

Messages of *da'wah* for non-Muslims in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*

[*Mesej dakwah kepada yang bukan Islam dalam novel Ayat-Ayat Cinta*]

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the message of da'wah to Non-Muslims in a novel entitled Ayat-Ayat Cinta by Habiburrahman El Shirazi. This study is qualitative research with an internal analysis approach (content analysis) which attempts to identify how a novelist inculcates messages of da'wah in writing, specifically da'wah towards non-Muslims along with messages of any aspect that the novelist wants to convey. The results of this study found that the method used by Habiburrahman El Shirazi is by featuring some non-Muslim characters in the novel such as the family of Mr. Boutros Rafael Girgis, (Maria, Yosoef, Mr. Boutros, Madame Nahed) and Alicia, a journalist, who is from the United States. Through these characters, he included critical topics of discussion in the Islamic point of that are widely misunderstood by some non-Muslims namely the role of women in Islamic teachings, relations between husband and wife, the mixing of non-mahram men and women, to how Islam functions as a guide and provides blessings to the community be it Muslim or non-Muslim. Similarly, through the plot of the story, the author of the novel conveys the Islamic message on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is hoped that this study shall open more minds to the fact that da'wah can be conveyed effectively through writing and works of literature.

Kata Kunci:

Dakwah; Bukan Islam; Ayat-Ayat Cinta; Novel; Mesej

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji mesej dakwah kepada yang bukan Islam dalam novel yang bertajuk *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* karya Habiburrahman El Shirazi. Kajian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis kandungan (content analysis) yang berupaya mengenal pasti bagaimana seorang penulis novel memasukkan mesej dakwah ke dalam tulisannya, khususnya dakwah kepada orang bukan Islam serta apa sahaja aspek mesej yang penulis novel ingin sampaikan. Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa kaedah yang digunakan Habiburrahman El Shirazi adalah penampilan beberapa watak bukan Islam di dalam novel tersebut, seperti keluarga Tuan Boutros Rafael Girgis, (Maria, Yosoef, Tuan Boutros, Madame Nahed) dan Alicia seorang jurnalis dari Amerika Syarikat. Melalui watak-watak tersebut beliau memasukkan tajuk-tajuk perbincangan dari sudut pandang Islam, terutamanya isu-isu yang sering disalahfahami orang bukan Islam, seperti isu kedudukan wanita dalam ajaran Islam, hubungan suami dan isteri, pergaulan lelaki dan wanita bukan mahram serta Islam sebagai hidayah dan rahmat kepada masyarakat sama ada Muslim mahupun bukan Islam. Dengan cara ini penulis juga menggunakan plot cerita novel untuk menyampaikan mesej tentang hubungan orang Muslim dengan yang bukan Islam. Diharapkan kajian ini dapat membuka minda ramai kepada fakta bahawa mesej dakwah dapat disampaikan dengan jayanya melalui penulisan



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1. Introduction

Habiburrahman El Shirazy's work entitled *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* is a spectacular novel that was well received by the community (Rani, 2012). Similarly, it was adapted into a film and watched by 3.8 million people. Although in the form of a fictional literary novel it contains a deeper message of Islamic doctrine. Indeed, the author's main goal was to make it a medium of *da'wah* (Sulkhan, Nawawi, Uus & Roqib, 2019). El Shirazy wanted to lead the readers to enjoy the beauty of literary works of art while at the same time enjoying spiritual watering through the message of *da'wah* (El Shirazy, 2011).

Given the many aspects or dimensions in the novel, this paper is focused on dissecting one dimension, namely the message of *da'wah* to non-Muslims. In the novel, the author includes a few side characters who are non-Muslims. The reason this novel was chosen was that this novel details several situations of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, there are a few reflections of non-Muslim views on Islamic teachings such as the status of women in Islamic teachings among others. These characters interact with the main character Fahri in several storylines. Through this, the author applies the main normative values of Islam when dealing with non-Muslims.

Based on the background, the problem Statement of this study is established, namely, how does the author's literary methodology include the topic of the message of *da'wah* to Non-Muslims? And what topics does the author include in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*?

