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Ulviana, Ulviana; Fahrudin Faiz; Adriano da Silva Carvalho y Ulviana, Ulviana; Fahrudin Faiz; Adriano da Silva Carvalho.

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Imran Nazar Hosein's Interpretation of the End Times: Rudolf Bultmann's Hermeneutical Analysis of Demythology

Ulviana

Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: ulviana65@gmail.com

Fahrudin Faiz

Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: fahrudin@uin-suka.ac.id

Adriano da Silva Carvalho

Instituto Brasileiro de Educação Integrada (IBEI), Brasil
e-mail: adriano3656@gmail.com

Abstract

This article critically examines the interpretative methodology of Imran Nazar Hosein, evaluating whether his interpretations are grounded in a coherent epistemological framework or primarily driven by intuitive reflection. The analysis draws on Rudolf Bultmann's hermeneutic theory of demythology as a comparative lens, given its focus on reinterpreting mythological elements to address existential concerns, particularly in the context of discussions about the future rather than historical facts. The research employs a literature-based approach, utilizing primary sources such as Hosein's works on eschatology and Bultmann's writings on demythology, alongside secondary sources from relevant academic literature. The findings reveal notable methodological parallels between Hosein's interpretations and Bultmann's demythologization, particularly in their shared use of hermeneutic techniques. However, a key distinction lies in their epistemological foundations: while Bultmann approaches the New Testament through a Christian existentialist lens, Hosein's interpretations are deeply rooted in Sufi epistemology and his perspective as a Muslim scholar interpreting the Qur'an.

Keywords: Eschatology; End Times; Imran Nazar Hosein; Hermeneutics; Demythology

Abstrak

Artikel ini secara kritis menelaah metode interpretasi Imran Nazar Hosein, dengan mengevaluasi apakah interpretasinya didasarkan pada kerangka epistemologis yang koheren atau terutama didorong oleh refleksi intuitif. Analisis ini menggunakan teori hermeneutika demitologisasi Rudolf Bultmann sebagai lensa perbandingan, mengingat fokusnya pada penafsiran ulang elemen-elemen mitologis untuk menangani persoalan eksistensial, terutama dalam konteks diskusi tentang masa depan daripada fakta sejarah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan berbasis literatur, dengan

memanfaatkan sumber primer seperti karya-karya Hosein tentang eskatologi dan tulisan-tulisan Bultmann tentang demitologisasi, serta sumber sekunder dari literatur akademik yang relevan. Temuan menunjukkan adanya kesamaan metodologis yang signifikan antara interpretasi Hosein dan demitologisasi Bultmann, terutama dalam penggunaan teknik hermeneutika. Namun, perbedaan utama terletak pada landasan epistemologis mereka: sementara Bultmann mendekati Perjanjian Baru melalui perspektif eksistensial Kristen, interpretasi Hosein sangat berakar pada epistemologi Sufi dan perspektifnya sebagai cendekiawan Muslim yang menafsirkan Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci: Eskatologi; Hari Akhir; Imran Nazar Hosein; Hermenetik; Demitologi.

Introduction

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings and the final revelation brought by the last prophet, serves as the ultimate guide for Muslims. It contains a vast wealth of knowledge spanning theology, history, social issues, health, and even politics. Given its timeless relevance, as articulated by Muhammad Abduh in the phrase *likulli zaman wa makan*—applicable to all times and places—it is natural that scholars continue to explore its depths across various fields.

While the Qur'an indeed provides profound knowledge and moral guidance that strengthen the connection between humans and God, its interpretation requires specialized expertise. Understanding the *kalamullah* (speech of God) demands not only linguistic and theological competence but also a deep appreciation of its sacred nature. This challenge becomes even more pronounced when addressing eschatological themes. Although belief in the end times is an essential tenet of Islam, its comprehension is often constrained by rational limitations, particularly for modern Muslims immersed in secular systems of thought. Consequently, literature on this subject remains limited, as its true significance is only fully grasped when the foretold signs begin to manifest clearly (Hosein 2014).

Muslims are required to believe in many fundamental truths, making it essential to establish an appropriate methodology for interpreting the Qur'an. This ensures that its message remains relevant from a contemporary perspective while its values continue to guide Muslim life. One notable scholar whose interpretations engage with mythological elements in the Qur'an is Imran Nazar Hosein. His series of books, dedicated to his teacher Muhammad Fazlurrahman Al-Anshari, primarily explores international political dynamics and eschatological predictions. Through his works, it becomes evident that Hosein seeks to correlate contemporary global political events with the Qur'anic narrative of the end times.

Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretation stands out not only for its ability to connect contemporary realities with mythological narratives but also for his boldness in choosing to explore the theme of the end times. According to the author, this topic remains largely underexamined by Muslim scholars due to its complexity and the intellectual challenges it presents. Hosein himself has emphasized the need for a detailed interpretation of these eschatological verses, as they were revealed near the Prophet Muhammad's passing—suggesting that they carry a crucial message for the Muslim community after his death.

However, his discussions on the end times have inevitably sparked both support and criticism. Hosein has explicitly stated that he is not a terrorist, implying that he has faced accusations or suspicions in this regard. He has also mentioned being barred from entering Singapore, further highlighting the social and political ramifications of his controversial ideas. The author observes that Hosein has, in many ways, borne the societal consequences of his interpretations. Additionally, an academic thesis analyzing his works identifies inconsistencies, subjectivity, and exaggeration in his interpretations, suggesting that while his approach is thought-provoking, it is not without its methodological flaws (Wardah 2023).

The thesis was written by Lailatul Wardah with the title *“Revolusi Makna Ayat-Ayat Eskatologi (Analisis Terhadap Tafsir Kredibel dan Demythologi Imran Hosein)”*. Laila said that demythology is not Imran Nazar Hosein's method of interpretation, but demythology is the result of Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretation. That is, the verse interpreted by Imran Nazar Hosein is an example of the form of the Quran's function as an answer to every era in a concrete form.

Another study that is closer to the author's research is *“Ya'juj dan Ma'juj dan Hubungannya dengan Dunia Modern: Telaah atas Penafsiran Imran Hosein dalam An Islamic View of Gog and Magog in the Modern World”* by Sirajuddin Bariqi from the point of view of *uṣūl tafsir*. In his research, Bariqi concludes that there are inconsistencies in the use of hadith to interpret Gog and Magog so that he concludes Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretation falls into the category of non-scientific interpretation (Bariqi 2020).

Building on Imran Nazar Hosein's unique interpretative model, this study seeks to critically analyze his interpretative process. The objective is to determine whether his interpretation is grounded in a clear epistemological framework or merely a product of

intuitive reflection. This analysis is conducted by correlating his approach with Rudolf Bultmann's hermeneutic theory of demythology.

Rudolf Bultmann, a German theologian and professor of New Testament studies at the University of Marburg, introduced the concept of demythologization in hermeneutics. This study argues that applying a hermeneutical framework to Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretations provides a more comprehensive perspective. Similar to Bultmann's approach, which sought to reinterpret mythological elements of divine messages (closely tied to faith) to align with contemporary realities, this research posits that demythologization serves as an appropriate analytical tool for understanding Hosein's interpretations. Given the shared principles between the two scholars, Bultmann's hermeneutics of demythology offers a relevant lens through which to examine Hosein's interpretative methodology.

Biography of Imran Nazar Hosein

His ancestors were Indians. However, he was born in the Caribbean, Trinidad, West Indies (1942 AD) because his father was a contract farmer on a British-owned plantation in Trinidad who migrated from India (Hosein 2022c). Despite coming from a farming family, he was able to get a higher education and even became a renowned scientist in the American region. His father had already passed away by the time he started studying in Pakistan.

His scholarship began when he met his beloved teacher, Muhammad Fazlurrahman Al-Anshari. Imran Nazar Hosein was 18 years old before attending Al-Azhar University (Cairo), where Al-Anshari gave a lecture at the Montrose Village Mosque (Trinidad). Besides being fascinated by Al-Anshari's explanation of "Islam and Science," Hosein was impressed by the Sufi scholar's earnestness in visiting his village from Pakistan. Like any other child, Hosein, as an 18-year-old, would have been surprised to hear that science and the Qur'an had a strong connection. Especially with his preconceptions that there was no way the two could be related. What surprised him even more was when Al-Anshari lectured at Woodford Square in the capital city of Port of Spain on "Islam and Western Civilization" (Hosein 2016).

In November 1963, at the age of 21, he became a student at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, the most famous Islamic university, but because he did not find Islamic knowledge as impressive as what he saw when Al-Anshari lectured, he decided to leave and enter the Aleemiyah Institute of Islamic Studies in Karachi and became a student of Al-Anshari

(Hosein 2016), majoring in Philosophy (Hosein 2021). The institute was established with the aim of producing Islamic scholars who are comprehensive in islamic studies, comparative religion, and modern thought. With the motto "*li yatafaqquhu fi al-din*," the institute combines islamic studies and modern sciences (Wardah 2023). This is also why Hosein calls Al-Anshari a multidimensional scholar (Hosein 2022b), sufi sheikhs of the Qaderiyyah Sufis, philosophers, and modern-day islamic scholars (Hosein 2019).

He graduated from Al Aleemiyah Institute in 1971 with the Dr. Ansari Gold Medal for High Merit (Hosein 2023a). He then studied international relations at the University of West India and the Postgraduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland (Hosein 2021). Both of these fields of knowledge are very decisive for future careers.

