

# Epistemology of Interpretation of Women's Leadership Verses in the Qur'an (Comparative Study of *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* and *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh*)

Achmad Amry Zumaro A'laa

Arabic Language Teacher at Al Izzah Batu High School  
achmadamry03@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Epistemology of interpretation is a discipline that critically analyses the basis of the theory of knowledge of interpretation. The epistemological study of interpretation includes the source, method and validity of interpretation. In this case, the author studies the epistemology of two *mufasssir*, Bisri Mustofa in *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* and Quraish Shihab in *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh*. The type of research used is library research and interpretation of women's leadership verses as the object. The method used is descriptive-analytical. The author examines women's leadership verses and epistemological theories as her analytical knife. The results of this study explain the epistemological structure of the two *mufasssir*, First, the source of interpretation: Bisri Mustofa refers to intellect (*ra'yu*), while Quraish Shihab refers to the texts of the Qur'an, hadith, and opinions of scholars, opinions of scientists, the use of reason (*ra'yu*) and historical data; Second, the methodology of interpretation: a) both *mufasssir* use the *tahlili* (analysis) method, b) Bisri Mustofa uses a textual approach, while Quraish Shihab is more contextual; Third, the validity of the interpretation: a) coherence, the second interpretation of *mufasssir*, it is enough to maintain its consistency, b) correspondence, Bisri Mustofa's interpretation has no relevance to the reality at that time. Meanwhile, the interpretation of Quraish Shihab has relevance and is quite relevant to the reality of society c) pragmatically, Bisri Mustofa's interpretation does not make an adequate contribution to society because of its textual interpretation. Meanwhile, the interpretation of Quraish Shihab contributes to society because it uses a contextual approach.

**Keywords:** Bisri Mustofa; Epistemology; Quraish Shihab; Interpreting women's leadership verses.

## Introduction

The continuous interpretation of the Qur'an is influenced not only by the change in the context of time and place but also by the epistemological model of interpretation used. History shows that the understanding of the Qur'an developed dynamically and significantly through socio-cultural and human progress, as well as the critical-epistemological understanding of the interpreters. This development is also influenced by the interpreter's background and the interpretation method applied, including differences in intellectual tendencies, motivations, science, and socio-cultural contexts surrounding *mufasssir*.<sup>1</sup>

In this study, the two *mufasssir* used as the object of study were Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab. Both have significant differences in interpreting the Qur'an, including mastery and scientific focus, generational differences, language, script, and interpretation typology. In science, Bisri Mustofa is not only a *mufasssir* but also an expert in Fiqh and *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, which influences the pattern of interpretation in *Tafsīr*

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta, 2010). 1

*Al-Ibriz*. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab has a strong intellectual tendency in the field of tafsir with great emphasis on linguistic aspects.<sup>2</sup>

Differences in time periods are also a factor in the interpretation of products that are born. Likewise with the following two *mufassir*, namely. Bisri Mustofa produced his work in the 20th century CE, and Quraish Shihab authored him in the 21st century. On the other hand, there is a difference in the aspect of the language used. Bisri Mustofa's *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* uses the local language in the Pegon Arabic script.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab uses Indonesian. In addition, there are also differences in the typology of interpretation used. Bisri Mustofa tends to apply a textual approach with a short and simple language style. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab tends to apply a contextual approach.<sup>4</sup>

In the context previously explained, various kinds of differences can be identified; therefore, this study will focus on the epistemological aspects of interpretation in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* by Bisri Mustofa and *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab. This research will make women's leadership the object of discussion because this discourse is still reaping pros and cons in the community. The theological foundations that are often used in this discussion are QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71 and QS. Saba' [34]: 15 So what is the actual role of women in the public sphere and their position as leaders in the perspective of the Qur'an. This discussion is very important to find out how the construction of *mufassir* thought and the epistemology of its interpretation ultimately affect the products of interpretation produced.

There have been a lot of studies about the two *mufassir* figures, starting from the study of the interpretation method between the two figures. Among other things, Abu Rokhmad's research on "Analysis of the Characteristics of Arabic Tafsir Pegon Tafsir Al-Ibriz", in his research it was stated that the method of interpretation of Bisri Mustofa in tafsir al-Tabriz uses the *tahlili* method that adjusts to the starting *mushaf*. Meanwhile, the exploration of meaning uses the principle of linguistic-based exploration.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in the research conducted by Faiqoh entitled "Bisri Mustofa's Interpretation of Verses about Women in the Book of Al-Ibriz", the researcher tried to explore verses related to women in the context of Javanese society at that time. However, this study only focuses on the relevance of these verses to the condition of Javanese society without conducting a comprehensive investigation of the epistemological aspects of interpretation.<sup>6</sup>

Then a study by Achmad Mudhofar 'Afif with the title "Gender Equality in Islamic Sharia (The Study of Bisri Mustofa's Thought in *Al-Ibriz li Ma'rifah Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Aziz*)". In this study, the approach used is descriptive-qualitative to analyze Bisri Mustofa's thoughts in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*. The findings of this study conclude that Bisri Mustofa's interpretation tends to show a gender bias, which is significantly

<sup>2</sup> Atik Wartini, "Corak Penafsiran M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah," *HUNafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 11, no. 1 (2014): 109, <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v11i1.343.109-126>.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Rokhmad, "Telaah Karakteristik Tafsir Arab Pegon Al-Ibriz," *Analisa XVIII*, no. 01 (2011): 27–38, <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/42000-ID-telaah-karakteristik-tafsir-arab-pegon-al-ibriz.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Yayat Suharyat and Siti Asiah, "Metodologi Tafsir Al-Mishbah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia : Teori, Penelitian, Dan Inovasi* 2, no. 5 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.59818/jpi.v2i5.289>.

