara khusus mengkaji strategi retoris yang digunakan dalam perdebatan teologis melalui pendekatan tematik-hermeneutik masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi retoris ayat-ayat perdebatan teologis dalam Al-Qur'an dengan menelusuri akar leksikal jadala, ḥāja, dan khaṣama, kemudian menafsirkannya melalui hermeneutika double movement Fazlur Rahman. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis yang mengintegrasikan tafsir tematik Al-Qur'an dan pendekatan hermeneutik. Data dianalisis melalui identifikasi ayat, analisis kontekstual tematik, pemetaan bentuk-bentuk retorika, serta kontekstualisasi nilai-nilai universalnya terhadap tantangan komunikasi kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menemukan dua puluh tiga ayat yang memuat perdebatan teologis. Strategi retoris yang teridentifikasi meliputi argumentasi rasional, pertanyaan retoris, pelabelan negatif, penegasan kenabian, penggambaran konsekuensi, kontras semantik, dan narasi historis. Melalui perspektif hermeneutika Fazlur Rahman, penelitian ini merumuskan tiga prinsip universal, yaitu koherensi rasional, pembentukan kesadaran etis, dan integritas komunikatif. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi analisis retorika, tafsir tematik Al-Qur'an, dan

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hermeneutika double movement dalam mengkaji ayat-ayat perdebatan teologis. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah pengembangan kerangka etis-retoris bagi komunikasi keagamaan di era digital, khususnya dalam menghadapi skeptisisme, disinformasi, manipulasi emosi, dan krisis kepercayaan publik.

Kata Kunci: *Hermeneutika Double Movement, Perdebatan Teologis, Strategi Retoris, Tafsir Tematik Al-Qur'an*

A. Introduction

Debate constitutes one of the forms of human interaction that receives significant attention in the Qur'an. Qur'an 18:54 explicitly states that human beings are inherently inclined toward disputation and argumentation.[1] Accordingly, the Qur'an contains numerous verses addressing debates on a wide range of issues, including religious, social, and political matters. Among the various forms of debate presented in the Qur'an, theological debate is of particular interest to this study, especially discussions concerning faith (*ʿaqīdah*), monotheism (*tawḥīd*), prophethood, and the rejection of polytheism (*shirk*).[2] This theme has become increasingly relevant in contemporary society, as the rapid expansion of social media has made theological debates more accessible and widely disseminated within digital spaces.

Several online platforms actively disseminate such content, including Kaifa Channel Official, Iman Seratus Persen, Ahmed Deedat Channel, Dr. Zakir Channel, Dawah Over Dunya, and Benteng Akidah, among many others. While the accessibility of information through these platforms offers opportunities for broader religious engagement, it also poses challenges, particularly in debates over matters of faith and belief. Consequently, in order to ensure that theological debates—which have persisted across generations—remain oriented toward the pursuit of truth rather than mere polemics, it is essential to re-examine Qur'anic texts through alternative interpretive approaches. Such efforts reinforce the Qur'an's position as a sacred text that remains relevant across all times and places (*ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wa makān*).

Studies on *mujādalah* (debate) in the Qur'an have attracted considerable scholarly attention. Broadly speaking, the existing literature can be categorized into several major trends. First, a number of studies conceptualize *mujādalah* as a method of da'wah (Islamic preaching), as reflected in the works of Dwi Khairani,[3] Aviv Alfiyah, Intiha'ul Khiyaroh,[4] Agung Teguh Prianto,[5] Annisa Zahra Salsabila, Chatib Saefullah, and Rojudin.[6] Second, several scholars examine *mujādalah* as a model of prophetic preaching, including the studies

[1] Lajnah Pentashihan, Lajnah Pentashihan, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, *The Qur'an and Its Translation* (PT Rilis Grafika, 2009), 300.

[2] Wafi Marzuki Ammar, *Al-Bayan: Tafsir Tematik Al-Qur'an* (Sukses Publishing, 2017)., 554.

[3] Dwi Khairani, 'Konsep Mujadalah Dalam Al-Qur'an Kontekstualisasi Klasik Dan Kontemporer (Kajian Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Jadal),' *Jurnal Anwarul: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Dakwah*, 4.1 (2024), pp. 179-195.

[4] Avif Alfiyah and Intiha'ul Khiyaroh, 'Teori Mujadalah Dalam Al-Qur'an: Penerapan Metode Jidal (Debat) Dalam Konsep Dakwah",' *Jurnal Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam,* 6.2 (2022).

[5] Agung Teguh P, 'Penerapan Metode Dakwah Mujadalah Dalam Membendung Radikalisme Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Inteleksia*, 01.02 (2020), p. 305.

[6] Annisa Zahra Salsabia, Annisa Zahra Salsabia Chatib Saefullah and Rojudin, 'Penerapan Metode Mujadalah Dalam Dialog Antar Iman', *Jurnal Tabligh*, 8.1 (2023), p. 25.

conducted by Haris Hakam,[7] Tri Djoyo Budiono,[8] Elisa Elisadeh,[9] Mahkluf 'Abbasi,[10] and Aan Handriyani.[11] Third, some studies relate the concept of *mujādalah* to education, communication, and character formation, as demonstrated in the works of Harista Tifa,[12] Saeful Anwar,[13] Sya'bi,[14] and M. Ma'ruf and Fadhiya Mardhatila Amini.[15] Fourth, other studies investigate debate within the broader context of contemporary society, such as those conducted by Kamarusdiana and Amiruddin Nahrawi.[16]

Previous studies have demonstrated that *mujādalah* occupies an important position within Islamic scholarship, particularly in the fields of da'wah, education, communication, and the ethics of dialogue.[17] Nevertheless, these studies leave several significant academic gaps. First, existing research has predominantly examined *mujādalah* as a method of da'wah or a model of communication, without specifically exploring the rhetorical strategies employed in Qur'anic verses concerning theological debates.[18] Second, most previous studies have limited their analyses to verses derived from the root word *jadala*, thereby overlooking other Qur'anic terms that similarly convey meanings related to debate, argumentation, and disputation, such as *ḥāja* and *khaṣama*.[19] Third, only a limited number of studies have integrated thematic interpretation with Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics in a systematic examination of theological debate verses.[20]

In light of these research gaps, this study seeks to address the following questions: (1) What rhetorical strategies are employed by the Qur'an in verses concerning theological debates? (2) What universal principles can be derived from these rhetorical strategies through Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics? (3) How are these principles relevant to contemporary practices of religious communication in the digital age?

The corpus of this study was established through a multi-stage process of verse identification. The first stage involved tracing Qur'anic verses containing derivations of

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[7] Muhammad Haris Hakam, 'Ungkapan Satire Al-Qur'an Dalam Mujadalah (Seni Kesantunan Komunikasi, Artikulasi, Dan Agresi Politik Menghadapi Penguasa),' *Misykat: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Hadits, Syari'ah Dan Tarbiyah,* 7.1 (2022), p. 121.

