



Epistemic and Chronological Criticism in the *Safinah Kallā Saya‘lamūn* Exegesis Surah Ar-Rūm [30]:1–5

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Abstract

This discourse examines the *Safinah Kallā Saya‘lamūn* exegesis, which employs historical analogies to demonstrate the relevance of the historical content in the Qur’an; however, the criteria for testing these claims against empirical history remain underdeveloped. This study proposes a “Chronological-Epistemic Evaluation” model to critique the use of historical analogies in Indonesian exegetical works, particularly the *Tafsir Safinah Kallā Saya‘lamūn*, which interprets Surah Ar-Rūm [30]:1–5 by claiming a date correspondence (17 Ramadan/August 17) and stating that a discrepancy of one or two days is permissible across all calendars. Through qualitative research, this study employs an astronomical algorithm for Hijri-Gregorian conversion to verify the claim of a direct temporal correspondence between the Roman victory (7th century) and Indonesian Independence (1945). The research findings indicate that the text operates through a “mediating authority” structure, projecting a nationalist narrative onto the Qur’anic text to achieve “symbolic truth”. However, a rigorous chronological analysis proves that the claim of date correspondence is astronomically impossible due to the stability of the Gregorian calendar and the shifting lunar cycle. This study concludes that the text commits a category error by conflating metaphor (*majāz*) with empirical fact (*haqiqah*), thereby threatening scholarly integrity. Consequently, this research recommends that contemporary mufassirs adopt a “double validation” protocol balancing contextual relevance with strict empirical audits before publishing historical claims and advises readers to critically approach such historical analogies as symbolic pedagogy rather than literal historiography, thereby reinstating the principle of academic caution (*ihtiyāt*).

Keywords: Contextual Exegesis (*Tafsir bi al-ra’y*); Historical Analogy; Chronological Verification; Epistemic Caution (*Ihtiyāt*); *Safinah Kallā Saya‘lamūn*.

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Introduction

Qur'anic exegesis in the contemporary era has undergone a significant paradigm shift compared to the classical era. Whereas in the past exegesis focused primarily on linguistic analysis (*naḥw wa ṣarf*), theological debates (*kalām*), or pure *fiqh*, contemporary exegesis is more oriented toward efforts to “ground” the sacred text so that it can address the problems of modern humanity.¹ In the past, classical scholars tended to be wary of over-reliance on reason, fearing that external elements might infiltrate the exegesis (*dakḥil fī al-tafsīr*).²

However, researchers today actually agree that we do need to actively engage with the text. They view this shift in perspective as a reasonable middle ground between preserving the authenticity of the Qur'an and acknowledging the human role in producing the meaning of *tafsīr*.³ This aligns with the view that all forms of *tafsīr* are inevitably influenced by history.⁴ Consequently, modern *mufasssīr* (exegetes) inevitably bring their social and political backgrounds to bear when reading the Qur'an. Thus, *tafsīr* is no longer merely a search for a single, rigid meaning, but rather a dynamic process in which the Qur'anic text “engages in dialogue” with the exegete's understanding and expectations.⁵

From this shift in perspective emerged a distinctive style of exegesis in Indonesia often referred to as “Tafsīr Nusantara.” Its aim is to integrate universal Islamic values with local wisdom and the foundations of our nation. Billah and Sulhadi describe this approach as a wise way of thinking because it can strengthen national identity and bring the Qur'an closer to local communities, without compromising its core religious values.⁶ In this context, the inclusion of national narratives within religious exegesis is no coincidence but rather follows its own methodology. Some scholars, such as Zuhdi and Syamsuddin, call it the “Nusantara Exegesis Paradigm,” which consciously infuses a “spirit of Indonesianness” when interpreting sacred verses.⁷ This method is used to spread moderate Islam and prevent radicalism, so that exegetical scholars serve as mediating bridges between religion and love for the homeland.⁸ However, this blending of national political elements and religion raises an important question: where does the boundary of interpretation lie? Lufaei and Fahriana caution that if the primary goal is purely for the sake of nationalism, there is a risk that the

¹ Haqiqi Nurcahyati, “The Transformation of Traditional to Modern Exegesis from the Perspective of Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutics,” *Al-Muhafidz: Journal of Qur'anic Studies and Exegesis* 5, no. 1 (2025): 143–60, <https://doi.org/10.57163/almuhafidz.v5i1.177>.

