Zulfahmi Zulfahmi

Looking at Islam's Struggle for the Liberation of the Ummah

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Looking at Islam's Struggle for the Liberation of the Ummah: The Perspective of Bilal Bin Rabbah's Liberation Theology

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https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.522

Abstract

This article aims to analyse and explore the historical struggle of Islam in the liberation of the ummah, especially the liberation of Bilal bin Rabbah. This article uses qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The primary data source of this article was literature related to the story of Bilal bin Rabbah. At the same time, secondary data used comprised scientific articles, books of tafsir, and a range of books and reports related to the theme of the discussion. The results show that the story of Bilal bin Rabbah contains heroic liberation values in opposing the injustice of the Jahiliyah period. Liberation theology in Islam emphasises the values of social justice, freedom, and resistance to all forms of oppression. The life story of Bilal bin Rabah is a clear example of the application of these values, illustrating the firmness of faith, resistance to inequality, and struggle against oppression. In addition, Islam also provides indicators as a marker that the human being is free. The indicators are: Freedom of religion, Freedom of opinion and expression, Individual freedom, Economic freedom, Freedom from oppression and injustice and Freedom in education.

Keywords: Struggle, Liberation, Bilal bin Rabbah, Islamic Theology

Introduction

Human liberation is a necessity and a human right for one as a free being (Terretta, 2023). Throughout history, there have been many cases of violations of human rights and freedoms, and one of the worst was the Auschwitz Concentration Camp during the Second World War (1939-1945). Among the 7,000 people liberated at the camp's closure, most were terminally ill or near death (Carter-White & Minca, 2020). A few weeks earlier, as Soviet troops approached the camp , nearly 60,000 prisoners had been evacuated and forced to walk in a westerly direction towards Wodzislaw, away from the complex, in what is now known as “the death march” (Frost, 2023).

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The liberation of the ummah, a concept inherent in many religious traditions, exhibits a multidimensional dimension within the framework of Islamic understanding (Prawira Negara, 2023). The concept not only highlights the need for physical liberation from oppression but also underlines the essence of spiritual and moral liberation. In Islam, the liberation of people symbolises the assertion of just and civilised human values. The teachings of this religion instil the principles of justice, equal rights, and individual freedom as the primary foundation for viewing the liberation of the people. In Islam, the liberation of people symbolizes the assertion of just and civilized human values. The teachings of this religion instill the principles of justice, equal rights, and individual freedom as the primary foundation for viewing the liberation of the people. For instance, the Qur'an states, "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted" (Qur'an 4:135). Additionally, it is said, "O mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Qur'an 49:13). These verses underscore the principles of justice, equality, and individual dignity central to Islamic teachings on liberation.

In the history of Islam, we find figures who played an essential role in the struggle for the liberation of the ummah, confirming that this concept is not only theoretical but manifested in concrete actions. As a moral calling, ummah liberation in Islam requires Muslims to actively engage in eliminating all forms of injustice and oppression, both at the individual and societal levels (Chaudhry, 2023). By embracing the values of justice, Islam provides a strong foundation for the people's liberation struggle as a tangible manifestation of religious teachings that respect human rights. The right to human freedom is the main foundation of the human rights framework, which is recognised and upheld in many parts of the world (Spruk, 2022). The concept asserts that every individual has the inherent right to live freely, without arbitrary interference or oppression from any party. The right to freedom covers various aspects of life, including freedom of opinion, freedom of religion, and freedom of association (Howie, 2018). In the context of human rights, the right to liberty is fundamental to the establishment of a democratic and just society in which people of creeds etc can live in harmony.

Human liberty rights also reflect the recognition of the dignity and worth of every individual. Individual freedom to express opinions, practice religious beliefs, and participate in political processes are essential elements that support the development of inclusive and pluralistic societies. By guaranteeing the right to freedom, society provides space for diversity, dialogue and healthy growth. Therefore, the protection and recognition of human freedom rights is not only an ethical issue, but also the basis for a stable and just society (van Tongeren, 2022).