2. Methodology

This study is qualitative research aimed at discussing the message of *da'wah* to Non-Muslims in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. The study design of content analysis was used in the breaking down of the novel. This analysis is used to obtain information from the content presented in the form of emblems (Sadiah, 2015). This method can be used to study all forms of communication media such as newspapers, poems, songs, stories, paintings, speeches, letters, rules, laws, music, theatre and so on. Generally, this method is applied through several stages. The first is the formulation of research questions, the second, is the formulation of hypotheses, the thirdly, sampling, the fourth step is the manufacture of measuring instruments, the fifth is data collection and lastly the sixth is an analysis of the data collected.

The data of this research is in the form of language exposure which is in the form of discourse or story text. Acquisition of research data was done in two ways: reading analysis and recording. Analytical reading is a thorough reading activity, following a complete reading of the entire reading text. In this study, the reading activity analysis was done to find the messages of *da'wah* to Non-Muslims in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. The next activity is to record verbal data related to the research. The verbal data will then be rewritten in the presentation of research results as evidence of the findings.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Non-Muslim Views on Islam

It is undeniable that some people cannot separate the normative teachings in Islam from those practised by Muslims in daily life differentiated with terms such as actual Islam, historical Islam, Islam of reality and others (Lapidus, 1996). Normative teaching refers to teachings of an ideal nature as listed in scripture, taught by the apostles, delivered at the Friday sermon, or formulated in seminars. While the term actual Islam refers to what appears on the surface and is actually reflected by the community or individuals who are Muslims. In this case, there are two possibilities, it can be normative Islamic practice, and can also contradict it (Hasbullah & Martanti, 2020).

That being a baseline, according to the author, polemics often occur between Muslims and Non-Muslims. Muslims focus their views on the normative teachings of Islam, while non-Muslims who do not know the normative teachings tend to always raise questions or spread things that happen in the lives of Muslims which are contrary to normative teachings without accurate evidence. Several things which are often associated with Muslims are namely genocide, war, indiscipline, antiquity, orthodoxy, fanaticism and intolerance (Jasafat, 2014). According to the Research Division of the Terengganu Religious Affairs Department, among the non-muslims, many negative views on Islam are that Islam is not perfect teaching, where many still have superstitions and are unpunctual, along with the popular notion that developed countries do not consist of Islamic countries. Additionally, they believe that Islam cannot guarantee peace in this world with the proof being the frequent conflicts and bloodshed, with a special focus on the legalization of polygamy which degrades women among others. The impact from that point of view is the formation of various negative perceptions towards Muslims as well as the teachings of Islam that are further compounded by the support of western media (Latif, & Che Mamat, 1998).

Western media generally tends to portray Islam in a specific light either through television, radio, the internet, or other mass media. Muslims are often portrayed as fundamentalist, extremist, terrorist, or even uncivilized (Rockenbach, Mayhew, Bowman, Morin & Riggers-Piehl, 2017). Another thing that is often twisted in western media is the meaning of *jihād* or holy war in Islam. Images of war and violence have become two keywords often associated with Islam in western media. *Jihād*, which literally means fighting hard in the name of Allah, is often misinterpreted by western media as a holy war in which Muslims for no reason strive to kill non-Muslims (Saleem, 2007). The true meaning of *jihād* is rarely used by western media when reporting the news. The media often uses the word *jihād* out of context with the intention of it being spun as propaganda in developing a negative image of Islam. It is also the media that often reports inaccurately about the conflicts that occur in the Muslim community and the human rights of women in Islam, propagating that Muslim women are treated as second class humans that should always be at home. Through these means, a negative view of Islam was gradually formed (Siddiqui & Mahmood, 2019).