Imran Nazar Hosein became an officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the government of Trinidad and Tobagobefore giving up his job and devoting his life to the mission of Islam in 1985 (Hosein 2023a). He has been traveling extensively around the world lecturing since graduating from the Al Aleemiyah Institute in 1971 at the age of 29 (Hosein 2022c). His books and lectures are received by the public with respect. There is no evidence to suggest that his lectures or talks have ever misled people into terrorist acts (Hosein 2023a).

He was appointed rector of the Aleemiyah Institute of Islamic Studies in 1988. In 1989, he emigrated to the United States, where he was appointed Director of the Institute for Education and Research in Miami, Florida. In 1991, he worked in New York as director of Islamic Studies for the Joint Committee of the Muslim Organization of Greater New York (Hosein 2001).

In addition to lecturing, he has been writing a series in Al-Anshari's memory since 1994 (Hosein 2019) and the first six books were first published in 1997 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his teacher's death. The series seeks to convey his teacher's life mission of restoring Islam by first restoring the faith of each individual. Al-Anshari was a student of the famous muslim figure Muhammad Iqbal. From Muhammad Iqbal, sufi epistemology was obtained which was then conveyed to his students. The sufi epistemology taught is that truth is recognized and lived with sincerity and devotion to God, which in the end the truth enters the heart and becomes faith. Hosein considers his book series as a little fruit of the tree that Al-Ansari has planted (Hosein 2023b).

With such a sacred and impenetrable research subject for scientists, Imran Nazar Hosein admits that he would not have been able to write the series without the kindness of his teacher, Al-Anshari. He himself explained that only an authentic sufi, possessing the correct methodology in the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, and the epistemology of sufi spiritual insight, can interpret religious symbolism, even spiritual vibrations, with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who truly explains the subject credibly. However, he does not claim that he individually deserves to be called a Sufi who is able to do this because he always explains that his writings are solely the thoughts of Al-Anshari, and his purpose is to commemorate him as Al-Anshari did to his teacher. He also accepts criticism from any group of scholars if anyone finds evidence of errors in his interpretations (Hosein 2019).

Imran Nazar Hosein's Interpretation of The End Times

Discussions about the end times are inevitably linked to the historical development of how this "chapter" was ultimately revealed, particularly in the Qur'an. Imran Nazar Hosein explores this theme in a series of books, written as a tribute to his teacher, Al-Anshari. These works not only stem from his teacher's generosity in imparting knowledge but also serve as a means to honor his legacy. This section provides a summary of Hosein's writings, offering insight into his interpretative framework and thought process.

Hosein employs the *tafsir maudu'i* (thematic exegesis) approach, utilizing two primary methods: compiling verses within the same surah and gathering verses related to the same subject matter. His interpretative style emphasizes extracting the wisdom embedded in each verse. In his writings, Hosein approaches Sufism from within its own epistemological framework, presenting truth through *basirah*, or intuitive vision (Hosein 2016). In Sufi epistemology, truth is not merely understood intellectually but is deeply internalized through sincerity and devotion to God, ultimately permeating the heart and manifesting as faith.

He states that this understanding of the end times cannot be assessed objectively and is only speculative, even saying that the book does not discuss the subject of whether or not it is true (Hosein 2016). Following his teacher, Al-Ansari, he believed that the Qur'an has a system of meanings so that it can consistently relate verses to one another and be able to interpret them. He called this "multi-dimensional flexibility" (it has more than one meaning, and its meaning is adjusted by more than one formula). However, he believes that humans

can still interpret them because this multi-dimensional flexibility is possessed by human intelligence (Hosein 2023a).

In the book "Methodology for the Study of the Qur'an". He explained the importance of the Arabic Language for muslims in order to study Islam more deeply. Because for him, there will be a difference when studying the Quran directly with in Arabic and with translations (Hosein 2016). He sees that muslims are the object of oppression by secular nations. Therefore, muslims need to fortify themselves with their beliefs. This includes improving their spiritual abilities in order to get God's *nur*, which is useful for understanding end-time polemics so that they can place themselves. Because what the oppressor is afraid of is if the oppressed find freedom of thought so that they realize that they are being oppressed (Hosein 2016). By understanding the polemics of the end times, Muslims will realize that they are being oppressed, so there is an awareness to create the goal of Islam, which is *rahmatan lil 'alamīn*.

In looking at the end time predictions, Imran Nazar Hosein connects important subjects in the Qur'an, including the Kingdom of Zulkarnain, Gog and Magog, Dajjal, and the Holy Land and the Jewish Nation.

