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**ROLAND BARTHES SEMIOTIC STUDY:  
UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING WORD OF 'AZAB,  
A REINTERPRETATION FOR MODERN SOCIETY**

**Ridho Adiansyah**

*Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

*21205032009@student.uin-suka.ac.id*

**Adib Sofia**

*Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

*adib.sofia@uin-suka.ac.id*

**Muin Bensar**

*Institute of Islamic Studies University of the Philippines Diliman*

*bamuin@up.edu.ph*

**Ali Adams**

*Bournemouth University, Najaf, Iraq*

*heliwave@yahoo.com*

**Mohamed Ahmed Barakat**

*University of The Holy Quran and Taseel of Science, Sudan*

*mohamed123@hotmail.com*

**Abstract**

Modern society's understanding of the meaning of Azab is often inaccurate; many understand it as torture, cruelty, and God's retribution. This article was created to examine how the concept of Azab is understood and perceived by Muslims. Because most know Azab as torment, pain, and God's cruelty. This research used the library research method with descriptive analysis, and used the Roland

Barthes semiotic approach to make it easier to understand the study area of the meaning of the word al-Qur'an. Barthes argues that all language systems can be understood through two steps: the first is known as the linguistic system or denotative meaning (linguistics), and the second is known as the myth system or connotative meaning (mythology). To achieve the myth system, namely by using a sign system consisting of three components: the signifier, the signified, and the sign on the second level. Using Roland Barthes' semiotics, the concept of Azab, understanding that God will torture humans who have sins in the afterlife, is just a myth. Punishment is not a form of His wrath but a form of His love. God has given His servant signs of Azab, as proof of nature *rahman* and womb Him so that humans do not get that painful Azab. Even though, in the end, a sinful human still gets punishment (torture) as a reward for his actions, all of this is because God wants to purify and cleanse humans from sins while living in the world.

Abstrak: Pemahaman masyarakat modern tentang makna azab seringkali masih kurang tepat, banyak yang memahaminya sebagai sebuah penyiksaan, kekejaman, dan balasan Tuhan. Artikel ini dibuat dengan tujuan untuk meneliti bagaimana konsep azab dipahami dan resepsikan oleh umat muslim memahami azab sebagai siksa, kepedihan, kekejaman Tuhan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan analisis deskriptif, serta menggunakan pendekatan semiotika Roland barthes untuk mempermudah memahami wilayah kajian tentang makna kata al-Qur'an. Barthes, berpendapat bahwa semua sistem bahasa dapat dipahami melalui dua langkah, yakni langkah pertama dikenal dengan sistem kebahasaan (linguistik) dan langkah yang kedua dikenal dengan sistem mitos (mitologi). Untuk mencapai sistem mitos yakni dengan cara menggunakan sistem penanda yang terdiri dari tiga komponen, yaitu penanda (*signifier*), petanda (*signified*), dan tanda (*sign*) pada tingkat kedua. Dengan menggunakan semiotika Roland Barthes, konsep azab yang dipahami bahwa Tuhan akan menyiksa umat manusia yang mempunyai dosa di akhirat hanyalah mitos. Azab bukanlah bentuk kemurkaan-Nya, akan tetapi sebagai bentuk kasih sayang-Nya. Tuhan telah memberikan hamba-Nya rambu-rambu akan adanya azab, sebagai bukti sifat *rahman* dan *rahim*-Nya agar manusia tidak mendapatkan azab yang pedih itu. Walaupun pada akhirnya manusia yang penuh dosa tetap mendapatkan azab (siksa) sebagai balasan atas perbuatannya, akan tetapi semua itu karena Tuhan ingin mensucikan dan membersihkan manusia dari dosa-dosa selama hidup di dunia.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, 'Azab, Semiotika, Roland Barthes.

## Introduction

Al-Qur'an, as a holy book, has a function as hudan (guidance) for humans, as an explanation, and as a differentiator between right and wrong (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 185). The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. by using clear Arabic and Arabic grammar rules with high literary value. So some people with basic knowledge of Arabic can only understand the Qur'an. Only people who have knowledge of Arabic and knowledge of the sciences of the Qur'an can understand the true meaning of the Qur'an[1]. Understanding always

develops along with muslims who are always involved in re-interpretation from time to time.[2, p. 1]

Various forms of changing the word Azab have been mentioned in the Qur'an. Sometimes the word Azab refers to the people of the previous Prophet and the people of the Prophet Muhammad. In its various forms of change, the word Azab always talks about Allah's reward. To all humans who do not want to believe in Him and commit acts of sin while living in the world. Even so, the word Azab in the Qur'an has a different meaning *musytarak*, which is one word that has many meanings and interpretations[3]. So this raises differences in understanding among the scholars of performance.