3.2 *Da'wah Method to Non-Muslims*

Although oral *da'wah* (*da'wah bi al-lisān*) according to Zaydān (2002) is the origin of *da'wah*, to be convinced of the truth of Islam all negative views must be corrected first by showing a good example. This is a very important matter, the method by which non-Muslims can view and distinguish between the pure teachings of Islam (normative) and what is practised by Muslims (actual) (Mansur, 2019). From this understanding, it is important for them to know how to be selective and know when not to generalize what most Muslims do as part of Islamic teachings. In that way, their hearts were strengthened with the virtues of Islam through various steps, among others:

3.3 *Optimizing Da'wah Media*

The Quran guides all to carry out *da'wah*, one such example can be seen in His words in surah Āli 'Imrān [3]: 104). In said verse, it is mentioned that there should be a group of people who invite all to goodness and command what good is. According to experts, the meaning of *al-khayr* is a basic virtue, one that is fundamental, normative and universal, not affected by space and time and does not change like *tawhīd* (oneness of God) and *al-Akhlāq al-karīma* (noble characteristics). This is the first thing that preachers must know (Shihab, 2009).

Ma'rūf refers to something good according to the general view of society as long as it is in line with *al-Khayr*. As for *al-Munkar* (evil), it is something that is judged badly by society as well as being contrary to divine values. So the meaning of *al-ma'rūf* is the translation or embodiment of the normative and universal *al-khayr* and is based on space and time so it can be practised (Hidayah, 2020). *Ma'rūf* can vary as long as it remains in accordance with the value of *al-khayr*, therefore the carrying out of something *ma'rūf* or *amar ma'rūf* must be along with the prerequisite of knowing the development of society in accordance with the demands and necessities of space and time. So by itself, *ma'rūf* demands the existence of science or has a scientific dimension as an effort to translate *al-khayr*, as *al-khair* has a dimension of faith (Hasbullah, Hatta & Arifin, 2018).

The film is a work of art that can be used as a missionary medium, the excellence of this media form is that it is liked by many people, regardless of social status, age level, education level, career and profession (Kurniasih, 2009). It functions not only to entertain but also to instil good values indirectly, via the storyline, character or speech. But the colouring of a film depends on the vision of the producer as to where the film is to

be taken in terms of setting or theme. A film producer who has a soul that is *al-amru bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahyu 'an al-munkar* (commanding good and forbidding evil) then he will format his work according to the call of his soul. Through the film, the character of Muslims can then be portrayed ideally to the impressionable audience (Arifuddin, 2017).

Similarly, the novel analyzed was born from a foundation of art to attract the interest of the public (Aflahah, 2017). There are indeed many novels that are inspired by the desire to propagate Islam, often the message they bring works to straighten the negative views of non-Muslims about Islam. A work of art must contain three things, namely humanization, liberalization, and transcendence (Musa, 2012). *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy is a novel that has all three aspects. Based on the author's research there are some misunderstandings towards Islam that the author wanted to straighten out regarding Muslim work ethic, Islam as a blessing, Muslim and Non-Muslim Relations, the position of women, the limits of Male Intercourse and the status of women in Islam (Palewai, Tibek, Sham, Aini, & Syam, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Non-Muslim Characters in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*

Characters are the most important aspect of a story, as they are the object of the storytelling. In the novel, the author features the main character, Fahri, and the supporting characters, Misbah, Hamdi, Saiful, Rudi, Shaykh Ahmad, Shaykh Usman, Naura, Nurul, among others (Dermawan & Ajisaputra, 2014). All the main characters are Muslim, but in addition to Muslims, the author also presents characters that are non-Muslims, namely:

i. Maria

She is the eldest daughter of Mr. Boutros Rafael Girgis, who belongs to the Girgis family a large and very devout Coptic Christian family. She is described as a unique girl. She is a Coptic Christian or in the native Egyptian language, a Qibthi. Uniquely, she likes the Quran, and even memorizes some surahs in the Quran. Among the surahs memorized are Surah *Maryam* [19] 1-98, *Ṭāhā* [20] 1-135, and *al-Mā'idah* [5] 1-120. She is a student at Cairo University's Faculty of Communication and earned distinction (Mumtaz) in level by being the best in her faculty.

ii. Yousef

He is the younger brother of Maria who hangs out a lot with Fahri. From that association, he learns much about Fahri's intelligence and moral excellence and informs Maria about it. In this novel, Yousef's character is not very significant as he functions to complement the main character's storyline.

