

Recording the Traces of Verse al-Shifah in 6th Century Tafsirs

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the concept of *mutāsyabih* and verse *al-ṣifāt*, the tendency of tafsir that emerged in the VI century AH, and the pattern of exegesis of verse *al-ṣifāt* in the tafsir treasures of the VI century AH. The type of research used in this dissertation is library research with a focus on conducting a study of books, literature, records that have a close relationship with the problem to be solved or solved. The approach used in this research is a multidisciplinary approach with tafsir, kalam, and historical approaches. The result of this study is that Verse *al-ṣifāt* is understood as verses that discuss the attributes of God. The specific tendency of Qur'anic exegesis is influenced by several factors, including differences in the depth and variety of knowledge mastered, differences in the motivation of the mufassir, differences in the mission carried out, differences in the situation and conditions faced, and differences in the time and environment surrounding the sixth century hijri, the exegesis that were born had different tendencies; The exegesis of verse *al-ṣifāt* done by tafsir scholars in the sixth century hijri turned out to be no longer fully emotionally attached to the school of thought they adhered to. This research can be used as an additional reference and a new way of looking at the verse of *al-shifah* in the world of exegesis.

Keywords: *Tafsir, Verse Al-Shifah, VI Century H.*

Introduction

The term *verse al-sifah* is part of the *mutashābihāt* verses which are also part of the study of Ulumul Qur'an. The discussion of *mutashābihāt* verses is always coupled with *muḥkamāt* verses. If *muḥkamāt* verses are often interpreted as verses that are clear, then *mutasyābihāt* verses are interpreted as verses that are still vague.

The exegesis of the *mutasyābihāt* verses, especially the *verse al-ṣifāt*, is one of the sources of disagreement and the subject of dispute among Muslim scholars and



intellectuals. The trigger is not only the ambiguity of the meaning, but also who is actually the authority on the exegesis. These differences also affect the results of exegesis. The results of their exegesis then formed their own schools of thought. The mufassir when describing the verses in question there are still based on the doctrine of his school, may even be as stated by M.Quraish Shihab, the school becomes the basis in understanding the verse of the Qur'an, instead of the Qur'an which is used as the basis in determining the verse.¹ But among them there are also those who tend to go beyond the limits of their madhhab and follow the views of other madhhabs that are in accordance with the basic ideas and basic objectives of their exegesis. In addition, this concept in historical records is often used as a means to defend a group's point of view and attack their enemies. The verses used to support one's own opinion are called *muḥkamāt* verses, while the verses used by the enemy are called *mutasyābihāt* verses.

Methodology

The type of research used in this dissertation is *library research*. The approach method that is significantly used in the object of this study, among others, is the tafsir approach seen about the activities of exegesis, the Kalam approach because it highlights the discussion (kalam) about the attributes of God and the historical approach is also used to reconstruct the background of the emergence of the view in question and its pioneers so that it is divided into various madhhabs.

Research Results and Discussion

1. Sunni Exegesis Patterns in Sunni Exegesis Literature

Human disputes surrounding the meaning of Qur'anic verses are a phenomenon that adorns the pages of the history of Qur'anic exegesis. Later, these differences and disputes formed their own lines of thought which later became madhhabs.

The Qur'an as an object has actually made itself an axis to be interpreted and interpreted variously in various places and times. The verses of the Qur'an that limit and determine its meaning are only verses that have a purely informative function, for example those that are ideological in nature so as to deliver the recipient of the message to its content and content perfectly and finally. Other verses are open to exegesis.

The mufassirs have specifically studied the *mutasyābihāt* verses in such a way, either through exegesis or exegesis. Two important parts of the *mutasyābihāt* verses that have always been the subject of intense debate are the anthropomorphic verses and *al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'ah*. However, in this section, we focus on the anthropomorphic verses, which are part of the verse *al-ṣifāt*.

The exegesis, for example, of the memorization of "hand" which is interpreted by the Sunnis that even though it is said that God has a hand, God's hand is not the same as that of His creatures such as humans, and without how (if kaifa) gets a strong enough reaction and is totally disagreed with by the Mu'tazilah who place the verse in the *mutasyābih* area which requires *takwil*. According to them, *takwil* is an attempt to move

¹ M.Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an*, Jilid 2 (Jakarta : Lentera Hati, 2010), p. 561.

the verse away from the area of its external meaning. And hence according to them "hand" must be interpreted with power.

