

PRINCIPLES OF LISTENING IN THE QURAN AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC PREACHING: A STUDY OF SURAH AL-NAHL/16:78

Mira Fauziah

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh

Email: mira.fauziah@ar-raniry.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The Quran mentions that humans are endowed with a sense of hearing, yet they fail to utilize it to listen to the verses and guidance of Allah. This work aims to examine the principles of listening in the Quran and their development in Islamic preaching. This study employs content analysis to comprehend the significance of hearing Surah Al-Nahl/16:78. The research findings reveal that through the utilization of the sense of hearing, individuals acquire knowledge, leading them to obey all of Allah's commands and prohibitions. The sense of hearing is highly effective when employed to listen to preaching materials via videos on various social media platforms.

Keywords: *Hearing, Surah Al-Nahl, Islamic Preaching.*

ABSTRAK

Al-Quran menyebutkan bahwa manusia diberikan indera pendengaran, tetapi mereka tidak menggunakannya untuk mendengarkan ayat-ayat dan petunjuk Allah. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tentang prinsip pendengaran dalam al-Quran dan pengembangannya dalam dakwah Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan *content analysis* dalam memahami makna pendengaran dalam QS.16:78. Hasil penelitian diketahui bahwa dengan menggunakan indera pendengaran, maka manusia akan memperoleh ilmu pengetahuan sehingga ia mematuhi segala perintah Allah dan larangan-Nya. Indera pendengaran sangat efektif digunakan untuk mendengarkan materi dakwah melalui video di berbagai media sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Pendengaran, Surah al-Nahl, Dakwah Islam*

A. Introduction

Islamic propagation (dakwah) is an obligatory activity for every Muslim. The Muslim community inherits the prophetic message and concurrently passes down this duty of propagation to each generation. The act of dakwah must persist until the end of time. Therefore, various approaches are necessary to ensure the continuity of dakwah.

Essentially, Islamic propagation involves the conduct of Muslims in practicing Islam as a missionary religion, encompassing elements such as the *da'i* (preacher), *mad'u* (target audience), dakwah materials, dakwah media, and dakwah methods. Dakwah is a process involving the transmission, transformation, diffusion, and internalization of Islamic teachings.¹

The rapid development in the field of communication technology and the emergence of the cyber era, characterized by a growing global population using the internet as a means

¹ Ahmad Zaini, 'Dakwah Melalui Televisi', *At-Tabsyir: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, 3.1 (2015), p. 2 <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/at-tabsyir.v3i1.1642>>.

of communication, present both opportunities and challenges for *da'is* (preachers). *Da'is* are required to be responsive to the various changes of the times.²

According to internet world stats data, internet users in Indonesia reached 30 million people in 2010, or 12.3% of the country's population. Several studies indicate that internet users tend to be younger, more affluent, and better educated. In terms of lifestyle, around 50% of internet users fall under the category of actualizers, which includes academics, professionals, and the technically oriented.³

It is acknowledged that there are negative aspects to the development of knowledge and information technology (IT), such as the emergence of materialistic, individualistic, and secular attitudes, among others. On the other hand, there are opportunities for *da'is* (preachers) to harness the positive aspects of IT for use as a medium of propagation. The emergence of various social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and others provides *da'is* with the opportunity to post videos and written messages containing religious teachings.

Thus, the messages of propagation can be modified and presented appealingly so that everyone can easily receive and enjoy them. Through social media, these messages can be directly viewed or even just listened to while engaging in other activities. For instance, one can listen to them while working in the office, typing, on a business trip, or while traveling out of town. This means that no matter how busy one is, one can still engage with propagation by simply listening to the messages on social media.

Considering this recent development, the author believes that listening has become one of the ways for *da'is* (preachers) to conduct propagation. This study aims to examine the principles of listening in the Quran, specifically Surah Al-Nahl (16:78). In this study, the author employs the content analysis method to comprehend the meaning of listening in the mentioned verse.

B. Theoretical Study

In this section, several terms that are the focus of the study are explained: the concept of hearing, Surah Al-Nahl, and Islamic propagation.

1. The Concept of Hearing

Fundamentally, there is a distinction in meaning between "hearing" and "listening." Hearing is passive; it might be unintentional and doesn't require attention to what is heard. On the other hand, listening is an active and intentional process that necessitates understanding what is being heard. According to Devito, the act of listening is an active process of receiving stimuli in the ear (aural). Listening doesn't happen without consciousness; it requires deliberate engagement. Listening demands energy and commitment, especially in interpersonal communication. Hence, it's crucial to differentiate between hearing and listening.⁴

² Enjang Muhaemin, 'Dakwah Digital Akademisi Dakwah', *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 11.2 (2017), 341–56 (p. 342) <<https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v11i2.1906>>.

