

## THE JUSTIFICATION OF SHIA IDEOLOGY IN THE QURANIC HERMENEUTICS: Reading the Interpretation of Nâser Makârem Shîrâzî

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### Abstract

*This article analyzes the Quranic Hermeneutics according to Nâser Makârem Shîrâzî concerning al-Mahdi theme in al-Amthal Tafseer. He interpreted al-Mahdi's verses and diverted them to another meaning beyond the text. It is a forced interpretation to fit the desired theme, that al-Râzî cannot justify, even for a religion's ideology. A descriptive analytical method using hermeneutic approach on Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]:105 is implemented. This approach is applied by textually interpreting the verse followed by an in-depth discussion using ijihad to justify Shîrâzî's ideology. Hence, his Quranic Hermeneutics, as associated with Imam al-Mahdi, accommodates two meanings. First, it interprets the Quranic verses textually based on the linguistic principles where no single verse discusses al-Mahdi. Second, conducting an interpretation ijihad on the verses, referring to the narration of ahl-bayt. He constructs his argument to justify God's promise regarding the advent of al-Mahdi. Through these steps, he conveys that every Quranic verse contains exoteric (zâhir) and esoteric (bâtin) meanings. Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]:105 inspires him to perform ta'wil ijihadi. The word Zabûr in this verse is confirmed to be the Mazmur verses containing God's promise, that He will bequeath the earth to the devout people, and tells their characteristics, which are similar to Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntazar's.*

Artikel ini menganalisa hermeneutika al-Quran Nâser Makârem Shîrâzî dalam tema al-Mahdi pada kitabnya Tafsir al-Amthal. Ia menginterpretasikan ayat-ayat al-Mahdi dan mengalihkan ke makna lain di luar tekstual ayat. Ini suatu pemaksaan makna agar sesuai tema yang diinginkan yang tidak dibenarkan al-Râzî, meskipun untuk ideologi agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptifanalisis dengan pendekatan hermeneutika pada Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]; 105. Secara umum, langkah hermeneutika yang ditempuhnya ialah menafsirkan ayat secara makna tekstual, kemudian dibahas mendalam dengan pemikiran ijtihadinya untuk membenarkan ideologi yang dibangun. Dengan demikian hermeneutika Makârem Shîrâzî terhadap ayat al-Quran terkait Imam al-Mahdi mengakomodir dua makna ayat: pertama, menafsirkan ayat secara tekstual berpedoman pada kaidah kebahasaan yang mana tidak ditemukan ayat yang membicarakan Imam al-Mahdi. Kedua, melakukan ijtihad tafsir terhadap ayat tersebut dengan merujuk riwayat ahl-bayt. Shîrâzî membangun argumennya untuk membenarkan janji Tuhan tentang kedatangan al-Mahdi. Dengan kedua langkah ini, ia ingin menampilkan bahwa setiap ayat mengandung makna eksoterik (zâhir) dan esoterik (bâtin). Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]:105 menginspirasinya untuk melakukan ta'wil ijtihadi. Kata Zabûr pada ayat tersebut dikonfirmasi dengan ayat-ayat Mazmur (al-kitab) yang berisikan janji Allah, bahwa Ia akan mewariskan bumi kepada orang salih sehingga mengisyaratkan sifat-sifat orang salih yang serupa dengan Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntazar.

**Keywords:** hermeneutics; ideology justification; Makârem Shîrâzî

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## Introduction

The news of the advent of al-Mahdi (Haqqy 2020, 89) is widely found in the books of hadith, as Imam Abu Daud and al-Turmuzdi write specific titles about al-Mahdi in their books. The news of the advent of al-Mahdi is described in the book as a sign of the end of worldly life. Makârem Shîrâzî (here in after referred to as Shîrâzî) is a role model scholar (*marja' taqlîd*) in the Ithnâ Ash'ariyah Shia Madhhab who holds the title of Ayatulllâh 'Uzmâ. As a role model scholar, he has a tremendous influence

in the social and political life of the community, including the Iranian Shia government. His works, especially the Quran interpretation, became a reference for the believers of Shia in carrying out their ideology. These works convinced and inspired them to try to create a mission that they believed in Shia teachings. Among these, they believe that Imam al-Mahdi will come to lead the world with justice. According to Shîrâzî's interpretation of the verses related to Imam al-Mahdi, the people of Islam should make adequate preparations to welcome the advent of Imam al-Mahdi by forming an Islamic state. The preparation is completed by considering various aspects, both morally and materially professionally (Shirazi 2013, 184).

The believers of Shia consider such an interpretation, which tends to justify Shia ideology, as the right thing, but they may face opposition from the opposing groups. If each group maintains its own ego, polemics cannot be avoided. Then, the matter concerns how outsiders can understand the intentions of insiders without having to get involved in endless heated debates, but comprehend an explanation or understanding leading to peace. This paper offers a method of reading text (interpretation) from the perspective of the author (insider) using a hermeneutical approach.