From the perspective of liberation theology, Bilal Bin Rabbah provides an example of how Islamic teachings encourage the liberation of people from all forms of oppression. The concepts of justice, equal rights, and freedom are the cornerstones of Islamic teachings that Bilal adheres to. In this context, his struggle was not only physical against oppression but also a spiritual and moral fight against injustice (Hafsyari & Faisal, 2021). His liberation theology reflects the essence of Islamic teachings that emphasise individual freedom and social justice. Bilal Bin Rabbah also symbolises inclusivity in the Islamic struggle. Born into slavery, Bilal faced severe persecution for his early conversion to Islam. His struggle against oppression and his elevation to a position of respect and honor within the early Muslim community exemplify Islam's commitment to fighting discrimination and promoting the dignity of every individual, regardless of their social status or background. His role as the first muezzin, chosen by the Prophet Muhammad for his integrity and dedication, further underscores the inclusivity and egalitarian principles in the Islamic faith.

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With a different ethnic background, Bilal showed that Islam does not look at race, ethnicity, or cultural background in liberating people. His Islamicity takes precedence over his origin, highlighting the principles of universality in Islam. This illustrates how liberation theology in Islam is wide-ranging and relevant to all humanity, eliminating all forms of inequality. The urgency of this research is to look deeply into the role of Islam in the liberation of the ummah, focusing on the perspective of Bilal Bin Rabbah's liberation theology. This research is necessary because it can provide substantial insights into how Islamic values can shape the views and actions of Muslims in facing the realities of modern times. Thus, this research will not only hopefully in a small way revive the spiritual and moral values of Islam but also make an essential contribution to the understanding of religion in the context of contemporary multi-faith societies.

Literature Review

This research reflects an in-depth study of the role and contribution of Islam in defending and liberating the ummah, primarily through the lens of liberation theology represented by the historical figure Bilal Bin Rabbah. In this title, "Observing" provides a nuance of careful observation and deep understanding of the efforts to liberate the people in the Islamic context (Bidabad & Tabatabaei, 2019). The perspective of liberation theology is an important focus, as it signifies an analysis of the religious foundation underlying the struggle (Aguilar Ramírez & De Beer, 2020). Islam, as a religion that encompasses spiritual, moral and social aspects, is expected to provide a holistic view towards the liberation of the people (Bashir, 2023). This research also seems to point to the theological concepts embraced by Bilal Bin Rabbah, one of the Prophet's companions who was famous for his extraordinary struggle to free himself from slavery and fight for human rights.

The choice of Bilal Bin Rabbah as a representation of struggle in this title adds a particular dimension, as his life story not only reflects a physical struggle against oppression but also depicts a spiritual and moral struggle (Darmawan & Simanjuntak, 2022). By analysing Bilal's role, this research is expected to reveal a deeper meaning of Islamic values in the context of people's liberation, exploring theological aspects that may be a source of inspiration for Muslims in responding to the challenges of modern times.

First, we look at a study entitled "*The Concept of Human Liberation in Gandhi's Social Philosophy and Balasuriya's Social Theology*" (Ikeke, 2023). The results show that both are deeply involved in advocating and seeking the liberation of humanity from social, political, economic and other forms of oppression on earth. At the same time, they are only open to the notion of total liberation that can be attained. Although both discuss theological aspects, this article specifically discusses liberation theology in Islam with Bilal bin Rabbah as the analysed figure.

Then the research entitled "*Liberation Theology and Human Rights*" (Czerny, 2023) is considered. This research shows that the use of human rights discourse in liberation theology is eclectic, taking Catholic, Marxist, and liberal approaches to human rights. The development of the relationship between liberation theology and human rights can be outlined in three phases: initial rejection, gradual development of critique, and theological and practical engagement. The difference between this article and previous research lies in the subject of discussion, where this article discusses Islamic theology in viewing human liberation.

Method

The type of research that the author uses in this article is qualitative research (Weyant, 2022). The approach used in this research was phenomenology in order to explore and understand the essence or structure of human experience directly (Larsen, 2023). The paradigm used in

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this research was constructivist, with a more contextual and in-depth understanding of how individuals form their understanding of the world (Lincoln & Guba, 2016; Olsen & Pilson, 2022).

