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Hermeneutics as *al-Dakhil*: Criticism of Abdullah Saeed's Thinking on the Crucifixion of Isa al-Masih

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Abstract

*Entering the modern period of discourse on the interpretation of the Qur'an, the emergence of a new approach to interpreting the Qur'an, namely the hermeneutical approach, has sparked much debate. When applied to it in general, the polemic circle around hermeneutics revolves around the question of the validity of hermeneutic methodology to the Qur'an and the analysis of the results of the interpretation of hermeneutic applications to the Qur'an, which distort the fundamental teachings of Islam. Very few studies have criticized the results of implementing the hermeneutics of the Qur'an using the theoretical framework of *al-dakhil fi al-Tafsir*. So, this research aims to fill this void. The author's research criticizes Abdullah Saeed's thoughts about the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih as a result of using the hermeneutic method of contextual interpretation. Through the methodology of content analysis and critical analysis, the authors found. First, Abdullah Saeed, through his theory of contextual interpretation, interprets verse 157 of *al-Nisa'* with the conclusion that Isa al-Masih was killed and crucified. Second, Abdullah Saeed's interpretation is identified as *al-dakhil* because Abdullah Saeed interprets the Qur'an out of the meaning of the text without any guidance; even the clues from the series of verses 157-159 require the textual meaning. In addition, forcing a uniform understanding of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih against Christian traditions has violated the principle of religious pluralism.*

Kata Kunci

Abdullah Saeed, al-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir, Hermeneutika, Penyaliban Isa al-Masih

Abstrak

Memasuki masa modern wacana penafsiran al-Qur'an kemunculan pendekatan baru dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an, yakni pendekatan hermeneutika telah memicu banya perdebatan. Lingkaran polemik seputar hermeneutika ketika diterapkan terhadap umumnya

berkisar pada pertanyaan keabsahan metodologi hermeneutika terhadap al-Qur'an dan analisis terhadap hasil penafsiran dari aplikasi hermeneutik terhadap al-Qur'an yang mendistorsi ajaran fundamental agama Islam. Sangat sedikit penelitian yang mengkritik hasil dari implementasi hermeneutika terhadap al-Qur'an menggunakan kerangka teoretis al-dakhil fi al-Tafsir. Maka, penelitian ini bertujuan mengisi kekosongan tersebut. Penelitian penulis mengkritik pemikiran Abdullah Saeed tentang penyaliban Isa al-Masih sebagai hasil penafsiran dengan metode hermeneutika penafsiran kontekstual. Melalui metodologi konten analisis dan analisis kritis, penulis menemukan. Pertama, Abdullah Saeed melalui teori penafsiran kontekstual yang disusunnya, menafsirkan ayat 157 surat al-Nisa' dengan kesimpulan bahwa Isa al-Masih terbunuh dan disalib. Kedua, penafsiran Abdullah Saeed tersebut teridentifikasi sebagai al-dakhil karena Abdullah Saeed menafsirkan al-Qur'an keluar dari makna teksnya tanpa petunjuk apapun, bahkan petunjuk dari rangkaian ayat 157-159 menghendaki makna tekstualnya. Selain itu, Pemaksaan penyeragaman pemahaman mengenai penyaliban Isa al-Masih terhadap tradisi Kristen telah menyalahi prinsip pluralisme agama.

Introduction

The emergence of a modern interpretation of the holy book of the Qur'an, known as the Hermeneutic method of interpretation, has sparked debate among Muslim intellectuals. The circle of polemics surrounding it, among other things, regarding the legitimacy of using the hermeneutics of the Qur'an and the implications of the meaning of the Qur'an born of hermeneutic methodology. However, it is very rare to study criticism of Hermeneutics using a systematic approach using a theoretical basis born from the Islamic world.

The purpose of this paper seeks to fill the void. Therefore, the author raises a critical discourse on hermeneutics using the theoretical basis of *al-dakhil fi al-tafsir*. This theoretical study analyzes forms of infiltration in interpretation which Ibrahim Abdurrahman Khalifah first coined in 1980.¹

¹Moh. Alwi Amru Ghozali, "Menyoal Legalitas Tafsir: Telaah Kritis Konsep al-Ashil wa al-Dakhil," *Tafsire* 6, no. 2 (2018): 67-86.

Criticism of the Qur'anic hermeneutic methodology is generally only about two things—first, criticism of the historicity of hermeneutics. The emergence of hermeneutics originating from traditions outside of Islam caused some rejection. The history of hermeneutics began in the first century AD when the Church distributed the Old Testament and its methods of interpretation. Hermeneutics at that time used four methods, namely, literal, midrash, peshar, and typology.² The rejection of all traditions outside of Islam is based on the history of Umar holding the pages of the Torah; then being reprimanded by the Prophet Muhammad 'if Musa was still alive, he would have followed me.'³ Islam closes itself in a religious context to thoughts from outside

²Yohanes Verdianto, "Hermeneutika Alkitab dalam Sejarah: Prinsip Penafsiran Alkitab dari Masa ke Masa," *Mitra Sriwijaya: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen* 1, no. 2 (2020): 46.

³Darsitun, "Menakar Ulang Hermeneutika dalam Studi al-Qur'an di Era Modern dan Kontemporer (Pendekatan Sastra, Sejarah dan Sains)," *Islamadina: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 1 (2021): 34.

Islam. Second, criticism of hermeneutics in the interpretation of the Qur'an stems from the fear of sharia deconstruction that leads to liberalism, such as pluralism and feminism.⁴

Critical studies on hermeneutics that are currently developing are generally related to critical studies of their theoretical framework. For example, Sudarto Murtaufiq's research entitled *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an: Kritik Atas Pemikiran Nasr Abu Zaid*. Murtaufiq, in this research, emphasizes Nasr Hamid's concept that the Qur'an is a historical discourse and does not contain a fixed and substantive transcendent meaning. This conclusion was reached because Nasr Hamid saw that the Qur'an came down to respond to problems in the Middle East, therefore, the Qur'an is a holy book dictated by culture, so it is fair to say that the Qur'an is a cultural product. This does not only apply to texts that have a human dimension, which can be dialectical with the context of the time of revelation, but to every text, even texts that have a faith dimension. According to Murtaufiq, this is unacceptable because it will have an impact on distorting Islamic teachings; an understanding of the real attributes of Allah will only be seen as a mere metaphor.⁵ However, the critical study above does not use the *al-dakhil fi al-tafsir* approach, as the author does. The study of hermeneutics in relation to *al-dakhil*, the author, found in Akhmad Sulthoni's research entitled *Hermeneutics of the Qur'an Perspective al-dakhil fi al-tafsir*. However, Sulthoni briefly conveys hermeneutics from the perspective of *al-dakhil* and takes the hermeneutics of Muhammad Shahrur, who is suspected of being *al-dakhil* as a sample.⁶ Research above. Meanwhile, the author takes the material

object as Abdullah Saeed's thoughts regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih.