[8] Tri Djoyo Budiono, 'Pola Argumentasi Dalam Metode Dakwah Mujadalah Nabi Ibrahim",' *Jurnal Inteleksia*, 2.1 (2020), p. 2.

[9] Elisa Elizadeh, 'Debate Etiquette from The Perspective of The Qur'an and Ahl al Bayt', *Qur'anic: Science Studies.*, 4.2 (2022), pp. 27-48.

[10] Muhammad Makhluf Abbasi, 'Al-Jadal al 'Aqady Bayn al Islam Wa Ahl al Kitab', *Adrar Jami'ah Amad Dirayah*, 1.1 (2022).

[11] Aan Handriyani, 'Konsep Mujadalah Terhadap Ahlul Kitab Dalam Tafsir Asy-Sya'rawi', *Jurnal Da'wah*, 6.2 (2023), p. 73.

[12] Harista Tifa, 'Korelasi Metode Mujadalah Dalam Al-Qur'an Dengan Metode Pembelajaran Modern', *Jurnal Istiqra'*, 9.1 (2021), p. 1.

[13] Saeful Anwar and Ahmad Firdaus, 'Penerapan Metode Dakwah Mujadalah Di Majelis Taklim', *Lentera: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 1.2 (2023), p. 119.

[14] Sya'bi, 'Metode Mujadalah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an', *Jurnal Intelektualita*, 9.1 (2019), p. 65.

[15] M. Ma'ruf and Fadhiya Mardhatila Amin, 'Implementasi Metode Mujadalah Dalam Westernisasi Gen Z', *Jurnal Al-Makrifat*, 9.2 (2024), pp. 1–13.

[16] Kamarusdiana and Amiruddin Nahrawi, 'Wacana Debat Inklusif: Menyoal Jadal Sebagai Perdebatan Dalam Al-Qur'an', *Jurnal Al-Ashriyyah*, 5.1 (2019), p. 83.

[17] Abdul-Samad Abdullah, 'Fādil Al-Samarra'ī's Contribution to Literary and Rhetorical Exegesis of the Qur'an', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 180; Ali Ahmad Hussein, 'Poetry and the Qurʾan: The Use of Tashbīh Particles in Classical Arabic Texts', *Religions*, 14.10 (2023), p. 1326.

[18] Samed Yazar and Islam Batur, 'Rhetorical Transformation in the Qurʾān and Pre-Islamic Poetry: A Comparative Analysis of Space, Animal, and Natural Figures', *Religions*, 16.9 (2025), p. 1186.

[19] Mohammed Ibrahim Elshafey, 'The Role of *Khafāʾ al-Maʿnā* ("Obscurity of Meaning") in Qur'anic Rhetoric', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 23.3 (2021), pp. 176–223, doi:10.3366/jqs.2021.0484.

[20] M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, 'Understanding the Qur'an Through Sura Structure: Reading Q. 86 and Q. 88', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 23.3 (2021), pp. 160–70, doi:10.3366/jqs.2021.0482.

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three principal lexical roots: *jadala*, *ḥāja*, and *khaṣama*. These roots were selected because of their semantic association with debate, refutation, argumentation, and contestation of claims. The second stage consisted of selecting verses based on their thematic context. Only verses directly related to theological debates were included in the corpus, particularly those concerning monotheism (*tawḥīd*), polytheism (*shirk*), prophethood, divine revelation, resurrection, and the authority of divine truth. The third stage involved excluding verses containing these lexical roots but lacking a direct connection to theological disputes, such as those addressing social conflicts, legal disagreements, or general forms of contention unrelated to matters of faith and belief.

Based on these criteria, the study identified twenty-three verses as its primary dataset. This number does not represent all Qur'anic verses that contain elements of debate; rather, it comprises only those verses that satisfy the study's inclusion criteria, namely, the presence of disputational elements, theological content, and argumentative patterns that can be subjected to rhetorical analysis. Accordingly, the selection of these twenty-three verses was determined through thematic screening and analytical relevance rather than the researcher's subjective preference.

The data were analyzed through several stages. First, the identified verses were classified according to their lexical roots and the theological themes they address. Second, each verse was examined to identify the rhetorical strategies employed, including rational argumentation, rhetorical questioning, affirmation of prophetic authority, semantic contrast, descriptions of consequences, negative labeling, and historical narration. Third, the findings of the rhetorical analysis were interpreted through Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics. The first movement was employed to reconstruct the moral, historical, and thematic contexts of the verses, while the second movement was used to derive their universal principles and contextualize them in relation to contemporary challenges in religious communication.

The integration of thematic interpretation and hermeneutical analysis enables this study to move beyond merely identifying the rhetorical forms found in the Qur'an. It also facilitates an examination of the functions, underlying principles, and contemporary relevance of these rhetorical strategies.[21] The scholarly contribution of this research lies in the development of a model for interpreting Qur'anic theological debate verses through the integration of rhetorical analysis, thematic Quranic Tafsir, and Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics. Through this integrative framework, the study not only expands the scope of *mujādalah* studies within Qur'anic scholarship but also offers an ethical-rhetorical analytical framework for understanding the Qur'an's patterns of argumentation in responding to the challenges of religious communication in the digital age.[22]

B. Results and Discussion

Derivations of Debate-Related Terms in the Qur'an

The Qur'an, as the sacred scripture of Islam, possesses numerous distinctive features, one of which lies in its precise and nuanced choice of diction. This characteristic becomes particularly evident when examining verses related to debate and argumentation. Such an examination reveals that the concept commonly referred to as *mujādalah* is expressed in the Qur'an through a variety of lexical forms rather than a single term.

[21] Sohaib Saeed, 'Fights and Flights: Two Underrated "Alternatives" to Dominant Readings in *Tafsīr*', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 24.1 (2022), pp. 46–88.