The primary data source in this research was relevant literature that is directly related to the story of Bilal bin Rabbah. At the same time, the secondary data used in this research included books of tafsir, reportage, scientific articles and other books related to the theme. The data collection techniques used in this research were observation interviews and documentation (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020). After the data was collected, the author conducted the Miles and Huberman version of data analysis including four stages, namely: data collection, data presentation, data reduction and verification and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

Results

Bilal bin Rabbah Profile

Bilal bin Rabah, better known as Bilal al-Habashi, is a hero in Islamic history. Born around 580 CE in Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Kashani, 2023), Bilal began his life in difficult circumstances as an enslaved person in a low-income family. Nonetheless, his fortunes changed when Islam began to flourish amidst the scattered Arab society. Bilal's time as an enslaved person was characterised by unimaginable injustice. He faced cruel physical torture simply for refusing to abandon his monotheistic beliefs (Latef, 2020). Bilal's courage, honesty, and determination in defending his faith and belief in Allah are reflections of an extraordinary character. An essential step in Bilal's life journey was when he decided to embrace Islam, which at that time was still in the early stages of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching. This decision was not easy, especially considering his social status as an enslaved person. However, Bilal firmly and confidently accepted the teachings of Islam that emphasised the oneness of God. This choice put him under severe pressure and threats from the rulers of Quraysh, who still held fast to the tradition of idolatry.

Bilal's story underwent a significant change when Abu Bakr, who later became the first Caliph of Islam, decided to buy and free Bilal from slavery (Mulyani et al., 2023). This act was not only a physical liberation, but it also conveyed a strong message of equality before God in Islam. Bilal's liberation became an essential milestone in the social change brought about by Islam. After entering the Islamic world, Bilal was not just a loyal follower of the Prophet but was also actively involved in various battles that shaped the early history of Islam, such as the Battles of Badr and Uhud (Md Isa et al., 2022). Bilal's bravery and perseverance on the battlefield earned him the respect and appreciation of his fellow Muslims. After the Hijrah, his role increased in the formation of Muslim society in Medina. Bilal's liberation from slavery was not the end of his struggle. Returning to Mecca after the Islamic conquest, Bilal had the opportunity to call the adhan from the top of the Kaaba. At that time, the place that previously witnessed his torture was now a place to declare victory and freedom from injustice. Bilal bin Rabah, as a central figure in Islamic history, thus plays an important and irreplaceable role in the context of human liberation in Islamic theology. In the Islamic theological view, Bilal is not only a figure of physical liberation from slavery, but also a symbol of spiritual liberation from all forms of oppression.

Bilal illustrates liberation from material slavery in Islamic teachings. As an enslaved person freed by Abu Bakr, Bilal shows that in the sight of Allah, all humans are equal regardless of social status or ethnicity. Bilal's physical liberation was not only an act of humanity but also a manifestation of the principles of justice and equality that are espoused in Islam. Furthermore, Bilal also represents liberation from idolatry and value systems that contradict the monotheistic teachings of Islam (Holter, 2021). Bilal's steadfastness in maintaining his belief in the oneness of Allah despite facing tremendous physical torture, exemplifies the importance of spiritual liberation and fidelity to the faith. In Islamic theology, human liberation from the worship of anything other than Allah is considered an essential step towards true freedom.

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Furthermore, Bilal's role as the first Muadzin in Islamic history highlights the importance of the voice and call to prayer in spreading the teachings of Islam (Öncel, 2020). The call to prayer by Bilal not only invited Muslims to pray but also became a call to liberate themselves from backwardness and misguided practices. For instance, pre-Islamic Arabian society was deeply entrenched in tribalism and racial discrimination, where social status was often determined by one's tribe or race. Islam challenged these discriminatory practices by promoting the equality of all believers. Additionally, the society practiced idolatry with widespread worship of multiple gods, but Islam emphasized monotheism and the worship of the one true God. Furthermore, social injustices such as slavery and the exploitation of the poor were prevalent, and Bilal's elevation from slavery to a revered position in the Muslim community underscored Islam's commitment to justice, freedom, and the fair treatment of all individuals. Bilal's voice became a symbol of spiritual freedom, reminding Muslims to always unite in obedience to Allah. Bilal provides a living example of human liberation from all forms of racism and discrimination. As a Habashi (African), Bilal proves that the values of faith and piety are the benchmark of honour in Islam. The concept of equality before Allah erases any differences in skin colour or ethnic background, and Bilal played a significant role in paving the way towards that important understanding.

