Contemporary Methods of Interpretation

Ahmad Sudianto
IAIN Takengon, Aceh, Indonesia
excellent_621@yahoo.co.id

Abstract
This article is written to briefly explain the contemporary method of interpretation. The contemporary interpretation method is an interpretive method that carries the theme of humanity and its problems as the core of its study. The emergence of this method is an answer to the development of human civilization which requires moral and spiritual tools based on the instructions of the Qur'an. This research is a library research with a revelation approach.

Keywords: interpretation, contemporary, methodology

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary method of interpretation is one of the various methodologies of Quranic interpretation that was presided over by the scholars of interpretation. As a method of interpretation, this method in principle has similarities and does not deviate from the rules of salaf interpretation. Both methods, contemporary and classical, are both projected to preach the content of the Qur'an according to a certain period of time (Sudianto, 2017, Eni, 2017).

The Koran was bestowed as a revelation to the Messenger of Allah Muhammad pbuh. Delivered by the revelation-bearing Angel, Gabriel as. It is derived with Arabic full of privileges. This scripture contains various information about the basic principles of tawhid, sharia laws and the rules of muamalah both horizontally with fellow beings and vertically with Khalik. Nevertheless, Allah swt. there is no detailed explanation of the various studies in question so many Quranic lafaz need to be interpreted. Furthermore, there are many quranic language editorials consisting of short sentences with deep meaning content (Saihu, 2020, Firdausiyah, 2019). Not only sentences, in the Koran there are many simple lafaz that collect various meanings. Thus, the need for interpretation of the Koran became a necessity.

The existence of the Koran among Muslims, driven by their strong desire to study and explore its teachings and aspects of miracles, has spawned a variety of Islamic scientific fields and study methodologies. The emergence of this scientific field was preceded by the compilation of Arabic grammar by Abu al-‘Aswad ad-Du'aliy until the birth of work in the field of uṣūl al-fiqh from the intelligence of Imam asy-Syafii. That process continues to the present through the presence of various techniques of Interpretation of the Koran.

On the other hand, there are many Muslim scholars who struggle to study various disciplines. Their quality of the Quranic content is the driving force for conducting relevant research. Because the Qur'an tells about the beginning of life activities with its problems that are an inseparable part of the fields of scientific studies, so that the core messages will be difficult to implement appropriately but by referring to scientific findings in the realms of Quranic studies.

Some of the above facts form the background of this short article. The presentations put forward will include the notion of contemporary interpretation methods, examples of the application of their interpretation, their shortcomings and advantages and their urgency. It is hoped that this article can be used as an instrument in adding and enriching readers’ insights about contemporary interpretation methods.

Theoretical Foundations

In the current context, Muslims in particular and the global community in general face many life problems that demand resolution. This needs to be responded well, because among the wisdom of the Qur'an is to lead people towards the best life (Q.S. Al-Isra/ 17:...
9). Muslims are directed to make the Koran a way of life, with the guidance of the scholars, according to the dalālah of the above verse. These lofty ideals cannot be achieved but with a good understanding of the messages of the Quran (Sudianto, 2021, Asmuni, 1995).

The interpretation of the Koran, since the initial periodization of revelation, has been practically always dynamic and has never stagnated. Absolutism lies only in the texts of the verses, not in the interpretations put forward by the scholars. A wide variety of methods and colors of interpretation have been sown by scientists of classical to contemporary interpretations. The pulse of interpretation continues to be influenced by the logic of creative thinking until the end of human life (Zulyadain, 2018). The study of the interpretation of the Koran should not stop for a moment, because the concretization of the Quranic instructions lies in it. In addition, interpretation becomes a dead price that must be paid to achieve the islamic nature of life (Nurmahni and Irsyadunnas, 2020).

In order to emphasize the meaning of the contemporary interpretation method, an analysis of each word raised will first be put forward, namely: method, interpretation, and contemporary. Method is a term translated from the English word method. The original source of this word is methodos which is Greek meaning way or way (Baidan, 2005).

The term tafsir etymologically means to manifest and decipher (Aż-Zaḥabi, 2003). Another meaning is to uncover the hidden meaning of the elaborate lafază (Al-Quṭṭān, 1973). The definition of interpretation according to language will always be related to the meaning of manifestations, descriptions, outcrops, descriptions and explanations (Anwar, 2005).

In the terminological level, interpretation has the meaning of explaining the meaning or meaning of the kalam-kalam of Allah based on human abilities (muḥaffīṣ) (Aż-Zaḥabi, 2003). Contemporary means currently the latest aka taken from English (contemporary) (Hornby, 1995). Thus the contemporary interpretation method contains the notion of studies carried out in the realm of interpretation methodology that developed in the contemporary period (Shaleh, 2007).

