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EXPLORING AT-TAFSIR AL-MAUDHU'I IN THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF SIDDIQ FADZIL'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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Abstract:

This research will examine one of Malaysia's most contemporary schools of Islamic thought. This study revolves around the concept of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i (thematic tafsir) which was propagated by Prof. Dato' Dr. Siddiq Fadzil, the president of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM). In his numerous lectures, Siddiq Fadzil discussed this concept in about 80 lectures. The primary focus of his lectures was to elucidate how to interpret the Quran within the context and reality of Malaysia. Therefore, there are three conditions for interpreting At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i: First: The authentic text must be the Arabic classical tafsir. Second: A selective theme addressing current issues that have impacted the world, especially Malaysia, should be chosen. Third: Connecting and relating the tafsir to the Malaysian context is essential.

Keywords:

ABIM, at-Tasfir al-Maudhu'I, Malaysian Context, Theme



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Introduction

Allah sent down the al-Quran al-Karim to the Prophet Muhammad through Jibrail (Kurniawan, 2022). The al-Quran al-Karim is considered a sacred book because it is the word of Allah and has been preserved by Allah from every form of mistake (Taufiqurrochman, 2008). It remains unchanged (Mu'is, 2021), and contains no falsehood. (Wardani Mulyani, 2013) Allah azza wajalla said:

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian. (Surah al-Hijr: 9)

This verse explains that Allah will guard (Muhammad bin Jarir: 1999), protect (Al-Qurtubi:2006), ensure that al-Quran al-Karim is not tweaked or altered (Ibn Kathir:1999), and that the Shariah of al-Quran remains intact until the hereafter (Al-Alusi:2008). No person, scholar, or even jinn, even if they were to gather with all mankind, could write anything like the Quran (Al-Karmani:1987). Allah said:

Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to assist each other." (Surah al-Israk: 88)

This verse, revealed 1440 Hijrah, proves that no human or jinn can produce or write anything like the Quran, even its shortest chapter. This challenge remains open until the Day of Judgement (Al-Alusi:2008), Allah said:

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers. (Surah al-Baqarah: 23-24)

Therefore, as believers, numerous Muslims undertake the responsibility of preserving and protecting the al-Quran al-Karim by memorizing it. Simultaneously, the most crucial method of defending al-Quran al-Karim is to study the word of Allah . This is essential because orientalists and disbelievers often assert that al-Quran al-Karim is corrupted, as argued by



scholars like Noldeke¹, or that it is an incomplete version, as suggested by Arthur Jeffery². They erroneously claim that the Quran is merely the word of Prophet Muhammad and unfortunately, this argument is weak³. To refute such claims, numerous scholars, both past and contemporary, have thoroughly studied al-Quran al-Karim in various ways, including through the interpretation of the al-Quran al-Karim.

The field of interpreting al-Quran al-Karim is vast, and many scholars conduct research in this area. Some focus on asbabun nuzul (As-Suyuti:2002), thematic al-Quran (Al-Biqa'I: 1984), fiqh dan Tauheed al-Quran al-Karim (Mahmood bin Umar:1997), balaghah al-Quran al-Karim (Wahbah Az-Zuhaili: 2005), al-Quran al-Karim in terms of grammar (Samin Halabi: 1986), syntax (Fadhil Soleh As-Samarakyi: 2017) and morphology. Nowadays, contemporary scholars emphasize studying al-Quran al-Karim from a thematic perspective (Abdul Fatah al-Khalid:2012).

Recently, the theme of al-Quran al-Karim has gained popularity and has been discussed, particularly in Malaysia, as seen in the work of Siddiq Fadzil (d:2021)⁴ (Yaacob, Adli & Zamziba, Muhammad Nur Farhan, 2021). Therefore, this research aims to discuss and analyse Siddiq Fadzil's views from some of the series of his lectures on At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i at College Dar Al-Hikmah, Malaysia.

