

SAYYID QUTB'S INTERPRETATIONS: A FOCUS ON POLITICAL CONCEPTS

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ABSTRACT

Sayyid Qutb's thinking influenced many Islamic scholars. His book, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, is the greatest work and influential among the world's Muslim community. This study aims to identify Sayyid Qutb's interpretation, especially political verses in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, and describe the meaning of politics from his perspective. Establishing an Islamic state is crucial for the implementation of sharia, as political power is necessary for its implementation. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the correct methods of interpreting Qur'anic verses from modern exegetes. We employ a qualitative approach in our writing, concentrating on library research and gathering information from diverse sources of literature. The approach used is multidisciplinary, encompassing interpretive, historical, and sociological perspectives. The study utilizes primary data, specifically the book *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, as well as secondary data, which includes materials related to *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* and sources that can support this writing. The research reveals that Sayyid Qutb employed the *tahlili* method to interpret the Islamic political verses. Subsequently, Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of politics posits that the government bears the political responsibility of managing and overseeing the affairs of Muslims. Next, the first principle of reign Islam emphasizes who is worthy to be called *ulul amri*, followed by upholding Allah's law and, finally, being fair to all human groups.

Keywords: Sayyid Qutb, Interpretation, Political, Concepts.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the books of tafsir that appeared in the 20th century is the *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutb. Among the purposes of this interpretation is written as a warning to Muslims who are seen as too submissive to materialism and technology that continues to grow and reminded Muslims that the threat of ignorance continues despite being under the rule of an Islamic state. For instance, Malaysia is a country that is developing and has multiple races and religions, but at this point it was plagued by turmoil in economics, education and politics. Through this study

of methodology and description of political sentences in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, it is hoped that it will be a way to return to Islamic values and adhere to the teachings of Islam despite the modern age.

It is very important to know the right ways of the interpretation Qur'anic verses. False ways of understanding Qur'an will lead to a wrong interpretation.¹ The content of the Qur'an is very high in meaning, therefore the scholars of *tafsir* (*mufassirin*) used various methods and patterns to describe the meaning of Qur'an. However, this study focuses on the Sayyid Qutb's interpretation to learn the true meaning of Islamic politics through the *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*.

The division of Muslims stems from the attitude of only making the Qur'an a theoretical source but not applying it in daily life. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to understand politics from an Islamic point of view and practice it. Lack of understanding in political science can cause a great impact on religion and Islamic society, such as cannot uphold the sovereignty of Islam, the leaders who will be appointed do not meet the characteristics set by Islam, do not guarantee the unity of the people and the country's economy is exposed to things prohibited by Islam.²

This happens because the lack of appreciation of Muslims for each branch of religion. Most Muslims only care about matters of worship and faith, but people have failed to notice other things in Islam such as politics. Besides that, there is also the issue of defamation against Sayyid Qutb who is said to like violence instead of a political approach such as, his understanding of *Qutubiyah Khawarijiyah*, theory of *Tauhid Hakimiyyah* and *Takfir* and his words against Sayyidina Uthman who said that his management deviated from Islam. Thus, this study will prove the truth about Sayyid Qutb by referring to other secondary sources.

Therefore, the study of the Qur'an through the method of interpretation can attract interest and facilitate the understanding of Muslims related to Islamic politics. If all Muslims know and understand how important politics is in Islam, whether they learn through interpretation or other methods, then Islam will return to become a sovereign country and Muslims can carry out their religious demands perfectly and safely.

Politics and Religious Demands

Politics from the point of view of basic meaning is governance. It is human behavior in managing a business to achieve a goal. Specifically, politics that is understood directly in the mind in the current framework is the power of government and national administration.

Understood from the point of view of that meaning, the politics that are used now take the translation from the Arabic word called *siyasaah*. And this word is used by Rasulullah S.A.W.

¹ Qadhi, Y. (2017). *Pearls from the Quran*. Retrieved November 10, 2022, From Muslim Central: <https://muslimcentral.com/yasir-qadhi-pearls-quran-14-ramadan-2017/>.

² Shukeri Muhammad (1997). *Kepimpinan Islam: Satu Agenda Pembangunan Ummah*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya. *Jurnal Usuluddin*, Vol. 6, 131–148.

to express the Messengers who lead or manage the affairs of their people, according to the text of the hadith from Abu Hurairah that Rasulullah S.A.W. said:

كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ، كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي، وَسَيَكُونُ بَعْدِي خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْتُمُونَ³

Meaning: "It is the Bani Israel; they are led in their affairs by the Prophets. When a Prophet dies, another Prophet comes to replace him. There will be no Prophet after me, but there will be many caliphs."