iii. Mr. Boutros and Madame Nahed

They are the parents of Maryam and Yousef, where Mr. Boutros is an entrepreneur, while Madame Nahed is a doctor. Fahri and his flatmates treat both of them and their children like family. They help each other all the time.

iv. Alicia

She is a journalist from the United States who travelled to Egypt. In this novel, it is revealed that she is so curious about Islam and that she has a lot of questions about the deep things of Islam. She questions many related issues considered negative by Westerners, such as the popular opinion that Islam commands a husband to beat his wife. As a result, she raised the question of how Islam propagates the treatment of women. Similarly, it is questioned how Islam views non-Muslims. In the end, after she learns the deeper concepts of Islam, she received guidance to embrace Islam.

4.2 Interaction With Non-Muslims

In general, there are two particular continuous interactions of the main character (Fahri) with non-Muslims that are focused on in the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, firstly with Mr. Boutras' family and second with Alicia. Their interactions are described in detail:

i. Interaction with Mr. Boutras' Family

The author recounts Fahri's life with his friends from one of the flats adjacent to Mr. Boutras family consisting of Madame Nahed's wife as well as his two children Maria and Yousef. The novel begins with the subtitle "That Egyptian Girl Named Maria". In this section, the author describes the family of Mr. Boutras in detail, especially Maria (El Shirazy, 2008).

As mentioned, Maria is described as a unique girl. Although non-Muslim she likes and is drawn to the Quran. She even memorized some surahs of the Quran, such as the Surah Maryam 1-98 among others. She is also described as a girl who looks more Muslim and Islamic in nature than some Egyptian girls who claim to be Muslim. In terms of her dress, she dresses modestly and properly, always in long sleeves and long pants that cover up to the heels. However, she does not wear a hijab. Maria always seeks Fahri's help on things. The requests were assessed by Fahri as not a burden and he was easily able to help her buy diskettes, ink and others. This interaction amazed Maria and she fell in love with Fahri, but she never revealed it to him (El Shirazy, 2008).

The author reflects the subtlety of Fahri's soul as a Muslim, through an event that took place at a groove in the middle of the night. There a girl named Noura is tortured and dragged into the street by her father and sister. Noura then wept while sitting under the mercury lamp post. At the time, Fahri felt sorry to see Noura's suffering and was moved to help, but he could not do much because he was worried that people would misunderstand and that could lead to the emergence of new problems. Fahri then remembered Maria, and so he asked her to come down and help Noura via SMS. Below is an excerpt from the novel featuring the dialogue during the said event (El Shirazy, 2008):

"Maria did you wake up. Do you hear crying down there?"
 "Yes I woke up, I heard it. I saw from the window Noura hugging the pole."
 "Don't you feel sorry for her?"
 "Very pitiful."
 "Would you like to help her?"
 "Yes, I would like to. But that's not possible. "
 "Why?"
 "The Black Bahadur can do anything. My father doesn't want to deal with him."
 "Would you go down and wipe away her tears. Pity Noura. She needs someone to strengthen her heart."
 "That's not possible."
 "You're more likely than we are."
 "It's so hard for me to do!" Maria refused.
 "Please come down and wipe away her tears. I can't stand women crying. I can't stand it. Please, if I am halal for her, I will go down to wipe her tears and take her to a place away from tears forever. "
 "For this one, don't force me Fahri! I can't! "
 "Please for the sake of your love for Christ Please!"
 "All right, for the sake of my love for Christ, I will try. But you have to keep an eye out from your window. If there is anything you have to do. "
 "Don't worry. God is with those who do good. "

This sub-plot conveys the true quality of a Muslim character, one who always cares for the suffering of others. Thus, the mentality of such characters will always be toward ways in which one can spread grace to others. This is the reflection of a true Muslim as pictured by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ يَقُولُ إِنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خَيْرٌ قَالَ مَنْ سَلِمَ
 الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ

[Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, *Bāb bayān tafāḍul al-Islām wa ay umūrih afḍal*, Hadith Number 40]

Translation:

From 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As is reported to have said: "Verily a person asked the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who amongst the Muslims was better." Upon this (the Holy Prophet) remarked: "From whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe"."