A study on Shia ideology has been carried out by several people including, first, a study conducted by Ahmad Muzayyan Haqqy. He affirms that Imam Mahdi was Imam Muhammad bin hasan al-Askari, the last Imam of Imamîyah Shia who once disappeared when he was a child and was believed to appear as Imam al-Mahdi at the end of time. The concept of Imam al-Mahdi has similarities and differences with the concept of Imam al-Mahdi in Ahlussunnah, Messiah in Judaism and Jesus in Christianity. The similarities, it is believed that all of them will appear at the end of the world to strengthen each other's religions, while the difference is about the character that each concept differently interprets. Imamiyah Shia teachings make it clear that Imam al-Mahdi will play the role of the heir and world leader as explained in Q.S. al-Qashash [28]: 5-6. 2) and the one that will strengthen the religion at the end of the world as stated in Surah al-Nur [24]: 55 and Q.S. al-Tawbah [9]: 3. He is also believed as the witnesses for his people are found in Q.S. al-Nisa [4]: 41, Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 84 & 89 and Q.S. al-Qashash [28]:75 (Haqqy 2020, 89). Second, it is a study conducted by Reza Rezaie Khanghah. In his

explanation, God helped Imam al-Mahdi and Jesus Christ to establish a divine rule on earth and this was accepted by Muslims and Christians. Fear and terror are parts of Imam al-Mahdi's power. Imam Mahdi will emerge aiming for humanitarian reform and spreading justice in the world. In his other writings, Khanghah also reveals the narration and prophecy related to Imam Mahdi both among Shia and Sunni, even in other religions. In his last writing, Khanghah tried to prove the emergence of Imam Mahdi and the various forces that would join forces to support him altogether with Imam Hussein (Khanghah 2022, 7).

This study aims to complement the deficiencies of the previous studies. They did not focus on the justification aspects of Shia ideology, which has not been frequently studied. Therefore, based on a trace of previous studies, a study on the Justification of Shia Ideology in the Quranic Hermeneutics: Reading The Interpretation of Naser Makarem Shirazi, has not become an interest for previous writers. Thus, this study is important to be written to get a more in-depth attention and investigation.

### Research Method

The type of this study is considered qualitative research utilizing library research by analyzing some literatures (Syarifah & Fahimah 2020, 289). The primary source is *al-Amthâl fî Tafsîr Kitâbillah al-Munzal* created by Shîrâzî and the secondary sources are commentary literature and the science of interpretation as well as the supporting thoughts of several scholars. It is a descriptive-analytic with a hermeneutic approach. First, it aims to describe the formal object of Makarem Shirazi's hermeneutics from the methodological aspect and his thoughts conveyed in his work on material objects in QS. *al-Anbiyâ* [21]: 105; Second, it analyzes the interpretation used by Shîrâzî in his *ta'wil* and analyzes his thoughts on the verses that are interpreted by using the interpretation tools applied by Shîrâzî and paying attention to his fusion of horizon as a Shia *marja' taqlîd*.

### Result and Discussion

#### The Concept of al-Mahdi Between Shia and Sunni

The long-awaited advent of al-Mahdi and the absence of confirmation from the Quranic verses or strong hadiths of the Prophet made Ibn Khaldun (Enam 2013,14), a Muslim historian of the 14th century AD, does not believe in the ideology of al-Mahdi's advent at the

end of world. It is also considered that there are many weaknesses in the narration provided in the hadiths of the Prophet (Muthanna 2015, 221) regarding the news about al-Mahdi. It then results in the rejection of the ideology of *raj'ah*. Different from Ibn Khaldûn, a *mufasir* (interpreter) named Fakhruddîn al-Râzî (al-Râzî 1981, 3) in the 6th century believes in the ideology of the advent of al-Mahdi at the end of world, but he disagrees about the existence of the Quranic verses or interpretations about al-Mahdi. He thinks that the interpreted Quranic verses concerning al-Mahdi is a distorted interpretation because the interpreter made up the interpretation by withdrawing verses from the Quran that are general to legitimize the particular ideology of *raj'ah* (al-Razi 1981, 22).

According to the Shia group, *raj'ah* is a pillar of a religion, this ideology is created based on and written in the Quranic verses. Its interpretations strongly confirms the advent of the messiah at the end of world. Although these meanings and interpretations are not found in the *zahir* aspect of the verses, Shia *mufasir* often interpret the verses of the Quran to understand the esoteric (inner) meaning. This is what some opposing groups intended (al-Dhahabî n.d., 53–57) that is translating the verses of the Quran to obtain the esoteric meanings (Permana 2022, 12-35) seems to impose one's will and to appear as a Madhhab fanaticism.

The view of the Shia *mufasir* regarding the esoteric interpretation of the Quranic verses can be justified as long as it provides a connection between the exoteric meaning (literal) and esoteric meaning (inner). The esoteric meaning of the Quranic verses must be based on the narrations and Hadiths or *athar* of the *ma'sûm* Imams; otherwise, this interpretation is similar to *takwîl bi al-ra'yi madhmûm*, which cannot be justified (Subhani 1432, 138-139).

