

INTERPRETING THE QURAN ACCORDING TO THE OPINIONS OF THE COMPANIONS

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze the interpretation of the Quran based on the opinions of the Prophet's companions (*Sahabat*). This research is essential because the Sahabat were the first generation of Islam, through whom the Quran and its interpretation were transmitted to subsequent generations. The study employs a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach. Research data is collected from various sources, including Quranic exegesis literature, *usul al-tafsir* (principles of interpretation), and relevant journal articles that pertain to the history of Quranic interpretation during the time of the Prophet's companions, in order to provide a comprehensive overview. Additionally, it considers the viewpoints of both classical and contemporary exegetes. The study reveals several key findings. Firstly, the method of interpretation employed by the *Sahabat* was a global (*ijmali*) approach, while the technique used was interpretation. Secondly, the sources of interpretation used by the Prophet's companions included the Quran itself, *hadith* (Prophet's sayings), *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) or *istinbath* (drawing inferences through language, culture, and the customary practices of the Arab people), as well as stories from the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), known as *isra'iliyyat*. These various sources led to diverse interpretations among the Sahabat. Thirdly, the interpretations of the *Sahabat* can be categorized into *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* (narrative exegesis) and, to some extent, *tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (interpretation based on reasoning). Sahabat's narrative exegesis involves explanations related to the reasons for the revelation of Quranic verses (*asbab al-nuzul*), accounts of the past (the stories of the Prophets and righteous individuals), and accounts of the future (the events of the Day of Judgment, the intermediate realm, Paradise, Hell, and so forth). Meanwhile, *Sahabat's* interpretation based on reasoning is derived from *ijtihad* and their understanding of the Arabic language. When the *Sahabat* reached a consensus (*ijmak*) on the interpretation of a verse, it held the status of *marfu'* (authentic). In contrast, interpretations of the *Sahabat* that originated from the People of the Book fall under the category of *isra'iliyyat* and are not considered a genuine source of interpretation by the *Sahabat*. The *Sahabat*

cited the People of the Book for historical and narrative purposes, not for Quranic exegesis.

Keywords: methods and sources of interpretation; the Quran; Prophet's companions; *tafsir bi al-ra'yi*; *tafsir bi al-ma'thsur*

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penafsiran al-Qur'an dengan pendapat sahabat Nabi. Penelitian ini diperlukan karena sahabat Nabi merupakan generasi pertama dalam Islam, yang melalui merekalah al-Qur'an dan penafsirannya tersebar ke generasi-generasi selanjutnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka. Data penelitian di ambil dari berbagai literatur tafsir, *ushul tafsir*, dan artikel jurnal, yang relevan dengan sejarah perkembangan tafsir di masa sahabat Nabi untuk mendapatkan gambar secara komprehensif. Selain itu, memerhatikan pandangan para mufasir klasik maupun kontemporer. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan beberapa temuan penting. Pertama, metode penafsiran yang digunakan sahabat adalah metode *ijmali* (global) sedangkan teknik yang digunakan adalah teknik interpretasi. Kedua, sumber penafsiran sahabat Nabi, yakni al-Qur'an, hadis, *ijtihad* atau kekuatan *istinbath* (melalui bahasa, budaya, adat kebiasaan bangsa Arab), serta cerita '*abl al-Kitab*' dari kaum Yahudi dan Nasrani yang dikenal dengan *isra'iliyyat*, sumber penafsiran ini mengakibatkan penafsiran mereka beragam. Ketiga, penafsiran sahabat Nabi dapat dikategorikan tafsir *bi al-ma'thsur* (*bi al-riwayah*) dan sebagian masuk tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* (*bi al-dirayah*). Penafsiran sahabat kategori tafsir *riwayah* adalah penjelasan sahabat berkaitan dengan *asbabun nuzul* ayat al-Qur'an, berita gaib tentang masa lalu (kisah para Nabi dan orang-orang saleh), dan berita masa depan (huru hara kiamat, alam barzakh, surga, neraka, dan sebagainya). Sementara penafsiran Sahabat kategori tafsir *bi al-dirayah* adalah penafsiran yang bersumber dari *ijtihad* dan pemahaman bahasa Arab para sahabat Nabi. Ketika para Sahabat mencapai kesepakatan (*ijmak*) mengenai penafsiran suatu ayat, maka ayat tersebut menyandang status *marfu'* (otentik). Sebaliknya, tafsir Sahabat yang berasal dari *abl al-Kitab* termasuk dalam kategori *isra'iliyyat* dan tidak dianggap sebagai sumber tafsir yang asli oleh Sahabat. Para Sahabat menyebutkan riwayat dari '*abl al-Kitab*' dari segi keilmuan dan riwayat, bukan karena segi tafsir al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: metode dan sumber penafsiran; al-Qur'an; sahabat Nabi; tafsir *bi al-ra'yi*; tafsir *bi al-ma'thsur*

Introduction

The history of the Quran demonstrates that it is not easily comprehensible due to its profound and extensive meanings. The challenge in interpreting it lies in the linguistic miracle and the depth of its content, making it not readily understandable in terms of its meanings and intentions by everyone. The Quran contains knowledge, teachings, and crucial, pure, and sacred messages that cannot be fully grasped and practised except by those who possess knowledge, morality, and a clear mind and soul (Arib et al., 2022). Those who meet these criteria are undoubtedly better equipped to comprehend the Quran, although not necessarily to perfection, compared to those who fall short of these attributes. Hence, whenever Allah, the Most Exalted, speaks about the evidence of His divinity and His oneness, it is consistently accompanied by references to those who possess intellect and knowledge, those who listen and ponder, and those who are willing to draw lessons from it. All these indicate that human beings can access the essence and meaning of the Quranic verses through one or all of these potentialities, capacities, or abilities.