Understood from the hadith above, it shows politics in the sense of managing the affairs of those under his leadership. Therefore, Islamic politics lead human affairs to achieve good in the world and lead them to the path of Allah S.W.T.

The Concept of *Khalifah* and General Politics

The word caliph or *khalifah* is synonymous with the political role in Islam. This is because the duty of the *khalifah* is not only about matters of worship but also very important in administering the entire system of human life that depends on politics. Some opinions relate the term *khalifah* only to the Messenger. Based on thematic al-Qur'an, the meaning of *khalifah* is apostle, not human in general. This is due to the argument that God wants to make the caliphate on earth reserved for Prophet Adam.⁴ The story of Iblis being proud of Prophet Adam, disobeying God's command and finally being cursed shows that it stems from the status of the caliphate that only deserves to be given to the Messenger.

However, based on the opinion of Islamic scholars such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Taimiyyah and al-Mawardi, the title and responsibility of caliph is not only given to the Messenger but will be given to any human being especially those who believe throughout the ages. Imam al-Mawardi defines the *khalifah* as upholding religion and managing world affairs based on religion. This statement is the result of the manifestation of al-Qur'an texts and hadiths which mention that political, economic and social tasks must always be carried out by believers after the absence of the Messengers. For example, Abu Bakr thus became the *khalifah* of the Messenger of God and in this way the caliphate was founded, an institution that had no equivalent and was destined never to have any outside the Muslim world.⁵

The Qur'an contains guidance and teachings about politics. While it primarily focuses on matters of spirituality, morality, and personal conduct, it also touches upon principles of governance and societal affairs. Here are a few examples of verses from the Quran that touch upon political themes:

³ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Ismail. (2005). *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Riyadh: Bait al-Afkar al-Duwaliyyah, no. 3455.

⁴ Rahmat, M., & , F. (2018). *Understanding the Meaning of Khalifah fil ardh in the Quran and Implications on Education*. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, p.28.

⁵ Vaglieri, L. (1977). *The Patriarchal and Umayyad caliphates*. Cambridge: Cambridge Universiti Press, 55.

1. “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.”⁶ This verse emphasizes the importance of obeying those in positions of authority, indicating that Muslims should follow the guidance of both Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as the legitimate leaders of their community.

2. “And We have certainly sent messengers before you (Muhammad), and We assigned to them wives and descendants. And it was not for a messenger to come with a sign except by permission of Allah. For every term is a decree.”⁷ This verse acknowledges that Messengers and leaders are appointed by Allah and have specific responsibilities. It highlights the notion that leadership is a divinely ordained role and not a matter of personal choice or ambition.

3. “And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is (determined by) consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend.”⁸ This verse highlights the significance of consultation (*shura*) in decision-making. It indicates that the affairs of the believers are determined through mutual consultation, suggesting a participatory and democratic approach to governance.

4. “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.”⁹ This verse emphasizes the importance of justice and impartiality. It encourages Muslims to stand firm in upholding justice, even if it goes against own interests or the interests of their loved ones. This verse promotes the idea that justice should be the guiding principle in political and social interactions.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Application of *Tahlili* Methods

According to Salah 'Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi, Sayyid Qutb used the *al-tahlili* method in interpreting *tafsir*. The meaning of *tahlili* method is to interpret the verses of the Qur'an by displaying all the aspects contained in the interpreted verses and explaining the meanings included in them in accordance under the expertise and inclination of the commentator who interprets the verses.¹⁰

The *tahlili* method also is a method that tries to explain the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an from various aspects, based on the sequence of verses or surah in the *mushaf*, by highlighting the content of the words, the relationship between the verses, the relationship

⁶ Surah al-Nisa', 59.

⁷ Surah al-Ra'd, 38.

⁸ Surah al-Shura, 38.

⁹ Surah al-Nisa', 135.

¹⁰ Nasirudin Baidan. (1998). *Metodologi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 132.

between the *surah*, the reasons for its descent, the hadiths related to it, the opinions of previous commentators and the commentator himself is colored by his educational background and expertise.

There are two advantages of this method, firstly, a wide scope. This method can be used by commentators in two forms; *ma'tsur* and *ra'yi* can be developed in various interpretations according to the expertise of the commentator. For example, get a wide opportunity to interpret the Qur'an from a linguistic understanding, such as *Tafsir al-Nasafi*, written by Abu al-Su'ud, qiraat experts such as Abu Hayyan, making *qiraat* the starting point in his interpretation.

