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TSAQAFAH AL-MUFASSIR WA BI'ATUHU: IMPLICATIONS OF IMAM IBNU KATSIR'S SOCIO-INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS INTERPRETATION

TSAQAFAH AL-MUFASSIR WA BI'ATUHU: IMPLIKASI LATAR BELAKANG SOSIO-INTELEKTUAL IMAM IBNU KATSIR TERHADAP KARAKTERISTIK PENAFSIRANNYA

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Abstract

The interpretation of the Qur'an cannot be separated from an exegete's social background and intellectual capacity, as these factors shape their orientation, sources, and methods of interpretation. Imam Ibn Kathir is one of the most renowned exegetes, known for his work titled Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim. This study aims to analyze the impact of Ibn Kathir's intellectual background particularly his expertise in hadith and history, as well as his intellectual relationship with Ibn Taymiyyah on the characteristics of his exegesis. This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. Primary data includes Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and Ibn Kathir's other works, while secondary data is drawn from books on exegetical methodology and relevant journal articles. The analysis employs a historical approach and examines the characteristics of the interpretive argumentation patterns. The exegetical method used by Ibn Kathir is the tafsir bi al-ma'tsur approach, which draws upon the Qur'an, hadith, the narrations of the Companions, and the opinions of the Tabi'in. Meanwhile, an intertextual study of the introduction to this exegesis reveals intellectual connections that require careful analysis within the context of the methodology employed by Ibn Taymiyyah. This study uses the social and intellectual background as a basis for understanding how Ibn Kathir interpreted the verses of the Qur'an, but does not consider this to be the sole factor determining his entire body of thought. Therefore, this study is expected to strengthen the understanding of the relationship between the exegete's scholarly capabilities, the intellectual environment, and the formation of exegetical methods.

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Keywords : Ibn Kathir, Exegete's Intellectual Background, Intellectual Environment, Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'thur, Ibn Taymiyyah.

Abstrak

Penafsiran Al-Qur'an tidak bisa dipisahkan dari latar belakang sosial dan kecerdasan seorang mufasir, karena hal tersebut membentuk orientasi, sumber, dan cara mereka dalam menafsirkan. Imam Ibnu Katsir adalah salah satu tokoh mufassir yang terkenal karena karyanya berjudul Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak latar belakang pengetahuan Ibnu Katsir, terutama keahliannya di bidang hadis dan sejarah, serta hubungan intelektualnya dengan Ibnu Taimiyah terhadap karakteristik penafsirannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (*library research*). Data primer meliputi *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim* dan karya-karya Ibnu Katsir lainnya, sedangkan data sekunder berasal dari buku tentang metodologi tafsir serta artikel jurnal yang terkait. Analisis melalui pendekatan historisis dan analisis terhadap karakteristik pola argumentasi penafsiran. Metode tafsir yang digunakan oleh Ibnu Katsir adalah pendekatan *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* dengan mengacu pada Al-Qur'an, hadis, riwayat para sahabat, serta pendapat para tabi'in. Sementara itu, studi intertekstual terhadap muqaddimah tafsir tersebut menunjukkan adanya keterkaitan pemikiran yang perlu dianalisis dengan teliti dalam konteks metode yang digunakan oleh Ibnu Taimiyah. Penelitian ini menggunakan latar belakang sosial dan intelektual sebagai dasar untuk memahami cara Ibnu Katsir menafsirkan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, tetapi tidak menganggap hal tersebut sebagai satu-satunya hal yang menentukan seluruh pemikirannya. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkuat pemahaman mengenai hubungan antara kemampuan ilmiah mufasir, lingkungan intelektual, dan pembentukan metode tafsir.

Kata Kunci : Ibnu Katsir, Tsaqafah Al-Mufassir, Bi'ah Al-Mufassir, Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'tsur, Ibnu Taimiyah.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Quranic interpretation is an intellectual activity that develops through the interaction between the sacred text, scientific tools, and the interpreter's life context. Although the Quran is the primary source for understanding its meaning, the process of understanding its contents requires an understanding of various fields of knowledge, such as Arabic, hadith, fiqh, history, and Quranic sciences. Therefore, the characteristics of an exegetical work can be understood not only through its textual content, but also through the intellectual background and scientific environment surrounding the exegete. In the exegetical method, an exegete's scientific background can be examined through the concept of tsaqafah al-mufassir, while his social conditions and intellectual environment can be analyzed using the concept of bi'ah al-mufassir. Both concepts help explain how education, mastery of knowledge, teacher-student relationships, and religious traditions relate to the formation of interpretive orientations. However, this relationship must be proven through historical and textual research to avoid simply assuming that a person's background directly determines all of their thinking. One of the important figures to research from this point of view is Imam Ibnu Kathir, a religious expert who is famous for his contributions in the fields of tafsir, hadith and history. His work, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim, has an important role in the tradition of understanding the Qur'an, especially because it uses history as a source of explanation of verses in the Qur'an. In the tafsir methodology literature, this work is categorized as tafsir bi al-ma'tsur which uses analytical methods or tahlili in explaining the verses of the Al-Qur'an (Aruf, 2011; Maliki, 2018). These characteristics show how important it is to understand Ibn Kathir's scientific abilities. His expertise in the field of hadith helps understand how