[22] Ulrika Mårtensson, 'Linguistic Theory in *Tafsīr* between 100/400 and 700/1000: Implications for Qur'anic Studies', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 24.3 (2022), pp. 1–45

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), the term *debat* (debate) refers to a discussion or exchange of opinions concerning a particular issue in which each party presents reasons to defend its respective viewpoint.[23] Terminologically, debate may be understood as an exchange of arguments between opposing parties aimed at addressing differences of opinion through a fair, rational, and constructive process of dialogue.[24]

The author's lexical investigation indicates that *mujādalah* derives from the root *jadala*, which originally means "to twist," "to braid," or "to intertwine."[25] Through the addition of the letter *alif* according to the morphological pattern (*wazan*) *fāʿala*, the root develops into *jādala*, meaning "to engage in debate" or "to argue."[26] In addition to this term, the Qur'an employs the word *ḥājja*, which etymologically denotes arguing with another person, engaging in dispute through evidence and proof, or contesting differing viewpoints.[27] Another related expression is *khaṣama*, which conveys meanings associated with debate, quarrel, hostility, conflict, and dispute.[28]

Within the Qur'an, these three lexical roots appear in a variety of grammatical forms, including the perfect verb (*fiʿl māḍī*), imperfect verb (*fiʿl muḍāriʿ*), and verbal noun (*maṣdar*). Such morphological variation is a common feature of the Arabic language and serves to indicate distinctions related to temporal reference, agency, number, and gender. Consequently, the semantic field of debate in the Qur'an is expressed through a diverse range of linguistic constructions, each contributing to the broader portrayal of argumentation, disputation, and theological engagement within the Qur'anic discourse.

Rhetoric in Debate

The foundations of rhetorical theory were first systematically articulated by Aristotle in his work *De Arte Rhetorica*, which was originally composed in three volumes.[29] Etymologically, the term *rhetoric* derives from the Latin *rhetorica*, meaning "the art of speaking," and later evolved into the English term *rhetoric*, referring to the skill or art of effective speech. Conceptually, scholars have proposed various definitions of rhetoric. However, this study adopts the view that rhetoric is the art and science of effective communication aimed at influencing an audience through persuasive language and strategic forms of expression.[30]

According to Aristotle, effective rhetoric is built upon three fundamental modes of persuasion: *logos* (rational appeal), *pathos* (emotional appeal), and *ethos* (ethical credibility).[31] These elements function as persuasive instruments that enable a message to be communicated effectively, thereby influencing, convincing, and motivating the audience.

In the context of debate, where participants seek either to defend their own arguments or refute those of their opponents, rhetoric plays a crucial role in determining the

[23] Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, "Debat," *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Daring*, 2025.

[24] Muhammad Nuruddin, *Ilmu Debat* (Keira, 2024)., 19.

[25] Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Al-Munawwir: Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Pustaka progressif, 2002)., 175.

[26] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an, Cet IV* (Lentera Hati, 2005)., 553

[27] Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, "Debat," *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Daring*, 2025.

[28] Munawwir, *Al-Munawwir: Kamus Arab-Indonesia*., 344.

[29] Mohamed Ibrahim ElShafey, '*Ishbāʿ al-Maʿnā* in the Qur'an: A Structural Survey of *Sūrat al-Ḥāqqa* (Q. 69)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 24.2 (2022), pp. 100–36,

[30] Relly Vinata Wisnu Saputra Anjar, *Retorika* (Wawasan Ilmu, 2024).

[31] Aristoteles, *Retorika: Seni Berbicara, Trans. Dedeh Sri Handayani* (Basabasi, 2018)., 18-19.

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effectiveness of argumentative performance.[32] The success or failure of an argument is often influenced by the rhetorical strategies employed in its presentation. By understanding and applying appropriate rhetorical techniques, disputing parties can construct coherent and persuasive arguments, anticipate counterarguments, and respond effectively to objections. Consequently, rhetoric not only enhances the logical strength of an argument but also contributes to influencing the thoughts and emotions of interlocutors, thereby fostering more constructive and meaningful discussions.

Hermeneutics as an Approach to Qur'anic Interpretation

Hermeneutics, a term widely recognized as originating from the Greek language, is derived from the word *hermēneuein*, which means "to interpret" or "to translate." The term is commonly associated with Hermes, the figure in Greek mythology entrusted with conveying messages from the gods to humanity.[33] In the context of Qur'anic studies, hermeneutics functions as an interpretive approach through which scholars seek to understand and explain the meanings of divine revelation as conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In this sense, the hermeneutical process begins after the revelation has been preserved and transmitted in textual form.[34]

The application of hermeneutics to the Qur'an highlights the dynamic nature of textual interpretation, including the interpretation of verses concerning *mujādalah* (debate). It recognizes that meaning is not entirely fixed but remains open to multiple perspectives and contexts of understanding.[35] Every reader approaches the text with distinct intellectual backgrounds, cultural horizons, and lived experiences, which may lead to different interpretations.[36] Consequently, the scope of hermeneutics extends beyond textual analysis alone. It also involves examining the historical circumstances, social context, and contemporary relevance surrounding Qur'anic verses, including those addressing theological debates.[37]

Among the various hermeneutical approaches applied in Qur'anic studies, Fazlur Rahman's theory of double movement is one of the most influential.[38] Rahman proposed this approach as a means of producing interpretations that are both comprehensive and responsive to changing social realities.[39] The first movement seeks to understand the historical and moral context in which a Qur'anic teaching was revealed, while the second movement aims to derive its underlying universal principles and apply them to contemporary circumstances. Through this interpretive process, the Qur'an is understood not merely as a text confined to a particular historical period but as a source of guidance whose moral vision remains relevant across different contexts, societies, and generations. The successful application of this double movement approach therefore reinforces the Islamic belief that the

[32] Younus Y. Mirza, '"A Precious Treatise": How Modern Arab Editors Helped Create ibn Taymiyya's *Muqaddima Fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 25.1 (2023), pp. 79–107.

[33] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutika; Teori Baru Mengenai Interpretasi* (Pustaka Teologi Pelajar, 2005).

[34] Hasan Hanafi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an, Trans. Yudian Wahyudi* (Pesantren Nawasea Press, 2009)., vii.

[35] Michal Moch, 'Critique of Nas ḫ in Contemporary Qur'ānic Hermeneutics Using the Example of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd's Works', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 187.

[36] Joseph EB Lumbard, 'Decolonizing Qurʾanic Studies', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 176.

[37] Jauhar Azizy, Mohammad Anwar Syarifuddin, and Hani Hilyati Ubaidah, 'Thematic Presentations in Indonesian Qur'anic Commentaries', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 140.

[38] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (The University of Chicago Press, 1982)., 5.

[39] Gokhan Bacik, 'Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkey: An Analysis of Turkish Historicists', *Religions*, 12.11 (2021), p. 1027.

teachings of the Qur'an possess enduring significance and continue to provide guidance for humanity in every age.