1. The Kingdom of Zulkarnain (Hosein 2016)

In his Qur'anic interpretation, it is understood that Zulkarnain walked westward until he found a lake with dark, murky water, and he saw the sun sink below the sea. Then he walked towards the east and also found a lake, but with good conditions, the sun rose from the east. On the third journey, Zulkarnain passed two mountains, in the middle of which there was a road, and there he met a people who complained to him about the deeds of Gog and Magog. They asked for a barrier to protect them from the bullies, Gog and Magog. Zulkarnain built the barrier but told them that one day Allah would destroy the barrier so that Gog and Magog would come out and harass people again at the end of time.

In this story, Imran Nazar Hosein interprets Zulkarnain's westward journey as a journey to the Black Sea. In that area, there are people who are oppressed by the Zionist authority, including monetary oppression with a false monetary system created by the Zionists themselves. Seeing this, a religiously grounded Zulkarnain would use his power and authority to punish the oppressors. This means that religion cannot tolerate oppression.

The journey to the east is interpreted as a journey to the Caspian Sea and there meeting the people who are protected by the light of God. Zulkarnain's way of dealing with them was to care for them with wisdom or to be their protector. He became a protector because in modern times, or the fitan age, the modern world is hungry for resources, especially oil, which will make human life miserable because the rulers do not pay attention to human feelings. Oil is obtained from primitive people whom they can control. It is a blatant robbery of a people who already live in harmony with nature. Imran Nazar Hosein calls the oppressors North America and Australia.

The third journey is called an enigmatic journey because it intersects with the end time issues. One of the signs of the apocalypse is the appearance of Gog and Magog. The area between the two mountains is the Caucasus Mountains, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Gog and Magog are the Euro-Zionist Jewish-Christian world order that currently rules the world from Washington. They will control the entire world like Gog and Magog, who spread out in all directions after coming out of the wall that Zulkarnain had built.

It is important to understand that Zulkarnain comes from the Arabic word *qarn*, which means time. This means that Zulkarnain is closely related to time and events. The story above is a Qur'anic account of the conquest by the Kingdom of Zulkarnain, a kingdom that conquered nations known from west to east and punished injustice and rewarded piety. Imran Hosein's latter-day view of Zulkarnain is interpreted as a second *qarn*, or the author interprets it as a similar event repeated in a different context. So Zulkarnain, as described above as the "Kingdom of Zulkarnain" (the one with wisdom), will appear again in the last days to stem the Gog and Magog.

In the Black Sea region, the people who follow the revelation of the book are Orthodox Christians. In the Qur'an, they are referred to as the people of the book. The people of the book are Russian Orthodox Christians who reject the godless Marxist Communists, the atheist Soviet Union, and the Russian Jews. So, this second *qarn* kingdom is not the Ottoman Islamic Empire (which many muslims predict) but Orthodox Christian Russia. This proves that Orthodox Christian Russia is not willing to submit to people who are trying to control the whole world that NATO wants. Based on Imran Nazar Hosein's

analysis, Orthodox Christian Russia will cooperate with muslim armies to liberate Constantinople (Byzantine Christian Empire).

2. Gog and Magog (Hosein 2023a)

When Zulkarnain built a wall to prevent Gog and Magog from disturbing the nation in the middle of the Caucasus Mountains, it did not mean that Gog and Magog were defeated. They wanted to be locked up because they knew from the will of Allah SWT that they could not be defeated by their fellow humans. This shows that they are a destructive nation capable of becoming an unrivaled superpower. Invincible power is interpreted as a record of invincible military power as well.

The barrier between Gog and Magog is two mountains with a gap between them that Zulkarnain closed. The gap was open before the time of Islam; the hilly coastal road opened with the receding of the Caspian Sea. To find the place, Imran Nazar Hosein sought guidance from the Qur'an. Among the clues was that it was north of Saudi Arabia, and then the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea was found. The Qur'an says that Gog and Magog were confined to a road between the sides of mountains that looked like a "*sadafain*," or open sea shell. The people in that place did not understand the language that Zulkarnain spoke. Imran Nazar Hosein's analysis suggests that the place was the Caucasus Mountains, or Georgia, in Eastern Europe.

After Gog and Magog came out of the fortress, they left the region and moved to the Holy Land (in the language of the Qur'an) with a strong military record. The people were the Khazars of Eastern Europe. The language they spoke was a pre-Indo-European language that was isolated without contact with other languages for about 5000 years, so it is natural that they did not understand the language of Zulkarnain. Among them, after leaving Georgia, some embraced European Jewry and some embraced European Christianity. European Jews eventually allied to become British-American-Israeli Zionists as Gog, while European Christians were led by Russia as Magog.

Gog and Magog will fight each other in what the Qur'an calls a "star war." This star war is interpreted as a nuclear war. This is then referred to as *Malhama*, or the greatest war of all wars, which will result in the blowing of the trumpet. The nuclear war between two equally powerful camps will cause a smog called the sign of *dukbān*, resulting in 40 days of

darkness. This will cause the human population to decrease drastically and the land to become dry and barren.