<sup>5</sup> Rokhmad, "Telaah Karakteristik Tafsir Arab Pegon Al-Ibriz."

<sup>6</sup> Faiqoh, "Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Perempuan Dalam Kitab Al-Faiqoh.," *Skripsi Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga*, 2013, 130.

influenced by the Javanese culture in which it is contested.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the research by Farida is entitled "*Women's Leadership in the Qur'an (Comparative Study of Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh and Tafsir Ibn Katsir)*". This study concludes that the interpretation by Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* uses a contextual approach and pays attention to sociological aspects, that leadership does not depend on gender differences, but rather on competence. Meanwhile, Ibn Katsir tended to adopt a textual approach and cited normative texts that stated that men were leaders for women.<sup>8</sup>

Of the several studies that have existed between the two *mufassir* figures, the existing research is only in the source area and interpretation method and has not reached the test of the results of the interpretation of the two *mufassir* using the theory of validity in epistemology. This study explores the epistemological aspects of the two interpretations by comparing the interpretations of verses about women's leadership in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* written by Bisri Mustofa and *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* by Quraish Shihab. Although research has been carried out on the two books mentioned, research that specifically focuses on the epistemological dimension is still relatively limited.

This inspired the author to conduct more thorough and comprehensive research related to the epistemology of the interpretation of verses regarding the role of women's leadership in two tafsir works, namely *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* written by Bisri Mustofa and *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* compiled by Quraish Shihab. Although many previous studies have been conducted to examine the interpretive principles applied by the two commentators, there has been no specific and in-depth research that reveals the epistemological construction of the interpretation of women's leadership verses in their two works.

This research aims to explore and formulate a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of interpretation carried out by Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab in the context of verses related to women's leadership. In addition, this research will also clearly reveal the sources of interpretation used by these two *mufassir* figures, as well as the methods they apply in unravelling the meaning of these verses. Not only that, this research is also determined to explore the quality of the truth of these interpretations can be verified and the extent to which their accuracy can be accounted for epistemologically.

In this study, the method used is literature (*library research*) focusing on the study of verses related to women's leadership in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* by Bisri Mustofa and *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* by Quraish Shihab. This interpretation uses a descriptive-analytical approach where it allows for a deep understanding, supported by the application of epistemological theories to complete the conceptual framework of this research.<sup>9</sup>

In the early stages of the research, the researcher will collect data through literacy of women's leadership verses by referring to *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* and *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* as the main sources. Then, the researcher will apply the epistemological theoretical framework to analyse the findings produced through the descriptive-analytical approach. Researchers will use a variety of epistemological theories, such

<sup>7</sup> Achmad Mudhofar Afif, Maskur Rosyid, and Lutfi, "Gender Equality in Islamic Sharia (the Study of Bisri Mustofa'S Thought in Al-Ibriz Li Ma'Rifah Tafsir Al-Qur'An Al-'Aziz)," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 22, no. 1 (2022): 69–88, <https://doi.org/10.18592/sjhp.v22i1.6307>.

<sup>8</sup> Farida, "Kepemimpinan Wanita Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Komparatif Tafsir Al-Misbah Dan Tafsir Ibnu Katsir)," *Program Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung*, 2018, 1–124, [http://repository.radenintan.ac.id/5494/1/Tesis Full.pdf](http://repository.radenintan.ac.id/5494/1/Tesis%20Full.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Kartini Kartono, *Pengantar Metodologi Riset Sosial*, Cet. 5 (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 1986). 33

as coherence theory, correspondence theory, and pragmatic theory, to evaluate the truth and validity of the interpretation of the verses studied.

By conducting this research, it is hoped that it can make a significant contribution to enriching understanding of the epistemology of the interpretation of verses related to women's leadership, especially in these two important works, namely *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* by Bisri Mustofa and *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh* by Quraish Shihab. In addition, this research provides a broader insight into the epistemology of interpretation in general, opens up new insights, and completes our understanding in understanding the verses of the Qur'an in a contemporary context.

## Discussion

### Analysis and Comparison of Interpretations of Women's Leadership Verses in *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* and *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh*

The author elaborates on the epistemological analysis of the interpretation of women's leadership verses in Bisri Mustofa's *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* and Quraish Shihab's *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh*, which consists of three main variables, namely the source of interpretation used, the method of interpretation and the validity of interpretation. In this case, some of the verses on women's leadership that the author uses as an analysis and comparison are QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71 and QS. Saba' [34]: 15.

#### A. Source of Interpretation

The source of interpretation of the Qur'an is one of the elements in the epistemological framework. Therefore, it is important to consider the sources of interpretation used by Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab in interpreting verses related to women's leadership.

#### 1. Interpretation Source of Bisri Mustofa

##### a) Interpreting with Reason (*ra'yu*)

Intellect is the most important part of exploring knowledge; all activities related to knowledge must involve intellect. Because with reason, humans will reach out and develop their reasoning and logic to know the verses of Allah that are spread out in the universe. Humans use their intellect to develop more scientific methods and approaches to understanding and interpreting the Qur'an.

In this case, Bisri Mustofa also uses reason (*ra'yu*) as an instrument in interpreting the text of the Qur'an. Its role is not ruled out in dissecting the meaning of a text. It can be seen when Bisri Mustofa interprets QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 in the words *al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alā an-nisā'*. Bisri Mustofa explains that men have power over women. Because men get an advantage over women, the chapter of disciplines, ideologies, regions, and others and these traits are natural with women.<sup>10</sup> Bisri Mustofa tries to elaborate in detail the meaning of the text of the superiority of men over women from various dimensions to show the state of nature between the two. Bisri Mustofa's interpretation is enough to provide a concrete explanation of the fragment of the verse that still holds questions in the reader's mind, this is the touch of reason for Bisri Mustofa in writing the fruits of his thoughts to reveal the content and meaning of a text. Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of the verses on women's leadership tends to be presented in a rational descriptive manner, not gathering and referring to the opinions of friends and scholars in expanding the interpretation of the Qur'anic text that is interpreted.