From the analysis of the religious doctrines of the Shia community, then dynamics and structure of society shaped by religion emerged. It indicates that religion is the foundation for the formation of a cognitive community, namely a community or unit of life that is bound by belief in the same essential truth. It allows the application of the same standard of knowledge, or an elaboration of religious doctrine that conveys understanding, both on the theoretical nor practical form. So, even though it started as a spiritual bond, the adherents of religion form their own society that is different from other cognitive societies.

In the Islamic view, Allah's commands are manifested in the form of clear and comprehensive laws with the existence of sharia. Since sharia has an all-encompassing nature, then, there are no aspects of social life in reality that are absolutely separated from religious principles. The Shia community implements it into every aspect of life in understanding the religion. Thus, they view all laws that they understand and implement, whether these are taken from sharia sources or not, as the laws containing sacred values. For example, they feel that they have carried out their religious obligations when they work in order to make a living although the work is not religion-related. For them, God's will is clear and covers all aspects of human life encompassing values in the sacred law (Nasr 1983, 170).

The Shia group views that God's will also applies in nature, where natural phenomena occurred are regarded as "the signs of Allah the Almighty." Having a deep awareness regarding this matter, it is not surprising that they have a high consciousness of something transcendent, or in other words, it means that visible things are veils covering the unseen, and the laws of nature are only a part of the universal law of God the Almighty. They are well aware of the transitory nature of everything. Conversely, if this world is impermanent and temporary, then there is another world that is everlasting and bright above the current world that is a world made up of substances of angels.

There should be a high awareness of the distance between human reality, with all external pleasures and lusts that are temporary, and happiness in life and its beauties, which reflect the beauty of higher levels of existence. Humans are almost desperate to gain awareness about God and their own spiritual nature because of the great distance separating them from God.

Closely related to such a perspective, humans feel that they still have hope through God's help that is the advent of a savior who acts as a mediator and intermediary between humans and God. The intermediary between humans and Allah does not end at the prophethood of Muhammad, but there must be an Imam who acts as a successor for the generations after Muhammad, namely al-Mahdi who will save the world from its discrepancy. al-Mahdi is also strongly suspected as the twelfth Imam (Bisri 2016, 151) who still exists and lives in the unseen realm and it is only Allah that knows his existence. Mahdism then create the doctrine of

*intizar* (waiting), which is waiting for the advent of the Savior or Imam Mahdi. This period of waiting is believed to be a form of religious piety, an ideal religious act of asking for help from sacred humans or Imams. Based on the arguments above, it is impossible for humans to live without guidance. Consequently, during the time of *ghaibah sughrâ* or minor occultation, the concept of *marja'iyah* was born as Naib al-Imam who was in occult.

Based on the concept of *wilâyat al-faqîh* which is derived from the doctrine of *marja'iyah*. *Wilâyat al-faqîh* is appointed as the holder of authority in religious and social affairs, including state and political matters. *Wilâyat al-faqîh* means the power or leadership of the Fuqaha.

Linguistically, the sentence consists of two words, namely *wilayat* that means power or leadership and *faqîh* that means fiqh expert or expert on Islamic law. A leader who has been empowered by the Imams as a judge always takes care of various issues and supervises the community in a fair and wise manner. The Faqîhs, therefore, possess the function as references since they are knowledgeable about the various policy lines, provisions, standards, and conventions. A Faqîh is certainly able to conclude a law (based on the Quran and Hadith as well as the sayings of the Imams) regarding this matter (Qiraati 2004, 178).

Although the story of al-Mahdi is part of the Islamic *aqeedah* (Rizal & Rizal 2021, 98) there are differences in the concept of al-Mahdi between Sunni and Shia. The *Ithnâ 'asyariyah Shia* has confirmed that al-Mahdi is the twelfth Imam who was unseen (disappeared) in the 4th century of Hijriyah. Sunni thinks that al-Mahdi (al-Suyûtî 2000, 7) is not a figure whose character has been confirmed, but he is a leader of the faithful people who will be born at the end of world and save the world from destruction and tyranny. As Muhammad Nuh Rasyid wrote in a journal, the concept of al-Mahdi in Shia and Sunni theology is distinguished. He wrote that the Messianism emerged from Shia was motivated by the political defeat during the era when Alî bin Abî Tâlib lived. This defeat provided a chance for a movement of resistance against the tyranny of the Umayyad government to rise. Whereas according to Sunni's understanding, Messianism appears to counter the hegemony of the Shia political resistance movement with different interpretations of al-Mahdi (Rasyid 2019). What Muhammad Nuh Rasyid did had raised the concept of the triggering action of the Shia messianism movement emergence, from

a historical perspective in the early centuries of Islam to the resistance movements and methods in the past. This has implications for the movement of modern groups that hold resistance against the authorities. Meanwhile, this dissertation examines the interpretation of the verses that Makârem Shîrâzî made as messianic verses, and uncovers the possibility of the Quranic verses interpretations which influenced the society in carrying out the messianic movement in Iran before the revolution.