Russia's post-Malhama military goal is to cooperate with Muslims to conquer Constantinople in order to gain naval access to the Mediterranean Sea for Israel. So as to realize the prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad that Muslims would liberate the Holy Land from Jewish oppression. Meanwhile, the Zionist Alliance continues to exercise its power over the remaining world by replacing the United States as the third superpower, led by Dajjal. Meanwhile, Gog and Magog are said to survive in underground cities (where the Qur'an says they hide behind rocks).

3. Dajjal (Hosein 2022a)

In the Qur'an, Dajjal is described as a corpse, a human body without a spirit. The Christians refer to him as the "Anti-Christ," while the Prophet Muhammad did not give the name "Anti-Christ" because "Dajjal" is not a name but a term for a deceiver. He is called a deceiver because he tries to imitate the Messiah, whom the Jews expected to come. Hence, Dajjal is also referred to as the false messiah. His mission is to convince the Jews that he is their leader and to gain control of the Holy Land, which the Jews believe is their promised land.

It is also mentioned that the dajjal has one eye. This cannot be taken literally but must first be interpreted. In the hadith recorded in Sahih Bukhari, the eye used by Dajjal is the left eye, while the right eye is blind. The left eye is interpreted as extrinsic vision, while the right eye is interpreted as the eye of the heart. In the divine revelations in the books that have been revealed, it is mentioned that the heart can also see. It is this vision of the eyes of the heart that makes illiterate believers able to read the bad intentions of Dajjal. This bad intention is likened to the writing "*kafir*" on Dajjal's forehead, which can only be read by those who have right eye sight.

Dajjal is neither an angel nor a *jinn*, but a corpse, that is, a human being with no spirit or soul. He may look like a human, but he will not be fully human because he has no soul. That is, Dajjal has no intrinsic intelligence or is similar to a robot. One of Dajjal's products by Imran Hosein is exemplified by the fact that the currency that was originally in the form of gold and silver is now replaced with monetary paper money (money is only a body but actually has no value).

It is said that once Prophet Sulaiman saw a corpse (Dajjal) sitting on his throne "holding his staff." Prophet Sulaiman prayed that the corpse's control over the Holy Land would not succeed. The *Jinn*, who had entered into a covenant with Prophet Sulaiman with the permission of Allah that they would serve him for many years without the freedom to observe the world, could not recognize that he was not Prophet Sulaiman but a corpse (because the corpse was holding Prophet Sulaiman's staff). So, the *jinn* unknowingly worked to serve the impostor, whom they perceived to be Prophet Sulaiman.

That is, if the stick (in the Qur'an called *minsa'ah*) falls, the body cannot convince the *jinn* that he is the Prophet Sulaiman. The *minsa'ah* was utilized by the body to use the miraculous power of Prophet Sulaiman (to make the *jinn* subjugated). *Minsa'ah* is interpreted as a tool to manipulate the dimension of time because it can trick the *jinn* because the *jinn* exist in another dimension of time than humans. However, the Qur'an tells us that the *minsa'ah* will be eaten away by an end-time beast called *dabbatul ard*, so that there will be a time when the power of the miracle runs out.

Dabbatul ard is something that will hurt through its ability to speak. Imran Nazar Hosein defines *dabbatul ard* as smartphones that make humans like livestock, spending hours of one's time on worthless things so that one's mind is brainwashed and addicted to them. The implication is that the human brain is damaged and susceptible to cancer, dementia, and even alzheimer's disease. This electronic storm from smartphones will kill the human mind so that humans lose access to the spiritual realm (where the spirit is). This is what Western Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and others are experiencing.

4. The Holy Land (Hosein 2014) and The Jewish Nation

The Qur'an never explicitly explains where the Holy Land is located. It is usually referred to as *qoryah* (city). But to be clear, it is mentioned that the place became one of the places of the Prophet Muhammad's *isra' mi'raj* journey. The city is Jerusalem. Perhaps it is not mentioned directly in the Qur'an because there is a "protective" purpose from God for the city. In fact, Jerusalem does have an important role in the end times, namely being a city that is considered by the Jews as the promised land.

Then who are these Jews? The Jews are the Israelites or followers of the Prophet Moses who consider themselves to be God's chosen nation and have human rights that are

superior to other humans from a spiritual perspective (Hosein 2022a). In fact, anyone who claims to have superior human rights will be cursed by God regardless of race, be it Jewish, Christian, Hindu, or Muslim.

