

FACTORS OF DEVIATION CAUSES IN TAFSIR (Causes of Errors and Deviations in Interpretation: *Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur, Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi, and Tafsir bi al-Isyarah*)

Zainuddin Abdullah

A Lecturer at STIT Al-Amin Kreo Tangerang, Indonesia, zainuddinzain@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

This paper discusses the factors that cause irregularities in interpretation, that is focusing on the factors causing errors and irregularities in interpretation: interpretation *bi al-ma'tsur*, interpretation *bi al-ra'yi*, and interpretation *bi al-isyarah*. This paper shows that the deviation in interpretation is caused by several factors, they are: 1) Deviation due to the *Isra'iliyyat* factor; 2) Deviations due to the *nahwu* school of thought; 3) Deviations due to factors not knowing Arabic rules; 4) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentary of the *Muktazilah*; 5) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the *Shi'a* interpretation book; 6) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentaries of the *Khawarij*; 7) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentaries of the *Sufis*; 8) Deviations in the book of scientific interpretation, which states that the Koran includes all knowledge of both globally and in detail; 9) Deviations due to contemporary demands. Furthermore, this study offers three theories of truth testing to answer the phenomenon of interpretive deviation, including: a) Coherence theory: a test of consistency b) Correspondent theory: a test of equality with facts c) Pragmatic theory: a test of expediency. A theory that can be used to minimize deviations in the interpretation of the Qur'an.

Keywords: Interpretation, Deviation, the Truth Theory, Kind of Factor

INTRODUCTION

In a number of verses,¹ the Koran does command humans to add verses to it, order it to contemplate its verses, and even denounces those who only follow opinions without a basis.² This command is common to all people in the past, present and future. This command seems to allow humans in general to interpret the verses of the Koran to find out the true meaning and purpose of these verses. But of course not. Not all people are free to interpret the verses of the Koran because if everyone is free to interpret the Koran the situation is the same as if everyone is free to talk or do practices in medicine or do statistical analyses without having knowledge about the knowledge.³

It takes a number of conditions and manners for people who want to interpret the Koran so that the product of interpretation can be accounted for and the commentator is protected from mistakes and irregularities in interpretation. In this case the scholars have explained the conditions for the interpretator. Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, for example, mentions the conditions of the interpretator as follows: 1) Having the right creed; 2) Clean from lust; 3) Interpreting the Qur'an first with the Qur'an; 4) Looking for interpretation of the *Sunah*; 5) If there is no interpretation in the *Sunah*, you should review the opinions of the friends; 6) If there is no interpretation found in the Qur'an, *Sunah* or in the opinion of the Companions, then you should review *Tabi'in's* opinion; 7) Mastering Arabic with all its branches; 8) Knowing the main points of science related to the Qur'an, such as the science of *qira'ah*, the science of monotheism, the science of *ushul al-tafsir* such as *asbab al-nuzul*, *nasikh* and *mansukh*, and so on.⁴

In addition to the conditions mentioned above, there are also interpretator adab which must be considered by people who want to interpret the Koran, they are: 1) Intending good and aiming right; 2) Having good character; 3) Obey and do good; 4) Be honest and thorough in reconciliation; 5) *Tawadhu* and gentle; 6) Noble spirit; 7) Vocal in conveying the truth; 8) Good appearance so that they are authoritative and respectable; 9) Be calm and steady; 10) Putting people first before themselves; 11) Prepare and take the steps of interpretation well.⁵

If the terms and conditions of the above commentators are ignored, then it is certain that the product of the interpretation of a commentator cannot be accounted for and the exegete is very likely to be mired in errors and irregularities in

¹ QS. Al-Nisa: 82; QS. Muhammad: 24' QS. Al-Isra': 36.

² Made Saihu, *Merawat Pluralisme Merawat Indonesia: Potret Pendidikan Pluralisme Agama Di Jembrana-Bali* (Yogyakarta: DEEPUBLISH, 2019), 54.

³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an*, cet. 6 (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 77.