Similarly, philosophers, books of interpretation dominated by philosophical thoughts such as *Tafsir al-Fakhr al-Razi*. Those who are inclined towards science and technology interpret the Qur'an from the point of view of scientific or scientific theories such as *Tafsir al-Jawahir* by al-Tanthawi al-Jauhari. Secondly, it contains various views of relative analytical methods, providing a wide opportunity for commentators to express their views and ideas in interpreting the Qur'an. That means the interpretation pattern of this method can accommodate various ideas by commentators.

According to Sri Aliyah (2013), *Tafsir Fi Zhilali Al-Quran* as a book containing *al-tahlili* methods has special features:¹¹

a) The Principle of Naqliyah Based on al-Quran and Hadith

Fi Zilal al-Qur'an is written based on directly derived from the al-Qur'an and Hadith by bringing the narrations of *ma'thurat*. Sayyid Qutb uses a method of interpretation that cleans the interpretation of the Qur'an from side conversations and distractions such as discussions of language and grammar, the science of penmanship and the science of jurisprudence as well as *Israiliyat*, fairy tales that are common in most other interpretations. Sayyid Qutb also rejects the *ta'wil* (paraphrase) method of al-Qur'an expressions that are not clear in meaning. This dimension of the *naqliyah* interpretation method has led Islamic scholars to consider Sayyid Qutb as a special teacher in the field of interpretation who is the key to the best way to understand the content of the holy book.

b) Integrated and Aligned

Fi Zilal al-Qur'an has been compiled in a form that is coherent, consistent, and interconnected between one verse and another in each *surah*, making each interpretation an organized and clear unit. Unlike other interpretations that lead to the separation of the chain of verses. This interpretation is also an interpretation that makes the Qur'an speak to the whole human being, with his spirit and soul, intellect and mind, nature, and conscience as well as his feelings and sentiments. It makes the discussions of the Quran so clear in meaning, many inspirations, broad and deep, making the human mind so attracted and fascinated.

¹¹ Aliyah, S. (2013). *Kaedah-kaedah Tafsir Fi Zhilaali al-Quran*. Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, dan Fenomena Agama. Palembang: Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam UIN Raden Fatah. 14(2), 39-60. Retrieved from <http://jurnal.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/JIA/article/view/468>.

c) Cultural Analysis and Deep Thinking

Fi Zilal al-Qur'an examines the way of life against the backdrop of *Jahiliyyah* culture, which has influenced human life throughout the ages, and keeps away the deception of all the enemies of Islam, who are so scheming and use false scientific studies to destroy holy Islam and try to attract Muslim scholars into deviation from the true foundation of religion. Sayyid Qutb in his interpretation also always emphasizes the phenomenon of the teachings of Islam is not limited to certain times. This interpretation keeps away various forms of understanding created by the human mind that leads to the act of shirk that deifies fellow human beings, trends that deify reason, science, and technology as well as hedonism trends that lower human dignity to the status of animals.

Sayyid Qutb's linguistic writing in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* interpretation is highly lovely and interesting. This presentation of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* describes the life of Sayyid Qutb as a preacher who is very patient, persistent, pleased, calm, peaceful, full of trust in Allah SWT and never giving up on the mercy of Allah SWT. *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* which means "In the Shade of the Qur'an" is an accurate title with the function and nature of the Quran which is described as a tree of grace with lush and shady branches, providing a shadow, a calm atmosphere, triggering various inspirations, to every listener and reader who is serious and earnest. His experience and life journey are important factors that gave birth to *Tafsir Fi Zhilali Al-Quran* in the form of a unique commentary compared to other interpretations.¹²

This book has been translated into various foreign languages, including English, French, Turkish, Urdu, Afghanistan, Persian, Malaysian and Indonesian. In addition, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* has also been the object of study by many of experts, for example; Muhammad Tawfiq Barakat who wrote the *Khulasat Hayatih: Manhajuhu fi al-Harakah wa al-Naqd al-Muwajjah Ilaihi*, Yusuf al-A'zam wrote *Ra'id al-Fikr al-Islami al-Mu'ashir al-Shahid Sayyid Qutb* and Ahmad Faiz wrote *al-Yaum al-Akhir Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*.

