

The Meaning of Islamic Architecture in the Ar Rahman Mosque, Blitar City as a Media For Dakwah and Education

Chosinawarotin

Balitar Islamic University Blitar
e-mail: chosinawa@gmail.com

Bambang Hardadi

Balitar Islamic University Blitar
e-mail: bambanghardadi@gmail.com

Ade Virra Maretta

Balitar Islamic University Blitar
e-mail: virramaretta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Mosques are holy places for Muslims used for worship and other religious activities. The Ar-Rahman Mosque in Blitar City, which was inaugurated in 2019, not only functions as a place of worship, but also as a center for Islamic education and preaching. With architecture that resembles the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, this mosque conveys deep spiritual and symbolic messages through its design elements. This research aims to examine the meaning of the architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque in the context of Islamic da'wah and education and its influence on the spiritual experience of the congregation. Adopting a qualitative approach, data was collected through surveys, direct observation, and interviews with mosque managers, religious leaders, and local communities. The research results show that the architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque has a significant impact in enriching the spiritual experience of the congregation. Elements such as umbrella-like poles, calligraphic carvings, and the use of symbolic colors play an important role in conveying Islamic messages and educational values. The harmonious interior and exterior design creates a solemn and calm atmosphere, supporting worship and spiritual reflection. Through this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to religious and architectural literature and strengthen the role of mosques as centers of da'wah and education in local communities. The Ar-Rahman Mosque, with its combination of the beauty of Islamic architectural art and its comprehensive function, serves as an important cultural and spiritual heritage for the community in Blitar City.

Keywords: Education, Architecture, Mosque, Ar-Rahman, Da'wah

INTRODUCTION

A mosque is a location that has been provided for the purpose of worship or prayer (Huda, 2017). It is highly recommended for Muslims to worship Allah SWT in accordance with Islamic law. Mosques can function as places for taklim meetings, which are intended to foster understanding and close relationships among the congregation, apart from being places of worship (Ayub, 2005). Because congregational prayer in a mosque can have multiple benefits, the general goal of a mosque is to guide the congregation in various matters, such as improving the quality of worship (Kurniawan, 2014).

From the Quba mosque founded by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which was built simply - for example, with date palm trees as pillars and date palm fronds as a roof - mosque construction continues to innovate in form. Mosque structures have evolved over time to become more creative and multipurpose. The ideal mosque is a structure that can provide a sense of comfort for the congregation. These worshipers will then experience inner satisfaction, peace and tranquility, which is why mosque buildings must be designed taking into account suitability, beauty and functionality. This allows

mosques to be adapted to the goals of prosperity. In strengthening Islamic brotherhood in order to strengthen brotherhood among Muslims, madrasas can also be held in mosques (Nandang, 2017).

The Ar Rahman Mosque in Blitar City is not only a physical building, but also has significant religious, cultural and educational significance. The Islamic architecture of this mosque has deep spiritual and symbolic meaning in addition to being aesthetic. Mosques function as centers of religious and educational activities in addition to being places of worship in today's rapidly developing world (Ibrahim, 2013). One of the ancient buildings in Blitar City, the Ar Rahman Mosque, displays distinctive Islamic architecture that proves the growth of Islam in the region. The Islamic architecture of the Ar Rahman Mosque reflects the goals of Islamic education and propagation in society. We can learn how religious messages and Islamic educational principles are reflected in the design of this building by understanding and studying its architectural aspects. In addition, this research will investigate how the local community is affected by the significance of this architecture in terms of Islamic education and preaching (Hujaeri, 2019).

It is hoped that this research will add to the religious and architectural literature by deepening our understanding of the importance of Islamic architecture at the Ar Rahman Mosque. This research will also help us to better understand the role of mosques as centers of education and da'wah in the context of local communities (Nata, 2021). It is also hoped that this research can become the basis for the growth and maintenance of mosques as an important part of social and cultural history.

The introduction above covers a number of important topics regarding the evolution of mosque functions, the sustainability of mosques' religious and social functions, ideal mosque design and architecture, the significance of Islamic architecture in the Ar Rahman Mosque, the influence of architecture on society, and the contribution of literature and architecture to the development of mosques. This mosque, which was built in a very simple way during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, has evolved into a building with more modern architecture and has many other uses. Ensuring that these additional tasks do not interfere with the mosque's primary role as a place of prayer and religious gatherings is a problem. Apart from that, the mosque also functions as a place for taklim assembly activities and guidance for the congregation on various issues. Therefore, it is very important to preserve and improve the quality of these activities so that mosques remain centers of education and strengthen Islamic brotherhood. Mosque design that is comfortable, beautiful, and practical is essential to encourage worship and social gatherings; therefore, it is very important to create a structure that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also capable of providing satisfaction and tranquility to the congregation.