Because of their arrogance, the Israelites did not believe that Prophet Isa was the promised Messiah to establish the Kingdom of Solomon with his chosen people (in their beliefs, they were) (Hosein 2022a). They actually insulted that Prophet Isa was an illegitimate child born without a father; the implication was that they also killed Prophet Isa's uncle and cousin, Prophet Zakariya and Prophet Yahya, and felt they had succeeded in crucifying Prophet Isa. In the Qur'an, God is not immediately angry with them but gives them one more chance. The opportunity came when the Prophet Muhammad was revealed to be the last Prophet. But they still did not accept it because they believed that the last prophet who would descend was from their nation, not the Arabs, let alone the descendants of Ismail. They believe and have rewritten the Torah that the covenant for the existence of the Messiah is from the descendants of the Prophet Isa, not the descendants of the Prophet Ismail (Hosein 2022c).

Such pride is just like the pride of the devil, who was reluctant to bow down to man. Just as the devil was expelled by God from heaven, the Israelites were eventually closed by God because of their pride. This is what made the Israelites believe that one day there would be a Messiah who would come to lead them to rule the world through Jerusalem. But unfortunately, they would meet a false Messiah, or Dajjal.

Rudolf Bultmann's Hermeneutic of Demythology

Demythology is a hermeneutic to understand the reality of a statement or text that has mythological elements (Bultmann 1962). For Bultmann, the mythological worldview has its own existential purpose. It is therefore not a communication of theoretical knowledge about the world, but an attempt to impress man with his personal situation in the universe and his relationship with the forces that govern it (Carvalho 2025). This means that this hermeneutic recognizes that a myth speaks about reality. According to Bultmann, reality itself can be understood in two ways (Bultmann 1962). The first is to view reality in which humans themselves exist and try to master it with the aim of securing their lives; here, humans consider themselves to be positioned outside the reality they see. The second is to view reality

through man's position as reality itself. So, humans are involved in the movement of the reality they see. This second way of looking at reality is what Bultmann uses in the hermeneutics of demythology.

Bultmann sees humans as something mortal; "their existence is not authentic" (Thiselton 1980). For Bultmann, the human "body" and "soul" do not refer only to certain parts of the human being but to the whole, including its temporality. While the discussion of an active God includes events of personal existence, an encounter with God can only be an event for humans in the here and now, as humans live within the confines of time and space (Carvalho 2025). For Bultmann, myths must be interpreted existentially. Therefore, the background for demythologization is the existentialist philosophy of Martin Heidegger (Carvalho 2024). From here, we can see the influence of Heidegger's existential thinking in determining Bultmann's perspective. According to Heidegger, hermeneutics is a human way of being. By the author understanding, humans are not only a method of expressing the phenomenology of the human self but also a facet of the form of human existence (Faiz and Usman 2019). It is no wonder that the birth of demythological hermeneutics was to try to maintain the existence of Christians in the midst of modernity. The difference with Heidegger, who interprets existence practically, is that Bultmann interprets existence epistemologically, namely by presenting the meaning of verses from the Bible or New Testament (Hardiman 2015).

According to Bultmann, demythologization was practiced by the authors of the New Testament themselves. Bultmann found a precedent for demythologization in the New Testament itself. He recalled that the eschatological preaching of Jesus was maintained and continued by the early Christian community in its mythological form. But soon the process of demythologization began, partly with the apostle Paul and then with John (Carvalho 2024). However, according to Macquarrie, demythological hermeneutics is only limited to the mythical New Testament, whereas not all of the New Testament is myth (Hardiman 2015). So, this demythological hermeneutics is only relevant to the New Testament in certain parts. Bultmann himself emphasized that the gospel is essentially a message, or kerygma. Meanwhile, the goal of demythology is to free kerygma from "Jewish Apocalyptic Myth" and "The Hellenistic Gnostic Myth" (Callahan 1960). He himself admitted that apologetic interpretation of scripture and moral instruction was possible (Bultmann 1952). However,

the author has not found Bultmann's expression, which states that all parts of the Old Testament can be explored using demythological hermeneutics.

Hermeneutical studies of sacred texts are different from studies of ordinary texts. The study of sacred texts is called exegetical, derived from the Greek term "exegesis," which means systematic research to find the rational meaning of Bible verses. The exegetical process involves understanding the grammatical context and historical context of the text (Hardiman 2015). Because the focus of hermeneutics is on the study of the Bible, the results of the interpretation are to strengthen the dogmas of the contents of the Bible.

Bultmann's way of viewing reality makes his interpretation different from that of other Bible interpreters. Because by positioning oneself historically with reality, the interpreter needs to let the text speak as it is. This means that in the process of exegesis, there is no need for dogmatic presuppositions from the interpreter (Hardiman 2015). Several points in understanding the process of exegesis or hermeneutic demythology include:

1. Kerygma

Kerygma is the message that God wants to convey, a message that is not bound by language. However, it is impossible for us to encounter messages from God without language, so Bultmann concludes that we never encounter God's messages purely because we need language as a medium. Meanwhile, language itself is always influenced by the dominant cultural conditions at the time God's message was delivered (Wildman 1994a). Let it be clear that for Bultmann kerygma is the message addressed to the individual in himself and not to his reason (Carvalho 2024).

