

**CHAPTER II**  
**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF QUR'AN INTERPRETATION**  
**(TAFSÎR)**

**A. Historical Development of Qur'an Interpretation (*Tafsîr*) on Overview**

The interpretation of the Qur'an consists of two aspects, there are the content of interpretation which is the product of the interpreter's thinking, and the method of interpretation which is the way that the interpreter useses in interpreting the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> Interpretation has existed since the period of Prophet Muhammad. Since the revealed verses of the Qur'an by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad to be delivered to all mankind. Everytime Prophet Muhammad received the revelation, he immediately conveyed it to companions and interpreted the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an which need a more in-depth explanation of the contents.

The interpretation of the Qur'an, both in the sense of product of interpretation (content) and the method of interpretation, has grown rapidly. This development certainly departs from the development of thought about the methodology of the interpretation of the Qur'an, because it is the methodology which produces the interpretation. Beginning from the centre of spreading of Islam, the method of interpretation grew out of the interpretation of the Prophet Muhammad known as *al-Tafsîr al-Nabawî* as the interpretation of the verse with

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<sup>1</sup>Wardani, *Trend Perkembangan Pemikiran Kontemporer Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 2017), 1.

another verse, or the interpretation of one theme by referring to several verses.<sup>2</sup> Typology of interpretation continues to develop from time to time rapidly in accordance with the context and demands of the times. The basic typology or category of interpretations is different, that also produce different patterns, such as *bi al-mathûr* interpretation and *bi al-ra'yi* interpretation. *Bi al-mathûr* interpretation is a pattern of interpretation that uses texts in interpreting verses of the Qur'an, both the Qur'an with the Qur'an and the Qur'an with *sunnah* or history or everything that comes from the Qur'an, *sunnah*, the words of companions explaining the meaning of the word of Allah.<sup>3</sup> This is the oldest form of interpretation in *khazanah* Islamic intellectual. Some examples of interpretation books in this form are *Tafsîr al-Ṭabarî*, *Tafsîr Ibn Kathîr*, *al-Durr al-Manthûr fî al-Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr* by al-Suyutî, and others.<sup>4</sup> Whereas *bi al-ra'yi* interpretation is thought or *ijtihad*, interpretation that relies more on authentic *ijtihad*.<sup>5</sup>

1. The classical era of the interpretation (since the period of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. to the period of successors)

The development of interpretation has gone through a long process generation to generation since the Prophet, companions, successors until now. *First*,

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<sup>2</sup>Wardani, *Trend Perkembangan*, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Muhammad Abd al-Azîm al-Zarqânî, *Manâhil al-Irfân fî Ulûm al-Qur'an* vol. 2 (n.p: Dar Qutaibah, 1998), 18.

<sup>4</sup>Nashruddin Baidan, *Wawasan Baru Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011), 370.

<sup>5</sup>al-Zarqani, *Manâhil al-Irfân* vol. 2, 59.

in the period of the Prophet, in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an is to be his authority. He only interpreted the verses which he considered necessary to be interpreted and also because of the questions from the companions.<sup>6</sup> While the interpreter of the verses of the Qur'an at that time only the prophet himself as a single interpreter, he as recipient, explainer, and interpreter of revelation and at this time the interpretation had minimal criticism.

*Secondly*, in the period of companions, the interpretation of companions had the source are the verses of the Qur'an, the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad, the *ijtihad* of the companions though in a limited scope.<sup>7</sup> This happened after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, they were perforced to do *ijtihad*, especially those who have capabilities such as Ali Ibn Abi Thalib, Ibn Abbas, Ubay Ibn Ka'ab and Ibn Mas'ud.<sup>8</sup>

*Thirdly*, the interpretation of companions is further developed by *sucessors*. The source of interpretation in the period of sucessors are the verses of the Qur'an, *sunnah* of the prophet, the *ijtihad* of companions, and the opinion of sucessors. They inherited the way and pattern of the interpretation of the

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<sup>6</sup>Manna Khalil al-Qaṭṭan, *Mabâhith fî Ulûm al-Qur'an* (n.p: Manshurat al-Asr al-Hadis, 1990), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Rohimin, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir dan Aplikasi Model Penafsiran* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar 2007), 66.