Understanding and analyzing the architecture of the Ar Rahman Mosque is essential to uncover the religious and educational meaning of this building, as it has significant spiritual and symbolic importance. With the hope that these findings can be used to support the development and preservation of mosques as an important part of global cultural and spiritual heritage, this research intends to investigate the impact of the architectural meaning of the Ar Rahman Mosque on the local community in the context of Islamic da'wah and education. This research is also expected to contribute to religious and architectural literature. To optimize the role of mosques as religious, educational and social centers, the main challenge is to ensure that all these elements are in harmony and support each other.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research will use qualitative methodology. Direct observations and surveys at the Ar Rahman Mosque in Blitar City will be used to collect field data. The information will include the interior design, architectural features, and other aspects of the mosque's missionary and educational goals (Hardani, 2020). Afterwards, to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of Islamic architecture at the Ar Rahman Mosque, interviews with mosque administrators, religious authorities, and members of the local community will be conducted. Their understanding of the function of mosques in da'wah and education will be the main topic of investigation. The collected data will undergo qualitative analysis using interpretive methodology to show trends, important findings, and correlations between variables. In the context of da'wah and education, the meaning of Islamic architecture will be explained in detail using analytical methods such as theme analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the Establishment of the Ar-Rahman Mosque, Blitar City

If the construction of mosques and other places of worship is commonplace, this is not the case in Blitar City in 2019 with the construction of the Ar-Rahman Mosque. One of the entrepreneurs in Blitar City, Mr. Hariyanto, created a new chapter in the history of Islam in Indonesia by building a magnificent and strategic mosque, in addition to adding new tourist attractions. Apart from being a well-known businessman in Blitar, he pays special attention to integrating religious knowledge into the community. Due to its similarity in beauty to the Nabawi Mosque in Medina, the ar-Rahman Mosque in Blitar City is also highly respected and used as a unique place of worship. Apart from being a place to worship and learn about the Islamic religion, with its uniqueness it has become one of the religious tourism sites in Blitar City.

In his book Sadly (2018), Gazalba defines religious tourism as a certain type of tourism product that has a strong connection to religion or human belief. According to Imandantar and Idajati (2019), religion is the belief in the existence of a relationship between humans and Almighty God which is considered a supernatural essence. This relationship manifests in various forms, such as worship and lifestyle choices based on certain beliefs.

On Wednesday, December 25 2019, Mrs. Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Governor of East Java, inaugurated the Ar-Rahman Mosque in Blitar City, making it the newest religious tourism destination in Blitar City and its surroundings (Zamroni, 2001). A thousand people can fit inside the mosque, which is open around the clock and offers first-class service. In other words, there are officers who take care of security, cleanliness, information needs of the congregation, and directions to where to use the Ar-Rahman Mosque facilities (Khasanah, 2022).

Ten pillars, starting from the parking lot, four of which resemble the umbrella-shaped pillars found in the Nabawi Mosque. Apart from that, there is an indoor toilet and ablution area whose walls are covered with colorful ceramics similar to those in the Nabawi Mosque. You will be amazed by the design of this mosque when you enter the room, because it has a striking similarity to the Nabawi Mosque. These include gold-carved entrances, building roofs that share the same color scheme, and sculptures on the roofs. A reproduction of the kiswah sits on the wall of the imam's quarters, and the

pulpit is made to resemble the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Another similarity with the Nabawi Mosque is the aroma of perfume coming from the pulpit and mihrab imam. The aroma inside the mosque is a true reflection of the Nabawi mosque in Medina.

Arrahman Mosque: An Islamic Architectural Monument

Apart from being a house of worship, the Ar-Rahman Mosque in Blitar is a very beautiful symbol of Islamic architecture. The Ar-Rahman Mosque is a popular place of worship and religious tourism destination because of its stunning and distinctive architectural style, which is reminiscent of the Nabawi Mosque in Medina. Studying the architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque can provide more insight into how Islamic architectural design combines beauty with the purpose of da'wah and teaching.

Mosques are centers of social and educational activities in addition to being places of worship, according to previous research. Ayub (2005) shows that mosques also function as locations for taklim meetings to expand knowledge and strengthen ties between congregations. Huda (2017) highlights the importance of mosques as places dedicated to worship and prayer. The role of the mosque as a whole as a place where the congregation can receive instruction in various fields, including improving the quality of worship, was discussed by Kurniawan (2014).

Nandang (2017) also emphasized the important role of mosques in enhancing madrasah efforts to promote Muslim brotherhood and ukhuwah Islamiyah. This research contributes to efforts to understand the significance of the Islamic architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque and how it influences the surrounding environment. This research can add to the body of knowledge in the field of religion and architecture by examining architectural features that convey religious messages and Islamic education. This research can also explain the function of mosques as centers of education and da'wah.