<sup>10</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifat Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Aziz* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1964). 210

## 2. Interpretation Sources of Quraish Shihab

### a) Interpreting with the Text of the Qur'an

In QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, Quraish Shihab tries to interpret using the text of the Qur'an. Because one of the ways and methods in interpreting the Qur'an is to look at the explanation of other related verses. The Prophet also teaches this method when explaining the word *ẓulm* in QS. Al-An'am [6]: 82, which refers to the explanation of QS. Luqman [31]: 13, which means shirk. Because the first step in interpretation after looking at the linguistic aspect is to find an explanation of the Qur'an that is relevant to the verse or in the language of the Qur'an it is called *the Al-Qur'ān yufassiru ba 'duhā ba 'dan* (the verses of the Qur'an interpret each other).

Quraish Shihab applies the rules of *the Qur'ān yufassiru ba 'duhā ba 'dan* to QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 when interpreting the verses of women's leadership, Quraish Shihab refers to several relevant verses, including quoting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 228 and QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 229. An example of its implementation is when Quraish Shihab interprets verse by verse when explaining the fragment of the verse *al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alā an-nisā'* Quraish Shihab reveals that the leadership that Allah gives to the husband does not mean giving arbitrary rights. In her view, this leadership is a special responsibility and has a higher degree than women. Quraish Shihab refers to Surah Al-Baqarah [2]:228 in the Qur'an to further explain the concept of degrees related to men and women. He explained that this high degree can be achieved by a man through good treatment of his wife.<sup>11</sup> Quraish Shihab interprets other verses to strengthen his arguments and explanations in *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh*.

### b) Interpreting with Hadith Texts

The role of hadith in the interpretation of the Qur'an is very important, it is part of the primary source that clarifies the content of the Qur'anic text. The significance of the role of hadith comes from the words of the Prophet Muhammad, a messenger who explains the Qur'an and is the initial *mufassir* (first interpreter) of the Qur'an. So its existence is difficult to put aside to obtain its full meaning.

It is not spared from the interpretation of Quraish Shihab in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 34 hadiths are used as instruments to construct the meaning of the text of the verse. For example, when Quraish Shihab interprets a fragment of verse *wadribūhunna* he emphasizes that the word "hit" does not mean "hurt" nor is it interpreted as something praiseworthy. Quraish Shihab then quoted the words of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who reminded his people not to hit their faces and not to hurt their wives. He said, "Are you not ashamed to beat your wives like you beat an animal?" In this context, shame arises not only because of the act of hitting itself but also because of a failure to educate the wife by giving advice and using other, more thoughtful means. Because in essence, the principle in the household is the principle of reciprocity, no matter what the terms superior and inferior in the household are.<sup>12</sup> In the context of the verses of women's leadership, this shows that husbands and wives have the same position and opportunity to build a harmonious household with the principle of reciprocity. Looking at the description above shows how important the role of hadith is as an instrument of interpretation of the Qur'an.

### c) Interpreting with the Opinion of the Scholars

One of the sources Quraish Shihab uses in interpreting the Qur'an is to refer to the opinions of Salaf and contemporary scholars. This step is necessary to enrich the

<sup>11</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002). 429

<sup>12</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

views in interpretation because their position as scholars is very competent and credible in providing their views on the meaning of the Qur'an text. Some scholars used as references in the interpretation of Quraish Shihab are Muhammad Thāhir Ibn 'Ashūr, Imam Fakhruddin Ar-Rāzī, Imam Aṭ-Ṭabari, and Al-Biqā'ī.

Some examples of interpretations that refer to the opinions of scholars. For example, when Quraish Shihab interprets the word *al-rijāl* quoting Muhammad Thāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr, in his commentary, conveys an opinion that needs to be considered. Ibn 'Āshūr argued that the word "*Al-rijāl*" is not used by Arabic, including in the Qur'an, to refer specifically to husbands. In contrast to the word "*An-nisā'*" or "*imra'ah*", which refers to the wife. According to Ibn 'Āsyūr, the first passage of the verse speaks in general terms of men and women and serves as an introduction to the second passage of the verse, which deals with the attitude and nature of godly wives.<sup>13</sup>

The above presentation proves that the construction of interpretation carried out by Quraish Shihab is enriched and loaded with the opinions of scholars.

#### d) Interpreting with the Opinion of Scientists

In the development of modern Tafsir, several opinions in various scientific disciplines deserve to be used as a source to enrich the interpretation of the Qur'an, seeing the nature of science that is always growing and developing while the products of interpretation are always contextual by the spirit and dictum of the Qur'an *ṣāliḥun likulli zamānin wa makānin* (relevant at any time and place) plus the study of the Qur'an which is very diverse. Therefore, the opinions of scientists are needed to explain in detail the meaning of the verses related to their expertise in various scientific disciplines.

In this case, Quraish Shihab quotes the opinion of Prof. Reek, an American psychologist in interpreting the Qur'an.