General Side of the Sayyid Qutb's Method of Interpretation

The method comes from the Greek language is *methodos*, which means way or path. In Arabic translate it with *tariqat* and *manhaj* which contain meaning, a well-ordered and well-thought-out way to achieve the purpose, a systematic way of working to facilitate the implementation of an activity to achieve something determined.¹³

Sayyid Qutb used the *tahlili* method, a method of interpretation that means explaining the content of the verses of the Qur'an and all its aspects. The *mufassir* follows the order of the verse according to the *mushaf (tartib mushhafi)*, presents the meaning of the vocabulary, the explanation of the global meaning of the verse, presents the reasonableness and discusses the reason for *al-nuzul*, accompanied by the Prophet's Sunnah, the opinion of the companions, *tabi'i* and the opinion of the interpreter himself, and often mixed with discussions and others that are seen to help understand the text of the Qur'an.

¹² Ibid., 60.

¹³ Nasirudin Baidan (1998), *Metodologi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 24.

In fact, his method is the fruit of his enthusiasm to enter the realm of the Qur'an without the various preconceived notions and from his belief in the richness of the Qur'an as well as its many meanings and inspirations. The method stands on two levels.¹⁴ Related to this, 'Adnan Zurzur stated, the process of interpretation that Sayyid Qutb went through includes two stages; first, reading the entire Qur'anic surah several times, then pondering it for several days, until Allah gives guidance on the main meaning and information about the *surah*. When the interpretation was clear in front of him, he wrote it down (if possible) immediately.

Second, after completing the process of interpretation of a *surah* or verse, Sayyid Qutb cross-checks previous interpretation works, to find out the cause of *al-nuzul*, fragments of fiqh discussions, hadiths, or authentic narrations, to find amplification of information. This statement, according to Zurzur, shows that Sayyid Qutb did not leave authentic narrations in the process of *tafsir bil al-ma'thur*.¹⁵

In *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, it always tries to return to the reference and take the source. The taking of this source has two forms. First, take thoughts in general, or instructions and provisions and do not quote specific words. It is enough to show the reference to the reader. Second, taking words to be used as argumentation, proof, illustration or explanation, then citing them often by using quotation marks, and sometimes by showing references and pages in footnotes. The citation done by him meets the criteria of writing methodology.

This shows that, despite the initial analysis, the style of his interpretation, in fact, does not come out of the existing context - except for the substance and spirit of his interpretation which is indeed different. This statement at the same time contradicts several comments, for example Abdul Muid Nawawi, who believes that Sayyid Qutb's interpretation is autonomous, not bound by the views of previous writers and therefore stands on its own.

According to Muhsin Mahfudz (2013), the interpretation of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* is sourced from:¹⁶

- i. Al-Qur'an with al-Qur'an.
- ii. Narration from the Prophet.
- iii. The word of companions that is considered an expert in interpretation.
- iv. The words of the famous *mufassirin*.
- v. Discoveries of modern science (although not as popular as source of interpretation).

As a modern interpretation, of course the approaches used by Qutb are visible. Some of the approaches used give color to readers when reading this interpretation. As follows:

- i. Language approach (linguistic approach); that the whole commentary of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* is displayed by Qutb with great attention to the beauty of language.

¹⁴ Al-Khalidi, Salah 'Abd al-Fattah. (2012). *Ta'rif al-Darisin bi Manahij al-Mufassirin*. Dubai: Dar al-Kalam, 176.

¹⁵ Ibid., 176.

¹⁶ Muhsin Mahfudz, (2013). *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an: Tafsir Gerakan Sayyid Quthub*. Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin. Makassar: Program Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Filsafat, 133.

- ii. Scientific approach: a large part of the tafsir volume included scientific arguments, such as history, physics, biology, chemistry and so on.
- iii. Psychological approach: in many places Qutb always uses psychoanalysis, social psychology and so on.
- iv. Social approach (sociological approach); almost the whole of his interpretation is social criticism, especially of the society that refuses Islamic civilization, which he calls 'modern *jahiliyyah*'.