The contemporary method of interpretation has almost no difference when compared with the classical method of interpretation. The difference is that contemporary interpretation has the content of contemporary sciences. There are three groups of contemporary interpretive works put forward by J.J.G. Jansen. First, an interpretation containing contemporary scientific theories (tafsir ʿilmī). Second, interpretations born from linguistic and philological studies, and third, interpretations associated with the routine problems of people's lives (Jansen, 1997). Contemporary works of interpretation include: the interpretation of al-Manār written by Muhammad Rasyid Rida, the interpretation of Fī Zīlālī of the Koran compiled by Sayyid Quṭb, the tafsir al-Marāğā of the thought of Mustafa Ahmad al-Marāğā, the tafsir al-Munār by Wabhah az-Zuḥaili and the tafsir of al-Azhār which is the scratch of Hamka's ink.

In principle a fundamental difference is found in the use of contemporary words according to the accompanying disciplines. In the realm of interpretation the term contemporary has a correlation with the dismantling of the progress of Islamic thought, whereas in the study of Ulumul Hadith the contemporary term tends to be focused on a review of its writing methodology (Mutamam, 2013). Thus, it takes polarization and scientific classification to arrive at the purpose of interpretation.

Contemporary interpretation is closely related to globalization and its implications for the Islamic world in the form of accelerated interactions such as: thought, social, technological, economic and environmental such as global warming. Thus, the challenges of contemporary interpretation, will not be spared from increasingly developed countries, the low education of the people, technological advances and the migration of the population that penetrates the boundaries of territories and nations.

METHOD
This research is a literature research (book research). The research data are presented descriptively-analytically. The design of the research is revelation by positioning divine literature in a structured manner as the basis for analysis with efforts to minimize the individual tendencies of researchers (Sudianto, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Examples of Interpretation

To clarify this description of the contemporary method of interpretation is presumably seen in the following examples:

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِى لِمُسْتَقَر ٍّ لَهَا ذلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ {سُورَةُ يَسِينُ/36: 38} (Mujamma', 1415)

It means: "And the sun circulates on its axis. That is the provision of the Mighty and All-Knowing." Q.S. Yāsīn/36: 38 (Mujamma’, 1415)

In the classical interpretation this verse is interpreted with the physical movement of the sun in its circulation every season (Jamal: 2006). Contemporary interpretation as referring to scientific work and theories of science explains the verse referred to by the movement of the sun leading to a point that boils down to the planet Vega (Rohimin: 2007).

وَتَرَى الْجِباَلَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِىَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنْعَ اللهِ الَّذِى أَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍّ إِنَّهُ خَلَّاءٌ {سُورَةُ النَّمَلُ/27: 88} (Abdussamad, 2002)

A group of interpretive scholars interpreted the above verse with jabal-jabal mobility by the time the doomsday came. However, others declare this divine kalam as an element of quranic miracles. They assumed the movement of the earth as evidenced by this verse. Dalālah verse hints that the movement of the mountain occurs due to the rotation of the earth on its orbit (its trajectory). This condition is in line with the phenomenon of cloud movement caused by wind impetus factors (Abdussamad, 2002).

َََوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَاْلأَرْضَ كاَنَتاَ رَتْقاً فَفَتَقْنَا النَّاسِ {سُورَةُ الإِسْرَا/17: 30-44} (Hamka, 1984)

This verse is interpreted as a gesture of the initial combination of the seven layers of heaven with the earth that man inhabits today. Along with the change of time and the turnaround of the time when the two were separated by God, the seven layers of heaven rose, while the seven layers of earth descended. Space is the separator of the stretch of distance between the world's sky as the closest sky to the earth. So rain is poured out to fertilize plants on earth (Hamka, 1984).

وَايَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْناَ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ وَخَلَقْناَ لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِه مَا يَرْكَبُوْنَ وَإِنْ نَشَأْ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلاَ صَرِيْخَ لَهُمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنْقَذُوْنَ إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً مِناَّ وَمَتاَعاً إلِىَ حِيْنٍّ {سُورَةُ يَسِينُ/36: 41-44} (Abdussamad, 2002)

The above verses become God's call to man to manifest various kinds of transport media; sea, land and air. As well as a warning for them to pay attention to the safety and security of the trip. The transportation media in question include arks and state-of-the-art means of sea transportation, gauge and container cars. Including the invention of individual transporting facilities such as automobiles as well as motorcycles in exchange for horses or himar in the classical era. Thus, the technological advances achieved today are not an elusive matter, because the Koran has shown, among others, with the above verses (Baidan and Aziz, 2009).
In the above verse, ‘ulu al’amri is interpreted with the policymakers who rule among men and become a representation of their faces. Their power is a form of legal legitimacy born from a legal and formal electoral process (Hamka, 1984).