2. Myths

The way of looking at myths cannot be the same as looking at historical facts, which are bound by time and place, because myth itself is a form of understanding (Hardiman 2015). For Bultmann, myths are not meant to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to communicate the understanding that man has of himself in the world in which he lives (Carvalho 2024). So, to understand the notion of myth, it is necessary to dig into its existential meaning. It's like asking, "Why did this myth form like this?" or "What meaning does this myth retain?". Then, to answer this question, demythologizing or connecting myths with current reality is required.

3. Demythologizing

Demythologizing is not defined as eliminating or not recognizing the existence of myths in the Bible, but rather as interpreting myths or answering questions about the meaning that one wants to maintain in myths (Hardiman 2015). Because the aim is to maintain the meaning behind the myth, of course it is related to the "now" and "here" acceptance of the existence of the myth. "Now" and "here" in Bultmann's time were modern conditions dominated by rational thinking. So, there is an interaction between myths and modern humans. Modern humans' acceptance of the meaning of myth is a way of maintaining the existence of myth. Meanwhile, the meaning of myth that can be accepted by modern humans is the way for modern humans to exist without rejecting myth.

Analysis of The Interpretation of The End Times of Imran Nazar Hosein Using Demitological Hermeneutics

Ways of Viewing in Exegesis

The interpretation carried out by Imran Nazar Hosein includes exegesis in Rudolf Bultmann's language because it attempts to interpret the holy book of Islam, namely the Qur'an. By positioning himself as a student of a sufi (with an islamic epistemology), Imran Nazar Hosein views discussions about the end times as also including his involvement as a historical actor, meaning that the interpreter's position exists historically, not historically as secularists view it. According to him, discussion on this matter cannot be done using western epistemology, which is scientific observation. Perhaps this is also the reason why Rudolf Bultmann received little response from scientists.

The reason why few theologians respond to Rudolf Bultmann's work is because few people move easily in the world of existential analysis, especially those who follow Heidegger (Callahan 1960). According to Imran Nazar Hosein, intuitive understanding is also needed to interpret holy books, especially those relating to matters of a mythological or eschatological nature, because the interpreter enters into the subject of research. However, all verses in the Qur'an have the right to be interpreted, one of which is the verse about the end times.

Purpose of Interpretation

Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretation of the end times in the Qur'an is presented in a narrative style, incorporating stories such as those of the Jews and the Dajjal, Gog and Magog, Zulkarnain, the signs of the apocalypse, and even depictions of the final hour in chapter 30. Within these accounts, certain terms remain difficult to comprehend, as discussing the end times inherently involves speculating about the future. This raises significant questions: If the Qur'an states that the period following Prophet Muhammad marks the final era, what does that imply for the emergence of the Dajjal? Where will Gog and Magog come from? Will Jerusalem truly emerge victorious in the end times?

These uncertainties weigh heavily on the minds of Muslims who seek to understand the Qur'an's message. However, an even more pressing question arises: What is the role of Muslims in the end times? Is the Qur'anic message merely a warning that the apocalypse will come to pass? If posed to Imran Nazar Hosein, he would undoubtedly argue otherwise. He asserts that Muslims are the primary victims of oppression by secular powers, making it essential for them to strengthen their faith. This includes enhancing their spiritual resilience to attain divine guidance, which he deems crucial for comprehending the complexities of the end times and positioning themselves accordingly (Hosein 2016).

The author seeks to understand why Imran Nazar Hosein specifically emphasizes *nūr* science, also referred to as '*irfānī* science, as it enables individuals to discern good and evil in the end times (Hosein 2022a). In his discussion on Dajjal, Hosein describes this ability as the "right eye" or the "eye of the heart"—a spiritual vision that Dajjal lacks. He further argues that this "right eye" will weaken due to the influence of *dābbatul ard*, which he associates with modern electronic waves and technological advancements.

The consequences of Muslims losing their "right eye" are profound, as it shapes their perception of good and evil, ultimately influencing their behavior and worldview. This becomes particularly significant in the face of a secular world order that challenges their faith and identity. From this perspective, the author identifies a central theme in Hosein's thought: the preservation of Islam's spiritual values as an existential necessity. This approach parallels Bultmann's efforts to reinterpret New Testament mythology, ensuring that its core message remained relevant and accessible to contemporary Christian audiences.