In Sunni terms, at least Ibn Khaldûn's statement regarding the understanding of al-Mahdi is a key part of the Sunni's view. Ibn Khaldûn interprets the matter about al-Mahdi as follows: "Actually, religious preaching and royal political propaganda will not take place perfectly unless one manifests a fanatical power to uphold and defend (religious preaching or propaganda) so that Allah's help is perfect for the person (Khaldûn 2000, 456).

Thus, the advent of al-Mahdi in Ibn Khaldûn's *'asabîyah* (Luhtitianti & Arifin 2020, 259) theory is a sign or phenomenon of the birth of a new group of people who want to realize political ideals based on millennium ideas. This idea must be driven by the spirit of group fanaticism so that it can create new strength to pass through the struggle. Therefore, the new community group will not gain strength and will not be able to achieve the goals of the struggle, without the participation of propagandists who have strong fanaticism towards Islam and *ahl al-bait*. This theory asserts that the decline and defeat of an ummah is caused by a weak or waning spirit of fanaticism of the ummah itself (Pribadi 2017, 30-46).

This interpretation of al-Mahdi according to Ibn Khaldûn's model seems to be more adequate to people's reasoning today than imagining it in a very abstract and imaginative form. The term, al-Mahdi, feels more suitable to be interpreted as bringing new ideas to rebuild the Islamic world which was left out or isolated from the current era, pessimism, and shallow insight in facing the challenges of the era (Rasyidi 1977, 6-7). Then, he can refine the dignity of Islam and Muslims in its true sense so that the ummah can be protected from the excesses of modernization involving materialistic in nature and talkative attitudes or fond of imitating the traditions of the infidels. As known, the Prophet once put his words as following:

"Indeed you will (later) follow the traditions of those living before you, inch by inch, bit by bit, accordingly, if they enter a big lizard's



hole, you will surely follow them." I interrupted, "Are they Jews and Christians?" He replied: "Who else?" (Bukhârî and Muslim).

Moreover, with the Prophet's statement regarding the return of Isa al-Masih, as mentioned in the book of Sahîh Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim, he is the one given the mandate to kill Dajjal (the enemy of Islam). This can be interpreted as a symbol of the advent of the reformers who are always aware of the dangers, which threaten and terrorize the spirituality of the ummah. Besides, they are always oriented towards the interests of Islam and the Muslim community as well as strive to save them from a great urge of lust, wanting to seek physical satisfaction. It is an excess of the implementation of advanced technology in various aspects of human life. Thus, people do not need to claim and declare themselves as either al-Mahdi or as Isa al-Masih, especially through the teachings of beliefs or worship that are full of superstition and *bid'ah* (to create a new thing without precedence).

The description of this hadith shows how big the influence of Jewish and Christian traditions at the present on the attitudes and behavior of Muslims in everyday life is. The political, social, economic and cultural system of life seems to be affected by the traditions of the Jewish and Christian communities, which are seen as modern traditions and must be followed. The Islamic tradition is only visible in the ritual aspects, while the way of life, the matter of maintaining one's life and occupation, way of socializing and others are still influenced by Jewish or Christian traditions. Muslims who are oriented towards the true teachings of Islam are rare to find. In this kind of condition, new Mahdis are needed, referring to formidable preachers, as the guides for the ummah who can save them from hypocrisy, polytheism, wickedness and disbelief (al-Musawi 1983, 29).

Based on the description above, a conclusion regarding the comparison of the concept of al-Mahdi can be drawn. Based on the perspective of Shia, there will be an Imam who will descend, and that Imam will be the descendant of Ali ra and Fatimah. Meanwhile, Sunni understands that Al-Mahdi is interpreted symbolically; he is a reformer who will remain and continue to exist until the end of time.

### Nâser Makârem Shîrâzî, the Contemporary Shia Mufasir

Shîrâzî is an exemplary scholar (*marja' taqlid*) in the madhhab of Ithnâ Ash'ariyah Shia who possesses the title of *Ayatullâh 'Uzmâ* (a Great Imam). The name his parents gave him was Nâser bin Makârem bin Muhammad Karîm bin Muhammad Bâqir. He is more popularly known as Nâser Makârem or Shîrâzî. He was born in 1345 H./1926 AD in the city of Shiraz into an educated and respectable family who believe in the ahl bayt madhhab (Biography, n.d.)

He attended the primary and secondary education in the city of Shîraz. At the age of 16, he went to school, at Hawzat Ilmiyah (seminary) of Agha Baba Khan, in the same city. Here, Shîrâzî began to study religious sciences and Arabic language such as Fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, Logics, Ma'ânî, Bayân, Badî', Nahw and Sorf. The mastery of the basic knowledge of education at Hawzat Ilmiyah generally needs ten years to accomplish, but he can master it within four years. Meanwhile, Ayatullâh Mowahid was Shîrâzî's first teacher who met Shîrâzî's parents and suggested that they would allow their child to fight for the religion.