As for the studies of *al-dakhil*, most of them only identify elements of *al-dakhil* in a particular work of interpretation or of certain theme elements in the book of exegesis. *Al-dakhil's* research on the books of interpretation as a whole is as in the study of Qaḥṭān Khair al-Najī Abd al-Waḥīd al-Qayisī with the title *al-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir Imam Abī al-Bakrī*. Al-Qayisī only analyzes the findings of infiltration elements in Imam Abī al-Bakrī's commentary both in terms of *naqli* and *'aql* based on the classification of themes in the book *al-dakhil fi al-tafsir* on the entire contents of the book of interpretations. For example, on the theme of infiltration in the form of *israiliyat*, al-Qayisī finds infiltration in the story of Adam and Eve, which tells that the devil entered heaven to tempt Adam and Eve through the mouth of a snake. After the form of infiltration was found, al-Qayisī immediately criticized the interpretation, which was considered infiltrative, by analyzing other scholars' interpretations. In this case, al-Qayisī used the opinion of Ibn Kathir and al-Ālūsī.⁷ Al-Qayisī examines a book of interpretation as a whole, different from the author, who only takes one fragment of Abdullah Saeed's interpretation.

As for *al-dakhil's* study of specific theme elements as is the study entitled *al-Dakhil dalam Tafsir: Studi atas Penafsiran Esoterik Ayat-Ayat Imāmah Ḥusain al-Ṭabātabā'ī*, by Siar Ni'mah. Ni'mah's finding in her research that Ṭabātabā'ī infiltrates problematic hadiths in supporting the esoteric interpretation of imāmah, this infiltration of problematic hadiths is assessed as *al-dakhil* by Ni'mah.⁸ Ni'mah's research only analyzes the *al-dakhil*

⁴Ibid.

⁵Sudarto Murtaufiq, "Hermeutika al-Qur'an: Kritik Atas Pemikiran Nasr Abu Zaid," *Akademika* 9, no. 1 (2015): 1–15.

⁶Ahmad Sulthoni, "Hermeneutika al-Qur'an Prespektif ad-Dakhil Fi at-Tafsir," *Al-Karima: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2019): 22.

⁷Qaḥṭān Khair al-Najī Abd al-Waḥīd al-Qayisī, "Al-Dakhil Fi al-Tafsir Imam Abī al-Bakrī" (Universitas of Anbar, 2020).

⁸Siar Ni'mah, "Al-Dakhil dalam Tafsir: Studi Atas Penafsiran Esoterik Ayat-Ayat Imāmah Ḥusain al-Ṭabātabā'ī," *Kaca (Karunia Cahaya Allah): Jurnal Dialogis Ilmu Ushuluddin* 9, no. 1 (2019): 44–64.

il side of *riwāyah*. The author's research uses the *al-dakhil* approach from the side of *dirāyah* in analyzing Abdullah Saeed's interpretation.

Different from various studies related to hermeneutics and *al-dakhil fi al-tafsir* studies, this study seeks to critically analyze Abdullah Saeed's thoughts regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih resulting from his hermeneutic interpretation process, which is known as the theory of contextual interpretation. The author's critical study of these thoughts is through the theoretical framework of *al-dakhil wa al-āsil*, especially *al-dakhil* in terms of thought.

This study is a type of literature research, with data collection techniques in the form of documentation, then the author uses a content analysis approach in analyzing the data. The author's material object is the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih, and the formal object is Abdullah Saeed.

Biography of Abdullah Saeed

Abdullah Saeed was born in the Maldives, a country consisting of a group of islands in the Indian Ocean. Saeed is of Omani Arab descent and living in the Republic of the Maldives.⁹ Backed by his religious beliefs, Saeed began his intellectual pilgrimage to the center of Islamic civilization, namely Saudi Arabia. In that country, Saeed studied formally at the Basic Arabic Language Institute from 1977-1979, then continued to the Intermediate Arabic Language Institute from 1979-1982. Then, from 1982 to 1986, Saeed studied at the University of Saudi Arabia in Medina. Saeed's intellectual pilgrimage then continued to Australia.¹⁰

The academic atmosphere in Australia allows Abdullah Saeed to develop so freely.

Degrees obtained in Australia include, among others, a master's in Applied Linguistics and a doctorate in Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne in 1992. After completing his formal education, Abdullah Saeed started his academic career as a young lecturer in Melbourne, specifically in the Department of Asian Languages and Anthropology. In 1993, he rose to become a senior lecturer in 1996. Saeed's career continued to move positively, and he obtained a professorship in Arabic and Islamic Studies in 2003. Saeed's career peaked when he was elected to the Australian Academy of Humanities. Abdullah Saeed focuses on research on Islamic studies and Human Rights, the Qur'an and Tafsir, Islamic law reform, Islamic studies and the Muslim community in Australia, and Religious freedom.¹¹

Abdullah Saeed's research coverage is in his essential works, including *Freedom of Religion: Apostasy and Islam Interpreting the Qur'an: Toward a Contemporary Approach and Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century: A Contextualist Approach*, *The Qur'an: An Introduction*, *Muslim Communities in Australia*, *Muslim Australians: Their Beliefs, Practices, and Institutions*.¹² Abdullah Saeed's books have been translated into various countries. Some of them have been translated into Indonesian, such as the *21st Century al-Qur'an: Contextual Tafsir, Paradigm, Principles, and Methods of Contextualist Interpretation of the Qur'an*, *Introduction to the Study of the Qur'an*, and the book *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*.¹³ Judging from his works, Abdullah Saeed is very focused on studying the Qur'an in the context of reinterpreting

⁹M. Salahudin, "Membincang Pendekatan Kontekstualis Abdullah Saeed dalam Memahami al-Qur'an," *Qof* 2, no. 1 (2018): 51.