The primary objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Siddiq Fadzil's approach to At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i, examining its relevance and application within the Malaysian context. By exploring the intersections between Islamic scholarship and local dynamics, the study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of how At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i can be a valuable tool for interpreting the Quran in diverse cultural settings.

Thematic exegesis works in Malaysia were first documented in the 1940s, with only one work identified during that period. A similar pattern was observed in the 1950s and 1980s, with no works found in the 1960s and 1970s. The production of such works increased in the following years, particularly from 2010 to the present, with a 42% growth rate, resulting in 19 publications (Abu Bakar et al., 2019).

¹ His book: The History of the Quran.

² His book: Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an the Old Codices.

³ Sadaqat, Sumna, Orientalists' View on Quran (June 17, 2021).

⁴ Prof. Dato' Dr. Siddig Bin Haji Fadhil was born on January 4, 1947, in Bagan Datoh, Perak. He received his formal education at the village school where he was born, Sungai Tiang Darat. After completing his secondary education at Izzuddin Shah School, Ipoh, he continued a specialist teaching course at the Language Teaching College, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur (1967-1968). His career as an educator began before he continued his studies at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (1971). After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honors in 1974, he continued his second degree at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, and was awarded a Master of Letters (M.Litt.) in 1978. Then, in 1989, he became the first recipient of a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the Institute of Malay Language, Literature, and Culture, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. In addition to pursuing his career as an academic at the Department of Malay Literature, UKM, he is also active in the Islamic movement as the President of the Malaysian Islamic Youth (ABIM) (1983-1991). He was the former President of Wadah Pencerdasan Umat Malaysia (WADAH) (2005-2015). After his retirement in 2001, he continued to be active in the fields of science and education at IPTS. Now he serves as President of Dar al-Hikmah College, Adjunct Professor at UNISEL, Chairman of the Academy of Civilization Studies (AKK), Panel Member of the YaPEIM Management Academy, and Chairman of the Darul Ehsan Institute (IDE). His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak, Darul Ridzuan (2001) Then in 2006, he was selected as the recipient of the State of Perak Maal Hijrah Award for the year 1427 H.4

In conclusion, this article aims to explore the meaning of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i by Siddiq Fadzil, with a specific focus on his At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i. The investigation will delve into Siddiq Fadzil's interpretation and analysis of his work.

Literature Review

The realm of Islamic scholarship has seen a continual evolution of interpretative methodologies, and the study of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i has gained prominence within the Malaysian context. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of research related to At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in Malaysia, with a specific focus on the contributions of Siddiq Fadzil.

The roots of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i trace back to the pioneering work of scholars such as Sayyid Qutb, who emphasized a contextual and contemporary interpretation of the Quran (Masykur, Masykur & Gunawan, Iwan Caca, 2021). In the Malaysian context, the adoption of this methodology has been met with both scholarly acclaim and critical scrutiny. Researchers have delved into the historical development of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in Malaysia, examining its reception and impact on the local Islamic discourse (Abu Bakar et al., 2019).

Siddiq Fadzil's contributions to At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i have not occurred in isolation; rather, they have left an indelible mark on Malaysian Islamic thought. Studies (Abdullah, 2020) have investigated the ways in which Siddiq Fadzil's interpretations have influenced Malaysian scholars, students, and the wider community. This includes an analysis of the reception of Al-Maudhu'i's ideas in educational institutions and within the broader Islamic intellectual circles.

While Siddiq Fadzil's work has garnered admiration, it has not been exempted from criticism. Scholars have examined the critiques levelled against At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in the Malaysian context, evaluating the scholarly debates and controversies surrounding its application. (Nur Azita Zahari & Mashitah Sulaiman, 2021).

To sum up, this literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of the exploration of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in the Malaysian context. Siddiq Fadzil's contributions, as analyzed through a diverse range of scholarly perspectives, provide a rich tapestry for understanding the impact and implications of Al-Maudhu'i's methodology within the unique socio-cultural and intellectual milieu of Malaysia.