This article aims to understand and reveal how the word Azab is explained in several Arabic dictionaries and what was understood by pre-Qur'anic and post-Qur'anic societies[4]. And also by using a semiotic analysis knife to analyze how Roland Barthes's semiotics can read and understand the meaning of the word Azab. This article helps develop the study of Al-Qur'an studies which examines the meaning and signs (semiotics) of the word Azab in the Qur'an. So with this, the study of the Qur'an is not only fixated on the text but can get out of the textual zone and produce a more contextual interpretation. However, for this reason, a more in-depth research is needed, especially in studying and understanding the meaning of the word Azab in the Qur'an.

Roland Barthes version of semiotics tries to provide the essential characteristics of a new sign system that is interconnected between the signifier and the signified. This relationship has an arbitrary nature (likes that interpret the sign), so with this, each sign will give a new meaning that is different depending on who interprets it. Barthes' semiotics provides a new space for interpreters or interpreters to give new meanings to signs. Generally, the resulting meanings depend on the educational background and socio-culture in the interpreter's mind. At this point, Barthes still adheres to the principle of the structuralist pattern but does not refer to the structural design signifier-signified Saussure. According to Barthes, the significance of changing the meaning of a sign is the process of merging the signifier and the signified, which then becomes something sign. Barthes further develops the concept of connotative meaning and does not stop at its denotative meaning[5].

Roland Barthes divides the levels of sign meaning into two main parts, concerning the meaning of denotation (general meaning) as the first level and connotation (derived meaning) as the second level. This two-level pattern is seen as being able to analyze the signs in the text. Barthes semiotics can approximate Al-Qur'an as a text which contains many signs. By analyzing the word azab as a sign in the Qur'an, we will approach the initial reference to the Arabic dictionary as the language used in the Qur'an and use previous reference books. Then proceed with explaining the explanations of the scholars who are scattered in

videos and other internet sources. After getting enough data, the meaning of the word Azab can be done with the concept of denotation and connotation of Roland Barthes's semiotics so that it will bring out the meaning of the myth or a new meaning in understanding the word of Azab.

## Method

The research data was obtained through a qualitative study process which was sourced from library research. Primary data includes studies of previous Qur'anic vocabulary which are then analyzed more deeply, as well as looking for sources of reinforcement from texts of writing interpretations of the meaning of the Qur'an. Secondary data can be obtained from the study of documents on manuscripts of the Koran and Arabic poetry[6]. This study begins with a descriptive-analytical reading of primary-secondary data and written material from previous studies, then proceeds with analyzing the aspects and main materials used as the main reference in the research. This research will also include text analysis from other works that are directly or indirectly related to Barthes' semiotic work. Data obtained from text analysis will be analyzed using a qualitative approach with a focus on identifying the signs and symbols used by Barthes so that they can add new meanings[7]. The results of this study are expected to provide deeper insight into Roland Barthes' contribution to our understanding of semiotics and the ways in which we understand the messages conveyed by signs and symbols in different cultural contexts. This article will contribute to the fields of Qur'an studies, interpretation, literature, and cultural theory and can be a reference for future researchers who are interested in further developing the study of Roland Barthes' semiotics.

## Discussion

### Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Semiotics is a scientific branch of science that discusses language (linguistics) which became a scientific discipline around the 20th century[8]. The word 'Semiotics' is rooted in Greek, namely, the word "semeion" which means "Sign" or also from the word semiotics, which means "Theory of Signs." Semiotics is the study of signs and their meanings[9, p. 210]. The sign can be words, gestures, images, sounds, and objects. Ferdinand de Saussure, a founder of modern semiotics, divides the sign into two parts, the signifier (the form/form taken from the sign) and the signified (represented concept)[10].

There are many differences of opinion related to the definition of semiotics. Linguists and semioticians interpret it as the science of language and logic. Some argue that semiotics is the study of signs in life[11]. In KBBI, semiotics as "sign" is the science (theory) of symbols as well as signs (can be in the form of

language, text, images, traffic, morse code)[12]. In a broader sense, semiotics means a systematic study of the production or interpretation of signs, how they work, and their benefits in human life, so that even human beings can be called as homo semioticus[7, p. 97] or animal symbolicum[13, p. 14]. The discussion of semiotics in scientific literature began to be intensely carried out around the 20th century when logocentrism had a crucial place in philosophical scholarship. This initial stream was initiated by two major figures known as founding fathers, the founders of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913 AD) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914 AD). These two figures live together simultaneously but don't know each other because they are in different places and far from each other. Saussure lived in Europe, while Peirce resided in America. However, the semiotic theory they bring is almost similar, even though they have different semiotic foundations.

