

## Construction of Epistemological Interpretation On Eschatology Verses In ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman al-Syati’s Perspective

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### Abstract

*This article aims to examine the perspective of ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman al-Syati’ (1913-1998), as a contemporary female mufassir, regarding eschatological verses in surah al-Zalzalah to prove the epistemological construction of interpretations based on sources, methods and validity of truth. The object of this research is the text and its relationship with past events, that a literature study is carried out to learn content analysis using a historical approach. The primary data in this study is the book of Tafsîr al-Bayânî and supported by literature on the epistemology of interpretation in a philosophical approach. The results revealed that ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman has interpreted surah al-Zalzalah referred to Arabic language grammar, the prophet’s hadith, and previous interpretations. In the epistemology of interpretation, the verses about eschatology are not sufficient if they are interpreted in language separately, despite proving the validity of interpretive coherence, she remains consistent in using those method, even correspondingly the interpretation of zilzal is a picture of the earth’s condition when it shakes in accordance with the reality and scientific facts about earthquake, as well as in line with the argument about a doomsday that is bound to happen as found in terms in the Qur’an*

### Kata Kunci

Eskatologi, Hari Kiamat,  
Tafsîr al-Bayânî, al-  
Zalzalah

### Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan mengkaji pandangan ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman al-Syati’ (1913-1998), sebagai mufassir wanita kontemporer, tentang ayat-ayat eskatologi dalam surah al-Zalzalah untuk membuktikan konstruksi epistemologi tafsir yang didasarkan pada sumber, metode, dan validitas kebenaran. Objek penelitian ini adalah teks dan hubungannya dengan peristiwa masa lalu, sehingga dilakukan studi kepustakaan untuk

mengkaji analisis konten dengan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah. Data primer dalam penelitian ini adalah kitab Tafsir al-Bayani serta didukung literatur tentang epistemologi tafsir dalam pendekatan filosofis. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman al-Syati’ menafsirkan surah al-Zalzalah bersumber pada kaidah bahasa Arab, hadis Nabi, dan penafsiran sebelumnya. Secara epistemologi tafsir, ayat-ayat tentang eskatologi tersebut tidak cukup apabila ditafsirkan secara bahasa saja, meskipun pembuktian secara validitas penafsiran koherensi tetap konsisten menggunakan metode tersebut, bahkan secara korespondensi penafsiran tentang *zilzal* merupakan gambaran keadaan bumi ketika berguncang sesuai dengan realitas dan fakta ilmiah tentang gempa, serta sesuai dengan argumentasi tentang hari kiamat yang pasti terjadi seperti yang ditemukan pada terma-terma yang ada dalam al-Qur’an.

## Introduction

The beauty of literature and the different meaning of each verse in the Qur’an can be investigated deeply to reveal the messages in Qur’an, in which these messages are not merely aimed at a certain object, but addressed many objects including human beings.<sup>1</sup> The target and the purpose of the Qur’an are human being themselves, even though there are some redactions of Qur’an verses that cannot be interpreted precisely except by the owner of the redaction. Thus, this is the reason for the existence of different interpretation in understanding the context and its natural language structure as well as the vocabulary.<sup>2</sup>

Even though there are differentiation and diversity of the Qur’an interpretation, it causes the occurrence of different motives in interpreting

the verses of the Qur’an. One of the motives is talking about *lughawy* (language aspect).<sup>3</sup> This kind of interpretation tries to explain the messages in Qur’an based on grammatical aspects, in which the Qur’an language style can gather the sentence structure as a whole. The beauty is very different from the revelation style used to employ by Arabian. The language style can combine vocabulary fluency and can present the beauty of the shaper meanings. The basic motive of this interpretation is to reveal the primacy of the Qur’an language. One of the Islamic scholar interpreters is ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman. She is a contemporary female *mufasssir* who uses *lughawy* interpretation to all the verses in Qur’an including the verse that talks about the judgment day. This belief is one of the pillars of faith.

The belief of the judgment day as part of pillars of faith is supported and strengthened by the clear explanation originated from verses of Qur’an and hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW which was revealed in the history of Imam Muslim as follow:

عمر بن الخطاب قال: بين نحن عند رسول الله ذات يوم، إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب، شديد سواد الشعر، لا يرى عليه أثر السفر، ولا يعرف منا أحد، حتى جلس إلى النبي صلى الله

<sup>1</sup>Harun Yahya, *Miracles of the Qur’an* (Canada: Al-Attique Publisher Inc., 2001), 366–369; Che Zarrina Sa’ari and Joni Tamkin Borhan, “Al-Qur’an : The Miracles of the Miracles,” *Al-Bayan Journal of Al-Quran and al-Hadith* 1, no. 1 (2003): 43–56; M. Quraish Shihab, *Mukjizat Al-Quran: Ditinjau Dari Aspek Kebahasaan, Isyarat Ilmiah, Dan Pemberitaan Gaib* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 23–24.