This variety of exegesis has shown the polemical currents between the madhhabs. In fact, there was a small effort by the scholars to try to eliminate and reduce the polemics by interpreting the mutasyābih by returning to the muḥkam. However, this effort could not eliminate the notion of contradiction. This means that all madhhabs have their own views in one way or another in interpreting the verses in question.

These differences can sometimes be traced back to differences in response to the nature of the Qur'anic language and ideological holdings. They respond to the nature of the Qur'anic language that contains mutasyābih through takwil.

Takwil by scholars after the third century hijri focused on the intention of transferring the meaning of a word or sentence from its original, essential meaning to another meaning based on accompanying indicators or arguments.² It is undeniable that every language recognizes metaphorical words or expressions, including the language used by the Qur'an. Therefore, scholars in order to understand the Qur'an need to explore Arabic as the language of the Qur'an so that they can understand it well. But again, because the parameters they use in exegesis are different, the end result is also different.

Philosophers, for example, provide exegesis that are different from most Muslims. As can be expected, according to Nurcholish Madjid, philosophers are among the Muslims who do the most takwil, due to their strong recognition as seekers of essence and demonstrative truth (which is irrefutably proven).³ Such a method of understanding (takwil) has appeared since the early days of Islamic history. Therefore, the issue of metaphorical exegesis has a considerable share in the exegesis of the Qur'an.

They strongly view the linguistic expressions in religious sources, both the Scriptures and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as metaphorical or allegorical. So they are not meant to be taken as they are according to their original meaning, which requires a high level of discipline and training in thinking that they believe is only obtained through philosophical thinking.⁴

Their exegesis of the Qur'anic verses based on these philosophical approaches gave birth to the style of falsafi exegesis.⁵ This exegesis actually tries to synthesize and syncretize philosophical theories with the verses of the Qur'an as well as trying to reject philosophical theories that are considered contrary to the verses of the Qur'an.⁶

² Al-Ḍahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, Jilid I (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Hadīṣah, 1963), p. 18

³ Nurcholish Madjid, "Masalah Takwil sebagai Metodologi Penafsiran Alquran" dalam Budhy Munawar-Rahman (ed.), *Kontekstualisasi Doktrin Islam dalam Sejarah* (Cet. II; Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1995), p. 14

⁴ Nurcholish Madjid, "Masalah Takwil sebagai Metodologi Penafsiran Alquran" dalam Budhy Munawar-Rahman (ed.), *Kontekstualisasi Doktrin Islam dalam Sejarah*, p. 14.

⁵ H. Harifuddin Cawidu, "Metode dan Aliran dalam Tafsir", *Pesantren*, I, Volume VIII, 1991), p. 8.

⁶ Al-Ḍahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, jilid II, h. 418. Hal yang sama misalnya dapat dilihat



The emergence of this type of exegesis is inseparable from the introduction of Muslims to the philosophy of Hellenism which then stimulates them to explore it and then make it a tool to analyze Islamic teachings, especially the Qur'an. But falsafi exegesis is not necessarily accepted by various parties. Al-Ẓahabī for example unfolds two views within the body of Muslims, namely:

The group that rejects philosophy, because they find a conflict between philosophy and religion. This group radically opposed philosophy and tried to keep people away from it. The pioneers of this group were al-Gazālī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The latter is a figure who exposes philosophical ideas that are seen as contrary to religion, especially to the Qur'an and finally he firmly rejects philosophy based on reasons and arguments that he considers adequate.