<sup>8</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an; Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2013), 105.

companions, but already a lot of entry *israiliyyat*,<sup>9</sup> there are many disagreements based on the ideologies that greatly affects the interpretation.

## 2. The middle era of interpretation (10<sup>th</sup> BC)

The speed of the development of society, developing and growing also the portion of reason or *ijtihad* in the verses of the Qur'an interpretation so that there arose various books and interpretations of various patterns.<sup>10</sup> In this era, there arose interpretation patterns and began to orient the Qur'an interpretation based on the approach of linguistics and scientific reasoning, this time not only rely on *bi al-ma'thûr* interpretation but also *bi al-ra'yi* with all kinds of implications. The emphasis on the interpretation development in the certain aspects is in accordance with the tendency of the interpreter.

## 3. The contemporary modern era of interpretation (18<sup>th</sup> BC - now)

The adherents of Islam has long been experienced oppression and colonization by the Western nation, in fact is the imperialise-colonists, therefore the majority of Muslims began to rise from the adversity of suffering and mental suffering. To contend with mental depravity, the leaders and fighters of muslim strive to make improvements. Such as the emergence of Islamic modernization movement conducted by Islamic figures.

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<sup>9</sup>*Israiliyyat* according to the terminology of Jewish culture sourced from the Taurat, Zabur, Asfar Musawiyah and Talmud including all of his statements which are full of tales and *khurafat* and abatil which they developed from time to time. For further information, see M. Shalahuddin Hamid, *Study Ulumul Qur'an* (Jakarta: PT Intipedia Ciptanusantara, 2002), 350.

<sup>10</sup>Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 107.

The characteristic of the interpretation this period is clear from the story of *israiliyyat*, contains no false hadith, reveals the beauty of language, unites between the scientific theories developed with the Qur'an, the source of its interpretation is the fusion of *bi al-ra'yi* and *bi al-ma'thûr*. In the next centuries, efforts to interpret the Qur'an based on *ra'yi* or logical reasoning began to develop in line with the advancement of the standard of human life in which is full of problems that are not always available answers in the Qur'an.

Many ways are done by experts of Qur'anic interpretation in understanding the content and messages conveyed by Allah in His revelation. Approach, method and pattern of interpretation that rely on logical reasoning in the view of al-Farmâwî is divided into four kinds of methods are *tahlilî*, *ijmalî*, *muqâran* and *mauđû'î*.<sup>11</sup>

The presenting according to the sequence of verses of the Qur'an as written in the muşhaf it begins Q. *al-Fâtiḥah* and ends with Q. *al-Nâs*. Interpreting the Qur'an verses by exposing all aspects contained in the interpreted verses and explaining the meanings contained therein accordance with the expertise and the tendency of the interpreters to interpret the verse. In this interpretation model, the interpreters follow the verse's revelation as arranged in the Ottoman *muşhaf*. The interpreters began analyzing the verse by expressing the meaning of vocabulary followed by an explanation of the global meaning of the

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<sup>11</sup>Rohimin, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir*, 66.

verse.<sup>12</sup> Then explain the intended meaning of the verse, the intended target and the content of the verse, explaining the conclusion from the verse and concluding the correlation between the verses and its relationship with the surah before and after. To arrive at the meaning, the interpreters refer to *asbâb al-nuzûl* and the arguments derived from the Prophet, companions or the *sucessors*. Even sometimes mixed with the interpreters opinions themselves with colored educational background and often also with linguistic which is considered to help understand the Qur'anic texts.<sup>13</sup> The message and content are conveyed in detail and broadly covering various problems that arise in the mind of the interpreter, both those that are directly related to the verse and those that are not directly related to the verse being interpreted. This way is known as *tahlilî* interpretation method.

There is also a method of interpretation of the Qur'an briefly and globally but includes the whole, without a long explanation, concise but encompassing description, with popular language, understandable and readable. The interpreter explains meaning of the verse a brief and concise description that can explain the meaning without talking the other things. This is done on verses of the Qur'an verse by verse, surah by surah, according to the sequence of verses of the Qur'an as written in the *muşhaf* within the understandable framework of the description. This method is *ijmalî* interpretation method. Some examples of this method are

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<sup>12</sup>Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah fî al-Tafsîr al-Maḍû'î: Dirasah Manhajiyah Mauḍû'iyah* (Egypt: al-Maṭaba'at al-Hadarat al-Arabiyyah, 1977), 24.