In its position as the holy book of the Islamic community, the Quran serves as the primary source of all laws, and its interpretation is an ongoing endeavour to uncover its inherent meanings (Mokodenseho, 2021). This task is not exclusive to devout believers, as challenges and criticisms persist from those who oppose its teachings. The Quran continually invites us to engage in critical thinking and dialogue for a deeper understanding, offering truths that can be substantiated. This reality gives rise to never-ending discussions and sparks waves of scholarly research by academics. This is because the Quran contains crucial information and historical events that record the conditions of past civilizations, encompassing religious, social, political, cultural aspects, and more, until the 7th century CE. Simultaneously, the Quran provides numerous guidelines, regulations, and actions for future generations who seek to live under its guidance and discover the meaning of life within it (Shihab, 2003). Therefore, the interpretation of Quranic verses holds great significance. One of the essential tools for achieving this understanding is the process of interpretation. Consequently, the interpretation of Quranic verses plays a pivotal role in advancing or regressing

the Islamic community, as it serves as the key to unlocking the meanings encapsulated within it.

The interpretation of the Quran has a rich history, flourishing during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He served as the initial exegete of the Quran, which contains the words of Allah, to elucidate the meanings of its verses or revelations. However, following the Prophet Muhammad's passing, the interpretations provided by the companions took on the second most significant role after the Prophet's interpretations (Al-Dzahabī, 1986). The position held by the companions signifies that they engaged in interpretation because the Prophet Muhammad, as the initial interpreter, had passed away. His companions automatically transferred or assumed this as the bearers of the role previously carried out by the Prophet. One basis for this is mentioned by Salim (d. 2011), who refers to the verb "*ḵhalafa-yakhlufu*" in the Quran, used in the sense of "replacement," both in the context of generational succession and the assumption of leadership positions. According to him, the concept encapsulated by the term "*ḵhalafa*" does not merely imply generational succession but also carries functional connotations (Salim, 1994). Furthermore, following the Prophet's demise, various questions arose among the companions regarding the meanings of certain verses in the Quran.

Among the companions of the Prophet, studying the interpretation of the Quran was relatively straightforward because the Quran was revealed in their language, and they could witness the circumstances and events surrounding the revelation of its verses (Abbas, 2005). Additionally, since the companions of the Prophet directly interacted with him, held faith in him, and passed away in the state of Islam (Al-ʿAsqalānī, 2006), they received and learned the Quran directly from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, it is worth noting that differences in understanding and interpreting Quranic verses were not uncommon among them. In other words, some verses were easily comprehensible to some of the companions, while they remained unclear to others (Al-Dhahabī, 2000). This disparity occurred because each companion possessed varying levels of understanding and insight.

Based on these considerations, this article analyses the interpretation of the Quran according to the companions' opinions. The research will address questions about the methods and sources of interpretation used by the companions of the Prophet and categorize their interpretations. This will provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the interpretations offered by the companions of the Prophet.

Method

This research employs a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach. Data collection involves thoroughly examining books, literature, notes, and reports on the addressed issues (Allen, 2017; Mann, 2015). In the context of this research, data are extracted from various sources, including Quranic exegesis literature, *usul al-tafsir* (principles of interpretation), and journal articles relevant to the historical development of Quranic interpretation during the time of the Prophet's companions to obtain a comprehensive overview. Furthermore, it considers the perspectives of both classical and contemporary exegetes. The acquired data is processed and analyzed descriptively using inductive analysis techniques.

Results and Discussion

Defining Tafsir al-Qur'an with the Opinions of the Companions

The term "opinion" (*qaul*) is derived from the verb "*qala - yaqulu - qaulan*," which means speech or opinion. Meanwhile, the companions of the Prophet (Sahabat Nabi) are defined as individuals who were companions (Khallaf, 1978), had direct contact with, believed in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), embraced Islam, and passed away while remaining faithful (Al-Khinni, 1996). It is also essential to note that the duration of a companion's association with the Prophet determines their rank or status as a companion. This is articulated in the words of Imam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him): "Whoever accompanied the Prophet for a year, a month, a day, or even a brief moment and saw the Prophet is counted among the companions of the Prophet. The degree of each is determined by the length of time they spent with the Prophet" (Taymiyah, 1419).

From this understanding, the term "opinion of the companion" (قول الصحابي) refers to the opinions expressed by the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The concept of the companions' opinions encompasses their views and judgments on particular cases, which are quoted by scholars, whether in the form of a fatwa (religious ruling) or a legal decision. This occurs when no explicit guidance is provided by Quranic verses or Hadith (Prophet's sayings) regarding the specific situation the companions face (Amin, 2005).