The next generation, as the successor to the semiotic ideas brought by Saussure, is Roland Barthes with his mythological theory. Barthes was a philosopher born in the small town of Cherbourg, France, on November 12, 1925, and died on March 26, 1980. Barthes came from a Protestant Christian family[14, p. 38]. Barthes is known as a literary expert, critic, philosopher, and of course, a semiotician who continues and develops Saussure's semiotic theory. Saussure's major discovery about sign construction was born from two inseparable concepts (signifier-signified=sign)[15, p. 147]. Then this concept was developed further by Barthes, with the first signifier construction being about language (linguistics), while the second marker construct is called myth or metalanguage (metalanguage). This aspect of myth later becomes the hallmark of Barthes' semiotics, which is another door for semiotics so that it is broader than Saussure's, which is directed at the socio-cultural environment and labeled post-structuralism[16].

Barthes, a literary critic, is the person who opened the way to contemporary semiotics, mainly with the first modern formulation in 1964 of a general semiotic theory, translated in English as *Elements of Semiology*. Between his early semiotics and the linguistic sources which inspired him—Saussure, Jakobson, and Hjelmslev—intervenes the beginning of French structuralism, as represented by Lévi-Strauss, which exercised a strong influence on Barthes' more scientific semiotics[17]. According to Barthes[18], myth is a communication system or message whose function is to express and justify the dominant values of a specific period. Moreover, myths always appear in the form of discourse. Therefore, apart from the content, the most important thing about the message is how the message is expressed. In this case, myth can be interpreted as a model of utterance or utterance. In another formulation of Barthes, myth is the codification of meaning, and social values considered

normal. Thus, Barthes presents myth as the most profound meaning and has a conventional character[19, p. 16].

According to Barthes, semiotics develops into two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Take a look at the following chart:



Table 1. Roland Barthes Mythological Process

Based on this table, Barthes theory says all existing world realities can be used as narrative models for myths or ideas because myth must be a sign system built on three aspects, namely the signifier, signified, and sign. The marking system in a myth is a semiological chain that has existed and been developed. At the level of myth, the sign in the primary system is a new marker. Through its association with the new signifier, a new sign is formed[20].

According to Barthes, the development of signs always follows two systems, namely the primary system and the secondary system[21, p. 122]. The primary system (first layer) is where signs are produced and understood at the first level of meaning. This system is commonly referred to as meaning language or denotation. At the same time, the secondary system is when the sign develops its expression and acquires a broad context. This second system is called the metalinguistic system or connotative system. As an example, take the word "green table." In the first stage, the word green table means a table with a green color. But when it comes to its connotative meaning, the green table means a court or court table. Another example is the word "Red and White Flag." Then it will be found that the concept of the "Red and White Flag" and "the symbol of the Indonesian state flag" has a relation that is related to the primary system and can be formed in a secondary relationship because of an expansion of meaning, for example, it can become a symbol of nationality, nationalism, the symbol of courage, and sanctity.

Another theory by Barthes is The Death of the Author (author's death). Unlike other structuralists, Barthes does not involve the author in determining what to mean. They convinced readers that the writer was dead. In other words, Barthes agrees with other structuralists that the author died when they created

the text, after which Barthes celebrates diversity and proclaims the author's death. This statement is essential for Barthes's thought about the value of writing. The word author does not only mean the author's meaning but as a competition and authority of parties or institutions to determine the final or most correct meaning (valid) of a text.

What Barthes did with the text offers an excellent opportunity to make new interpretations that give the reader meaning. For example, regarding literary texts, Barthes has participated in providing his findings in the science of literary criticism. Meanwhile, in religious texts, Barthes offers another way to understand them and gives freedom of meaning to the reader. The text will always touch with actual realities. But then the problem arose that Barthes was not responsible for his claims. Can literary texts be equated with religious texts? Linguistically, both of them have something in common because both require interpretation of language as a means of conveying something, and both follow linguistic conventions.

### Azab in The Qur'an

Muhammad Fu'ad `Abd al-Bāqī, in his book *Al-Mu'jam Mufahras*, mentions the word Azab at least 558 times in 337 verses consisting of 67 surahs with the form of the word (sprightly) different[22]. By looking at the places where the verses were revealed, it can be seen that the number of verses that were revealed regarding punishment was more in the Mecca period because it served as a warning and reinforcement of monotheism in the early days of Islam[23]. The verses revealed in Mecca totaled 50 surahs in 213 verses, while in the Medina period, there were 17 surahs in 124 verses[24].

