

ANALYSIS OF MUSTHAFA UMAR'S EXEGESIS METHODOLOGY IN THE *TAFSIR AL-MA'RIFAH*

(Analisis Metodologi Tafsir Musthafa Umar dalam *Tafsir Al-Ma'rifah*)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the methodology of Musthafa Umar on preaching using his exegetical book on the Malay-Muslim community in Indonesia and Malaysia. The use of *al-Islahi al-Ijtimāci* methodology in the *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* has succeeded in attracting the Malay-Muslim community in Indonesia and Malaysia to use the *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* as a guide in their lives. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology using the content analysis method of the exegetical book. This study also used an interview method with the author. The results found that the *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* is currently studying new problems at the present time by using the Malay language, which is easy to understand. The exegetical book also emphasizes the aspects of Islamic society, morals, and social life. The *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* is a *tafsir bi al-Ra'y* (opinion-oriented interpretation), which uses the interpretation method of

Tahlili al-Mawdu'i with the approach of *al-Islahi al-Ijtimāci* (social reform). The implication of this study is to introduce a Muslim scholar who can be a reference for researchers, scholars and the Malay-Muslim community in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Keywords: Methodology; Exegesis; Malay-Muslim; Indonesia; Malaysia; Musthafa Umar; *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*

ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah memperlihatkan metodologi Musthafa Umar dalam berdakwah menggunakan tafsirannya pada masyarakat Melayu-Muslim Indonesia. Penggunaan metodologi al-Islahi al-Ijtimā'i dalam tafsir al-Ma'rifah berjaya menarik minat masyarakat Melayu-Muslim Indonesia untuk menggunakan Tafsir al-Ma'rifah sebagai panduan kehidupan mereka. Metodologi kajian ini ialah kajian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode analisis isi kandungan kitabnya. Kajian ini juga menggunakan metode wawancara/temu bual bersama penulis. Hasil daripada kajian mendapati bahawa kitab Tafsir al-Ma'rifah merupakan kitab tafsir masa kini yang mengkaji masalah baru pada masa kini dengan menggunakan bahasa Melayu yang mudah untuk difahami. Kitab tafsir ini memberikan penekanan kepada aspek penambahbaikan masyarakat Islam, akhlak dan sosial masyarakat. Kitab Tafsir al-Ma'rifah merupakan tafsir bi al-Ra'yi dengan menggunakan metode tafsir Tahlili al-Mawdu'i, dengan pendekatan penafsirannya menggunakan al-Islahi al-Ijtimā'i (perbaikan masyarakat). Implikasi kajian ini amat penting kerana ia memperkenalkan seorang tokoh ulama yang dapat dijadikan rujukan para penyelidik, ulama, masyarakat Melayu-Muslim Indonesia, dan Malaysia pada masa kini.

Kata Kunci: Metodologi; Tafsir; Melayu-Muslim; Indonesia; Malaysia; Musthafa Umar; *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*

INTRODUCTION

The Quran was not interpreted as a whole during the time of the Prophet (al-Qattan 2007). Prophet Muhammad only interpreted the Quran in response to his companions' questions or according to the prevailing needs at the time. Later in the era of the Companions and Tabi'in (al-Zarkasyi 1957), Quranic exegesis developed at three exegetical schools, namely in Medina, Mecca, and Kufa. The continuation of the present Quranic exegesis is necessary for every human being. In recognizing this, scholars of related fields seek to understand and interpret the Quran based on the disciplines of studies, and to adhere to their skills by meeting the specific requirements set by previous scholars (Kholid 2007).

Among the current *mufassir* (exegete) who are yet to be known to the Indonesian community is Musthafa Umar. His expertise in the field of Tafsir had pushed the *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* to be written using the Malay language, which is easily understood by the general public. The *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* is the first exegetical book authored by an Indonesian scholar, Musthafa Umar, that was written in the Malay language. To interpret the Quran, the *mufassir* (exegete) must be versed in a number of specific fields of knowledge. As a result, exegetical works are composed and written by a small number of scholars.