¹⁰Ridhoul Wahidi, "Aplikasi Hermeneutika Kontekstual al-Qur'an Abdullah Saeed," *AL ITQAN: Jurnal Studi al-Qur'an* 2, no. 1 (2016): 21.

¹¹Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual*, translated by Ervan Nurtawab (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2014), 316.

¹²Muhammad Nasrullah, "Pandangan Abdullah Saeed Pada Konsep Nasakh Mansukh: Analisis Surah al-Nur Ayat 2," *Al-Munir: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2020), 117.

¹³Salahudin, "Membincang Pendekatan Kontekstualis Abdullah Saeed dalam Memahami al-Qur'an," 51.

the values of the Qur'an today. Including works translated in Indonesia, they are also dominated by books related to the Qur'an.

Abdullah Saeed does not only focus on writing academic works. However, Saeed actively participates in giving academic sermons on a national and international scale. Among those noted by Annas Rolli Muchlisin are:

Abdullah Saeed is also very actively involved in national and international seminars. The following is Saeed's writing which was presented at several seminars, including "Towards a More Inclusive View of the Religious 'Other': a Muslim Perspective" in a peace lecture at the University of Otago Dunedin, New Zealand in 2007, "Development of the Concept of Jihad in Islam" in the seminar on international humanitarianism and Islamic law at the Queensland Red Cross Brisbane in 2007, "How to Bridge the Information Gap Between Islam and the West?" in the International Islamic and Western Conference at the Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Diplomatic and Foreign Relations in 2007, "Muslims in the West between Participants and Isolationist" at the Sultan Qaboos University Oman in 2004, "Religious Reconciliation in Indonesia: Inclusivist versus Exclusivist" in the Academic Seminar Australian Humanity 2000.¹⁴

Based on the description of Abdullah Saeed's life journey, it can be concluded that Saeed's academic climate is a blend of tradition and modernity. Saeed's process while in Saudi Arabia and Australia. Combining these two elements of thought borrows Fazlur Rahman's term neo-modernism, namely a complete reconstruction of Islam following modern needs while remaining faithful to its spiritual roots, grounded in tradition.¹⁵ This

¹⁴Anas Rolli Muchlisin, "Penafsiran Kontekstual: Studi Atas Konsep Hierarki Nilai Abdullah Saeed," *Maghza* 1, no. 1 (2016): 21.

¹⁵Hana Widayani, "Neomodernisme Islam dalam Perspektif

can be seen from Abdullah Saeed's idea of contextual interpretation, that contextual ideals in interpreting the Qur'an must be based on Islamic tradition, namely understanding the socio-historical conditions of the revelation period and the interpretations of medieval scholars.

Contextual Interpretation

The concept of contextual interpretation consists of two variables: interpretation and contextual. The term interpretation is the science that discusses the Qur'an based on existing instruments to seek God's true purpose, according to the limits of human ability.¹⁶ The contextual term comes from the English context, translated into the Indonesian context, namely situations, and conditions related to an event.¹⁷ In simple terms, contextual interpretation is an effort to understand the Qur'an according to what God wants by paying attention to the situation surrounding the Qur'an during the revelation period and the situation surrounding the Qur'an today.

Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation idea was inspired by Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory, namely the process of interpreting the Qur'an with two movements. The first movement leads to the reality of the revelation period and then captures the spirit in the Qur'an. Then the second movement brings the spirit of the Qur'anic text from the reality of the times to be applied to today's reality.¹⁸ Saeed recognizes this,

For the most part, I rely on the ideas and interpretations offered by Fazlur Rahman in his Major Themes of The Qur'an.

Fazlur Rahman," *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman dan Tafsir Hadis* 9, no. 1 (2020): 85–100.

¹⁶Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zarqāny, *Manāhil Fi 'Ulūm al-Qurān*, Vol 2 (Kairo: Mathba'ah Īsa al-Bāby al-Ḥalby, n.d.), 5.

¹⁷Pusat Penyusunan Bahasa, *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008), 805.

¹⁸Anas Rolli Muchlisin, "Penafsiran Kontekstual: Studi Atas Konsep Hierarki Nilai Abdullah Saeed," 23.

His approach illustrates how a Muslim commentator of the Qur'an today will apply the critical elements in practicing a contextual approach to interpretation.¹⁹

The contextual interpretation theory initiated by Abdullah Saeed is a continuation of Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory. Instead of as operational development.

The operational form in Abdullah Saeed's book, *Interpreting the Qur'an*, is divided into four stages. *First*, an introduction, namely recognizing the text with the 'world' around it. *Second*, observing the text as it is, not connecting the text with the historical situation when the Qur'an was revealed or the period after it. The *second* stage is interpreting the Qur'an, analyzing words and spoken language, as well as all problems of Arabic grammar. Next, analyze the relationship of the text to the text that lies after and before and how the text is used in a specific surah or the entire Qur'an. Next, analyze the genealogy of the text, whether the text correlates with law, ritual, or history. Finally, analyze the synonymous texts and how the exact text is applied in different verses. The third is finding the connection between the text and the first recipient. At this stage, the interpreter analyzes the local wisdom surrounding the text at the time of revelation, including culture, culture, rules, and beliefs of the people of the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD. Then, analyze the nature of the text, whether it has legal, theological, or ethical nuances.

Furthermore, determining whether the purpose of the message is universal or whether it only applies to the context of revelation alone. Next, find the focus of the Qur'anic text and its objective meaning. Finally, analyze how the text is understood, interpreted, and applied in the period of revelation. Fourth is the last

stage, connecting the text with the current context. This stage begins with identifying problems, issues, and what is needed. Then, sort out political, economic, and cultural issues relevant to the Qur'an. Next, look for values and norms in the early days of Islam that support a text's meaning. The next step is to compare the similarities and differences between the current context and the socio-historical conditions that underlie the text. Next, relate the interpretation and understanding of the first recipient of the text to the present context to emphasize the differences and similarities between the present context and the context of revelation. Finally, analyze whether the scope of the universal text is only specific to the time of revelation and whether the objective message of a text is still valid or not.²⁰

Abdullah Saeed, in the book *al-Qur'an 21st Century* also describes the operational framework of contextual interpretation. However, in Saeed in the *21st Century al-Qur'an* book, the context surrounding the revelation period with macro context one and the current context is referred to as macro context two. Saeed adds that looking for a correlation between the first and second macro contexts, it must be through the linking context that explores how interpretation grows between the 7th and 21st centuries. The connecting context includes ideas, academic traditions, and the evolution of interpretation surrounding the Qur'an with emerging contexts between the 7th and 21st centuries.²¹

As previously mentioned, the theory of contextual interpretation is a development of the double movement theory of Fazlur Rahman. The location for the development of contextual interpretation with double movement is contextual interpretation; Saeed

¹⁹ Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual*, 160.