<sup>13</sup>Rohimin, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir*, 68.

*Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Karîm* by Muhammad Farid Wajdi, *al-Tafsîr al-Waṣiṭ* published by *Majma 'al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyat*, and *Tafsîr Jalalain*, and *Taj al-Tafsîr* by Muhammad Usman al-Maraghi.<sup>14</sup>

The method of the Qur'an interpretation also exists a comparative method of interpretation (*muqâran*), this method is the comparison of the Qur'an verses that have similar redaction, similarities in the same case or the same estimate. Then compare the Qur'an verses with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad that looks contradictory. Furthermore, comparing the various thoughts of the interpreter in interpreting the Qur'an verses.<sup>15</sup>

The comparative studies area is not only limited to editorial analysis. But rather covering the defferences meaning and problems of the comparative verses. In determining these differences, interpreter should observe the various aspects that the reason of the defferences, such as *asbâb al-nuzûl*, words and their structure in verses, the context of each verse, the situation and conditions of the verse.<sup>16</sup>

Regarding to the the thematic interpretation method (*mauḍû'i*) will be more detailed in the next explanation because the research is done by the author.

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<sup>14</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 42-43.

<sup>15</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 45.

<sup>16</sup>Nashruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2000), 66.

## B. Thematic Interpretation (*Mauḍû'î*)

### 1. Etymological meaning of thematic interpretation (*mauḍû'î*)

The thematic interpretation (*tafsîr mauḍû'î*) consists of two words both are *tafsîr* and thematic. Thematic in Arabic is called *mauḍû'î*. The word of *tafsîr* comes from the Arabic word consisting of *fa*, *sîn* and *ra*, that is *maṣdar* from *fassara yufassiru tafsîran* means explanation, information, and description.<sup>17</sup> According to the terminology meaning, *tafsîr* is the science that studies about the Qur'an from *dalâlah* to understand the purpose of Allah's words in accordance with human capabilities.<sup>18</sup> *Tafsîr* is the science used to understand the Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, explaining his meanings and exploring the laws and the wisdom in the Qur'an until the Qur'an truly serve as a guidance for humans. The basic of *tafsîr* are the linguistic (*nahwu, ṣaraf, balaghah*), *uṣul fiqh, asbâb al-nuzûl, nasîkh mansûkh* and other sciences.<sup>19</sup>

The thematic word or in Arabic is *mauḍû'î* is based on *mauḍû'* which is *ism maf'ûl* from *wada'a yada'u waḍ'an wa mauḍû'an* the meaning is laid out, feigned, themes or topics. The relevant meaning in this discussion is theme or topic. So etymologically meaning of the thematic interpretation (*mauḍû'î*) is an interpretation of a particular theme or topic.

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<sup>17</sup> al-Zarqani, *Manâhil al- Irfân* vol. 2, 7. For further information, see also Husein al-Dhahabî, *al-Tafsîr wa al-Mufassirûn* vol. I (n.p.: Maktabah Muṣ'ab bin Umair, 2004), 12.

<sup>18</sup> al-Zarqani, *Manâhil al-Irfân* vol. 2, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Badruddin Abi Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Bahâdir Ibn Abdullah al-Zarkasyi, *al-Burhân fî Ulûm al-Qur'an* vol. I (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2007), 33.



## 2. Terminological meaning of thematic interpretation (*mauḍû'î*)

The interpreters had thoughts of the terminological meaning of thematic interpretation are focused on the same meaning. Some thoughts by the interpreters of thematic interpretation are:

### a. Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmâwî

*Tafsîr mauḍû'î* is collecting verses of the Qur'an that have the same intent in the sense that both discuss a topic of the problem and arrange it based on chronology and the reason for the decline of the verses, then the interpreter began to give explanations and take conclusion.<sup>20</sup>

### b. Muḥammad Maḥmûd Ḥijazi

According to Muḥammad Maḥmûd Ḥijazi in his book quoted by al-Farmâwî, *tafsîr mauḍû'î* is the one that has the same intention in the sense that both discuss one topic and then give the interpretation, explanation and take conclusions.<sup>21</sup>

### c. Ali Ḥasan al-Ariḍ

*Tafsîr mauḍû'î* is a method that has been taken by an interpreter by collecting all the verses of the Qur'an that talk about a theme and pointing to an

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<sup>20</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 52.

