

THE INTERPRETATION OF MUHKAM AND MUTASYABIH VERSES ACCORDING TO FAKHRUDDIN AR-RAZI AND IBN KATHIR

Meliyani ¹, Wildan Setiawan ²

¹Ma'had Aly Walindo Pekalongan, ²Ma'had Aly Walindo Pekalongan
Meliy73916@gmail.com, wildanakmubarok09@gmail.com

Abstract

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, contains verses that in terms of meaning are categorized into muhkam and mutasyabih, which play an important role in understanding the content of the Qur'an, particularly in the determination of Islamic law and the formation of creed ('aqidah). This study aims to examine and compare the interpretations of muhkam and mutasyabih verses according to Fakhruddin ar-Razi and Ibn Kathir, with an emphasis on their methodological and epistemological differences. Using a library research method with a descriptive-analytical and comparative approach to their major exegetical works, this study finds that Fakhruddin ar-Razi tends to employ a rational-epistemological approach, emphasizing linguistic analysis, logic, and the strength of textual indication (dalalah al-lafz), while allowing room for rational ta'wil of mutasyabih verses. In contrast, Ibn Kathir applies a tafsir bi al-ma'thur approach grounded in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the narrations of the Companions and the Successors, based on the principle of referring mutasyabih verses back to muhkam verses in order to preserve the coherence of Qur'anic meaning. Despite their methodological differences, both exegetes share the same objective: to safeguard the purity of the Qur'an's meaning and to prevent interpretive deviation. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of balancing rationality, textual authority, and faith-based attitudes in understanding muhkam and mutasyabih verses.

Keywords: Muhkam, Mutasyabih, Ar-Razi, Ibn Kathir.

ملخص البحث

يحتوي القرآن الكريم، باعتباره المصدر الرئيسي للتعاليم الإسلامية، على آيات مقسمة بشكل ذي معنى إلى فئتين: محكم ومتشابه، والتي لها دور مهم في فهم محتوى القرآن الكريم، وخاصة في تحديد الأحكام وتكوين العقائد. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص ومقارنة تفسير الآيات المحكم والمتشابه وفقاً لفكر الدين الرازي وابن كاتير مع التركيز على الاختلافات المنهجية والمعرفية بينهما. من خلال منهج دراسة الأدبيات، مع اتباع نهج وصفي تحليلي مقارنة لأهم أعمال التفسير، وجدت هذه الدراسة أن فكر الدين الرازي يميل إلى استخدام منهج عقلاني معرفي مع التركيز على التحليل اللغوي والمنطق وقوة الدلالة لللفظ، مما يفسح المجال للتفسير العقلاني للآيات المشروطة. في المقابل، يطبق ابن كاتير منهج التفسير بالمعاصر، مستنداً إلى القرآن والسنة وروايات الصحابة والتابعين، مع مبدأ إعادة الآيات المشروطة إلى الآيات المحكّمة حفاظاً على اتساق معاني القرآن. ورغم اختلاف المنهج، فإن لكلا المفسرين الهدف نفسه، ألا وهو الحفاظ على نقاء معاني القرآن وتجنب الانحرافات في التفسير. لذا، تؤكد هذه الدراسة على أهمية التوازن بين العقلانية وسلطة النص وموقف الإيمان في فهم الآيات المحكّمة والمشروطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: محكم، المتشابه، الرازي، ابن كاتير

A. Introduction

The Al-Qur'an, the revelation of Allah SWT, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as a guide for mankind, includes aspects of faith, shari'a and morals, and is the main source of Islamic teachings whose authenticity is maintained until the end of time.¹ A believer who wants to know the legal provisions of a problem in accordance with Islamic law will refer to two main foundations, namely the Al-Qur'an and the Sunnah. Understanding of Islamic teachings cannot be separated from these two sources, because the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah are a complementary unit and cannot be separated in upholding Islamic law.

