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An Analysis of Empirical Analogies of Quran for Resurrection: A Case Study of Surah Ar Rum

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Abstract

Belief in the Hereafter is one of the fundamental beliefs of Islam. It forms the foundational structure of faith after the concept of Tawheed (monotheism). This belief pertains to a metaphysical reality that cannot be comprehended solely through human intellect, but is revealed through divine guidance. The Holy Qur'an, for this reason, frequently links belief in Allah with belief in the Hereafter, explaining resurrection after death in various ways.

Surah Ar-Rum stands out among the Qur'anic chapters for emphasizing resurrection after death. Out of its 60 verses, 26 directly or indirectly refer to the Day of Judgment and the life after death or resurrection. These verses present arguments from multiple perspectives: rational, empirical, historical, and etc. Among these, a particularly significant and noteworthy aspect is the Qur'an's use of five scientific signs to substantiate resurrection after death.

This approach not only highlights the Qur'an's miraculous nature in the context of modern scientific understanding but also encourages human reflection on the laws of nature and the cosmos, making the possibility of resurrection logically conceivable. In this study, five specific verses of Surah Ar-Rum are examined in detail to illustrate how the Qur'an correlates the concept of resurrection with observable natural phenomena and universal laws.

Keywords: *Belief in the Hereafter; Resurrection, life after death; hereafter, Scientific Signs in the Qur'an; Surah Ar-Rum; Nature and Divine Wisdom*

Introduction and Significance

Belief in the Hereafter (Ākhirah) is central and core belief in Islamic theology. It realizes the accountability of an individual's actions in this world. The concept of accountability leads to excellence in moral and behavioral status as it contains divine justice which remains incomplete without resurrection. The Qur'an persistently affirms that just as creation began by divine command, its revival after death is equally within Allah's power.

In this Context, Surah Ar-Rum is particularly significant because it integrates theological assertions with empirical observations from nature, thereby making the doctrine of resurrection both rationally conceivable and experientially relatable. The surah under discussion not only serve as metaphysical arguments but also resonate with scientific insights observable in daily life and modern research. This dual nature of the Qur'an's discourse strengthens faith and expands intellectual horizons.

Literature Review

Various dimensions of Surah Ar Rum have been discussed in the available literature on the topic. Such as Dr. Hamidullah's work titled "Surah Rum Ki Ibtidaee Ayat ka Pas Manzar"¹ also work of Zarai and Darxabad² in Persian discusses same historical background. These works are focusing on historical background of the Surah and Reason of revelation proving the miracle of Quranic prediction.

Whereas research paper of Assadi, S., Zare'Zardini, A., Moti, M., & Horri, A. (2021)³ Focuses on the concept of cohesion between Quran and its Surah.

Recent research of Supriyadi, A. (2025)⁴ has discussed Surah Al A'araf and Ar Rum on environmental challenges globally. Also Research of Naf, E. Z. N. E. M., Hafizu, H., Rahman, T. A. F. T. A., & Nurdalila, A. W. A. (2024) has focused on marine life and marine environmental challenges.⁵

Firmansyah, A., Nugraheni, Y. T., Wisanto, M., & Asih, S. W. (2023)⁶'s work focuses on the ecological sustainability of the earth system in the light of various interpretations of surah Ar-Rum.

¹ Dr. Muhammad Hameedullah "" E published by Paighame Quran Publication <https://hamidullah.info/historic-background-of-first-ayats-of-surah-rome/> retrived on 16/9/2025,

² Zara'i, Daxabad (2020), Wakai Shadi e Momina Dar Ayat e Ibtidaee Surah Rum dar Parto Naqd e Qiraat e Ayat, Journal of Mutaliat e Tafsiri 42 (11), 65-86

³ Assadi, S., Zare'Zardini, A., Moti, M., & Horri, A. (2021). A Systemic Approach to the Fractal Cohesion of Surah Structure with Emphasis on Opening and Closing: the Case of Surah Ar-Rum. *Literary Quranic Researches*, 8(4), 1-33.