² Suci Romadani Siregar, Nur Aulia Indriyanti, and Hery Sahputra, “A Critical Study of al-Dakḥil from the Perspective of Isra'iliyat,” *Journal of Islamic Law and Humanities* 4 (2025): 662–74, <https://doi.org/10.58578/ahkam.v4i2.6335>.

³ Abd. Kholid, “The Paradigm Determining the Validity of Qur'anic Interpretation in the Discourse of the Madhāhib of Tafsir,” *Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia* (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2023).

⁴ Carlo Davia, “Is Philosophical Hermeneutics Self-Refuting,” *Projek Muse* 75, no. 4 (2022): 751–77, <https://doi.org/10.1353/rvm.2022.0024>.

⁵ Sulkifli, “The Dynamics of Contemporary Exegesis in Muslim Scholarship,” *Al-Mutsala* 4, no. 02 (n.d.), <https://doi.org/10.46870/jstain.v4i2.222>.

⁶ M Mu'tashim Billah et al., “Tafsir Nusantara as the Epistemological Basis of Contextual Islam: Responding to Indonesian Challenges in the Global Era,” *Samawat: Journal of Hadīth and Qur'anic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2025): 1–9, <https://doi.org/ISSN 2614-0942; e-ISSN 3109-6298>.

⁷ M N Zuhdi and S Syamsuddin, “The Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis: Tracking Trends in the Interpretation of the Qur'an in Indonesia 2000–2010,” *Jawi*, 2018.

⁸ Mohammad Takdir, “Moderation Reasoning Based on Religious Literacy to Prevent Radicalization among Interfaith Generation Z in Indonesia,” *International Studies in Catholic Education*, October 24, 2025, 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2025.2568712>.

text of the Qur'ān will instead be “forced” to fit the state’s narrative, rather than being studied in depth according to linguistic principles.⁹

Take, for example, the tafsīr titled *Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn*, which employs historical analogies. The exegete draws parallels between the stories in the Qur'an and modern political events to demonstrate that the Qur'an remains relevant throughout the ages.¹⁰ A classic example is Surah Ar-Rūm, verses 1–5, which recounts the victory of the Romans over the Persians. In the past, scholars like Ibn Kathīr interpreted these verses purely as a historical event that actually occurred in the 7th century. However, the *Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn* commentary draws a parallel between this story and Indonesia’s struggle for independence.¹¹ The Roman victory is seen as a symbol of the oppressed triumphing over cruel colonizers. Such an analogy aligns with the “contextual approach,” which prioritizes the moral message of a verse over its literal meaning. The problem is, if this symbolic analogy is treated as an indisputable historical fact, it will spark a complex debate regarding the meaning of truth in exegesis.¹²

The crux of this debate lies in the distinction between narrative truth and historical truth. In the philosophy of history, historical truth must consist of empirical facts. On the other hand, a story possesses a “truth of meaning” that may differ from facts on the ground.¹³ Djouaria Ghilani writes that narrative truth prioritizes a coherent message, so it often resembles a work of fiction rather than verifiable facts. Distinguishing between these two is crucial in the field of interpretation.¹⁴ A religious story may be entirely true in terms of its moral message (for example, about never giving up or God’s help), but it fails to hold up when tested against strict historical facts. Conflict arises when exegesis blurs this boundary and presents symbolic parables as if they were accurate dates or years.¹⁵

Unlike Western studies, which rigorously apply historical-critical methods to examine the historiographical sequence and empirical accuracy of Qur'anic narratives (often sparking debate),¹⁶ contextual exegesis in Indonesia operates under a distinct hermeneutical paradigm and is rarely subjected to such strict empirical scrutiny. Rather than verifying exact historical chronologies, the tradition of Nusantara *tafsīr* (particularly the book *Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn*) prioritizes moral messages and sociological contextualization for nation-building, favoring

⁹ Lufaei Lufaei and Lukita Fahriana, “Between Contextualization and Distortion: Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses on Nationalism in Detik.com and NU Online,” *Tanzīl: Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2025): 251–70, <https://journal.sadra.ac.id/ojs/index.php/tanzil/article/view/412>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Ismail Ascholy, *Safīnat Kallā Saya'lamūn Fi Tafsīri Syaikhinā Maimūn* (Bangkalan: Nahdlatul Tuots, 2021).