Meanwhile, Tafsir is a medium and instrument used to explain the Quran. Tafsir al-Qur'an is the science that studies the process of providing explanations for the object under interpretation, which involves interpreting the content and meanings of Quranic verses by extracting the meanings, laws, and wisdom contained within them (Al-Zarkashī, 2008). Thus, Tafsir al-Qur'an, with the companions' opinions, comprises the words and explanations regarding the Quran conveyed by the companions who met Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This includes explanations of meanings and the reasons for revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), which encompass the social and historical context of the society, the causes of revelation, interpretations of ambiguous meanings (*mujmal*), and all the meanings contained in the Quran. This encompasses jurisprudence (*fiqh*), worship, creed (*akidah*), ethics (*akhlak*), and all aspects related to human life.

Mufasirs Among the Companions

Following the passing of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), several of his companions were recognized for their contributions to the field of Quranic interpretation (Tafsir). They lived during the time of the Prophet, directly learned from him, and witnessed the reasons for the revelation of Allah's words in the Quran. However, their understanding of the Quran varied, reflecting different levels of comprehension, similar to their understanding and transmission of the Prophet's hadith (Kamarudin & Mokodenseho, 2022). According to as-Suyuthi (1445-1505 CE), several notable companions were known for their expertise in Quranic interpretation. These include Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq (573-634 CE), Umar bin Khattab (584-644 CE), Uthman bin' Affan (579-656 CE), Ali bin Abi Thalib

(599/601-661 CE), Ubay bin Ka'ab (d. 639 CE), Abdullah bin Mas'ud (594-653 CE), Zaid bin Tsabit (610-665 CE), Abu Musa al-Asy'ari (d. 662/672 CE), Abdullah bin Abbas (619-687 CE), and Abdullah bin Zubair (624-692 CE) (Al-Suyūṭī, 1979; Al-Munawar, 2004). Furthermore, some scholars also include other companions' names, such as Abu Hurairah (603-678 CE), Aisyah binti Abu Bakar (604-678 CE), Jabir bin Abdullah (607-697 CE), Abdullah bin Umar (610-693 CE), Anas bin Malik (612-709 CE), and Abdullah bin Amr bin Ash (616-683 CE) (Al-Qaṭṭān, 1973). However, only a limited amount of their interpretations have been transmitted to the Muslim community after compilation (*tadwin*).

In the context mentioned above, it is important to note that the narrations attributed to the companions of the Prophet, such as Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, and Utsman bin 'Affan, regarding the interpretation (Tafsir) of the Quran, are relatively scarce when compared to their narrations concerning jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and legal rulings (*fatwa*). Al-Dahābī (1915-1977 CE) cites several factors that account for the limited nature of their interpretations in the field of Quranic exegesis: (1) Following the passing of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the lifespan of these companions was relatively short. Consequently, their time to explain or transmit Quranic interpretations to subsequent generations could have been improved. (2) The companions of the Prophet, such as Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, and Utsman bin 'Affan, were preoccupied with the responsibilities of leadership and governance, particularly during their respective caliphates. This left them less time to teach Quranic exegesis in mosques and other educational settings. (3) In the city of Madinah, many other companions deeply understood the content and meaning of the Quran. As a result, there was no urgent need to seek explanations from Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, and Utsman bin 'Affan regarding interpreting Quranic verses (Al-Dzahabī, 1986).

Compared to the Rightly Guided Caliphs such as Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, and Utsman bin 'Affan, Al-Dzahabī (1986) notes that Ali bin Abi Thalib played a significant role in narrating and interpreting the Quran. This is attributed to Ali's lifespan extending well beyond the time of the Prophet Muhammad's passing, lasting until the year 40 AH (After

Hijrah). During the periods of Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, and Utsman bin' Affan, Ali was not as heavily engaged in the administrative affairs of the caliphate. Furthermore, there was a growing need among the Tabi'in (the generation after the companions) to address questions from the Muslim community regarding interpreting Quranic verses. This demand was particularly prominent among non-Arab Muslim converts (Muslim Ajam) who required explanations.

These circumstances also led to the transmission of numerous Quranic interpretations by other companions of the Prophet, such as Ubay bin Ka'ab (Abidu, 2007), Abdullah bin Mas'ud,¹, and Abdullah bin Abbas. As for other companions of the Prophet, who were also skilled in Quranic exegesis, like Zaid bin Tsabit, Abu Musa al-Asy'ari, and Abdullah bin Zubair, their narrations could be more extensive and reach subsequent generations to the same extent. Additionally, their expertise was considered below that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Sources of Companion Interpretation

Based on the sources of their interpretations, Quranic exegesis (Tafsir) can be categorized into two types: *Tafsir bi al-ma'thsur* (narrative) and *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (rational thought). According to al-Şābunī (1930-2021 CE), *Tafsir bi al-ma'thsur* involves interpretations found within the Quran, the Sunnah (Prophet's tradition), and the opinions of the companions (Al-Şābūnī, 2003). In other words, *Tafsir bi al-ma'thsur* is the act of interpreting the Quran using the Quran itself, the Quran using the Sunnah, or the Quran using the opinions of the companions. However, Al-Dhahabī (2000) presents a different perspective, defining *Tafsir bi al-ma'thsur* as interpretations originating from the narrations of the Prophet, the companions, and the Tabi'in (the generation after the companions). Al-Dhahabī appears to include the Tafsir of the Tabi'in in the category of *bi al-ma'thsur* because their commentaries often contain the opinions of the Tabi'in, as seen in works like

¹Abdullah bin Mas'ud was a highly proficient companion in the fields of the Quran and Hadith. This is evident from the statement attributed to Ali, as reported by Abu Nu'aim from Abu Bakhtari, where Ali was asked about Ibn Mas'ud. Ali responded, "He understood the Quran and the Sunnah, and then he remained silent, satisfied with that knowledge" (Al-Maliki, n.d.).