²⁰ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 150-151.

²¹ Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual*, 16.

includes a connecting context. Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman broke the long chain that was in the middle between the 7th century context and the present context. Even though it turns out that the experimentation of the double movement failed, that is, if the ideal moral result of the verse is not suitable to be formulated in a specific form in the present context. So, the process of interpretation must start from the first again; it could be that the interpreter is wrong in formulating the moral ideals of the Qur'an or if this is not the case, it means that the interpreter has failed to see the current social reality as a second context.²² Judging from the double movement method, which only revolves around the reality of the revelation period and the present reality, it seems very clear that Rahman does not look at the interpretation traditions of any scholars.

Polemic of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a new discussion of the study of the Qur'an. Before getting to know hermeneutics, Muslims have used various approaches to studying the Qur'an, such as the ulema of the Qur'an and the rules of interpretation. Apart from compiling a book of commentary, some scholars compile the book of *ulum al-Qur'an* as an epistemological basis for their interpretation. For example, Muhammad Ali al-Shabuni made a book *al-Tibyān fi 'Ulūm al-Qurān*, al-Suyūṭy made a book *al-Itqān fi 'Ulum al-Qurān* and Ibn 'Ashur Ibn 'Ashur introduced the book *Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* by discussing the *Ulumul al-Qur'an*. Most Muslim scholars who interpret the Qur'an have books on the methodology and theory of interpretation of the Qur'an.

Hermeneutics is present in the arena of interpretation of the Qur'an as an alternative after Nashr Ḥamid Abū Zaid proclaimed to

²²Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 7.

practitioners of the study of the Qur'an to use hermeneutics as a basis for interpreting the Qur'an so that the Qur'an remains relevant to the demands of the times.²³ This idea was followed by Muslim thinkers, especially scholars who experienced Western education. So, hermeneutics does not come from the Islamic tradition but is born from the Western tradition.

There are two versions of the background to the emergence of hermeneutics. *First*, Greek mythology precisely derived from the God Hermes, who, according to Greek folklore, served as a messenger from the gods to convey it to humans. According to some experts, Hermes carries out his duties, among others: conveying through words what is in mind, then explaining some words that are still unclear and translating them into a language understood by the target.²⁴ *Second*, it comes from the church tradition in the first century to interpret the old testament. According to David Dockery, there are four approaches applied by the Jews to the Old Testament. Namely the literal approach, interpreting the Bible based on literal texts. The *peshar* approach interprets the Bible through the eyes of Jewish sectarianism, and the typological approach contextualizes the Old Testament with past, present, and future events.²⁵ Although there are differences between the two versions, a common thread can be found that hermeneutics comes from civilizations that already have a wonderful literary tradition, namely Greece and Judaism. Suppose Greece is famous for its philosophical tradition, while Jews are known as owners of the Old Testament.

²³Darsitun, "Menakar Ulang Hermeneutika dalam Studi al-Qur'an di Era Modern dan Kontemporer (Pendekatan Sastra, Sejarah dan Sains)," 30.

²⁴M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, second edition (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2015), 402-403.

²⁵Verdianto, "Hermeneutika Alkitab dalam Sejarah: Prinsip Penafsiran Alkitab dari Masa ke Masa," 46.

Intellectual culture dimmed in the middle ages until finally, the culture of criticism was opened by Martin Luther by reforming Christian teachings, thus giving birth to a splinter of Protestant Christianity as an opposition to the domination of the Roman Church. In compiling his critique, Luther used a hermeneutical approach to interpreting and translating the New Testament Bible into the German language.²⁶ Luther offers methods and principles in understanding the Bible; namely, the interpretation of the Scriptures must be free from dogma, magisterium, and tradition, and the interpretation of the Scriptures must be based on what the text is, not based on the interpretation of the Church's authority and everyone has the right to have access to understand the Bible directly.²⁷ The existence of hermeneutics in the Christian tradition is intended to reconstruct Christian teachings, especially the Church's single interpretation of Christian teachings.

As happened in the Christian tradition, hermeneutics is considered necessary to be applied to the Qur'an because it wants to reconstruct the interpretations of the Qur'an, which the majority of Muslims consider to be established and standardized. Therefore, hermeneutics is labeled liberation by some of its proponents in Islamic circles instead of associating synonymous hermeneutics with *takwil*. As Nashr Hamid Abū Zaid and Fazlur Rahman pointed out, there are similarities between *takwil* and hermeneutics, which are

both looking for meanings that are relevant today, by quoting Muhammad Abduh's opinion that contextual interpretations of modern times are urgently needed and classical interpretations are no longer relevant to answer the question. Challenges and problems of modern times.²⁸ Not just a discourse, Muslim scientists who propose hermeneutics as the basis for interpreting the Qur'an also prepare operational standards to apply it.

The operational standard in question is a hermeneutical device for interpreting the Qur'an. Like Fazlur Rahman with the theory of multiple movements. According to him, a commentator performs two movements. First, relying on the present to the time when the Qur'an was revealed, the commentator explores the background of a revealed verse and how the Prophet Muhammad and his companions understood the verse. Then, look for general and long-term principles in specific verses. Second, after this general principle is obtained, the commentator returns from the time of revelation to the time he existed and then applies the general principle of a verse to a specific and concrete practical setting.²⁹

Another figure who offers operationalization in interpretation, namely Hasan Hanafi, developed his hermeneutic methodology with the following steps. *First*, analyze the original text of the Qur'an to draw out its true meaning or spirit. *Second*, the analysis of the situation in the context of the general revelation in the Arabian Peninsula and the specific context that caused the revelation of the verse is known as *asbāb al-nuzul*. *Finally*, updating the meaning based on the context of the verse when it is revealed to be linked to the present context, with a note that it still refers to the

²⁶Martin Luther became the first pioneer of the cultural roots of nationalism in Europe through one of the entrances, namely the mother tongue, assisted by capitalism which began to stir in medieval Europe. Luther used the German language to attack the dominance of the Roman Church with theses of the earthing of his religion at the door of the Wittenberg Chapel, Germany. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang*, translated by Omi Intan Naomi, third edition (Yogyakarta: Insist, 2008), 58-59.