Among the interpretations that refer to the opinions of scientists when Quraish Shihab explained the verse *bimā faḍḍala-llāhu ba'dahum 'alā ba'din* is quoted from an American psychologist, Prof. Reek, who has conducted research for many years on men and women and revealed the difference in the privileges between the two in terms of psychiatry. Prof. Reek stated that men generally feel bored or bored if they are around their partners for too long. On the other hand, women feel happy and enjoy time with their lovers all the time. Furthermore, Prof. Reek explained that men are happy with routines and still appear with the same face daily. This is different from women who want to get out of bed every day with a fresh and different look on their faces.<sup>14</sup> The explanation of the above verse becomes wider and more comprehensive when the verse is seen from the perspective of an American psychologist Prof. Reek.

#### e) Interpreting with reason (*ra'yu*)

Some examples made by Quraish Shihab in his interpretation are based on reason (*ra'yu*) in QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 when explaining the passage of the verse *Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alā an-nisā'i*. In every unit, including within the scope of the family, leadership is a very important need. This is because husband and wife are always together and feel they have each other and their families. Problems that often arise between husbands and wives often arise from an inner attitude that is reflected in cheerful or gloomy facial expressions. As a result, conformity and disagreement can arise suddenly, however, they can also pass quickly soon.<sup>15</sup> In these conditions, a

<sup>13</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

<sup>14</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

<sup>15</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

leader who can handle the situation is needed, even more than the need in a company that deals with numbers, not feelings, and is bound by detailed agreements that can be settled through the courts. Quraish Shihab tries to rationalize that leadership in every sector of life is a necessity and even a necessity because if leadership does not exist, it will be a disaster for the system because it is related to governance and management to achieve common goals and ideals.

#### **f) Interpreting with Historical Data**

Historical data has a crucial role in understanding the meanings contained in the Qur'an. Through historical information, it is possible to explore the social, political, cultural, and environmental background when revelation is revealed. This allows us to understand the context surrounding the revelation and relate it to the concrete events that occurred at that time. Using historical data, we can place ourselves in that time and look at the Qur'an through the lens of the past, enriching our understanding.

In interpreting QS. Saba' [34]:15, Quraish Shihab carefully combines historical data to provide a deeper understanding. He spoke of the Saba, who had evidence of God's power in their dwellings. In his description that relies on geographical and historical data, Quraish Shihab explained the existence of the Saba people around San'a in South Yemen. Furthermore, Quraish Shihab also presents historical information about the Saba Kingdom. He emphasized that this kingdom was established in the eighth century BC. His influence extended to include Ethiopia and a famous country at the time, Ma'rib, famous for its magnificent dams.<sup>16</sup>

Such is the touch of historical data that is enough to provide clarity for readers made by Quraish Shihab in QS. Saba' [34]: 15. So that the stories in the Qur'an do not leave many questions in the minds of readers because they are supported by complete historical data and, at the same time, become the antithesis of some people who state that the stories in the Qur'an are mere imaginations.

### **B. Method of Interpretation**

The interpretation method is part of a series of epistemological studies to discover the essence of science through the methodical steps taken by a *mufassir* in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an.<sup>17</sup> The method aspect of interpretation is very important in constructing an interpretation because it describes a horizon and a systematic system of thinking to produce a desired interpretation product. Meanwhile, the methodology of interpretation of the Qur'an is an integral part of the epistemology of interpretation, which involves a series of processes, principles, and procedures used by a *mufassir* to explore and understand the hidden meanings in the text of the Qur'an. In this context, methodology refers to a thorough understanding of the systematic steps, processes, principles, and procedures followed by a *mufassir* in developing their interpretation. In this case, it can be seen how KH. Bisri Mustofa in *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* and M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsīr Al-Miṣbāh* apply the interpretation methodology to verses related to women's leadership.

#### **1. Principles of Interpretation**

This stage will explain the principles used by *mufassir* in exploring the meaning of the Qur'anic text by utilizing linguistic aspects. The implementation is to

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<sup>16</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

<sup>17</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, *Pergeseran Epistemologi Tafsir*, ed. Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008).

explore the meaning of words or a series of several words to reveal the content of the Qur'anic verses.

#### a) Principles of Interpretation of Bisri Mustofa

The principle used by Bisri Mustofa in exploring the meaning of the Qur'an text by utilizing linguistic aspects, Bisri Mustofa tends to interpret the Qur'anic words tactically and relies on word equivalents in Javanese accompanied by brief explanations in each verse that are interpreted, especially in the verses of women's leadership. So, the format for interpreting the Qur'an after interpreting the words uses the Arabic script *pegon* in each phrase.

Some examples of Bisri Mustofa's interpretation in *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 about the verses of women's leadership in the words *Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alā al-nisā'i bimā faddala-llāhu ba'dahum 'alā ba'din* he gave the meaning of the word first to the verse with typical Javanese *Pegon* writing. Then proceed with the interpretation by providing a brief explanation of the verse, stated in his interpretation

*Wong-wong lanang iku dikuwasaake mengatasi wong-wong wadon. Sebab jenis lanang iku keparangan keluwihan ingatase jenis wong wadon; bab ilmu, akal, wilayah, lan liya-liyane lan sebab olehe infaq marang wong-wong wadon*

This means that men have the power to overcome women. Because the male type gets an advantage over the female, the chapter on disciplines, ideologies, regions, and reasons for providing a living to women.

Bisri Mustofa tried to explain the meaning of the word man ruling over women because men are given advantages in various sectors in the process and creation. Then further, when Bisri Mustofa explained QS. Saba' [34]: 15, it was said,

*Wong-wong mu'min lanang lan wong-wong mu'min wadon iku iku siji lan wenehe, minongko dadi sedulur lan kekasih, podo bareng-bareng amal podo amar ma'ruf nahi munkar podo jumenengake sholat, podo maringane zakat, lan podo ngabekti marang Allah Ta'ala lan utusane. Iyo wong kang manggoni sifate iku, wong-wong kang diwales asihe dining Allah Ta'ala iku dzat kang menang lan wicaksono*

This means that a believer man and a believer woman are one when they are brothers and lovers. Both do charity, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, uphold prayer, pay zakat, and obey Allah and his messengers. The one who does that will be loved by Allah. And Allah SWT is the most powerful and wise being.