Tafsir al-Ṭabarī. On the other hand, Al-Zarqānī (1988) limits this category to interpretations provided by Quranic verses, the Sunnah, and the opinions of the companions, aligning with the viewpoint of al-Ṣābunī. In this context, Al-Zarqānī does not include the Ṭabi'in interpretations in the *Tafsir bi al-ma'thsur* category. This distinction arises from the belief that many of the Ṭabi'in were influenced by *isrā'īlyyat* (narrations from the People of the Book, i.e., Jews and Christians), which was a consideration not present in the interpretations offered by the companions.

Meanwhile, *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (reasoning) refers to *ijtihād* (independent juristic reasoning) and *qiyas* (analogy). The term "*ra'yi*" used in this context means *ijtihād* (Al-Dhahabī, 2000). *Ijtihād* must be performed while considering the sources of the Quran, Hadith, and narrations from the companions, all based on sound and strong principles. Consequently, *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi* can be categorized into two types: *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi mahmud* (commendable reasoning) is an interpretation grounded in the Arabic language, sentence context, and the transmitted traditions (*Atsar*), while *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi madzūm* (blameworthy reasoning) is an interpretation based on personal desires and logic without proper knowledge or adherence to established principles (Abbas, 2005). The companions' interpretation of the Quran, based on the Arabic language and their independent reasoning (*ijtihād*), falls under *Tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (reasoning or rational thought or *dirayah*).

As for the companions' interpretations of the Quran, they utilized various sources of interpretation. First and foremost, they relied on the Quran itself, interpreting the Quran with the Quran based on what they had learned from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through narration, albeit this was a relatively limited practice (Al-Tayyar, 1993). For instance, in the interpretation of Surah Al-Tur [52], verse 5:

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ

5. And [by] the heaven raised high (QS. Al-Tur [52]: 5).

Ali bin Abi Thalib interpreted the word "heaven" in this verse as the sky. This interpretation was based on the following statement of Allah (SWT):

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهَا مُعْرَضُونَ

32. *And We made the sky a protected ceiling, but they, from its signs, are turning away.* (QS. Al-Anbiya [21]: 32)

In this verse, the term "heaven" is likened to a "roof" that Allah has preserved and elevated (Ath-Thabari, 1992).

Umar bin Khattab demonstrates another example of interpreting the Quran with the Quran in his interpretation of the verse:

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ

7. *And when the souls are paired* (QS. Al-Takwir [81]: 7).

Umar bin Khattab interpreted the word "zuwwijat" in this verse to mean companions or close associates. According to Ath-Thabari (1992), this interpretation was based on the following statement of Allah (SWT):

﴿أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ﴾

22. *[The angels will be ordered], "Gather those who committed wrong, their kinds, and what they used to worship* (QS. As-Saffat [37]: 22).

Another example is the interpretation provided by Ibn Abbas for the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحْلَتْ لَكُمْ بِهِيْمَةُ الْآنَعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُجْلِي الصَّيِّدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

1. *O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts. Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you [in this Qur'an] - hunting not being permitted while you are in the state of ihram. Indeed, Allah ordains what He intends* (QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 1).

Ibn Abbas interpreted the verse above by referring to the following verse:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهٍ...

3. *Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah...* (QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 3).

Secondly, they relied on Hadith. In addition to interpreting Quranic verses with other Quranic verses, the companions also sought to narrate the

sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) related to the interpretation of Quranic verses based on his explanations. In other instances, the companions did not mention the chain of narration (sanad) to the Prophet when interpreting the Quran. Both of these approaches indicate that the companions of the Prophet relied on his Hadith when they could not find the interpretation of the Quran within the Quran itself (Al-Tayyar, 1993). For example, the interpretation provided by Abdullah bin Abbas regarding the following verse of Allah (SWT):

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ

30. *On the Day We will say to Hell, "Have you been filled?" and it will say, "Are there some more,"* (QS. Qaf [50]: 30).

Abdullah bin Abbas mentioned that Allah placed His foot in Hellfire, and Hellfire responded, "Enough, enough" (Ath-Thabari, 1992).

Thirdly, the Arabic language. When the companions of the Prophet did not find an interpretation for something in the Quran and Hadith, they referred to the Arabic language for Quranic interpretation (Al-Tayyar, 1993; Al-Dzahabī, 1986). They used the Arabic language because Allah revealed the Quran in this language. Additionally, the companions of the Prophet spoke and understood Arabic, which is why they had a good grasp of the Quran baik.² Therefore, when they could not find an explanation for something in the Quran or the Hadith of the Prophet, they tried to interpret it based on their knowledge of Arabic. For example, Abdullah bin Abbas interpreted the following verse of Allah (SWT):

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ

²This opinion, among others, is presented by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 CE). However, this view differs from that of al-Dahābī, as stated in his book, who argues that the fact that the Quran was revealed in the Arabic language does not mean that all Arabs understood the Quran in terms of its words and structure. He argues that we can observe books written in various languages today. Nevertheless, most succeeding generations cannot understand most of what is contained in those books in their original languages. Therefore, 'understanding' does not solely depend on mastering the language; rather, it requires individuals with a specific intellectual aptitude to delve into the meanings and study them by the level and complexity of the text and the writer's expertise (Al-Dzahabī, 1986).