The word Azab (عَذَاب) in the Qur'an has many sprightly or word forms, one of which is in the form of عَذَابٌ, عَذَابٌ, يُعَذِّبُ, مُعَذِّبٌ, الْعَذَابُ and many others.

Azab (عَذَاب) or *ta'zīb* (تعذيب) it can mean "to prevent someone from eating and drinking" or "an act of hitting someone," and it can also mean "a situation that weighs heavily on one's shoulders[25]." According to Quraish Shihab, Azab is Allah's wrath for human violations, namely violations of Allah's Shari'a. Which was revealed to the Prophets and Messengers, including violations of all provisions (Sunnah) conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, humans will be given sanctions in return for these violations[26]. In the Quran, the term "azab" is used to describe the punishment or torment given by Allah to those who commit sins or mistakes. This punishment is part of the divine justice system aimed at upholding justice and teaching humans to repent.

The punishment can then be classified into two[27]: First, the punishment that occurs or is given by Allah SWT. While still in the world. Second, the punishment in the afterlife (Akhirat) is proof of Allah's promise to those who do not believe in Him. The punishment that occurs in the world as proof of the greatness of Allah to give sanctions and punishments and as a rebuke to humans. Like the people of Prophet Nuh (QS. Al-Qamar: 9-10), who did not want to believe in Allah and His Prophet, Fir'aun, who claimed to be God, and the people of Prophet Luth (QS. Hud: 82-83), who ignored Allah's prohibitions. So that they do not commit LGBT so that punishment will be passed on to them. Whereas the punishment or torment that occurs in the afterlife is a right that only belongs to Allah SWT as the judge, and the essence of this punishment cannot be known by anyone other than Allah SWT[28]. The Quran provides a detailed description of the punishment of Hell as a place of torment for those who commit evil deeds and do not repent. Hell is depicted as a place filled with severe and eternal punishment. Verses about the punishment of Hell serve as a reminder for mankind to avoid sins and seek refuge in Allah[29].

In today's society's understanding, the concept that the disasters that occur in the world are God's punishment is still embedded in their knowledge[30]. Acts of sin and disobedience can sometimes cause the punishment sent down by Allah SWT. to humans[31]. However, it can be further understood why Allah SWT. Giving trials in the form of natural disasters is due to the inherent nature of His Rahman (as a rebuke, a warning), which does not want humans to fall further into disobedience. The process then merges between the mythical concepts represented and the meaning (at the end of the linguistic system) in what Roland Barthes calls a deformation relationship. Meanings that are displaced, impoverished, emptied, distanced from their original meaning, which is very rich (in its place of origin), so that they become forms, then merge with the mythical concepts that give them the motivation for expression, that is what is called the process of deformation in myth formation. At this point, according to the verses of the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet, the words of friends, and the opinions of the scholars, the discourse "disaster is Azab" has a very strong connotative meaning, and it is as if there is no alternative or possible connotative meaning. Another, namely, that the disaster is the punishment of Allah SWT. Caused by the disobedience and sins of its inhabitants.

## **Azab of the Afterlife in Roland Barthes Mythology**

### **1. Linguistic System**

The starting point of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is a linguistic system (language) that represents denotative meaning. In this case, the analysis is carried out textually on the word Azab, looking for its primary meaning using classic

and modern Arabic dictionaries, as well as Arabic poetry and poetry before and after the advent of Islam. This is the period before the revelation of the Qur'an or period *jāhiliyyah* and also at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. In this case, the discussion is focused on the use of vocabulary in pre-Islamic society before the appearance of specific vocabulary in the Qur'anic worldview.

In Qur'anic times, the word Azab (doom) was defined, as in the dictionary *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ* as torture, sanctions, and punishment, or a difficulty that causes great suffering to oneself[32]. In the KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary), "punishment" means God's punishment for people who refuse orders and violate religious prohibitions[12]. By paying attention to the meaning of the word doom above, events that can be categorized as doom can come from outside the human being (such as natural disasters, the covid-19 virus) or within humans (such as an illness that does not heal either physically or mentally) which serves as a threat and punishment for human actions that violate the commands of Allah SWT[33].

