

Understanding the Characteristics of *Muhkam* and *Mutashabih* Verses through the Twentieth Principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī

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Abstrak

Pemahaman terhadap al-Qur'an dapat dicapai melalui penguasaan berbagai disiplin yang terangkum dalam 'ulūm al-Qur'ān, salah satunya adalah cabang ilmu yang membahas ayat-ayat *muhkam* dan *mutashabih*. Kajian ini bertujuan mengelaborasi secara lebih mendalam karakteristik ayat *muhkam* dan *mutashabih* dengan merujuk pada kaidah ke-20 dalam *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* karya Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif berbasis studi kepustakaan, kaidah ke-20 dalam *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān* dapat memetakan ayat ke dalam tiga kategori: *muhkam* secara keseluruhan, *mutashabih* secara keseluruhan, dan ayat yang mengandung unsur *muhkam* dan *mutashabih* sekaligus dalam kadar tertentu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ayat *muhkam* memiliki beberapa karakteristik utama: maknanya jelas dan dapat dipahami maksudnya; tidak memerlukan takwil; dapat berdiri sendiri tanpa ketergantungan pada ayat lain; redaksinya tidak berulang; serta memuat ketentuan hukum seperti perintah, janji, dan ancaman. Adapun ayat *mutashabih* memiliki ciri-ciri sebagai berikut: sebagian maknanya tidak dapat dijangkau sepenuhnya oleh manusia dan pengetahuannya hanya berada di sisi Allah SWT, seperti perkara terjadinya kiamat; sebagian lainnya dapat dipahami melalui proses penafsiran dan kajian mendalam; memerlukan takwil; tidak dapat berdiri sendiri tanpa merujuk kepada ayat lain; redaksinya cenderung berulang; serta sering memuat kisah-kisah dan perumpamaan.

Kata Kunci: Ayat *muhkam*, ayat *mutashabih*, kaidah tafsir, *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān*

Abstract

Understanding of the Qur'an can be achieved through mastery of the various disciplines encompassed within 'ulūm al-Qur'ān, one of which is the branch of knowledge that discusses the *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. This study aims to elaborate more deeply on the characteristics of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses by referring to the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach based on library

research, the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Hisān* maps verses into three categories: entirely *muhkam*, entirely *mutashabih*, and verses that contain elements of both *muhkam* and *mutashabih* to a certain degree. The results of the study indicate that *muhkam* verses possess several main characteristics: their meanings are clear and their intent can be understood; they do not require interpretation (*ta'wil*); they can stand independently without reliance on other verses; their wording is not repetitive; and they contain legal provisions such as commands, promises, and threats. As for *mutashabih* verses, their characteristics are as follows: some of their meanings cannot be fully comprehended by human beings and their ultimate knowledge rests only with Allah SWT, such as the occurrence of the Day of Judgment; others can be understood through interpretation and in-depth study; they require *ta'wil*; they cannot stand independently without reference to other verses; their wording tends to be repetitive; and they often contain narratives and parables.

Keywords: *muhkam* verses, *mutashabih* verses, principles of tafsir, *al-Qawā'id al-Hisān*

INTRODUCTION

As the sacred scripture revered by Muslims, the Qur'an cannot be understood in the same manner as ordinary texts. The emergence of the sciences of the Qur'an serves as a methodological instrument, affirming that the study of the Qur'an requires a systematic scholarly approach and cannot be conducted arbitrarily.¹ Etymologically, *'ulūm al-Qur'an* is derived from the words *'ulūm* and *al-Qur'an*. The term *'ulūm* is the plural form of *'ilm*, the verbal noun of *'alima-ya'lamu*, meaning "to know."² According to Muhammad Abd Azhim Az-Zarqani, *Ulumul Qur'an* encompasses various discussions related to the Qur'an, including its revelation, arrangement, compilation, codification, modes of recitation, interpretation – such as its miraculous nature, abrogation (*nasikh* and *mansukh*), and the refutation of doubts – as well as other related aspects.³

Understanding the Qur'an is attained through mastery of the disciplines within *'ulūm al-Qur'an*, one of which is the science of tafsir. Etymologically, the term tafsir derives from the root *al-fasr*, which in the morphological pattern *taf'īl* becomes *al-tafsīr*. *Al-fasr* means to uncover something concealed, while *al-tafsīr* refers to clarifying the meaning or intent of difficult expressions.⁴ Terminologically, as cited by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti from Badruddin al-Zarkashi, tafsir is the science of understanding the Book of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), explaining its meanings, and deriving its wisdom and legal rulings.⁵

¹ Ajahari, *Ulumul Qur'an: ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an*, Cetakan I (Awaja Pressindo, 2018), 19.