The group that admires and accepts philosophy, even though it contains ideas that contradict the shara' text. This group tried to compromise or find common ground between philosophy and religion and tried to get rid of all contradictions. But their efforts have not succeeded in reaching a final meeting point, but are still an attempt to solve the problem halfway.⁷

However, it must be recognized that they are among the khawas of the ummah, and they have the right to use metaphorical exegesis of religious texts. Ibn Rushd, for example, even holds the view and claims that philosophers are ahl al-burhān. That is what is meant in Allah's word as those who are deep in knowledge (الراسخون في العلم) in QS. Ali Imrān/3: 7 and therefore they are entitled or obliged to do takwil against the sound of sacred texts including anthropomorphic verses. So for Ibn Rushd, God's words must be read by the khawāṣ in such a way that "those who are deep in knowledge" are among those who know the exegesis of the mutasyābihāt verses. Ibn Rushd thus transfers the punctuation of the waqf to "those of deep knowledge". Such an understanding is similar to scholars who argue that the waw in the verse should be waw aṭf, not waw isti'nāf.⁸

Philosophers in this case should not follow the laity in understanding religious teachings. Philosophers must interpret the texts of both the Book and the Sunnah. Whereas the common people accept them as they are according to their external meaning. The philosophers would be disbelievers if they did not interpret (because for them certain religious teachings such as heaven and hell in the physical sense do not make sense, so they are rejected). The same is the case with verse al-ṣifāt or anthropomorphic verses that recognize the similarity between God and humans as impossible. On the other hand, ordinary people will become disbelievers if they dare to interpret them, due to the difficulty of understanding these abstract exegesis, which are beyond the reach of their intellect. This is what is referred to in QS Ali Imrān/3: 7.

pada Abd. Hay al-Farmawī, *al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudū'i: Dirāsāt Manhajīyyah al-Maudū'īyyah* (Mesir: Maktabah Jumhuriyyah, 1977), p. 33-34

⁷ Al-Ẓahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, jilid II, p. 418

⁸ Ibnu Rusyd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl wa Taqrīr mā bain al-Ḥikmah wa al-Syarī'ah min al-Ittiṣāl*, diterjemahkan oleh Nurcholish Masjid dalam bukunya *Khazanah Intelektual Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), p. 217-218

يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Translation:

'They (the laity) should say: "We believe in the verses that are *mutashābihāt*, they are from our Lord." And no lesson can be learned from them but those of understanding.'⁹

There is a danger of disbelief, continued Ibn Rushd, both from the *khawas* and the laity, so the *takwil* should be kept and kept secret for the *khawas* only.¹⁰

Unfortunately, philosophical exegesis that try to synthesize and integrate philosophical ideas with the verses of the Qur'an have not yet been found in the form of complete and complete exegesis. Such exegesis are more pragmatic in the form of books of philosophy or Islamic theology. Therefore, al-Ḥabīb criticized the work of philosophers by saying that we have never heard among the philosophers who composed a complete book of Qur'anic exegesis. All that we find is nothing more than a partial understanding of the Qur'an in the philosophical books they wrote.¹¹

2. Patterns of Mu'tazilah Exegesis in Sunni Literature.

a. Al-Bagawī Exegesis of the Lafal 'Ain and Kursī

The memorization 'ain in QS. Ṭāhā/20: 39 is interpreted by al-Bagawī with vision and surveillance.¹² Here al-Bagawī does not cite any narrations as is customary when he interprets Qur'anic clauses. He immediately gives an exegesis, but this exegesis is actually the meaning that developed among the Mu'tazilah. Or he gave this meaning because it was based on the Sunni understanding of the Māturīdiyyah. But al-Māturīdī in the context of anthropomorphism did not agree with al-Ash'arī. He disagrees with al-Ash'arī that verses describing God as having a physical form cannot be given exegesis or exegesis. In his opinion, hands, faces and so on must be given a *majazi* meaning. Therefore, al-Māturīdī in this context according to Harun Nasution agrees with the Mu'tazilah.¹³

For the meaning of *kursī* in QS al-Baqarah/2: 255, al-Bagawī elaborates by presenting a number of narrations. Al-Hasan said: al-kurs is *al-'arsh*. Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: al-kursī is the place in front of 'al-*arsy* and the meaning of his words *وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض* is the area like the area of heaven and earth. Furthermore, *al-kursī* beside 'al-*arsy* is like the circle of the sahara field.

⁹ Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Bandung : Syamil Qur'an, 2011), p. 50.

¹⁰ Ibnu Rusyd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl wa Taqrīr mā bain al-Ḥikmah wa al-Syarī'ah min al-Ittiṣāl*, diterjemahkan oleh Nurcholish Masjid dalam bukunya *Khazanah Intelektual Islam*, p. 230-231.

¹¹ Al-Ḥabīb, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, jilid II, p. 419.