It can be said that Sayyid Qutb interpretation of the Qur'an can be classified into *al-Adabi al-Ijtima'i* (literary, cultural, and social) interpretation. This is considering his background as a writer so that he can feel the beauty of language and the values that the Qur'an brings which is indeed rich with a very high style of language.¹⁷

Criticism of *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*

Like most other scholars, Sayyid Qutb is also not missed to criticism. Muhammad al-Ghazali, the religious overseer in Egypt once discovered the deficiency of Qutb in his interpretation when he came to the interpretation of *Surah al-Buruj* which contained the conditions of his torture and suffering with other mujahids in Liman Turrah prison. Until it was decreed by Muhammad al-Ghazali to be deleted before it was published.¹⁸

Sayyid Qutb interpretation can be seen to be influenced by his background as a militant of the radical preaching movement, so the content of his interpretation is nothing more than a collection of religious lectures.¹⁹ Although Jansen himself did not see it from the perspective of the Qur'an as a preaching mission, but solely from the perspective of science. Some commentators also criticized the scientific interpretations that Sayyid Qutb often published in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Scholars such as Muhammad Rashid Ridha say the incorporation of scientific interpretation is the bad luck of Muslims in the field of interpretation. That is what happened to *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Rejection of this kind of interpretation is also done by experts such as al-Syathibi, al-Maraghi, Mahmud Syaltut and Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi.²⁰

With the statement above, it can be known that *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* interpretation is not free from shortcomings, it needs to be understood that this book should not always be seen from the author's aspect only, but it should also be highlighted from the socio-political aspect where the interpretation was written. *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* at that time spoke to the Egyptian society which he saw as modern *Jahiliyyah* so, it was necessary to be given an understanding of the nature of *da'wah*. The political situation of Egypt at that time under the influence of Western imperialism forced Qutb to show evidence of his crimes against Muslims. However,

¹⁷ Mahdi Fadullah. (1991). *Titik Temu Agama dan Politik: Analisa Pemikiran Sayyid Quthb*. Solo: Ramadhani, 114.

¹⁸ Al-Khalidi, Salah 'Abd al-Fatah (2001). *Madkhal ila Zhilal al-Qur'an*. Solo: Era Intermedia, 59.

¹⁹ Jansen, J.J.G., (1997). *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997, 128.

²⁰ al-Muhtasib, 'Abd al-Majid 'Abd al-Salam. (1997). *Ittijahat al-Tafsir fi al-Ashr al-Rahin* translated by Moh. Magfur Wahid titled *Visi dan Paradigma Tafsir al Qur'an Kontemporer*. Surabaya, al-Izzah. 318.

this deficiency of this tafsir cannot be denied, but it must be acknowledged that Sayyid Qutb has made an invaluable contribution to the Islamic world.²¹

Concepts in Political Verses

To observe the concept of politics in the Qur'an, three verses are presented as examples:

Allah S.W.T. said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا²²

Meaning: “Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

In the interpretation of this verse, Sayyid Qutb explained two important things. First, why humans are the greatest trustees compared to other creatures. Then Sayyid Qutb explained how people can fulfil their trust. Second, Sayyid Qutb explained the concept of justice in Islam and advised to the government and judges to always *muqarabah* to Allah so that the decisions that will be made can be made fairly and economically.

The first point in this verse, Sayyid Qutb mentioned, these are the duties of the Muslim group, and this is their morals, which is to fulfill the trust and responsibilities to those who are entitled to receive them and conduct justice between people fairly according to the rules of God and the lesson.

Those trusts start from the great trust, which is the trust that God hands over to human nature, the trust that refuses to be accepted and is afraid to be carried by the sky, the earth and the mountains and then carried by human beings, which is the trust of guidance and enlightenment and faith in God which arises from intention, from a will, from earnest effort and the inclination of the heart. Only man is the only creature that is left to his nature, intellect, knowledge, will, inclination and the efforts he pours to reach God with God's help.

Then, Sayyid Qutb brought a verse from the Qur'an for anyone who tries to seek God's pleasure, Allah S.W.T. said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ²³

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.”

From this great trust arose all other trusts that God commanded to be fulfilled by humans. Among those trusts is the trust of proving the truth of the religion of Islam to oneself

²¹ Muhsin Mahfudz, (2013). *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an: Tafsir Gerakan Sayyid Quthub*. Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin. Makassar: Program Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Filsafat, 187.

²² *Surah al-Nisa*, 58.

²³ *Surah al-Ankabut*, 69.

by striving to make oneself a translation for this religion, that is, a translation that lives in one's feelings and behaviors so that the public can see the image of the religion and make them interested.

Next Sayyid Qutb explained the concept of justice in Islam. Sayyid Qutb said, justice is not only between Muslims and not just justice towards the people of the Book, but rather justice is also the right of every human being with his nature as a "human being" because it is only this nature that creates the right to justice.

Allah S.W.T. said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا 24٥٩

Meaning: "O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best (way) and best in result."