²⁷Serpulus Simamora, "Hermeneutika: Persoalan Filosofis - Biblis Penggalan Makna Tekstual," *Filsafat-Teologi* 4, no. 2 (2005): 84.

²⁸Adli Haaj Yacoob and Hafidz Fadli Achma, "Hermeneutika Wa at-Ta'wil: Al-Muqaranatu Fi Minhaji Tafsir Al-Ma'ani," *Studia Quranika: Jurnal Studi Quran* 5, no. 1 (2020): 39.

²⁹N. Nafisatur Rofiah, "Poligami Perspektif Teori Double Movement Fazlur cRahman," *Mukadimah: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 4, no. 1 (2020): 4.

meaning of the text.³⁰ As for Nashr Ḥamid Abū Zaid in operating hermeneutics, as follows. *First*, collect all the verses of the Qur'an with the same theme. *Second*, finding the level of meaning, whether the meaning of the verse in question is original or is just a signification. *Third*, to determine the direction or purpose of the verse, a chronological device of the verse is needed, the context of the verse, and to whom the verse is specifically addressed. *Fourth*, looking for implied meaning in the text through the historical criticism approach and linguistic analysis.³¹

Looking at some of the operational frameworks offered by Muslim scientists who carry the hermeneutics, a common thread is that they use the hermeneutic tools used by Western scientists by exploiting the text, author, and audience. What is meant here is the text of the Qur'an. At the same time, the author is a socio-historical condition or a specific contest during the time the Qur'an was revealed, while the audience is the current contemporary situation.³²

Although hermeneutics has a solid methodological basis and is believed to apply to the Qur'an, some traditionalists still do not agree that hermeneutics is used as the basis for interpreting the Qur'an. The rejection of hermeneutics comes from the ideological, theological, and epistemological sides.³³

First, the ideological dimension is that hermeneutics comes from intellectual traditions outside Islam or thoughts imported from the West. The basis of rejection from this point of view is the sentiment of suspicion

towards all who come from outside Islam because its hermeneutics is considered to pollute Islam's purity.

The second is the theological dimension. Namely, the principle of hermeneutics that reads the socio-historical context at the time of revelation and even uses a critical approach, making some hermeneutics advocates conclude that the Qur'an is a cultural product, namely the emergence of the Qur'anic text dictated by the local culture at that time. Hermeneutics, of course, is rejected by Muslims who believe that the authenticity of the *qādim* text of the Qur'an comes from God.

The third is the epistemological dimension, namely the belief in relativism and the subjectivity of commentators, which have become identical to hermeneutics, making the results of the interpretation of the Qur'an with a hermeneutic approach very different, instead of being considered to deviate from standard Islamic teachings.

Jazim Hamidi In simple terms, there are three reasons for refusing to apply hermeneutics to the Qur'an. Hamidi said;

First, the Hermeneutics of the Qur'an implies that the text is not valuable and meaningful without context, while the traditional idea holds that the real meaning is what God intended. Second, the hermeneutics of the Qur'an emphasizes humans as intermediaries that produce meaning. In contrast, the traditional idea states that God bestows a person's correct understanding. Third, very different from the hermeneutical tradition of the Qur'an, traditional Muslim scientists have made an unbridgeable distinction between the text of the Qur'an and its interpretation and recipients. The text of the Qur'an is holly so sacred that its true meaning is impossible to achieve.

The author believes hermeneutics is a valid approach to interpreting the Qur'an and the rules of interpretation, ushul fiqh, and *ta'wil* approaches. However, there are several notes from the author that the hermeneutical

³⁰Achmad Khudori Soleh, "Membandingkan Hermeneutika dengan Ilmu Tafsir," *Tsaqafah* 7, no. 1 (2011): 41-42.

³¹Muhammad Lutfi, "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Model Interpretasi Nashr Ḥamid Abū Zaid," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 8, no. 1 (2018): 37.

³²Jazim Hamidi, *Hermeneutika Hukum: Sejarah-Filsafat dan Metode Tafsir* (Malang: UB Pers, 2011), 121.

³³Kamarsudiana dan Ahmad Zaki M, "Posisi al-Qur'an dalam Epistemologi Hermeneutika," *Al Amin: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu dan Budaya Islam* 2, no. 1 (2019): 81.

approach cannot be separated from tradition, especially regarding the discourse on how the first generation of Muslims understood the Qur'an; this prevents the results of the hermeneutical theoretical approach from being overly subjective. Apart from that, several part in the Qur'an cannot be touched by rationality, such as *mutashabihat* verses from verses that discuss the existence of God and eschatological concepts that demand full faith. Of course, the hermeneutic approach cannot operate there.

***Al-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir* from the Side of Thought**

The study that traces the infiltrative part of Islamic teachings is known as *al-dakhil wa al-asil*, a study in the discipline of interpretation and hadith that tracks and sorts out authentic and inauthentic sources in Islamic teachings.

Epistemologically, the classification of *al-dakhil* is divided into two—namely, infiltration in terms of history and infiltration in terms of thought. The definition of infiltration in terms of riwayat is based on the Prophet Muhammad, the *Sahabah*, and *Tabi'in*, but this claim does not meet the requirements to be accepted.³⁴ As for *al-dakhil* on the dimension of thought, it is a bad idea. In more detail Abd al-Rahim Abu 'Albah said:

A view, provision, thought, and understanding comes to Muslims from the gaps of contradictory and contradictory interpretations of Islam. Moreover, there is no backing from the Qur'an and Hadith regarding *mantuq* and *mafhum*.³⁵

The form of thought infiltration in interpretation can be easily understood if it is presented through classification and mapping into seven. In this case, al-Najjar characterizes

the form of infiltration in interpretation in terms of thought as follows. *First*, twisting the Shari'ah law, eliminating it, and changing it from its original form. *Second*, inserting wrong ideas to destroy Islam. *Third*, trying to extract the implied meaning of the Qur'an without any instructions. *Fourth*, interpreting the Qur'an without having the capacity as a commentator and not mastering the theoretical basis of interpreting the Qur'an. *Fifth*, interpret the verse externally without paying attention to what is appropriate and inappropriate for Allah. *Sixth*, analyzing Arabic in the Qur'an, but not using the rules and grammatical formulations of the language compiled by Arabic linguists. *Seventh*, imposing a link between the verses of the Qur'an and modern scientific discoveries.³⁶ Some of the seven forms of infiltration override classical interpretations and interpretations written by mufassir of modern.