<sup>2</sup>Sardaraz Khan and Roslan Ali, “Conceptualisation Of Death And Resurrection In The Holy Quran: A Cognitive-Semantic Approach,” *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)* 1, no. 2 (2016): 84–89; Ali Al-Ali, Ahmad El-Sharif, and Mohamad Sayel Alzyoud, “The Functions And Linguistic Analysis Of Metaphor In The Holy Qur’an,” *European Scientific Journal, ESJ* 12, no. 14 (2016): 153–169.

<sup>3</sup>Sardaraz Khan and Roslan Ali. “Conceptualisation Of Death And Resurrection In The Holy Quran: A Cognitive-Semantic Approach.”

عليه وسلم. فأسند ركبتيه، ووضع كفيه على فخذيه ... قَالَ : فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ قَالَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِمْ<sup>4</sup>

Interpretation: Umar bin Khattab stated that: one day while we were sitting next to Rasulullah, suddenly a man came to us, he was wearing very bright clothes, his hair was so dark, he did not seem that he has been traveling far away, and none of us recognized him. He sat next to Rasulullah and then he pressed his knees to the knees of Rasulullah, and he placed his palms on the thighs of Rasulullah... He asked: "Tell me about faith" he (Rasulullah) replied: "You believe in Allah, His angels, His holy books, His messengers, judgment day, and believe to the good destiny and bad destiny."

This understanding is based on *naql* proposition not *'aql*, since judgment day is something beyond human imagination which is unreachable by human senses, so logics cannot reach and understand it in certainty. Without explanation about judgment day based on *naql* proposition, then humans will never know what is happening in the afterlife; what the resurrection day for, and whether the afterlife does exist, also how is the afterlife looks like.<sup>5</sup>

Among the revelation and explanation of the judgment day can be found in surah al-Zalzalah. This surah consists of short verses; hence this has become a certainty and strength to the believers. This surah also tends to do repentance, in which repentance used to take place only in long verses. Hence, it can be concluded that the repentance in the short verses aimed to catch the attention and bring a psychological influence.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Muslim bin Hajjaj Abu Hasan al-Qusyairi al-Naisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1 (Riyadh: Dārul Mughni, 1998), 22.

<sup>5</sup>Umar Sulaiman Abdullah Al-Asyqar, *Al-'Aqidah Fi Daw-Il Kitab Was Sunnah: al-Qiyamah al-Kubra* (Kuwait: Dar Nafis, 1990), 45–47; Novizal Wendry, "Cosmological Interpretation: A View of Wind Concept Shi'a Literature," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 27, no. 2 (2019): 224–236; Cholid Ma'arif, "Maqāṣid al-Qur'an al-Ghazali Dalam Kitab Sirāj Al-Ṭālibīn Karya Syekh Ihsān Al-Jampesi," *QOF* 4, no. 1 (2020): 57–73.

<sup>6</sup>Aisyah Abdurrahman, *Al-Tafsir al-Bayāni Li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Mesir: Dār al-Ma'arif, 1977), Juz. 1, 133.

To understand the meaning containing in this surah, interpretation is of vital importance. The interpretation effort has been carried out by a contemporary female *mufasssir* (Qur'an interpreter) named 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman who is popular as Bintual-Syati' in her monumental work that is *al-Bayani Tafsir*. 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman in *al-Bayani* is interpreting surah al-Zalzalah linguistically.

Some experts have conducted studies on the thoughts of 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman; Fuad Thohari,<sup>7</sup> Fatimah Thohari,<sup>8</sup> Wahyuddin,<sup>9</sup> Alif Jabal Kurdi and Saipul Hamzah,<sup>10</sup> Endad Musaddad.<sup>11</sup> Their research examines the figure of contemporary female *mufasssir*, the method of Qur'anic facilitation, the anti-synonymity theory of Bintu al-Syati', and no one also discusses eschatology.

A study of interpretation related to *'ilmy* was also carried out by Jauhar Azizi.<sup>12</sup> According to Azizy, the model of scientific interpretation in his work shows the dialectic between Western scholars and Muslim scholars in interpreting the Qur'an. In its discussion, the work involved researchers from LIPI and al-Azhar University translator alumni. In addition, Ahmad Muttaqin in the field of Ilmi Tafsir of the Ministry of Religion and LIPI focused on studying the excavated terms (sea, food-drink, and time).<sup>13</sup> The interpretation

<sup>7</sup>Fuad Thohari, "Tafsir Berbasis Linguistik "Al-Tafsir al-Bayāni Li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm "Karya 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman Bintu Syāt," *Adabiyāt: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 8, no. 2 (2009): 232–244.

<sup>8</sup>Fatimah Thohari, "Prof. Dr. 'Aishah 'Abdurrahman Bint Al-Shāṭi': Mufasssir Wanita Zaman Kontemporer," *Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 87–99.

<sup>9</sup>Wahyuddin, "Corak Dan Metode Interpretasi Aisyah Abdurrahman Bint Al-Syāṭi'," *Jurnal Al-Ulum* 11, no. 1 (2011): 79–98.