¹¹ Muhammad Rafsanjani, Ulfatul Halimah, and Faqru Nisa Arrahmah, “The Roman Victory in Q. S. Al-Rūm [30]: 2–5 and Its Implications for Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Commentaries of Ibn Kathir and Safīnat Kallā Saya'lamūn,” 1, no. 2 (2025): 262–88.

¹² Abdulloh Dardum, “Abdullah Saeed’s Contextual Approach and Its Application to the Verse on the Veil,” *KACA (God’s Gift of Light): Journal of Dialogic Studies in Islamic Theology* 8, no. 2 (2018): 197–208, <https://doi.org/10.36781/kaca.v8i2.3016>

¹³ Marian David, “The Correspondence Theory of Truth,” ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, *The {Stanford} Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2025th ed. (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2025), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2025/entries/truth-correspondence/>.

¹⁴ Djouaria Ghilani, Olivier Luminet, and Olivier Klein, “When History Seems to Repeat Itself: Exposure to Perceived Lessons of the Past Influences Predictions About Current Political Events,” *Psychologica Belgica* 62, no. 1 (2022): 89–107, <https://doi.org/10.5334/PB.1075>.

¹⁵ Ghilani, Luminet, and Klein.

¹⁶ Emmanuelle Stefanidis, “In Search of Chronology: Narratives of Qur'anic Evolution in Western Academia,” *ReOrient* 9, no. 1 (2024): 70–95, <https://doi.org/10.13169/reorient.9.1.0070>.

narrative truth over historical truth.¹⁷ However, when a modern *tafsir* makes a definitive mathematical claim of date correspondence between the Roman victory (17th of Ramadan) and Indonesian independence (August 17, 1945), it transcends purely symbolic or pedagogical boundaries. This specific assertion enters the realm of empirical historiography, wherein its validity can, and must, be debated using precise chronological verification.¹⁸

Previous studies have, in part, discussed the *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn* exegesis. Among them are those by M. Syamsul Arifin¹⁹ and Ahmad Yahya,²⁰ as well as studies that examine the nationalist aspects of the *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn* exegesis, such as the study by Ahmad Ashimulloh²¹ or its comparison with Ibn Kathir's exegesis by Muhammad Rafsanjani.²² However, there has been no research that truly combines theoretical criticism with chronological verification. Most studies only assess whether the *tafsir* is useful for the state or makes religious sense, but neglect to test the accuracy of its historical facts. Consequently, for the sake of national pride, many historical inaccuracies are deliberately overlooked. That is why we need research that truly examines the narrative of this *tafsir* from a historical perspective.

To fill this gap, the author proposes a research model called the "Chronological-Epistemic Evaluation." This study focuses on analyzing the book *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn* (a collection of exegeses attributed to KH. Maimun Zubair), which links the time mentioned in Surah Ar-Rūm to Indonesia's independence. The author argues that the historical analogy in this exegesis is indeed highly successful as a moral narrative to ignite the spirit of nationalism; however, its historical claims fail when tested against the science of astronomy and calendar calculations. The author emphasizes that a good *tafsir* must be able to distinguish between what is merely symbolic truth (related to morality and meaning) and what is factual truth (certain facts bound by time and science). If this distinction is not recognized, the scholarly quality of the exegesis itself will be compromised, as the exegesis will merely become a tool of nationalist propaganda at the expense of historical accuracy.

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach with two primary analytical frameworks: theoretical critique (epistemology) and chronological analysis. Drawing inspiration from critical thinkers such as Mohammed Arkoun²³ and Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri²⁴ who frequently deconstruct traditional Islamic thought to uncover hidden meanings and critique Arab rationality this study treats the *tafsir* text not merely as a theological guide or religious doctrine. Rather, the *tafsir* text is viewed as a historical artifact whose veracity must be rigorously tested. The primary material analyzed in this study is the

¹⁷ Ascholy, *Safinat Kallā Saya'lamūn Fi Tafsiri Syaikhina Maimūn*.

¹⁸ Kholid, "Paradigma Penentu Validitas Interpretasi Al-Qur'an Dalam Diskursus Madhāhib Al-Tafsir."

¹⁹ M Syamsul Arifin, "The Epistemology of Scientific Exegesis in Tafsir Al-" IV, no. 1 (2025): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.37252/jpkin.v4i1.1351>.