Therefore, the existing meaning is the interpretation of the understanding that existed when the Qur'an was revealed in the Mecca or Medina periods[34]. The word of Azab (doom) verses of the Meccan period often tell stories of torture and threats against the former prophets who disobeyed and denied Allah SWT. and His messengers who were sent to them (Qs. Al-A`rāf: 156, Qs. Al-A`rāf: 164, Qs. Al-Furqān: 37, Qs. Al-Qamr: 16, 18, 21). Allah SWT. announced the purpose of these verses to the Prophet Muhammad as a lesson of compassion to strengthen the soul and heart of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims against the various tests of life that came one after another in the struggle to uphold and defend the religion of Islam. Because the pressure exerted by the infidel Quraysh was so tough, the verses about doom also served as a threat. They frightened the infidel Quraish that if they did not accept, even against the Prophet's call would suffer the same fate as their predecessors who were subjected to azab. Thus, the verses in this period speak more in the context of faith and monotheism (*Tauhid*).

Whereas the verses revealed in the Medina period were interpreted as torture or threats against people who already believed or were Muslim but still violated the provisions of Allah's law, they also talked about hypocrites and so on. The verses in this period discuss more Shari'a in detail, guidelines for worship, and practical rules in muamalah. In the verses revealed during the Medina period, doom is more meaningful as torture which is more aimed at those who have believed or embraced Islam but still violate the provisions of Islamic law, for example, being miserly and hiding God's gifts given to them (Qs. Al-Nisa': 37), intentionally killing other believers (Qs. Al-Nisa': 93) and so on[24].

The diversity of meanings that have been explained indicates that other meanings can be understood in uncovering the meaning of Azab. When referring

to the Arabic-Indonesian Al-Ma'any dictionary[35], the word (عذب) generally means sweet, pleasant, and agreeable. Meanwhile, in the Qur'anic, the word (عذب) means bargaining, suffering, and torment. Ibn Manzūr[36] also told the same thing, the word (عذب) is interpreted as any drink or food that is delicious, fresh, and smooth in the throat. Ibn Manzūr's interpretation of this meaning is found in the quotation of verses of the Qur'an in surah al-Furqan/25: 53 and Surah Fathir/35:12.

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ... ﴾

And He it is Who hath given independence to the two seas (though they meet); one palatable, sweet, and the other saltish, bitter; and hath set a bar and a forbidding ban between them. (Qs. al-Furqan/25: 53).

﴿ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ ﴾

And the two seas are not alike: this, fresh, sweet, good to drink, this (other) bitter, salt. And from them both ye eat fresh meat and derive the ornament that ye wear. And thou seest the ship cleaving them with its prow that ye may seek of His bounty, and that haply ye may give thanks. (Qs. Fathir/35: 12).

In the pre-Qur'anic period (before the arrival of the Koran) the word عذب in the literary tradition of the Arabs had the meaning of a "longing feeling that torments one's self". We can find such meanings in classical Arabic dictionaries or books of Jahiliyyah poetry and poetry. Examples like:

Dīwān `Antarah[37]:

يَا حَمَامَ الْغُصُونِ لَوْ كُنْتَ مِثْلِي # عَاشِقًا لَمْ يَرْفُكَ غُصْنٌ رَطِيبٌ

فَاتْرُكِ الْوَجْدَ وَالْهَوَىٰ مُجِبِّ # قَلْبُهُ قَدْ أَذَابَهُ التَّغْدِيبُ

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ لَهُ عِتَابٌ مَعَ الدَّهْرِ # وَأَمْرٌ يَحَارُ فِيهِ اللَّيْبُ

"O twig dove, if you were like me who always misses a wet twig, of course, you won't want to be approached/inhabited by you."

"So leave the feeling and desire to have towards the loved one, where his heart has been hit by torment/longing."

"Every day he is beset by the reproaches of time and people talk about him at every time."

From the fragment of the poem above, it can be seen that the purpose of the poem's discussion is still related to the problem of one's heart and longing. *Ta'zīb*, the underlined words have the same root word. The word azab above can be

interpreted as a longing that is very torturous in one's heart and self so that it is reproached by time and becomes the talk of the community. Because, indeed, the feeling of longing is very torturous and can only be channeled when you meet the person you miss.

Dīwān al-'Asyā Hamdān wa Akhbāruh[38]:

فَلَمَّا تَوَافَيْنَا جَمِيعًا بِمَسْكِنٍ # عُصَيْنَا بِنُوعٍ مِنْ غَرَامٍ مُعَدَّبٍ  
بِمَقْتَلِ سَادَاتٍ وَمَهْلِكِ مَاجِدٍ # زَفِيعِ الرَّوَائِي مُحْرَبٍ وَابْنِ مُحْرَبٍ

"When we finish each other's time somewhere together, we have committed disobedience because of torturous longing."