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he uses the history of the Prophet, his companions and tabi'in. Meanwhile, his knowledge in the field of history provides a background to make it easier to understand why people are interested in the stories of the prophets, ancient peoples, and historical events related to the interpretation of the Koran.

However, the use of narration in tafsir cannot be understood solely on the basis of expertise in hadith. The tradition of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur predates Ibn Kathir, involving several exegetes who came before him. Therefore, in analyzing Ibn Kathir, it is necessary to consider the relationship between his personal abilities, the continuity of the previous tafsir tradition, and the intellectual environment in which he developed his thinking. One important aspect of Ibn Kathir's intellectual environment is his connection with Ibn Taymiyyah. This figure is known for his thinking on the methodology of Qur'anic interpretation, particularly as discussed in the Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir. In this work, Ibn Taymiyyah argues that interpreting the Qur'an must be done using the Qur'an itself, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the explanations of the first generation of Muslims. He also explains the principles for understanding differences in interpretation (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.d.; Waliko, 2016).

The intellectual connection between the two figures is important because they share similarities in their interpretation of narrated sources, emphasizing their power and authority. However, similarities in method do not necessarily mean that all features of Ibn Kathir's interpretation are influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah. This connection must be seen by comparing the texts, particularly considering the possibility of developments, adjustments, and the distinctive characteristics of Ibn Kathir's thought. Previous studies have discussed Ibn Kathir's exegetical methodology from various perspectives. Aruf (2011), for example, outlines the methods used in Ibn Kathir's interpretation, such as analytical methods and use of narrated sources, as well as how he considered the assessment of these narrations. Maliki (2018) also analyzes the methods and types of interpretation used by Ibn Kathir and positions them within the tradition of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur. Recent research by Muhyin and Nasir (2023) also discusses Ibn Kathir's exegetical methods using a literature study approach. Furthermore, Wara et al.'s (2024) research on intertextual patterns in the preamble to Ibn Kathir's interpretation and Ibn Taymiyyah's method provides a new way to understand the relationship between the two figures' thoughts through textual comparison. Such research is important because intellectual connections cannot be explained solely through historical information but must be demonstrated through the intersection of identifiable ideas in their works.

Based on this research, the focus of the study is directed to integrate discussions on Ibn Kathir's intellectual background, his scientific context, and the characteristics of his interpretation. The goal is not only to describe his biography or identify his method of interpretation, but to explain how the first two aspects can support an understanding of the third aspect. Therefore, this study applies the perspective of tsaqafah al-mufassir wa bi'atuhu as an analytical framework to explore the relationship between scientific competence, intellectual context, and the characteristics of interpretation in Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim.

Formulation of the problem

Based on this background, this research asks three questions:

1. How did Imam Ibnu Kathir's social and intellectual background influence the way he understood and taught the Koran as a commentator?
2. How can Ibn Kathir's expertise in the field of hadith and history be seen from the way he interprets the verses of the Koran?
3. What is the relationship between the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn Kathir in terms of how to understand and translate the Qur'an, especially in the work Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim?

Research purposes

This study aims to analyze Ibn Kathir's social and intellectual background, identify the impact of his expertise in hadith and history on his understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an, and examine his intellectual relationship with Ibn Taymiyyah by comparing the principles of their interpretation methods. From an academic perspective, this study is expected to broaden the study of

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intellectual biographies of commentators by combining historical data with an understanding of the text.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Types and Approaches of Research

This study employed a qualitative method with library research. This method was chosen because the research focused on Ibn Kathir's exegetical works, biographical literature, and academic studies related to Ibn Kathir's exegetical methodology. The approach employed in this study consists of three parts. First, a historical approach is used to understand Ibn Kathir's life background, education, and scholarly context. This approach helps to situate the exegete's thoughts within the intellectual developments of the time.