<sup>10</sup>Alif Jabal Kurdi and Saipul Hamzah, "Menelaah Teori Anti-Sinonimitas Bintu Al-Syathi' Sebagai Kritik Terhadap Digital Literate Muslims Generation," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 245–260.

<sup>11</sup>Endad Musaddad, "Metode Tafsir Bint Al-Syathi," *Al Qalam* 20, no. 1 (2003): 51–72.

<sup>12</sup>Jauhar Azizy, "Corak Ilmi Dalam Tafsir Kemenag (Edisi Yang Disempurnakan)," *Ulul Albab Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 2 (2014): 148–168.

<sup>13</sup>Ahmad Muttaqin, "Konstruksi Tafsir Ilmi Kemenag RI-LIPI: Melacak Unsur Kepentingan Pemerintah Dalam Tafsir," *Religia* 19, no. 2 (2016): 74–88.

is pragmatic in promoting government policies in the environmental sector.

Syarifuddin and Azizy also mapped the scientific interpretation literature in the XX century until the last decade.<sup>14</sup> The literature review shows that the product of interpretation is the result of dialectical interpretation with the development of science at that time.

This research is different from previous research, that this study examines about eschatology verses in surah al-Zalzalah to prove the construction of epistemological interpretation. This research is a literature study was conducted to content analysis study using historical methods. The object of the study of this study is the text and its relationship with past events, so a historical approach is needed.<sup>15</sup> This approach aims to see the text entities in the form of text identity and identity conditions. Therefore the historical review in the research aims to examine the historical function that gives impact to the text.

However, is it relevant to interpret verses of judgment day as the eschatology verses linguistically? This question requires proof by conducting a study of epistemology interpretation to reveal the source, method, and validity of the truth to turn it into an interesting investigation. Considering the importance and the attractiveness of this interpretation study conducted by ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman on eschatology in surah al-Zalzalah as a new concept, hence authors of this research are introducing and exploring anything related with her biography, methodology, and the practice of the interpretation.

### Biography of ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman as a figure in Qur’an interpretation and literature was born in Dimyat

City, a port city located in Delta, Nil River, in the north part of Egypt on November 6<sup>th</sup> in 1913 AD coincides with the 6<sup>th</sup> of Dzulhijjah in 1331 H. She was born to welfare, religious, and educated family.<sup>16</sup> She was born to Muhammad ‘Ali ‘Abdurrahman and Faridah ‘Abdussalam Muntashir, who is known as a religious figure who graduates from al-Azhar University. Her grandfather, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Damujy al-Kabyr, from the maternal line, is a great Islamic scholar of al-Azhar University. ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman was married to Amin Khuli in 1945, one of her lecturers who taught ‘*Ulûmul Qur’an*’ courses at Cairo University.<sup>17</sup> Her education started since she was five years old in which she learned and wrote the Arabic language to Sheikh Mursi in Shubra, Bakhum (her father’s place of origin). Next, she entered the elementary school to learn Arabic language grammar and the basics of Islam belief in Dimyat. After that, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman went to Fuad University, Cairo to achieved a Licence (Lc) degree in 1939. Next, in 1941 she pursued her postgraduate education, and in 1950 she achieved a doctoral degree in the same field and institution with a dissertation entitled al-Gufranly Abu al-A‘la al-Ma‘ary.<sup>18</sup>

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman started her career as a teacher of Ibtida’iyah in al-Mansurah around 1929. Next, in 1932 she was transferred to the university by the education department of the Ministry of Education to manage English and France language laboratory. After she achieved Lc degree, she was assigned as a secretary in the same university.<sup>19</sup>

She started her career as an author in an institution called Giza. She sent numerous writing to famous mass media in Egypt, such as al-Nahdlah al-Nisa’iyyah (Women Awakening

<sup>14</sup>M. Anwar Syarifuddin and Jauhar Azizy, “Thematic Scientific Interpretation Of The Qur’an In Indonesia,” *International Conference on Qur’an and Hadith Studies (ICQHS)* (Atlantis Press, 2017), 43–50.

<sup>15</sup>Victor Velarde-Mayol, “Jorge J. E. Gracia, A Theory of Textuality. The Logic and Epistemology,” *Revista de Filosofia DLÁNOLA* 43, no. 43 (1997): 247–248.

<sup>16</sup>‘Aisyah Abdurrahman, ‘*Ala al-Jisr, Usturat al-Zaman* (Mesir: Dar Hilal, 1967), 14–16.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.; Issa J. Boullata, “Modern Qur’n Exegesis A Study Of Bint Al-Shāti’s Method,” *The Muslim World* 64, no. 2 (1974): 103–104.

<sup>18</sup>‘Aisyah Abdurrahman, ‘*Ala al-Jisr, Usturat al-Zaman*, 22–24.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 46–47.