2. *And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so]* (QS. Al-Insyiqaq [84]: 2)

Abdullah bin Abbas interpreted the word '*adẓinat*' to mean "hearing," signifying that the heavens hear their Lord (Ath-Thabari, 1992).

Another example involves Umar bin Khattab's inquiry about the meaning of "*takḥannuf*" in the verse of the Quran: "*Aw ya'khubẓahum 'ala takḥannuf*" (QS. an-Nahl [16]: 47). An Arab from the Hudzail tribe explained that it meant "reduction." This interpretation was based on the use of language and was supported by pre-Islamic poetry. Umar was satisfied with this explanation and recommended studying such poetry to understand the Quran (Al-Shāṭibī, n.d.).

Fourthly, '*ahl al-Kitāb*' (the People of the Book) is another source of interpretation for the companions. This includes both Jews and Christians.³ This reliance on '*ahl al-Kitāb*' as a source for interpretation stemmed from the fact that in some matters, such as the stories of the Prophets and previous communities, the Quran aligned with the Torah and the Gospel. For example, the Quran includes details found in the Gospel, such as the birth of Jesus (Isa ibn Maryam), and his miracles. However, the Quran employed a different method or *manhaj* than the Torah and the Gospel, resulting in differences in some matters of religious law, and it did not provide comprehensive narratives but brief mentions to convey lessons (*Ibrah*) (Al-Dzahabī, 1986).

When the human intellect leans toward something comprehensive and profound, some of the Prophet's companions referred to several Quran stories, which are mentioned briefly, to expand upon the stories circulated among the People of the Book (Al-Dhahabī, 2000). For example, Abdullah bin Abbas asked Abul Jalad about the meaning of '*al-ra'du*'. Abul Jalad replied that it means "wind" (Ath-Thabari, 1992).

Compared to references to the Quran and Hadith, the interaction and reference of the companions of the Prophet to the opinions and stories of the '*ahl al-Kitāb*' were not the primary sources in interpreting the Quran. The use of the '*ahl al-Kitāb*' as a reference can be considered limited and restricted

³According to (Shihab, 1996), almost all scholars agree that Jews and Christians are called '*ahl al-Kitāb*' (the People of the Book).

because there had been distortion, *tabrif* (alteration) of the contents of their books, namely the Torah and the Gospel. This caution led the companions of the Prophet to be careful when taking information from the *'abl al-Kitāb* to preserve the authenticity of the Quran and the Islamic faith from any distortions.

Al-Dhahabī (2000) mentioned that the companions sought opinions and stories that were not stated in the Quran from individuals who had converted to Islam from the People of the Book, such as Abdullah bin Salam (550-630 AD)⁴ and Ka'ab al-Ahbar,⁵ as well as other scholars from the Jewish or Christian backgrounds. Similarly, Sayyid Ahmad Khalil, as Anwar (1999) quoted, attributed the *isrā'iliyyat* narrations to the Jews because their narrators were mostly those who had converted to Islam. However, in this context, the companions of the Prophet did not accept *isrā'iliyyat*⁶ narratives or their opinions unless they aligned with Islamic beliefs and did not contradict the Quran (Al-Dhahabī, 2000).

Fadhl Hassan Abbas (1932-2011 CE) commented on interpretations that relied on information from the *abl al-Kitāb* by stating that this could not be a source of interpretation during the time of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet). This is because Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) aimed to emphasize a single source in matters of religion: Islam, specifically the Quran. Therefore, the Sahabah did not rely on the beliefs of the pre-Islamic Arabian era (*Jahiliyah*) or turn to anything other than the Quran. It is narrated that one day, the Sahabah gathered and discussed something. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked them what they were

⁴Abdullah bin Salam, born as Al-Husain bin Salam, was a companion of Prophet Muhammad and a Jewish scholar who embraced Islam. He participated in the conquest of Syria and Palestine but passed away in Medina in the year 663 CE. He had two sons, Muhammad and Yusuf.

⁵Ka'ab al-Ahbar, whose full name was Abu Ishaq Ka'ab bin Mati' al-Himyari al-Ahbar, was a Jewish scholar who converted to Islam during the early days of the Rashidun Caliphate in Medina. He is said to have belonged to the Dhu Ra'in or Dhu al-Kila tribe.

⁶The legal status of including *isrā'iliyyat* stories for mere citation without belief is as follows: (1) If their authenticity is known and they align with the principles of the Qur'an. If they are accurately quoted, then it is considered valid (*sahih*). (2) If their falsehood is evident due to their contradiction with the principles of the Qur'an, then they are rejected. (3) If their status is unknown, they are neither accepted nor rejected, neither believed nor denied (Al-Nayl, 1989).

discussing, and they explained that they were discussing the genealogies of the Arabs and pre-Islamic matters. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) then explained that this was knowledge that did not bring benefit. He mentioned that knowledge is divided into three parts: clear verses (*mubkam*) of the Quran, established obligations, and the Sunnah that is followed (HR. Abu Dawud, Hakim and Baihaqi) (Al-Munawi, 1356).