Identification of Theological Debate Verses in the Qur'an

This study adopts a thematic lexical approach (*al-tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī al-lafẓī*), which focuses on examining specific Qur'anic vocabulary and its semantic network. Accordingly, the analysis began by tracing the Indonesian term *debat* (debate), identifying its corresponding Arabic expressions, and subsequently exploring their semantic equivalents through a Qur'anic concordance. The concordance served as a reference tool for locating Qur'anic verses based on lexical roots and their derivations.[40] The verses selected for this study explicitly contain elements of argumentative dialogue related to matters of faith and theological principles. These verses are derived from three principal lexical roots: *jadala*, *ḥāja*, and *khaṣama*. Based on the identification process conducted by the researcher, twenty-three verses were determined as the primary corpus of analysis. The selected verses, along with their respective lexical forms, are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Classification of Theological Debate Verses Based on Lexical Roots

No	Qur'anic Reference	Lexical Form
1	Surah Hud:32	جَٰدَلۡتَنَا
2	Surah Al-Zukhruf: 58	جَدَلَۢاۚ and خَصِمُونَ
3	Surah Ghafir: 5	وَجَٰدَلُواْ and يُجَادِلُ
4	Surah Al-A'raf:71	أَتُجَٰدِلُونَنِي
5	Surah Al-Kahfi:56	وَيُجَٰدِلُ
6	Surah Al-Hajj: 3	يُجَٰدِلُ
7	Surah Al-Hajj:8	يُجَٰدِلُ
8	Surah Luqman:20	يُجَٰدِلُ
9	Surah Al-Ra'd:13	يُجَٰدِلُونَ
10	Surah Ghafir:35	يُجَٰدِلُونَ
11	Surah Ghafir:56	يُجَٰدِلُونَ
12	Surah Ghafir:69	يُجَٰدِلُونَ
13	Surah Al-Shura:35	يُجَادِلُوْنَ
14	Surah Al-An'am:25	يُجَٰدِلُونَكَ
15	Surah Al-Shura:16	يُحَآجُّونَ and حُجَّتُهُمۡ
16	Surah Ali 'Imran:65	تُحَآجُّونَ
17	Surah Al-An'am:80	أَتُحَٰٓجُّوٓنِّي
18	Surah Al-Jathiyah:25	حُجَّتَهُمْ
19	Surah Al Baqarah:139	أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا
20	Surah Ali 'Imran:73	يُحَاجُّوكُمْ
21	Surah Al-Shu'ara: 96	يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ
22	Surah Al-Naml: 45	يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ
23	Surah Al-Zumar: 31	تَخْتَصِمُوْنَ

As shown in Table 4.1, the Qur'anic verses concerning theological debate derived from the lexical roots *jadala*, *ḥāja*, and *khaṣama* are presented in a variety of morphological forms. These derivations reflect the linguistic richness of the Qur'anic discourse in portraying different modes of argumentation, disputation, and theological engagement. Understanding this classification not only reveals the structural patterns of debate within the

[40] Ali Audah, *Konkordansi Qur'an* (LItera Antar Nusa, 2008)., vi.

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Qur'an but also provides a foundation for examining the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies employed in these verses. Such an analysis makes it possible to explore the various forms of evidence and argumentation (*ḥujjah*) used to reinforce faith, establish theological convictions, and respond to doubt and skepticism across diverse contexts and historical periods.

Analysis of the Qur'an's Rhetorical Strategies in Theological Debates

The Qur'an employs a variety of rhetorical strategies in theological debates that are designed to construct persuasive arguments (*logos*), evoke emotional responses (*pathos*), and establish the credibility of the monotheistic message conveyed through God's messengers (*ethos*).[41] These three dimensions of persuasion play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of rhetorical communication. Their careful integration ensures that debate functions as a meaningful exchange of ideas rather than a futile confrontation that may generate hostility and division.

One of the most prominent strategies found in the theological debate verses identified above is the use of rhetorical statements and direct challenges that carry sarcastic undertones. Sarcasm, in this context, refers to a form of expression characterized by ridicule, sharp criticism, or dismissive language intended to undermine an opponent's position.[42] An example can be found in Q. 11:32, where the people of Noah declare: "You have disputed with us and prolonged your dispute with us." This statement reflects their frustration with and rejection of Noah's monotheistic preaching. They further challenge him by saying, "Bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are among the truthful." Such remarks demonstrate not only skepticism toward Noah's message but also an attempt to discredit his prophetic authority. Historical Islamic sources record that Noah's mission extended over a remarkably long period—traditionally understood as 950 years—during which only a relatively small number of followers accepted his message.[43]

The Qur'an also frequently employs provocative questions and comparative arguments as rhetorical devices.[44] Such strategies are often used by opponents of the prophets to divert attention from the central issue or to weaken the force of the prophetic message. As noted by Keraf, comparison functions rhetorically only when one of the compared elements is presented as superior or more persuasive than the other. An illustration of this strategy appears in Q. 43:58, where the opponents ask: "Which is better, our gods or he (Jesus)?" This provocative question was directed toward the Prophet Muhammad with the intention of challenging the status of Jesus and, at the same time, legitimizing their practice of idol worship. Rather than constituting a genuine theological inquiry, the question serves as a rhetorical maneuver designed to redirect the discussion and defend existing beliefs.

This pattern of argumentation has also been discussed by the Qur'anic scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who argues that polytheism is fundamentally incompatible with the order and harmony of the universe created by God.[45] According to Nursi, the divine attributes of wisdom and omnipotence are manifested throughout creation, leaving little rational basis for attributing divinity to created beings or material objects. From this

[41] Hakan Çoruh, 'A New Hermeneutical Approach to the Qur'an with Special Reference to the Narrative of Prophet Yaḥyā (John the Baptist) in the Qur'an and the Bible', *Religions*, 13.10 (2022), p. 982.

[42] Rani Sri Wahyuni, 'Analisis Gaya Bahasa Sarkasme Dalam Bahasa Sunda Warganet Pada Media Sosial Facebook', *Metabasa*, 3.2 (2021)., 66.

[43] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Vol.6* (Lentera hati, 2002)., 32-34.

[44] Gorys Keraf, *Argumentasi Dan Narasi* (PT. Gramedia, 2017)., 112.

[45] Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *Al-Lama'at, Terj. Fauzi Faisal Bakhresyi & Joko Prayitno* (Risalah Press, 2018)., 641.

perspective, the Qur'an repeatedly invites its audience to employ reason and reflection in evaluating theological claims. Such appeals to rational inquiry constitute an important rhetorical strategy within the Qur'anic discourse, encouraging individuals to critically examine the coherence and validity of their beliefs.

Rhetorical statements also appear in the form of questions that challenge the audience's use of reason and sound judgment. An example can be found in Q. 7:71, where the Prophet Hūd begins his argument with an emphatic declaration (*taḥqīq*), marked by the particle *qad*[46] in the expression: *qāla qad waqaʿa ʿalaykum min rabbikum rijsun wa ghaḍab* ("A punishment and wrath from your Lord have indeed become inevitable for you"). The use of *qad* serves to reinforce the certainty of the consequences that would result from their rejection of the divine message. This statement is then followed by a challenging rhetorical question: "Do you argue with me concerning names which you and your forefathers have invented, for which Allah has sent down no authority?" Through this question, Hūd calls into question the legitimacy of the idols worshipped by his people and exposes the absence of any valid basis for their beliefs.