Magazine), al-Ahram, etc. Bintu al-Syaṭi' was the name she chose as an author and this name started to be popular. Her writing career was bright in which numerous of her short stories were published in the other magazine such as al-Hilal, al-Balagh, and Kaukeb el-Sarq. Her writing topic mostly talks about the social theme as the reflection of her real-life experience among the villagers. In the 1970s, she was a professor of Arabic Literature at 'Ayn Syams, University, Egypt.<sup>20</sup>

### **Interpretation of *al-Bayânî Tafṣîr li al-Qur'ân al-Karîm***

Interpretation of *al-Bayânî Tafṣîr li al-Qur'ân al-Karîm* is 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman's masterpiece in the field of interpretation for both East and West. Initially, this book talked about lecturing themes to students of Syari'ah Faculty.

Her interest in interpretation study has started since she met Amin Khuli, an expert on interpretation in which later became her husband when she worked at Cairo University. Ever since that time, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman begun to explore the interpretation and wrote her interpretation book which was first published in 1962. This book was achieving extraordinary reception among intellectuals.<sup>21</sup> 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman wrote in the foreword of *al-Bayânî Tafṣîr* that she dedicated this masterpiece for her husband as well as her lecturer that this masterpiece is the implementation of interpretation method conceived by her husband, Amin Khuli.

### **Method and Interpretation Style of 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman**

Interpretation method employed by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman in her interpretation book was a

method conceived by her husband, Amin Khuli, that is *bayânî* method. This method tries to reveal the content of the Qur'an from linguistics philosophy and the secrets behind the verse, so that appropriate utterance meaning based on its context can be found out.<sup>22</sup> In interpreting Qur'an, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman also follows the pattern of Abu 'Isaqa Syaṭiby which focuses on the importance of word usage tracking which was interpreted during the revelation period. 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman limited the use of hadith and rejected *isra'illiyat* on this book to avoid being trapped like the previous *mufasssir* (Qur'an interpreter) who involved *isra'illiyat* in their interpretation book in which this kind of interpretation has never been intended by Qur'an.<sup>23</sup>

The characteristics of this interpretation that pay attention to philology development also focus on the historical value of the language. The principles of 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman's method in interpreting Qur'an are as follow:

- 1) Some verses in Qur'an interprets other verses;
- 2) *Munasabah* method is a method which links word or verse to word or verse which is close or not even close to it;
- 3) The rule of a problem is based on its common utterance or text, not because of a specific cause;
- 4) A belief that Arabic words in Qur'an have no synonym. One word only has one meaning. If people try to replace one word in Qur'an with the other word, Qur'an can lose its effectiveness, precision, beauty, and essence.<sup>24</sup>

In response to the interpretation method developed by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman; hence Barbara F. Stowasser stated that interpretation

<sup>20</sup>Ellen Anne McLarney, *Soft Force: Women in Egypt's Islamic Awakening*, *Soft Force: Women in Egypt's Islamic Awakening* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 36–37; 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman, 'Ala al-Jisr, *Usturat al-Zaman*, 79.

<sup>21</sup>'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman, *Al-Tafṣîr al-Bayânî Li al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*, Juz. 1, 10; 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman, *I'jaz al-Bayânî Li al-Qur'ân al-Karîm Wa Masail Ibn Azraq*, vol. 1 (Mesir: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1971), 11.

<sup>22</sup>J.J.G. Jansen, *The Interpretation of The Qur'an in Modern* (Leiden: E. Brill, 1974), 68–69.

<sup>23</sup>Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in The Qur'an, Tradition, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 120.

<sup>24</sup>'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman, *Muqaddimah Fi Al-Manhaj* (Cairo: Ma'had al-Buhu li al-Dirasah al-'Arabiyah, 1971), 128–138; Issa J. Boullata, "Modern Qur'n Exegesis A Study Of Bint Al-Shâti's Method," 104–105.

originated from this kind of method is a literary exegesis which was designed as Qur'an intertext interpretation. Methodologically, this kind of interpretation is categorized as a modern interpretation. This language approach interpretation style is conducted by collecting Qur'an verses which talk about the focus problem by considering all possibility of meaning carried out by the word based on language usage.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, pay attention to the usage of the word as a whole redaction arrangement, instead of discussing it separately out of its context. On the other side, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman asserted that the first requirement of a mufassir is to be able to understand a word and Qur'an language style as well as to investigate the secret behind the utterance of Qur'an.

## Interpretation of Surah al-Zalzalah

### 1. Judgment Day

#### a. The first verse of Q.S. al-Zalzalah

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾

“When the earth is shaken with a tremendous shock.”

'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman interprets the word of زلزل through its linguistics explanation which is a hard movement and a terrible shock, and this event can be felt by the senses. *Fa'il* (subject) of this verse is omitted since the secret of judgment day only possessed by Allah. However, based on the standard of language style, the meaning of the absence of *fa'il* of this verse is to focus on the event itself and to create an impression that the earth is shaken by itself.<sup>26</sup>

*Fi'il mādli* of زلزلت word is to affirm that this event is a must and preceded by إذا which containing *mustaqbal* (future) connotation.