¹² Al-Bagawī, *Tafsīr al-Bagawī*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 314.

¹³ Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 78.



Al-Bagawī also relates a narration from 'Alī and Muqātil said: each support of the chair is as long as the seven heavens and seven earths, and all of them are between *al-'arsh*, and *al-kursī* is carried by four groups of angels, each group of angels has four directions, and their feet are at the bottom of the seventh earth, the distance of its journey reaches five hundred years. The first group of angels resembles the first man, Adam. He is the one in charge of taking care of sustenance, rain for Adam's children and grandchildren from year to year. The next group of angels resembles the leader of the animals, the cow. Another group of angels resembles the ruler of wild animals, the lion, who is responsible for the lion's sustenance from year to year. And, the last group of angels resembles the leader of birds who is responsible for the sustenance of all types of birds from year to year.

Next is a narration from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The meaning of the chair is his knowledge, as stated by Mujāhid. Another meaning is His kingdom and His power.¹⁴

The history presented by al-Bagawī regarding the description of *al-'arsh* and *al-kursī*, does not seem to have strong arguments. Perhaps it is factors such as these that Ibn Taymiyyah criticized the quality of the narrations he included.

Furthermore, the meaning of *al-kursī* at the end does not reflect the meaning held by the Sunnis, but the Mu'tazilah-affiliated understanding.

b. Ibn Aṭīyyah's Exegesis of the Lafal *Wajh*, *Yad*, *'Ain* and *Kursī*.

Regarding the word *wajhullāh* in QS al-Raḥmān/55: 27, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah explains that *al-wajh* is an expression of the Substance, because indeed the limbs are negated in the right of Allah.¹⁵ His explanation in QS al-Baqarah/2: 115 is similar to that of al-Bagawī, especially in the narrations he uses.

What Ibn 'Aṭīyyah shows when explaining QS al-Raḥmān/55: 27 above is not a reflection of the exegesis recognized among the Sunnis, but is a view familiar and developed among the Mu'tazilah.

Regarding the phrase *yadullāh* in QS al-Faṭḥ/48: 10, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah explained that the phrase *yadullāh* was taken by the majority of the early scholars to mean favor, i.e. Allah's favor on the one who alleges allegiance as a reward for his goodness. Other scholars said: (يد الله) here means the power of Allah over their power.¹⁶

Ibn 'Aṭīyyah in his explanation of this phrase does not give an adequate commentary that comes from him. But when interpreting the memorization of *yadayya* in QS Ṣād/38: 75, Ibn Aṭīyyah interpreted it with power and strength. Therefore, the author considers that his view on this phrase accesses one of the models of exegesis that developed at that time. And as can be seen, what he puts forward is an integral part of Mu'tazilah.

¹⁴Al-Bagawī, *Tafsīr al-Bagawī*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 42.

¹⁵Ibnu 'Aṭīyyah, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Aṭīyyah*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, h. 532.

¹⁶Ibnu 'Aṭīyyah, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Aṭīyyah*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, h. 512.

The memorization of 'ain in QS Ṭāhā/20: 39 is interpreted by Ibn 'Aṭīyyah as vision and surveillance.¹⁷ Here Ibn 'Aṭīyyah does not offer any linguistic commentary as is customary when he interprets Qur'anic clauses. He immediately gives an exegesis, but this exegesis is actually the meaning adopted by the Mu'tazilah.

In the lafal *kursī* which is found in QS al-Baqarah/2: 255 Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, quoting Ibn 'Abbās, said that the meaning of *al-kursī* is knowledge. To corroborate this opinion, he then quotes al-Ṭabarī who mentions that the word can also be interpreted as *kurrāsah*, a book in which there is knowledge. Al-Hasan interpreted it the same as *al-'arsh*.¹⁸ This view is the same as that held by the Mu'tazilah.

c. Al-Rāzī's Exegesis of the Lafal 'Ain.