This verse explained the conditions of faith and Islam of a servant. The advantage of this verse is that it provides constant detail and balance to Muslims in choosing and obeying leaders. Sayyid Qutb divided two titles related to this verse. The first, is the right to establish laws. The second, is the advantage of being in God's system.²⁵ The first, is the right to establish a law in human affairs is owned by Allah and Allah has arranged the Sharia and contains it in the Qur'an. Among the characteristics of *uluhiyah* is the power to establish laws and the obligation to obey the apostle because of his nature as a messenger from God.

The word "*ulul amr*" or leaders are those from the group of believers who have the conditions of faith and limits of Islam that have been explained in the verse that obligates obedience to God and the Messenger. This verse makes obedience to Allah a basic obedience and makes obedience to His Messenger also a basic obedience because he was sent by Allah. Then Allah made obedience to the rulers of *mu'minin* as obedience that follows obedience to God and obedience to His Messenger. That is why the Al-Qur'an does not repeat the words "obedient" when mentioning "rulers" as it repeats it when mentioning the Prophet S.A.W. This is to explain that obedience to the rulers is obedience to Allah and obedience to His Messenger after the Qur'an explains that the rulers must be from the group of believers who follow the conditions.

Then, Sayyid Qutb brought a hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* related to the limits of obedience to the government. Rasulullah S.A.W. said:

إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ 26

²⁴ Surah al-Nisa', 59.

²⁵ Sayyid Qutb. (2000). *Inilah Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam, 46.

²⁶ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Ismail. (2005). *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Riyadh: Bait al-Afkar al-Duwaliyyah, no. 7257.

“Indeed, obedience is only in good things.”

Then, the next hadith from *Sahih Muslim*. Rasulullah S.A.W. said:

وَلَوْ اسْتُعْمِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ يُفُودُكُمْ بَكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَأَطِيعُوا²⁷

Meaning: “Even if the on him”. O commands you are a servant who leads you with the book of God, obey him and follow him.”

The second, privilege is in God's system. There are four features noted by Sayyid Qutb in his interpretation:

- i. To benefit from the rules created by the all-wise and all-knowing God. It is a rule or system that is safe from human weakness and lust and does not choose love for a certain person or race.
- ii. A system created by the human creator himself who knows the essence of human nature and its needs.
- iii. Determination in accordance by the laws of nature.
- iv. Allowing to the intelligent mind to engage in *ijtihad* in problems that can be handled by humans.

The Main Political Concepts

Based on the interpretation Sayyid Qutb's, concepts on politics can be highlighted in the findings below:

Ulul Amri Must Exist in Society

Based on the author's study of the principles of Islamic government in the interpretation of Sayyid Qutb, it can be concluded that the first principle is the emphasis on who is worthy to be called *ulul amri*, secondly, upholding the law of Allah and thirdly, being fair to all human groups.

From his thinking, *Ulu al-Amr* is the group of believers themselves, who have fulfilled the conditions of faith, namely those who obey God and His Messenger. Also, *ulu al-amr* are those who affirm Allah S.W.T. as the owner of the sovereignty of the law and establish the Sharia for all people, practice the law from Him, and return to Him all matters that are in dispute. For Sayyid Qutb, obedience to Allah and His Messenger is absolute. But obedience to *ulul amri* is only as long as they follow obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Obedience to *ulu al-amr* has its limit.

This obedience, according to him, is in matters that are not prohibited by the *Sharia*. He quotes the Hadith of al-Bukhari and Muslim from al-A'mash; *innama al-ta'ah fi al-ma'ruf (truly obedience is only in positive things)*. Sayyid Qutb also quotes the *sahihayn hadith* from

²⁷ Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj (1998). *Sahih Muslim*. Riyadh: Bait al-Afkar al-Duwaliyyah, no.1838.

Yahya al-Qattan; it is obligatory for a Muslim to listen and obey what he likes or does not like, as long as he is not commanded to commit immorality. When commanded by immorality, it is prohibited to obey it at all.