⁴ Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, *Mabahjith fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Riyad: Manshurat al-'Ashr al-Hadith, 1973), 347. See also Al-Suyuthi, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, jilid 5 (Saudi: Mamlakah al-Su'udiyah, t.th.), 2.297; Thameem Ushama, *Metodologi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, cet. 1 (Jakarta: Riora Cipta, 2000), 31-33; M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, cet. 3 (Tangerang: Lenteran Hati, 2015), 396-399.

⁵ Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, *Mabahjith fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, 348; Thameem Ushama, *Metodologi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 34-35.

interpretation. Therefore, in addition to having to fulfil all the requirements and customs of this interpretator, (or potential interpretator) must also know and be aware of any factors that make a person slip in error when interpreting verses of the Koran.

METHODS

This research method was conducted using qualitative research with a descriptive approach, which described the results of the study in accordance with the objectives of the study and was followed by data analysis to obtain relevant and accurate data. With a qualitative-descriptive-analytical approach, this paper factors the causes of irregularities in interpreting the Qur'an through the conditions that have been determined in the books of the rules of interpretation, such as *Mabahith fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, volume 5, Thameem Ushama, *Al-Qur'an Interpretation Methodology*, 1st edition, and M. Quraish Shihab, *kaidah Tafsir*, 3rd edition. Literature research (Library Research) by using various primary and secondary sources, is used in analysing the picture as clearly as possible the object of research with respect to the meaning of the study in this paper. The results of this study are systematically presented about the phenomena that exist.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors That Cause Mistakes and Irregularities in Interpretation

There are a number of factors that cause a commentator to make errors in interpretation. Al-Dzahabi, in his book *al-Ittijahat al-Munharifah fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*,⁶ detailing the causes of irregularities that occur in the interpretation. According to al-Dzahabi, there are nine factors of deviation in the interpretation as follows: 1) Deviations due to the *Isra'iliyyat* factor; 2) Deviations due to the *nahwu* school of thought; 3) Deviations due to factors not knowing Arabic rules; 4) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentaries of the *Mu'tazilites*; 5) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the Shi'ah interpretation book; 6) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentaries of the Khawarij; 7) Deviations due to the bias factor of the school as happened in the commentaries of the Sufis; 8) Deviations in the book of scientific interpretation, which states that the Koran includes all the science of *kawniyyah* both globally and in detail; 9) Deviations due to contemporary demands.

While in the book *Asbab al-Khata 'fi al-Tafsir*⁷ it is stated that there are four causes of misinterpretation: 1) Turning away from authentic and valid sources and interpretations; 2) Not careful in understanding the text of the verse and *doing it*; 3)

⁶ Al-Dzahabi, *al-Ittijahat al-Munharifah fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, 3rd edition (t.tp.: Maktabah Wahbah, 1986).

⁷ Tahir Mahmud Muhammad Ya'qub, *Asbab al-Khata' fi al-Tafsir*, 2nd volume, 1st edition (Lebanon: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 2004), 224.

Submitting texts on the interests of lust, fanaticism of the schools and heresy; 4) Ignore some of the conditions of exegesis.

And according to Quraish Shihab,⁸ there are at least six factors that cause errors in interpretation, they are: 1) The subjectivity of interpretator ; 2) Errors in applying methods or rules; 3) shallowness in the tool sciences; 4) The shallowness of knowledge about the paragraph (talk) paragraph material; 5) Not paying attention to the context, both *asbab al-nuzul*, relationship between communities, and social conditions of the community; 6) Not paying attention to who the speaker is and who the conversation is aimed at.

In other languages, a number of misinterpretation factors above can be summarized as follows, *First*, factors internal errors, or subjective factors, which may arise because they want to follow self-interest (lust) and the ideology of the school, or want to subdue the text under the self-interest and the group; *Second*, external error factors, such as the entry of the elements of *Isra'iliyyat*; *Third*, linguistic error factors, such as errors in applying the rules of language. From the three factors of error above, the following will describe several examples of factors "error" of interpretation caused by the factor of subjectivity of the interpreter.