³ A. Diana, *Mengenal E-Business* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2001), pp. 8–9.

⁴ Nikodemus Thomas Martoredjo, 'Keterampilan Mendengarkan Secara Aktif Dalam Komunikasi Interpersonal', *Humaniora*, 5.1 (2014), p. 505 <<https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v5i1.3067>>.

Hearing is a physiological process, whereas listening involves stimulus reception. Stimulus reception refers to absorbing the received stimuli and then processing them in a particular manner. Active listening involves three aspects: sensing, processing, evaluating, and responding. In the sensing aspect, the listener pays close attention to both verbal and nonverbal language from the message sender. In the processing and evaluating aspect, the listener strives to understand the conveyed meaning, interpret it, assess nonverbal language, and remember the message. The responding aspect entails the listener providing verbal and nonverbal signals to the message sender in response to what is heard.⁵

According to Moeliono, hearing means perceiving sounds or noises with non-deaf ears. On the other hand, listening means hearing something attentively and tuning in carefully to listen.⁶ Active listening can be highly effective in building relationships among individuals and is also efficient in avoiding conflicts between them. The ability to listen actively and effectively needs to be developed as a solution to addressing issues encountered in various aspects of human life.

Listening is an intellectual and emotional process. Through this process, individuals gather and integrate the physical, emotional, and intellectual input of others, aiming to grasp the messages and their meanings.⁷

From the various definitions above, it can be understood that the term 'listening' carries a higher level of significance compared to 'hearing.' Hearing is passive, often unintentional or inattentive to what is heard, thus not entering conscious awareness. In contrast, listening has a more active nature, is deliberate and conscious, and involves both intellectual and emotional processes.

2. Surah al-Nahl

Surah Al-Nahl is the 16th chapter written in the Quran and is located in the 14th Juz (section). This Surah consists of 128 verses and falls within the category of Makki Surahs, which were revealed before Prophet Muhammad migrated to Madinah. The Surah is named Al-Nahl, which means 'The Bee,' due to the story of the bee mentioned within it: 'And your Lord inspired the bee, "Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and trees, and [in] that which they construct." (Quran 16:68).

Bees are remarkable creatures because they produce honey. Honey is formed from various flower nectars that bees consume. Honey has medicinal qualities that can help treat a variety of human illnesses after it has undergone bee processing.

The inclusion of the bee in this Surah is significant not only for its symbolic value but also for the lesson it imparts. The bee's industrious nature, its ability to gather from diverse sources, and the beneficial outcome of its labor are often used as metaphors in Islamic teachings to encourage diligence, resourcefulness, and the pursuit of knowledge.

⁵ Martoredjo, p. 505.

⁶ Kathryn Geldard dan David Geldard, *Membantu Memecahkan Masalah Orang Lain Dengan Teknik Konseling* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2003), p. 99.

⁷ Ambar Wulan Sari, 'Pentingnya Ketrampilan Mendengar Dalam Menciptakan Komunikasi Yang Efektif', *EduTech: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial*, 2.1 (2016), p. 3 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30596/edutech.v2i1.572>>.

This portrayal of bees and their precious product holds broader lessons, illustrating the intricate wisdom embedded in the natural world and pointing to the signs of Allah's creation and providence. Just as the bee extracts goodness from different flowers, humans are encouraged to seek knowledge and virtue from various sources to enrich their lives and contribute positively to society.

3. Islamic Propagation

Propagating Islam involves efforts to guide humanity towards the right path and to prevent them from taking actions prohibited by Allah SWT. This is undertaken to ensure people's happiness in both this world and the hereafter.⁸

Propagation (dakwah) is an obligatory activity for every Muslim, regardless of gender, at all times, wherever they are, and according to their respective capabilities.⁹ *Da'is* (preachers) have the responsibility to convey the truth, teach Islamic values, and motivate the Muslim community towards virtuous deeds.¹⁰

The act of propagation should not cease until the end of one's life. It is as if the act of propagation is the soul of a believer's relationship with Allah SWT. If propagation stops, it's as if the soul dies.

C. Quranic Verses about Hearing

In the Quran, many verses discuss human hearing. Hearing is one of the essential senses for humans. Through hearing, the human brain processes the information it hears into knowledge. The knowledge gained from what is heard can be beneficial for human life. Among the Quranic verses, it is mentioned that only those who hear are the ones who obey the call of Allah (QS. 6:36). On the contrary, disbelievers possess ears, but they do not use them to listen to the verses of Allah (QS. 7:179).

This writing examines one of the Quranic verses related to hearing, which is Surah Al-Nahl/16:78.

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers, not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing, vision, and intellect, for which perhaps you would be grateful.