In Bilal's story, there is a moral of liberation from fear and oppression. Despite being faced with life threats and cruel torture, Bilal remained true to his faith. Liberation from fear of loss or physical suffering is an essential theme in Islamic teachings. By maintaining faith and loyalty to Allah, Bilal set an example for Muslims not to submit to the injustices and fears of the world. Therefore, in Islamic theology, Bilal bin Rabah is not only regarded as the face of physical liberation but also as a symbol of human spiritual, intellectual and social liberation. His story illustrates the fundamental principles of Islam, including justice, equality, and courage in the face of oppression (King, 2021). As an integral part of Islamic history, Bilal represents the tireless struggle towards true freedom and honour bestowed by Allah upon every individual.

Bilal bin Rabah, with all his sacrifices and fortitude, left an unforgettable legacy in Islamic history. His courage in the face of torture, his loyalty to the Prophet, and his role in shaping the early Muslim society made him a role model for every generation of Muslims. Although he physically left the world in 640 CE in Damascus, Syria, his legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of Muslims who continue to honour him as an essential pillar of Islamic history. Bilal's call to prayer remains a source of inspiration for Muslims, teaching the values of courage, resilience, and loyalty to the teachings of Allah. Bilal bin Rabah, with his meaningful life journey, made a significant contribution to spreading and strengthening the teachings of Islam in the early days of this religion. Bilal's loyalty and devotion built a solid foundation for the development of Islam, creating an indelible mark in the religious and social history of humanity.

Islamic Liberation Theology on the Level of Human Rights

Liberation theology in Islam is a framework that emphasises the values of social justice, freedom, and human liberation from all forms of oppression. This concept is rooted in Islamic principles that teach justice, solidarity and care for the disadvantaged. By embracing these values, liberation theology seeks to align Islamic teachings with contemporary social and political contexts, calling on Muslims to be progressive and combat all forms of inequality (Ghobadzdeh & Akbarzadeh, 2015). In the context of liberation theology in Islam, the life story of Bilal bin Rabah can be an inspiration and concrete example of the application of the values of social justice and human liberation. Bilal, as an enslaved person who later became a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, illustrates the firmness of faith and courage in the face of oppression.

Basically, liberation theology in Islam carries the message that social justice and shared prosperity are at the core of Islamic teachings (Demichelis, 2014). It calls on Muslims to combat poverty, inequality and oppression by mobilising social and economic resources for

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the benefit of all. Within this framework, the concepts of zakat (charitable donations) and distributive justice become essential tools to achieve this goal. Liberation theology in Islam challenges constraining and oppressive power structures. It involves opposition to all forms of corruption, abuse of power, and violation of human rights. It also emphasises the need to speak out and actively act against injustice, even if it means confronting corrupt authorities (Esposti & Scott-Baumann, 2019).

When Bilal uttered "*Ahad, Ahad*" under torture for his Islam, he became a symbol of resistance to oppression and acceptance of Islamic teachings that emphasise spiritual freedom and liberation from slavery to the world. Bilal's life story also highlights the spiritual aspect of liberation theology, where liberation from closeness to Allah and steadfastness of faith in the face of adversity are integral to the journey towards true liberation. Liberation theology in Islam, as a paradigm of thought, incorporates human values, social justice and freedom within the framework of Islamic teachings (Rahemtulla, 2023). In-depth, this theology attempts to interpret religious principles in light of contemporary social, economic and political realities and invites Muslims to play an active role in the struggle against all forms of oppression.