One of the important classifications in understanding the content of the Qur'an is the division of verses into muhkam and mutasyabih. Etymologically, muhkam verses mean firm or clear, namely verses whose meaning is definite and does not contain ambiguity. On the other hand, mutasyabih verses are verses whose meaning cannot be understood literally and require further explanation through in-depth interpretation. The word mutasyabih comes from the term tasybih, which means to resemble or create a parable, so that verses of this type are often symbolic and open to various interpretive approaches.²

The division between muhkam and mutashabih verses has significant philosophical implications in the study of the Qur'an. First, this division emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive understanding of the Al-Qur'an, considering that not all verses can be captured in their literal meaning. Second, this shows the need for a comprehensive methodological approach in religious studies, taking into account both aspects of the text and context. Third, the discussion regarding mutasyabih verses is also closely related to the dimension of faith, where Muslims are required to accept and believe in the contents of the Al-Qur'an with intellectual awareness and spiritual sincerity, and Muslims can better understand and practice the Al-Qur'an, and increase patience and perseverance in studying the Al-Qur'an. Thus, a proper understanding of the muhkam and mutasyabih verses is expected to help Muslims apply the teachings of the Qur'an in their daily lives in an effort to get closer to Allah SWT.³

¹ Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, *Mabahits fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (translated by Mudzakir AS, Introduction to the Study of the Science of the Qur'an), (Jakarta: Pustaka Litera AntarNusa, 2006), p. 20.

² Sulfi Alis, *Ulumul Qur'an: Muhkam wa Mutasyabih*, (Makassar: Postgraduate Program, Alauddin State Islamic University, Makassar, 2019), p. 1.

³ Luthfi Hana Fadiah and Deden Suparman, "Muhkam and Mutasyabih in the Al-Qur'an: Theological Meliyani ¹, Wildan Setiawan ²

Although numerous studies have been conducted on muhkam and mutasyabih verses, most of these studies are descriptive or focus on a single exegete, thus under-recognizing the methodological differences between them. The methodological differences between rational-theological exegetes such as Fakhruddin ar-Razi and traditional-hadith exegetes such as Ibn Kathir have not been widely studied comparatively. Therefore, this research is important to examine how differences in epistemology and interpretive methods influence the understanding of muhkam and mutasyabih verses.

B. Methods

This study is a literature review, a search for and summary of relevant empirical literature relevant to the topic. The literature used includes books, the Quran, commentaries, and scientific articles from journals. This was conducted using a descriptive-analytical and comparative approach. This involved describing the definitions, characteristics, and examples of muhkam and mutasyabih verses according to Fakhrudin Ar-Razi and Ibn Kathir. Then, we compared the similarities and differences between their views, and analyzed the implications of their interpretations.

C. Body of the article

Definition of Muhkam and Mutasyabih

Differences between scholars in defining muhkam and mutasyabih as well as general opinion:

1. Jabir bin Abdullah ra. said as is the opinion of as-Suyuti, and Sofyan at-Tsauri and others: muhkam is from the Al-Qur'an whose verses can be known, their meaning understood and interpreted clearly. Mutasyabih is a verse that there is no way for anyone to know its knowledge, because Allah SWT keeps it for Himself.
2. From Ibn Abbas: muhkam is a verse that is sacred, a clear law, and a verse that must be believed and practiced. Mutasyabih are verses that are mansukh, verses that are parables, and verses that are believed without being put into action.

Implications of Al-Muhkam and Al-Mutasyabih in the Al-Qur'an," Moral: Journal of Islamic Education Studies, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 2024): p. 54–66.