Such an understanding of *ulu al-amri*, with the limitation of a leader who only obeys Allah and His Messenger (excluding non-Muslim leaders), is probably stuck so strongly in his heart, mind and movement, that with his *haraki* soul, Sayyid Qutb is ready to directly confront the government or rulers that he judges to have gone beyond the limits of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, especially the government that devotes to *taghut*.²⁸

Enforcement of God's Law

Regarding his interpretation of *Surah al-Ma'idah*: 44-45, about people who do not judge by God's law (they are infidels and tyrants), Sayyid Qutb wrote, human life will not be straight unless creed, *syiar* and *sharia* comes from the same source which has power over the heart and conscience. If the power is divided and the source is not just one which is God's power is only placed in the heart. Also God's power to make rules and laws is mandated to someone other than God. Every Muslim must understand that while the power to give punishment in the world is given to someone other than Him, then at that moment the human soul is divided into two powers, because of different directions and methods. This makes the destruction of human life according to Sayyid Qutb perspective's.

For that, anyone who does not refer to God's law, according to his interpretation, is considered *kafir* for rejecting God's *uluhiyyah*. On the other hand, the person who claims to have the divine right to make sharia is also called a tyrant, because he leads people to a sharia other than his sharia. They also oppressed themselves by throwing him into destruction, preparing him to be tortured for his disbelief, and plunging human life into destruction.

People who do not judge by God's law, are called *kafirun* and *zalimun* (al-Ma'idah: 44-45), or *fasiqun* (al-Ma'idah: 47). This verses become law with some guidance of Sharia. In the meantime, Sayyid Qutb wants to warn that *kufur* (infidelity) can happen because rejecting Allah's *uluhiyyah*, is affected by the rejection of sharia. About *Zalimun* status, he wants to remind the leaders to not ignore the sharia and spread damage in community lives. *While the fasiq*, he want to remind every Muslim not to leave God's way and follow other than his way because driven by ignorance and worldliness.²⁹

Implement of Justice

²⁸ Nurul Huda, Dr. (2015). *Ash-Shahid dan Nuansa Haraki fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Jurnal al-Fath. Indonesia: Faculty of Ushuluddin and Adab, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State Islamic University of Banten, 11.

²⁹ Sayyid Qutb. (2000). *Inilah Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam, 49.

About Sayyid Qutb's spirit of justice, it can be found in his interpretation of *Surah al-Nisa'*: 135. He wrote justice is a great mandate handed over to believers, the trust of leadership over to all people and deciding the law on people fairly. Therefore, the call by mentioning the characteristics of their faith has its value and meaning, “*O people of faith...!*”. Allah S.W.T. mentioned this character, because of the task of shouldering a great trust.

In Sayyid Qutb perspective's, must to encourages Muslims to be enforcers of justice. Justice, in that verse, should also be upheld to children, fathers or relatives, and the closest people. This is the duty of Muslims as well as their morals, which is to fulfill the mandate to those who are entitled to receive it and decide the law fairly between people, according to the *manhaj* and teachings of Allah S.W.T. That is justice, the great mandate that Muslims must fulfill. That means, tyranny is the opposite of what was mentioned earlier, and that is always the enemy to be fought.

Next, the meaning of politics according to the view of Sayyid Qutb in his interpretation is that managing or taking care of the affairs of Muslims is a political responsibility that Allah SWT has placed on the shoulders of the government. Caring for the people means taking care of the people's interests, which means fulfilling all the rights and obligations of the people according to the provisions that God has ordered over them. For every individual Muslim and the Islamic movement, they are also obliged to be political with the obligatory intention on them to observe the affairs or interests of Muslims. They must ensure that they are 'regulated' (by the government) with Islamic laws and it is also obligatory for them to reflect on the government if the government does not apply Islamic law or ignores the welfare of Muslims. In this regard, Allah S.W.T. has mandated the existence of a group (movement) from among Muslims to invite people to Islam and to do *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*.³⁰

Negative Implications of Not Understanding Islamic Politics

The main purpose of Islamic politics is to protect the interests of Islam and control its security. If the leadership does not carry out the responsibility of preserving religion, then various bad things will befall the country and Muslims. The symptoms will further destroy the unity of Muslims and can lead to the destruction of the people. These signs of collapse once befall Muslims during the leadership of the Abbasid dynasty. They ignited the flame of Arab nationalism by fanning the spirit of classification between Arabs and non-Arabs, thus burning the unity of Muslims at that time. In the end, the country and the government became weak because of the division of the people that could not be contained anymore. Apart from that, some leaders at that time were also directly tempted by the temptations of their world and forgot the duty of preserving the purity and integrity of Islam.³¹

As another example, we can see the planning of Europe after losing the "Crusade" with the forces of the commander Salahuddin al-Ayubi. Their planning happens softly and slowly.