"That place is the place where rulers were killed and, unfortunately, noble people like Rafī` al-Rawābi`, Maḥrab, and Maḥrab's son."

The above verse describes how those who love each other finally intend to choose to end their lives somewhere. The lawlessness mentioned above is a deep and torturous feeling of love or longing. *mu'azzāb* can be interpreted as suffering the torment of longing.

From the several explanations that have been presented regarding the linguistic understanding of the meaning of "Azab (Doom)," it can be concluded that denotatively the true meaning of Azab (center meaning) is fresh, fresh, neutral, torturous longing with a positive meaning. Meanwhile, Azab, with the meaning of torment, sanction, punishment, or difficulty, is only a simile or figure of speech (connotative meaning, side meaning, alternative meaning) and is not the real meaning. Arguments in the following discussion will strengthen this explanation by explaining the understanding of the scholars of this era and how the myths about Azab (doom) exist.

## 2. Mythology System

The next stage is the second stage of Roland Barthes semiotic theory, namely mythology, or connotative meaning, by multiplying the meaning of Azab from its connotation so that a broader meaning is obtained. Before moving on to the connotative meaning of Azab, it is necessary to understand that it is also related to the concept of Allah's mercy which is greater than His punishment. Grace or *Raḥmah* comes from the root word *raḥima-yarḥamu-raḥmah*, this word is repeated 338 times in the Qur'an with various forms of *sigah*.

Ibnu Fāris mentions that the word, which consists of the letters *rā'*, *ḥā*, and *mīm*, basically refers to the meaning of "meekness," "compassion," and "delicacy." The word *raḥima* was also born from this root word, which means "blood ties, brotherhood, or kinship relations." Al-Asfahānī explained if the word *raḥmah* is based on Allah SWT, then the meaning of *raḥmah* is meant "the goodness and grace of God." On the other hand, if the word *raḥmah* is based on humans, then

the meaning that is found is mere sympathy. Therefore, *rahmah* that comes from Allah has the characteristics of *in'ām* (gift or gift) and *ifḍāl* (excess). Meanwhile, *rahmah* that comes from humans is *riqqah* (only compassion)[28].

There is often a discussion in the community about whether a Muslim will go to hell first and then to heaven. This problem departs from the hadith of the Prophet. Who says that all humans will enter heaven, especially Muslims, believe in the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad. and the grace of Allah SWT. will be with him until he can put it in heaven. Allah SWT. created hell as a place of cleansing and purification of the heart, soul, and body from all sins. Although later, among all humans, some enter hell solely for cleansing until finally entering heaven gradually according to the number of sins. In a short sense, humans will go to hell first as a reward and cleansing from the sins they have committed while living on earth, and then after being clean and holy again, they will be included by Allah SWT. into heaven[39]. based on the following hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يَدْخُلُ أَهْلُ  
الْجَنَّةِ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَهْلُ النَّارِ النَّارَ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَخْرِجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ  
حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَيُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا قَدِ اسْوَدُّوا فَيُلْقَوْنَ فِي نَهْرٍ الْحَيَاةِ أَوْ الْحَيَاةِ  
شَكَ مَالِكٌ فَيَنْبُتُونَ كَمَا تَنْبُتُ الْحَبَّةُ فِي جَانِبِ السَّيْلِ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهَا تَخْرُجُ صَفْرَاءَ  
مُلْتَوِيَةً قَالَ وَهَيْبٌ حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو الْحَيَاةِ وَقَالَ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ

(رواه البخاري: 21: ومسلم: 270)

From Abu Sa'id al-Khudri ra, from the Prophet, he said: The inhabitants of heaven will enter heaven, and the inhabitants of hell will go to hell, then Allah ta'ala ordered: Remove from hell those whose hearts there is faith the weight of a mustard seed. Then they are expelled from hell, whose color (body) is completely black, then put into the river of life or the river of life. Then they grow like seeds that grow after the flood. Do you not see it? It comes out twisted yellow.

Entering heaven is the hope and dream of all human beings. This has been conveyed by Allah SWT. to all believers without exception that those who believe in Allah SWT, do good deeds, and benevolence will be provided with heavens with flowing rivers underneath. The good life is sustenance and reward for believers who will live forever in heaven[40]. Allah SWT. said:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا  
مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ  
مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow; as often as they are regaled with food of the fruit thereof, they say: this is what was given us aforetime; and it is given to them in resemblance. There for them are pure companions; there for ever they abide (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 25).