A similar rhetorical pattern appears in Q. 31:20: "Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth?" This question functions as an invitation to reflect upon the divine blessings bestowed upon humanity. Rather than seeking information, such rhetorical questions encourage contemplation and critical self-examination. In this regard, they implicitly challenge flawed patterns of reasoning and expose inconsistencies in the arguments advanced by the opponents of monotheism. From a rhetorical perspective, these questions serve to direct the audience toward a more rational evaluation of theological claims.[47]

Contrast and irony likewise constitute important rhetorical strategies in the Qur'anic theological debates. These devices highlight the disparity between the abundance of signs pointing to God's truth and power and the persistent denial exhibited by those who reject them. Q. 13:13 presents a striking ironic contrast: thunder glorifies and praises Allah, while the angels stand in awe of Him, yet human beings continue to dispute His power and authority. This juxtaposition underscores the irrationality of denying divine sovereignty despite the overwhelming testimony of creation itself.

The Qur'an also frequently reveals the underlying motives that drive theological disputes. For instance, Q. 40:56 states that "there is nothing in their hearts except a desire for greatness, which they will never attain," indicating that arrogance and the pursuit of status often lie behind their arguments. A similar rhetorical effect is reinforced through the use of the contrastive conjunction *bal* ("rather" or "instead"), which functions to reject a preceding notion and redirect attention to a different reality.[48] In Q. 31:20, this linguistic feature highlights the irony that, despite the countless blessings granted by Allah, some individuals continue to engage in disputation without knowledge. By exposing the gap between divine generosity and human obstinacy, the verse strengthens the Qur'an's critique of uninformed and irrational opposition to faith.

The majority of theological debate verses in the Qur'an emphasize divine credibility, namely the absolute authority of Allah as the ultimate source of power, truth, knowledge, and justice. Alongside this affirmation of divine authority, the credibility of the prophets is also consistently highlighted, as they function as authoritative messengers entrusted with conveying and defending the truth. Conversely, the Qur'an's critique of the unbelievers

[46] Mustafa Al-Ghalayiny, *Jami' al-Durus al-'Arabiyyah Juz 3* (Dar al Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2011)., 200.

[47] Soe Tjen Marching, *Logika Bukan Hanya Untuk Orang Pintar* (Globalindo Publisher, 2021)., 71.

[48] Al-Ghalayiny, *Jami' al-Durus al-'Arabiyyah Juz 3*., 185.

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extends beyond the spiritual domain to include intellectual and moral dimensions. Their arguments are frequently portrayed as lacking a rational foundation and as being unsupported by sound theological reasoning.

Theological debates in the Qur'an also employ rhetorical strategies that explicitly articulate the objectives or consequences of particular beliefs and actions. By emphasizing the outcomes of accepting or rejecting divine guidance, these verses strengthen the logical force of their arguments. For example, Q. 42:35 underscores God's absolute sovereignty with the purpose of making its audience aware of their fundamental dependence upon divine power. The verse reminds its interlocutors that human beings possess neither ultimate authority nor complete control over their circumstances, thereby exposing the limitations of human power in contrast to divine omnipotence.

Direct forms of address likewise constitute an important rhetorical strategy in Qur'anic theological debates. Such expressions identify specific audiences and establish a more immediate and engaging mode of communication. An example is the address *Yā Ahl al-Kitāb* ("O People of the Book") in Q. 3:65, which directly targets Jewish and Christian communities in the debate concerning the religious legacy of Abraham. Through this mode of address, the Qur'an situates its argument within a concrete historical and theological context while inviting its audience to re-evaluate their claims.

Another notable rhetorical device is the use of dramatic narrative scenes to reinforce theological messages. In Q. 26:96–97, for instance, the Qur'an depicts a vivid scene from the Hereafter in which the inhabitants of Hell confess: "By Allah, we were indeed in manifest error." This dramatic representation functions not merely as a narrative description but also as a persuasive rhetorical strategy. By portraying the regret and realization experienced by those who rejected the truth, the verse seeks to evoke reflection, warn its audience of the consequences of misguided beliefs, and strengthen the persuasive force of the Qur'anic argument.

The Qur'an also employs metaphorical language as an effective means of conveying divine messages by transforming abstract concepts into ideas that can be understood through concrete and experiential imagery. An example can be found in Q. 43:58, where the expression *ḍarabūhu* (ضَرَبُوهُ), which literally means "they struck it," is used metaphorically to portray the arguments of the unbelievers as unfounded and devoid of substantive value.[49] A similar rhetorical device appears in Q. 42:16 through the phrase *ḥujjatuhum dāḥiḍah* (حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ), commonly translated as "their argument is futile." The term *dāḥiḍah* literally denotes slipping or losing footing, thereby creating a metaphorical image of an argument that lacks stability and collapses under scrutiny.

Another example is found in Q. 7:71, where the verb *waqa'a* (وَقَعَ),[50] literally meaning "to fall" or "to descend," is employed to depict the certainty of divine wrath and punishment upon those who reject God's revelation. Likewise, in Q. 31:20, the Qur'an is described as a *kitāb munīr* (كِتَٰبٍ مُّنِيرٍ), or "an illuminating Book." Here, light functions as a metaphor for guidance, knowledge, and spiritual insight, presenting the Qur'an as a source of illumination for those willing to understand and reflect upon its teachings.

The rhetorical strategies identified in the theological debate verses demonstrate that Qur'anic debate is far more than a mere exchange of words or a verbal contest between opposing parties. Rather, it represents a comprehensive mode of persuasive communication.[51] Through the integrated use of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, the Qur'an not

[49] Wahbah bin Mustafa Al-Zuhayli, *Tafsir Al-Wasit al-Zuhayli* (Dar al-Fikr, 2001). 174.
[50] Munawwir, *Al-Munawwir: Kamus Arab-Indonesia*., 1574.
[51] Halim Calis, 'The Theoretical Foundations of Contextual Interpretation of the Qur'an in Islamic Theological Schools and Philosophical Sufism', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 188.

only presents coherent and compelling arguments but also evokes emotional engagement and establishes the credibility of its message. Consequently, the rhetorical force of these verses extends beyond their original historical audience. Their persuasive power continues to resonate with contemporary readers, particularly when the Qur'an is studied through careful analysis and contextual interpretation. This enduring relevance highlights the capacity of Qur'anic rhetoric to communicate theological truths across different historical periods, cultural settings, and intellectual contexts.