Second, a textual approach is used to identify the patterns of source and argument utilization in the Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim. The analysis focuses on the use of Quranic verses, hadith, narrations of the Companions, opinions of the Tabi'in (followers of the Prophet), and historical information in the exegetical process. Third, an intertextual approach is used to compare the methodological principles contained in the preamble to Ibn Kathir's exegesis with those of Ibn Taymiyyah's Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir. This approach aims to find similarities in ideas and the possibility of developing thinking, not just stating influence because there are similarities in opinion (Wara et al., 2024).

Data source

Data sources used in research are divided into two types, namely primary sources and secondary sources:

Primary sources include Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah written by Ibnu Katsir, as well as Muqaddimah fi Ushul al-Tafsir written by Ibnu Taymiyah regarding history and methods.

Secondary sources include books on tafsir methods, historical papers on the development of tafsir, as well as journal articles that discuss the characteristics of Ibn Kathir and Ibn Taymiyah's way of interpreting the Qur'an. Among them are research by Aruf (2011), Maliki (2018), Abdullah (2020), Muhyin and Nasir (2023), and Wara et al. (2024). Secondary sources are used to compare so as not to draw conclusions based only on one work read.

Data collection technique

Data collection was conducted by documenting and searching for information from written sources. The research stages included:

1. Searching for sources discussing the biography, education, and intellectual environment of Ibn Kathir.
2. Exploring the various ways people understand and interpret the contents of the Quran, known as Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim.
3. Distinguishing explanatory sections that demonstrate the use of the Quran, hadith, stories from companions, and historical knowledge.
4. Comparing the principles of interpretation in the preamble to Ibn Kathir's tafsir and Ibn Taymiyyah's methodological work.
5. Data were analyzed based on their relationship to the tsaqafah al-mufassir (expositor's interpretation), bi'ah al-mufassir (expositor's interpretation), and the characteristics of interpretation.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis and historical interpretation methods. The analysis was conducted in three main stages.

First, the data was divided into three categories: scientific competence, intellectual environment, and interpretive practice. The scientific competence category encompassed mastery of

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hadith and history, while the intellectual environment category encompassed the scientific tradition and Ibn Kathir's relationship with Ibn Taymiyyah.

Second, a textual analysis was conducted to determine the characteristics of the interpretation. Aspects considered included the level of interpretive sources, the use of narrations, methods of explaining verses, and attitudes toward questionable narrations.

Third, the results of the analysis were explained by connecting findings from the text with historical information. The relationship between background and characteristics in the interpretation was not considered as an automatic causal relationship, but rather as a relationship that still needed to be supported by evidence.

To ensure the analysis remained accurate, the study also distinguished between documented biographical facts, similarities in thought, and intellectual influences evident in textual evidence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Imam Ibnu Kathir's Intellectual Background

Ibn Kathir was a scholar who specialized in several areas of Islamic religious knowledge, particularly in the fields of tafsir, hadith, and history. His tafsirs utilized various sources of narration to explain the meaning of verses in the Quran, while his work on history demonstrated his concern for constructing narratives of events and the development of Islamic society.

In his Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim, Ibn Kathir used narration as a key element in explaining Quranic verses. Aruf (2011) considers this tafsir to be a work that employs an analytical approach, with narration as its primary source. Research by Maliki (2018) also categorizes Ibn Kathir's tafsir as a bi al-ma'tsur tafsir and explains how the tahlili method was used in compiling it.

Literature findings indicate that Ibn Kathir's tafsir is characterized by placing Islamic sources as a crucial foundation for understanding the Quran. However, this characteristic also represents a continuation of the tradition of tafsir that predates Ibn Kathir's time.

Ibn Kathir's expertise in hadith helps us understand how he sorted and compared various narrations. His attention to history also helps us understand how historical narratives were used to discuss the verses of the story.

Therefore, Ibn Kathir's background knowledge can be interpreted as one of the foundations that explains the direction of his scholarship. However, this relationship must be seen through clear examples to avoid simply general explanations based on a person's life story.

Hadith Expertise and Characteristics of Interpretation

One of the distinctive characteristics of al-'Azhim's Tafsir al-Qur'an is the use of narrations to explain the meaning of verses in the Quran. This is called tafsir bi al-ma'tsur, an interpretation conducted by narrating from the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet, the explanations of the Companions, and the opinions of the Tabi'in (followers). Aruf (2011) states that Ibn Kathir not only collected narrations but also assessed who conveyed them and strengthened certain opinions when there were differences in interpretation. Muhyin and Nasir (2023) also identified the narration approach in Ibn Kathir's methodology. This study places Ibn Kathir's work within the classical tafsir tradition, which uses an analytical approach to explain Quranic verses.