This hadith means that a true Muslim will not hurt others either through words or deeds. It can also be understood from this hadith that the first step in building brotherhood is not to give something beneficial, but more important avoid the infliction of something negative towards others. This is termed by the scholars as (السلام السلبي) passive peace, after which it rises to (السلام الإيجابي) and then reaches its peak with compassion (Shihab, 2011). Basically, Islam cares about morality because it is a reflection of the personal image of a human being in accordance with the origin of his creation (Ismail, Azizan & Zin, 2021). The author also shows the limits of socialization in Islam. Following is the plot (El Shirazy, 2008):

"Fahri, do you want to dance with me? This is the first time I'll try to dance." Softly embarrassed. What do I (Fahri) have to do? Should I have to follow European culture? I am reminded of the early story of young Shaikh Abdul Halim Mahmud while studying in France. He also got a temptation that was not much different from me at the moment. Young Shaikh Abdul Halim Mahmud was able to pass the test well. He who was known as an *'arifillah* young Sufi was eventually chosen as the Grand Shaikh of Al-Azhar.

If there are worshipers and saints at the top of the mountain without temptation it is not amazing. But if there is a worshiper who can interact well in a metropolitan city place with all the hustle and bustle of its hedonistic culture, it's amazing.

Maria's offer for a young man is an attractive offer, who does not want to join hands dancing with a girl as beautiful as her. This is where the test lies.

"I'm sorry I can't." I replied with a smile and cupped both hands on my chest.

"Neither can I. We study together slowly, let's try." Maria said she did not fully understand my rejection.

"I'm sorry Maria, I mean I can't possibly do that. The teachings of the Quran and Sunnah forbid me to have contact with women except with my wife or mahram. I hope you understand and you are not disappointed," I explained firmly. In this case, this problem may not open space towards doubt which makes the devil enter the bloodstream."

Not only when in sound health and mind, but even when ill and possibly in an emergency, Habiburrahman still inserts the message of *wara* or fortitude that a Muslim must possess so as to not give room to lust to dominate other human beings. This is reflected when Fahri was ill and unconscious, Maria alone took care of him because Saiful, Fahri's friend, went out to have breakfast. The moment Fahri gained consciousness, he awoke and saw Maria was watching over him alone. Fahri was not pleased with this and when Saiful came back, he asked Maria to step out before reprimanding Saiful by saying (El Shirazy, 2008):

"Saiful why did you leave me alone with Maria? Why is she waiting for me? She is not my mahram."

After the exchange, Saiful conveyed to Maria in a subtle way that if she came, it would be better if she was with her father or brother. So that when talking or being in a room there is always a mahram who accompanies her. This was not for the sake of distrust in Maria but rather for the sake of peace of mind and soul. The peace of the soul can be attained by faith and discipline but if lust is given space to dominate man, and man's faith is dissolved by his lust, then faith becomes low and the peace of one's soul is lost (El Shirazy, 2008).

The two plots above provide information to non-Muslims about the social order of Muslims, especially men and women, specifically those who are non-mahram. Furthermore, it illustrates that every Muslim must strive to practice the teachings of Islam despite the challenges faced. Consider the events when Fahri presented a bag to Madame Nahed and gave Yousef a dictionary and a cassette. By 12 pm, Fahri and his flatmates went upstairs to meet Madame Nahed to give her the gift (El-Shirazy, 2008)

"I'm sorry Madame if our coming is disturbing you. We are here to express our love and respect for this family. Coincidentally, we have prepared a simple gift. This is for Madame and the other is for Yousef. We wish Madame and Yousef happiness and success." I explained the purpose of our appearance.

That simple gift is really great in its influence. Before going to bed, Fahri received an SMS from Maria. "What did you do until mama cried." Fahri did not answer. He just praised God many times."

The author shows how good morals impact others positively, even a non-Muslim. The author further expounds on this principle as Fahri reads Maria's Diary.