²⁰ Ahmad Yahya, Roem Rowi, and Abd Kholid, "Epistemological Studies of the Dotted Exegesis Dūrr Al-Asrūr by Mahmud Ibn Muhammad Al-Hamzawi," *At-Tibyan Journal: Journal of Quranic Studies and Exegesis* 5, no. 2 (2020): 307–24, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v5i2.1790>.

²¹ Ahmad Ashimulloh and Ayyuhan Maulana, "Relevansi Makna Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia Dalam Perspektif KH Maimoen Zubair : Analisis QS . Al- Rūm Ayat 1 -5 Dalam Tafsir Safinah Kalla Saya ' Lamun Fu Tafsiri Shaykhina Maymun)" 1 (2025): 33–43.

²² Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, "The Victory of the Romans in S. Al-Rūm [30]: 2–5 and Its Reflection on Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Exegesis of Ibn Kathir and Safinat Kallā Saya 'Lamūn."

²³ Taufik Hidayatulloh, "Navigating Contemporary Islamic Reason: An Epistemological Analysis of Mohammed Arkoun," *Journal of Islamic Thought* 4, no. 1 (2024): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jpi.v4i1.23080>.

²⁴ Luqman Nur Muhamad et al., "Critique of the Epistemology of Arabic Reason by Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri on the Progress of Islamic Civilization," *Alhamra: Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2024): 143–56.

tafsir text *Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn*, specifically the section discussing Surah Ar-Rūm, verses 1–5, where a historical analogy equates the Roman events with Indonesia's independence.²⁵

To collect the data, the author focused the search on *tafsirs* that specifically discuss historical events and dates. The data was then analyzed through a three-step investigative process. In the first step, the author categorized the statements within the text based on specific textual indicators: (1) moral (normative) rules were identified by the presence of imperative linguistics, legal rulings (*ahkām*), or ethical injunctions; (2) parables (symbolic/amthāl) were recognized through allegorical framing intended for theological instruction rather than temporal documentation;²⁶ and (3) historical facts were isolated based on the explicit presence of chronological markers, geographical data, or named historical figures.²⁷

The second step involved verifying the dates of these factual claims using advanced astronomical calculations to precisely convert the Hijri calendar to the Gregorian calendar. Specifically, this study employed the Julian Day (JD) conversion algorithm as adapted by Abuelyamen and Fitriyanti, utilizing the mathematical formula:

$$JD = \left\lfloor \frac{11H+3}{30} \right\rfloor + 354H + D_m + 1948439.5$$

(where H represents the Hijri year, D_m is the day of the year, and 1948439.5 serves as the Islamic epoch constant).²⁸ This formula acts as a highly consistent scientific “guardrail,” allowing us to align historical events from two different calendar systems with great accuracy.

Finally, the third step comprised a structured assessment of the verified data. This evaluation framework utilized a comparative historical-critical approach, wherein the astronomically converted dates derived from the *tafsir* were systematically cross-referenced against established non-scriptural historical archives and archaeological consensus to determine their degree of historical convergence.²⁹

Result and Discussion

Behind the Compilation of the *Safīnah* Exegesis

Tafsir Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn fī Tafsiri Syaikhinā Maimūn represents an epistemological formalization of the oral tradition of the weekly study sessions on *Tafsir al-Jalālayn* conducted by KH. Maimun Zubair.³⁰ Written and codified by Lora Ismā'īl al-Ash'ālī, this work marks a significant transition from charisma-based oral authority to a systematic written corpus. Chronologically, the compilation of this tafsir unfolded in several phases: the first volume, containing 17 thematic chapters, was completed on January 29, 2020,³¹ followed by the

²⁵ Ascholy, *Safīnat Kallā Saya'lamūn Fī Tafsiri Syaikhinā Maimūn*.

²⁶ Ghilani, Luminet, and Klein, “When History Seems to Repeat Itself: Exposure to Perceived Lessons of the Past Influences Predictions About Current Political Events.”

²⁷ David, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth*.

²⁸ Sang Hyeon Ahn, “Dating the Stars in the Calendrical Method Shoushili of the Yuan Dynasty,” *Journal of the Korean Astronomical Society* 56, no. 2 (2023): 137–47, <https://doi.org/10.5303/JKAS.2023.56.2.137>; Ahmad Izzuddin Riza, Muhammad Himmatur, “Pembaruan Kalender Masehi Delambre Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Jadwal Waktu Salat,” *Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Hukum Islam* 3, no. 2 (2020): 163–84, <https://doi.org/DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/jua.v3i2.7995>.