³⁰ Nurul Huda, Dr. (2015). *Ash-Shahid dan Nuansa Haraki fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Jurnal al-Fath. Indonesia: Faculty of Ushuluddin and Adab, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State Islamic University of Banten, 11.

³¹ Shukeri Muhammad (1997). *Kepimpinan Islam: Satu Agenda Pembangunan Ummah*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya. Jurnal Usuluddin, Vol. 6, 148.

The consequences that occur are destroying Islamic law, destroying the Qur'an, destroying the morals of Muslims, destroying the Islamic *ukhuwwah* of Muslims, making Muslims doubt their religion, letting the Arab nation remain weak, creating a political dictator system in the Islamic world, keeping people away Muslims from the ability to produce and let them remain consumers of western production, hinder strong Muslim people from gaining power in a Muslim-majority country so that the power of Islam does not rise destroy women and spread sexual depravity.³²

Part of the controversy about Sayyid Qutb is that he often associates groups that fail to translate the Islamic system including Islamic politics as *jahiliyyah*. This is one of the accusations of extremism that have been tried to be thrown at Sayyid Qutb writings. The word *jahiliyyah*, when applied to individuals or communities, does not carry the context of *kufr*. Sayyid Qutb also is associated with *takfir* issue. Imam Hasan al-Banna outlined a simple conclusion in *Usul 'Ishrin*:

“Let us not disbelieve a Muslim who pledges with two words of shahadah and acts according to his demands and completes what is obligatory on him based on one opinion he holds or one sin he commits; except if he confesses with the word kufr or denies things that are necessary and should be known about religion, denies the evidence of the Qur'an, or interprets it according to a perspective that does not conform to the Arabic style of a matter, or makes a practice that does not carry any meaning other than disbelief.”

Ikhwan al-Muslimin is an organization closely related to Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. This movement is not mistaken in understanding the text and context in the series of writings of Sayyid Qutb. Even the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* voiced their objections in a peaceful way, as well as using democracy to gain political legitimacy in government. They also denied being involved in any terrorism and radicalism activities in Egypt or any other country, such as ISIS. The violence that happened in Sinai, for example, is just an old puppet that tries to scapegoat the Muslim Brotherhood, as happened during the time of Jamal 'Abd al-Nasser.³³

3. CONCLUSION

For Sayyid Qutb, Islam is a comprehensive revolution to liberate mankind from man-made systems, to establish the kingdom of God on earth. And the concept of tauhid is a principle of human liberation. In this sense, Islam considers the first step toward the realization of this scheme as the liberation and purification of the soul. The idea of Sayyid Qutb's political thought has been widely discussed, especially after the emergence of many movements that invite to return to the rule of God. Some may take it to raise the spirit of love for Islam and have pure intentions, but some people only use lust and *ghuluw* in arguing for this kind of thinking.

³² Hasanuddin Yusuf Adan. (2016). *Syari'at Islam dan Politik Local di Aceh*. Banda Aceh: 'Adnin Foundation Publisher, 40.

³³ Amar Ismat (2015). *Sayyid Qutb dan Takfir: Sebuah Penjelasan*. Retrieved 12 January 2023 from: <https://www.amarismat.com/2015/03/sayyid-qutb-dan-takfir-sebuah-penjelasan.html?m=1>

The method of interpretation used by Sayyid Qutb in interpreting the Islamic political verses of *Surah al-Haj* verses 58 and 59 is the *tahlili* method, and the description is quite long, and the meaning can be understood. Sayyid Qutb included some hadiths of the prophet and verses from another surah when interpreting and discussing the verses. The hadith is brought simply as a support because it is also related to the verse discussed. In conclusion, Sayyid Qutb, was a leading Muslim thinker of his day, His works, ideas, and his systematic approaches continue to be a fertile source of inspiration for Islamic revivalists in all corners of the world at least in our day.

Sayyid Qutb's struggle in upholding the truth of Islamic teachings caused many effects and reactions on the entire Muslim community. As a courageous and tenacious Islamic figures, Sayyid Qutb should be emulated by the Muslim community. The construction of this ummah's civilization was done by him because he saw the state of the Muslim community now becoming increasingly distorted due to the current modernization. The development of the *Ummah* civilization had an impact on the Muslim community, especially the Egyptian community as well as the Muslim community. Community building through these various forms becomes an example and role model for the Muslim community around the world to raise the dignity of the Muslim community. The struggle carried by Sayyid Qutb became a follower of Islamic fighters after him in their efforts to build the strength of Muslims and the progress of Islam.

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