Until now, *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* has been referred to and used by the Malay-Muslims Indonesia and Malaysia as guidance in their lives. However, some of them do not fully understand the methods or approaches used by Musthafa Umar in his exegetical book. Therefore, this study intends to demonstrate the methodology behind Musthafa Umar's exegetical book and the application of Quranic exegesis to the Malay-Muslim community in Indonesia and Malaysia so they become more interested in using it as guidance.

AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

Musthafa Umar is one of the archipelago's scholars nowadays, who is not widely known by the community in Indonesia and Malaysia. Although he has contributed a lot of thought, both in the form of chapters in books and in his *da'wah* or missionaries, such as talks on routine studies in mosques. However, he is only known in the city of Pekanbaru, Indonesia, and by a small part of the community outside the city. He has not been widely known by the Indonesian community in general.

Musthafa Umar was born on May 13th, 1967 AD in Kampung Dalam Senapelan, Pekanbaru. He obtained early education in his hometown, namely the state primary school in Pekanbaru and the first secondary school was also in Pekanbaru. Then he continued his studies at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo East Java Indonesia, and completed his education in 1987 (Naldi 2014). During his childhood, Musthafa was educated by his parents with religious education. He studied in primary school during the morning sessions, and in the afternoon, he studied the Quran with his father, who was also a Quran teacher. According to him, his father built the house as a place to teach the Quran to primary school children. Sometimes there were up to 40 children reciting the Quran in his house. Thus, it is not surprising that he is able to recite the Quran fluently since he was a child. Moreover, his father ordered him to teach the Quran to children of the same age (Musthafa Umar 2014).

The paradigm of his thought began to open wide when he continued his studies at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, East Java Indonesia, then continued to grow when he continued his education in Cairo, Egypt for four years (1989-1993).

He received a first-class degree from Al-Azhar University, Egypt in the Faculty of Usuluddin majoring in *Da'wah* in 1993. Afterwards, Musthafa Umar continued his studies for a Master's degree at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in 1995-1999 with a thesis entitled "*Juhud al-Munazzamat al-Islamiyah fii al-Da'wah ila Qabiilati Sakai*" and obtained a Master's degree in *Da'wah* in 1999. Then, he obtained a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in al-Quran and Sunnah in 2009 from Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya Malaysia in 2009 with a thesis entitled "*Metode 'Aqliyyah Ijtima'iyah: Kajian Terhadap Tafsir al-Sha'rawi* (Musthafa Umar 2014).

Before he started his *da'wah* activity in Riau, he was also actively teaching religions in Malaysian mosques. Starting as a regular attendee, he became a prayer *imam*, replaced absent preachers, finally he was given a fixed schedule. Every month he had 60 teaching places. However, after graduating, he decided to return to Indonesia, but still returned to complete his studies for 10 days a month in Malaysia. He also conducted various religious studies, such as Quranic exegesis, Usul Fiqh, and Arabic language for mosques in Riau and Malaysia. He even went to remote areas of indigenous people to teach them (Damanik 2012).

Musthafa Umar's teaching classes in Malaysia received official permission from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). In fact, he was always invited to speak at government institutions. *Da'wah*, which he provided without asking for payment, was accepted by the Muslim community in Riau and Malaysia. Therefore, it is not surprising if many congregations come to his place of study. Malaysian followers sometimes travel to Riau to follow the studies conducted by his Tafaqquh Foundation (Damanik 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is a qualitative research method using the document analysis method. The type of research in this paper was library research, namely a study of the contents of the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*. Library research makes use of library sources to obtain research data. However, library research limits its activities to library collection materials only, without the need for field research. The research method with a qualitative approach is a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human problems (Creswell 1998).

The main objective of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon by focusing on a complete picture of the studied phenomenon rather than breaking it down into interrelated variables. The hope is to obtain a deep understanding of the

studied phenomena (Salim 2001). The form of data analysis used is a descriptive analysis (Vredenberg 1986). The workflow is not limited to collecting and compiling data but also includes analysis and interpretation of the data. Fundamentally, it can be said that a description is an objective representation of the studied phenomenon (1970). This study is divided into four methods, namely, the method of determining the subject, the form of the study, the method of data collection, and the method of data analysis.