⁴ Supriyadi, A. (2025). ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION VALUES IN THE AL-QURAN: STUDY OF SURAH AL-BAQARAH: 205, SURAH AL-A'RAF: 56, AND SURAH AR-RUM: 41. *PERSIS: Scientific Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 31-38.

⁵ Naf, E. Z. N. E. M., Hafizu, H., Rahman, T. A. F. T. A., & Nurdalila, A. W. A. (2024). Reflection From Surah Ar-Rum Verse 41: Effect Of Oil Spilling Towards The Downfall Of Marine Fishes. *'Abqari Journal*, 31(2), 68-79.

⁶ Firmansyah, A., Nugraheni, Y. T., Wisanto, M., & Asih, S. W. (2023). The ecological sustainability of the earth system: classical and contemporary interpretation of surah Ar-Rum (chapter 30), verse 41. *Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner*, 160-166.

Research Gap

After analysis of the above-mentioned research articles, it can be abstracted that the Surah Rum has been studied through various aspects, i.e. Quranic Coherent, Environmental Challenges, Asbab Un Nuzool, and marical mentioned in the surah. Whereas study of surah Ar Rum's empirical analogy on resurrection which is a dominant theme of the Surah, remained undiscovered by the researchers.

Research Methodology

This research is an attempt to analyze empirical analogies mentioned in the Surah Ar Rum in qualitative method. It includes collection of Ayat of Surah Ar Rum on the Resurrection and analyze the textual analysis on the mentioned theme of the Surah. As it is an interpretive study in its nature. It's major objective is to understand a research Question: How the Qur'an uses natural phenomena as empirical analogies to present and support the accuracy of resurrection?

Discussion

Surah Rum from its first Ayat is exploring the concept of resurrection in direct and indirect way. Ayat of Surah Rum starting with "ومن آياته" are focusing on empirical analogies to enhance the understanding of the accuracy of the life after death and day of judgement. Five prominent cases and natural phenomenon has been discussed with following themes:

- 1- Continuous Cycle of Life and Death
- 2- Biological System of Sleep and Wakefulness
- 3- The Water Cycle and its Role in Life
- 4- Lightning and Rain: Fear, Hope, and Renewal of Life
- 5- Human Actions and Environmental Corruption

1.1. The Continuous Cycle of Life and Death

Just as man comes from a drop of fluid, the bird from an egg, and both the drop and the egg come from a living creature, so too does He bring life after death and death after life. He revives the earth with vegetation after it has become dead and dry. In the same manner, you too will be brought forth alive from your graves after death. After witnessing such examples of revival, why then do you deny it? This, indeed, is the very cause and proof of resurrection after death. Following Qur'anic Verse is discussing this in verse no: 19 as follows:

⁷يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

*Translation: He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living, and He revives the earth after its death. And thus you shall be brought forth.*⁸

Discussion on Empirical Analogy in the Ayat:

This verse points to the reality that life and death in the universe operate within a continuous and interconnected system. Daily observation confirms that humans emerge from sperm, birds

⁷ Qur'an 30:19 (al-Rūm).

⁸ Tafseer Mazhari (vol. 7, p. 336):

from eggs, the living from the non-living, and vice versa. The same principle applies to the earth: after becoming barren, it regains life through rainfall.

Modern biology confirms that life arises from seemingly non-living matter. Living plants sprout from dead seeds, while the fundamental building blocks of life—such as carbon and nitrogen—are themselves products of non-living material. The human body is composed of elements that astrophysics identifies as “stardust,” originating within ancient stars. Furthermore, decayed organisms return minerals to the earth, which then nurture new life. Rainfall revitalizes parched land, and even deserts transform into “super blooms.”⁹

Similarly, according to modern biology, plants grow from dead seeds or from cells dormant within the seed, while the human body is formed from basic chemical elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen—all produced in stars (stardust). Decomposed organisms recycle nutrients back into the soil, sustaining new life. Rain, especially in arid or desert regions, rejuvenates this cycle, manifest in natural spectacles such as super blooms.¹⁰

1.2. The Biological System of Sleep and Wakefulness

After highlighting this universal cycle of life and death, the Qur’an moves towards another dimension of human experience that also symbolizes resurrection: the biological system of sleep and wakefulness. Following Qur’anic Verse is discussing this phenomenon with following words:

¹¹وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

*Translation: And of His signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who listen.*¹²

This verse points to another sign of Allah’s power: that He created the night for rest and sleep, and the day for striving to earn His bounty. It emphasizes that in this alternation there are signs for those who truly listen. The alternation of night and day also alludes to the reality of resurrection: just as man sleeps at night and awakens in the morning, so too will death be followed by life in the Hereafter.