Regarding the problem of environmental pollution, there is a description in the Qur’an surah al-’A’raf / 7: 85, namely:

واَلَّذُينَ فَسَداً فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِسْتِخْلاَجِهَا... {الأعراف: 85}

Cutting-edge science detects the adverse effects of the earth's inhabitants' attitudes on the utilization of natural materials in their lives. The atrocities occurred and continue to be active to the present. Among the clear evidence that can be felt is the reduced level of soil fertility as a result of the reclamation of solid objects resulting from industrial disposal, plantations, residents' dwellings and access roads. The use of pesticides and insecticides triggers an imbalance of living organisms that results in a decrease in the natural fertility of the soil and cuts the production of plantations and rice fields (Abdussamad, 2002).

Some examples of interpretations put forward above show the validity of qur'anic instructions that break through the boundaries and without limits, šāliḥ likulli zaman wa makān (Kaunian and Al-Aziz, 2018, Al Ayubi and Kurniawan, 2013). The universality of the Qur'an's hidayah is not limited to text and literal, but goes further into the contextual level. Thus, this interpretation is the result of linguistic, historical and social collaboration.

B. Advantages of Contemporary Interpretation Methods

Among the advantages of contemporary methods of interpretation are:

1. Provide solutions according to the times
   The development of the times is always followed by the sharpening of social problems as a characteristic of life. Contemporary interpretation places these problems in the corridors of the present so that they demand to be resolved with cutting-edge solutions. So, whatever the problem, Islamic sharia comes with a way out.

2. Sensitivity and has a clear structure
   The solutions offered by contemporary methods of interpretation are practical solutions according to the level of human needs. Thus, the Qur'an hidayah can get closer to the people.

3. Proactive
   Contemporary methods of interpretation appear to bring a new passion in today's rational culture. It is this characteristic that makes it interesting and more attractive to devotees in an effort to refer the Koran to every segment of life.

C. Disadvantages of Contemporary Interpretation Methods

The advantages possessed by contemporary methods of interpretation do not make it arbitrary and avoid disability. Among his disabilities were:

1. Limited time and space
   The variety of interpretation of verses derived from contemporary interpretation methods has a tendency to transition to follow the development of social, cultural, scientific and technological situations and tamadun. This fact further confirms the nature of the divine library which contains the news of the previous people as well as information about future events (Rohimin, 2007).
2. Excessive interpretation and tendency of rigor

This reality is reflected in the efforts of some mufassirūn circles in spawning works in the field of interpretation to accommodate a variety of scientific interpretations and contemporary rational concepts along with a series of community activities (Rohim, 2007).

Earlier research as proposed by Sari Magdalena stated that the various transformations of interpretation in contemporary methods of interpretation became an integral part of the process of interpretation carried out by the mufassirūn. The existence of Qur'anic verses that are qat’iyyu ad-dalālah and zanniyyu ad-dalālah also color the differences in views of interpretation from time to time (Magdalena, 2020).

The advantages and disadvantages contained in contemporary methods of interpretation are evidence of the limitations of human science and knowledge in understanding the instructions of the Koran. The language of the Koran both its editor and its structure is the language of the heavens which is impossible for the inhabitants of the earth to understand in essence. The essence embodied in the divine kalams is absolutely in His knowledge. The methodology of interpretation as taught by scholars only comes to the stage of explaining the closest intention of the nash-nash of the Koran.

D. The Urgency of Contemporary Interpretation Methods

A deep view of the Koran leads to the creation of two types of validity. First, empirical validity based on intensive assessment and integral investigation. Second, it is the validity of philosophy that is not reached by concrete knowledge. Empirical validity is elaborated and understood by reason, whereas the last so-called validity enters through the path of ideology (Rohimin, 2007). Philosophical validity is defined by abstract validity that is impossible to ascertain its existence by rational neutral assessment (Assad, 1980).

Diving into the ocean of the Qur'anic nash-nash about kauniah and insāniyyah requires a variety of sciences, especially natural and social sciences. The application of the interpretation of lafžiah alone is considered to have not met the elements of the scientific mandate. The classical works of the interpretive scholars were compiled taking into account the benefit of the people in the current era. It is open to the possibility that their ideas of thought are less significant to the current context. Thus, innovation is needed in interpretation according to a valid and pragmatic framework of thinking, namely modern contextual interpretation or contemporary interpretation.

The above fact is explained by až-Żahabi as quoted by Magdalena who posits that the Koran covers the entirety of the science that exists in the world. Statistically more than seventy thousand branches of science are hinted at in the Koran. This shows a very strong relationship and correlation between the capability of the mufasir and the interpretation it gave birth to (Magdalene, 2020).

Based on the scientific review that has been put forward, it is clear the urgency of contemporary methods of interpretation in the treasury of Islamic studies. Contemporary interpretation is presented as a solution to the problem of solidarity based on the development of the times.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary method of interpretation is essentially a method of interpreting Qur'anic verses that uses the rules of classical interpretation. The difference lies in the contemporary issues that come with it. These contemporary issues include, among others: the latest findings in the field of science and thought as well as the social problems of the people that occur today. In the conditions of the development of science and technology and the increase in the problems of the people in this modern era, efforts to interpret qur'anic verses using contemporary methods are very urgent.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