Subjective Elements in *Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur, Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi, Tafsir bi al-Isyarah*

It be stressed here, that not all interpretations that contain subjective elements certainly contain errors because almost all interpretation products contain subjective elements as integral part in the product of interpretation. *Tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* whose definition is the interpretation of the Koran with the Koran, the interpretation of the Koran with the *Sunah*, interpretation of the Koran with the words of the Companions, and the interpretation of the Koran with the words of Tabi'in⁹ also cannot be separated from the subjective element. The subjective element in the interpretation of *bi al-ma'tsur* can be seen from the following example. In his interpretation book *al-Kashfi wa al-Bayan 'an Tafsir al-Qur'an*, al-Tsa'labi when interpreting verse 10 of *surah al-Kahf*:

إِذْ أَوْىءَ الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

Remember) when the young men fled for refuge in the cave, and then they prayed: "O our Lord, Give us mercy from Thy and shape for we are direct guidance in our affairs (this)."

Referring to the history of al-Suddi, Wahab bin Munabbih, and besides the two, mentioned the names of the young *Ashab al-Kahfi* and his dog and the dialogue between them. The young leader's name is Maksyalmitsa, with members Amlikha,

⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, 398-399.

⁹ Subhi al-Shalih, *Mabahith fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, 10th edition (Beirut: Dar 'Ilm li al-Malayin, 1977), 291.

Maksyitsa, Martusy, Nawanusy, Kaydsattunus, and his dog named Qithmir.¹⁰ While in the books of commentary *bi al-ma'tsur* in general, such as *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* by Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H.), *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil* by al-Baydhawi (d. 685 H.), or *Ma'alim al-Tanzil* the work of al-Baghawi (d. 516 H.),¹¹ did not mention the names of these young men in detail. This shows that the selection of the history of al-Suddi and Wahab bin Munabbih to interpret verse 10 of *al-Kahf's* letter is purely the subjectivity of al-Tsa'labi. Besides being an example of the entry of internal elements, the interpreter subjectivity, this history can also be used as an example of the entry of external elements in the interpretation, the element *Isra'iliyyat*, which in al-Dzahabi's classification above is one of the causes of error in interpretation.

Furthermore, the subjective element in *bi al-ra'yi's* interpretation can be seen from the following example. Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami (d. 412 H.) in his book, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, when interpreting verse 66 of *al-Nisa'*:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا

And verily if We commend them: "Kill yourself or come out of your village", surely they will not do it except a small part of them. And truly if they carry out the lessons given to them, surely such things are better for them and more encouraging (their faith).

The meaning of the sentence *awikhruju min diyarikum* (or come out of your village) is *ikhriju hubb al-dunya min qulubikum* (bring out the love of the world from your hearts).¹² More fully, al-Sulami interprets the verse as follows:

قوله عزوجل: (ولوأنآكتبنا عليهم أن اقتلوا أنفسهم) ... الآية ... قال محمد بن الفضل رحمه الله: اقتلوا أنفسكم بمخالفة هواها أو اخرجوا من دياركم، يعني أخرجوا حب الدنيا من قلوبكم، ما فعلوه إلا قليل في العدد كثير في المعاني، وهم أهل التوفيق والولايات الصادقة.¹³

As in the example of the interpretation of *bi al-ma'tsur* above, the subjectivity in the interpretation of al-Sulami lies in the selection of narrations that are not the same as the other narrations in other commentary books. The history chosen by al-Sulami is the narration that interprets *awikhruju min diyarikum* (or you get out of your

¹⁰ Al-Dzahabi, *al-Ittijahat al-Munhjarifah fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, 30-32. Lihat juga al-Tsa'labi, *al-Kasyfu wa al-Bayan 'an Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Muhaqqiq: Abu Muhammad ibn 'Asyur, cet. 1, jilid 6 (Lebanon: Dar Ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabi, 2002), 155.

¹¹ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, jilid 5 (t. tp.: Dar al-Thayyibah li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', 1999), 138; al-Baydhawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*, jilid 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya al-'Arabi, 1998), 274; al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, jilid 5 (t. tp.: Dar al-Thayyibah li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', 1999), 145.

¹² Al-Dzahabi, *al-Ittijahat al-Munhjarifah fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, 20-21.