²⁹ Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri, *Bunyat Al-'Aql Al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1986), noor-book.com/en/j3spoe.

³⁰ Ascholy, *Safīnat Kallā Saya'lamūn in the Exegesis of Our Sheikh Maimūn*, 37.

³¹ Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, “The Victory of the Romans in Surah Al-Rum [30]:2–5 and Its Reflection on Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Commentaries of Ibn Kathir and Safīnat Kallā Saya'lamūn,” 37.

second volume, which focuses on an in-depth analysis of Surah al-Anbiyā' (21): 1–84.³² The codification of these two volumes was subsequently published as a single 437-page book by Nahḍat al-Turāth on June 17, 2023, while the third volume remains in progress.³³

From an epistemological perspective, the shift from oral explanations delivered in Javanese to a written text in Arabic was not merely a linguistic choice. Rather, it constituted a deliberate effort to align the work with the intellectual tradition (*turāth*) of non-Arab Nusantara scholars while preserving its analytical translatability and pedagogical significance within the pesantren tradition.³⁴ The epistemological framework of this tafsir simultaneously integrates two major paradigms: *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr* (tradition-based exegesis) and *tafsir bi al-ra'y* (reasoned and contextual interpretation).³⁵ Its textual authority is reinforced through the incorporation of insights from authoritative exegetical works such as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, and *Tafsir Marāḥi Labid*, which are then brought into dialogue with contemporary social realities.³⁶ The textual dynamics of the work also reflect a model of dual authorship. Ismā'īl al-Ash'ālī preserves the originality of Mbah Maimun's thought through the clause *qāla Syaikhunā* ("our teacher said"), while simultaneously expanding the interpretive discourse by inserting his own explanatory commentary (*sharḥ*) through the formula *Qultu* ("I say"), thereby strengthening the contextualization of Mbah Maimun's ideas through references to classical sources.³⁷

In terms of methodology and structural typology, this work departs from the analytical (*tahliḥi*) sequence characteristic of *Tafsir al-Jalālayn* and instead adopts a thematic (*mandū'i*) approach.³⁸ This structural reorganization was intentionally designed to group Qur'anic verses into specific socio-theological categories rather than following the order of the muṣḥaf.³⁹ This characteristic places *Tafsir Safīnah* within the socio-literary tradition of Qur'anic exegesis (*adabī ijtimā'i*), which prioritizes arguments relevant to contemporary social conditions and transforms religious texts into critical instruments for addressing current societal challenges.⁴⁰

The Romans, the Persians, and Indonesian Independence

الْم (1) غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ (2) فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ (3) فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (4) بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (5)

³² Ahmad Ashimulloh and Ayyuhan Maulana, "The Relevance of the Meaning of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia from the Perspective of KH Maimoen Zubair: An Analysis of Surah Al-Rum Verses 1–5 in the Tafsir Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun by Shaykh Maimoen Zubair," 1 (2025): 37.

³³ Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, "The Victory of the Romans in Surah Al-Rum [30]:2–5 and Its Reflection on Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Commentaries of Ibn Kathir and Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun," 37.

³⁴ Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, "The Roman Victory in Surah Al-Rum [30]:2–5 and Its Reflection on Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Commentaries of Ibn Kathir and Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun," 273.

³⁵ Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, "The Victory of the Romans in Surah Al-Rum [30]:2–5 and Its Reflection on Indonesian Independence: A Historical Study in the Commentaries of Ibn Kathir and Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun," 37.

³⁶ Ascholy, 37.

³⁷ Ascholy, *Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun in the Exegesis of Our Sheikh Maimun*, 37.

³⁸ Ahmad Ashimulloh and Ayyuhan Maulana, "The Relevance of the Meaning of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia from the Perspective of KH Maimoen Zubair: An Analysis of Surah Al-Rum Verses 1–5 in the Tafsir Safinat Kalla Saya 'Lamun by Shaykh Maimoen Zubair," 1 (2025): 37.

³⁹ Ascholy, 37.

⁴⁰ Rafsanjani, Halimah, and Arrahmah, 273.

Q.S Al-Rum, verses 1–5.

That verse recounts the victory of the Romans, who at that time were fighting against the Persians. The Romans were a people who adhered to the Holy Scriptures, while the Persians were fire-worshippers. During the war, the Romans initially suffered defeat, but a few years later they managed to turn the tide and conquer Persia. This Roman victory brought joy to the Muslim community, as the Romans were closer in faith to the Muslims than the polytheistic Persians.