² Said Agil Husin Al-Munawar, *AL-Qur'an Membangun Tradisi Kesalehan Hakiki* (Ciputat Press, 2002), 4.

³ Usman, *Ulumul Qur'an* (Teras, 2009), 3.

⁴ Al-Qaththan, *Mabahis Fi Ulumul Qur'an* (Maktabah Ma'arif, 1981), 277.

⁵ Al-Munawar, *Al-Qur'an Membangun Tradisi Kesalehan Hakiki*, 284.

The endeavor to interpret the Qur'an does not constitute a definitive claim regarding Allah's absolute intent; rather, it is an intellectual effort to attain truth according to human capacity and limitation. Essentially, tafsir aims to clarify the meanings of verses that are generally expressed in a global manner, thereby elucidating their content.⁶ Consequently, the study of tafsir also encompasses the discussion of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses.

According to Hasan Hanafi, the Qur'an as revelation in textual form represents a general framework requiring contextual actualization. This text may be filled in accordance with the needs of each era in constructing human civilization, referred to in revelation as the "general objective."⁷ Beyond this general objective, the Qur'an also possesses principal and central aims. Its primary purpose is to serve as guidance in theology (*'aqidah*), law (*shari'ah*), and ethics (*akhlaq*).⁸ Structurally, every verse of the Qur'an is systematically and firmly organized; its diction, syntactic placement, and construction demonstrate precision and coherence, leaving no room for criticism from any perspective.⁹

Concerning the issue of *muhkam* and *mutashabih*, Ibn Habib al-Naisaburi proposed three views regarding the classification of Qur'anic verses. First, all verses are *muhkam*, based on QS. Hud [11]:1. Second, all verses are *mutashabih*, based on QS. Az Zumar [39]: 23. Third, and considered the most accurate view, the verses of the Qur'an are divided into two categories – *muhkam* and *mutashabih* – as stated in QS. Ali Imran [3]: 7.¹⁰

Muhkam and *mutashabih* verses must be understood comprehensively, as both constitute fundamental objects in the study of the Qur'an. In the discourse of Islamic theology (Ilmu Kalam), differences of opinion among various theological sects have, among other factors, been influenced by differing understandings of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. The language of the Qur'an contains expressions that are clear (*muhkam*) and others that are not entirely clear (*mutashabih*), which has resulted in diverse interpretive perspectives. As a universal revelation, the Qur'an continues to be the subject of extensive discussion and scholarly debate, although a complete understanding of its content has not yet been fully attained. The divine messages and wisdom contained therein still retain an element of mystery for most human beings. Therefore, Muslims undertake interpretative (*ta'wil*) and contextual efforts

⁶ Muhammad 'Ali Al-Shabuniy, *Al-Tibyan Fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Irsyad, 1970), 74.

⁷ Hasan Hanafi, *Dari Akidah Ke Revolusi: Sikap Kita Terhadap Tradisi Lama*, cet. 1 (Paramadina, 2003), 185.

⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an; Fungsi Dan Peran Wahyu Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat*, cet. 5 (Mizan, 1993), 52.

⁹ Luthfi Hana Fadiah and Deden Suparman, "Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Dalam Al-Qur'an: Implikasi Teologis dari Al-Muhkam Dan Al-Mutasabbih Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Moral: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 3 (2024): 54–66, <https://doi.org/10.61132/moral.v1i3.82>.