<sup>21</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 52.

understanding and purpose, though the verses are different ways and time of revelation.<sup>22</sup>

From some thoughts of interpreters above, it can be concluded that the thematic interpretation (*mauḍû'î*) is an interpretation that explains several verses of the Qur'an regarding a title, topic or theme, based on the chronological of descending which is explained by various kinds of information from all aspects and comparison with information from various supporting sciences discussing the same topic or theme until make it easier and clearer the problem.

The pattern of interpretation in this way has the same purpose that are talking about one topic and compiling based on the chronology of descending verses and knowing the background of the causes of descent, then given explanations, descriptions, comments and points of law content. From this definitions give an indication that the interpreters who use these thematic methods and approaches are required more understand the verses related to the topic discussed, an determine the vocabulary of the verse and its synonyms associated with the theme set. The interpreter arranges the chronology of verse based on the period of descent in an effort to find out the development of the Qur'anic instructions concerning the issues discussed, outlining a story or event requiring chronological sequences of events. Knowing and understanding the background of the descent of the verse (if there is it) cannot be ignored because this has a great effect in understanding the verses of the Qur'an properly and correctly. To obtain

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<sup>22</sup>Abdul Djalal HA, *Urgensi Tafsir Mauḍû'î Pada Masa Kini* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), 84-85.

stronger and broader information about the explanation of the verse, it can refer to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad and the words of *companions* etc which are relevant with the topic.<sup>23</sup>

The thematic interpretation positioned the Qur'an as invited to dialogue in finding the truth. The interpreter asks and the Qur'an answers. Thus can be applied what has been advocated by Ali Ibn Abi Talib "Invite the Qur'an to dialogue (*Iṣṭanṭiq al-Qur'an*)!"<sup>24</sup> The concept that brought the interpreter from the results of human experience in the external reality of life that is wrong and true confronted to the Qur'an. This does not mean that interpreter attempted to impose the human experience of the Qur'an by forcing the verses to deny the will of human, but to find the view of the Qur'an in its capacity as a source of innovation and determinant of Divine truth associated with the reality of life.<sup>25</sup>

### **C. Historical Development of Thematic Interpretation**

If researched the development of Qur'an interpretation since the beginning in the period of the Prophet Muhammad can be said that thematic interpretation has come into being even simple. Efforts to reconcile some verses that are meaningful or related to a particular problem already exist with the interpretation of a verse of the Qur'an with other verses. This is because the Qur'an is revealed as *hudan li al-nâs* and gives guidance on the precepts revealed in accordance with

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<sup>23</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 52.

<sup>24</sup>Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 20.

<sup>25</sup>M. Sja'roni, "Studi tafsir Tematik," *Jurnal Study Islam Panca Wahana*, Edition 12, No. 10, 2014, 4.

situations and conditions that require, till sometimes revealed *mujmal*, *muṭlaq* and general, but sometimes also revealed the detail verse and specific.

The verses are sometimes revealed in detail then described in detail with another verse. Similarly, the general guidance given in a verse then specifically explained in another verse. It means the verse of the Qur'an has been interpreted by the Qur'an itself so that understandable the purpose of Allah's word through the explanation of Allah also in another verse, because Allah the only one who knows the purpose of His words than other.

An example of thematic interpretation in the period of the Prophet Muhammad is when he interprets the word (*al-zulm*) in Q. al-An'âm [6]: 82 with the word (*al-shirk*)<sup>26</sup> in Q. Luqmân [31]: 13

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“It is those who believe and confuse not confuse their beliefs with wrong-that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance.” (Q. al-An'âm [6]: 82)<sup>27</sup>

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۖ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ

عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: “O my son! Join not in worship (other) with God: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing”. (Q. Luqmân [31]: 13)<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 53-54. See in Muṣṭafa Muslim, *Mabâhith fî al-Tafsîr al-Mauḍû'î* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1989), 17-18. See also Manna Khalil al-Qaṭṭan, *Mabâhith fî Ulûm al-Qur'an*, 1.