An *al-dakhil* in interpretation is not always synonymous with an error. Although all infiltrations are wrong, not all of these errors can be categorized as *al-dakhil*, because the wrong understanding does not have to conflict with the texts of the Qur'an and has a basis from the side of *mantuq* and understanding. These errors can happen because of the diversity of *qir'ah*, the basis and subjectivity of *mufassir*, and the diversity of *madzab fiqh*.³⁷ For example, the debate about whether the feet are washed like the face and hands in ablution, is it enough to be rubbed with water as with the hair? Although majority of *ulama* think that the feet must be washed, some *ulama fiqh* argue that it is sufficient for a person who performs ablution only to wipe his feet based on the opinion of Ibn Abbas "there are four components in *wudu'*,³⁸ two are washed, and two are rubbed." Ikrimah

³⁴Jamāl al-Musthafa Abd al-Hamīd Abbd al-Wahhāb al-Najjar, *Al-Dakhil Fi Ay al-Tanzil* (Kairo: Universitas al-Azhar, 2008), 26.

³⁵Abd al-Rahm Abu 'Albah, *al-Dakhil Fi al-Tafsir* (Amman: Maktabah Shumān li al-Muḥadharāti, 1993), 131.

³⁶Al-Najjar, *al-Dakhil Fi Ay al-Tanzil*, 28.

³⁷Abu 'Albah, *Al-Dakhil Fi Al-Tafsir*, 132

³⁸The meaning is face, hands, hair, and feet, as explained in verse 6 of Surah al-Maidah.

supports this opinion, Anas and Qāṭadah.³⁹ The interpretation of wiping the feet up to the ankles, although according to the majority of the *fuqāha* it is wrong because it violates the majority and even contradicts the words of the Prophet Muhammad when he saw a *sahabah* ablution, his feet were dry. He said: “woe to the owner of the heels from hell, complete the ablution”.⁴⁰ However, the interpretation which says that when performing ablution, only the feet are rubbed is not categorized as *al-dakhīl* because it does not violate Islam and even has a basis in Islam.⁴¹

Al-dakhīl in interpretation is also not synonymous with bad intentions, although the appearance of *al-dakhīl* is synonymous with evil intentions. In order to clarify the form of *al-dakhīl* with good intentions. The author tries to explain the factor of infiltration in interpretation. According to Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmud, the origin of the infiltration of thought can occur because of the intention to destroy Islam and the haste in interpreting the Qur’an even though sincere intentions and good intentions accompany it.⁴² For example, the understanding of Qudamah bin Maz’ūn the Governor of Bahrain during the Caliphate of Umar bin Khatab understood verse 93 of Surah al-Maidah.

There is no sin for those who believe and do righteous deeds because they eat the food they ate before; if they are pious and believe, and do righteous deeds, then they

remain pious and believe, then they (still) pious and do good. And Allah loves those who do good.⁴³

There has been a famous incident regarding Qudamah, which Umar was about to chastise because he was known to drink of drunk drinks. Qudamah denied Umar by saying, “you have no right to beat me” Umar replied, “why?” Qudamah reasoned by reading verse 93 of Surah al-Maidah. Hearing Qudamah’s excuse, Umar said, “You did wrong in interpreting the verse. If you truly fear Allah, you will stay away from drunk drinks that Allah has forbidden.” Then the lashing of Qudamah was carried out.⁴⁴

In the twentieth century, the essential feature of this form of infiltration in thought lies in two things. First, it is an imaginative form and presents a parable when interpreting the Qur’an. Thus, interpretator’s avoid even interpreting the unseen and keep the verses of the Qur’an away from their explicit meaning. For example, Muhammad Abduh’s interpretation of verse al-Baqarah 255 on the phrase *kursiyu* as the breadth of Allah’s knowledge which covers all the heavens and the earth. So, *kursiyu* is not a supernatural thing related to the essence of God but has been rationalized with the help of the interpreter’s imaginative power so that it is interpreted as God’s knowledge. As for the parable that turns the verse away from its *haqiqi* of meaning, Muhammad Abi Zaid al-Damānhuri’s interpretation of the miracle of Prophet Moses in the form of a stick and shining hands is a strong argument. Second, consider the verses of the Qur’an as a symbol. As al-Damānhuri interprets the descent of Isa al-Masih, it is only a symbol of the unity, justice, and prosperity of the entire human universe. The arrival of the Dajal is symbolic of the arrival of age full of lies,

³⁹Abi ‘Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Anṣāry al-Qurṭuby, *Jāmi’ al-Aḥkām al-Qurān*, Vol 6 (Bairut: Muassah al-Risalah, 2006), 62.

⁴⁰Abu Daud Sulaiman al-Sijistany, *Sunan Abu Daud*, Vol. 1 (Bairut: al-Maktabah al-‘Ashriah, n.d.), 24.

⁴¹The basis for wiping the feet in ablution is in the reading of the qiraah imam, namely Ibn Kathir, Abu ‘Amar, and Hamzah by reading the *jar* on the phrase *arjulakum*. This indicates that the limbs of the legs are propped up against the hair of the limbs where the command of the hair is to be rubbed in the verse of the command to *wudhu* surah al-Maidah verse 6. Al-Qurtuby, *Jāmi’ al-Aḥkām al-Qurān*, Vol. 6, 61.

⁴²Muhammad Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmud, “Al-Dakhīl Fi al-Tafsīr Bi Ra’yi,” *Majalah Kuliah Dār Al-‘Ulūm* 15, no. 15 (2006): 686.

⁴³Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an Terjemahan* (Semarang: Cv. Toha Putra, 1989), 175.

⁴⁴Maḥmud. 700.

conflict, and deceit. Therefore, the age of chaos as a symbol of the Antichrist will be destroyed when the age of justice and unity comes as a symbol of the descent of Isa al-Masih.⁴⁵

Discourses on *al-dakhil* related to thought tend to be more subjective than *al-dakhil's* discourses in terms of history which tends to be more specific because the validity of the transmission chain can test it. Even so, *al-dakhil*, in terms of thought, can still be identified by at least two characteristics if the interpretation results tend to be coercive without being based on solid evidence. Second, if the interpretation contradicts the core teachings of Islam that the scholars have agreed upon, in the study of *ushul fiqh*, this is referred to as *qaṭ'i al-dilālah*.