¹³ Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, juz 1 (Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2001), 154.

village) be *ikhriju hubb al-dunya min qulubikum* (bring out the love of the world from your hearts). In terms of meaning, the meaning of this narration and the meaning of the text of the Qur'an are different. For comparison, let's look at Ibn Kathir's interpretation as follows:

قال ابن جرير: حدثني المثنى، حدثني إسحاق، حدثنا أبو زهير عن إسماعيل، عن أبي إسحاق السبيعي، قال: لما نزلت: وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا [مِنْهُمْ] الآية، قال رجل: لو أمرنا لفعلنا، والحمد لله الذي عافانا.¹⁴

Through another narration, Ibn Kathir gives a brief interpretation of this verse with someone's words, *law umirna lafa'alna wa al-h} amdu lillahi al-ladhi 'afana* (if we were ordered we would certainly do it, and all praise be to Allah for healthful we). In this interpretation, there is no new meaning that is different from the original meaning in the text of the Koran as contained in the interpretation of al-Sulami, there is only a statement of someone's readiness to carry out the command if ordered.

Regarding the example of the subjective element of Isyari's interpretation is *Ibn 'Arabi's Tafsir* by Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638 H.). Verses 8-9 of *Surah al-Muzzammil*:

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا (8) رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا

Mention the name of your Lord, and pray to him with great diligence (He is the) Lord of the East and the fall of dusk, there is no God (worthy of worship) but Him, and then take Him as Protector.

Interpreted by Ibn 'Arabi, *wadhkurrabbaka alladhi huwa anta* (say the name of your Lord, who [is none other than you]).¹⁵The full text is as follows:

{ واذكر اسم ربك } الذي هو أنت، أي: اعرف نفسك واذكرها ولا تنساها فينساك الله، واجتهد لتحصيل كمالها بعد معرفة حقيقتها { وتبتل } وانقطع إلى الله بالإعراض عما سواه انقطاعاً تاماً معتدلاً به.¹⁶

The word *rabbuka* (your Lord) in the above verse is denied by *alladhi huwa anta* (which is none other than you; that is, you know yourself, remember yourself, and don't forget, God will forget you later). This interpretation is similar to the concept of self-introduction in the discourse of Sufism, that is *man 'arafa nafsahu faqad' arafa rabbahu* (who has known himself, so he really knows his God), and this also shows the subjectivity of Ibn 'Arabi in his commentary.

The interpretation of Ibn 'Arabi, which is classified as the interpretation of *isyari*, is different from other interpretations that are not *isyari*, such as the interpretation of Ibn Kathir

¹⁴ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, jilid 2 (t. tp.: Dar al-Thayyibah li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', 1999), 352.

¹⁵ Al-Dzahabi, *al-Ittihad al-Munharifah fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, 74.

¹⁶<http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=3&tTafsirNo=33&tSoraNo=73&tAyahNo=8&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1>

who is classified as the interpretation of *bi al-ma'tsur*. Ibn Kathir interprets this verse as follows

{ وَأَذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا } أي: أكثر من ذكره، وانقطع إليه، وتفرغ لعبادته إذا فرغت من أشغالك، وما تحتاج إليه من أمور دنياك، كما قال: { فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ } أي: إذا فرغت من مهامك فانصب في طاعته وعبادته، لتكون فارغ البال. قاله ابن زيد بمعناه أوقرب منه.

وقال ابن عباس ومجاهد، وأبو صالح، وعطية، والضحاك، والسدي: { وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا } أي: أخلص له العبادة. وقال الحسن: اجتهد وتبتل إليه نفسك.

وقال ابن جرير: يقال للعباد: متبتل، ومنه الحديث المروي: أنه نهي عن التبتل، يعني: الانقطاع إلى العبادة وترك التزوج.¹⁷

Problems of Subjectivity in Interpretation

In the previous statement mentioned, subjectivity is one of the factors causing errors in interpretation. That is, to produce the correct interpretation, the interpreter must throw away his subjective element. The question then is, is it possible that in the process of interpretation the interpreter can get rid of the subjective element of himself? Isn't it true that in the process of interpretation, the subjective element of the interpreter cannot be separated from the interpreter himself since the interpreter is a subjective creature, that is, the subject who is interpreting?