The word 'ain, for example in QS Ṭāhā/20: 39, is given several meanings by al-Rāzī, including *al-ilm* (knowledge), *al-ḥirāsah* (care), and *al-ḥiyāṭah* (maintenance). Thus, the meaning of the clause *wa lituṣṣna'a 'alā 'ainī* is "and that you may be brought up under the knowledge, care and providence of God".¹⁹

It appears that in this explanation al-Rāzī prefers the meaning of the results of the exegesis carried out by several scholars, especially by the Sunni Māturīdiyyah group rather than taking the view of al-Ash'arī, the main reference of the Sunni group who said that God has eyes and hands that cannot be described or defined. Or given what it means, "God has eyes, face, hands and so on, but the eyes, face, hands and so on are not the same as those of humans.

In comparison, Sunni scholars of exegesis who did not live in the sixth century hijriyyah also have exegesis that follow the Sunni model of exegesis while some follow the Mu'tazilah model of exegesis.

Most of the Sunni commentaries that are characterized as *ma'sūr* adhere to and follow the line of interpretative thought developed by Ash'arī. Al-Ṭabarī for example when interpreting the memorization of جاء ربك says that God comes and his arrival moves (*al-ḥarakah*) and moves (*al-intiqāl*) from one place to another.²⁰

The same understanding can also be seen in the meaning of *istawā ala al-arsy*. He said that the meaning of *istawā'* in the verse is known but only Allah knows its essence. It seems that this opinion is based on Imam Mālik's exegesis of the verse.²¹

Ibn Kaṣīr also agrees with this exegesis. He says that the Salaf's view of not interpreting anthropomorphic verses is the safer view. One should not ask how, what and

¹⁷Ibnu 'Aṭīyyah, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Aṭīyyah*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 314.

¹⁸Ibnu 'Aṭīyyah, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Aṭīyyah*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 42.

¹⁹Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 314.

²⁰Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Jilid X (Beirūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1412 H./1992 M.), p. 37.

²¹Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Jilid IV, h. 140.



not liken Him to anything.²²

One of them that distinguishes their exegesis is the meaning of the memorization of الله *قوة الله*. Al-Ṭabarī for example says that the meaning of the memorization is the power of Allah).²³ It seems that this understanding follows the Sunni Māturīdiyyah school. Al-Māturīdī says that what is meant by hand is God's power. Ibn Kaṣīr, on the other hand, interpreted it as the hand as well, but regarding the form of the hand *when it is kaifa*.²⁴

Sunni understanding is also still visible in Sayyid Quṭb when interpreting the memorization of جاء ربك He said that affairs are unseen and therefore every human attempt to understand them will fail.²⁵

This is also seen in the meaning of وجه He said that the meaning of *wajh* should be separated from the meaning of *wajh* that is inherent in humans and how to interpret it should be left entirely to Allah alone.²⁶

Hamka, the Indonesian interpreter, elaborated his opinion in two parts. The meaning of *istawa'* and *'ain* is in the Sunni line while the rest follows the idea of *takwil* pioneered by Mu'tazilah which was later followed by the Sunnis of Samarkand and Bukhāra.

Hamka, when interpreting the verse على العرش استوى in QS Ṭaha/20: 5, recommends following the exegesis initiated by Imām Mālik.²⁷ Likewise, in interpreting QS al-A'rāf/7: 54, Hamka closes his exegesis with Ibn Kaṣīr's view, which gives the meaning of how it is by asking how and why, and not likening God to anything.²⁸

Some Sunni interpreters who are characterized by *ra'y* follow the understanding put forward by the Mu'tazilah who interpret anthropomorphic verses based on ratios.

The Mu'tazilah-influenced Sunni exegesis, for example, can be seen in Muḥammad Abduh's discussions. According to him, because God belongs to the spiritual realm, the ratio cannot accept that God has physical properties. He, who is known as a person who gives great power to reason, says that it is impossible for God to take the form of the body or spirit of a creature in this world. Therefore, على العرش استوى must be interpreted as

²²Abū al-Fidā' al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kaṣīr al-Dimasyqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm*, Juz II (Beirūt: Maktabah al-Nūr al-Ilmiyyah, 1412 H./1992 M.), p. 211.

²³Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Jilid XIII, p. 99.

²⁴Abū al-Fidā' al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kaṣīr al-Dimasyqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm*, Juz IV, p. 225.

²⁵Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Jilid VI (Jeddah: Dār al-Ilmī wa al-Nasyr, 1406 H./1986 M.), h. 3906.

²⁶Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Jilid VI, p. 3454.