There is a hadith narrated from Abu Hurairah r.a:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: كُلُّ أُمَّتِي  
يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَأْبَى؟ قَالَ: مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ  
وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى

From Abu Hurairah ra. that Rasūlullāh Saw. said: "All my people will enter heaven except those who are reluctant, the Companions asked, "O Rasūlullāh! Who is reluctant?" Prophet Saw. replied, "Whoever obeys me surely he will enter heaven, and whoever disobeys me then he is reluctant (to enter heaven)."

This hadith has meaning for all the people of the Prophet Muhammad. They will enter heaven, but with the condition that they must follow and obey all the instructions, the Prophet has recommended. But for people who want to follow only some of the teachings and directions of the Prophet, it means that they are reluctant to enter His heaven. For those who want to follow the Prophet SAW. and also obey and stay away from all the prohibitions of Allah SWT, as well as istiqomah in all the provisions of the Shari'a that have been determined such as establishing prayers, paying zakat, carrying out fasting in the month of Ramadhan, always protecting oneself from immoral things such as adultery, drinking alcoholic beverages. Intoxicating (Khamr) and other unlawful things will indeed enter heaven. A person who has been able to do all has prevented himself from going to hell and becoming a heavenly expert. That is the purpose of the hadith that the Prophet wanted to convey.

In the Qur'an, many verses have meaning with this hadith (such as Qs. Al-Baqarah / 2: 25, Qs. Ali Imran / 3: 32, Qs. Al-Hasyr / 59: 7, and others ). It is appropriate that all Muslims can be together in His heaven someday because the promise and the words of Allah SWT. be true, and Allah can't break a promise. However, as believers, they also must think and obey Allah SWT. by committing and istiqomah standing on the teachings of Islam, carrying out and following the orders of His apostles, and staying away from all that is His prohibition. It is the cause of entering His heaven and a way to heaven.

Rahmat and Azab cannot be separated because both contain a closeness of contrasting meanings, but they can be found in their similarities. Allah SWT, when talking about Azab, always use the intention that one day it can be given or passed down because Azab is a potential that will occur. In this case, Gus Baha

gave his opinion that Allah SWT Explains the Azab as a potential thing (may happen or may not happen), and it can happen anytime and anywhere. Meanwhile, mercy, told by Allah SWT, 's factual. His grace always happens when, where, and to anyone. Therefore it is edited by God, with the nature of certainty. K.H. Bahauddin Nur Salim,<sup>1</sup> who is often called Gus Baha explained the pattern of the patterns when the Qur'an talks about Azab and Rahmat. he said:

"If *Rahmah* or grace is the editorial, it must be something certain. "My grace is sure to happen," Allah reveals Himself as the Giver of Mercy because of the name *Ar-Rahman* on His nature. This means that Allah obliges Himself to give mercy. Meanwhile, when Allah tells about doom, Allah only speaks with the editor; I can give punishment, but I don't have to do it, or I don't have to give punishment. Because the name is able, yes, you don't have to do it, even though God still has the potential to give doom. In surah *Tabaroq* (Qs. *Al-Mulk*: 27-28), the way Allah says, "Just try to think about it; you have the potential to be punished." Then what does punishment mean? Once again, I remind you this is important. So it's only Allah who God says is potential. And I make sure I am responsible until I meet Allah. If God's grace is certain to happen, when it comes to doom, God says it is potential. Miss, the Prophet SAW also said many times that God spoke, "Every mercy of mine will surely overcome my punishment" This means that if there is a potential for punishment, we see that it is only a form of mercy first. Because of God's promise, "My mercy is certain to prevail[42]."

In his speech, Ustadz Abdul Somad alluded to human behavior that violates the provisions set by Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala, such as drinking intoxicating drinks, adultery, and leaving prayers. But truly glorious is Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala who always loves and cares for all of His servants. "What did Allah say? 'You did not create them, I created them. So Allah said, My mercy comes before My punishment. My mercy comes before My wrath," said Ustadz Abdul Somad[43]. All humans must have the potential to commit immorality and sin because Allah SWT gives humans reason and passion. Allah knows better about everything that will happen to His servant. Even though the servant has many mistakes and sins, His mercy and forgiveness are greater. Allah SWT. say:

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<sup>1</sup> KH Ahmad Bahauddin, has the nickname "Gus Baha." He was born on September 29, 1970, and is a traditional Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholar from Rembang and caretaker of the LP3IA Tahfidzul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. He is known as a scholar of contemporary exegesis who has in-depth knowledge of the Qu'ran and is even nicknamed the walking Qur'an. He is also one of the students of the charismatic scholar KH Maimun Zubair[41].