Even in the philosophy of science (read: epistemology), human subjectivity has become a separate school of thought, subjectivism. This flow states that the objects and qualities that we know through our senses do not stand alone, apart from our awareness of them. That is, there is no reality that stands alone regardless of our perception of it. All reality is the result of the formation of human perception.¹⁸ If this is the case, how can this subjectivity dilemma (which is the cause of error, on the one hand, and become an inseparable element, on the other) be interpreted?

To answer this dilemma, one thing needs to be stressed, the subjectivity of the interpreter must be in the process of interpretation, but not all subjectivity is the cause of error. Subjectivity which is the cause of error is subjectivity which no longer ignores the interpretive guidelines outlined by commentators, subjectivity which seeks to conquer the text under personal interest or its school. Such subjectivity is a despicable negative subjectivity which, according to some history, is threatened with hell:

مَنْ قَالَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ بِرَأْيِهِ ، فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

Anyone who interprets the Qur'an based on his (subjective) reasoning view alone, that is, apart from the norms of tafsir, he should occupy / take his place in hell.

¹⁷ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Adzim*, jilid 8 (t. tp.: Dar al-Thayyibah li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', 1999), 255.

¹⁸ Opposing subjectivism is objectivism. This second stream states that the objects and qualities that we perceive by the mediation of our senses exist and are free from human consciousness. That there are separate realities separate from reason. See, Harold H. Titus *et.al.*, *Persoalan-persoalan Filsafat*, Tranlated by. H. M. Rajidi, 1st edition (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), 218-227.

Even if the interpretation is correct, it is still considered wrong:

من قال في القرآن برأيه فأصاب فقد أخطأ.¹⁹

Whoever interprets the Qur'an with his (subjective) reason (that is, without regard to the conditions needed) and the interpretation is correct, then he is still considered wrong.

However, if the subjectivity still follows the rules of interpretation agreed upon by the commentators are accompanied by the intention of *ijtihad* to seek the truth, so this subjectivity is justified subjectivity. This kind of subjectivity is desired so that the interpreter also acts objectively. The more the interpreter follows the signs of interpretation and followed by an attitude full of honesty, the more he acts objectively, although to get to the one hundred percent objective level is also impossible. So what is possible is to minimize subjectivity in order to enter spaces of objectivity or, in the language of Muhammad Ulinuha,²⁰ integrate subjectivity and objectivity.

However, it is not easy to judge whether the commentator has succeeded in minimizing negative subjectivity that is despicable or not considering the magnitude of the possibility of differences of opinion among interpreters including differences in applying the rules of interpretation. When it comes to the question of agreed and non-agreed rules of interpretation, Quraish Shihab states, it is possible for the scholars to agree on one principle, but when applying them they differ so that their conclusions regarding the message / content of the verses are also different. As an example of the rule which states, If there are two verses that talk about the same problem, but one of them is *muhkam* and the second is *mutasyabih*, then the *mutasyabih* must be understood based on the meaning contained by the *muhkam*. When applying this rule to the word of God:

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ (٢٢) إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

The faces (of the believers) on that day beamed to their Lord saw (al-Qiyamah: 22-23).

Then juxtapose it with His word:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

He cannot be reached by eye sight, while He can see everything that is visible; and He is the Most refined, the All-knowing (Surah al-An'am: 103).

¹⁹ Al-Tirmidzi, *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*, Muh}aqqiiq: Muhammad Syakir, juz 5 (Beirut: Dar ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabi, t.th.), 200.

²⁰ Muhammad Ulinuha, *Rekonstruksi Metodologi Kritik Tafsir*, cet. 1 (Jakarta: Azzamedia, 2015), 208-209.