Shîrâzî grew up as a clever child. His intelligence was shown while he was studying the religious sciences. It is particularly reflected when he attended seminars and discussions on scientific matters which he often participates in. The ideas, suggestions and criticisms raised have showed his intelligence, thoroughness and depth of thought. Therefore, his thoughts are often used as materials in religious discussion forums. At the age of 18, he had already written a paper, which is *hashiyah* (footnote description) for the book entitled *Kifâyah Al-usûl* with Muhammad Kaim al-Akhund al-Khurasânî written as the name of the author (w. 1911). The descriptions in the book are the result of his critical reasoning; he can even describe things that have so far been considered abstract. He also continued to study religion in the sacred city of Qom under the supervision of great teachers such as Sayyid Muhammad Husein al-Boroujerdi (w. 1961). He studied in the city of Qom for 5 years.

In 1950, Shîrâzî continued his studies in the city of Najaf Ashraf (Iraq) at Hawzâh Ilmiyah. He learned from great scholars such as Abu al-Qasim al-Khû'i there (w.1984) and Abdul Hadi al-Shîrâzî (w.1962). He often conducted outside research, attended seminars, and received a diploma with the title *ijtihâd mutlâq* (independent *mujtahid*) at the age of 24. It is an achievement that is rarely achieved by youths around his age. The *ijtihâd mutlâq* diploma was given by two great *marja'* (reference) in the

field of Shia law, Ayatullâh al-Istihbânâtî and Ayatullâh Ḥusein kâsyif al-Ghîrâ' (w.1954 M.), after successfully answering Fiqh issues in front of the foreign scholars. Even al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Hâkim (w. 1970), a professor of Fiqh, wrote a special letter to him containing a short compliment and comment on his intelligence and success on Fiqh material.

The news of the achievements of Shîrâzî's studies in Iraq has been recognized by the scholars of Qom (Iran). Hence, Shîrâzî was demanded to devote his knowledge and return from the Hawzah (seminary) of Najaf Ashraf to the Hawzah (seminary) in the city of Qom. There, Shîrâzî initiated the establishment of a forum for the religious scholars and scholars of the Hawzah association with their friends under the name "Majma' al-Mudarrisîn". Shîrâzî still actively contribute to the world of Iranian Shia's education and culture by teaching Fiqh and Ushûl for the Advanced (high) level students. In the city of Qom, he wrote many books telling about his thoughts. One of them is Namoneh's commentary, which is the interpretation of the Quran in Persian which was later translated into Arabic under the name *al-Amthâl fi Tafsîr Kitâbillah al-Munzal*, and it is written in 15 volumes. Besides, there are many of his other works (al-Shîrâzî n.d.) that have become the treasures of Indonesian literary.

Shîrâzî, as *marja' taqlîd*, also built school foundations and centers for Shia cultural and ideological studies, such as *hawzâh illmîyah*, which was named Madrasah al-Imam Amîr al-Mu'minîn in the city of Qom. For adjusting to the advancement of time, Shîrâzî created a website that contains information about the Shîrâzî movement, religious fatwas (formal ruling about Islamic law), information about Shia and other information including education.

### Makârem Shîrâzî's Exoteric Meaning of Q.S al-Anbiyâ [21]: 105

Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]; 105 is interpreted in terms of "*sayaḥkumu al-ṣâlihûn al-ard* (the pious one will rule on earth))." In the previous verse, Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]; 104 informs that Allah will reward the pious believers. As for Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]; 105 informs that Allah will give worldly bliss to the believers and devout ones. This is clarified by the word *al-ard* (earth), which denotes the whole world consisting of land and sea, encompassing all of nature. This verse does not contain special information on certain situations. Even though the word *al-ard* means the commonly understood earth (world's realm), some interpret that this verse relates to the inheritance of the entire earth in the afterlife (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 287). The word *al-irth* (inheritance) (Basri 2020, 40) means the transfer of something or objects to someone without an interaction process, such as taking and giving. Sometimes the word *al-irth* is used in the Quran, which means mastering or winning, like a pious person wins in controlling or wins against an evil person. As the meaning contained in QS. al-A'râf [7]:137 (and We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones)" (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 287).

Furthermore, the word *al-zabûr* encompassing all books. Although the word *zabur* in the Quran refers to the Psalms of the Prophet Dawud, if it is interpreted as the book of the previous Prophets, it does not violate the existence of meaning since the Psalms are parts of the Old Testament. It consists of a collection of prayers and advice (al-Shîrâzî 2015, 287-88). Even so, the dominant public relates to the meaning of the Psalms of Dawud; moreover, it contains several expressions that are in accordance with the verses of the Quran.

The word *al-dhikr* (Hafidz & Rusydi 2019, 69) means a warning or something that causes someone to remember. Al-Quran has used the word *al-dhikr* with the same meaning. Even the word *al-dhikr* is sometimes associated with the book of the Prophet Musa, as written in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]: 48) "Indeed, We have bestowed upon Musa and Harun al-Furqan the criterion (of right and wrong) and a shining light (the Torah) and a reminder for those who keep from evil." Sometimes the word *al-dhikr* also means the Quran, such as Q.S. al-Takwîr [81]:27 "Surely, this 'Quran' is only a reminder to the whole world." Based on these two verses, the meaning of the *al-dhikr* means the two books, namely the Quran and Zabur (representing the books of the previous prophets). Thus, Q.S. al-Anbiyâ

[21]:105 has the meaning that Allah has decreed in the previous prophets' Zabur and the Quran that the earth as a whole will be inherited by the pious ummah.