3. From Muhammad bin Ja'far bin az-Zubair: muhkam is a verse that is proof for Allah, which protects against falsehood and the absence of change. Mutasyabih is a verse that contains changes, interpretations and changes in meaning.
4. From Imam Qurtubi: mutasyabih is a vague verse, because it has many meanings and if these meanings are looked at carefully then they become muhkam. Muhkam is the verse that is the basis for reference law. Imam Qurtubi rejects the opinion that the entire Koran is muhkam or vice versa, because the food is different.
5. General opinion: muhkam is a verse that is clear in meaning, can be understood, and has one meaning, for example verses about law, obligations and prohibitions. Meanwhile, mutasyabih is a verse that is vague, contains many possible meanings, or only Allah SWT understands it, like the Day of Judgment.⁴
6. According to Imam ar-Razi: mutasyabih is a verse that is proven to be weak in meaning, namely the pronunciation of mujmal, muawwal and abstruse. From the definition above, it can be concluded that the mutasyabih verse is a verse whose meaning is still unclear and still requires further explanation or investigation.⁵

Interpretation of Muhkam Mutasyabih according to Fakhrudin ar-Razi Biography of Fakhrudin Ar-Razi

Fakhruddin ar-Razi was one of the leading ulama figures of Ahl al-Sunnah who was active in the 6th century Hijriah. He is known as a figure who developed Imam al-Ash'ari's theological thinking and adhered to Imam al-Syafi'i's school of jurisprudence. His reputation as a scholar was very prominent during his time and the influence of his thinking is still felt today. His name is often mentioned and referred to in various scientific disciplines, especially among kalamists, linguists, and especially commentators.⁶

His full name was Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥusain ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali. He was born in the city of Rai on 25 Ramadan 544 AH/1149 CE and died in 606 AH/1209 CE, as agreed by

⁴ Abd al-Rosul al-Ghaffaari, *Al-muhkam wa al-Mutasaybih*, 1st edition (Qum: al-Mustafa International Center for Translation and Publishing, 1431 H/1389 Sy), pp. 63-64.

⁵ Siti Aisyah, Seli Septina, and Ali Akbar, "Criteria for Verses and Wisdom from Muhkam and Mutasyabih," *Edusola: Journal Education, Sociology and Law*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2025).

⁶ Alam Tarlam, "Methodological Analysis Study of the Tafsir of Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb by Fakhruddin al-Razi," *AL-KAINAH: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol. 2, no. 1 (2023), STAI Miftahul Huda Subang, p. 4.

historians and biographers. Ar-Razi came from the Quraysh Arab family of Banu Taim who had previously migrated to the Tibristan region before finally settling in Rai. This background led to him being known by a number of ratios and titles, including al-Razi, al-Taimi, al-Tibristani, and al-Bakri. Of these various titles, Fakhr al-Din is the most famous, although some scholars argue that the popularity of this title only grew after his death.

As a multidisciplinary scholar, ar-Razi was known for his rational, critical, and systematic thinking. His life experiences, including the social dynamics and family tragedies he experienced, influenced the reflective approach in his works. This is evident in his monumental work, *Tafsir Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, which not only displays in-depth linguistic and theological analysis but also demonstrates the integration of reason, texts, and spiritual reflection in interpreting the Qur'an.⁷

Discussion of muhkam and mutashabih according to Fakhrudin Ar-Razi

Fakhrudin ar-Razi used QS. Al-Imran verse 7:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرُّسُخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Meaning: *It is He (Allah) who sent down the Book (Al-Qur'an) to you (Prophet Muhammad). Among its verses there are those that are muhkamat, those are the main contents of the Book (Al-Qur'an) and others that are mutasyabihat. As for those who in their hearts have a tendency towards error, they follow the verses that are mutasyabihat to cause fitnah (chaos and doubt) and to search for tawil. In fact, no one knows takwil, except Allah. Those who have deep knowledge say, "We believe in it (the Qur'an), everything is from our Lord." No one can learn a lesson, except ululalbab. (QS. Al-Imran: 7)*

This verse is used as the basis for classifying muhkam and mutasyabih verses, while explaining that understanding these verses depends on the capacity and level of understanding of the reader.