Factors Influencing the Use of Rhetorical Strategies in Qur'anic Theological Debate Verses

The diverse rhetorical strategies employed in the Qur'anic verses of theological debate are not arbitrary; rather, they are shaped by a number of interrelated factors. One of the most significant factors is the nature of the intended audience, particularly their level of faith and theological commitment. The rhetorical approach directed toward believers who already affirm the oneness of God differs considerably from that addressed to unbelievers who reject divine revelation. In addressing the latter, the Qur'an frequently employs direct challenges, rhetorical statements that appeal to reason and common sense, and warnings concerning the consequences of disbelief. Such strategies can be observed, for example, in Q. 11:32, Q. 7:71, and Q. 40:4–5.

A second factor is the rhetorical purpose or communicative objective of the message itself. Each verse serves a particular function within the context of theological debate, and this function directly influences the choice of rhetorical strategy. When the objective is to establish or demonstrate the truth of a theological claim, the Qur'an tends to employ strong logical appeals (*logos*). Examples include references to God's blessings and signs in Q. 31:20, as well as challenges to provide valid evidence or authority for opposing claims, as found in Q. 7:71.

By contrast, when the objective is to refute error, skepticism, or false beliefs, the rhetorical strategy is often directed toward exposing the weaknesses of opposing arguments. This may be accomplished through ironic contrasts, as illustrated in Q. 13:13, or through rhetorical questions that challenge the logical consistency of an opponent's position, as seen in Q. 3:65. Furthermore, when the purpose is to warn, admonish, or encourage repentance among those who reject the truth, emotional appeals (*pathos*) become more prominent. Such appeals are evident in descriptions of divine punishment in Q. 40:5 and Q. 13:13, as well as in vivid depictions of the Day of Judgment, such as those found in Q. 39:31.

In addition, some rhetorical strategies are employed to undermine the credibility of erroneous claims and reveal the underlying motives behind persistent opposition to the divine message. In these cases, the Qur'an may portray certain attitudes or behaviors negatively, as in Q. 43:58, or expose the hidden motives that drive theological resistance, as illustrated in Q. 18:56. Through these various approaches, the Qur'an adapts its rhetorical strategies to the circumstances, objectives, and audiences involved, thereby maximizing the persuasive force of its theological discourse.

A third factor influencing the selection of rhetorical strategies is the historical context and circumstances of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) surrounding the theological debate verses. Historical accounts indicate that pre-Islamic Arab society was renowned for its eloquence and mastery of poetry, suggesting a highly developed culture of linguistic expression and argumentation. Consequently, the Qur'an often responds to its audience using rhetorical forms that correspond to their communicative environment. An example can be found in Q.

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11:32, where the opponents challenge the prophet by demanding the immediate arrival of the punishment he warns them about. In response, the Qur'anic discourse employs an equally forceful rhetorical strategy by affirming the certainty of the consequences that will eventually occur.

A fourth factor is the character of the speaker, namely Allah and His messengers, whose authority constitutes an absolute form of *ethos*. The divine attributes repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an—such as omniscience, justice, and absolute oneness—serve as powerful sources of rhetorical credibility. These qualities are presented explicitly and unequivocally in verses such as Q. 22:3 and 8, Q. 40:35 and 56, and Q. 39:31. Although the wording and rhetorical forms vary across these passages, their central themes remain consistent, namely monotheism (*tawḥīd*), the Hereafter, and prophethood. This thematic consistency reinforces the credibility and authority of the Qur'anic message, strengthening its persuasive force within theological discourse.

A fifth factor concerns the linguistic features of the Arabic language itself, which provide the medium through which the rhetorical beauty and effectiveness of the Qur'an are expressed. The richness of Arabic grammatical structures and its capacity for nuanced expression enable the Qur'an to employ a wide range of persuasive devices. For example, the particles *inna* (إِنَّ) and *la-* (لَـ) are frequently used for emphasis (*ta'kīd*),[52] thereby strengthening the certainty and force of a statement, as seen in Q. 40:56. Similarly, the conjunction *thumma* (ثُمَّ)[53] functions to indicate sequential progression, linking one event or statement to another, as illustrated in Q. 39:31. Such linguistic features contribute significantly to the persuasive and rhetorical impact of the Qur'anic discourse.

Taken together, these factors demonstrate that the rhetorical strategies employed in Qur'anic theological debates are shaped by a complex interaction of audience characteristics, communicative objectives, historical circumstances, speaker credibility, and linguistic structure. The integration of these elements contributes to the distinctive persuasive power of the Qur'anic discourse and helps explain its enduring influence across different historical periods and cultural contexts. From the perspective of Islamic scholarship, this rhetorical sophistication has long been regarded as one of the remarkable features of the Qur'an and an important dimension of its literary and communicative excellence.

A Rhetorical Synthesis of Theological Debate Verses through Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement

The rhetoric of theological debate verses in the Qur'an presents distinctive argumentative patterns that play a significant role in articulating the concept of divine unity in a rational and communicative manner. These rhetorical structures are manifested through dialogue, refutation, and the purification of theological concepts, all of which are directed toward reshaping patterns of thought and belief. Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutical framework provides a methodological approach for interpreting these verses by treating historical context as the essential starting point of interpretation.[54]

Re-examining these verses through the lens of Rahman's double movement theory yields a more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an's argumentative structure.[55] This

[52] Kamilah Al-Kawary, *Al- Wasit Fi Al-Nahwi* (Dar Ibn Hazm, 2018)., 458.

[53] Al-Ghalayiny, *Jami' al-Durus al-'Arabiyyah Juz 3*., 183.

[54] Priyantika Lesyaina Az Zahra, Aniatul Fukoroh, and Andi Rosa, 'TEORI DOUBLE MOVEMENT PADA PENAFSIRAN FAZLURRAHMAN DOUBLE MOVEMENT THEORY IN THE INTERPRETATION OF FAZLURRAHMAN', *JIIC: Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendekia*, 1.10 (2024), pp. 7704–15.

[55] Bayram Demircigil, 'The Conceptualization of Jurisprudential Exegesis as the Intersection of Tafsir and Fiqh: A Critical Approach', *Religions*, 16.2 (2025), p. 254.

approach demonstrates that Qur'anic rhetoric is not merely concerned with refuting opposing arguments; rather, it seeks to construct an alternative theological paradigm grounded in monotheism. A reconstruction of the socio-historical setting of pre-Islamic Arabia reveals that theological debates emerged within a social environment characterized by religious plurality, competing claims to religious authority, and deeply rooted belief systems.[56] Situating the verses within their historical context, therefore, provides valuable insight into how the Qur'an responded to theological claims that it regarded as lacking a valid foundation.[57] By contrast, a purely literal reading that disregards the realities surrounding revelation risks producing interpretations detached from the rhetorical purposes of the Qur'anic discourse.