The Qur’an often mentions such signs, yet they benefit only those who pay attention to the Prophet’s words and to the Qur’an. Here, after mentioning reflection (tafakkur) and knowledge (‘ilm) in previous verses, Allah mentions listening (sami’). This implies that even if a person lacks the ability for deep reflection on the universe, attentive listening to sound reasoning and divine guidance can still lead him to truth.

Discussion on Empirical Analogy in the Ayat:

Sleep and wakefulness also symbolize this system of life and death. Nighttime sleep resembles a state of suspension akin to death, while daytime activity resembles renewed life.

Sleep is a fundamental biological necessity for all living beings. Neuroscience confirms that sleep plays a central role in memory consolidation, tissue repair, and metabolic regulation. These processes are governed by the “circadian rhythm,” an approximately 24-hour biological cycle

⁹ Zia H Shah: Scientific and Theological Commentary on Natural Signs in Surah Ar-Rum (30)

¹⁰ Alberts, B. et al., Molecular Biology of the Cell, 6th Edition, 2014, Garland Science.

¹¹ Qur’an 30:23 (al-Rūm).

¹² Tafseer Tadabbur al-Qur’an (vol. 6, p. 87):

found across species, regulated by the earth's rotation. This demonstrates that the balance between sleep and wakefulness is an essential principle embedded within the structure of life.¹³ Circadian rhythm governs bodily functions, especially the sleep-wake cycle. It synchronizes biological processes such as hormone production, body temperature, and mental alertness with the alternation of night and day.¹⁴

1.3. Lightning and Rain: Fear, Hope, and Renewal of Life

From the intimate biological system within human beings, the Qur'an next points to external natural phenomena—lightning, rain, and the revival of the earth—as further proofs of resurrection. Following words are discussing empirical analogy in its words:

¹⁵وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُخْرِجُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَغْدًا مَوْتًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

Translation: "And among His signs is that He shows you the lightning, inspiring fear and hope, and He sends down water from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after its death. Indeed, in that are signs for people who use reason."

Allah Almighty presents another sign of His greatness: the lightning that flashes by His command. Sometimes it strikes fear in hearts, as people worry about thunder or lightning causing destruction. At other times, it inspires hope of rainfall that will bring abundance and prosperity. Then Allah sends down water from the heavens, reviving the barren land into greenery and producing crops of many kinds. This is a living proof of the resurrection: just as the dead earth is revived, Allah is fully capable of resurrecting mankind after death.¹⁶

Discussion on Empirical Analogy in the Ayat:

Lightning is a sudden electrical discharge during storms, releasing up to one billion joules of energy and heating the air to over 30,000°C. While fearsome, it produces rainfall, which is life-giving. Scientific studies show that lightning breaks strong nitrogen bonds, producing nitrates that descend with rain and fertilize the soil. Nitrogen fixation is essential for crop growth. Desert blooms, where dormant seeds suddenly spring to life after rainfall, serve as striking evidence.¹⁷ During thunderstorms, lightning converts atmospheric nitrogen (N₂) and oxygen (O₂) into compounds that descend with rain as nitrates (NO₃⁻), enriching soil fertility. These nitrates are indispensable for plant growth.¹⁸

¹³ Scientific and Theological Commentary on Natural Signs in Surah Ar-Rum (30)

¹⁴ Sleepfoundation.org

¹⁵ Qur'an 30:24 (al-Rūm).