<sup>27</sup>Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* (Kuala Lumpur: Saba Islamic Media, 2000), 166.

<sup>28</sup>Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 496.

Therefore, it means the Prophet Muhammad had implanted thematic interpretation seeds by interpreting a verse of the Qur'an with another verse and hinted that the difficult vocabularies of verses should be found the explanations to other vocabularies. In this context, Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmâwî said that all the verses interpreted with the verses of the Qur'an include thematic interpretation and the first time of the growth thematic interpretation.<sup>29</sup>

Ali Khalil commented on this narration and asserted with this intelligent interpretation the Prophet Muhammad has given an explanation to *companions* that the act of collecting *mutashâbihat* verses can explain the point of problem and will eliminate doubt and confusion.<sup>30</sup>

M. Quraish Shihab said the thematic interpretation based on surah was first conceived by a professor of Ushuluddin Faculty of al-Azhar University Department of *Tafsîr*, Shaikh Maḥmud Shaltut in January 1960. The work contained in his book *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Karîm*. While the thematic interpretation based on a topic or theme first time in Egypt initiated by Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sayyid al-Kumi, a professor at the same institution as Mahmud Shaltut Department of *Tafsîr* Ushuluddin Faculty of al-Azhar University, and he became

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<sup>29</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 54.

<sup>30</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 54.

Head of the Department of *Tafsîr* until 1981. This model of interpretation was conceived in the 1960.<sup>31</sup>

The examples this interpretation model include *al-Insân fî al-Qur'an*, *al-Mar'ah fî al-Qur'an al-Karîm* by Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, *al-Riba fî al-Qur'an* by Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, *al-Tibyân fî al-Aqşam al-Qur'an* by Ibn Qayyim, *Mufradat al-Qur'an* by Abu Ubaidah, *al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh* by Abu Ja'far al-Nahhas, *Asbâb al-Nuzûl* by Abu Hasan al-Wahidi, and al-Jaṣṣaṣ in his book *Ahkâm al-Qur'an*. Some commentators in modern era also explain this method including Dr. Al-Husaini Abu Farhah with his book *al-Futuḥat al-Rabbaniyah fî al-Tafsîr al-Maudû'î li al-Ayat al-Qur'aniyyah*.<sup>32</sup> Then this model's interpretation was developed and completed more systematically by prof. Dr. Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmâwî in 1977 in his book *al-Bidâyah fî al-Tafsîr al-Maudû'î: Dirâsah Manhajiyah Maudû'iyah*.

#### **D. The Steps of Thematic Interpretation**

Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmâwî in his book *Al-Bidâyah fî al-Tafsîr al-Maudû'î: Dirâsah Manhajiyah Maudû'iyah* explained the steps in applying the thematic method are:

- a. Determine the problem to be discussed (topic).

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<sup>31</sup>Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 110. For further information, see M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an; Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2007), xiii.

<sup>32</sup>Arie Machlina Amri, "Metode al-Qur'an" *Jurnal* Vol. 2 No. 1 Juni 2014, 19.

- b. Collecting verses relating to the problem.
- c. Prepare the verses according to the period of descent, along with the knowledge of the *asbâb al-nuzûl*.
- d. Understand the correlation of the verses in their respective chapters (*munasabah*)
- e. Arrange the discussion in a perfect framework (out line).
- f. Complete the discussion with the relevant hadith to the point.
- g. Study verses as a whole by collecting verses that have the same meaning or compromise between those are general and those are *khaṣ* (specifically, *muṭlaq* with *muqayyad* (bound) or which are apparently contradiction), till all meet in one estuary without distinction or coercion.<sup>33</sup>

### **E. Types of Thematic Interpretation**

The method of thematic interpretation (*mauḍû'î*) has two kinds of studies both are purposed at exploring the rules there are not in the Qur'an discussing problems whose answers are found in other verses of the Qur'an, by analyzing and explains the meaning of the verses. Furthermore, it can be obtained the answer to the theme that is the point, or by reviewing the surah of the Qur'an and