¹⁰ Mokhamad Miftahul Ulum, *Ulumul Qur'an*, 1st ed. (PT. Nasya Expanding Managemen, 2025).

to relate its meanings to various phenomena, traditions, and scientific theories, so that the development of human knowledge remains aligned with the authentic realities contained within the Qur'an.¹¹

This study aims to examine more deeply the characteristics of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses and their relation to the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī. In addition, it provides examples of interpretations offered by several Qur'anic exegetes and explores the wisdom embedded within *mutashabih* verses. The study of this work is expected to enrich the corpus of interpretive principles, strengthen the understanding of applicable exegetical methodology, and contribute academically to the development of Qur'anic studies.

Previous studies have generally focused on the general definitions of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses, as well as on the perspectives of exegetes regarding these categories. For instance, the research conducted by Muhammad Anwar Firdaus entitled *Membincang Ayat-Ayat Muhkam dan Mutashabih* discusses the definitions of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* and presents various scholarly opinions in interpreting them, as well as their role in exegesis.¹² Similarly, the study by Rahmat Efendi entitled *Muhkam dan Mutashabih dalam Al-Qur'an: Refleksi Keyakinan dan Implikasi terhadap Corak Teologi Islam* examines the theological implications of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses, which have contributed to the emergence of diverse schools of thought, while also emphasizing tolerance and unity among Muslims.¹³

The research gap identified in these two studies lies in the absence of a specific discussion on the characteristics of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses that directly refers to the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī. Accordingly, this study seeks to present a more concrete and systematic analysis of the characteristics of these two categories of verses based on the aforementioned principle.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a library research approach. Library research is a study conducted to collect information and data through various materials available in libraries, such as documents, books, journals, historical accounts, and other relevant literature. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary source is *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī.

¹¹ Muhammad Anwar Firdausi, "Membincang Ayat-Ayat Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 16, no. 1 (2015): 80, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v16i1.2930>.

¹² Firdausi, "Membincang Ayat-Ayat Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih."

¹³ Rahmat Effendi, "Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Dalam Al-Qur'an: Refleksi Keyakinan Dan Implikasi Terhadap Corak Teologi Islam," *TAJID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20, no. 1 (2021): 1-31, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v20i1.153>.

The secondary sources include the Qur'an and related scholarly works, referring to various Islamic literatures relevant to the research questions. The data processing technique begins with collecting data from the primary source, namely *al-Qawā'id al-Hisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, and from secondary sources, including the Qur'an and relevant literature studies. The process then involves selecting, comparing, integrating, and classifying various concepts until relevant data are identified. The collected data are subsequently analyzed in depth and formulated into conclusions based on the findings of the study. The data analysis technique applied in this research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach. This is carried out by presenting the principles of tafsir found in the primary source, then elaborating and interpreting them comprehensively with the support of relevant secondary data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of *Muhkam* and *Mutashabih* Verses

Etymologically, the term *muhkam* derives from the root *ahkama* (أحکم), which conveys the meanings of firmness, perfection, precision, and prevention. In the terminology of Qur'anic studies, *muhkam* refers to verses whose meanings are clear and do not require explanation from other verses. In the context of the Qur'an, *muhkam* verses are definite in meaning and free from ambiguity. Generally, they address virtues, prohibitions of wrongdoing, and information that is easily understood, including fundamental injunctions such as prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and prohibitions against adultery, murder, and theft.¹⁴

The term *mutashabih* originates from *tasyābuh* (تشابه), which linguistically denotes resemblance or similarity that may result in ambiguity between two matters. Terminologically, *mutashabih* refers to verses whose meanings are not immediately clear, possess multiple possibilities of interpretation (*ta'wil*), or contain hidden meanings that require specific clarification, and in certain cases are known only to Allah SWT. Thus, *muhkam* verses are those with clear and unambiguous meanings, whereas *mutashabih* verses contain meanings that are uncertain or ambiguous.¹⁵ The ambiguity of *mutashabih* verses arises because their meanings transcend human rational comprehension, such as matters concerning the attributes of Allah, including His power and will, as well as the realities of the Day of Judgment, the pleasures of Paradise, the punishment of the grave, and the torment of Hell.¹⁶

¹⁴ Umar Al Faruq et al., "Analisis Al-Muhkam Wa Al-Mutasyabih Dalam al-Qur'an," *RELINESIA : Jurnal Kajian Agama Dan Multikulturalisme Indonesia* 3, no. 2 (2024): 120–25.