Based on this literature, the relationship between competence and the characteristics of tafsir can be seen through the use of hadith as a source of explanation for verses, the use of narrations from the Companions and Tabi'in as part of the habit of understanding Islamic teachings in the early generations, and attention to the quality of narrations when constructing arguments. However, this study cannot claim that all narrations in Ibn Kathir's interpretation are of equal quality. The sources of the hadith and the assessments of relevant hadith scholars require examples based on relevant sources. Therefore, the impact of the hadith's credibility on Ibn Kathir's interpretation of the Qur'an lies in the importance of the narrations as sources of interpretation, as well as the need to critically evaluate their use.

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Historical Skills and Explanation of Story Verses

Besides being known for his works on tafsir, Ibn Kathir also wrote history books, one of which is "Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah." This work demonstrates that the study of history was an important part of his intellectual pursuits. In understanding the Quran, historical information can help explain the background stories of the prophets, previous generations, and events that occurred in the lives of past societies. However, the use of historical information must be distinguished from interpretations derived directly from verses or hadith.

In exegesis, stories related to Judaism and Christianity are known as isra'iliyyat. This type of narration presents a methodological problem because not all information derived from ancient traditions has the same level of acceptance and veracity. Supriyanto and El Habib's study of isra'iliyyat in Ibn Kathir's tafsir considers this issue crucial in understanding how Ibn Kathir processed narrations derived from earlier history (Supriyanto & El Habib, 2026).

From that point of view, Ibn Kathir's historical abilities need to be examined not only from the number of stories written, but also from the way historical information is arranged in his explanations. There are three aspects that need to be considered. First, using historical information to explain the stories in the Koran. Second, the relationship between this information and the historical sources used. Third, a critical attitude towards information that is not supported by strong evidence. Thus, skills in history can help broaden understanding of a context. However, to show these implications specifically, further research needs to compare examples of interpretation in Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim with historical explanations contained in Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

Intellectual Environment and Relationship with Ibn Taymiyyah

The relationship between Ibn Kathir and Ibn Taymiyah is important in understanding how Ibn Kathir's thought developed. Ibn Taymiyah is known to be very concerned with interpretive methodology which emphasizes the importance of understanding the Qur'an through reliable sources.

In Muqaddimah fi Ushul al-Tafsir, Ibn Taymiyah explains the levels of sources used to understand or interpret the Qur'an, including using the Qur'an itself, the Sunnah of the Prophet, as well as explanations from friends and the first generation of Muslims. These principles indicate a methodological approach that prioritizes the relationship between interpretation and initial sources (Ibnu Taimiyah, n.t.). The same characteristics are also found in al-'Azhim's method of Tafsir al-Qur'an, especially in the use of history as a source for understanding the meaning of the Qur'an. This contact becomes the basis for analyzing the intellectual relationship between the two figures.

Wara et al.'s (2024) research on intertextual patterns in the preamble to Ibn Kathir's commentary and Ibn Taymiyyah's methodological approach provides an important basis for analyzing this. This research examines how sentences within the text are interconnected and demonstrates the importance of understanding how earlier ideas are integrated and developed in the commentary. These findings distinguish three aspects: methodological similarity, historical connection, and demonstrable intellectual influence. Methodological similarity indicates shared principles. Historical connection indicates a connection in the course of thought. Meanwhile, intellectual influence requires clearer evidence that one figure's ideas were accepted, used, or developed by another.

Therefore, the relationship between Ibn Kathir and Ibn Taymiyyah should not be understood as involving a complete copying of thought. Ibn Kathir must still be considered an interpreter who processed sources and traditions of knowledge with his own work and arguments.

The Relationship between Tsaqafah, Bi'ah, and the Characteristics of Tafsir

Based on literature studies, the characteristics of Ibn Kathir's interpretation can be analyzed through the relationship between these three elements.

First, the tsaqafah al-mufassir, which is the scientific ability related to mastery of hadith, history, and the sciences of the Qur'an. This element will be divided into the tendencies of source selection and argumentation patterns in interpretation.

Second, the bi'ah al-mufassir, namely the intellectual environment encompassing the tradition of knowledge, the relationship between teacher and student, and the development of religious thought.