Fakhrudin ar-Razi said: The Qur'an includes appeals to special groups and the laity as a whole. However, ordinary people usually experience limitations in understanding something that

⁷ Muhammad Mansur, *Tafsir Mafātīḥ al-Gaib (Historicity and Methodology)* (Sleman: Lintang Hayuning Buwana, 2019), pp. 35–40.

exists but is not an object, has no form or mukhtalith, and cannot be seen or appears physically. This situation is similar to a child who does not yet understand, so they assume that something is khalq al-adam (does not exist) and then reject the existence of that thing. Therefore, it is more appropriate if they are invited to use words that show part of what they suspect and think, and this is mixed with something that shows the real truth, so that it falls into the category of mutasyabihat (vague verses). The verses that ultimately make things clear to them are the muhkam (clear and firm) verses. However, this is a healing method from one side, there are still other verses related to themes such as creation, destiny, decisions, force and choice, justice, and creation.

Fakhruddin ar-Razi discussed differentiating the meaning of the same single pronunciation, saying that the meaning may have the possibility of referring to a certain meaning that has been determined, or it may not. If the meaning of the lafaz only refers to one meaning without allowing for other meanings (nash), then it is a clear meaning. If other meanings are possible, then the possible meanings are divided into three: firstly, the possibility of one meaning being stronger (rajih) than the other, secondly, the possibility of both meanings being equally possible, without one being stronger, such as the word al-Qur' which can refer to menstruation and postpartum, thirdly. If the possibility of one meaning is stronger than the other, then the pronunciation for the stronger meaning is called zahir or clear, while for the weaker meaning it is called mu'awwal or ditakwil. However, if the possible meanings of both are equally strong, then the pronunciation is called musytarak or together, and for each meaning it is called mujmal or vague.

Regarding the text and dzahir, both of them produce absolute meaning, but the text is stronger and does not allow for other meanings other than the specific meaning of mujmal. Meanwhile, dzahir has a stronger meaning but still allows for other meanings. The number of meanings that cannot be removed is called muhkam. Ar-Razi stated that the words mujmal and mu'awwal do not have a stronger meaning. However, mu'awwal lafaz is not considered marjuh or has less priority, while mujmal lafaz is considered marjuh.

Thus, according to ar-Razi, a mutasyabih verse is a verse in which there is misunderstanding, ambiguity due to the absence of a stronger meaning. Therefore, the verse must be understood in its weaker meaning (marjuh), on the grounds that the meaning that appears outwardly is impossible, which is proven by rational arguments. This explanation is emphasized by the author of al-Bahr al-Muheet who said: A word that is placed for one meaning and another meaning is impossible is a nash. If it is possible for one meaning to be stronger than the other, then

the strong meaning is zahir and the weak meaning is mu'awwal. If the meanings are equally possible, then the wording is called musytarak and for each meaning it is called mujmal. Then ar-Razi concluded that mutasyabih is that which lies at the intersection between mujmal and mu'awwal, because the misunderstanding that occurs comes from both categories.

Meanwhile, according to al-Razi, muhkam is a pronunciation that is brought to a stronger meaning without the need for takwil. If we examine more deeply and follow the term ushuliyah used by ar-Razi and his followers, this research leads to the ushul method, namely marking the text as a lafaz whose meaning is certain without other possibilities, while dzahir is a lafaz which still allows for other possible meanings. The opposite of nash and dzahir are mujmal and mutasyabih which fall into the mubham or vague category. There is no doubt that according to them, mutasyabih is a word whose meaning cannot be known with certainty. Ar-Razi differs from some mutakallim who do not distinguish between muhkam and mutasyabih as equal categories.

Explanation of Muhkam and Mutasyabih according to ar-Razi explained by referring to the verse:

إِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا

Meaning: *When We intend to destroy a town, We command its luxurious people (to obey Allah). Then they commit transgressions in it, until Our word (of punishment) becomes a reality. So We destroy it completely. (QS. Al-Isra': 16)*

Externally, this verse appears to command them to sin, but in fact this is not the case. Allah says that He does not command abominable acts, which is a muhkam verse that cancels the birth understanding of the previous verse. This is strong evidence and a warning to unbelievers who deny Allah, as in the verse:

وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Meaning: *When they commit an abominable act, they say, "We found our ancestors doing this and Allah told us to do it." Say (Prophet Muhammad), "Indeed Allah does not command abominations. Is it appropriate for you to say about Allah SWT what you do not know?." (QS. Al-A'raf: 28).*