Contextual Interpretation of the Crucifixion of Isa al-Masih

The crucifixion of Isa al-Masih indeed contains debates between the three Abrahamic religions. The reason is that the three religions have different interpretations regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih. According to Judaism, the figure of Isa is a propagator of heresy and heresy, so it must be stopped by executing the death penalty. Meanwhile, according to the Christian version, it is the same as the Jews, namely believing that Isa al-Masih, or what is known as Jesus Christ, died on the cross. However, the death of Isa al-Masih was not in as humiliating condition as the Jewish belief. However, as a holy sacrifice because Isa al-Masih wanted to be a martyr for atonement for the original sin of Adam's children and grandchildren. As for Islamic beliefs, especially those contained in the literal text of the Qur'an, saying that Isa al-Masih was not killed and crucified, the Jews executed other people who were likened to the Prophet Isa. The Qur'an says in Surah al-Nisa' verse 157.

And because of their sayings: «Indeed, We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's Apostle.» They did not kill or crucify him, but (they killed) people who were likened to Jesus for them. Indeed, those who disagree about (the killing of) Jesus are in doubt about the one who was killed. They have no belief about who was killed, except following mere suspicion; they are not (also) sure that it is Jesus whom they killed.⁴⁶

Abdullah Saeed, in the book *al-Qur'an Century 21: Contextual Tafsir*, makes the discussion of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih one of the results of his interpretation using the hermeneutic theory of contextual interpretations. Before interpreting the verse, Saeed begins by referring to various classical and modern interpretations. In exploring the classical interpretation, Saeed refers to al-Thabāri. According to al-Thabāri, two versions of the narration tell of the time of the capture of Isa al-Masih. The first version tells that when the Jews surrounded Isa al-Masih with his twelve disciples in a house, Allah made everyone in the house likened. As a result, the Jews caught the wrong person, and Allah appointed Isa al-Masih. The second version says that Allah will raise him at the time of revelation. Isa al-Masih called all his disciples and then asked one of them to be martyred and claim to be Isa al-Masih.⁴⁷

Besides the various history of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih from al-Thabāri. Abdullah Saeed analyzes the verse text with his grammatical approach. He is quoting the opinion of al-Zamakhshary, who analyzed the keywords of the verse *wa lakin shubbiha lahum* (ولكن شبه لهم), this text, whether to rely on Isa al-Masih or the slain. Because according to Zamakhshary, the word *shubbiha* is a passive verb and cannot be

⁴⁵Abu 'Albah, *Al-Dakhil Fi al-Tafsir*. 312-314.

⁴⁶Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *al-Qur'an Terjemahan*. 144.

⁴⁷Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual*, 221.

used as a passive verb to refer to a subject that has not been mentioned. So, the passive verb must be attached to the negative of the particle in the form of *lahum*. So, this verse indirectly states, «Imitation has affected them”.⁴⁸

Then, Abdullah Saeed refers to the interpretation of Fakhruddin al-Rāzi; through his philosophical approach, al-Rāzi makes an extraordinary leap from the traditional interpretation, which rejects the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih entirely. Al-Rāzi seems to sympathize with the Christian view regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih, although indirectly, in commenting on the belief of Nestorian Christians, which states that Isa al-Masih was only crucified with only human dimensions (*nāsūt*), as for his divinity (*lāhūt*) ascend to the sky. Rāzi tries to strengthen Nestorian Christian beliefs by presenting the philosophical view that humans are not only limited to their physical appearance. So, the killing of Isa al-Masih, although in his physical form, but not in his soul.⁴⁹

Shifting to a modern interpretation, according to Abdullah Saeed, the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih in modern interpretation only continues the traditional form of interpretation. However, three Muslim scholars give a new nuance to interpreting the crucifixion of Isa: Nashr Ḥamid Abū Zaid, Rashīd Riḍā, and Mahmoud Ayoub. Their opinion, by taking into account the interwoven context between verses in verse 157 of Surah al-Nisa', does not mean to deny and justify the killing of Isa al-Masih but focuses on refuting the claims of the Jews who did it based on their abilities and asserts that the killing of the prophets is a wrong action. Mahmoud Ayoub emphasizes the wisdom behind the story about the crucifixion of Isa in the Qur'an; according to him, the denial of Isa's crucifixion in that verse

is a symbol of human powerlessness in the face of divine power, the claim of power against God is just an illusion. As the Qur'an describes, «they did not crucify him, but it appeared to them. What appears to them is only an illusion, not reality.”⁵⁰

After Saeed expressed various views of interpretation from pre-modern to modern times, He proposed a bold interpretation of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih. According to Abdullah Saeed:

By using various approaches based on a certain level of reason and considering other possible interpretations, some Muslims argue that there is no theological difficulty in accepting the view that Jesus was killed and crucified. Many other prophets mentioned in the Quran were killed at the hands of their opponents, and Jesus is no exception. Rejecting Christian claims about Jesus and the story of Jesus' death as mentioned in the New Testament, which is generally based on the generation of *tabi'in* is very problematic from the point of view of contemporary Muslim scholars. This view does not reduce the high respect for Jesus as in the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet.⁵¹

Saeed's view is based on three reasons. *First*, because the verse was revealed in Medina, the landscape that surrounds it is a conflict between Islam and Judaism in the contestation of truth. So, the moral discourse of the verse is a statement of the disloyalty of the Jews to the prophets of Allah, insulting Mary, and the illusion that they killed Isa al-Masih.⁵² *Second*, the development of the feud between Islam and Judaism at the beginning of its birth changed when Muslims entered the fourth millennium Hijri. The geopolitical map changed as Islam competed for influence with

⁴⁸Ibid., 226.

⁴⁹Ibid., 232.

⁵⁰Ibid., 237-238.

⁵¹Ibid., 240.

⁵²Ibid., 216.