The first movement of Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutical model focuses on deriving universal theological principles from the specific historical circumstances in which the verses were revealed. These principles are understood as possessing enduring relevance across different times and places. One of the central theological principles conveyed by the Qur'an is that associating partners with God (*shirk*) represents a fundamentally irrational position. The Qur'anic argument consistently emphasizes the impossibility of equating the Creator with created beings or attributing divine status to entities that are themselves contingent and dependent. This principle is evident, for example, in Q. 7:71, where the Prophet Hūd challenges the legitimacy of the objects of worship revered by his people. The rhetorical purpose of this challenge is to dismantle claims that lack divine authority and to redirect the audience toward a more coherent understanding of theological truth.

The second principle, derived from the dimension of *pathos*, is the principle of *ʿibrah* and *taqwā* as forms of existential awareness. This principle suggests that emotions should be directed toward the cultivation of piety and moral consciousness. Accordingly, persuasive arguments should not merely manipulate emotions but should encourage reflection (*ʿibrah*) and foster ethical self-awareness (*taqwā*). The Qur'an's use of emotional appeal can be observed, for instance, in Q. 26:96–97, where the dramatic depiction of regret in the Hereafter serves as a powerful reminder intended to awaken moral reflection and spiritual accountability.

The third principle is communicative integrity. This principle emphasizes that credibility must be grounded in a consistent and trustworthy source of truth. As demonstrated in the theological debate verses discussed above, such credibility is established through the honesty, moral integrity, and exemplary conduct of the prophets who convey the divine message. In rhetorical terms, *ethos* is not merely a matter of authority but also of ethical consistency between message and messenger.

The second movement of Rahman's hermeneutical framework involves contextualization, namely the process of relating the universal principles derived from the Qur'anic text to contemporary social realities. This stage helps connect the text to societies undergoing moral, intellectual, and cultural transformation. Through this perspective, Qur'anic verses are understood not merely as normative statements but as moral interventions addressing concrete religious and social challenges. The integration of historical awareness and linguistic analysis thus enhances the clarity and relevance of the Qur'an's theological message. Within this framework, the contextualization of the first principle—rational coherence grounded in divine evidence (*ḥujjah*)—becomes particularly

[56] Muhammad Arsyad, 'Nilai-Nilai Universal QS. al-Mujâdalah [58]: 11 : Kajian Hermeneutika Double Movement Fazlur Rahman', *Muasarah: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer*, 5.2 (2023), pp. 114–27.

[57] Rüdiger Lohlker and Soleh Hasan Wahid, 'The Transformation of Islamic Religious Authority', *Religions*, 17.4 (2026), p. 493.

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significant in responding to contemporary phenomena such as misinformation, disinformation, and religious skepticism.

Individuals are therefore encouraged to employ reason, evidence, and logical reflection in the pursuit and communication of truth, especially in an age characterized by unprecedented access to information and competing truth claims. Contemporary societies, particularly younger generations, increasingly encounter challenges to their religious convictions arising from diverse factors, including exposure to digital content that contradicts Islamic values, limited spiritual guidance, and the proliferation of alternative worldviews.[58] In response to these challenges, a reflective approach based on *tafakkur* (contemplation) and cosmological reflection may serve as an effective means of strengthening faith. By encouraging individuals to reflect upon the order, complexity, and harmony of creation, such an approach aligns with the Qur'anic rhetorical method of directing attention to the signs of God in the universe as a basis for theological conviction and spiritual awareness.

The second principle may be understood as the application of ethical *pathos*, whereby emotional appeals in communication must remain grounded in moral and ethical values. The Qur'an does not merely convey theological doctrines and legal injunctions; it also presents powerful narratives that evoke profound emotional and spiritual reflection. One example is the story of the Prophet Abraham, who remained steadfast in his faith despite threats and opposition from the polytheistic community around him. Such narratives demonstrate that emotional engagement in the Qur'an serves not to manipulate audiences but to cultivate moral awareness, resilience, and commitment to truth.

In the contemporary digital era, however, emotional appeals often overshadow rational evaluation. Viral content frequently attracts public attention by eliciting empathy, outrage, shame, or other strong emotions, regardless of whether the information presented is accurate or reliable. Various forms of manipulation and staged content are deliberately designed to generate emotional responses in order to increase viewership, engagement, popularity, or financial gain through donations and monetization.

Within this context, the contemporary application of the second principle becomes increasingly important. Digital communication should encourage audiences to engage in meaningful reflection and to derive moral lessons (*ʿibrah*) from the content they encounter. Ethical *pathos*, therefore, requires that narratives be authentic and directed toward moral education rather than emotional exploitation for the sake of views, likes, or other manipulative objectives. Likewise, provocation through abusive language, personal attacks, and other forms of negative emotional stimulation should be avoided. Instead, communication should prioritize mutual respect, solidarity, and social cohesion, thereby ensuring that theological debate contributes to constructive dialogue rather than social fragmentation.

The third principle can be contextualized in the form of digital integrity. This principle is particularly important for individuals whose credibility constitutes a central component of their public role, especially religious preachers and educators operating in both offline and online environments. In contemporary digital culture, credibility has become one of the most valuable assets in religious communication. One of the major challenges facing contemporary religious discourse is the growing public skepticism toward certain religious figures whose sincerity in conveying Islamic teachings has been questioned. Such concerns often emerge when religious communication appears to be excessively commercialized or when material interests seem to overshadow educational, spiritual, and

[58] Idhar and Nasrullah, 'Krisis Aqidah Di Era Digital: Tantangan Keimanan Generasi Z', *Al-Ittihad*, 11.1 (2025), pp. 100–25.

moral objectives. From the perspective of communicative integrity, maintaining consistency between message, intention, and conduct is essential for preserving public trust and ensuring the effectiveness of religious communication in the digital age.[59]

The findings of this mapping process demonstrate that the theological debate verses examined in this study embody a moral orientation that can serve as a foundation for the development of an intellectual culture grounded in critical reflection and ethical responsibility. The process of deriving and generalizing these values positions revelation as a source of moral guidance whose relevance extends beyond its original historical context. In this regard, the Qur'an's emphasis on rationality as a central component of theological rhetoric resonates with Fazlur Rahman's critique of interpretive stagnation within certain strands of traditional exegesis.[60]

The presence of these universal values further indicates that the Qur'an advances its theological critiques primarily through persuasive rather than merely confrontational means. The rhetorical patterns found in the Qur'anic discourse reveal a gradual and systematic strategy aimed at guiding individuals and communities toward a clearer understanding of divine reality and monotheistic belief. Rather than relying solely on condemnation, the Qur'an frequently employs reasoned argumentation, moral reflection, and rhetorical persuasion to facilitate intellectual and spiritual transformation.

The contextualization of theological debate verses through the second movement of Rahman's hermeneutical framework also offers significant contributions to interreligious dialogue, educational discourse, and the development of contemporary Islamic thought.[61] By integrating text, historical context, and contemporary application, this approach enables interpretations that remain responsive to changing social realities while preserving the normative foundations of revelation.[62] Such an interpretive model demonstrates that fidelity to the Qur'anic message and contextual relevance need not be mutually exclusive.