¹⁵ Badrudin, *'Ulumul Qur'an: Prinsip-Prinsip Dalam Pengkajian Ilmu Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, 1st ed. (A-Empat, 2020), 122.

¹⁶ Sairi et al., "Hikmah Adanya Ayat Mutasyabihat," *MUSHAF JOURNAL : Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Hadist* 2, no. 2 (2022): 218–23.

According to Syadali, *muhkam* derives from *ihkām*, meaning firmness, perfection, precision, and prevention, with the essential sense of protection from corruption. *Mutashabih*, on the other hand, stems from *tasyābuh*, signifying resemblance that leads to ambiguity.¹⁷ This view aligns with that of Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, who asserted that the entire Qur'an is *muhkam* when viewed from the perfection of its composition and the aesthetic excellence of its structure. Conversely, the Qur'an may also be described as *mutashabih* in terms of the similarity and coherence of its verses, whether in rhetorical eloquence (*balaghah*) or miraculous nature (*i'jaz*).¹⁸

Based on these definitions, *muhkam* verses are characterized by clear and comprehensible meanings; the absence of need for interpretative elaboration; independence in structure; non-repetitive wording; and the inclusion of legal rulings such as obligations, promises, and warnings. *Mutashabih* verses, by contrast, include meanings known only to Allah, such as the occurrence of the Last Day; meanings accessible through in-depth study; the necessity of interpretation; dependence on other verses for clarification; repetitive expressions; and the inclusion of narratives and parables.¹⁹

The general or absolute application of the terms *muhkam* and *mutashabih* does not imply contradiction. The assertion that the Qur'an is entirely *muhkam* refers to its firmness and coherence, whereby its verses confirm one another. A discourse described as *muhkam* and *mutqan* signifies harmony of meaning despite variation in expression. Hence, when the Qur'an commands something, it does not contradict that command elsewhere but rather reinforces it with similar injunctions.²⁰

The concept of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* extends beyond exegetical concerns and bears practical implications for Muslim life. A proper understanding of clear and decisive verses forms the foundation of belief and ritual practice, while engagement with ambiguous verses provides space for reflection and spiritual development.²¹

The Twentieth Principle in *Al-Qawā'id al-Hisān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī

الْقُرْآنُ كُلُّهُ مُحْكَمٌ بِاعْتِبَارٍ، وَكُلُّهُ مُتَشَابِهٌ بِاعْتِبَارٍ وَبَعْضُهُ مُحْكَمٌ وَبَعْضُهُ مُتَشَابِهٌ بِاعْتِبَارٍ ثَلَاثٌ

¹⁷ Ahmad Syadali and Ahmad Rofi'i, *Ulumul Quran I* (CV. Pustaka Setia, 1997), 199.

¹⁸ M. Hasbi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran Ash Shiddieqy, (Bulan Bintang, 1993), 166.

¹⁹ Ulum, *Ulumul Qur'an*, 69–70.

²⁰ Salim Aqil Mubarak et al., "Pentingnya Memahami Perbedaan Ayat Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Sebagai Landasan Memahami Takwil," *TA'LIM: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu* 2, no. 2 (2023).

²¹ Tawarati and Syarifuddin Ondeng, "Al-Muhkam Wal-Mutasyabih," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 6 (2025): 117–22, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14678589>.

²² Abdurrahman Ibnu nashir Al-Sa'di, *Al-Qowa'id Al-Hisan Fi Tafsihi Al-Qur'an* (Maktabah As-Sunnah, 2002), 68.

“The Qur’an is entirely muhkam from one perspective, entirely mutashabih from another perspective, and partly muhkam and partly mutashabih from a third perspective.”

Allah describes the Qur’an in one place as *muhkam*, in another as *mutashabih*, and elsewhere as consisting of both *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. *First*, the Qur’an is described as *muhkam* based on the statement of Allah in QS. Hud [11]: 1:

الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَحْكَمْتُ آيَاتِهِ ثُمَّ فَصَّلْتُ مِنْ لَدُنِّ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

“Alif Lām Rā. (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then explained in detail from One who is All-Wise and All-Aware.”