It should be underlined that liberation theology in Islam details that the principles of justice and solidarity are essential elements in Islamic teachings (Abdul Rehman, 2017). The concept of zakat and the fair distribution of wealth are central to the idea of creating a more equitable society. This thinking places collective responsibility on Muslims to address issues of poverty, inequality and social injustice. Politically, liberation theology stimulates Muslims to act as agents of change to combat corruption and abuse. Fighting corruption and abuse of power. The concept of "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*" (advocating the good and forbidding the bad) becomes a guideline to oppose all forms of injustice and human rights violations (Ikhlas, 2022). In this way, this theology provides a view that resistance to injustice is a form of worship and moral responsibility.

Besides the political and economic dimensions, liberation theology also explores the spiritual dimension (Bing-Quan & Hai-Xin, 2020). Self-liberation from greed, a closer relationship with God, and an attitude of humility are integral to this concept. By nurturing the spiritual dimension, this theology teaches that true liberation is not only material but also involves inner purification and harmony with spiritual values. In other words, liberation theology in Islam permeates every aspect of life, incorporating political, economic and spiritual dimensions (Masyhuri, 2016). This encourages Muslims to not only reflect on religious values but also apply Islamic teachings in concrete actions to achieve holistic and sustainable liberation in line with the humanitarian ideals reflected in Islamic teachings.

In aspects of daily life, the fulfilment of human rights in Islam manifests through principles such as justice, equality and compassion. The concept of "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*," or advocating the good and forbidding the bad, indicates the responsibility of Muslims to ensure justice and well-being in society. This can involve active participation in combating injustice and inequality (Harjuna, 2018). It is important to note that the concept of fulfilling human rights in Islam is not only limited to Muslims but also includes the fair treatment of all individuals, regardless of religion, ethnicity or background. The concept of ukhuwah (brotherhood) in Islam emphasises equality and solidarity among human beings.

In the political and economic context, Bilal bin Rabah also reflects the concept of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, where he not only rejects idolatry but also opposes restrictive and oppressive power structures. The liberation of Bilal from slavery by Abu Bakr also demonstrates the collective responsibility of Muslims to address inequality and oppression. Liberation theology thinking in Islam can provide a deeper understanding of Bilal's life story, highlighting the values of humanity, social justice and freedom that are emphasised in Islamic teachings. The story of Bilal bin Rabah is part of the Islamic heritage that teaches that liberation is not only material but also involves inner purification and struggle against all forms of oppression.

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Indicators of Human Freedom in the Qur'an and its Relevance to Bilal bin Rabbah

In Islam, the concept of freedom or independence has spiritual, moral and social dimensions that are reflected in religious teachings. Some indicators of a free human being in Islam involve individual freedom balanced with social responsibility and adherence to Islamic values. Here are some of these indicators.

No	Indicators	Description
1	Freedom of Religion	Islam respects the freedom of individuals to choose and practice their religion without pressure or coercion. The principle of "La Ikraha Fid-Din" (There is no compulsion in religion) suggests that belief should be voluntary and exercised in complete freedom.
2	Freedom of Opinion and Expression	Islam encourages its followers to dialogue, discuss and respectfully express their opinions. However, this must be done with due regard to Islamic ethical and moral norms, and without harming the rights or dignity of others.
3	Individual Independence	Individual human rights, including the rights to life, property, and honour, are guaranteed and respected in Islam. Individual liberty involves protection against oppression or unfair treatment.
4	Economic Independence	Islam encourages economic freedom through principles such as legal ownership, fair trade, and the giving of zakat. The individual right to own and use property freely is recognised, but it also comes with a social responsibility to share with those in need.
5	Freedom from Oppression and Injustice	Islam condemns all forms of oppression and injustice. As an indicator of freedom, Muslims are directed to resist injustice and fight for human rights, including the right to life and to be treated fairly.
6	Freedom in Education	Islam gives importance to knowledge and education. Islamic societies are expected to provide freedom to seek knowledge, and education is considered a right of every individual.