The above interpretation shows that almost the explanation made by Bisri Mustofa is similar to the equivalent of the verse text. Bisri Mustofa uses linguistic aspects to understand and briefly explain the meaning of the text of the verses of the Qur'an.

#### b) Principles of Interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab

The principle of Quraish Shihab in uncovering and exploring the meaning of the Qur'an text is through a linguistic approach. The explanation Quraish Shihab conveys in *Tafsīr Al-Misbāh* regarding the verses of women's leadership QS. Al-Nisā' [4]:34 reveals a very strong understanding in terms of language. Quraish Shihab gives some examples when he interprets the word "*al-rijāl*", where he states that the word is a plural form of the word "*al-rijāl*", which is generally translated as masculine, although it is not always used with that meaning in the Qur'an. Many scholars interpret the word "*al-rijāl*" in this verse as husbands. Initially, Quraish Shihab also supported this opinion. However, in his book *Insight into the Qur'an*, Quraish Shihab



expresses his view that " *al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'i* " does not generally refer to men in general, because of the considerations put forward earlier, as explained in the continuation of the verse, namely "because they (the husbands) provide for some of their property," which is intended for their wives. If the word "man" is meant by men in general, then this consideration does not apply. Moreover, the continuation of this verse and the following verses clearly talk about wives and home life. The explanation shows that the use of the word "*al-rijāl*" in QS. Al-Nisā' [4]:34 does not have to be interpreted exclusively as a man, because there are considerations that follow the passage of the verse, so that the meaning of "*al-rijāl*" in the verse can refer to a man or a woman, depending on his role and contribution in married life.

The above explanation shows that Quraish Shihab is very meticulous in linguistic-based interpretation. Because language interpretation is the first step a *mufassir* takes in dissecting and exploring the meaning of Qur'anic verses, before approaching through *asbāb al-nuzūl* and various approaches of other scientific disciplines as an instrument of interpretation.

## 2. Method of Interpretation

To interpret the Qur'an, scholars and readers of the Qur'an use various interpretation methods that have been developed throughout history. These methods include the *ijmālī* (global) method, the *tahlīlī* (analysis) method, the *muqārān* (comparison) method and the *maudū'ī* (thematic) method. Each method has a different approach to understanding the Qur'an; interpreters seek to achieve a richer and deeper understanding through these methods.

### a) Bisri Mustofa's Interpretation Method

In interpretation, there are four categories of well-known methods of tafsir, namely *Tahlīlī*, *Ijmālī*, *Muqārān*, and *Maudhū'ī*. Each of these categories has a different approach and focus in interpreting the text of the Qur'an. In this case, Bisri Mustofa uses the Tahlili method in interpreting the leadership verses, but what is explained in *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz* in the leadership verses is very short and concise in its explanation, not detailed and deep to touch on the social problems of the community. For example, when Bisri Mustofa interprets QS. Saba' [34]: 15 as follows:

*Temenan kabilah saba' (tanah yaman) iku papane kena kanggo conto lan tepatulado (tanahe subur lan asri) kaum saba' persasah didawuhi pengena rizqine pangeran sing enak, lan syukurono nikamate pengeran iku, negorone bagus (bagus tanahe, bagus bangunane, lan howone, sangking baguse howo nganti ora ono lamuk, jingklong laler lan sepadane) pengeran agung pangapurane*

It means that it is true that the Saba (Yemen) tribe is a place where an example can be made (its fertile and beautiful land) the saba' people are given great blessings from Allah. So be thankful for the blessings of God; the country is good (the land is good, the buildings are good, and the atmosphere and climate are so that there are no mosquitoes, flies, etc.) Allah is forgiving

In the above interpretation, Bisri Musfota only briefly describes the meaning of a good country from the verse by explaining that the country is good in terms of its soil, good buildings, and atmosphere and climate, to the point that there are no mosquitoes, flies, etc. Bisri Musfota did not mention the phenomenon of the Saba Kingdom led by the Queen of Balqis with all her policies able to create *Baldatun Tayyibatun Wa Rabbun Gafur*.

### b) Quraish Shihab's Interpretation Method

Quraish Shihab, when interpreting the verses of women's leadership, is very comprehensive in QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34. It is interpreted using the *tahlīlī* method as its analytical knife and various analyses from various scientific perspectives, including analysing using the text of the Qur'an, hadith, the opinions of scholars, commentators to the opinions of contemporary scientists. Quraish Shihab also gave his analysis a touch of linguistic aspects, which made his interpretation even deeper and more comprehensive.

It can be seen that when Quraish Shihab interpreted the verse Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, it is clear that he carried out a linguistic analysis of the word "*al-rijāl*". Quraish Shihab explains that the word is a plural form of "*al-rijāl*", usually translated as "man", although the Qur'an does not always use it in that sense. In addition, many scholars understand the word "*al-rijāl*" in this verse as "husbands". Quraish Shihab also emphasizes in his book, Insights into the Qur'an, Quraish Shihab reveals that *al-rijāl qawwāmuna 'alā al-nisā'*, which does not mean "man" in general, in view of the considerations mentioned earlier.