Therefore, the secret of إذا زلزلت sentence is as a sudden surprise, event inauguration, and distraction to this event. It is more appropriate to read زلزالها by *kasrah* ز in which this word means *maṣdar* that functions as a strengthening which is in line with the context. The rule as *maṣdar* is strengthening in the other verse that is Q.S. al-‘Ahzab verse 33. In brief, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman's interpretation of this verse is a very tremendous shake with no match.<sup>27</sup>

#### b. The second verse of Q.S. al-Zalzalah

وَأُخْرِجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾

“And the earth has issued its heavy burdens.”

'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman explains that the earth in this sentence is the *fa'il* even though it is a nonliving thing; this is to show the obedience and submission of the earth to that condition.

Furthermore, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman stated that the word الأثقال is *jama'* (plural form) of ثقل word which means heavy burden.<sup>28</sup>

'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman added that the issue of the heavy burdens is when the time comes so that the revelation that the earth removes something from its stomach has less impression and has no impact, and less adequate to explain about the judgment day. The meaning of this verse is that the earth will remove the womb to relieve itself of what is burdening. In this case, 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman refers to Q.S. al-Insyiqaq verse 3-4 which mentioned:

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴿٤﴾

“When the earth is flattened. What is in the earth is spewed up to become empty.”

<sup>25</sup>Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in The Qur'an, Tradition, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup>'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman, *Al-Tafsir al-Bayānī Li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Juz. 1, 80.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 81-82.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 84-85.

c. The third verse of Q.S. al-Zalzalah

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا هَٰذَا ۝٣

“And human asks: What happens to this earth?”

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman interprets that the question in this verse implies shock, fright, and worry. The word الإنسان of this verse shows humans in general, that they are scared of the tremendous shake and what is caused by the earth that removes its burdens. She revealed that the shake and the frightening situation is faced by all human beings, the believers, and the non believers. The fright and worry are not only aimed at the non believers.<sup>29</sup> To strengthen her statement that there is no specification for the non believers only on this topic, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman cites Q.S. al-Hajj verses 1-2.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ آتِفُوا رَبِّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝١  
يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ۝٢

“O People! Obey your God; really, the shake on the judgment day is a tremendous one. (Remember) on the day you see it (the shake), all breastfeeding woman will neglect their breastfeeding children and every pregnant woman will have a miscarriage, and you see humans are being drunk, when in fact they are not drunk, but Allah’s punishment is very harsh.”

d. The fourth verse of Q.S. al-Zalzalah

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ۝٤

“On that day the earth delivers its news.”

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman describes that on that day the earth tells its news. The secret of يومئذ utterance is to present to the listener about the description of the previous day so that there will be no argumentation that this يومئذ is separated from the previous day.<sup>30</sup>

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman also describes that the earth on this context is as a subject that will certainly do anything determine by God, as what has already determined through the revelation of Qur’an about judgment day which is impressive and frighten so that it will not going to be easily disappeared. It implies that the description of the judgment day is containing art value. The explanation of the Qur’an is very impressive, not only uttered by the non-living and mute creatures, but also by the living one who is willing to talk and willing to know, as explained in Q.S. Qaf verse 30.<sup>31</sup>

e. The fifth verse of Q.S. al-Zalzalah

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ۝٥

“Because your God has indeed commanded such a thing to it.”

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman revealed that the interpretation of أوحى word in the affirmative form is not sufficient to explain the meaning of this verse. She tends to agree on the interpretation of al-Raghyb since it is more close to the Arabic language and Qur’an guidance. Al-Raghyb interprets the word أوحى as a quick and hidden sign. If the receiver of the sign is a living creature, then it is a revelation. If the receiver of the sign

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 86.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 87.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 88.

is a nonliving creature, then the meaning is *taskhyr* (submission).<sup>32</sup>

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman confirmed that the meaning of *أوحى* word is the speed along with hiddenness or secret. In surah al-Zalzalah, the word *أوحى* does not mean *أمر* (command) since command requires the direction of the talk and away from hidden things. She stated that the meaning of *أوحى* word is *تسخير* (subdue) since the meaning has adequate strength inside.<sup>33</sup>

The word *أوحى* is transcribed with *ل* letter to attract the attention of the *mufassir* and linguists since the popular one is to transcribe it with *إلى*. ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman added that transcribing it to *ل* letter is due to it has a special meaning, to make the verse more communicative and assertive.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Padang Mahsyar Events

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿١٠١﴾

“On that day humans comes out of their graves in groups, to show them (in return) all their deeds.”

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman explains in her interpretation book, the word *يومئذ* is as the repetition of the previous verse. This repetition is used in Qur’an to link the sequence of situations, also to return the attention of the listener to the previous verses. It is also aimed to repeat the cautions that have been well understood by the listener.