Table 1. Indicators of Human Freedom in the Qur'an

Allah guarantees freedom of religion for anyone without any coercion. The Quranic evidence that reflects the principle of freedom of religion can be found in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256, which reads:

> "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right way is clear from the wrong. Therefore, whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then indeed, he has held on to a very firm gusset that will not break. Moreover, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Due to the perfection of this religion and the clarity of its verses, there is no need for coercion to embrace it for those from whom the jizyah is taken (Al-Qarni, 2008). However, some conditions must be carried out in the context of a humanitarian mission to save them (the disbelievers) from misguidance and ignorance (Al-Jaza'iri, 2003). Bilal Bin Rabbah reflects the principle of religious freedom in the story of his life journey. Despite facing severe torture for his beliefs, Bilal never denied his religion. His loyalty to Islam and his voluntary belief reflects the principle of "La Ikraha Fid-Din", which asserts that faith must be voluntary. Then, Islam emphasises Freedom of Opinion and Expression. The principle of freedom of opinion and expression can be taken from Surah Al-Kahf verse 29, which reads:

> "Say: 'The truth comes from your Lord; so whoever believes, surely he has been guided to the straight path.'"

The freedom in this verse refers to the truth that comes from Allah. Indeed, Allah has prepared hell for the wrongdoers, namely those who are arrogant and reject the truth that I convey,

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whose turmoil surrounds them from all directions (Pustakalajnah.kemenag.go.id, 2016). Bilal Bin Rabbah, in his journey as a companion of the Prophet, set an example of freedom of opinion and expression. Despite difficult situations, he never hesitated to express his faith and courage, reflecting the values of courage and freedom of speech in Islam. Islam also guarantees Individual Freedom and Individual human rights, including the rights to life, property, and honour, found in Surah Al-Isra verse 70, which reads:

> "Indeed, We have honoured the sons of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and We have given them good provision, and We have preferred them with perfect excellence over most of the creatures We have created."

Bilal Bin Rabbah, with his courageous stand against oppression and injustice, is the epitome of individual freedom in Islam. His steadfast attitude shows that every individual has the right to be free from oppression and has the right to a just life. Furthermore, there is the value of Economic Freedom in Islam. The principle of economic independence can be found in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 267, which reads:

> "O you who believe, spend (in the way of Allah) some of the good of your labour and some of what We bring forth from the earth for you. Moreover, choose not that which is bad for you to spend, and you do not take it but close your eyes to it. Moreover, know that Allah is All-Rich, All-Praised."

This verse explicitly indicates that Allah is rich. Hamka (2012) explains that this verse explicitly says: "*Remember this when you give anything to others so that their hearts are open to choosing good things to give to those who deserve to be given. Allah is most praiseworthy! For He always helps you by providing sound sustenance*." Although Bilal Bin Rabbah was originally in slavery, economic freedom in Islam is reflected in his liberation. After embracing Islam, Bilal became free from slavery, and the concepts of economic freedom in Islam, such as legal ownership and fair trade, were realised in his life. Furthermore, Islam emphasises the Freedom of all human beings from Oppression and Injustice. Opposition to oppression can be taken from Surah An-Nisa verse 75, which reads:

> "And why did you not fight those who broke their oaths when they had begun to expel the Messenger, and they had begun to attack you first? Do you fear them? However, Allah is more worthy of your fear if you are believers."

In Katsir (2018), this verse indicates fighting in defence of the weak, both men, women, and children all praying, "O our Lord, take us out of this land (Mecca) whose inhabitants are oppressive, and give us a protector from Your side, and give us a helper from Your side!" Bilal Bin Rabbah denounced all forms of oppression and injustice through his resistance to the unfair treatment he experienced. His attitude shows that in Islam, people are invited to fight against injustice and fight for human rights. Another indicator of liberation is Freedom in Education: Freedom in seeking knowledge and education is recognised in Surah Al-Zumar verse 9, which reads:

> "Are those who know equal to those who do not know? It is only the intellect that learns."