Mbah Maimun emphasized that this situation bears similarities to Indonesian history. The Netherlands, as a European colonial power, is likened to Rome, while Japan, as a sun-worshipping nation, is likened to Persia. Indonesia was initially under Dutch colonial rule. However, Japan later arrived with its military might and succeeded in expelling the Dutch from the Indonesian archipelago.

Lora Ismā'īl stated that Indonesia's independence bears a resemblance to the Prophet's appointment as a Messenger. As evidenced, Indonesia's independence fell on August 17, which coincides with the 8th of Ramadan, and the day of the Prophet's appointment as a Messenger fell on the 17th of Ramadan, which coincides with August 8. He derived this analogy while studying under Mbah Maimun.⁴¹

Lora Ismā'īl then compared the above statement by citing the opinion of Shaykh al-Mubārakfūrī in his book *Sirah al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm*, that the Prophet's appointment as a Messenger occurred on the 21st of Ramadan, which coincides with August 10, for the following reasons:⁴²

First, the sending of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ occurred on a Monday, as established in the narrations.

Second, Mondays falling in the month of Ramadan that year occurred only on the 14th, 21st, and 28th of Ramadan, and authentic narrations indicate that his mission coincided with the Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr).

Third, Laylat al-Qadr occurs only during the last ten days of Ramadan, as indicated in the hadith.

Fourth, scientific calendar calculations prove that Monday in that month fell on those dates. This is a summary of the commentary in al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm with minor modifications.

There is a discrepancy between al-Mubārakfūrī's statement and what Mbah Maimun conveyed. This is because, if Mubārakfūrī maintains that the Prophet was appointed as a messenger on the 17th of Ramadan, that date would fall on August 6. Meanwhile, according to Mbah Maimun, the 17th of Ramadan falls on August 8. In this regard, the author will validate the alignment of dates and the statement by Lora Ismā'īl, who wrote:

“Therefore, determining the date of the Prophet's ﷺ appointment as a messenger using a specific calendar is of no use; for this will inevitably lead to differences of opinion among his followers due to variations in the sighting of the crescent moon among them. And differences in dating are permissible between Mubarakfuri's region and the region of Mecca and beyond; since the Prophet's birth, according to the Gregorian calendar, occurred between the sixth day—according to those who say it occurred on the 17th

⁴¹ Ascholy, *Safinat Kallā Saya'lamūn in the Exegesis of Shaykh Maimun*.

⁴² Ascholy.

of Ramadan—and the tenth day, according to those who say it occurred on August 21—a difference of one or two days is permissible across all calendars.”

In this context, the author wishes to further examine the statement “a difference of one or two days is permissible across all calendars” to determine whether this claim can be substantiated. Therefore, it is necessary to first understand the Gregorian calendar in order to achieve the intended objective.

Calendar Test: Why August 17 Is Not the Same as the 17th of Ramadan

The most widely recognized calendar used by the Indonesian public for daily activities is the Christian calendar. This system is actually the Gregorian calendar, instituted by Pope Gregory XIII, which establishes the start of the year based on the birth of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, the term “Masehi” became the dominant terminology among Indonesians. Although the Masehi calendar now appears established and universal without ongoing disputes over the determination of the start of the month, this stability was achieved through a long historical process, including critical corrections to calculation errors and repeated rejections from the global community. Eventually, by the 16th century, various kingdoms began to accept and adopt this calendar, leading to its ubiquitous global use today.⁴³

However, the stability observed in the Gregorian calendar is not absolute. The Gregorian system as it stands today cannot be used indefinitely without causing discrepancies with natural astronomical cycles. This is due to the mathematical difference between a solar tropical year and a Gregorian year. A solar tropical year averages 365.242199 days, while a Gregorian year lasts 365.2425 days. Consequently, the disparity between the Gregorian year and the tropical year cycle amounts to approximately 0.0003 days, or 12 seconds, each year. This discrepancy causes astronomical phenomena, such as the Vernal Equinox, to occur 12 seconds earlier each year. If accumulated, this deviation will amount to 1 day over a period of 3,600 years; 2 days over 7,200 years; 3 days over 10,000 years; and over 100,000 years, the Vernal Equinox will shift by an entire month.