This is also confirmed in the word of Allah SWT. In surah An-Nahl verse 28:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Meaning: *"Indeed, Allah commands (you) to act justly and do good deeds, and give to your relatives, and Allah forbids evil deeds, evil and enmity."* (QS. An-Nahl: 90)

These muhkam verses come as an answer to the disbelievers, thus we must understand the concept of muhkam and mutasyabih from these explanatory verses in accordance with what we can understand from ar-Razi's explicit interpretation. In conclusion, if a lafadz allows two meanings, and one of the meanings is stronger (rajih) than the other meaning which is weaker (marjuh), then we understand it in the stronger meaning, and that is muhkam. However, if we understand this pronunciation in its weak meaning and not its strong meaning, then that is mutasyabih.⁸

Biography of Ibn Kathir

'Imad al-Din Abu al-Fida Isma'il ibn al-Khathib Syihab al-Din Abi Hafsh 'Amr ibn Katsir, better known as Ibnu Katsir, was born around 700 AH/1300 AD in the village of Mijdal, Bushra region, and then settled in Damascus and became known as the al-Dimasyqi nisbah. He was the youngest child and was raised in the Shafi'i school of thought tradition by his father, who initially adhered to the Hanafi school of thought. Ibn Kathir came from a prominent family with the Quraysh lineage which was recognized by his teacher, al-Hafizh al-Mizzi. From an early age, he received a strong religious education, which later led him to become one of the most influential interpreters of the Qur'an at the beginning of the 8th century Hijriah.⁹

Ibn Kathir lost his father as a child, so his early education was not directly received from his parents. The role of educator was then taken over by his older brother, Kamal ad-Din al-Wahhab, who guided his intellectual development after they moved to Damascus in 707 AH. The city, which during the Mamluk Dynasty was a center of Islamic studies, allowed Ibn Kathir to gain knowledge from a number of renowned scholars. In the field of hadith, he studied with prominent huffadz and deepened his knowledge of rijal al-hadith under the guidance of al-Hafizh al-Mizzi, the author of Tahdhib al-Kamal, who later also became his father-in-law. Meanwhile, in the field of jurisprudence, he studied from Burhan al-Din al-Fazari and Kamal al-Din ibn Qadhi Syuhbah,

⁸ Abd al-Rosul al-Ghaffaari, *Al-Muhkam wa al-Mutasaybih*, 1st edition (Qum: al-Mustafa International Center for Translation and Publishing, 1431 H/1389 Sy), pp. 74-76.

⁹ Dr. H. Hasan Bisri, M.Ag., *Ibn Kathir's Model of Legal Interpretation* (Bandung: Institute for Research and Community Service, Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, 2020), p. 24

and mastered the jurisprudence and ushul jurisprudence of the Syafi'i school through standard reference books such as al-Tanbih and Mukhtashar by Ibn al-Hajib.

Apart from expertise in hadith and fiqh, the fields of knowledge that most prominently raised Ibn Kathir's name were history and interpretation of the Al-Qur'an. In the field of history, he was greatly influenced by al-Hafidh al-Birzali and made his work the main reference in writing al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah. Meanwhile, in the field of Al-Qur'an and exegesis, Ibn Kathir has memorized the Al-Qur'an since 711 H and studied the science of qira'at, and attended many of Ibn Taymiyyah's assemblies. The influence of Ibn Taymiyyah is clearly visible in Ibn Katsir's tafsir methodology, especially in the principles of interpretation contained in the muqaddimah of Ibn Katsir's Tafsir, which is substantially in line with Ibn Taymiyyah's Muqaddimah fi Ushul al-Tafsir.¹⁰