This indicates that its verses are firmly structured, clear in meaning, elevated in law and wisdom, and highly refined in expression. The information it conveys is true, free from falsehood and contradiction. Its legal rulings are just and devoid of injustice. All its commands lead to goodness and guidance, while all its prohibitions prevent evil and misguidance.

Second, the Qur’an is described as *mutashabih* based on the statement of Allah in QS. Az-Zumar [39]: 23:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابًا

“Allah has sent down the best statement: a Book, consistent in its parts and repeated.”

This signifies that its verses resemble and reinforce one another, and that in certain contexts their meanings are not immediately understood without reference to other passages. Determining whether a meaning conveys goodness, truth, and right guidance – or possibly the opposite – requires further clarification from related sources.

Third, the Qur’an is described as partly *muhkam* and partly *mutashabih*, as stated in QS. Ali Imran [3]: 7:

وَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ

“It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Among it are verses that are muhkam – these are the foundation of the Book – and others are mutashabih.”

This verse indicates that some passages are clear and decisive, forming the core of the Qur’an, while *others* require deeper understanding due to their ambiguity in accordance with their terminological definition.

Based on this twentieth principle, it can be understood that the Qur’an contains both *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. Their classification may be determined from the perspective of meaning and function. *Muhkam* verses possess clear meanings, firm structure, and contain elevated legal and moral wisdom. The information they convey is definitive, free from contradiction, and their rulings are

just. All their commands direct toward goodness and guidance, while their prohibitions avert evil and deviation. In contrast, *mutashabih* verses cannot be understood immediately, tend to be complex, and require explanation from other verses or evidences. Determining whether their meanings indicate goodness, truth, and benefit—or potentially another meaning—necessitates reference to additional relevant sources.

The Wisdom Behind the *Mutashabih* Verses

Muslim scholars have long examined and reflected upon the wisdom behind the existence of the *mutashabih* (ambiguous) verses of the Qur'an. Among the insights they have offered are the following:²³ *First*, Testing Faith and Obedience. The *mutashabih* verses serve as a test of a person's faith and obedience. They raise the question of whether one will accept and believe in these verses even when the intellect cannot fully comprehend them, or instead reject and doubt them.

Second, Encouraging Reflection and Contemplation. These verses stimulate curiosity and encourage people to think, learn, and seek deeper understanding. Humanity is invited not merely to receive information passively, but to reflect and explore the meanings embedded within the text. The distinction between *muhkam* (clear) and *mutashabih* verses has historically prompted in-depth study and analysis of the Qur'an, giving rise to intellectual striving (*mujahadah*) exemplified by scholars. Such a condition is essential in Islamic education, whose paradigm of knowledge encompasses ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions.²⁴

Third, Demonstrating the Majesty of Allah's Knowledge. The *mutashabih* verses remind humanity that certain realities lie beyond the reach of human reason. This points to the greatness and boundlessness of Allah's knowledge, which cannot be fully attained by anyone. They also serve as evidence of the Qur'an's miraculous nature (*i'jaz*), reflected in its profound literary excellence—affirming that it is not the product of Prophet Muhammad but divine revelation from Allah, and thus deserving of belief and implementation.²⁵

Fourth, Serving as Trial and Trial. The presence of *mutashabih* verses functions as a spiritual test. Will people remain patient and persist in seeking sound understanding, or will they fall into error by following personal desires and flawed interpretations? *Fifth*, Enriching the Intellectual Heritage of Islam. The *mutashabih* verses provide fertile ground for scholars to conduct profound research and

²³ Ulum, *Ulumul Qur'an*, 70.

²⁴ Zainal Arifin Munir and Adet Tamula Anugrah, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Dari Adanya Term Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan Hadist* 4, no. 2 (2021): 199–212, <https://doi.org/10.35132/albayan.v4i2.134>.