The expression used in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]:105 explains that what is meant by the word Zabur in this verse is the book of Prophet Dawud and the word *al-dhikr* means the Torah of Musa, thus that the Zabur came after the Torah. The expression " *min ba'di* (after)" in this verse shows its true meaning. So, the overall meaning is "indeed We have determined in the Psalms after the Torah that We will inherit the earth to righteous servants" (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 288).

Shîrâzî casted a question before getting involved in the discussion of takwil verses. The question was: "Why do you have to mention these two books?" There is a possibility that this expression of verse was expressed because Prophet Dawud was one of the great Prophets who was able to form an honest and just government, while Bani Israel were the underdogs (*mustad'afîn*) who were oppressed by arrogant people at that time. They destroy, and take away their land as well as the government. The next question is: "Who is the pious servant of Allah mentioned in the verse above?" Pairing the word *ibâd* (believer)" with the name of Allah will describe the meaning of their faith and monotheism. Meanwhile, the word *al-sâliḥûn* in this verse contains a broad meaning. The meaning of *sâlih*, taken from the word *al-sâliḥûn*, above embraces the meaning of professionalism that is not limited to piety, but includes other fields such as awareness, knowledge, managerial ability and power as well as social power. When the *ibâd mu`minûn* (devout believer) prepare themselves with piety (professionalism) in each of these fields, Allah will surely help them in defeating people who are arrogant so that they cannot rule on earth.

Based on the description above, faith and oppression cannot the perfect pair to seize power and control the enemy as the verse promised above. However, a professional business in other fields is also a requirement that must be met in order to get the inheritance of the earth. The following verse, (Q.S. al-Anbiyâ[21]: 106) then states that, in fact, this Quran conveys a clear message for the worshipers of Allah, which is an affirmation of the promise to the pious believers that Allah will inherit a government on earth if the pious person meets the requirements of professionalism (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 289). The description of this interpretation is the exoteric meaning of the textual verse.

### Esoteric Meaning in Hermeneutics Q.S al-Anbiyâ [21]:105

The aforementioned description of the Shîrâzî interpretation does not show any Shia interpretation. The interpretation is made based on the meaning of words and displays the exoteric meaning of the Quranic text. For deepening the discussion or what Shîrâzî calls *bahth* or *buhuth*, he did the recitation of verse Q.S.al-Anbiyâ[21]:105 and developed his ideas or thoughts.

In the *bahth* section, Shîrâzî made the interpretation in three main sub-themes, namely: a) *Riwâyah haula thaurah al-Mahdi* (the narration of hadith surrounding the revolution of al-Mahdi); b) *Bisyârah hukûmah al-sâlihîn fi mazamîr dâwud* (good news concerning the rule of the pious people in the book of Zabur of the Prophet Dawud); c) *Hukm al-sâlihîn qânûn takwînî* (the rule of the pious people is a formative government). Here is the description of the sub-theme:

Regarding *riwâyah haula thaurah al-Mahdi*, Shîrâzî elaborates on the verse of QS. al-Anbiyâ [21]: 105 by citing a narration made by Imam Bâqir in al-Tabrisî's classical interpretation of Shia *Majma' al-Bayân* (w. 548 AH). The narration explains that the meaning of the final piece of the verse (*ibâd al-sâlihîn*) is the companions of al-Mahdi in the last days. Shîrâzî also cites the narration of al-Qummi the Shia scholar of the third century A.H. In another classic book of *tafseer*, which mentions that he (*ibâd al-sâlihîn* is al-Qâim (another title of Imam al-Mahdi) and his companions.

Shîrâzî explains repeatedly in the verses related to Mahdi found in different spots that the commentaries and narrations related to al-Mahdi reach the degree of *mutawâtir*. Shîrâzî does not limit the generality of the exoteric meaning of this verse because the specific meaning exists in its *takwîl* (esoteric). In accordance with the exoteric meaning of the verse, he affirmed that there will always be a devout believer of God in every era who fights malevolence and injustice. The Shia narrations of the *ahl al-bayt* or Sunni narrations that deliver the story of the advent of al-Mahdi (Syukri 2020, 109) tells the leadership of a pious man. He was the descendants of the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet who will lead the world with tolerance and justice, and eliminate the tyranny and evil that exist. Even the narration commonly found in the hadith of the Shia and Sunni paths states: "Although the age of the world is only one day, Allah will extend that day

until He sends a pious man from *ahl al-bayt*, a Rasul who leads the world with honesty and justice as the world (before) was filled with evil" (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 290). So, the struggle ends with the victory of the devout man and the area conquered by him will become his dominion.