Abdullah bin Abbas said, "O fellow Muslims, why do you ask the *'abl al-Kitāb* when your book (the Quran) is the latest revelation from Allah, and you read it? Hasn't Allah informed you that the *'abl al-Kitāb* altered the laws Allah prescribed for them and tampered with the Book of Allah with their own hands, then claimed, as Allah has informed you? Is there no knowledge that has reached you to prevent you from asking the *'abl al-Kitāb*? No! By Allah, I have never seen any of them (the *'abl al-Kitāb*) asking you about the Quran! (So why do you ask them?)" (Al-Bukhārī, 1999).

Once, Umar bin Khattab went to see Prophet Muhammad with a book he had obtained from some *'abl al-Kitāb*. The Prophet read it, became angry, and said, "Are you confused, O Umar bin Khattab? I have brought you the pure white religion by Him in Whose Hand my soul is. Please do not ask them (the *'abl al-Kitāb*) anything; they will (may) never tell you the truth, *al-haq*. They might convey a falsehood, and you would accept it as truth. Moreover, please do not believe them, for they can never be truthful. By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, if Moses were alive now, he would have no choice but to follow me (Hanbal, 2001).

Fifth, *ijtihād*. In interpreting matters that lacked explanation in the Qur'an, hadith, Arabic language, and other sources, the Companions of the Prophet used *ijtihād* and their understanding, including deriving legal rulings. However, not all Companions agreed or adhered to the method of *ijtihād*. Some Companions relied solely on transmitted reports, while others, in addition to relying on reports, also used *ijtihād*. Hamka (1908-1981 CE) stated that the basis for relying on the method of *ijtihād* was linguistic competence and knowledge of the circumstances of revelation or *asbabun nuẓul* (Al-Farmawi, 2002). Among the Companions who did not permit interpreting the Qur'an through *ijtihād* were Abu Bakr ash-Shiddiq and Umar bin Khattab. At the same time, those who employed this method included

Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Abdullah bin Abbas. However, it is essential to emphasize that the *ijtihad* of the Companions was based on knowledge, and thus, their *ijtihad* was a reasonable means to address various complex issues (Al-Tayyar, 1993).

At the very least, several aspects are related to the *ijtihad* tools that the Companions of the Prophet needed before interpreting the Qur'an. First, mastery of the forms and secrets of the Arabic language. This influenced the understanding of verses, as understanding them depended solely on Arabic. Second, knowledge of Arab customs. This influenced the understanding of most verses related to their customs. For example:

...وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا...

189. ...*And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back...* (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 189).

Another example:

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ... الْكُفْرِينَ

37. *Indeed, the postponing [of restriction within sacred months] is an increase in disbelief...* (QS. At-Taubah [9]: 37).

Some of the above verses cannot be understood in meaning except by those knowledgeable about the traditions or customs of the pre-Islamic Arabs when the Quran was revealed.

Third, understanding the conditions of the Jews and Christians in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Quran's revelation. This influences the understanding of verses that guide their actions and reactions towards them. Additionally, knowing the reasons for the revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) and the context surrounding the Quran from various situations and circumstances affects the understanding of many Quranic verses. Ibn Daqiq al-Ied (1228-1302 CE) stated, "Explaining the reasons for the revelation of verses is a strong method for understanding the meanings of the Quran." Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328 CE) mentioned, "Knowing the reasons for revelation impacts the understanding of the verses. Indeed, knowledge of the causes inheres in the knowledge of what caused them or *musabab*."

Fourth, the ability to understand and the breadth of knowledge. This is a special gift from Allah to His servants as He wills (Shalih, 2003).

It is narrated that Umar employed Qadamah bin Madz'un to work with 'Ali in Bahrain. Later, Jarud came to Umar and said, "Indeed, Qadamah drank and got drunk." Umar responded, "Who bears witness to what you are saying?" Jarud said, "Abu Hurairah is the witness to what I am saying." Umar replied, "O Qadamah, I will be the one to punish you." Qadamah responded, "By Allah, if I were to drink as he claims, you would not be able to punish me." Umar asked, "Why not?" Qadamah said, "Certainly, Allah has said..."

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

93. *There is not upon those who believe and do righteousness [any] blame concerning what they have eaten [in the past] if they [now] fear Allah and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allah and believe, and then fear Allah and do good; and Allah loves the doers of good (QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 93).*

Qadamah continued, saying, "I am among those who believe and do good deeds, then remain righteous and faithful, and after that, remain righteous and do good deeds. I was with the Prophet in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, etc." Umar asked, "Do you want to respond to his words?" Then Abdullah bin Abbas said, "Certainly, this verse serves as forgiveness for what has passed and evidence for what is to come. Because Allah has said..."