The research subject chosen was the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*, written by Musthafa Umar. The focus of this study was on his biography, his methodology in Quranic exegesis, and the method of *al-Islahi al-Ijtima'i*. This study was conducted in Indonesia and Malaysia. The form of study carried out was a qualitative study in the form of book content analysis. The main source in this study was the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*, focusing on chapters one to four, namely from Chapter al-Fatihah to the beginning Chapter an-Nisa since the exegetical book has not been published yet.

The method used was a literature review using a descriptive analysis approach (Vredenberg 1986). This study aimed to collect data through reading and researching the contents of the *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*, data collection related to Musthafa Umar, and his exegetical book. Secondly, this study also used the interview method to obtain important data that was not found in literature reviews (Moleong 2002). The form of the interview is an unstructured interview. An unstructured interview is an interview that does not use existing questions, but questions are not pre-arranged and delivered with spontaneity (Tohirin 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This is an explanation of the general method used by Musthafa Umar in his debate. The choice of the name of his interpretation with *al-Ma'rifah* was to declare that this exegesis provided knowledge to people who do not understand the Arabic language. Furthermore, it was created to help people understand the meaning of Quranic exegesis and to inspire people to study, understand, and apply the main sources of Islamic law, the Quran and the Hadith, in their daily lives.

As for Musthafa Umar, he employed two methods, namely *Tahlili* and *Mawdu'i*, which combined the interpretation method of *Tahlili al-Mawdu'i* with the approach of *al-Islahi al-Ijtima'i* (social reform). As an introduction to every chapter interpreted in the Quran, he provides a brief explanation. These include the names of the Quranic chapters, their meanings (sometimes using different names for the same chapter)

and the order of an exegesis, which depends on the location of its revelation (Mecca or Medina) and summarizes the contents of the chapter.

Upon entering into the discussion of exegesis, Musthafa Umar used the appropriate method according to the verse that required interpretation (Musthafa Umar 2000). Before interpreting the verse, he provided specific headings for each verse within the chapter according to the order in the *mushaf* (written copy of the Quran). For example, in Chapter al-Fatihah, he provided the theme of charity. Then, in the first verse, he described the wisdom of starting a charity. The second verse was about the science of ending the charity and others.

He then related the interconnectedness of the verses (called the *munasabah ayat*) of the verse under consideration and its predecessor and succeeding verse, such as in Chapter al-Baqarah. In the first verse, he provided the title of the pious, then the second verse was about the infidels, and the third verse was about the hypocrites. Verse included *فواتح السورة* (opening letters of the Quranic chapter), Musthafa Umar mentioned it in the word of *muqatta'ah*, explaining the secret of his meaning in Arabic without mentioning the scholars' opinions.

Musthafa Umar referred to the legal *istinbat*, taken from the interpreted verses, which dealt with certain aspects of life, such as the Chapter al-Fatihah containing the meanings of *'Aqidah*, *'Ibadah*, and *Mu'amalah*. During the work of Quranic exegesis, Musthafa Umar touched on the aspects of the advantages of these Quranic chapters, such as Chapter al-Fatihah as the mother or master of the Quran (*Umm al-Kitab*) and Chapter al-Baqarah as a must-read chapter for every Muslim, to shun Satan from residing within the home.

He also used the combined methods of *Tahlili* and *Mawdu'i* with the aim of improving the Muslim community at the present time (*al-Islahi al-Ijtima'i*). According to Musthafa Umar, the *al-'Aqli al-Ijtima'i* method is a new method in the present Quranic exegesis. The method is also used to improve the Muslim community at present. The uniqueness of this exegetical book is the concise, simple and easily understood Malay language by the general public, for example in Chapter al-Fatihah, the chapter mentioned about deeds (Musthafa Umar 2009).

Methodology of Contents of the Exegetical book of *Tafsir al -Ma'rifah*

The title's meaning in the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah* is 'knowledge' as according to the author, this book will aim to provide knowledge to the community. The author explained that this exegetical book seeks to restore society to the guidance of the Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad, as well as to instil love towards both these authorized sources of references.