"My father was once touched by his attitude of not wanting to bother and hurt the neighbours. One day, my father charged a water fee to his place. It turned out that he was not feeling well and was resting in his room. In the room, there is a bucket to collect water dripping from the ceiling. He knew right away, that we were right on top of it. And the bathroom is next to my room. He asked,

"How long has this water been seeping and dripping in your room?"

"One month."

"Why didn't you tell me if there was a mess in our bathroom and it seeped into your place?"

"Our Prophet taught to glorify his neighbours, he said," Whoever believes in God from the last day then he should glorify his neighbours! " We know the damage needs to be repaired. And the repairs cost a lot. Because the floor of your house is the ceiling of our house, then the cost of the repair is our responsibility together. Coincidentally we have no money. We will let you know when we have some to repair it. If we tell you right away, we are afraid of bothering you. And that's not what we want.

Hearing that answer, my father's heart was very touched. He was touched by his patience for a month. There is water dripping on the ceiling of the room of course very uncomfortable. He was also touched by his maturity and felt responsible.

ii. Interaction with Alicia

Fahri coincidentally encounters Alicia, a tourist from the United States. They met in the Metro (LRT). At that time Alicia was with a young man and a grandmother. In the Metro, they did not get a seat. Because the grandmother was tired of standing and wanted to sit on the floor, at that moment a veiled woman (Aisha) suddenly stood up and invited her to sit on her seat. Aisha's attitude was considered wrong by a passenger. The man got up with a red face and said, "*Busyit!*" you veiled woman, what are you doing! "*Yakhrab baitik!*" You have insulted all the Egyptians in this metro. You are so outrageous! It looks like a veil, pious, but in fact, you're a bastard!. The passenger is confident that Alicia and her two family members are Americans who deserve a lesson in humility as representatives of the U.S. government. The author then features Fahri's character advising the passengers on their attitude. Through that advice, the author shares with the reader how a Muslim should behave towards non-Muslims. To successfully diffuse the heavy atmosphere Fahri then delivered the speech as below (El Shirazy, 2008);

"All right, I'll explain and after I explain, you can judge whether I said arbitrarily or not. You must understand, that these three white people in addition to your guests are also *ahlu dzimma*. Of course, you know what *Ahl dhimma* is. *Ahl dhimma* is under the guarantee of Allah, in the guarantee of His Messenger, and in the guarantee of the congregation of Muslims."

"*Ahl dhimma* are all non-Muslims who are in the country of the Muslims in a good way, not illegally, by paying *jizyah* and abiding by the rules in the country. Their rights are the same as the rights of Muslims. Their blood and honour are the same as the blood and honour of the Muslims. They must be cared for and protected. Can't be hurt in the slightest. And you must know, that these three American tourists entered Egypt officially. They pay for visas. If you do not believe it, just try to look at the passport. So they have the same law as *ahl dhimma*. Their blood and honour must be protected. That is what the Prophet PBUH taught."

"Did you listen to his words," Whoever hurts the *dhimmī (ahl dhimma)* then I will be his enemy? And whoever I am the enemy he will surely lose on the Day of Resurrection. He also warned, "Whoever hurts the *dhimmi*, he has hurt me and whoever hurts me means he hurts Allah. That is how Islam teaches how to treat non-Muslims and foreign guests who enter officially and kindly in a Muslim country. Iman Ali even said, "Once they pay *jizyah*, their property becomes the same, they must take care of our property, their blood is equal in value to our blood. And the tourists have paid visas and other administrative fees, the same as paying *jizyah*."

Fahri of course explained the above in Arabic. Fahri's words were heard by Aisha, she then translated it to Alicia in English. From that point, Alicia was interested to know in more detail the true concept of Islam as featured by Fahri. From that coincidental meeting, a few days later Fahri, Aisah and Alicia meet again at the Mahattah Metro underground Maydan Tahrir. The meeting was an initiative of Alicia who wanted to talk more about Islam and the moral teachings it brought. Although Fahri was very busy and it is very difficult to divide his time on the matter, he pushed forth as it was a golden opportunity to explain the true nature of Islam to westerners (El Shirazy, 2008).