This verse discusses the basic potential of humans, which is hearing, as a means to acquire knowledge.¹¹ According to Ibn Kathir, with the ability to hear, a person can carry

⁸ Mira Fauziah, 'Persuasive Missionary Endeavor in The Story of Prophet Musa and Fir'aun: Study of Chapter Thaha Verse 44', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu Ashirah*, 20.1 (2023), p. 133 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v20i1.17075>>.

⁹ Mira Fauziah, 'Da'wah Activities of Jamā'ah Masturah in Aceh Besar', *Al-Lubb: Journal of Islamic Thought and Muslim Culture (JITMC)*, 2.1 (2020), p. 49 <<https://doi.org/10.51900/lubb.v2i1.8589>>.

¹⁰ Mira Fauziah and Muhammad Zaini, 'Internalisasi Nilai Universal Islam Dalam Dakwah Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0', *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 2.1 (2021), p. 174 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/jpi.v2i1.11476>>.

¹¹ Siti Zainab, 'Komunikasi Verbal: Konsep Mendengarkan Dalam Al-Quran', *Jurnal Kajian*, 3.3 (2011), p. 346.

out the commands of Allah.¹² When someone is capable of hearing well, it becomes easier for them to digest and understand messages, allowing them to apply them easily in their daily lives.¹³

According to M. Quraish Shihab, the principle of hearing mentioned in Surah Al-Nahl/16:78 signifies the potential to receive divine inspiration and sparks of divine light. Firstly, the potential to receive divine inspiration means that Allah granted the sense that functions before others. Hence, it's understood that the sense of hearing is of paramount importance in human life. Through hearing, humans gain knowledge. Secondly, if the sense of hearing is utilized properly, the outcomes of what is heard, whether calls or commands from Allah, should be deeply obeyed.¹⁴

Hamka explained that, by being granted hearing by Allah SWT, humans are not deaf. The principle of hearing here is that, with the sense of hearing that humans possess, they can hear the commands and prohibitions of Allah and then obey them.¹⁵

Imam Jalaluddin al-Mahalli and Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi explain that hearing is to be able to know everything.¹⁶ According to these two scholars, humans can learn many things through the sense of hearing compared to other senses. Therefore, hearing is the first sense to be functional when humans are born.

Ahmad Musthafa al-Maraghi explains that hearing is part of understanding what others discuss.¹⁷ As humans live within a community, they naturally interact with each other and engage in conversations. Thus, mutual understanding among them is necessary.

In Surah Al-Haqqah/69:9–12, Allah SWT says:

وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكُتْ بِالْحَاطِطَةِ فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَابِيَةً إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا
الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذِكْرًا وَتَعْيِبَهَا أُذُنَ وَعِيَةَ

And there came Pharaoh and those before him, and the overturned cities with sin.¹⁸ And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with a seizure exceeding (in severity). Indeed, when the water overflowed, We carried your ancestors¹⁹ in the sailing ship. That We might make it for you a reminder and (that) a conscious ear would be conscious of it.

In the verse of Surah Al-Haqqah/69:12 mentioned above, the word 'udzun' is used, which means 'ear' and is composed of three letters: *hamzah*, *dzal*, and *nun*. From these three

¹² Al-Imam Abu Fida Ismail Ibnu Katsir Ad-Dimasyqi, *Terjemahan Ibnu Katsir* (Bandung: Sinar Baru al-Gensindo, 2002), p. 425.

¹³ Ad-Dimasyqi, p. 372.

¹⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), p. 637.

¹⁵ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2015), p. 202.

¹⁶ Imam Jalaluddin al-Mahally, *Tafsir Jalalain*, jilid 1, C (Bandung: Sinar Baru Algensindo, 2003), p. 1099.

¹⁷ Mustafā Ahmad al-Marāgi, *Tafsir Marāgi* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1986), p. 211.

¹⁸ It means: The meaning is that the ancient peoples who denied the Prophets, like the people of Thamud, the people of Shuaib, and others, and the overturned cities, are the cities of the people of Lot. Their wrongdoing was rejecting the messengers.

¹⁹ What was brought aboard the ark of Prophet Noah for salvation were the family of Prophet Noah and the believers, except for his disobedient son..

letters, various other words can be formed, such as '*idzin*' (permission) and '*adzan*' (call to prayer), and from this word, the term '*muadhin*' (the one who calls the *adzan*) is also derived. Each word formed from these three letters can be related in meaning to something that can be heard or an announcement. Therefore, a '*muadhin*' is someone who announces through the phrases of the *adzan* that the prayer time has come, or the *adzan* that is whispered into the ears of a newborn baby to introduce the declaration of monotheism and for various other purposes. Meanwhile, '*idzin*' refers to a notification or a sign that something is permissible (*i'lamu bi ijjazatihi wal rukhshati fih*).²⁰