The second way to find the methodology of the exegetical book is to study the content of it in more detail in order to determine the method of *tafsir bi al-Ma'thur*, *bi al-Ra'yi*, or a combination of several methods with something else. Musthafa Umar did not mention the detailed method that he used in his introduction. The following discussion is a comprehensive study of the contents of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*.

Discussion of *Munasabah Ayat* by Verses in A Quranic Chapter

Discussion of *munasabah ayat* by verses in a chapter of the Quran is a discussion of a verse in a particular place by looking at other verses that are still in the same chapter. This method is used in interpreting the verses because verses in each Quranic chapter are believed to explain each other (Musthafa Umar 2009). This method is used by the contemporary *mufasssir* (exegetes). In this case, he is inclined to follow the method of exegesis of *Tafsir al-Sha'rawi*.

Musthafa Umar paid attention to the title that unites a chapter of the Quran and attempted to interpret the verse that followed in the chapter without releasing it in his exegesis. As he interpreted Chapter al-Fatihah, 1:1, on the deeds of human deeds.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Translation:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

He interpreted this verse as the beginning of deeds to recite the *Basmala*. Then, he linked this verse with the later verse in the same chapter, 1:2 too, that is;

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Translation:

Praise be to Allah who preserves the universe

In this verse, he explains that after reciting the *Basmala* at the beginning of the verse, the way to end the charity is to recite *Alhamdulillah*. Then he interpreted the verse after which every deed would be answered by Allah in the hereafter. The next verse also described the Muslim practices that are accepted and rejected (Musthafa Umar 2000).

According to Musthafa Umar, this verse describes the last group of people, which are the hypocrites. Besides that, Allah mentioned the saint in 13 verses, the unbelievers in two verses, and the believers in five verses. This is an alert to the believers that the hypocrites are more dangerous than infidels (Musthafa Umar 2000).

This is because hypocrites do not express their hatred and infidelity; therefore, it is difficult to recognize and learn. Whereas the unbelievers express their disbelief and it is easier to know and learn their nature. He cited this exegesis from the exegetical book of Shaykh al-Sha'rawi (Musthafa Umar 2000).

Discussion of *Munasabah Ayat* Between Different Quranic Chapter

According to Muhammad Shaltut, logical reasoning in the Quran is that all chapters in the Quran do not contradict one another. There is no separation from each other, despite the different places, the various chapters and the law. It remains a unity in its meaning, does not justify the separation in practice and also in part by taking it partially (al-Rumi 1414).

Musthafa Umar applied this method to his exegesis, following, for example, when he interpreted verses from Chapter al-Baqarah, 2:2 (Umar 2000):

ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين

Translation:

Book of the Quran, there is no doubt in it (about the coming of Allah and its perfection), it is also a guide to the pious.

This verse explains the obligation of the believers to the Quran, but it is rejected by the Jews and Christians. Only those who believe and fear Allah Almighty are able to accept the Quran as a scripture that comes from Allah Almighty and is also a pillar of the faith of Muslims. Another verse also explains the obligation of man to perform one of the pillars of Islam, which is fasting, to be a devout person. In keeping with the word of Allah in Chapter al-Baqarah, 2: 183:

يأيتها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون

Translation:

O you who believe, you are obliged to fast as you are obliged to those who were before you, so that you may worship.

Both of these verses are related to doing a righteous act. Musthafa Umar said that only those who believe and fear Allah are able to perform the worship commanded by

Allah. The believers believe that the command of Allah is beneficial to every human being in this world and the hereafter (Musthafa Umar 2000).

Thorough Discussion of Themes for the Humans

Thorough Discussion of Themes for the Humans is a discussion of the Quranic verses and the *Shari'a*, therein not only in one particular people or in certain times and places, but in the whole humanity in every age and place as a whole (al-Rumi 1414). As Allah says in the Quran, Chapter al-Saba', 34:28:

وما أرسلناك إلا كافة للناس بشيرا ونذيرا ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون

Translation:

And not us to send you (Muhammad) but for the whole of mankind, as a Messenger of glad tidings (to the believers), and a warner (to the disbelievers), but most people do not know it.