This verse indicates that there is a difference between those who think (alim) and those who are ignorant (As-Suyuthi & Al-Mahally, 2015). This verse indicates that all humans can reach the title of alim, but not all get this title. Unfortunately, slavery actually makes the freedom to reach the title of alim disappear due to the absence of liberation. Although not explicitly recorded in history, the concept of freedom in seeking knowledge and education is reflected in the scientific culture adopted by Bilal Bin Rabbah. Islam values the freedom to seek knowledge, and this is reflected in Bilal's enthusiasm to continue learning and understanding the teachings of Islam.

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Discussion

This research describes an in-depth examination of the role of Islam in the context of people's liberation, with a particular focus on the perspective of liberation theology represented by the figure of Bilal Bin Rabbah. The choice of Bilal as the focus of research is relevant, considering that his life story reflects not only a physical struggle against oppression but also spiritual and moral in fighting for Islamic values (Dildora, 2019). Understanding liberation theology in Islam begins with an examination of human life in this world and the hereafter. This theological view rejects the status quo that protects the rich and oppresses the poor (Čejka, 2020; Paget, 2020). In other words, liberation theology opposes stagnation, both in religious and political contexts. The primary role of liberation theology is to defend the oppressed and those who are disenfranchised and to fight for their interests by providing a solid ideological foundation to fight against the oppressors. Moreover, liberation theology not only recognises a metaphysical concept of destiny in Islamic history but also recognises that humans have the freedom to determine their destiny to an extent. This theology encourages the development of Islamic practice through the negotiation between human liberation and destiny, where both are considered complementary elements rather than contradicting each other.

As a starting point, it is necessary to reveal how the concept of liberation in Islam is not simply physical liberation from slavery or oppression. The perspective of liberation theology brings spiritual and moral dimensions to the liberation of the people (Løland, 2021). Islam, as a religion that includes guidelines for daily life, affirms the values of justice, equal rights, and individual freedom as the theological foundation for liberation. Bilal Bin Rabbah, as a figure who experienced slavery before embracing Islam, makes a unique contribution to the understanding of the liberation struggle. Bilal's role as an early supporter of Islam and witness to the firmness of faith in the midst of torture creates an understanding of religious freedom and courage in the face of injustice.

Furthermore, the perspective of liberation theology represented by Bilal Bin Rabbah highlights the importance of human values in Islam. The liberation of people, in this view, is not only a right but also a moral responsibility. This concept triggers thoughts on how Muslims can contribute to fighting all forms of oppression and injustice in society, in line with their religious teachings (Munir & Munafiah, 2019). In a historical context, Bilal Bin Rabbah's journey illustrates how Islam views struggle as an integral part of religious teachings. Its liberation theology invites people to stand firm against all forms of injustice and free themselves from the slavery of the heart, mind and society (Sarnoto et al., 2022). Therefore, looking at Islam's struggle for liberation from the perspective of Bilal Bin Rabbah's theology not only details history but also provides practical direction for Muslims in living their lives.

The novelty of this research is the sharp focus on analysing Islam's role in the liberation of the ummah through the lens of liberation theology, with a particular emphasis on Bilal Bin Rabbah's perspective.

This research is novel because it embraces the spiritual and moral dimensions of the liberation struggle, exploring the values of justice, equal rights, and individual freedom that stem from Islamic teachings. By linking the historical struggle represented by Bilal Bin Rabbah with the theological aspects of liberation, this research offers a valuable contribution to the understanding of how Islamic values can form a comprehensive liberation paradigm.

Conclusion

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Through the above explanation, it can be concluded that an in-depth analysis of the Islamic struggle for the liberation of the people with a focus on the perspective of Bilal Bin Rabbah's liberation theology provides substantial insight into Islamic values that promote justice, equal rights and individual freedom. This research confirms that liberation in Islam is not only physical but also includes spiritual and moral dimensions that enrich the understanding of the role of religion in responding to injustice. Bilal Bin Rabbah, as a historical figure, provides a real example of courage and determination in fighting for human rights. The perspective of liberation theology described in this research makes a significant contribution to religious and humanitarian literature, expanding the understanding of how Islam becomes a source of inspiration for the liberation struggle of the people in all aspects of life. As such, this research not only revitalises history but also stimulates Muslim reflection and action in facing contemporary challenges towards a more just and free society.

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