From this understanding, it can be comprehended that the ear ('*udzun*') is a human body part that functions to hear announcements. The ear is a sense organ that physically transfers information from the external environment for later processing by the mind. In the following phase, this information is stored in the heart and can be communicated again if necessary. However, what the Quran refers to as 'hearing' is not solely limited to its physiological meaning but also holds a deeper significance encompassing spirituality. The Quran occasionally mentions those who possess functional hearing as 'non-deaf' individuals.²¹

Every human possesses the sense of hearing (ear) to listen. Yet not all ears can become good listeners. Allah created two ears, which outnumber the creation of one tongue. The wisdom behind this is to encourage people to listen more than they speak. In the Quran, Allah explains two types of ears: those that function well and those that do not.²²

The attributes of a good ear include the ability to hear, retain, and uphold conversations and advice. A good ear can hear lessons, guidance, the verses of Allah, and the traditions of the Prophet. It avoids conversations that are inappropriate and unbeneficial. This is a depiction of a functional ear.²³ On the other hand, impaired hearing is characterized by not adhering to the commands and prohibitions of Allah.

In the Quran, the key to the dysfunction of the ear lies within the heart. *Just as in 'Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and their hearing, (Surah Al-Baqarah/2:18). The example of those who do not utilize their hearing is akin to those without intellect (Surah Yunus/10:42), like the living dead (Surah An-Naml/27:80), or individuals buried (Surah Fatir/35:22).*

Such are the many verses of the Quran that mention human hearing. In essence, the fortunate individuals are those who consistently employ their sense of hearing to follow the commands of Allah and His messenger while also refraining from listening to anything that would lead them astray from the right path.

D. Conveying the Message of Propagation Through Hearing

Allah SWT emphasizes in numerous verses the significance of hearing for humanity. The hearing referred to in the Quran pertains to humans listening to the commands of Allah and His Messenger. Preachers convey their messages through media that can audibly

²⁰ Waryono Abdul Ghafur, *Strategi Qur'ani: Mengenal Diri Sendiri Dan Meraih Kebahagiaan Hidup* (Yogyakarta: Belukar, 2004), p. 108.

²¹ Ghafur, p. 108.

²² Ghafur, p. 110.

²³ Ghafur, p. 110.

transmit the messages of propagation and, in some instances, even recitations of the sacred verses of the Quran. It is well known that hearing is one of the most effective human sensory tools for receiving messages conveyed by individuals. Therefore, preachers need to pay attention to how they can harness the media to effectively convey their message. Propagation material can be delivered through lectures, advice, and recitation of the Quran.

El-Kadi states that listening to the recitation of the Quran is linked to a slower heart rate and relaxation of smooth muscles. Several studies indicate that listening to music can be an effective and safe intervention for complications caused by various diseases. It can also reduce stress, irritability, and feelings of loneliness, and improve mood.²⁴

Therapy through the recitation of Quranic verses, with the stimulation of Quranic recitation (*murotal*), can be considered a novel alternative therapy for relaxation. It proves to be more effective compared to other audio therapies, as Quranic stimulation can induce delta waves by up to 63.11%.²⁵

Thus, it can be understood that the human soul experiences profound tranquility by listening to the recitation of Quranic verses. Even a hardened heart can be softened through frequent exposure to Quranic recitation. Therefore, propagating the message through means of conveying the propagation content to the audience (*mad'u*) via videos and social media stands as a highly appropriate method in this day and age. The propagation material can be presented in the form of Quranic recitation or words of wisdom that touch emotions and can be conveyed through social media.

E. Conclusion

From the explanations above, it can be concluded that the Quran extensively emphasizes the significance of hearing. Many individuals fall into disobedience due to their failure to effectively utilize their sense of hearing. The essence of hearing in QS. An-Nahl/16:78 is that Allah created two ears so that humans could listen to knowledge, His commands, and His prohibitions, enabling them to obey and be devoted to Allah. This understanding highlights the crucial role of hearing in shaping human behavior and fostering a strong connection with the divine.

In light of modern communication methods, propagation materials can be effectively disseminated through engaging videos and shared across various social media platforms, reaching a wide audience and enhancing the impact of the message. By tapping into the potential of auditory and visual media, propagators can bridge the gap between traditional teachings and contemporary communication practices. This convergence not only empowers the propagation of Islamic teachings but also underscores the importance of utilizing the blessings of technology for spreading the divine message.

²⁴ Ricky Zainuddin, 'Efektifitas Murotal Terapi Terhadap Kemanmdirian Mengontrol Halusinasi Pendengaran', *Jurnal Keperawatan Muhammadiyah*, 2019, p. 2.

²⁵ Zainuddin, p. 2.

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