From this astronomical baseline, it becomes evident that a significant temporal discrepancy existed before the Gregorian calendar's adoption, which necessitated its creation. While a drift of 1–2 days is still theoretically possible under the Gregorian system, the accumulation of just a single day requires 3,600 years of elapsed time. A 2-day discrepancy would necessitate 7,200 years.⁴⁴

Applying Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri's epistemological framework to this mathematical reality reveals the structural flaw in Lora Ismā'īl's interpretation. The commentator's approach suffers from an over-reliance on Bayani reasoning an epistemology heavily dependent on textual analogy (*qiyas*) and linguistic parallelism. By forcing a rigid analogy between the 17th of Ramadan (the revelation of the Quran) and the 17th of August (Indonesian Independence), the commentary attempts to synchronize sacred history with national history without empirical grounding.⁴⁵

When subjected to Burhani reasoning which prioritizes empirical reality, demonstrative logic, and scientific mathematics this analogy entirely collapses. As calculated previously, a calendar shift of 1–2 days under the Gregorian system requires at least 3,600 to 7,200 years to

⁴³ Ahmad Izzuddin Riza, Muhammad Himmat, “The Delambre Reform of the Gregorian Calendar and Its Implications for Prayer Times,” *Journal of Islamic Law Studies and Research* 3, no. 2 (2020): 163–84, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.30659/jua.v3i2.7995>.

⁴⁴ Riza, Muhammad Himmat.

⁴⁵ Al-Jabiri, *Bunyat Al-'Aql Al-'Arabi*, 198–200.

manifest. Given that the temporal distance from the Prophet’s mission to the present day is only about 1,500 years, the mathematical threshold required for such a date shift has simply not been met. Therefore, using *Burbani* logic, the synchronization of the 17th of Ramadan with the 17th of August is a mathematically inconsistent projection; it exposes the limits of forced *Bayani* analogies when they contradict the established realities of astronomical timekeeping.⁴⁶

PERISTIWA HISTORIS	TANGGAL GEORGIAN	TANGGAL HIJRIAH
Proklamasi Kemerdekaan RI	17 Agustus 1945	9 Ramadhan 1364 H
Peringatan 17 Ramadhan di Tahun Kemerdekaan	25 Agustus 1945	17 Ramadhan 1364 H
Estimasi Historis Nuzul Qur’an Pertama	10 Agustus 610 M	17 Ramadhan 13 SH

The Validity of the Exegesis of Surah Ar-Rūm [30]:1–5

The interpretation of *Safīnah Kallā Saya’lamūn* is a work of tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī*, based on ijtihad or the mufasssīr’s reasoning, which is heavily influenced by the mufasssīr’s scholarly background. In the discourse on tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī*, scholars agree to classify it into two categories: tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī mah}mūd* (praiseworthy) and tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī mamdūh* (blameworthy). Tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī* can be considered praiseworthy and acceptable when the interpretation meets certain criteria. *Al-Dhababī* specifically outlined several explanations that, when summarized, can be divided into five points: tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī* is considered praiseworthy when:⁴⁷

- 1) It conforms to the rules of the Arabic language with all its complex grammatical forms.
- 2) It conforms to the principles of exegesis and the sciences of the Qur’an, such as *asbabunnuzul*, *nasīkh wa mansūkh*, *qiraah al-Qur’ān*, and so on.
- 3) There is no forced interpretation of the text to align with a specific ideology.
- 4) It does not venture too “deep” into areas that are not within the scope of a servant of God.
- 5) There is no unilateral claim (unaccompanied by constructive arguments) that this interpretation is the most correct and that other interpretations are wrong.

Given the validity of the interpretations outlined above, a re-examination of tafsīr *bi al-ra’yī* is necessary, particularly the *Safīnah Kallā Saya’lamūn* interpretation. Therefore, in this context, the author revisits Lora Ismā’īl’s statement that “a difference of one or two days from all calendars is permissible,” to determine whether this claim can be proven true or not. By equating the Romans (who were monotheists) with Indonesian freedom fighters, and the Persians (pagans) with colonizers, this interpretation successfully instills a moral message: the Indonesian people must possess an unyielding spirit, much like the early generations of Muslims who patiently awaited victory over the Romans . However, when examined scientifically, equating these two dates is irrelevant. Yet, in the context of igniting religious

⁴⁶ Al-Jabiri, 198–200.