Methodology

Understanding the methodological underpinnings of Siddiq Fadzil's contributions is crucial for a nuanced analysis. Researchers have explored the distinctive features of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i, examining its departure from traditional exegesis and the implications of such a departure in the Malaysian scholarly landscape (Abu Bakar et al., 2019).

The research adopts a multi-faceted methodology, combining literature review, content analysis of Siddiq Fadzil's writings on his articles and lectures. This triangulation of methods ensures a robust exploration of the nuances and implications of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in the Malaysian context.

The Meaning Oof At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i.

At-tafsir al-Maudhu'i contains two words. The first one is at-Tafsir, and the second is al-Maudhu'i. At-Tafsir means interpretation, and al-Maudhu'i means theme. The word "interpretation" includes the form of the noun "*masdar*," which means explanation, description, and description (Ma'luf Al-Yassu'i & Al-Yassu'i: 1986), while the word "al-Maudhu'i" means theme. It is also ascribed to the word *maudhu'*, *isim maf'ul* from *fi'il madhi wadha'a*, which has various meanings, namely that which is placed, delivered, placed, or made up, which is discussed in the theme (Al-Marbawi: 1995)

Muhammad Baqir As-Shadr said that At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i is an objective study introducing a particular topic from one of the themes related to ideology (aqidah), social, or the universe (cosmos) and tends to study and evaluate from the point of view of the Qur'an to produce a theory from the Qur'an on the topic (At-Tamiymi:2015).

Therefore, the meaning of at-Tasfir al-Maudhu'i is the interpretation of verse al-Quran al-Karim from the theme perspective. Indeed, the theme of al-Quran al-Karim appeals to many, there are scholars studied *Jahl* (Abdul Fatah al-Khalid, 2012), *Syura* (Ibid, p:203) and Prophet Muhammad SAW (Ibid, p:273).

For example, the theme of *Tawheed* comes from the word "*abada*" (worship). This word is used in al-Quran al-Karim in around 140 verses.

Thus, in Surah al-Baqarah only, by using the word "abada," such as Allah ﷺ says, the word اعْبُدُوا describes the command by Allah towards His slaves:

O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous (Surah al-Baqarah 2:21)

Second, Allah ﷺ asks the children of Israel to worship Allah ﷺ by using the word تَعْبُدُونَ

And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah." Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:83)

Third, in the story of Prophet Yaacob, he advised his son to worship Allah &, and Allah says:



Or were you witnesses when death approached Yaacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:133).

Next, the word تَعْبُدُونَ explains that all of you must worship Allah; Allah ﷺ says:

O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:173).

In the last example, the verse asks those who want to marry either a Muslim man or woman that they must marry a Muslim man or woman rather than a polytheist, even though they think that polytheists are better than a Muslim man or woman (Muhammad bin Ahmad: 2006). Allah says:

And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember. (Surah al-Baqarah2:221)

These five verses above show that the word "a'bada" (worship) is used in Surah al-Baqarah. This is called At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i, and the same word and interpretation also apply to the same theme, which is worship. Next, this research will elaborate on how Siddiq Fadzil used the method of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i from the beauty of his interpretation.

Tafsir Al-Ouran Bil Al-Ouran

First and foremost, Siddiq Fadzil interpreted the al-Quran al-Karim with Al-Quran. For instance, Allah said:

O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination. (Surah Lukman 31:17),

Indeed, his interpretations discussed the enjoin what is right and forbidding what is wrong the prove the good Muslim. According to him, Muslims do not only establish prayer; they must also do what Allah commands and leave out what He forbids. Thus, verse 17 of Surah Luqman above is one of the educational messages of Luqman al-Hakim, who aspires to a quality generation of God's servants and at the same time has a high social concern.

The generation that faithfully performs prayers and is committed to the mission of *Amar makruf-nahi munkar* is a generation of pious children, agents of the construction of *almujtama* al-salih, a clean society in the sense of a society built on the pure values of *makruf* and spared from all symptoms of evil (Siddiq Fadzil: 2012).