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This element provides the background for understanding the methodological approach used by Ibn Kathir.

Third, the characteristics of interpretation that can be directly seen in Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim, which encompasses the interpretation of the Qur'an using the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the sayings of the Companions.

Table 1. Synthesis of Thinking Matrix and Methodological Relationships

Study Aspects	Tsaqafah / Bi'ah al-Mufassir	Implications on the Characteristics of Interpretation
Hadith Expertise	Mastery of the science of history and jarh wa ta'dil	Strict selection of narrations, criticism of sanad, and interpretation of verses with hadith (tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Sunnah).
History Expertise	Writing of Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah	Narrative contextualization of the stories of the prophets & critical screening of the narrations of isra'iliyyat.
Teacher-Student Relationship	Influence of Ibn Taymiyah (Muqaddimah)	Application of the hierarchy of interpretation: Al-Qur'an → Hadith → Atsar Sahabat → Tabi'in.

The relationship between these three elements can be formulated as the following analytical framework:

Scholarly competence + intellectual environment → methodological orientation → interpretive practice.

This framework does not imply that the relationship between background and interpretation occurs automatically. Rather, the scholarly background and academic environment provide the basis for understanding how an interpreter chooses a method for translating verses, while evidence from the text itself is used to demonstrate how that choice is implemented. Therefore, Ibn Kathir's distinctive style of interpreting the Qur'an is best understood as the result of an interaction between his personal intellectual abilities, the existing history of exegesis, his academic environment, and the methods he employed in interpreting the Qur'anic verses contained in his work.

DISCUSSION

Tsaqafah al-Mufassir as a Framework for Understanding Interpretation Orientation.

The concept of tsaqafah al-mufassir conveys the view that someone interpreting the Quran does not interpret it within a contextless or backgrounded framework. The ability to understand a particular field of knowledge can influence how an interpreter selects sources, organizes arguments, and evaluates differing opinions.

In the context of Ibn Kathir, the ability to understand hadith is crucial for explaining the position of narrations in his exegetical works. Aruf (2011) states that Ibn Kathir's interpretations went beyond simply collecting narrations, but also involved evaluating and substantiating certain opinions. Thus, competence in hadith can be interpreted as part of his methodological orientation.

Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir's interest in history provides an opportunity to understand the relationship between historical knowledge and the interpretation of verses in narratives. However, this relationship cannot be proven simply by demonstrating that Ibn Kathir wrote a history book. Research must clearly demonstrate how historical knowledge is used in the interpretation process and how this information relates to other sources.

Methodologically, in understanding the background knowledge of interpreters, two aspects must be considered. On the one hand, background can help explain how someone interprets something. On the other hand, the characteristics of the work still need to be analyzed through the text so that

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conclusions don't rely solely on biography. Thus, the tsaqafah al-mufassir is more appropriately used as a framework for understanding trends in interpretation rather than being considered a comprehensive explanation of the entire content of tafsir

Bi'ah al-Mufassir and the Formation of Intellectual Orientation

The intellectual environment serves as a venue for the exchange of ideas, learning, and scientific development. The relationship between teacher and student can be one way to disseminate methodological principles. In the case of Ibn Kathir and Ibn Taymiyyah, the confluence of ideas regarding the authority of hadith in exegesis demonstrates the importance of studying the intellectual environment as part of the history of exegetical methods. The principles discussed by Ibn Taymiyyah in the Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir provide a foundation for understanding the exegetical tradition that uses the Qur'an, Sunnah, and earlier commentaries as important sources.

However, environmental influence does not necessarily mean full acceptance. A student may accept some of their teacher's ideas, develop them, or apply them in a different context. Therefore, research on intellectual influence must address the relationships evident in the works. The intertextual research of Wara et al. (2024) is relevant in this regard because it emphasizes comparisons between texts to explore connections between ideas. This approach helps researchers distinguish between general similarities and more specific textual connections.

Therefore, Ibn Kathir's intellectual environment must be understood as one of the factors that shaped the direction of his thinking, not as the only factor that determined all the characteristics of his interpretation.

Integration of Hadith and History Competencies in Tafsir Methodology

Expertise in hadith and history can be viewed as two complementary skills in the interpretation process, although they have distinct roles. According to Ibn Kathir's exegesis, these two aspects can be analyzed by selecting examples of verses that have explanations based on narrations and are related to historical narratives. Researchers can then assess how these sources are used, whether there are comparisons between narrations, and how the interpreter draws conclusions.