⁴⁷ Kholid, “The Paradigm Determining the Validity of Qur’anic Interpretation in the Discourse of the Madhāhib of Tafsir,” 16.

and nationalistic fervor, this is of great importance. Separating these two dates using a rigid historical lens would actually undermine the beautiful message of the sermon.

Lora Ismā'īl considers a 1–2 day discrepancy between calendars to be “normal” and tolerable. Fact: The Gregorian calendar is highly precise. As explained in the text, it takes approximately 3,600 years for the Gregorian calendar to deviate by one day from the solar tropical year. The events of the Prophet’s mission (the Revelation of the Qur’an/the Battle of Badr) occurred approximately 1,400–1,500 years ago. Mathematically, the shift in the Gregorian calendar from the time of the Prophet until 1945 had not yet reached even one day (only half a day, or about 12 hours). Thus, astronomically, the 17th of Ramadan in the 7th century had the exact same celestial positions as August 17, 1945. There is no “1–2 day margin of error” in celestial mechanics for a solar calendar over a span as “short” as 1,400 years.

This parable (analogy) cannot be regarded merely as historical fact, but rather as "symbolic fiction." As David Brown (2001) states,⁴⁸ a narrative may be fictitious in terms of historical facts, yet it remains “true” because it successfully conveys its central message in this case, the message that God always aids the oppressed. This interpretation prioritizes stories that can build national memory and identity over rigid history that merely lists dates and numbers.

To rectify this, modern exegetes particularly those interpreting the book *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn* must return to upholding the principle of *ih̥tiyāṭ* (academic caution).⁴⁹ Any exegetical claim that invokes historical or scientific data must be willing to undergo empirical testing before being accepted as fact (*haqiqah*). If proven scientifically inaccurate such as the dates of the 17th of Ramadan and August 17th, particularly Lora Ismā'īl's statement that “a difference of one or two days from all calendars is permissible” then such claims must honestly be downgraded to mere figurative language (*majāz*). By distinguishing between what is merely a metaphor intended to ignite patriotic fervor and what is a calendar fact, the credibility of the science of exegesis will remain intact, without needing to violate the laws of nature created by God.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that while historical analogies in contextual exegesis function very effectively as pedagogical metaphors to inspire national unity, these analogies often collapse when tested chronologically. An analysis of the book *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn* reveals that its central claim namely, the direct temporal connection between the Roman victory in Surah Ar-Rūm and Indonesian independence, and specifically the statement “a discrepancy of one or two days from all calendars is permissible” operates as a mechanism of “symbolic truth” alone, rather than empirical fact. By constructing an exegesis through “intermediary authority,” this book prioritizes the “narrative truth” of national identity over the “historical truth” of the seventh century. However, the application of astronomical algorithms proves that the specific alignment between the 17th of Ramadan and August 17th over fourteen centuries is entirely unscientific. This is due to the absolute nature of the Gregorian calendar and the natural shifts in the Hijri cycle.

⁴⁸ Filip Taufer, “The Incarnational Aesthetic of David Brown,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* n/a, no. n/a (November 10, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijst.70006>.

⁴⁹ Lukluk Suhaila et al., “Students’ Responsibility Toward Academic Ethics in Building a Scientific Culture of Integrity,” *Journal of Economics & Business Students* 5, no. 3 (2025): 1383–95, <https://doi.org/10.37481/jmeb.v5i3.1510>.

By synthesizing these findings, a clear logical gap begins to emerge: the text turns out to conflate rational metaphor (*majāz*) with empirical fact (*haqīqah*). This category error ultimately transforms a legitimate homiletic tool into a fragile historiographical claim, and risks engendering a historiographical fallacy wherein prescriptive moral assertions are erroneously miscategorized as descriptive historical realities. The primary contribution of this research is the formulation of the “Chronological-Epistemic Evaluation” model, which aims to reintegrate the classical principle of epistemic caution (*ihṭiyāt*). This model demands a “double validation” protocol: every interpretation must meet the *maqāṣid* criteria for its relevance, while simultaneously passing an empirical audit for its factual claims. Although this study is still limited to specific Indonesian *tafsir* works, these findings point to a much broader trend in postcolonial Islamic thought. Future research should extend this chronological audit to various other modern exegetical works. The aim is to ensure that the strong drive to seek contextual relevance does not sacrifice the epistemological integrity of Qur’anic studies

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