Discussion of muhkam and mutasyabih according to Ibn Kathir

The discussion regarding the muhkam and mutashabih verses in Ibn Kathir's interpretation is based on the QS. Ali Imran verse 7, which is the main reference in the classification of Al-Qur'an verses.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّسُخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Meaning: *It is He (Allah) who sent down the Book (Al-Qur'an) to you (Prophet Muhammad). Among its verses there are those that are muhkamat, those are the main contents of the Book (Al-Qur'an) and others that are mutasyabihat. As for those who in their hearts have a tendency towards error, they follow the verses that are mutasyabihat to cause fitnah (chaos and doubt) and to search for tawil. In fact, no one knows takwil, except Allah. Those who have deep knowledge say, "We believe in it (the Qur'an), everything is from our Lord." No one can learn a lesson, except ululalbab. (QS. Al-Imron: 7).*

Ibn Kathir said: Allah's Word: وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ "And no one knows the tawil except Allah."

The reciters have differing opinions regarding the stopping point (waqf) in this verse; some argue that the waqf should be done at the word Allah SWT. In the context of interpretation, Ibn Abbas stated that interpretation is divided into four types, namely: first, interpretation that is so clear and

¹⁰ Ibid 19-22

clear that there is no reason for anyone not to understand it; second, interpretation that is already familiar to the Arab community because it comes from their own language; third, interpretation that can only be understood by those with profound knowledge; and fourth, interpretation that is known only to Allah alone.

Some scholars emphasize the statement of Allah (peace be upon him) ("and those who deepen their knowledge"), and this view has received widespread support from commentators and experts in Islamic jurisprudence. They argue that burdening people with something they cannot understand at all is contrary to the principle of wisdom.

It was narrated by Ibnu Abu Najih from Mujahid, from Ibn Abbas, that he stated: "I am one of those who deepen their knowledge and understand the interpretation of these verses." Ibnu Abu Najih also narrated from Mujahid that people with deep knowledge know the tawil of the mutasyabih verses and confirm their belief: "We believe in him." A similar view was also expressed by Ar-Rabi' Ibnu Anas. Apart from that, Muhammad bin Ishaq narrated from Muhammad bin Ja'far bin Zubair that only Allah and people who have deep knowledge know the tawil of the verses that Allah desires. They believe in these verses and interpret the mutasyabih verses by referring to muhkam verses whose meaning is clear and single. In this way, the contents of the Qur'an become consistent, complement each other, and strengthen each other's meaning.

In a hadith, the Prophet prayed for Ibn Abbas by saying: "O Allah, understand him in religion and teach him takwil." Several scholars explain that the term takwil in the Qur'an has two meanings, namely: first, takwil which refers to the essence of something or the outcome of a matter, as Allah says:

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ...

Meaning: *He (Yusuf) raised his parents to the throne. They bowed down to him. He (Yusuf) said, "O my father, this is the interpretation of my previous dream... (QS. Yusuf: 100).*

Second, takwil which means the reality or realization of what is reported, for example about the Day of Judgment, as Allah says: "They do not wait except for their takwil. On the day the takwil comes...". Thus, takwil includes both the interpretation of the essence and the final realization of what Allah promises.

If what is meant by takwil is this meaning, then waqf is carried out according to Allah's words, because the nature of all things and their deepest nature are not known for certain except by Allah. In this case, His words وَالرَّسُخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ become mubtada, and "they say: we believe in him"

becomes khabar.

If takwil is understood as the interpretation or understanding of meaning, then waqaf should be placed in the lafadz وَالرَّسُخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ, because they are the ones who really know and understand what is being conveyed, even though they do not know the essence of everything as it is. In this sense, the expression "they said: we believe in him" functions as a thing (adverb of circumstances) that explains their condition. The meaning of our belief in him is: in the mutasyabih verses. Meanwhile, His words: كُلُّ مَنْ عِنْدَ رَبِّنَا means: both muhkam and mutasyabih verses are all true and come from Allah. Each one confirms the other and bears witness to the other, for everything comes from God, and nothing that comes from God contradicts or contradicts anything else. As His word says:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

Meaning: "Do they not ponder over the Qur'an? If it were not from Allah, they would have found many contradictions in it." (QS. An-Nisa: 82)