According to most of *mufassir*, the word *يصدر* means come out from the grave. ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman argued disagree about it; she revealed that by doing so the word inspiration of Arabic language style will be abandoned. She interprets that the word *يصدر* is the opposite of *ورد* word (come, arrive), this is due to Arabic

people used to employ this word, and the link between those two worlds is a secret which causes inspiration that the life in this world is not permanent, but it is a journey that must be taken.<sup>35</sup> ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman also cited the interpretation by Muhammad ‘Abduh. Muhammad ‘Abduh interprets it by using a farther meaning, namely, *صدر عن المدينة* (he goes out from the city) and then if it is *يصدر الناس* then the meaning is that human goes. Based on that, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman confirmed that the word *يصدر* in surah al-Zalzalah means go away from life in the world.<sup>36</sup>

Next, the word *أشتات* is the plural form of *شت* in which linguistically it means not united and disputed.<sup>37</sup> They go separately, then driven to gather to see their deeds.

## 3. Retaliation of Human Deeds

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿١٠٥﴾

“Then whoever does good deed weighing as *dzarraḥ*, surely he will see (retaliation) of his action, and whoever does bad deed weighing as *dzarraḥ*, surely he will see (retaliation) of his action.”

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman explains in her interpretation that the word *مِثْقَال* is something that is weighed. This word is mentioned eight times in Qur’an, in which two of them are partnered with *حبة من خردل* (mustard seeds) which can be found in Q.S. al-Anbiya’ verse 47 and Q.S. Luqmân verse ١٦. The context and the structure of these two verses asserted that *مِثْقَال* is not weighed as light, but as something that has a small size. This signifies that nature cannot be separated from the power of the knowledge of Allah. Even though the size is small and looks unimportant, but it has

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 89.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 90-91.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 92-93.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 94.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 95.



something hidden in it.<sup>38</sup>

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman considered that *mufassir* previous interpretation of ذرّة is not related with Qur’an intention; this is due to the meaning of ذرّة in the Arabic language means anything used to describe weakness, small size, and lightweight. There is an assertive expression in *Lisan al-‘Arab* in which ذرّة does not weight tall due to its too light and too small size. ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman tends to interpret ذرّة as something weak, light, and small without considering the measurement, size, and color.<sup>39</sup>

On the second above verse, Allah does not state that He will reply or measure human deeds, Allah stated that whoever does a good deed and bad deed weighed as ذرّة then, Allah will see it. However, by considering the previous verse that humans will come out of the grave to show their deeds that they have committed. The sixth verse of surah al-Zalzalah shows that this condition can be connected with human sight, in which all of their deeds, small or big will be shown back to them.<sup>40</sup> Then, these deeds will be measured and replied to God’s justice and mercy. Allah gives forgiveness and torment to whomever he wants, and in fact, Allah can do anything.

### Epistemological Interpretation of ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman

Epistemology as a scientific theory is a branch of philosophy science that discusses the core and science scope, the basics, and the responsibility on the statement of the knowledge possessed. Meanwhile, epistemological interpretation is the description of analysis on the source, method, and interpretation validity.<sup>41</sup> The

applicable law is that not every interpretation product is the absolute truth. Therefore, the validity interpretation test requires the method implemented in epistemological interpretation.<sup>42</sup> It can be concluded that epistemology theory can be placed as a reference to check the validity of an interpretation product.

#### 1. Interpretation Source

‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman employs *ra’yi* and *ma’tsur* as the source of interpretation. This can be seen when ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman interprets surah al-Zalzalah, she started it by analyzing the grammatical rules of each word that need to be explained, he then discussed verses of Qur’an which are related with the context of the intended verse. She also discussed the interpretation of some Islamic scholars in which later end it with the conclusion of the interpretation.

Take as an example, when she interpreted surah al-Zalzalah verse 1, she interpreted it by providing its linguistics explanation of زلزل word. Linguistically, it is a harsh movement and tremendous shake which can be felt by human senses. *Fa’il* of this verse is omitted since the secret of the judgment day only possessed by Allah. However, based on the prevailing language style, the meaning of *fa’il* on this verse is to focus on the event itself and to create an impression that the earth is shaken by itself. She concluded that it is more appropriate to read زلزها by implementing *kasrah* to ز in which this word means *maṣdar* that can be used as the confirmation of a verse based on the context. The rule of *maṣdar* is confirmed in the other verse Q.S. al-‘Aḥzab verse 33. ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 96.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 97.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Juz. 1, 98.

<sup>41</sup>Kusmana, “Epistemologi Tafsir Maqasidi,” *Mutawatir* 6, no. 2 (2016): 206–231; Anwar Mujahidin, “The Dialectic of Qur’an and Science: Epistemological Analysis of Thematic Qur’an Interpretation Literature in the Field of Social Sciences of Humanities,” *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, no. 2 (2018): 209–227; Sujiat Zubaidi Saleh, “Epistemologi Penafsiran Ilmiah Al-Qur’an,” *Tsaqafah* 7, no. 1 (2011): 109–132; Islah

Gusmian, “Epistemologi Tafsir Al-Qur’an Kontemporer,” *Al-A’raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat* 12, no. 2 (2015): 21–32.