Then Quraish Shihab enriched his explanation by quoting the opinions of scholars and commentators. One of the opinions he quoted was Muhammad Thāhir Ibn 'Ashūr in his commentary. Ibn 'Ashūr conveyed a very relevant and considerate opinion: "*al-rijāl*" is not used in Arabic, even in the Qur'an, to refer to husbands. Instead, words such as "*al-nisā'*" (woman) or "*imra'ah*" (wife) are used to describe the meaning of wife. According to Ibn 'Ashūr, the first passage of the above verse speaks in general terms of men and women and serves as an introduction to the second passage of this verse, which discusses the attitude and nature of godly wives. By quoting this opinion, Quraish Shihab completes his explanation and points out that there is variation in the understanding of the word "*al-rijāl*" in the verse, and it is important to consider the context and the whole verse in interpreting it.

After explaining the linguistic interpretation and quoting the words of the scholars, Then Quraish Shihab continued the explanation of the verse by quoting Cleo Dalon, a female psychologist, in his view, two things are considered very important in this view of women. First, women tend to prefer to work under the supervision of others. Second, it is argued that women are more influenced by feelings, while men are more based on rational considerations. Although we often see that women are not only on par with men regarding intelligence, sometimes even surpassing them. However, the main drawback highlighted in women is their very delicate sensitivity to feelings. On the other hand, men tend to think practically, set goals, organize, and direct. Women are expected to accept the reality that they need male leadership over them.

Quraish Shihab continues his explanation with a rational approach that complements the understanding of women's leadership in the context of the verse. Quraish Shihab revealed that leadership is an absolute thing, especially in every family, because they are always together and feel that they belong to each other. In a marital relationship, problems often arise from the soul's expression reflected in cheerful facial expressions or visible sadness. This can trigger conformities and disputes that arise quickly, but can also disappear quickly. In these conditions, the presence of a leader is very important, even more important than the needs of a company that deals with numbers and not feelings and is bound by detailed agreements that must be settled through the courts.

Of the two *mufassir* figures, when interpreting the verses of women's leadership, both of them use the *tahlīlī* method. However, the interpretation of Bisri Musthofa tends to be short and concise with a simple language style without being

supported by the opinions of scholars. In contrast to Quraish Shihab, when interpreting the verse using a fairly detailed analysis and reviewing from several contemporary scientific disciplines.

### 3. Interpretive Approach

Textual and contextual interpretation are two approaches used in understanding and interpreting texts, including in the context of the Qur'an. These two approaches have different focuses on expressing the meaning of the text.<sup>18</sup> Textual interpretation is an approach that focuses on the analysis and direct understanding of the text itself. This approach focuses on the words, sentences, language structure, and writing style used in the text. Textual interpreters seek to understand the literal meaning of the text. Examining the vocabulary used, the meaning of words individually, and the relationships and relationships between words in the context of sentences. Textual interpreters base their interpretation on linguistic rules and norms and pay attention to the grammar and vocabulary used when writing the text. Interpretation can also refer to dictionaries, grammar, and other references to better understand the meaning of words.

On the other hand, contextual interpretation emphasizes the importance of considering the text's context. This approach recognizes that a text cannot be understood in isolation, but rather must be understood in relation to the historical, cultural, social, and environmental context in which it appears. Contextual interpreters seek a broader and deeper understanding by considering external factors such as customs, traditions, norms, cultural values, and the social situation in which the text is derived. This interpretation seeks to understand the historical background, social life, and political conditions of the time and how these factors can affect the understanding and use of the Qur'anic text.

#### a) KH. Bisri Mustofa's Interpretive Approach

Bisri Mustofa in interpreting the verses of women's leadership in QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 tends to be textualist. The interpretation has not reached the area of social relations in explaining the interpretation of the verse and only dwells on the area of the text. For example, when Bisri Mustofa interpreted QS. Al-Nisā' [4] : 34

*Wong-wong lanang iku dikuwasaake mengatasi wong-wong wadon. Sebab jenis lanang iku keparingan keluwihan ingatase jenis wong wadon; bab ilmu, akal, wilayah, lan liya-liyane lan sebab olehe infaq marang wong-wong wadon.*

This means that men have the power to overcome women. Because the male type gets an advantage over the female, the chapter on disciplines, ideologies, regions, and reasons for providing a living to women.

Here it can be seen that the interpretation that Bisri Mustofa puts forward is only limited to the elaboration of the meaning of the text, when interpreting and commenting on the type of man who gets an advantage over women, Bisri Mustofa only describes his superiority in the realm of science, ideology, region, and the reason for providing a living to women. Maintenance is one of the reasons for the superiority of men over women. Here he does not explain in detail in what realm men dominate women. He also did not explain what kind of regional advantages were meant. In such an interpretation, an understanding emphasizes that men have greater potential than women, and therefore, they are considered leaders for women in all aspects of life.

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<sup>18</sup> M Solahudin, "Pendekatan Tekstual," *Al-Bayyan* 2, no. Desember (2016): 115–30.

### b) M. Quraish Shihab's Interpretive Approach

The approach of Quraish Shihab in interpreting the verses of women's leadership in QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 tends to be contextual. Quraish Shihab tries to relate the meaning of the Qur'anic text to the surrounding reality that occurs in society or in other languages Quraish Shihab dialogues between the text and the existing context.