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلُمُ رَجَسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ
فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

90. *O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful (QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90). Umar said, "You are correct" (Al-Dhahabī, 2000).*

Although some of the companions of the Prophet at that time used the method of ijtiḥad in interpreting the Quran, they did not go as far as formulating rules of language and grammar. In other words, they still thoroughly understood pure Arabic before coming into contact with other

languages. From the beginning, they already understood the elements of *balaghab* (rhetoric and eloquence)⁷ such as *ijaz* (inimitability),⁸ *majaz* (metaphor),⁹ *tashbih* (resemblance),¹⁰ *ithnab* (negation),¹¹ and others. During the time of the Sahabah (companions of the Prophet), there was no systematic collection of Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*). They did not write *tafsir* separately because, at that time, *tafsir* was considered a part of *hadith*. Therefore, due to concerns about the potential mixing of *tafsir* with the Quranic text, they still need to write down *tafsir* works. The formal collection of *tafsir* texts began during the reign of Umar bin Abdul Aziz (Umar II; 682-720 CE), the eighth Umayyad Caliph (99 H/717-720 CE). During this period, *tafsir* was still considered one of the sections within the larger body of hadith literature.

Interpretation by the Companions of the Prophet

Example One:

Narrated to us by Abu al Yaman, who reported from Syu'aib, who said, 'Urwah bin Zubair narrated: I asked Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her)

⁷Etymologically, *balaghab* is derived from the word *بلغ*, which means reaching or arriving *وصل*, while terminologically, it refers to the conformity of eloquent speech with the situation and circumstances (*muqtadhal baal*). It is the use of language that is *jasib* (fluent) and appropriate for the given context and conditions.

⁸"*Ijaz*" is derived from *isim mashdar* (the verbal noun) "*a'jazu-yu'jizu-I'jazan*," which means "incapability" or "inability." When the term "*i'jaz*" is derived from the verb "*a'jazu*," it implies weakening or rendering something incapable and powerless.

⁹"*Majaz*" refers to the figurative meaning of a word or expression due to indicators supporting this meaning shift. Generally, there are two types of "*majaz*": "*majaz lughawi*" or "*mufrad*" and "*majaz isnad*" or "*aqli*." These two types of figurative language are further divided into several categories, including "*majaz mursal*," "*majaz isti'arah*," and some scholars add "*majaz kinayah*" to these categories.

¹⁰"*Tasybih*" refers to drawing a similarity between two or more things that share one or more characteristics by using a specific tool or method for a particular purpose. The word being compared is called "*musyabbah*," and the one it is compared to is called "*musyabbah bib*." The shared characteristic (one or more) is called "*wajh syibb*," and the tool used to draw the comparison, such as "*kaf*" or something similar, is known as the "*alat*."

¹¹"*Ithnab*" can be understood etymologically as lengthening or adding words to convey the intended meaning. In terminology, it refers to "adding words according to meaning for a specific purpose." The key point is that adding words in "*ithnab*" should be significant to the intended meaning. If the addition is insignificant and does not convey a specific meaning, it is called "*ta'wil*," If the addition has a specific purpose, it is referred to as "*hashm*."

and said to her, "What is your opinion regarding the verse of Allah (Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 158), which means: ('Indeed, Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs 'umrah - there is no blame upon him for walking between them.')

By Allah, there is no blame on a person if they do not perform the Sa'i (walking) between the hills of Safa and Marwah." Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her) replied, "What a terrible thing you are saying, O nephew of mine!"

Indeed, if your interpretation of this verse were correct, it would imply that there is no sin for someone who does not perform the Sa'i (walking) between them. However, this verse was revealed about the Ansar (the inhabitants of Medina who helped the early Muslim community), who, before accepting Islam, intended to perform Hajj for the idol Manat, which they used to worship in Musyallal. At that time, anyone intending to perform Hajj felt sinful about performing the Sa'i between the hills of Safa and Marwah (out of respect for their idol). After they embraced Islam, they asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about this matter and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we feel sinful if we perform Sa'i between Safa and Marwah." Therefore, Allah revealed the verse, "Indeed, Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah."

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified performing *Sa'i* between these two hills, and no one should forsake it." I conveyed this information to Abu Bakr bin 'Abdurrahman, who responded, "Truly, this is knowledge I have not previously encountered. However, I have heard from knowledgeable individuals that, apart from those explained by 'Aisha, there were people who had formerly entered the state of ihram for Manat. They had also conducted *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwah." Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "When Allah mentioned circumambulation (*tawaf*) around the Ka'bah in the Quran but did not mention the *Sa'i* (ritual walking) between the hills of Safa and Marwah, the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) inquired, 'O Messenger of Allah, in the past, we used to perform *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwah, and now Allah has revealed a verse about tawaf around the Ka'bah without mentioning Safa. Are we sinful if we continue to perform *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwah?' In response to their question, Allah revealed the

verse, 'Indeed, Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. 'Abu Bakar bin 'Abdurrahman said, "I heard this verse was revealed for two groups of people. The first group consisted of those who felt guilty for having performed the *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwah during the era of ignorance (prior to Islam) because they had done it in honour of the idol Manat. The second group included those who had previously performed the Sa'i but now, after embracing Islam, felt guilty about repeating it because Allah initially mentioned only the circumambulation (*tawaf*) around the Ka'bah in His revelation and did not specify Safa and Marwah. However, later, He mentioned Safa and Marwah as among His symbols. He mentioned Safa and Marwah as part of His signs) after commanding the circumambulation (*tawaf*) around the Ka'bah." (Al-Bukhārī, 1999; Naisabūrī, 1998).