Regarding *bishârah hukûmah al-sâlihîn fi mazamîr dâwud* (good news on the rule of the devout people in the book of Zabur of the Prophet David), Shîrâzî admits that there are deviations from the Psalms (zabur), a part of the Old Testament. However, the message about the earth that will be handed down to the devout ones, according to him, is protected and free from changes made by the expert of the religious book. It is found in: 1) Psalm [37]: 9 "For those who do evil will be eliminated, but those waiting for the Lord shall inherit a land." 2) Psalm [37]:11 "But the humble shall inherit the land, and rejoice in abundant prosperity." 3) Psalm [37]:18 "The Lord knows the days of the devout people, and their inheritance shall remain forever and ever." 4) Psalm [37]:22 "Behold, his blessed shall inherit a land, but those whom he cursed shall be eliminated." 5) Psalm [37]:29 "The devout people shall inherit the land and dwell there always." If we look at the characteristics of the *salih* or devout people mentioned in the Psalms, it used the same language expressions as those found in the Quran. They are *al-siddiqîn* (the righteous one), *al-mutabarrakîn* (the blessed one), *al-mutawâdi'in* (the humble one), and *al-mutawakkilîn* (the one who waits on God). These characteristics indicate the qualities possessed by the *salih* people as mentioned in the narration of Imam al-Bâqir above. Thus, the Psalms verses hint at the universality of the rule of the *salih* leading to the figure of al-Mahdî al-Muntazar (al-Shîrâzî 2013, 290-291).

*Hukm al-sâlihîn qânûn takwînî* (the rule of the devout ones is a formative government). Based on a philosophical analysis, only a government led by a preacher and a believer can implement an honest and just government. Beyond that, there is only a government that is contrary to the purpose of the law of creation of nature. Hence, people who live under tyrannical and dictatorial rule will find it difficult to accept the truth. Therefore, God affirms in His Word that "the earth was bequeathed to devout believers." However, before this promise of God can be realized into reality, the laws and regulations of the rule of the devout ones must be formatted and prepared as early as possible. In other words, al-Mahdi's government must be prepared before his arrival.

### Shia Ideology on the Hermeneutics of Makârem Shîrâzî

Hermeneutics or *takwil* pays attention to the theory of fusion of horizons (assimilation of horizons) as emphasized by Gadamer in Sahiron Syamsuddin's quote that in the process of interpretation, there are two main horizons that must be considered and assimilated; those are the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter. The text (Hanif 2017, 104) horizon is a view of the world of the text which al-Khuli calls *dirâsah mâ fi al-naş wa dirâsah mâ ḥawla al-nas* (a study of what is in the text and what surrounds the text). The study of texts is about analyzing what exists in the language aspects of a text. The other one, the study of what surrounds the text is the study of the things that surround the text from micro and macro conditions (outside the text), such as *asbâb nuzûl* verses and the cultural conditions of the Arab nation in general when the verses of the Quran were revealed. The interpreter's horizon is a view of the personal condition of the interpreter involving one's background in life, scholarship, and madhhab or schools of thought that will influence his understanding in the interpretation process (Syamsuddin 2017, 86-87).

Hermeneutics is a text interpretation process that focuses on the interpreter's horizon. Each interpreter has a different madhhab and scientific background, and these will definitely produce different interpretations. Accordingly, the products of interpretation vary widely. However, it is not uncommon for these differences to cause pros and cons. Basically, in the classical scientific tradition, the scholars have provided limits and conditions that interpretations that receive recognition are interpretations carried out by qualified interpreters who have the correct *aqeedah* (ideology). However, the differences in madhhab in Islam have created pros and cons of hermeneutics against the Quran. It happens particularly if the interpretation leads to madhhab fanaticism and group ideology. Then, the interpreter's personal ideas dominate his interpretation of the Quran.

Next, two types of *ta'wil* emerge (Fauzi 2018, 190) namely: a) *ta'wil mahmûd* (commendable); it is a *ta'wil* which does not conflict with religious law or is far from misguided. This *ta'wil* is built with the principles of correct knowledge, linguistics, knowledge of the Quran and other supporting sciences; b) *ta'wil mazmûm* (disgraceful); it is a *ta'wil* that is contrary to religious law. This *ta'wil* is not built with correct interpretation



principles such as linguistic and scientific rules of the Quran, but is carried out by following the tendency of lust such as madhhab fanaticism.

In the Shi'a tradition, there are also similar requirements for an interpreter. They must have the correct *aqedah* (ideology), although the meaning of "the correct ideology" differs between outsiders (non-Shia) and insiders (Shia). *Tafsir* or *ta'wil bil ra'yi* according to the Shia tradition is forbidden since the Quranic verses are interpreted by following one's desires, relying on the personal ideas of the interpreter without any basis for proof. So, in Shia interpretation, the terms *ta'wil bil ra'yi mahmud* (commendable) and *ta'wil bil ra'yi mazmum* (despicable) are not recognized. However, Shia hermeneutics has *ta'wil ijthadi*, which is an attempt to interpret the Quranic verses by building a structure of thinking using reasoning by looking for supporting arguments from Hadith or the words of the Imams of ahl al-bayt. Such *takwil* is justified in Shia ideology.