Therefore, Allah says: 'The Most Gracious and the Most Merciful,' which means that only those who possess sound reason and correct understanding are able to correctly comprehend, comprehend, and reflect on the meanings of the Qur'an. In line with this, it is narrated from the Prophet that he said that the Book of Allah SWT was revealed in such a way that some of its verses confirm others. Therefore, do not reject or deny some verses while ignoring others. What you understand from the Qur'an should be put into practice, and what you do not understand should be referred to Allah, the All-Knowing.¹¹

Comparative Analysis of the Interpretation of Muhkam and Mutasyabih between Fakhruddin ar-Razi and Ibnu Katsir

Ar-Razi views muhkam and mutasyabih from an epistemological, rational point of view. For him, the main measure of muhkam and mutasyabih of a verse lies in the clarity of the meaning of the pronunciation and its strength. Ar-Razi emphasized that reason plays an important role in determining the meaning of what is impossible or rationally possible. Therefore, the mutasyabih

¹¹ Abd al-Rosul al-Ghaffaari, Al-Muhkam wa al-Mutasaybih, 1st edition (Qum: International al-Mustafa Center for Translation and Publishing, 1431 H/1389 Sy), pp. 79-80.

verse needs to be interpreted if the meaning of the dhohir contradicts the rational proposition, the muhkam verse.

Muhkam is a verse or lafadz that has the strongest and clearest meaning, so that it can be understood directly without requiring additional interpretation. Mutasyabih is a verse whose meaning is not yet clear or is still vague because the editorial is general or global in nature, so it requires interpretation to obtain a more precise understanding.

Meanwhile, Ibnu Katsir views muhkam and mutasyabih with a bil ma'tsur interpretation approach. He made QS. Al-Imron verse 7 as the main basis. Ibnu Katsir emphasized an attitude of faith, prudence and scientific manners with the principle of returning the mutasyabih verse to the muhkam verse so that the meaning of the Qur'an remains in harmony.

Muhkam verses are verses whose meaning is clear and definite, so they are used as the main basis for understanding the contents of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, the mutasyabih verse is a verse whose meaning cannot be understood independently and needs to be referred to the muhkam verses so that the meaning can be explained correctly.

D. Conclusion

Based on a study and comparative analysis of the interpretation of muhkam and mutasyabih verses according to Fakhrudin ar-Razi and Ibnu Katsir, it can be concluded that the differences between the two lie mainly in the epistemological basis and method of interpretation used.

Fakhrudin ar-Razi views the muhkam and mutasyabih verses from a rational-epistemological perspective. He focuses on linguistic analysis, logic and the power of lafadz. According to him, muhkam verses are verses that have the strongest meaning (rajih) and do not require takwil, while mutasyabih verses are verses whose meaning is unclear, weak, or are mujmal and mu'awwal in nature, requiring interpretation, especially if the outer meaning is in conflict with rational propositions or muhkam verses. Thus, reason plays a significant role and the meaning of a verse is impossible.

On the other hand, Ibnu Katsir understands the muhkam and mutasyabih verses through a tafsir bil ma'tsur approach, namely an interpretation that relies on the Al-Qur'an, the Prophet's sunnah, as well as the history of the companions and tabi'in. He emphasized the importance of maintaining scientific etiquette and an attitude of faith when dealing with mutasyabih verses. According to Ibnu Katsir, the muhkam verses function as the main basis for interpreting the Al-Qur'an, while the mutasyabih verses cannot be understood separately and must be referred to the muhkam verses to avoid deviation and potential slander. In this context, harmony and integration between verses of the Al-Qur'an are principles that are highly emphasized.

Thus, although Fakhrudin ar-Razi and Ibnu Kathir differ in methods and approaches, they both have the same goal, namely maintaining the purity of the meaning of the Qur'an and preventing distorted interpretations. This difference actually enriches the treasury of tafsir (interpretation) and demonstrates that understanding muhkam and mutasyabih verses requires a balance between rationality, textuality, and faith. This comparative study emphasizes the importance of understanding the methods of exegetes so that Muslims can study the Quran more comprehensively, proportionally, and responsibly.

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