Education Through Architecture: Learning Without Words

The Ar-Rahman Mosque functions as an important center for religious and educational activities in addition to being a place of worship. The architecture of this mosque teaches Islamic values through the architectural aspects embedded in every part of the structure, acting as an excellent teaching tool without the need for words. According to previous research, mosque architecture plays an important role in expressing religious ideas and enhancing the spiritual life of its visitors.

According to Ibrahim (2013), a mosque is a place of devotion and prayer, which shows that every aspect of its architecture has spiritual meaning. Mosques also function as places for religious events, building relationships between congregants and disseminating information, according to Ayub (2005). This is in line with the role of the Ar-Rahman Mosque as a center for disseminating knowledge and developing Islamic character through various programs, including lectures, Al-Quran lessons, discussions and recitations.

The exterior and interior design of the Ar-Rahman Mosque, which is carefully designed to communicate Islamic educational themes, is very much in line with Kurniawan's (2014) research, which shows that creating a conducive environment can improve the quality of worship. Mosque decorations combine certain colors with deep symbolic meaning. For example, the color green reminds the congregation of the value of maintaining harmony with nature and each other. This color also signifies vitality, coolness and calm.

Nandang (2017) highlighted the importance of fortifying Islamic brotherhood and the function of mosques in providing religious knowledge to the community. Mosque

walls and ceilings decorated with calligraphic carvings, for example, are important symbols of Islamic ideals that encourage congregants to consistently remember and understand the lessons found in sacred texts. In addition to adding to the beauty of the mosque, the geometric patterns on the walls and ceramic floors convey the philosophy of the order of creation and the unity and oneness of God, encouraging worshipers to consider God's majesty and beauty in everything they do.

The open and proportional room design actually teaches about equality and justice before Allah, which reflects the egalitarian principles in Islam. This study shows how the Ar-Rahman Mosque skillfully combines the obligations of worship with an educational institution through meaningful architecture, offering visitors a profound spiritual experience and invaluable teaching.

The Meaningfulness of Architectural Symbols

The architectural symbolism of the Ar-Rahman Mosque is very important in spreading education and da'wah messages to congregants and guests. The umbrella-like shape of the parking poles is one of the standout features. This umbrella shape represents the safety and calm of the congregation in addition to its aesthetic value. In this context, an umbrella - which is usually used to protect oneself from the hot sun or rain - represents God's protection of His people. Thus, the congregation is reminded of the importance of seeking refuge in Allah in all situations whenever they see or are under the shade of these pillars.

According to research and theories that highlight the importance of aesthetics and meaning in mosque buildings, the carvings of the Ar-Rahman Mosque beautify its appearance and have deep symbolic meaning. The decorative aspects of Islamic architecture have not only aesthetic purposes but also educational and spiritual purposes, as previous research and religious theology shows. Omer (2008) states that Islamic architecture often reflects the order and unity of Allah through the use of calligraphy and geometric patterns. The stunning geometric design serves as a visual reminder of the order and beauty of the universe while illustrating the perfection of God's creation. This is clearly seen in the carvings of the Ar-Rahman Mosque, where intricate geometric motifs serve as a reminder to worshipers of the splendor and order of Allah's creation.

According to Grabar (1987), carvings of Al-Quran verses that decorate the walls and entrances of mosques have a significant role in spiritual teaching. Grabar points out that Islamic calligraphy serves as a reminder to people of the teachings of the Koran and the importance of studying and applying these teachings in everyday life. The complex spiritual themes found in the carvings at the Ar-Rahman Mosque encourage worshipers to get closer to Allah and gain a deeper understanding of the fascinating principles of Islam.

This perspective is further supported by Nasr's (1987) research, which highlights the fact that Islamic art always contains spiritual and pedagogical components. Apart from adding to the beauty of the mosque, the carvings function as teaching tools, emphasizing the sanctity and beauty of Islamic principles. At the Ar-Rahman Mosque, for example, carved geometric patterns and calligraphy of Al-Quran verses serve as a reminder to worshipers of the importance of maintaining beauty and purity in everyday life.

The verses contained in the Koran are also effectively conveyed through calligraphic carvings. The messages contained in the Koran can be communicated in an

interesting and touching way through the beauty of creative calligraphy. For example, when entering a mosque, people are reminded of the need to uphold *ukhuwah Islamiyah* and support each other through calligraphy containing verses about the unity and integrity of the community. It can also serve as a reminder to read and understand the Koran at all times, as every verse written in the mosque offers invaluable insight and direction.

The architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque also considers other symbolic elements such as lighting and spatial planning. In accordance with Omer's (2008) assessment of the importance of architectural features in expressing spiritual and educational ideals, the natural light entering through large windows symbolizes the light of knowledge that illuminates the darkness of ignorance. According to the doctrine of egalitarianism in Islam outlined by Nasr (1987), an open and spacious setting symbolizes the idea of unity and equality in Islam, where all congregants, regardless of socio-economic level, can stand side by side in congregational prayer. In Grabar's (1987) study of Islamic architecture, all of these components—including the geometric motifs and calligraphic carvings that decorate mosques—combine to create an environment that encourages deep religious learning and spiritual appreciation, enhances the worship experience of congregants, and advances the goals of *da'wah* and education Islam.

As a result, the architecture of the Ar-Rahman Mosque functions as a powerful tool for *da'wah* and education in addition to being a place of worship. The complex symbolic architecture of this mosque conveys profound Islamic teachings and offers invaluable lessons to every congregant who visits. Every architectural feature, from beautiful carvings to umbrella-shaped pillars, has a spiritual meaning that can inspire and serve as a reminder of how important it is to live according to Islamic principles.

CONCLUSION

Apart from being a house of worship, the Ar-Rahman Mosque in Blitar City is a magnificent example of Islamic architecture and functions as a center for religious and educational activities. This mosque, which succeeded in establishing a strong spiritual connection with the vast Islamic heritage, did so by combining architectural aspects from the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Through highly symbolic architectural aspects, this mosque efficiently conveys Islamic messages without using words thanks to a design that is full of missionary and educational purposes. Islamic ideals are taught to worshipers and their spiritual experience is enhanced through the use of color, geometric patterns, and calligraphic carvings. Overall, the Ar-Rahman Mosque has succeeded in combining the role of worship with education, fostering an atmosphere that encourages deep spiritual learning and a comprehensive understanding of Islam. It is recommended that the Ar-Rahman Mosque be maintained and promoted as a prime example of beautiful and significant Islamic architecture. Publications, architectural exhibitions, and educational initiatives that raise public awareness of the elegance and importance of Islamic architecture can achieve this. Improving facilities such as library space, Islamic study centers, and multi-purpose rooms for religious and educational events is very important to support the role of mosques as educational and *da'wah* centers. By implementing these suggestions, the Ar-Rahman Mosque will be able to continue to be a symbol of Islamic architecture that enhances the spiritual experience of worshipers and actively contributes to the spread of Islam throughout Blitar City and the surrounding area.

REFERENCES

- Ayub, M. E. (2005). *Mosque Management*. Jakarta: Human Echo.
- Grabar, O. (1987). "The Formation of Islamic Art." Yale University Press.
- Hardani. (2020). *Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu Group.
- Huda, P. T. (2017). *Analysis of the Role of Mosques as Centers for Economic Empowerment of the Community*. Malang: Brawijaya University Malang.
- Hujaeri, A. (2019). *Islamic aesthetics: Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perspective mosque architecture* (Bachelor's thesis, Jakarta: Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Syarif Hidayatullah).
- Ibrahim, M. (2013). Utilization of Mosques and Menahah as Islamic Da'wah Development Institutions. *Al-Bayan Journal: Media for the Study and Development of Da'wah Science*, 19(2).
- Imandintar, D. D., & Idajati, H. (2019). Characteristics of Religious Tourism Villages in the Development of Bejagung Village as a Religious Tourism Village. *ITS Engineering Journal*, 8(2), C47-C52.
- Jannah, N. (2016). *Revitalizing the Role of Mosques in the Modern Era (Case Study in Medan City)*. Medan: North Sumatra State Islamic University. Khasinah, S. (2013). HUMAN NATURE ACCORDING TO VIEW. *DIDAKTIKA Scientific Journal*, 310.
- Kurniawan, S. (2014). Mosques in the history of Muslims. *Khatulistiwa Journal- Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(2), 169-184.
- Nandang, Z., & Sholehudin, W. S. (2017). *Mosques & Endowments*. TAFAKUR.
- Nasr, S. H. (1987). "Islamic Art and Spirituality." State University of New York Press.
- Nata, A. (2021). The role and function of mosques in Indonesia from the perspective of Islamic education. *Ta'dibuna: Journal of Islamic Education*, 10(3), 414-432.
- Omer, S. (2008). "Islamic Architecture: Its Philosophy, Spiritual Significance, and Some Early Developments." *Islamic Studies*, International Islamic University, Malaysia.
- Sadly, Effendi. "Social Da'wah Management: Study of the Development of Islamic Da'wah Methods." *Journal of Management & Business Research (JRMB)* 3, no.2 (2018):44.
- Sujatmiko, A., & Zamroni, M. (2001). *Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Rotating Ball Isolation System in 10 Storey Building Structures*.
- Wibowo, F., Khasanah, A. U., & Putra, F. I. F. S. (2022). Analysis of the Impact of the Presence of Modern Markets on the Marketing Performance of Traditional Markets Based on the Perspectives of Traders and Consumers in Wonogiri Regency. *Benefit: Journal of Management and Business (This Journal Has Migrated)*, 7(1), 53-6
-