Christianity. In order to show the superiority of Islam and the inferiority of Christianity, the production of ideas is devoted to finding as many points of difference as possible. Verse 157 of Surah al-Nisa', initially focused on Jews, changed its focus to attacking Christian beliefs that had just started since the *tabi'in* era. Because of its massiveness, the production of ideas was not killed, and Isa was crucified. The ideas turned into Islamic religious doctrines, which are considered standard. *Third*, the situation is much different in modern times, marked by globalization from pre-modern times. Emphasis on good relations between religious people in the modern era of plurality and interaction by conducting dialogue, discussion, and debate in a friendly atmosphere. Therefore, reinterpretation of theological views is needed to maintain the continuity of contemporary plural life, which does not have a solid historical and textual basis. However, the reinterpretation is not supported by the textual basis of the Qur'an and Hadith.⁵³

Critical Analysis of the Perspective *al-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir*

Traces of the approach using contextual interpretation in Abdullah Saeed's thoughts regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih can be described as follows; Linking the case of Jesus' crucifixion to the reality of the polemic between Islam and Judaism is a manifestation of Saeed's efforts to trace the understanding of the early generations. In addition, when Abdullah Saeed refers to classical and modern commentators regarding the interpretation of al-Nisa' verse 157, it is Saeed's implementation in viewing the connecting context. Finally, the process of reading contemporary realities, especially regarding contemporary Islamic relations, is Saeed's attempt to connect the text with the current context.

However, suppose Abdullah Saeed's

⁵³Ibid., 242-243.

interpretation of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih in the Qur'an is seen from the perspective of the *al-dakhil fi al-tafsir* approach. In that case, the infiltration side will be found because Abdullah Saeed draws the implied meaning in verse without any clues other than just ratios. This is acknowledged by Saeed himself, although indirectly, Saeed's words «evaluate various theological views even though there is no clear textual basis in the Qur'an and Hadith.»⁵⁴ Abdullah Saeed ignores the apparent indications that Isa al-Masih was crucified and killed. The indication is in the form of the following verse, which reads.

But (in fact), Allah has raised Jesus to Him. Allah is Mighty, Most Wise.⁵⁵

This verse affirms that Isa was not crucified and killed, but He raised to His side. This is not impossible for Allah, for He is great; nothing stands in his way, and he is also all-wise; that is, he decided to save Isa al-Masih.⁵⁶

In addition, Abdullah Saeed's argument denies the ascension of Isa al-Masih during the crucifixion process because the moral discourse of verse 157 is an affirmation of the evil behavior of the Jews towards the prophets. That the production of interpretations regarding the refutation of the crucifixion of Isa was only produced during the *tabi'in* period because geopolitical conditions between Muslims and Christians influenced it at that time. Also, there is a need for reinterpretation of theological interpretation, which is a stumbling block to harmonious relations between religious communities in modern times. Abdullah Saeed's three arguments to strengthen his interpretation are problematic for the following reasons.

First, the context of the intertwining of

⁵⁴Ibid., 244.

⁵⁵Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an Terjemahan*, 145.

⁵⁶Muhammad Jamal al-Din al-Qasimy, *Mahasin Al-Ta'wil* (Kairo: 'Isa al-Bäby al-Kalby, 2007), 1637.

verse 157 of Surah al-Nisa' is not only focused on Jews but Christians as well. This can be seen in the following verse 159.

None of the Ahli Kitab except that they will believe in him (Isa) before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection, Jesus will be a witness against them.⁵⁷

The verse describes that none of the People of the Book, namely Jews and Christians at the time of death, except faith in Isa al-Masih as a servant of Allah. Unlike the Jewish accusations that say Isa as a child obtained from an adulterous relationship. Nor is it like the Christian confession, which says that Isa al-Masih is the son of God. Later on, on the Day of Judgment, Isa will testify to their disbelief and to Isa's testament to the People of the Book about the coming of the Prophet Muhammad and the command to believe in him. So, the purpose of the verse is to refute the Christian belief that Isa died on the cross and also to refute the Jewish claim that they succeeded in killing Isa al-Masih.⁵⁸

Second, Abdullah Saeed's claim regarding the production of a denial interpretation of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih started from the *tabi'in* era. This claim contradicts the fact that Ibn Abbas, as a generation of companions, also narrated the events of the ascension of Isa al-Masih. In the story of the siege of Isa by the Jews, Isa asked one of his twelve disciples to be martyred; then, the disciple was likened to Isa, and Isa was taken up to the sky. Then the Jews arrested and crucified his disciple. This version was narrated by Ibn Abbas, through the path of Abi Ḥātim, from Ahmad bin Sunan, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from 'A'mash, from Munhal, from Amru, from Said bin Jubair then to Ibn Abbas. The transmission line attributed to Ibn Abbas

was considered valid by al-Qāsimy.⁵⁹

The third is the opinion that the denial of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih is considered problematic for inter-religious relations. This opinion violates the true principle of pluralism. Because basically, the spirit of pluralism is not in forcing a religion to agree with other religions but rather in the context of theological beliefs. The spirit of pluralism is an attitude of mutual acceptance of each other, and all religious adherents have the right to exist and live according to their beliefs.⁶⁰ So, the differences regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity should be equally respected without having to force on each other's beliefs.

Conclusion

Abdullah Saeed's interpretation of the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih differs from the general commentators of the Qur'an rather than contradicts it. According to Abdullah Saeed, Isa was crucified and killed at the hands of the Jews, as is believed in the New Testament. This interpretation emerged from the process of the hermeneutical approach compiled by Abdullah Saeed himself, called contextual interpretation. There are three arguments by Abdullah Saeed to support the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih, namely that the moral discourse of verse 157 of Surah al-Nisa' is to record the evil deeds of the Jews, the production of an interpretation that denies the killing of Isa al-Masih, only appeared in the *tabi'in* period. It is necessary to interpret the appropriate interpretation. Deny the crucifixion of Isa to establish harmonious relations between Muslims and Christians in the world.

Abdullah Saeed's interpretation which states that Isa al-Masih was crucified, is *al-dakhil* because Saeed shifted the meaning of

⁵⁷Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an Terjemahan*, 145.

⁵⁸Abi Bakar Jābir al-Jazari, *Aysār al-Tafāsir Li Kalām al-Āliyy al-Kabīr* (Jeddah: Rāsm li al-Da'ayah wa al-I'lān, 1999), 572.

⁵⁹Al-Qāsimy, *Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl*, 1670.

⁶⁰Nurcholis Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, 4th edition (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), 3.

the verse without any clue. Even verse 157 of Surah al-Nisa', besides clearly denying the death of Isa al-Masih, is also strengthened by the following verse, which states that God raised Isa al-Masih. In addition, the arguments presented by Abdullah Saeed to support his interpretation are also problematic because the context of verses 157-159 is focused on Jews and Christians at the same time. Denial of the death of Isa began in the era of friends, and efforts to equate Islamic theological beliefs regarding the crucifixion of Isa al-Masih with Christians violate the spirit of pluralism. Among adherents of religions.

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