An example is when Quraish Shihab interprets the beginning of QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 The men are *qawwāmūn* over the women. Quraish Shihab tries to draw the meaning of the verse into the context of the present day with the conditions and cultural developments surrounding it. Quraish Shihab said that leadership is a very important need in every unit, including within the family. This is because husband and wife are always together and feel they have each other and their families. Problems that often arise between husbands and wives often arise from an inner attitude that is reflected in cheerful or gloomy facial expressions. As a result, conformity and disagreement can arise suddenly, however, they can also pass quickly soon. In these conditions, a leader who can handle the situation is needed, even more than the need in a company that deals with numbers, not feelings, and is bound by detailed agreements that can be settled through the courts.<sup>19</sup>

Quraish Shihab analogizes leadership to social reality, likening a company to a leader who needs to manage all existing work dynamics. Especially in a household whose dynamics are more complex than a company that only involves reasoning and work ethic, while in a household all aspects ranging from thoughts, energy and feelings are all involved. So, it becomes a necessity for leaders in the household.

Through observation of various events that occurred related to women's leadership, it can be seen that there has been significant progress that has been achieved by women in various aspects of life. This has opened up opportunities for women to hold public positions and play active government and leadership roles. This phenomenon shows that the approach Quraish Shihab uses in interpreting the Qur'an verses is not limited to understanding the text alone, but also involves understanding the existing social context.

By connecting the Qur'anic texts with the evolving social reality, Quraish Shihab shows that the Qur'an is not just a collection of ancient texts, but a source of solutions and inspiration for human life. The interpretation by Quraish Shihab considers social dynamics and the development of the times, to provide a relevant and applicative understanding in the current context.

### C. Validity of Interpretation

The validity of the interpretation of the Qur'an is very important in understanding the message and teachings contained in the holy book. The validity of interpretation is closely related to accuracy, truth, and conformity with the theory of truth in philosophy. To assess the validity of an interpretation, it is necessary to consider several factors, namely using three main theories: coherence theory, correspondence, and pragmatics.

#### 1. Validity of Bisri Mustofa's Interpretation

##### a) Coherence Theory

At this stage, in terms of coherence or consistency of Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of the verses of women's leadership QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71, and QS. Saba' [34]: 15, both in terms of method and source of interpretation are quite consistent. It can be noted when Bisri Mustofa interprets the

<sup>19</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*.

early passage of QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 tends to use the source of reason (*ra'yu*) in interpreting and describing the verse and trying to explain briefly the superiority of men over women. Likewise, when Bisri Mustofa interprets QS. Saba' [34]: 15 Bisri Mustofa describes the virtues of the land of saba' with all its constraints, including the beauty of the land, the beauty of the buildings, the atmosphere and climate, the explanation that tends to rationalize the picture of the land of Saba which is overwhelmed with pleasure.

So that Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71, and QS. Saba' [34]: 15 in terms of coherence or consistency of women's leadership verses is quite consistent regarding methods and sources of interpretation. It can be seen when Bisri Mustofa provides additional rational explanations in each interpreted verse.

## 2. Validity of Quraish Shihab's Interpretation

### a) Coherence Theory

At this stage, in terms of coherence or consistency of Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verses of women's leadership QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71, and QS. Saba' [34]: 15 is quite consistent. The interpretation of Quraish Shihab focuses more on the discussion of language. It can be seen when Quraish Shihab interprets the beginning of QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 Quraish Shihab begins with a linguistic discussion of his words such as the words *riḍwān*, *qawwāmūn*, *al-rijāl*, then Quraish Shihab refers to the hadith of the prophet in strengthening the argument of his interpretation seen when Quraish Shihab interprets a fragment of verse *waḍribūhunna* emphasized that the word "hit" does not mean "hurt", nor is it interpreted as something praiseworthy. Then Quraish Shihab quoted the words of the Messenger of Allah (saw) that he reminded him, "Do not hit your face and do not hurt yourself when he said, "Aren't you ashamed to hit your wife, like beating a donkey?" Shame, in this case, is not only for hitting, but also for failing to educate with advice and other means. Followed by quoting some opinions of scholars and using the ratio (*ra'yu*) to explain in more detail the verses on women's leadership, such as when Quraish Shihab interpreted the word *al-rijāl* quoted the opinion of Muhammad Thâhir Ibn 'Ashûr in his commentary Quraish Shihab put forward an opinion that needs to be considered, namely, that the word *al-rijāl* is not used by Arabic, even the language of the Qur'an in the sense of husband. In contrast to the word *an-nisā'* or *imra'ah*, which is used for the meaning of wife. Then the interpretive approach by Quraish Shihab is a contextual approach that gathers social reality to be dialogued with text.

Furthermore, when Quraish Shihab interprets QS. At-Taubah [9] : 71 Quraish Shihab begins by exploring the meaning of the word *ba'dhum awliyā'u ba'd* by quoting the opinion of the scholars of Ibn Asyur's tafsir in the construction of the meaning, emphasizing that the factor that unites believers is the power of solid faith. This firm faith resulted in the attitude of mutual help taught in Islam. In this context, Quraish Shihab quotes a hadith from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He likens the unity and unity of the believers to a building structure with a strong foundation. Just like stones that reinforce each other, if one part is sick or damaged, the whole body will feel pain, overheating, and difficulty sleeping. In this case, Quraish Shihab consistently cites several references used in interpreting the text of the Qur'an.

In QS. Saba' [34]:15, Quraish Shihab begins the interpretation by revealing the meaning of "Saba'" which can refer to a region or country. This is by the designation in QS. Al-Naml. Furthermore, Quraish Shihab uses historical data to build an

understanding of the existence of the Saba region. The Saba kingdom was founded in the 8th century BC, and he explains that his influence extended to include Ethiopia and one of the famous cities of the time, Ma'rib, which was famous for the huge dam built there.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that Quraish Shihab, in interpreting the verses of women's leadership in terms of coherence, is quite consistent in referring to several sources that are used in constructing its interpretation.