²⁷Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Juz XVI (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), p. 125.

²⁸Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Juz VIII, p. 257.

kingdom or power.²⁹ Likewise, the view of *kursī* in QS al-Baqarah/2: 255 is interpreted as God's knowledge.³⁰

Al-Qāsimī has also done the same exegesis as the Mu'tazilah view. This can for example be seen in the memorization of وجه which is interpreted as the Substance of God.³¹ Likewise, the memorization of يد with power,³² The memorization of عيني with guardianship and maintenance,³³ and استوى with a high place.³⁴

The understanding described above is similar to Abū Su'ūd's exegesis of *wajh* as substance.³⁵ Hamka, although the previous two views follow the Sunni flow, but in other memorizations he directs his views to Mu'tazilah. The word وجه is interpreted as God's Substance,³⁶ يد is interpreted as God's power and blessing,³⁷ and جاء in the fragment جاءريك is interpreted as God's decree.³⁸

Mu'tazilah Exegesis Pattern in Tafsīr al-Kasysyāf.

The Mu'tazilahs are a group that brings theological issues that are more profound and philosophical in nature. In the context of the discourse of thought, they are said to use a lot of reason so that they get the nickname of Islamic rationalists.

In Indonesia itself, according to Harun Nasution, the Mu'tazilah school is not well known and not favored, because as mentioned above, it is considered to have opinions that deviate from the actual teachings of Islam. The leaders of the Mu'tazilah in their religious thought use a lot of ratios. They do believe in the power of reason bestowed by God to man. In the exegesis of theological verses (including anthropomorphic verses) they use a lot of rational thinking. So high was the power they gave to reason, he continued, that the assumption arose among Muslims that they favored ratio over revelation. This

²⁹Muḥammad Abdūh, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Kairo: al-Jāmi'ah al-Khairiyyah al-Islāmiyyah, 1322 H.), p. 31.

³⁰Muḥammad Rasyīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Jilid III (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, t. th.), p. 33.

³¹Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl*, Jilid IX (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1398 H./1978 M.), p.288.

³²Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl*, Jilid IX, p. 69.

³³Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl*, Jilid VII, p. 163.

³⁴Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl*, Jilid VII, p. 154..

³⁵Abū al-Su'ūd 'Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad Atā, *Tafsīr Abī al-Su'ūd*, Juz V (Riyād: Maktabah Riyād al-Hadīṣah, t. th.), p. 246.

³⁶Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, Juz XX, p. 76.

³⁷Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, Juz XXIII, p. 301.

³⁸Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, Juz XXX, p. 133.



assumption then led to the accusation that the Mu'tazilah were a group of Muslims who went astray and slipped from the straight and true path. Not even a few Muslims who consider them not to believe in revelation and thus have become disbelievers and are no longer Muslims.³⁹

But among the Mu'tazilah reason actually has limits and does not know everything. Reason still needs the help of revelation to know the details of what can be known in outline.⁴⁰

Thus the Mu'tazilah do not think that humans can manage their lives with just one mind alone, without the help of revelation. For the Mu'tazilah, they actually give a high position to reason but have a very important position. And it is not true that they give a higher position to reason than revelation. The Qur'an in its text for them is absolutely true and must be believed. Because they are Muslims, they do not oppose and doubt the truth of the Qur'an.

Then the question arises: What is the attitude of the Mu'tazilah when there is a conflict between the opinion of reason and the text of the Qur'an? In the opinion of the Mu'tazilah the Qur'anic text does not always have to be taken in its literal sense. The texts of the verses in addition to the literal meaning, contain metaphorical meanings. Or in other terms the Qur'an contains both external and internal meanings. Furthermore, they believe that there is no contradiction between the correct opinion of reason and revelation. If there is a conflict, it is only between reason and the lafzi meaning of the Qur'anic text. If the lafzi meaning is abandoned and the majāzi or metaphorical meaning is taken, the contradiction will disappear by itself. For example, the Qur'anic text says that God has hands and a chair. For hands, for example, in QS Ali Imrān/3: 73.

وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبَعَ دِينَكُمْ فَلْإِنْ أَلْهَدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُحَاجُّوكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ فَلْإِنْ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Translation:

And do not believe except in those who follow your religion. Say (Muhammad), "Surely guidance is only the guidance of Allah. (Do not believe) that anyone will be given what was given to you, and that they will refute you before your Lord". Say (Muhammad), "Surely the bounty is in the hand of Allah, He gives it to whom He wills. Allah is All-Wise, All-Knowing".⁴¹

And for the memorization of the chair in QS al- Baqarah/2: 255.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

³⁹ Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional* (Cet. V; Bandung: Mizan, 1998), p. 129.

⁴⁰ Abd. Al-Jabbār Aḥmad, *Syarḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamzah* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1965), p. 563.

⁴¹ Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 59.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۖ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Translation:

Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, Who continually takes care of (His creatures); neither slumbers nor sleeps. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, and no one can offer intercession in the sight of Allah without His permission. Allah knows what is before them and behind them, and they know nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His Kursi encompasses the heavens and the earth, and He does not find it hard to maintain them, and He is the Most High, the Greatest.⁴²

The two verses above clearly mention the text of the verse which means hand and chair. But reason argues that God does not have hands and a chair, because God is not physical like humans.

Thus, the words hand and chair take on a metaphorical meaning, namely the power and authority contained in the words hand and chair. There is no conflict between reason and revelation. God does not have hands and chairs, but God has power. In this way, the Mu'tazilah and Islamic philosophers overcame the differences and contradictions that initially existed between reason and revelation. In overcoming the differences and contradictions that seem to exist on the outside, the Mu'tazilah did not reject the verses of the Qur'an by saying that the verse was not true from God. But they believe the verses as revelation that is absolutely true. All they do is leave the lafzi meaning and take the majāzī or metaphorical meaning of the verse in question.⁴³

Al-Jāhiz (d. 255 A.H.), a Mu'tazilah scholar, is considered the first figure in the field of metaphorical exegesis. He came forward to introduce metaphorical meanings to the Qur'anic verses. With this effort, it must be recognized that he has produced thoughts that are very impressive, so as to be able to solve many problems of religious understanding or obstacles that were previously faced based only on literal understanding. Whereas literalism often narrows the meaning, in contrast to exegesis which expands the meaning while not deviating from it.⁴⁴

This was continued by his student Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276 AH). This man was not an adherent of the Mu'tazilah rational school and was even considered a spokesman for Ahlussunnah. However, he took the methods of his teacher and developed them in order to understand religious texts.⁴⁵

⁴²Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 42.

⁴³ Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional*, p. 134

⁴⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Cet. I; Bandung: Mizan, 1992), p. 90

⁴⁵ Riḍwān al-Sayyid, *Al-Islām al-Mu'āṣir Naẓ'at fī al-Ḥādir wa al-Mustaqbal* (Beirūt: Dār al-'Ulūm al-Arabiyyah, 1986), p. 90.



But the metaphorical understanding of religious texts is not acceptable to some. They use two arguments. Firstly, metaphor is akin to falsehood, whereas the Qur'an is the pure word of Allah from certain things. And secondly, a speaker does not use a metaphor unless he is unable to find the essential vocabulary of the expression, and of course it must be believed that Allah is Able for everything.

Both arguments were rejected by other scholars. Ibn Qutaibah, for example, rejected this view by saying: If metaphors or *majāz* were considered lies, then how many of our utterances would be lies.⁴⁶

Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) also writes that metaphor is a matter of beauty of language and if it is denied in the Qur'an, then surely some element of beauty will not be present in it.⁴⁷

Mu'tazilah literature is rarely found. But other books concerning their teachings have been reprinted, read and studied. Discussions of the teachings they left behind have been issued not only in the form of articles in periodicals but also in the form of thick books. Furthermore, there have been Sunni leaders who share the Mu'tazilah view, such as Muḥammad Abduh in Egypt.

It is in these literatures that their understandings about anthropomorphic verses are found. In the field of exegesis, there is actually a book of exegesis that is quite monumental and is the trumpet of the Mu'tazilah, namely al-Kasysyāf 'an Haqāiq al-Tanzīl wa Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl which is then more popular as Tafsīr al-Kasysyāf.