²⁵ Anang Silahuddin, "Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Dalam Ulumul Qur'an," *Jurnal Misbahul Ulum (Jurnal Institusi)* 5, no. 2 (2023): 123–35.

analysis. This has enriched the treasury of Islamic knowledge and contributed significantly to human civilization. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the Qur'an is regarded as a comprehensive source of knowledge encompassing various aspects of human life. An interdisciplinary approach integrates multiple fields of study to understand particular phenomena or subjects. In this context, the Qur'an can be approached through diverse disciplines, such as psychological exegesis and scientific interpretation.²⁶

Sixth, Awakening Awareness of Human Limitations. The *mutashabih* verses make humans aware of their limitations as created beings. No one can claim complete knowledge, for certain matters are known only to Allah. Accepting and believing in the meanings contained in these verses is itself a form of test—just as Allah tests the body through acts of worship. Without such trials, a person of great knowledge might never fully recognize their limitations and servitude before God.²⁷ In light of these wisdoms, both *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses offer valuable lessons for the field of education. They demonstrate that difference is not inherently negative. Variations in understanding, opinion, and perspective—particularly within educational discourse—are positive and should be maintained, as they cultivate tolerance and intellectual openness.²⁸

Example of Interpreting *Muhkam* and *Mutashabih* Verses

Interpretation of the *Muhkam* verse in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 183 based on *Tafsir Jalalain* as follows:²⁹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain piety.”

In *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, the phrase: “O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you”, means that fasting has been made obligatory upon the believers just as it was mandated for previous communities among humankind. The phrase: “So that you may attain piety”, means that fasting functions as a means of protecting oneself from acts of disobedience. It restrains desires and blocks the primary causes and roots of sin.

²⁶ Ana Anisa and Heri Khoiruddin, “Peran Al-Qur'an Sebagai Sumber Ilmu Pengetahuan : Kajian Interdisipliner,” *Tabsyir: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial Humaniora* 5, no. 1 (n.d.): Januari 2024.

²⁷ Deefa Augista Amrain et al., “Mempelajari Al-Qur'an Sebagai Sumber Hukum Melalui Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih,” *Hamalatul Qur'an : Jurnal Ilmu Ilmu Alqur'an* 5, no. 2 (2024): 740–48, <https://doi.org/10.37985/hq.v5i2.315>.

²⁸ Munir and Anugrah, “Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Dari Adanya Term Muhkam Dan Mutasyabih Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an.”

²⁹ Jalaluddin Al-Mahalli and Jalaluddin As-Suyuti, *Terjemah Tafsir Jalalain*, Jilid I (n.d.).

Ibn Kathir explains in his tafsir that the command to fast is not merely about abstaining from food, drink, and marital relations. Rather, it must be grounded in sincere intention for Allah, purifying both soul and body from evil and reprehensible deeds. Fasting also serves to restrict Satan's influence over human beings. Since Allah mentions that fasting was also prescribed to previous nations, Muslims are expected to observe it more earnestly and perfect its practice better than earlier communities.³⁰ Al-Alusi states that the mention of "previous nations" strengthens the ruling, provides motivation, and comforts the hearts of those commanded to fast. When a difficult obligation is shared universally, it becomes easier and more bearable.³¹

This example clearly demonstrates that the verse is *muhkam* (clear and decisive). Referring to the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Hisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī, the first aspect to consider is its meaning. Surah al-Baqarah verse 183 contains a clear command to fast for believers. Its meaning is explicit, and the command embodies goodness and guidance. In terms of function, the verse serves as a legal directive and a foundational principle of Islamic law.

Interpretation of the *mutashabih* verse in QS. al-An'am [6]: 103 include:³²

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

"Vision cannot grasp Him, but He grasps all vision. And He is the Most Subtle, the All-Aware."

In *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, the phrase: "Vision cannot grasp Him", means that human eyes cannot see Him in this world. The vision of Allah is reserved exclusively for believers in the Hereafter, as mentioned in QS. al-Qiyāmah [75]: 22-23: "Faces on that Day will be radiant, looking toward their Lord." This is further supported by a hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim stating: "Indeed, you will see your Lord (in the Hereafter) as you see the full moon." Another interpretation suggests that human sight cannot encompass or fully comprehend Him. The phrase: "But He grasps all vision", means that He sees all that is seen, while nothing seen can perceive Him. No one besides Him possesses such a quality. "And He is the Most Subtle (*al-Latif*)", meaning gentle toward His devoted servants. "The All-Aware (*al-Khabir*)", meaning fully aware of them.