#### **b) Correspondence Theory**

At this stage, when viewed from the correspondence perspective, Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verses of women's leadership QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 is quite relevant to the reality of society at that time. The interpretation of Quraish Shihab provides a concrete picture of social reality.

As when Quraish Shihab interprets QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34 that leadership is a very important need in every unit, including within the scope of the family. This is because husband and wife are always together and feel they have each other and their families. Problems that often arise between husbands and wives often arise from an inner attitude that is reflected in cheerful or gloomy facial expressions. As a result, conformity and disagreement can arise suddenly, however, they can also pass quickly soon. In these conditions, a leader who can handle the situation is needed, even more than the need in a company that deals with numbers, not feelings, and is bound by detailed agreements that can be settled through the courts.

Quraish Shihab analogizes leadership to relevant social realities, likening a company to a leader who needs to manage all existing work dynamics. Especially in a household whose dynamics are more complex than a company that only involves reasoning and work ethic, while in a household all aspects ranging from thoughts, energy and feelings are all involved. So, it becomes a necessity for leaders in the household. Quraish Shihab uses the analogy of leadership with a company. So, when viewed from the correspondence of the interpretation of Quraish Shihab, it is quite relevant to the social conditions at that time.

#### **c) Pragmatic Theory**

Pragmatically, the interpretation was carried out by Quraish Shihab on QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71 and QS. Saba' [34]: 15 is quite beneficial and becomes a solution to the ummah's problems. Quraish Shihab conveyed in a simple language style but provided quite comprehensive insights. Because Quraish Shihab interprets the verses of the Qur'an with several stages and systematic sequences so that what is presented in the interpretation can be easily understood by the reader.

For example, when Quraish Shihab interprets QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71 *ba'dhum awliyā'u ba'd* (some of them are helpers, some others) Quraish Shihab explains that both men and women relate to each other and help each other. They are united in understanding and have common interests, supporting each other in all their affairs and needs. Leadership is not limited to men but also includes women. The proof of the solidity of their faith is that they encourage goodness, prohibit evil, perform prayers solemnly and continuously, pay zakat perfectly, and obey Allah and His Messenger in all His instructions. In this interpretation, leadership roles are not limited to one gender group but depend on the abilities and piety of individuals, both men and women<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> M. Quraish Shihab.

This is emphasized by the concept of mutual help (help for some others) and the importance of carrying out the command of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (encouraging goodness and prohibiting evil). This interpretation shows that leadership is not only related to gender but also to the quality of faith and piety in carrying out religious duties and helping others.

Thus, Quraish Shihab conveyed that leadership is not a monopoly of men, but can also be carried out by women. This is supported by the concept of mutual assistance and the implementation of the command of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* as an indicator of the solidity of faith and responsibility in helping others. That way, women can hold public office as long as they are qualified and have the necessary abilities. The approach Quraish Shihab takes in interpreting the Qur'an verses is not limited to the textual aspect alone, but also relates it to the existing social context. Because Quraish Shihab has a very strong interpretation characteristic, it takes into account the socio-cultural conditions of society and the current context.

This shows that the Qur'an provides an effective solution to acts of discrimination against women in the context of leadership and, at the same time, becomes a source of inspiration for the life of humanity as a whole.

## Conclusion

The above description of the epistemology of the interpretation of the verses of women's leadership from both *mufassir* Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab can be summarized as follows:

*First*, the epistemological structure of Bisri Mustofa's and Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verses of women's leadership of QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, QS. At-Taubah [9]: 71 and QS. Saba' [34]: 15 starts from the source of interpretation. The sources used by Bisri Mustofa in interpreting the verse using reason (*ra'yu*), while Quraish Shihab uses Qur'anic texts and hadiths, the opinions of contemporary scholars and scientists and explanations of interpretation using reason (*ra'yu*).

*Second*, regarding interpretation methods, Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab have different perspectives when interpreting leadership verses. Although both use linguistic-based exploration of the meaning of the Qur'an text and expand the meaning through linguistic studies, in the area of the interpretation method of the two *mufassir* Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab both use the *tahlīlī* (analysis) method, but there are differences in the sharpness and breadth of interpretation. Bisri Mustofa tends to present her interpretation concisely in the verses of women's leadership. The textual approach is the main basis for its interpretation. Therefore, its interpretation is more limited to the area of the text alone. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab adopts a contextual approach in his interpretation. He tried to connect the meaning of the Qur'anic text with the reality in society at that time.

*Third*, in terms of interpretation validity, in the context of coherence, both Bisri Mustofa and Quraish Shihab can maintain consistency in their interpretation models and sources of interpretation. However, if you look at the correspondence, there is a significant difference in the interpretation of the two. The interpretation made by Bisri Mustofa did not conform to the conditions and realities that existed in society at that time. She interprets the verses about women's leadership succinctly without a clear correlation and a common thread that connects her interpretation with the social reality that is happening. On the other hand, the interpretation carried out by Quraish Shihab is quite relevant to the conditions and reality of society. Likening leadership in the household to a more complex thing than a company, which only

relies on reason and work ethic. In the household, thoughts, energy, and feelings are all involved, so leadership becomes necessary.

Pragmatically, Bisri Mustofa's interpretation does not make an adequate contribution. Its interpretation only focuses on the textual aspect without reaching out to the problems faced by society and providing concrete solutions. This makes the interpretation unable to meet the practical needs of the community in understanding and applying these verses. Meanwhile, the interpretation carried out by Quraish Shihab has a more functional tendency and makes a meaningful contribution in conveying the meaning and content of the Qur'an to the community. Offering effective solutions to overcome discrimination against women in the context of leadership and being an inspiration for human life. So that its comprehensive and concrete interpretation makes its application in daily life more likely to be carried out by the community.

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