Example Two:

The words of Allah (SWT):

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

115. *And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So, wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and knowing* (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 115).

Ali bin Abi Thalhah narrated from Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both). He explained the reason for the revelation of the above verse. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah, he was initially commanded by Allah to face Jerusalem (*Baitul Maqdis*) as the qiblah (direction of prayer). This decision pleased the Jews. The Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to pray facing Jerusalem for 16 months while he longed to face the Kaaba in Mecca (*Masjid al-Haram*). During this time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) often prayed and looked up at the sky. Allah then revealed the following verse:

...فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ...

144. ... *So, turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram...* (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 144)

The Jews began to doubt the change in the qiblah and questioned why the Muslims had turned away from their previous direction. In response,

Allah revealed the following verse: "To Allah belongs the east and the west. So, wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah." (Quran, Al-Baqarah [2]: 115) (Ath-Thabari, 1992).

Example Three:

The words of Allah (God) Almighty:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا...

11. *Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan...* (QS. Al-Hadid [57]: 11).

Umar bin Khattab interprets the verse above to mean that "Whoever lends to Allah a goodly loan" refers to people spending their wealth for the sake of Allah (Kasir, 1998).

Example Four:

Al-Qurtubi mentions in his tafsir that Imam at-Tirmidzi narrated from Yazid bin Abi Hubaib, who heard from Aslam bin Imran, he said, "Back when we were in the Roman city, they sent out a large army of Romans, and the Muslims sent out an equally large army. The leader of the people of Egypt was 'Uqbah bin 'Amir (d. 678 CE), and the group leader was Fadhalah bin 'Ubaid. Then, one of the Muslims attacked the Roman army until he penetrated their ranks. Then, the people began to cry, saying, 'Subhanallah, he has thrown himself into destruction.' Abu Ayyub al-Anshari stood up and said, 'O people, indeed you have interpreted this verse (which prohibits throwing oneself into destruction) in this manner, whereas this verse was revealed concerning us, the Anshar (Helpers), when Allah had honoured Islam, and there were many of its defenders among us. Some of us said secretly to others behind the Prophet Muhammad, 'Verily, our wealth has been destroyed, and indeed Allah has honoured Islam, and there are many of its defenders.' So, we should tend to our wealth and repair what has been destroyed.' So, Allah revealed to us a verse regarding what we had said, which goes as follows:

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ...

195. *And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining] ... (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 195).*

Hence, "destruction" in the above verse refers to taking care of and repairing one's wealth and abstaining from warfare. Consequently, Abu Ayyub al-Anshari continued to participate in battles until he was buried in the land of Rome (Al-Qurthubi, 1967).

From the explanations and examples provided, Mustaqim (2005) highlights the characteristics of the Quranic interpretation with the opinions of the companions, which include: (1) It is comprehensive (general); (2) No interpretations are scholarly (*ilmi*), jurisprudential (*fiqh*), literary, philosophical, or sectarian (*madzhab*); (3) Limiting the interpretation with explanations based on the primary language; (4) The interpretation of the Quran during the companions' time is complete or comprehensive. Not all verses of the Quran were interpreted; only those verses that were deemed difficult to understand and caused they interpreted confusion; (5) There were few differences in understanding the wording of the Quran because the problems faced at that time were not as complex as those faced by later generations; (6) There were no written commentaries on the Quran then, as the compilation of commentaries began around the second century of the Islamic calendar; (7) The interpretations at that time represented a development from the hadith.

Conclusion

This writing concludes that the interpretive method used by the companions was a global (comprehensive) method or *ijmali* method, and the technique used was interpretative. The companions' interpretations were initially based on sources they received directly from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These sources included the form and recitation of Quranic verses, witnessing events or reasons for the revelation of verses (*asbabun nuzul*), and listening to and understanding the interpretation of Quranic verses. The sources of the companions' interpretation were the Quran, Hadith, *ijtihad*/deriving legal rulings (through language, culture, and the customs of the Arab people), *istinbath*, as well as stories from the People of the Book, specifically the Jews and Christians, known as *Isra'iliyyat*. These

sources resulted in diverse interpretations by the companions. Some fell into the interpretation category through narration (*tafsir bi al-rimayah/tafsir bi al-ma'thsur*). In contrast, others fell into the interpretation category through personal opinion (*tafsir bi al-dirayah/tafsir bi al-ra'yi*). The companions' interpretations in the category of narration included explanations related to the reasons for the revelation of Quranic verses, reports of unseen events from the past (the stories of prophets and righteous people), and future events (the chaos of the Day of Judgment, the realm of Barzakh, paradise, hell, and so on). Furthermore, the interpretations in the category of personal opinion (*dirayah*) were based on the companions' *ijtihad* and their understanding of the Arabic language. When they reached a consensus on the interpretation of a verse, their consensus had a *marfu'* (raised to a higher authority) status. However, the companions' interpretations that originated from the People of the Book were considered part of the discussion on *isra'iliyyat* and were not considered sources of the companions' Quranic interpretation. The companions transmitted knowledge and reports from the *'abl al-Kitab* regarding scholarship and historical reports, not as a means of interpreting the Quran.

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