This approach is also crucial in studying the issue of isra'iliyyat. The existence of earlier narratives demonstrates that narrative-based explanations do not necessarily encompass only the Prophet's hadith and the accounts of his companions. Narrative material also requires special assessment. Supriyanto and El Habib's 2026 study on isra'iliyyat in Ibn Kathir's exegesis demonstrates that this topic remains relevant in research on tafsir methods. Therefore, expertise in hadith and history must be read together by evaluating the sources, not solely based on the number of narrations or stories cited. This discussion shows that to understand the characteristics of Ibn Kathir's way of interpreting verses, it is necessary to carry out an analysis by considering how he uses sources, evaluates the truth of the narrations, and constructs his arguments.

Characteristics of Ibn Kathir's Tafsir in Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur.

Tafsir bi al-ma'tsur is an important approach in the history of Quranic interpretation. This approach places narrated sources as the primary basis for explaining the meaning of verses.

Aruf (2011) and Maliki (2018) both discuss the use of narrated sources in Ibn Kathir's tafsir. Both also identify the analytical method as a distinctive characteristic in constructing his interpretations. This characteristic indicates that Ibn Kathir not only follows the sequence of verses in the Mushaf but also provides interpretations by referring to various sources and appropriate explanations. Thus, the tahlili method explains how to structure a discussion, while tafsir bi al-ma'tsur explains the direction or tendency within the sources of interpretation.

This distinction is important because the terms method and source of interpretation are often used interchangeably, even though they have different roles and functions in analysis. From the perspective of the tsaqafah al-mufassir and his followers, these characteristics can be learned by combining mastery of knowledge, academic background, and the activity of understanding and interpreting verses of the holy book. However, this association must be balanced, as the bi al-ma'tsur tradition had developed long before Ibn Kathir. This means that the distinctive characteristics of this

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interpretation not only reflect a person's individual abilities but also relate to broader methods of interpretation.

Research Contributions to the Study of Interpretation

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the scholarly background, academic environment, and distinctive interpretive methods employed by Ibn Kathir. The first contribution is the application of the concepts of tsaqafah al-mufassir and bi'ah al-mufassir as a basis for connecting biographical studies with textual analysis. With this framework, research on interpreters goes beyond simply explaining their lives but also attempts to explain how these backgrounds influenced their work.

The second contribution relates to the distinction between scholarly abilities, intellectual context, and textual evidence. This distinction helps prevent overly simplistic conclusions about the influence of one figure on another. The third contribution focuses on the importance of evaluating sources in understanding interpretations based on narration. The use of hadith, narrations of the Companions, opinions of the Tabi'in (followers of the Prophet), and historical narratives must be analyzed based on the role and credibility of their sources.

However, this study has limitations. A literature synthesis cannot replace in-depth textual research on the primary editions of Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah. Further research should select several verses in a focused manner and compare their interpretations with the methodological principles found in Ibn Taymiyyah's work. With more in-depth research, the relationship between social and intellectual backgrounds and interpretation characteristics can be clarified with more convincing evidence.

4. CONCLUSION

Research on tsaqafah al-mufassir wa bi'atuhu provides a basis for understanding how Imam Ibnu Katsir's intellectual background, academic environment, and traits in interpreting the Qur'an are related to each other. Based on the literature review, there are three main conclusions.

First, Ibn Kathir's intellectual background is important to understand the direction of interpretation he used. His attention to the science of hadith and history is related to how to use narrations and historical information in explaining the Qur'an which is called Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim. However, these relationships must be explained by analyzing the text so as not to rely solely on information about a person's background.

Second, the way Ibnu Kathir understands something shows that story sources have a very important role. The use of the Al-Qur'an, hadith, explanations of friends, and the opinions of tabiin are important elements in the tradition of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur. When it comes to the quality of the source and its argumentative function, the use of history is directed towards evaluating the quality.

Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual context is crucial and he understands Ibn Kathir's methodological orientation. The intersection of their thoughts requires a reliable text, which will demonstrate methodological similarities, traditional scholarly continuity, and a more specific intellectual perspective. In general, this research demonstrates that Ibn Kathir's approach to understanding the Qur'an needs to be understood by examining the relationship between his scientific abilities, his intellectual environment, and the methods he employed in interpreting Qur'anic verses, as evident in his work. This closely related cause and effect demonstrates the interaction between personal intellectual capacity and the scholarly traditions that developed at the time.

Further research is recommended to analyze several verses in the Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and compare them with Ibn Kathir's historical work and the methodological principles employed by Ibn Taymiyyah.

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