At the second meeting, Alicia asked, "Well, Fahri, in the West, there is an opinion that Islam tells a husband to beat his wife. He said the instruction is in the Quran. This is clearly far from a civilized act. Very insulting to the dignity of women. Can you explain the real problem? Is that opinion true, or how so?"

"I sighed. I am not bothered by Alicia's question. Such highly discrediting opinions are often expressed by the western media. And because of the ignorance of the call for Islamic teachings that many civilians in the west swallow the raw opinion. With my ability, I try to explain the truth. I hope Alicia understands my English well."

"It is not true that Islamic teachings tell us to do such uncivilized acts. The Prophet PBUH In a hadith commanded, *Lā taḍribū imāa Allah*. Meaning, don't hit women! In another hadith, he explains that the best man or husband is the one who does good to his wife. And indeed, in the Quran, there is a verse that allows a husband to beat his wife. But what kind of wife should be taken care of? In what situation? What is the purpose? And how it should be carried out? The explication is in surah al-Nisa [4], in verse 34: "Therefore, the pious woman is the one who is obedient to God and takes care of herself when her husband is not at home, because God has taken care of (them) the women you fear *nushūz*, so advise them and separate them from the bed and beat them. Then if they obey you, then do not seek to trouble them. Allah is Exalted in Power, Mighty".

So a husband is allowed to hit his wife who has seen signs of *nushūz*. Alicia interrupted, "What is *Nushūz*?"

"*Nushūz* is the action or behaviour of a wife who is not friendly to her husband. In Islam, a wife is like two souls in one body. Her body is a household. Both must take care of each other, respect each other, glorify each other and take care of each other. A *nushūz* wife is a wife who no longer respects, loves, cares for and glorifies her husband. Wives who are no longer committed to the sacred bond of marriage."

As it goes, there were still many questions that Alicia wanted to convey to Fahri, but due to Fahri's limited time, they agreed to meet again. Fahri asked Alicia to write down all her questions, and then on the day they had agreed, Fahri would answer all the questions in written form. Fahri then answered Alicia's questions which among other things were about the words of the prophet PBUH which read that women are the trap of satan. Indeed, that is not a hadith. That is the saying of a Sufi named Basyir Al-Hafī, as explained carefully in the book *Kasyful Khafa*. It was the personal opinion of Basir Al Hafī who was most likely influenced by the words of the Roman clergy. It is not a hadith but is broadcast by people who do not understand the hadith (El Shirazy, 2008).

How is it possible that Islam would insult women as a trap of Satan when in the Quran it is clearly repeated that the creation of women is as a male's life partner while also being among the signs of God's greatness as quoted in sura al-Rūm verse twenty-one. If women are the devil's trap, how could the Prophet PBUH have commanded all to treat women well. He said in an authentic hadith, "*The selected person among you is the one most kind to his woman (wife)*." The Prophet PBUH also called on his people to give priority to their mother over their father. Earnestly, Prophet PBUH added that the mother was mentioned three times, "Your mother, your mother, your mother, then your father! (El Shirazy, 2008).

On the second page, Alicia asked about how Islam views non-Muslims. Specifically, on how Islam viewed Christians and Jews? As well as what exactly happened between Muslims and Copts in Egypt. For the question, what exactly happened between the Muslims and the Copts in Egypt, the most accurate answer is to actually let the Copts of Egypt themselves ultimately answer it. That being said, Pope Shenouda, the supreme leader of Egypt's Coptic Christians had already denied all such ill-intentioned allegations. He stated that he was an orphan in a remote Egyptian village and was breastfed by a Muslim woman who did not force Shenouda to follow her beliefs at all. The Muslim woman provided her milk for the nourishment of the body of the pure little Shenoud because of the Divine call to help her neighbour's baby who was in need of her milk (El Shirazy, 2008).

Is there any tolerance beyond what Pope Shenouda's Muslim mother-in-law did?

I am also reminded that the great and eminent scholars of Egypt never greeted Coptic Christians as outsiders. Copts are considered and addressed as "brothers and sisters". Brothers of the land, a village of the yard, a toy of childhood, not a brother in belief and faith.