According to *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Hamka, this verse explains that human sight is incapable of seeing Allah due to its inherent limitations. This inability should not lead to doubt about His existence. Human eyes perceive only a small portion of reality and can even be deceived. Something that appears beautiful from a

³⁰ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīru Al-Qur'an Al-Azhim*, Juz I (Dar Thayyibah lin Nasyri wa Tauzi', 1999), 497.

³¹ Mahmud Bin Abdullah Al-Alusi, *Ruhul Ma'ani*, Juz II (Al Resalah Publishing House, 2010), 56.

³² Al-Mahalli and As-Suyuti, *Terjemah Tafsir Jalalain*.

distance—such as a mountain peak or colorful clouds—may differ upon closer inspection. Meanwhile, Allah sees everything, including human sight itself. He created the intricate system of vision—its nerves, colors, forms, and distances—yet even experts cannot fully comprehend how sight functions.³³

A newborn baby can often see before hearing, illustrating the complexity and importance of vision. Yet paradoxically, we cannot directly see certain parts of our own bodies, such as the heart or even the eyes themselves, despite their undeniable existence. Thus, knowledge of Allah is attained not through sight, but through intellect and heart. Allah is *al-Latif* (The Most Subtle), and His creation reflects subtlety that invites reflection and faith. Based on QS. al-An'ām verse 103, this verse is categorized as *mutashabih*. In terms of meaning and function, it relates to the attributes of Allah, whose full reality cannot be comprehended literally or superficially.³⁴ Such verses test a person's faith, requiring submission and proper theological understanding rather than simplistic interpretation.

Here is a short table to make the above explanation easier:

No	Element	<i>Muhkam</i>	<i>Mutashabih</i>
1	Meaning	Clear, explicit, and does not create doubt.	Unclear, ambiguous, and open to multiple interpretations
2	Comprehension	Can be understood directly (easy to comprehend).	Requires explanation and interpretation.
3	Function	Serves as the basis of Islamic law and teachings.	Tests faith and encourages reflection and intellectual inquiry.
4	Example	Verses concerning commands or prohibitions.	Verses concerning the attributes of Allah and the Day of Judgment.

Table 1. Characteristics of *muhkam* and *mutashabihat* verses

CLOSING

According to the twentieth principle in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abdurrahman al-Sa'dī, which states that “the Qur'an may be regarded as entirely *muhkam*, entirely *mutashabih*, or partly *muhkam* and partly *mutashabih*,” the Qur'anic verses are described in different ways: in some contexts they are characterized as *muhkam*, in others as *mutashabih*, and in yet others as consisting partly of *muhkam* and partly of *mutashabih* verses. An example of a *muhkam* verse can be found in Qur'an 2:183, which contains the command for believers to observe fasting. The

³³ Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Jilid III (Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 1982), 2128.

³⁴ Anonymous, “Apa Perbedaan Ayat Mutasyabihat Dan Muhkamat,” *Ponpes Al Hasanah Bengkulu*, March 29, 2020, <https://ponpes.alhasanah.sch.id/pengetahuan/apa-perbedaan-ayat-mutasyaabihat-dan-muhkamat/>.

meaning of this verse is clear, and the command it conveys embodies guidance and goodness. In terms of its function, the verse serves as a directive and a foundational principle within Islamic law. An example of a *mutashabih* verse appears in Qur'an 6:103. From the perspective of its meaning and function, the verse contains meanings that are not immediately clear and relates to the attributes of God. Such matters cannot be understood in a purely literal or straightforward manner. Moreover, the verse functions as a test of a person's faith. This study contributes to the development of Qur'anic semantic studies, particularly in understanding the characteristics of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. It is expected that this research will help strengthen faith and serve as a useful reference for those who wish to further study the concepts of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses.

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