The reconstruction of universal values from the rhetorical structures of these verses reveals the broader moral vision that the Qur'an seeks to establish. Rahman's hermeneutical model provides a robust scholarly foundation for further research on theological rhetoric in the Qur'an and its contemporary implications. More importantly, this framework offers a means of bridging tradition and modernity within Qur'anic interpretation, allowing the enduring ethical and theological principles of revelation to remain meaningful across diverse historical and cultural contexts. Ultimately, this process reaffirms the continuing vitality of the Qur'an as a source of moral guidance capable of addressing the intellectual and spiritual challenges of every age.

The Rhetoric of Theological Debate from the Perspective of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement

The findings and analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed in the Qur'anic verses of theological debate offer significant practical implications for Islamic studies, particularly in the fields of daʿwah and religious communication within contemporary society. In an era characterized by rapid information exchange and the widespread circulation of

[59] Muhammad Hamdan Yuwafik and Moh Muslimin dan Afif Mahmudi, 'Kontroversi Komersialisasi Dakwah: Perspektif Dakwah Profetik', *Dariscomb*, 5.1 (2025), pp. 41–55.

[60] Rifki Ahda Sumantri, 'HERMENEUTIKA AL-QUR'AN FAZLUR RAHMAN METODE TAFSIR DOUBLE MOVEMENT', *Komunika: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 7.1 (2023), pp. 112–45.

[61] Muhammad Umair and Hasani Ahmad Said, 'Fazlur Rahman Dan Teori Double Movement: Definisi Dan Aplikasi', *Al Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 71–81.

[62] Edi Hermanto, 'IMPLEMENTASI TEORI TAFSIR GERAK GANDA FAZLUR RAHMAN PADA BUKU AJAR AL-QUR'AN DAN HADIST', *Jurnal An-Nida: Pemikiran Islam*, 41.1 (2025), pp. 31–49.

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misinformation, the ability to construct persuasive, well-reasoned, and credible messages has become increasingly important. The Qur'anic model of theological debate demonstrates that effective communication requires not only logical coherence (*logos*) but also the strategic use of emotional appeal (*pathos*) to engage audiences and encourage meaningful reflection. This insight is particularly relevant in contemporary public discourse, where emotions and sentiments frequently shape public opinion and influence patterns of belief and behavior.

In this regard, the Qur'an's use of narratives, analogies, and vivid imagery provides valuable examples for contemporary communicators. These rhetorical devices may be employed to create messages that resonate emotionally and intellectually with audiences, provided that they are used responsibly and ethically. The objective should not be emotional manipulation but rather the cultivation of understanding, reflection, and moral awareness. Consequently, the ethical dimension of *pathos* remains essential for ensuring that persuasive communication contributes positively to public discourse.

Equally important is the dimension of *ethos*, or the establishment of credibility, which has become a decisive factor in the digital age. Public trust can be easily weakened by misinformation, inconsistency, or perceived lack of integrity. The Qur'an reinforces both divine and prophetic credibility while simultaneously exposing the weaknesses and underlying motives of those who oppose the truth. This rhetorical pattern suggests that effective communication, whether in debate or in broader social engagement, must be grounded in integrity, consistency, and demonstrated expertise.

For contemporary religious leaders, scholars, educators, and social activists, credibility is not merely a supplementary attribute but a fundamental requirement for effective communication. The messages they convey must be supported by transparent conduct, intellectual honesty, and a trustworthy public record. In this way, the Qur'anic rhetorical model offers not only a framework for theological argumentation but also a broader ethical paradigm for responsible communication in an increasingly complex and interconnected digital environment.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that although individuals possess the freedom to present and defend their arguments, such freedom must be exercised with respect for the rights of others to express differing viewpoints.[63] Constructive theological discourse, therefore, requires not only the ability to formulate persuasive arguments but also a commitment to intellectual openness, mutual respect, and ethical engagement. In practical terms, this principle may be implemented through careful audience analysis, the selection of appropriate language, and the use of examples that resonate with the specific audience being addressed, whether young people, professionals, or the general public. Such considerations help ensure that messages are communicated effectively and reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding or rejection resulting from contextual mismatches.

Furthermore, an appreciation of the richness of the Arabic language as a rhetorical medium in the Qur'anic theological debate verses highlights the importance of linguistic competence and effective communication skills. The persuasive power of these verses is closely connected to their careful use of diction, stylistic variation, and rhetorical expression. In the contemporary era, where information is disseminated through diverse digital and conventional media, the ability to communicate persuasively and articulate complex ideas with clarity has become increasingly important. Mastery of language and rhetoric enables communicators to convey sophisticated theological and ethical concepts in ways that are

[63] Faris Khoirul Anam, *Fikih Media Sosial: Cerdas Berbagi Informasi* (Delta Pijar Khatulistiwa, 2024)., 33.

both accessible and compelling, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of religious and intellectual discourse.

Viewed through the perspective of Fazlur Rahman's double movement, these rhetorical principles demonstrate that the Qur'an's communicative strategies are not confined to their original historical setting. Rather, they embody universal values that can be adapted to contemporary contexts while remaining faithful to the ethical and theological objectives of the revelation. Consequently, the study of Qur'anic theological rhetoric contributes not only to a deeper understanding of the text itself but also to the development of more responsible, persuasive, and contextually relevant forms of communication in modern society.

C. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Qur'anic verses of theological debate employ systematic rhetorical strategies that integrate *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* to communicate theological truths. These strategies are manifested through rational argumentation, rhetorical questioning, semantic contrast, depictions of consequences, historical narratives, negative labeling, and the affirmation of divine and prophetic authority. Through Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics, these rhetorical patterns can be distilled into three universal principles: rational coherence, ethical awareness, and communicative integrity. The study contributes to Qur'anic studies by expanding the scope of *mujādalah* beyond the root *jadala* to include *ḥāja* and *khaṣama*, while integrating rhetorical analysis, thematic interpretation, and Rahman's hermeneutical framework. The findings suggest that Qur'anic rhetoric functions not merely as a literary device but also as a theological and ethical instrument for shaping rational, responsible, and context-sensitive religious discourse.

In contemporary contexts, these principles offer valuable guidance for addressing misinformation, emotional manipulation, and declining public trust in digital communication. Rational argumentation, ethical emotional appeal, and credibility-based communication remain essential for fostering constructive religious dialogue. Methodologically, the thematic-hermeneutic approach proves effective in uncovering the enduring moral significance of theological debate verses. Future research may broaden the corpus by examining other Qur'anic expressions of dialogue and polemics, as well as exploring the application of Qur'anic rhetorical principles in digital media, interfaith dialogue, and religious literacy initiatives.

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