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<sup>33</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 61-62.

explained the specific and general objectives of the surah concerned so the problem can be made as a solid unity.<sup>34</sup>

When viewed in terms of the aspect of themes the thematic interpretation is divided into two types both are:

1. Interpretation of the surah thoroughly and completely by explaining its general and specific intent, explaining the correlation between the various problems it contains, till the *surah* appears in the perfect and complementary form.<sup>35</sup>

The formulation affirmed by al-Shaṭibi in *al-Muwafaqat* he said that in the fact one surah even though it contained a problem, was a unity that referred to one purpose or complete that purpose, although it contained various meanings. The way of study this interpretation model worked by Dr. Muhammad Mahmud Hijazi in his book entitled *al-Tafsîr al-Waḍîh* than followed by other commentators.<sup>36</sup>

2. Interpretation by collecting all or some verses from several surahs that talk about a same topic to be related the one verse with another verses and then given an explanation of all aspects, then take a thorough conclusion about the problem according to the view of the Qur'an.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 35-36.

<sup>35</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 51.

<sup>36</sup>M. Sja'roni, "Studi tafsir Tematik," *Jurnal Study Islam Panca Wahana*, Edition 12, No. 10, 2014, 8.

<sup>37</sup>Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 111.



This thematic interpretation is commonly known in contemporary tafsir lately.

One of the reasons the appearing of this second form was because it widened, expanded and deepened the development of various sciences, and the increasingly complex problems that needed guidance from the Qur'an. On the other hand, the busyness and time opportunities available to guidance enthusiasts are increasingly demanding rapid moves to gain information and guidance.<sup>38</sup>

#### **F. The Position of Thematic Interpretation**

If reviewed carefully, the thematic interpretation is actually included in *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*, because when viewed from the interpretation taken from the explanation of the Qur'an verses. Interpreter uses a way of combining the verse with another verse. *Tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* is an authentic and accurate form of interpretation and can guarantee the truth, because its interpretation is returned to the verses of Allah.

Ibn Kathîr in his book *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Azîm* states that when asked what is the best method of interpretation, then the answer is the best method of interpretation that to interpret the Qur'an with the Qur'an, because somewhere the things are explained globally and sometimes explained in detail elsewhere.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an*, xiv.

<sup>39</sup>Ibnu Kathîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Azîm*, 3. See also Ziyad Khalil al-Dagamin, *al-Tafsîr al-Mauḍû'î wa Manhajiyah al-Bahthu fîh* ('Amman: Dar Amar, 2007), 19.

Al-Zarkashi and Ibn Taimiyah also argued that, so the experts of interpretation lately are more likely to be interested in interpreting the Qur'an by using thematic interpretation method.<sup>40</sup>

### **G. Urgency of Thematic Interpretation**

Thematic interpretation if reviewed carefully, it will be known this interpretation is one very heavy effort, but it is very commendable because it can facilitate people in understanding and living the teachings of the Qur'an, can serve anyone who resolves the problems they face, because the presentation of the texts of the Qur'an is realized in various themes. According to Ahmad Sayid al-Kumi, living in modern period need the presence of thematic interpretation patterns because it works by enabling to understand the issues discussed and immediately to the point of the problem in a simple, practical and easy way.<sup>41</sup>

Thematic interpretation has the highest value of the quality of interpretation because the interpretation selection must be charged to the will of Allah Almighty. All the ideas of interpretation resulting from life experiences that may be true or false should be consulted with Qur'anic insights. This thematic interpretation method is more reliable to answer the problems of life on this earth. That means, this method has a huge role in the lives of the people that can be guided to the right way according to the intention of the Qur'an being revealed.

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<sup>40</sup>For further information, see al-Zarkashi, *al-Burhân fî Ulûm al-Qur'an*, 175. Ibnu Taimiyah, *Muqaddimah fî Uşûl Tafsîr*, 18.

<sup>41</sup>al-Farmâwî, *Al-Bidâyah*, 71.

Therefore, the position of this method has become stronger in the intellectual property of Islam.