This book is a legacy of the Mu'tazilah in the exegesis of the Qur'an as a whole that has reached the present time.⁴⁸ In fact, it is the only book of exegesis.⁴⁹ Goldziher considers this tafsir as a model of Mu'tazilah.⁵⁰ This is very appropriate, because indeed this tafsir contains a defense of Mu'tazilah theology and an onslaught against its enemies, especially the Sunnis. But among the Sunnis this tafsir is not included in the "black list" of books that must be eliminated.

Before examining further about his views on anthropomorphic verses, it is necessary to first present the most dominant aspects of the tafsir. Namely his deep mastery of the subtleties of Arabic language and literature and his strong commitment to Mu'tazilah. The two are indeed difficult to separate because as has been shown by the Mu'tazilah scholars before him, the support of mastery of Arabic language and literature for Mu'tazilah thought seems to be very decisive. Especially regarding aspects of language and literature. Zamakhsharī's mastery is also supported by the fertile environment of

⁴⁶ Sayyid al-Rādī, *Talkhis al-Bayān* (Mesir: Isa al-Bāb al-Halabī, 1955), p. 56.

⁴⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Jilid II (Beyrut: Dār al-Fikr, t.th.), p. 36.

⁴⁸ Al-Sayyid Zaghlūl, *al-Ittijāhāt al-Fikriyyāt fī al-Tafsīr* (Iskandariyyah: al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah, 1975), p. 188

⁴⁹ Al-Juwainī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa Bayān I'jāzih* (Kairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1968), p. 72

⁵⁰ Ignaz Goldziher, *Mazāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmi*, terjemahan Abd. al-Halim al-Najjar (Kairo: Maṭbū'āt al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1975), p.141.

Khawarizm (his homeland) and its beautiful panorama and allows the birth of writers who are clear in their imagination.

As for his strong commitment to Mu'tazilah, it is also inseparable from the environment of Khawārizm which is dominated by Mu'tazilah so that the name Khawārizm (people of Khawārizm) is synonymous with Mu'tazilah.

Because of his strong commitment to Mu'tazilah, he was very demonstrative in revealing his sect. In fact, Ibn Khalikan states that when al-Zamaksyarī visited his friend's house, he said to the person who opened the door, tell your master that Abū al-Qāsim al-Mu'tazilī is at the door. Abū al-Qāsim is a title for al-Zamakhsharī.⁵¹

In interpreting the verses of anthropomorphism, al-Zamakhshari remains firmly in the view of his school. According to the Mu'tazilah, since God is immaterial, it cannot be said that God has physical attributes. According to them, God cannot have a material body and therefore does not have physical attributes. This needs to be emphasized at the outset. Therefore, the Qur'anic verses that describe God as having physical attributes must be given another exegesis.

Al-Zamaksyarī when interpreting the clause 'ala al-'arsy istawā in QS. Ṭāhā/20: 5 starts with a linguistic explanation. الرحمن is read jar as an attribute of liman khalaqa, but reading rafa' is better, because if read rafa', it can indicate the meaning of praise by estimating the sentence is هو الرحمن "He is the Most Merciful (huwa al-rahmān), and can also indicate the mubtadā' indicated by the letter lam contained in liman khalaqa.

If you said: What is the position of the phrase 'alā al-'arsh istawā if the word al-rahmān is pronounced jar or pronounced rafa' as a form of praise? I replied: If the word al-rahmān is pronounced jar, then 'ala al-'arsh istawā' is the khabar of the mubtada' which is discarded (mahzūf), and cannot be anything else. If it is pronounced rafa' then it may also be the answer (khabar of the mahzūf mubtadā'), and it may also be positioned as a khabar together with al-rahman (so there are two khabar for the mubtada'). When al-istawa' 'ala al-'arsh is the king's throne which includes the kingdom, they make it a kinayah of the kingdom by saying: So-and-so sits on the 'arsh, when what is meant is the king, even though he does not sit on the throne at all. The answer is that the previous sentence shows the greatness of his affairs and his kingdom by creating the vastness of the heavens and the earth in a short time. Allah followed that sentence with this sentence (ثم استوى على العرش) to add to the impression of majesty and power. Nothing comes out of his decree and decision.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibnu Khalikan, *Wafayāt al-'A'yān wa Anba'Abna al-Zamān*, Jilid V (Beirūt : Dār al-Ṣadr, t.th.), p. 170.

⁵² Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kasysyāf*, Program al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, p. 312.



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