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī greeted the Copts with the *Ikhwan al-Aqḥath*, our Coptic brothers. A greeting that has been taught by the Quran. The Quran acknowledges the existence of brotherhood beyond faith and belief. In the history of the prophets, the people of Noah were the people who denied the apostles. They did not want to be believers in Noah. However, the Quran mentions Noah as their brother. It is stated in surah al-Shūrā verses 105 and 106: "The people of Noah denied the Messengers when their brother (Noah) said to them," Why do you not fear (taqwā)?"

If such a beautiful and very humanist teaching is still considered unfair as well, then what is justice like? It can be likened to Jewish teachings that consider non-Jews to be their slaves.

What the author describes through Fahri's answer is the implementation of the teachings of the Quran which advocates finding a point of contact and a meeting point between adherents of the religion. The Quran recommends that in social interaction, if no similarities are found, each should acknowledge the existence of the other party, and thus there is no need to blame each other (Shihab, 2011). At the end of the novel, it is explained that Maria and Alicia received the guiding light to embrace Islam. Although what is discussed in this paper is a work of fiction, the process of these two female characters on their journey towards receiving the guiding light reflects the realities of life (El Shirazy, 2008).

Da'wah with its various components is a human endeavour to make every individual and society fully obedient in practising the teachings of Islam. Trying to change human attitudes and behaviour is not an easy matter. Therefore, *da'wah* must be done with mature preparation by first doing an in-depth analysis of the elements of *da'wah* as components of a system. With this analysis, it is expected that *da'wah* could be carried out with the right approach and methods (Rusli, 2011). Therefore, al-Qaradāwi (2011) mentioned that a preacher or *dā'i* should master Islamic-based knowledge besides secular knowledge. It should maximally stimulate the functions of *hidāyah al-ilhām* (guiding instinct), *hidāyah al-ḥawās* (guidance of the five senses), *hidāyah al-'aql* (guidance of the mind) to the recipients of *da'wah* to be further guided by religious guiding light or *adyān* so that they know the essential truth that can be used and applied as a way of life. This outwardness needs to be accompanied by physical actions or *ikhṭiyār baṭiniyya* in the form of prayer so that Allah grants us the fifth guiding force, namely *tawfīq* or god's guiding light which is a very strong potential driving or encouraging point in human beings to submit and practice the teachings of Islam wholeheartedly.

5. Conclusion

Habiburrahman through his *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* novel has imitated the commands that God has put forth, of course in a way as best as a human being can. He conveyed religious messages and propagated goodness through storytelling, just as Allah often conveyed advice through the stories of the Quran. The *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* novel is an Islamic novel that is loaded with religious messages, which should and could easily be applied in daily life. Among the messages are the way a Muslim interacts with society, specifically with non-Muslims. In the novel, this is reflected through the association of the main character, Fahri who leads two people who receive guidance to embrace Islam via his goodness, words and actions.

Viewed from the scientific aspect of *da'wah*, Fahri's success in delivering his *da'wah* was accepted by non-Muslims because of two things, first, he showed the teachings of Islam in real terms (*da'wa bi al-qawl*) through one's words and deeds. The normative teachings of Islam found in the scriptures are applied in his daily life and so the depth of his knowledge of Islam is interchangeable with his Quranic knowledge or *bi al-ḥikmah*. In this case, Fahri was able to convey Islam in accordance with the rules of universal knowledge so that it can be accepted by people who have a good reason to regardless of faith.

The message of *da'wah* to Non-Muslims is one of the many pieces of advice in the *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* novel by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. This study is expected to be one of the solutions that break the misconceptions of some individuals about Islam or the misconceptions propagated by Islamophobic groups. Therefore, the author suggests to other researchers who carry out research on the *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* novel to focus on the other aspects of *da'wah*, such as *da'wah* to teenagers or the dimensions of Sufism and others. Through this work the author hopes, that readers can increase their appreciation of literary works. This is because literary works have proven to be useful as a medium for subtle *da'wah* and a solution to various social problems.

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