Understanding Kerygma

Kerygma is the message that God wants to convey—a message that is not bound by language. However, it is impossible for us to encounter messages from God without language, so Bultmann concludes that we never encounter God's messages purely because we need language as a medium (Wildman 1994b). Imran Hosein only explained the importance of Arabic for Muslims so they can study Islam more deeply through the Qur'an (Hosein 2016). This is related to how he views the Qur'an. For him, the Qur'an has a system of meaning so that it can consistently relate one verse to another so that it can interpret those verses. He called it "multi-dimensional flexibility" (having more than one meaning, and its meaning is adapted to formulas that are also more than one) (Hosein 2023a). So, in interpretation, Imran Nazar Hosein considers that there is a message from God, or kerygma, that needs to be explored.

Mythological Stuff

A narrative is classified as a myth when it cannot be equated with historical facts that are bound by time and place, as myth itself represents a form of understanding (Hardiman 2015). This applies to stories such as those of the Jews and the Dajjal, Gog and Magog, Zulkarnain, the signs of the apocalypse, and even depictions of the end times, which cannot be considered historical facts since they are futuristic predictions of the final era.

One such narrative describes the Kingdom of Zulkarnain, which is said to have eradicated oppression in the West while maintaining harmony in the East. Between these two regions, Zulkarnain is believed to have subdued the disruptive forces of Gog and Magog. The Qur'an foretells a second era of Zulkarnain emerging at the end of time, coinciding with the prophesied release of Gog and Magog from their confinement, once again wreaking havoc. This kingdom is expected to be established in the Holy Land, which, according to Jewish belief, is their divinely promised land as mentioned in the Torah, where they anticipate being led by a Messiah. However, the Qur'an predicts that the Jews will fail to recognize the true Messiah and will instead mistake the Dajjal—a deceitful leader characterized by his blind right eye—for the awaited savior. The resurgence of Gog and Magog is believed to disrupt the reestablishment of Zulkarnain's kingdom, ultimately leading to global chaos and triggering the apocalypse.

Demythologizing in the Interpretation of Imran Nazar Hosein

Imran Nazar Hosein interprets the mythological narrative of the end times as a reflection of contemporary global politics, particularly the dominance of the British-American-Israeli Zionists and their opposition, Russia. At the heart of this geopolitical struggle lies the Zionist mission to reclaim Jerusalem as the Holy Land and establish global dominance from there. However, according to Hosein, divine will prevents the Israelites from fulfilling this ambition due to their spiritual blindness, which leads them to misidentify the true Messiah. This contradicts the Torah's teachings, which uphold the Israelites as a chosen nation with superior spirituality.

Hosein further argues that the Israelites' inability to recognize the Messiah extends to all individuals who fail to cultivate their spiritual insight. In modern times, the prevalence of electromagnetic waves, which negatively impact the human brain, further weakens spiritual perception. If left undeveloped, this ability will diminish entirely, leading humanity to adopt a vision akin to that of the Dajjal—one devoid of inner sight.

However, Hosein's demythologization of the end times is not solely about the necessity of spiritual cultivation. He highlights that spirituality, when misused, can lead to arrogance and manipulation. The Jewish elite, for example, claim spiritual superiority as the "chosen people," while the Dajjal possesses advanced technological tools (*minsa'ah*) to control and deceive. Yet, the Jews' spiritual insight is lost due to their arrogance, and the Dajjal's power remains fragile, as it is dependent on external devices susceptible to disruption. In contrast, Hosein posits that Muslims possess an innate spiritual potential embedded in their hearts, which, if nurtured, can be harnessed and strengthened. This interpretation of the end times does not dismiss or deny the Qur'anic eschatological myths but seeks to extract their deeper meaning, offering insights into the spiritual and geopolitical realities of the modern world.

Conclusion

Imran Nazar Hosein's interpretative approach shares notable similarities with Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization, particularly in its methodological framework. However, a key distinction lies in its epistemological foundation—Hosein's interpretations are rooted in Sufi epistemology, as he approaches the Qur'an from an Islamic perspective. This differs from

Bultmann, who interpreted the New Testament through his own theological lens. Despite their differing religious contexts, both employ a hermeneutic method aimed at uncovering and reinterpreting mythical elements within scripture to reveal the kerygma—the core divine message—so that it remains relevant to contemporary conditions.

Given this approach, it is understandable that Bariqi categorizes Hosein's interpretation as non-scientific, as demythologization requires the interpreter to immerse themselves in the subject matter (a concept Bultmann refers to as "historical involvement"). The methodological parallels between Hosein's interpretations and Bultmann's demythology suggest that Islamic eschatological verses may benefit from a similar hermeneutic approach. However, a crucial distinction remains in the esoteric dimension of religious understanding. Hosein emphasizes that mastery of the subject is essential for interpretation, implying that the interpreter must deeply engage with the spiritual and theological depths of Islam to fully grasp and convey the kerygma of the divine message.

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