<sup>42</sup>Muhamad Ali Mustofa Kamal, “Pembacaan Epistemologi Ilmu Tafsir Klasik,” *Maghza* 1, no. 1 (2016): 67–84; Andi Rosa, “Menggagas Epistemologi Tafsir Alquran Yang Holistik,” *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2017): 95–112; Muhammad Alwi HS, “Epistemologi Tafsir: Mengurai Relasi Filsafat Dengan Al-Qur’an,” *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (2019): 1–16.

interprets this verse as a very tremendous shake with no match.

## 2. Interpretation Method

The interpretation method employs by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman in her interpretation book is the method conceived by her husband, *bayânî* method. This method tries to reveal the content of the Qur'an based on its language aspect as to reveal the hidden secret behind verses of Qur'an which can be seen clearly from its outer layer. 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman also limits the use of hadith and reject *israilliyat* in her interpretation book.

Take as an example, when 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman interprets وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا (Q.S. al-Zalzalah verse 3), 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman mentioned in her interpretation that when the shake happened on the judgment day, all of the believers and non believers feel scared and worried. The reason for 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman interprets the word الْإِنْسَانُ as all human beings are due to the meaning of الْإِنْسَانُ based on its literal meaning is a human crowd. 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman also cited Q.S. al-Hajj verse 1-2 to support her explanation about the meaning of *al-insan* as a human in general.

## 3. Interpretation Validity

### a. Coherence Theory

The coherence theory is the assessment of interpretation validity that can be seen from the consistency of methodology used by the *mufasssir* in interpreting the Qur'an. 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman in her interpretation book employed a new method conceived by her husband, *bayânî* method. It can be seen when 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman interpreted surah al-Zalzalah, she consistently employed this method. Started by explaining the word meaning of the verse, then she described the other *mufasssir's* opinion. Next, she provided a conclusion to later cited Qur'an verses which discusses the same thing.

### b. Correspondence Theory

This theory stated that a proposition is considered as correct if there is any match between a fact and what it reveals up. The interpretation validity based on this theory is about how far the interpretation product is in line with the fact.

'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman revealed that the meaning of زلزل word is shaking, shake on verse 1 of surah al-Zalzalah is a tremendous one in which there is nothing to compare. She also added that the language style used in the first verse of surah al-Zalzalah gives the impression that the earth is shaken by itself.

Scientifically, the shake of the earth is widely known as an earthquake. Earthquake is a tremendous shake that is distributed to the surface of the earth caused by distraction in the lithosphere (earth's crust). The shake caused by earthquakes only occurs in some places on earth. The bigger the earthquake, the bigger the vibration, and the bigger the impact caused by the earthquake.<sup>43</sup> Science theories reveal that earthquake is a natural phenomenon that occurs by itself, the pressure that moves the earth's plate from below and shifts from one another.

Based on scientific theories, it can be concluded that 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman's interpretation is valid according to correspondence theory. Her interpretation of زلزل word is in line with the theory presented by science that is a shake which is also called an earthquake phenomenon

<sup>43</sup>Kerwanto, "Islamic Ethics Based On Al-Qur'an and Mulla Şadrā's Escatology," *Teosofia* 4, no. 2 (2015): 81–96; Khafidhoh, "Teologi Bencana Dalam Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 14, no. 1 (2013): 37–60; David K. Chester, Angus M. Duncan, and Hamdan Al Ghasyah Dhanhani, "Volcanic Eruptions, Earthquakes and Islam," *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* 22, no. 3 (2013): 278–292. both those relating to the Qur'an and hadith. In this paper, there are several principles of eschatology of Şadrā which the writer will examine as the position of Şadrā in regard to post-mortals physical resurrection, the intellectual (intellectual

in science.

### c. Performative Theory

This theory assesses the validity of an interpretation product if the interpretation creates reality. Surah al-Zalzalah talks about judgment day which happens in the future time and only Allah knows precisely when it happens. The interpretation effort conducted by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman is in line with the concept of judgment day as explained previously in the Qur'an and Hadith. The following are related to judgment day, the retaliation for human deeds and Padang Mahsyar event:

#### 1. Q.S. al-Hajj verse 1

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ آتِقُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ

عَظِيمٌ

*"O People! Obey your God; really, the shake on the judgment day is a tremendous one."*

#### 2. Q.S. al-'Insiyaaq verse 3-4

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۖ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ

*"When the earth is flattened. What is in the earth is spewed up to become empty."*

#### 3. QS. al-'Anbiya' verse 47

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ

شَيْئًا ۖ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا

وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا حَسِيبِينَ

*"And we will install the proper scales on the Judgment Day so that no one will suffer a slight loss; even if it is only as heavy as a mustard seed, we certainly bring them (reward), and it is sufficient for us to make the calculations by ourselves."*

