

which never entertained the idea of a mystical dimension giving shape to the *Qur'ān* and embodying its meaning.²²

Chalil, however, goes a step further in equating *bāṭinī tafsīr* with those written by the traditionalists (whom he refers to as "heretics) on the ground that both types of *tafsīr* could prove deleterious to the Muslim faith. This is despite the fact that his preoccupation with the "danger" of heresy could not be substantiated by empirical evidence or proofs.²³ In fact, there were no substantial differences between the traditionalists' and the reformists' *tafsīrs*, in so far as the Javanese works were concerned. Furthermore, the traditionalists could even claim some uniqueness in their approach to *tafsīr* by virtue of the fact that their methodology was nurtured by the Javanese environment, which allowed them to discover the deep (meaning) and surface (syntax) structure of the *Qur'ān*, as illustrated in Muṣṭafā's *tafsīr*.²⁴

Although Chalil does not provide us with a clear definition of what he means by flat and tasteless, we are able to arrive at an understanding of this qualification by considering his criticism of the tradition of *Qur'ānic* translation. As such, Adnan's work could be considered "flat" and "tasteless", since his technique of direct translation of the *Qur'ān* was frowned upon by Chalil.²⁵ Adnan's *tafsīr*, however, is not a word by word translation, but

²²The task of identifying Javanese works on *tafsīr* that contained *sūfī* elements was embarked upon by Adnan who, quoting the views of Sahl al-Tustarī, claims that the *Qur'ān* contains hidden and esoteric meanings, which can only be interpreted by *wong sing khusus* (people of distinction). Adnan, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān Suci Basu Jawi*, 7.

²³Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidayat-Rahmāna*, vol. 1, 33, 39 and 41.

²⁴Muṣṭafā's *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz* employs a method which originally serves as a guide to the study of Arabic and which had been developed in the *pesantren* over the course of a century or so. Following this technique, Muṣṭafā gives an annotated meaning under each word as well as an identification of its grammatical function by providing fixed signs under words, whereby each stands for the grammatical category of the word. In this way, a reader will immediately recognize if a word is a subject, a predicate, an object, a genitive or others. This method was invented to serve the needs of the *santris* (students) of the *pesantren* and was called *makna gandul*. Thus, two dimensions were simultaneously provided by this method, i.e. both the syntactic and morphological functions of words were elucidated by the same method. Muṣṭafā, *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, vol. 1.

²⁵Moenawar Chalil, "Al-Qur'anul Hakim," *Abadi* (October, 3; 1953).

thus, limited his dependence on this body to the first three generations following Muḥammad. Whenever the above mentioned sources were found insufficient for any particular verse, a *mufasssīr*, in Chalil's eyes, was to resort to his independent opinion, a process which Chalil refers to as *ra'y* or *ijāhūd*.⁶⁴

Although independent reasoning was long considered one of the primary tools of interpretation, a *mufasssīr* was only allowed to exert the power of his reason within strictly defined limits. For his part, Chalil provides certain criteria for what can be settled rationally and what must be accepted unconditionally. In this, he was following the principle that matters related to the *ṣaḥ ṣyāt* (unconditional obedience to religious doctrines) and *'ibādah* (ritual) were not to be discussed rationally. The reason for this, according to him, is not due to any shortcoming in the use of reason, but because Muḥammad himself did not give rational explanations for his pronouncements on these matters. Beyond the *ṣaḥ ṣyāt* and *'ibādah*, however, the path was clear for the exercise of responsible, rational investigation.⁶⁵

Chalil points out that the requirements for undertaking the task of *tafsīr* were discussed by the early scholars. As early as the second century of the *Hijrah*, al-Shāfi'ī wrote a book which laid down the requirements for a *mufasssīr*. Chalil's concern with the requirements was to show the scholarly nature of the task and to limit its practice only to the most competent scholars, due to the demanding nature of the work. It was so demanding that al-Bulqīnī asked for knowledge of fifty sciences, whereas al-Suyūṭī required eighty.⁶⁶ Among these requirements, Chalil highlights only a few, such as mastery of *ḥadīth al-nuzūl*. In this, he was not influenced by the disagreement over the *ḥadīth al-nuzūl* existing among the classical authorities nor the modernists' disfavor of it. Citing the opinions of Ibn Daqīq and Ibn Taymīyah, he states that the mastery of *ḥadīth al-*

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 28.

muashābīhāt and his emphasis on *i'jāz 'aqlī* all give evidence of the rational approach which the reformists consistently adopted in their *tafsīr*.