¹⁶ Tafseer Ibn Kathir (Vol. 4, p. 195)

¹⁷ Scientific and Theological Commentary on Natural Signs in Surah Ar-Rum (30)

¹⁸ Science Learning Hub, University of Waikato

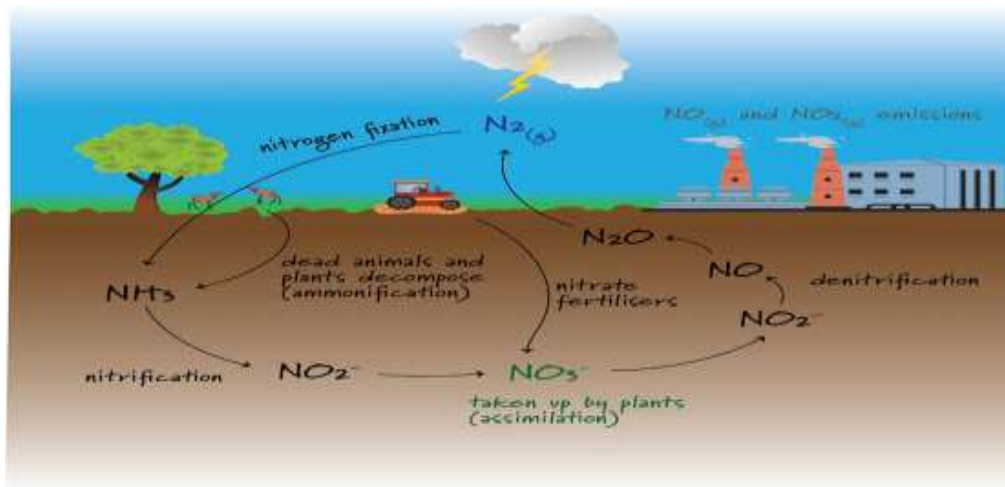


Figure 1: The Nitrogen Cycle. Nitrogen moves through the atmosphere, soil, and living organisms via processes such as nitrogen fixation, nitrification, ammonification, and denitrification.¹⁹

1.4. Human Actions and Environmental Corruption

While natural signs such as rain revive the barren land, the Qur'an also warns that negative human behavior which is leading to destruction of both land and sea, manifesting consequences in this world and pointing ultimately to resurrection and judgment in the Hereafter. Surah Ar Rum's Ayat No. 41 is discussing the phenomenon as follows:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ²⁰

Translation: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."

Allah Almighty sent man into this world and commanded him to adopt faith and righteous deeds as a test. Within him are forces that incline him toward both good and evil. Alongside this, Satan constantly seeks to mislead people from faith and good works, pulling them toward disbelief and sin. Through His messengers, Allah made it clear that the result of disbelief and disobedience is destruction—both in this world and the Hereafter.²¹

The Qur'anic verse "Corruption has appeared on land and sea" reflects this truth: sins and disobedience cause widespread turmoil and calamities. This includes wars, bloodshed, famine, epidemics, earthquakes, storms, and other disasters. Such trials strike not only disbelievers but also believers, and even animals are affected. These punishments, however, are only partial consequences in this world, whereas the complete recompense will be faced in the Hereafter—especially after resurrection, when mankind is raised again to face the final judgment.

¹⁹ <https://share.google/images/D1SvsCUQPjEnSwr8m>

²⁰ Qur'an 30:41 (al-Rūm).

²¹ Anwar al-Bayan, vol. 4, pp. 22–2

Tafsir Qurtubi also cites Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) explaining that even the blessings of the seas are reduced because of human sins—for example, rainfall affects the formation of pearls in shells, and when rains are withheld, pearl production decreases. Similarly, oppression and wars destroy ships, trade, and lives. This corruption on both land and sea serves as a reminder for mankind to repent, but the full outcome will manifest only after death when Allah resurrects them for accountability.