This shows that the Quran is a guide for all humanity, not only for Muslims but for all human being. This principle is the pattern of reforms in the exegesis method of *'Aqliyah ijtima'iyah*, as brought by Shaikh Muhammad Abduh with his student, Shaikh Muhammad Rashid Rida. Then, followed by Abd Qadir al-Maghribi, Shaikh al-Azhar Muhammad Musthafa al-Maraghi and others (al-Rumi 1414 H, 908).

Musthafa Umar was also the one who followed this methodology. Many of the Quranic verses were interpreted for all mankind, such as the following example, when interpreting Chapter al-Fatihah, 1:7, it is about people who are raged and people who are astray:

صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

Translation:

That is the way of those whom Thou hast bestowed upon them, not (the way) of those whom Thou hast been angry, and not and (the way) the astray.

Musthafa Umar interpreted the meaning of the verses to mean that they were the people who had been shown a straight path but refused to take it. The meaning of

the astray people is that they do not know the straight path (Allah's way), and then take another path, that is the unclear path with an unknown direction and destination (Umar 2000).

In the above exegesis, it appears that he interpreted the Quran in the eyes of all mankind and ignored the popular opinion of the exegesis. The well-known exegesis of the people who are raged are the Jews, and those who are astray are the Christians. Musthafa Umar pursued this method of believing that the Quran is a holy book for all mankind, not just for Muslims.

Musthafa Umar may have made a mistake in interpreting this verse, as it does not convey the meaning of the true exegesis, as explained in the exegetical book of *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* about the meaning of the verse, which is the meaning of the road which Allah had given to the Jews, and they know the truth (know the Quran), but they do not believe it, while the wrong way is the way of the Christians. They are the people who have gone astray and have led astray others from the right path (Ibn Kathir 1998).

A hadith explaining the meaning of "the children of rage and those who go astray" was narrated by Imam Tirmidhi and validated by Imam al-Albani:

عن عدي بن حاتم، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: اليهود مغضوب عليهم، والنصارى ضلال

Translation:

From 'Addi ibn Hatim, from the Prophet Muhammad says: The Jews are the ones who are enraged, and the Christians are the ones who are deceived

(al-Tirmidhi, *Quranic Tafsir*, Chapter al-Fatihah, n.d: 2954).

Exegesis of the Quran with the Quran

Among the features of *Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur* is the exegesis of the Quran with the Quran, because interpreting the Quran with the Quran requires a high degree of Quranic exegesis. In the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*, it was found that Musthafa Umar often uses Quranic verse in interpreting other Quranic verses. He was very committed to this exegesis, either with the verses of the Quran itself or with the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad.

His exegesis of the Quranic verse with the Quranic verse meant to use another verse, to reinforce the exegesis of the verse. That is, when he interpreted Chapter al-Fatihah, 1: 2 which is about being grateful for Allah's favor, as Allah says in His words:

الحمد لله رب العالمين

Translation:

Praise be to Allah who preserves the universe.

This verse explains the expression of a servant's gratitude for all the received blessings. This verse also teaches us to give thanks to Allah by saying "*Alhamdulillah Rabbi al-^cAlamin Musthafa Umar quotes from Chapter Ibrahim 14:7:*

وإذ تأذن ربكم لئن شكرتم لأزيدنكم ولئن كفرتم إن عذابي لشديد

Translation:

And (remember) when your Lord said: "Verily, if ye are grateful I will increase my favor upon you, and verily, if ye deny, my punishment is very severe".

This verse explains that while they were grateful for Allah's grace, Allah added for them another grace that had never been given, which was twice as much as the previous.