The interpretation of Q.S. al-Anbiya [21]: 105 based on the exoteric meaning of the verse carried out by Shîrâzî uses a linguistic approach that does not violate the conditions carried out by scholars of Quran exegesis in general. This type of interpretation can be accepted by all groups, both Shia (in this case Shîrâzî as an insider) and Sunni (as an outsider) because the interpretation carried out by Shîrâzî is in accordance with the meaning of the Qur'anic text and shows the general meaning of the pronunciation of *'ibâdiya al-sâlihîn*. Nevertheless, at the end of the interpretation of this verse there is a prologue which directs the interpretation to the esoteric meaning of the verse.

Quran is recognized by every Muslim as God's guidance which has an unlimited depth of meaning. Thus, Quran is open to interpretation with a textual (exoteric) understanding approach or with an understanding of the inner (esoteric) meaning contained in the text (Permana 2022, 13) Shia scholars are used to interpreting the Quran with an exoteric and esoteric approach as Shîrâzî did in the abovementioned verse. An interpretation made with an exoteric approach is chosen to interpret verses with the theme of monotheism or prophethood, while verses with the theme of Imamah are interpreted using an esoteric approach. (Hawting and Shareef 1993, 196) The idea of interpretation using Imamah theme, with esoteric approach has become the contradictory point of Sunni towards Shia, so many interpretations of Shia are claimed to be "deviated," (Wendry 2010, 25) because they are influenced by group fanaticism.

Makârem Shîrâzî interprets this verse using an esoteric meaning approach. He does not use his personal opinion, which can be claimed as the forbidden *ta'wîl bil ra'yî*, but returns to the past by referring to the interpretation of Imam Shia al-Bâqir as the authoritative author to align it with personal meaning as a reader. Q.S. al-Anbiyâ[21]: 105 inspired him to do *ta'wîl ijtihâdî*. The word Zabûr in this verse is confirmed by the verses of the Psalms which contain God's promise to bequeath the earth to the devout people. The two verses of the Quran and the Bible have the same content, concerning God's promise. The verses of the Psalms, based on Shîrâzî's *ijtihâd* give a hint about the characteristics of the pious people who have similarities with the characteristics of Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntazar. Referring to this meaning, Shîrâzî builds his *ta'wîl* ideas about the advent of the twelfth Imam of Shia Imamiyah that is Imam al-Mahdi. According to an insider (Shia) perspective, this kind of commentary is considered valid and in accordance with the prevailing interpretation rules in Shia. It is in contrast to the views of outsiders (sunnis) who think that this interpretation is the justification for justifying the ideology of Imamah. Even though Shia and Sunni both confirm Allah's promise regarding the advent of Imam al-Mahdi at the end of the world, each group has different opinions about the figure of al-Mahdi whose presence is expected. Shia is waiting for the appearance of the invisible Mahdi who once lived in the fourth century of *hijrah*, while Sunni is waiting for the birth of the promised al-Mahdi. However, the editorial chosen to interpret this verse is a general editorial so that it can be accepted by all parties.

## Conclusion

Shia scholars are used to interpreting the Quran with an exoteric and esoteric approach as Shîrâzî did for Q.S. al-Anbiyâ[21]: 105 from the exoteric part which is interpreted into the theme "*sayahkumu alsâlihûn alard*". It means that God will give worldly bliss to the devout and pious believers. The word *al-Zabûr* in this verse refers to the book of Dawud and the word *al-dhikr* means the book of the Torah of Musa; thus, Zabur came after Torah. So, faith and oppression cannot be a perfect pair to seize power and control the enemy as promised through the verse, but professional efforts in other fields are also conditions that must be met in order to receive the inheritance of the earth. Meanwhile, in terms of its esoteric meaning, Shîrâzî interprets it in three main sub-themes that

include: a) the history of the hadith about the revolution of al-Mahdi; b) the good news about the reign of the devout people in the Psalms of the Prophet Dawud; c) the rule of the devout people is formative government.

The interpretation of Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]: 105 based on the exoteric meaning of the verse carried out by Shîrâzî uses a linguistic approach that does not violate the conditions made by the scholars of Quran exegesis in general. This type of interpretation can be accepted by all groups, both Shia (in this case, it is Shîrâzî as an insider) and Sunni (as an outsider) since the interpretation made by Shîrâzî is in accordance with the meaning of the Quranic text and shows the general meaning of the pronunciation of *'ibâdîy al-sâlihûn*. Then, Shîrâzî performs *ta'wîl* on this verse using an esoteric meaning approach. Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]: 105 inspired him to do *ta'wîl ijtihâdî*. The word Zabûr in this verse is confirmed by the verses of the Psalms (the Bible) which contain God's promise to bequeath the earth to the devout people. The two verses of the Quran and the Bible have the same content concerning God's promise. The verses of the Psalms, based on Shîrâzî's *ijtihâd*, give a hint about the characteristics of the pious people who have similarities with the characteristics of Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntazar. In the end, Shia waited for the appearance of the invisible Mahdi who once lived in the fourth century of the *Hijrah*, while Sunni looked forward to the birth of the promised al-Mahdi. However, the editorial chosen to interpret this verse is a general editorial so that it can be accepted by all parties.

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