So what makes the verse *surah al-Qiyamah* as adverse *muhkam* contact confirms that God can be seen with "eye" in the hereafter, even though the nature of His substance is unreachable. But for those who make the verse *al-An'am* as a verse *muhkam*, and the verse *al-Qiyamah* as *mutasyabih*, then they affirm that God at all times, under any circumstances, cannot be reached/seen with eye contact, either in the afterlife, especially in the world.²¹

In this example, we certainly cannot necessarily judge that the subjectivity of the interpreter is a negative subjectivity that is despicable before we actually judge it scientifically because it may be that the interpreter bases his opinion on the rules of interpretation as well. In this case, what is needed is honesty and our objective attitude as assessors. There are several things that can be used as a measure to determine the objectivity of the interpreter. *First*, the interpretation procedure is open to the public and can be examined by other researchers / interpreters; *Second*, definitions are made and used precisely and based on existing interpretive concepts and theories; *Third*, interpretive data are collected, analyzed and interpreted objectively based on scientific methods that can be accounted for; *Fourth*, consistently use the methods, approaches and interpretation procedures agreed upon by commentators and Qur'anic scholars.²²

Benchmarking the Truth of the Interpretation

Problem of subjectivity in interpretation leads us to an epistemological problem, what are the criteria for correct interpretation? Benchmarks for interpretation of the truth need to be given so that the measurement of the interpretation of the truth is not always seen from the measurement of the ideology of certain schools of thought as seen in Medieval commentary discourse, where the difference in interpretation results is due to factors differing in the ideology of the school rather than other factors.²³

The absolute measure of interpretation of interpretation which must be present in the interpretation process is *first*, referring to the rules of interpretation that have been compiled and agreed upon by the commentators. These rules of interpretation are closely related to linguistic issues such as *lafazh*, *al-w Tujuh* and *al-naza'ir*, *majaz* and so on, also related to *usul fiqh* issues such as *ulqat'iy* and *zanny*, *'am* and *khash*, *mutlaq* and *muqayyad*, etc.²⁴ If one does not know Arabic and the rules of

²¹M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, 12-13.

²² Excerpted from Muhammad Ulinnuha, *Rekonstruksi Metodologi Kritik Tafsir*, 205-206.

²³ See, Yunus Hasan Abidu, *Tafsir al-Qur'an: Sejarah Tafsir dan Metode Para Mufasir*, penerjemah: Qodirun Nur dan Ahmad Musyafiq, cet. 1 (Tangerang: Gaya Media Pratama, 2007), 154-155.

²⁴ See for example, Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, cet. 3 (Tangerang: Lenteran Hati, 2015); Khalid ibn Utsman al-Sabt, *Qawa'id al-Tafsir: Jam'an wa Dirasatan* (Mamlakah al-Sa'udiyah: Dar ibn 'Affan, 1997); al-Suyuthi, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, jilid 4 (Saudi: Mamlakah al-Su'u>diyyah, t.th.), 1.266.

this interpretation, one is certainly not possible to interpret because the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic.

Second, it refers to the measurement of truth in the philosophy of science.²⁵ There are three theories about the test of truth that are believed by philosophers, they are: a) The theory of coherence: a test of consistency. According to this theory, a consideration is true if it is consistent with other considerations that have been accepted as true. Correct considerations are coherent considerations, according to logic, with other relevant considerations; b) Correspondent theory: a test of equality with facts. According to this theory, truth is loyalty to objective reality. Truth is a correspondence between statements about facts and facts themselves, or between considerations and the situation they describe. Truth has a close relationship with the statement or preaching that we do about something; c) Pragmatic theory: a test of expediency. Followers of this theory are empirical in interpreting experiences. For them, the test of truth is a benefit, workable, or satisfying result.²⁶

If coherence theory is drawn into the realm of interpretive study, then the main standard of interpretation correctness lies in philosophical consistency in the internal relations of interpretation. As long as the interpreter is consistent in interpreting a word, then the meaning is also consistently supported by other interpreters, then the meaning is considered correct according to the theory of coherence. In this theory, the interpreter must really base his opinion on the assumptions and propositions that are true because once an assumption and proposition that is based on wrong, then the next conclusion will also be wrong, and therefore, this error will be a consistent error.²⁷