In the thematic method there will be no division of understanding on the verses of the Qur'an which are the consequences of not studying all the verses, because of that, this method occupies a very important place in the study of Qur'anic interpretation.<sup>42</sup>

## **H. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Thematic Interpretation**

### 1. The advantages of thematic interpretation

The several advantages of this thematic interpretation method are:

#### a. Answering the challenges of the times

Problems in life always grow and develop in accordance with the development of life itself. The more modern human life, the life problems that arise are increasingly complex and crucial, and have a broad impact. It is possible because what happens in a place, at the same time, can be witnessed by others in other places too, in fact that occur in space can be monitored from the earth. This conditions makes a problem quickly spread throughout the community in a relatively short time.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Nashruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar Offset, 1998), 169-170.

<sup>43</sup>Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an*, 165-166.

To face the problems, seen from the point of the Qur'an interpretation, can not be handled with other theoretical interpretation methods. This is because the thematic method is intended to solve problems. That is why this method studies all verses of the Qur'an that talk about the case being thoroughly discussed from various aspects. This pattern is not used in other methods.

b. Practical and systematic

Interpretation by thematic method is arranged in a practical and systematic in solving the problems that appear. This is very suitable and in accordance with the lives of increasingly modern people with high mobility until they seem to have no time to read the book of great and thick interpretation, but to get the guidance of the Qur'an they must read and understand it. But with the thematic interpretation, they will get the Qur'an's instructions in a practical and systematic manner and can save time, be effective, and efficiently.

c. Dynamic

Thematic method makes the interpretation of the Qur'an is always dynamic according to the demands of the times until to generate an image in the minds of readers and listeners that Qur'an always protect and guide life on earth on all layers and social strata. Thus, it seems that the Qur'an is always actual (update), never outdated. Under these conditions, Muslims will be interested in practice the rules of Islam in the Qur'an, because they will feel the Qur'an can really guide them to the right way even with the other method of interpretation this also can be created, but it is not a primary purpose or point.

d. Making the complete understanding

With the stipulation of the titles to be discussed, the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an can be fully absorbed. That understanding is difficult to find in other methods of interpretation. Therefore, this thematic interpretation method can be relied to solve a problem better and thoroughly.<sup>44</sup>

M. Quraish Shihab also stated some features of this thematic method are:

- a. Avoid problems or weaknesses of other methods.
- b. Interpreting the verse with the verse or with the Prophet's hadith, one of the best ways to interpret the Qur'an.
- c. The conclusions generated to be understandable.
- d. This method allows to reject the perceived existence of contradictory verses in the Qur'an. At the same time can also be used as evidence that the verses of the Qur'an accordance with the development of science and society.<sup>45</sup>

2. Disadvantages of thematic interpretation method

Besides having advantages, this method also does not escape from the shortcomings are:

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<sup>44</sup>Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an*, 166-167.

<sup>45</sup>Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 180.

a. Cutting the verses of the Qur'an

Cutting the verse of the Qur'an means is to take one problem contained in a verse or more that contains different problems. For example about *ṣalat* and *zakat*, usually these two services are revealed simultaneously in one verse. If you want to discuss about *zakat*, then inevitably the verse about *ṣalat* should be abandoned when reference from in order not to interfere at the time of analysis.

This method is sometimes reputed impolite towards the holy verses of the Qur'an as presumed by the textualists. However, as long as it does not damage the understanding, actually this method does not need to be reputed negative: especially since ancient times 'Ulama often cut off the verses of the Qur'an in accordance with the necessity their discussion as contained in the book of *fiqh*, *tauḥîd*, *tasawuf*, *tafsîr* etc.<sup>46</sup>

b. Limited the understanding of the verse

With the stipulation of the title of interpretation, the understanding of a verse is limited to the issues discussed. As a result, the interpreter is bound by the title, though it is possible that the verse is reviewed from various aspects, because the Qur'an is like a jewel that reflects every light at its angle. Thus, with the stipulation of the title of the discussion, it means that will be studied only one angle of the jewel. Thus, it can give the impression of lack of understanding. The conditions described are logical consequences of thematic methods. But that

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<sup>46</sup>Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an*, 168.

doesn't need to be too worrying because it will not reduce the messages of the Qur'an, except it is stated that the interpretation of the verse is only that, nothing else. In the fact it turns out that thematic interpretation is not the case.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an*, 170.