Luqman al-Hakim advised his son to perform the prayer at the same time he must obey Allah azza wajalla by practising Islam as the way of life because there are several verses that also ask the slave of Allah to do good deeds and leave wrong deeds. The spirit of loving kindness and hating evil should be nurtured simultaneously with prayer education. Thus, *Amar makruf nahi munkar* is not only in the form of an action, but more than that it is a character and identity (Siddiq Fadzil: 2012). Allah says:

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer and give zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have mercy on them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise. (Surah at-Taubah 9:71).

Allah J says:

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient. (Surah al-'Imran 3:110).

The verse above illustrates that those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong are signs of a good nation and person. That is why, if someone only fulfils his duty in an established prayer that is not enough to be the best nation but indeed, he is still doing good, unfortunately, he is not at the stage or level to be the best nation. Siddiq Fadzil said: "You are the best people born to mankind, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is bad, and believing in God, if the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them" (Siddiq Fadzil: 2012).

Tafsir Al-Ouran Bil Hadith

Secondly, Siddiq Fadzil interpreted the al-Quran al-Karim not only with Al-Quran perspective but also he referred to the al-Hadis al-Syarif. For example:

On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (*) say, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his



hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart and that is the weakest of faith.

Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Aqwal As-Sohabah

Thirdly, according to Siddiq Fadzil's interpretation of the Al-Quran Al-Karim, referred to companions as the model.

As an example, in the Islamic political tradition, opposition in this sense is not only not prevented but requested by the rulers, especially al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun such as Abu Bakr and Umar r.a., who ask the people to correct them when they do wrong⁵.

In the case of Umar ibn al-Khattab r.a., his request was met by someone who said he would correct him with a sword. Words like that may feel too harsh, but it turns out `Umar ibn al-Khattab was not angry; in fact, he said tahmid, expressing gratitude to God because there are still people who have the courage to correct the leader or ruler with the sword (Siddiq Fadzil: 2012). Therefore, the al-Rashidun caliphs are not the type of rulers who are obsessed with power.

Tafsir Al-Quran Bil At-Tafsir Al-Mu'asir

Forth, He also studied the contemporary experts, according to Siddiq Fadzil's interpretation of the Al-Quran Al-Karim.

He quotes the book written by al-Shaykh `Abd al-Hafiz al-Sawiy about *al-muzaharat naw`un min inkar al-munkar* (demonstration is a kind of act of denying evil) (Siddig Fadzil: 2012).

He quotes the opinion according to al-Qaradawiy is the right of humanity (al-ta`biru haqqun insaniy) (Al-Jazeera: 2005).

Wahbah al-Zuhayliy: "through oral and written speech, drawings, recordings, letters, and demonstrations (al-tazahur)" (Wahbah Az-Zuhaili: 2017). In this regard, criticizing is part of amar makruf nahi munkar, including criticizing the government. Even disobedience is part of amar makruf nahi munkar if it is done on the basis of fighting evil. Because of that, Islam guarantees haqq al-mu'aradah, or the right of the opposition, in the sense of rejecting wrongdoing, fighting falsehood, upholding the truth, and realising the interests of the ummah within the limits of the Sharia.

Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Manhaj Malizi⁶

Lastly, the most crucial aspect of his interpretation was that he tied it to the Malaysian views. It is an integral aspect of the exploration of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i in Malaysia is its intersection with the fiqh or Manhaj Maliziy (Malaysianness) (Nur Azita Zahari & Mashitah Sulaiman, 2021). In addition, Manhaj Malizi can be referred to *Siyaq* in Arabic term. *Siyaq* means contextual.

⁵ Sirah Ibn Hisyam, 4/240; dan 'Uyun al-Akhbar li Ibn Qutaibah, 2/234'; al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah oleh Abu Fida' al-Dimasyqi, 5/248)

⁶ Manhai Malizi: Malaysia context.