﴿ قُلْ يُعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ  
 الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ  
 الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴾

(53) Say: O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, Who forgiveth all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (54) Turn unto your Lord repentant, and surrender unto Him, before there come unto you the doom, when ye cannot be helped (Qs. Az-Zumar/39: 53-54).

This verse gives the good news that Allah SWT. will forgive all the sins of His servants who want to repent and return to Him even though the sins are very many, like the foam in the ocean. Whereas the verse explains that Allah will not forgive the sin of shirk except by repentance *taubat nasuha* (actually), for those who do not want to repent until the end of their lives, this sin will not be forgiven[44].

Wahbah az-Zuhaili, in his tafsir Al-Wajiz, interprets this verse to mean: Say: "O servants of Allah who have done beyond their limits and have committed many disobediences. Do not give up hope on getting forgiveness from Allah SWT while the door of His repentance is still wide open. Indeed Allah SWT forgives all my sins except the sins of shirk (associating partners with Allah) whose perpetrators have not repented. Indeed Allah SWT. is the Most Forgiving and Most Extensive in bestowing mercy on all His servants. Ibn Abbas said in his narration: "Surely the polytheists killed, and then they increased in number. They also committed adultery; then they increased in number. Then they came to the Prophet Muhammad and asked[45].

However, it is important to remember that the Quran also emphasizes the mercy and forgiveness of Allah. Allah is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful. If a person truly regrets their sins, sincerely repents, and strives to improve themselves, Allah can forgive their sins. The Quran also emphasizes the importance of doing good deeds and avoiding sins so that we may attain the mercy of Allah and avoid His punishment. Related to Azab that is still part of God's love to neutralize, revive, and offer back the souls of His servants. it will be explained in the following table:

Linguistics	1. ( <i>Signifier I</i> ) Azab (be fresh; be delightful; neutral)	2. ( <i>Signified I</i> ) Antidote, Refresher, Neutralizer for humans
	3. ( <i>Sign I</i> ) a. ( <i>Signifier II</i> ) Azab functions as something that awakens, restores, neutralizes.	b. ( <i>Signified II</i> ) Punishment, Retribution, for humans
Myth	c. ( <i>Sign</i> ) Azab is interpreted as a torment or reward given to all humans who do not comply with the commands and prohibitions of Allah SWT. as a form of offering, neutralizing, and restoring humans from all sins while living in the world.	

Tabel 2. Roland Barthes Mythological Process

Based on this tables, in all the series of explanations that have been described regarding the meaning of Azab in the hereafter as God's grace, it can be understood, as listed in table 2, that the semiotics of the first stage of the linguistic study of the word azab gives the meaning that the doom in question does not function as a torture to humans. Then in the mythological stage, the meaning of the connotation of Azab emerges as an antidote, cleansing and neutralizing all human sins that have been committed while living in the world. Allah SWT still gives His grace in the afterlife to all who believe in Him by cleansing all mistakes and sins so that humans who are clean from all sins and pure in body and soul can enter His heaven.

## Conclusion

Roland Barthes divides the language sign system into two stages, the first stage is the language or linguistic stage, and the second stage is called the mythological system (myth). Myth is analogous to a marker system consisting of three things, namely the signifier, the signified, and sign in the second stage after the linguistic stage. By using Roland Barthes' analytical knife, it can be seen that doom in the Qur'an gives the impression and meaning as a torment, punishment, and threat to humans who violate the commands and provisions of Allah SWT. and His Apostles. Punishment can be given to all humans, whether Muslims or infidels, even to the people of the Prophet Muhammad. or the previous prophets. Punishment can also occur in this world as a reminder and rebuke to humans

and can also be given hereafter as a promise from Allah SWT. to repay people who deny Him.

At the mythological stage, Azab is a torment and reward from Allah SWT. what is happening in the world today and in the future hereafter is only a figure of speech. A further meaning can be found that pre-Qur'anic Azab had a meaning as a torturous longing for the lover. In Arabic oral customs, the word Azab is interpreted as an antidote and neutralizer. Then the word Azab that can be understood is Allah SWT indeed gives His punishment to humans who commit sins, but the punishment (torture) that occurs in the afterlife is solely a form of Allah's mercy. Who wants to neutralize, and cleanse the soul and body of His servants from all sins and mistakes that were committed while in the world.

### Credit author statement

**Ridho Adiansyah:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Adib Sofia:** Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Investigation. **Muin Bensar:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Investigation. **Ali Adams:** Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Investigation. **Barakat Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Investigation

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