#### 4. Sahih al-Bukhari Number 6734

... حدثنا أنس ابن مالك رضي الله عنه قال :  
بينما أنا و النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم خارجان من  
المسجد فلقينا رجلا عند سدة المسجد فقال : يا رسول  
الله متى الساعة؟ فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ما  
أعددت لها؟ ... ثم قال : يا رسول الله ما أعددت لها  
كبير صيام ولا صلاة ولا صدقة, ولكن أحب الله  
ورسوله. قال : أنت مع من أحببت<sup>44</sup>

*"It was told to us, Anas bin Malik said: When I and Rasulallah came out of Mosque, we met a man, he asked Rasulallah: "O Rasulallah when the judgment comes?" Rasulallah replied: "What have you prepared?"...He then replied: "O Rasulallah, I have yet prepared lots of fasting, salah, sadaqah, but I love Allah and his Messenger, Rasulallah." He said: "You will be together with your beloved."*

### d. Pragmatism Theory

Practically, this *al-Bayânî Tafsîr* book by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman is considered as valid. It is because this interpretation book becomes an object of research discussion, also the interpretation method is a kind of novel work. J.J.G. Jansen is among the researcher who investigates the method of modern Egypt interpretation ideas by 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman.<sup>45</sup> This interpretation of 'Aisyah 'Abdurrahman also becomes a reference since this interpretation method is new and different literature.

### e. Consensus Theory

This theory stated that interpretation can be valued as valid in the presence of an assessor or admitter. Among the assessment of

<sup>44</sup>Muhammad Bin Ismail Abu Abdullah Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Katsir, 1987), Juz. 6, 2615.

<sup>45</sup>Abu Bakar, "Pemikiran Tafsir Mesir Modern J.J.G Jansen (Telaah Atas Karya J.J.G.Jansen The Interpretation of The Koran in Modern Egypt)," *Al-Ihkam* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1-10. an interpretation adopting a modern science but not oppose against the holy Quran, it is called tafsir al-'ilmî. Secondly, an interpretation that is designed to help reader understand the holy Quran or philological interpretation (al-tafsir al-lughawî

Islamic scholars toward ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman interpretation is by J.J.G. Jansen who stated that: “One of the popular new Qur’an commentaries has been written by a woman who teaches in a secular university. The new commentaries tend to build upon the philological and other information of the mediaeval commentaries: They tend not to diverge too radically from their predecessors. One new method is to emphasize studying words in their total context when seeking for meaning. Some of the writers of the new commentaries try to find traces of modern science in the Qur’an.”<sup>46</sup>

It means that the interpretation product of ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman is the best example of contemporary interpretation which focuses on the analysis of Arabic language and literature.

Issa J. Boullata revealed that the method employed by ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman is based on classic mufassir dictum even though they do not implement it systematically.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, that Qur’an must be understood as a whole just like what ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman did in her interpretation product.

Issa J. Boullata thought that ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman’s interpretation method is tolerated historical information about Qur’an. Even he also stated that a opinions of past *mufassir*, especially al-Tabari, al-Zamakhsyari, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Raghib al-‘Iṣbahani, Nizam al-Din al-Naisaburi, Abu Hayyan al-‘Andalusi, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, al-Suyuti and Muhammad ‘Abduh, are also sometimes mentioned to show their confusion and refute their nonsensical explanation who do not agree among themselves or with the text of the Qur’an as he understands it in his methods, or on rare occasions to choose their most likely opinion or one of them agree with his understanding and provide support.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Sheila McDonough, “The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt J. J. G. Jansen Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974. Pp. 114,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 6, no. 1 (1976): 99–100.

<sup>47</sup>Issa J. Boullata, “Modern Qur’an Exegesis A Study Of Bint Al-Shāṭi’s Method,” 104–105.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 107.

Based on the epistemological interpretation by ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman, then her interpretation product is valued as valid. As explained previously that interpreting eschatology verses by using grammar rule also provides a clear explanation on judgment day, so that the validity in interpreting verses in Qur’an is not merely sourced from history, but it may open up the probability that is sourced from language aspect.

## Conclusion

After looking at ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman’s epistemological interpretation, it can be concluded that interpretation source employed by ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman is using Arabic language rule, and she also cited numerous interpretations by the previous mufassir. It can be seen clearly when ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman interpreted surah al-Zalzalah by using a method which is started from a detail explanation of language rule, then she interpreted the verse as a whole. Sometimes, she also revealed *munasabah* between the verses and cited hadith.

The validity of ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman’s interpretation implies that this mufassir is adhering to the theory of truth, namely, coherence theory, correspondence theory, pragmatism theory, and consensus theory. Coherently, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman is consistent in using the method which is built in her interpretation on surah al-Zalzalah. Correspondently, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman’s interpretation in interpreting *zilzal* describes the situation of the earth when it is shaking. This is in line with the description of the earthquake based on science. Moreover, based on pragmatism theory, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman interpretation is practically employed as a reference for the next generation, particularly surah al-Zalzalah. By consensus, ‘Aisyah ‘Abdurrahman’s interpretation obtains support and achieves good assessment by another Islamic scholar.



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