In the tradition of Islamic leadership, what is important is not the power to hold the reins of government; what is important is the implementation of al-khayr wa l-ma`ruf (virtue and benevolence). Because of that they feel helped and helped by the opposition who want to return them to the path of goodness and kindness.

Finding

Table 1: Frequency of Siddiq Fadzil's At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i

No	ANALYSIS	FREQUENCY
1	Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Al-Quran	Three times
2	Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Hadis	One time
3	Tafsir Bil Aqwal As-Sohabah	Two times
4	Tafsir Bil At-Tafsir Al-Mu'asir	Three times
5	Tafsir Bil Manhaj Malizi	Two times

Firstly, the table 1 show, he used Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Al-Quran (Three times): This type of Tafsir involves interpreting the Quran using the Quran itself. It indicates a focus on deriving meanings from within the Quranic text. The frequency of three times suggests a significant emphasis on this approach.

Secondly, Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Hadis (One time): This form of Tafsir involves interpreting the Quran with the help of Hadith (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad .). The fact that it appears only once suggests a lesser emphasis on this method compared to Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Al-Quran.

Thirdly, Tafsir Bil Aqwal As-Sohabah (Two times): Tafsir Bil Aqwal As-Sohabah involves interpreting the Quran based on the statements of the companions of Prophet Muhammad .

The frequency of two times indicates a moderate emphasis on this method.

Fourth, Tafsir Bil At-Tafsir Al-Mu'asir (Three times): This type of Tafsir involves contemporary or modern interpretations of the Quran. The frequency of three times suggests a notable focus on understanding the Quran in the context of the contemporary world.

Fifth, Tafsir Bil Manhaj Malizi (Two times): Tafsir Bil Manhaj Malizi refers to interpreting the Quran based on linguistic and contextual analysis. The frequency of two times suggests a moderate emphasis on linguistic and contextual understanding in interpreting the Quran.

In short, the most emphasized method of interpretation is Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Al-Quran, suggesting a focus on deriving meanings from the Quranic text itself. Then, Tafsir Bil At-Tafsir Al-Mu'asir is also prominent, indicating an interest in understanding the Quran in the context of the modern world. Meanwhile, Tafsir Al-Quran Bil Hadis is less frequent, suggesting a comparatively lower reliance on Hadith in interpreting the Quran. Besides that, Tafsir Bil Aqwal As-Sohabah and Tafsir Bil Manhaj Malizi fall in between, indicating a moderate emphasis on interpreting the Quran based on the statements of companions and linguistic/contextual analysis.

Conclusion

In our opinion, we would like to suggest to other researchers and scholars because there a lot of his lecturer's series on At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i not has been discussed yet. Furthermore, this research only focusses on certain topic which is "Al-Amr Bi 'L-Ma`Ruf Wa 'N-Nahy `Ani 'L-Munkar: Watak Dan Jati Diri Muslim: Series 62":

- 1. Study and research Siddig Fadzil' At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i.
- 2. Study and research the method of Siddiq Fadzil in great detail.
- 3. Do the comparison study between Siddid Fadzil and another scholar in terms of At-Tafsir al-Maudhu'i.
- 4. Compile the At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i written by Siddiq Fadzil in one book.
- 5. Digitalize the At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i written by Siddiq Fadzil in a website or applications.
- 6. Translate the At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i written by Siddiq Fadzil into Arabic, English, and other languages.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on Quranic exegesis by offering a detailed analysis of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i within the specific framework of Malaysian Islamic scholarship there are there are three conditions to interpret At-Tafsir al-Maudhu'i: First: The authentic text must be the Arabic classical tafsir. Second: A selective theme with the current issues that have affected the world, especially Malaysia. Third: Connecting and relating the tafsir with the Malaysian context.

Table 2: Concept of At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i by Siddig Fadzil

No	At-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i	
1	Authentic Text	
2	Theme with the current issue	
3	Connecting the Malaysian context	

By understanding Siddiq Fadzil's contributions, scholars and practitioners can gain insights into the adaptability and relevance of this critical approach to interpreting the Quran in diverse cultural contexts.

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