Furthermore, if correspondence theory is used in the study of interpretation, then an interpretation product can be said to be true if it is in accordance with empirical reality. This is possible, according to Syahrur, because there are two basic assumptions, *first*, revelation does not conflict with reason, and *second*, revelation does not conflict with reality.²⁸ An example of this interpretation is Syahrur's interpretation of the beads of nature as stated in the *Surah al-Isra*: 41, *Surah al-Jum'ah*: 1, *Surah al-Hasyr*: 1, and *Surah al-Anbiya'*: 33. Syahrur interprets the word *tasbih* in these verses not in the sense of reading *tasbih*, but interpreting it as moving and dialoguing between two conflicting elements so as to enable development and

²⁵ In his book, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, Abdul Mustaqim draws three theories of truth in the philosophy of science that is coherence theory, correspondence theory, and pragmatic theory into the field of interpretation. According to him, although these three theories of truth are generally used in empirical sciences, they can also be applied to see the validity of an interpretation. See, Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, cet. 3 (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012), 289-299.

²⁶ Harold H. Titus, *et.al.*, *Persoalan-persoalan Filsafat.*, 236-244.

²⁷ Muhammad Ulinuha, *Rekonstruksi Metodologi Kritik Tafsir*, 212; Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, 291-292.

²⁸ Muhammad Syahrur, *al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* (Damaskus: al-Ahali li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', 1992), 94.

change. So, everything in the sky and on earth actually moves and dialects to develop and change throughout the ages.

Finally, if pragmatic theory is drawn in the realm of interpretation, then the benchmark for the correctness of interpretation is when the interpretation is empirically able to provide solutions for solving social humanitarian problems. Thus, the product of interpretation must be seen whether it is still able to answer the challenges of the times that always change along with the progress of human civilization or not. For that reason, interpretation should continue to be developed, because change and development is something that is sure to happen and is a *sunnatullah*.²⁹

CONCLUSION

To avoid misinterpretation, a interpretator or prospective interpretator must meet a number of requirements that have been determined by the commentators' scholars. Among these conditions are 1) Having the right creed; 2) Clean from lust; 3) Interpreting the Qur'an first with the Qur'an; 4) Looking for interpretation of the *Sunah*; 5) If an interpretation is not found in the *Sunah*, you should review the opinions of the Friends; 6) If there is no interpretation found in the Qur'an, *Sunah* or in the opinion of the Companions, then you should review *Tabi'in's* opinion; 7) Mastering Arabic with all its branches; 8) Knowing the main points of science related to the Qur'an, such as the science of *qira'ah*, the science of monotheism, the science of *proposals al-tafsir* such as *asbab al-nuzul*, *nasikh* and *mansukh*, and so on.

If a number of these conditions are ignored, then we can be sure that the interpretation product of a commentator cannot be accounted for and that the commentator is very likely to be mired in errors and irregularities in interpretation. Therefore, besides having to fulfil a number of these conditions, a interpretator (or prospective interpretator) must also know and be aware of what factors make a person slip in error when interpreting verses of the Koran. There are at least three factors causing errors in interpretation, they are: *first*, factors internal mistakes, or subjective factors, which may arise because they want to follow self-interest (lust) and the ideology of the school, or want to subdue the text under the self-interest and the group; *Second*, external error factors, such as the entry of the elements of *Isra'iliyyat*; *Third*, linguistic error factors, such as errors in applying the rules of language.

Furthermore, there are two benchmarks of truth of interpretation, *first*, referring to the rules of interpretation that have been compiled and agreed upon by the commentators. These rules of interpretation are closely related to linguistic issues such as *lafazh*, *al-wujuh* and *al-naza'ir*, *majaz* and so on, also related to *usul fiqh* issues such as the issues of *qat'iy* and *zanny*, *'am* and *kuhash*, *mutlaq* and *muqayyad*, and so on.

²⁹ Saihu, "Rintisan Peradaban Profetik Umat Manusia Melalui Peristiwa Turunnya Adam AS Ke-Dunia," *Mumtaz* 3, no. 1 (2019): 268–79, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36671/mumtaz.v3i2.44>.

Second, it refers to the measurement of truth in the philosophy of science. There are three theories about truth tests that are believed by philosophers, they are: a) Coherence theory: test of consistency b) Correspondent theory: test of equality with facts c) Pragmatic theory: test of expediency.

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