Discussion on Empirical Analogy in the Ayat:

Modern reports confirm the manifestation of this verse in today’s age:

- Deforestation and soil erosion leading to desertification.
- Biodiversity loss and the endangerment of millions of species (UN IPBES Report 2019).
- Ocean pollution through plastics, oil spills, and chemical waste.
- Rising carbon dioxide levels, causing acidification harmful to marine life.
- The phrase “so He may let them taste part of what they have done” aligns with the scientific principle of cause and effect or feedback loops: humans disrupt ecosystems, and in return suffer natural disasters, epidemics, food shortages, and extreme weather events.
- This highlights a universal law: just as humanity faces partial consequences of its deeds in this world, in the Hereafter it will face the complete recompense when Allah resurrects all for final judgment.²²

1.5. The Natural System of Rainfall: The Water Cycle

Finally, the Qur’an reinforces its argument with the natural system of rainfall, a precise description of the water cycle, again drawing a parallel between the revival of earth and the resurrection of mankind. Ayat No: 48 is mentioning the issue as follows:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيُبْسِطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَيَهْرُجُ الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ²³

Translation: “Allah is He who sends the winds so they stir up clouds, then He spreads them in the sky as He wills, and He makes them into layers. Then you see the rain coming forth from within them; and when He causes it to fall upon whomsoever of His servants He wills, lo! they rejoice.”

Allah Almighty is the One who sends the winds, which raise the clouds. Then Allah, through His wisdom, spreads them across the sky—sometimes moving them from one side to another, sometimes gathering them in the form of dense clouds, and sometimes scattering them into pieces. Then rainfall appears, and Allah sends it upon whichever settlement of His servants He wills. The people then rejoice, as the earth turns green and vegetation begins to sprout.

This scene is a clear proof that just as rainfall revives the dead earth, Allah Almighty has complete power to resurrect the dead on the Day of Judgment.²⁴

Discussion on Empirical Analogy in the Ayat:

This verse concisely yet comprehensively describes the stages of rainfall:

²² Scientific and Theological Commentary on Natural Signs in Surah Ar-Rum 30

²³ Qur’an 30:48 (al-Rūm).

²⁴ Tafseer Mazhari (vol. 7, p. 355-356)

Winds carry moisture upward فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا

Vapors condense in cooler altitudes to form clouds, which spread widely فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ

Clouds fragment or accumulate, becoming capable of rainfall فَيَجْعَلُهُ كَسَفًا

When droplets reach sufficient mass, they fall as precipitation.

These stages correspond precisely to what modern meteorology describes as the water cycle.

Human rejoicing after rainfall يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ. Captures a universal experience, particularly within agrarian societies.

The same God who revives barren earth through rainfall has the power to resurrect human beings after death.²⁵

Results and Recommendations

The analysis of the selected verses from Surah Ar-Rum demonstrates a unified argument: the Qur'an employs observable natural phenomena to affirm the possibility of resurrection. The recurring motifs life springing from death, sleep as a parallel to temporary death, the revival of earth through rainfall, ecological consequences of human corruption, and the interconnection of natural laws collectively illustrate Allah's supreme power over life and death.

Moreover, the convergence between Qur'anic discourse and modern scientific insights (such as nitrogen fixation through lightning, circadian rhythms governing life cycles, the water cycle sustaining ecosystems, and ecological imbalances caused by human actions) highlights the Qur'an's timeless universality. This synthesis of revelation and science enriches theological reflection and strengthens rational conviction in the Hereafter.

Recommendations:

1. Encouragement of interdisciplinary research to further examine Qur'anic verses in the context of contemporary scientific discoveries.
2. Inclusion of Qur'anic-scientific integration in educational curricula, fostering a holistic approach to both religious and natural sciences.
3. Presentation of Qur'anic arguments in interfaith and academic platforms to demonstrate the universality, rationality, and intellectual depth of Islam.
4. Promotion of environmental ethics by linking belief in the Hereafter with responsibility toward nature, as emphasized in verse 41.
5. Encouragement of Muslim scholars to publish and disseminate such studies, thereby strengthening the intellectual bridge between faith and modern knowledge.

Conclusion

Surah Ar-Rum presents a remarkable synthesis of divine revelation and natural observation. By drawing parallels between resurrection after death and natural phenomena such as life emerging from death, sleep and wakefulness, rainfall, and ecological cycles the Qur'an offers irrefutable proofs of the possibility of resurrection. These proofs are not only theological but also scientific, appealing to both faith and reason.

The Qur'an thus establishes that belief in the Hereafter is not a blind dogma but a truth supported by signs spread across the cosmos. For those who reflect, listen, and reason, these signs affirm both the inevitability of resurrection and the wisdom of divine justice.

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