Interpretation of Quranic Verse with Hadith

The characteristics of interpreting *bi al-Ma'thur* are by using the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. Musthafa Umar, in his exegesis, also used the hadith as an explanation of the interpreted verses. The only example that appears in his exegetical book was when he interpreted the verse from Chapter al-Baqarah 2:74, which is about the heart:

ثم قست قلوبكم من بعد ذلك فهي كالحجارة أو أشد قسوة وإن من الحجارة لما يتفجر منه الأنهار وإن منها لما يشقق فيخرج منه الماء وإن منها لما يهبط من خشية الله وما الله بغافل عما تعملون

Translation:

Then afterwards, your heart becomes hard as a stone, even harder. While some of them flowed out and flowed out of the river and some of them broke and springs broke out and some of them fell down for fear of Allah, and Allah was never neglected from what you do.

This verse is interpreted in the hadith to mean that the heart is the centre of the whole human body. If it is good, then all of the body is good, and if it is bad, then it is all bad. As narrated by Imam Muslim, namely:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ألا وإن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله ألا وهي القلب

Translation:

Verily, in the body there is a morsel of flesh, when he well then the whole body, and when it is damaged then been confusion throughout the body, a piece of meat that is the heart

(Muslim, Kitab: *al-qadr*, Bab: *ma'na kullu mawlud yuladu 'ala fitrah wa hukmu mawt atfal al-Kuffar wa atfal al-M uslimin*, n.d:1599).

Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi

The method of *tafsir bi al-Ra'yi* is an interpretation by thought and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), that is in accordance with the rules of interpretation of the Quran, it is acceptable. In the interpretation of Musthafa Umar, it seems to use reason in interpreting the Quranic verse. Therefore, it is easy for the intellect to understand. For example, when he interpreted Chapter al-Fatihah, 1: 5 which is on worship and asking for help only from Allah:

إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين

Translation:

You (we) worship only you, and to you alone we seek help.

According to Musthafa Umar, there is a knowledge in this verse that Allah rephrases the phrase with “*only to You*”, rather than the words “*we worship*” and “*we seek help*”. Though the correct order according to methods of language is that “*we pray and we ask for help*” than “*only to You*” (Musthafa Umar 2000).

The act of worshipping is known only to Allah, as many among mankind are deceived by Satan. Therefore, they worship beings other than Allah, such as the sun, idols, big trees and others. Then, humans must seek the help of Allah alone. For many of humankind, they seek strength rather than Allah, such as asking for the help from jinn, grave, dagger, shaman and others. Musthafa Umar took many references from the exegetical book of Sha'rawi's interpretation (Musthafa Umar 2009).

Emphasize on the Aspects of Society Improvement (*al-Islahi al-Ijtima'i*)

The methods of *al- 'Islahi al-Ijtima' i* is a method of interpretation that seeks to interpret Quranic verses with the aim of improving the society. Among the conditions of society

that focus on improvement are the following: deeds, morals, worship, improvement of faith from heresy, economic improvement, unity of Muslims, Islamic government, and all matters related to social problems. For the example of Allah's word in Chapter al-Fatihah 1:1,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Translation:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Musthafa Umar called on the believers to seek happiness in the world and in the hereafter by starting every job by reciting *Basmala*, and ending it by reciting *Alhamdulillah*. When a person does not start a job with *Basmala* it means that the person only wants a worldly reward and will not get anything in return. Life in the world is temporary, and it is not the ultimate aim for humans. The real life that humans aim for is the Hereafter (Musthafa Umar 2000).

CONCLUSION

The exegesis methodology used by Musthafa Umar in the exegetical book of *Tafsir al-Ma'rifah*, is the *bi al-Ra'yi*'s interpretation method by combining the methods of *tahlili* and *mawdu'i*, using the pattern of *al-Islahi al-Ijtima'i* approach in explaining the Quranic verses which urge people to always improve themselves to be virtuous human beings. The authors find that this methodology is very suitable at the present time, as it is effective for the individualistic society of today.

Musthafa Umar was acknowledged as he emphasizes the issues of social improvement. Therefore, he associates the Quranic verses with present life. The method used by Musthafa Umar is not the first time, that *mufassir* (exegete) is used in the field of Quranic exegesis. It started from the era of Muhammad Abduh, and then continued from time to time as in Egypt by Shaykh Mutawalli Sha'rawi, flowed later to archipelago such as the exegetical book of Buya Hamka and others.

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