

Anthropomorphism in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the tendency in schools of theology of the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, especially in anthropomorphism, *khalq* al-Qur`an and *ru`yatullah*. This study is a library research, and the primary data is the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia that was published in 1996. Meanwhile, the secondary data is the works of the rational school of theology (Mu`tazila and Māturīdī Samarkand) and the traditional school of theology (Ash`arī and Māturīdī Bukhara). After studying the sources above, it was found a number of verses of the Qur`an were used as naqli views by rational and traditional scholars, and then they explained their interpretation according to this Tafsir. Furthermore, a comparative interpretation analysis is carried out by applying the interpretation of the rational and traditional schools of theology to draw a conclusion about the school of theology in this Tafsir. The finding shows that the interpretation of anthropomorphic verses in this Tafsir is in line with Ash`arīyah and Māturīdīyah Samarkand Beliefs. Hence, the Al-Qur`an is *qadim* (ancient or old), and God can be seen with the eyes of the believer in the hereafter.

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Introduction

According to Pijnappel, Snouk Hurgronje, Moquette, and Dutch scholars, the teachings of Islam in Indonesia originated in Gujarat brought by intermediary traders from the Middle East who belonged to the Shafi`i school of the late 12th century AD. This opinion is based on the similarities between the Gujarati school and those in Indonesia (Shafi`i school) and the similarity in the discovery of tombstones in Barus and Pasai (Azra 1996, 24-36). This theory was refuted by Marison and TW Arnold, who said that in the 13th century AD (1297) in Gujarat, people still adhered to Hindu-Buddhist religions. Moreover, if Islam had originated in Gujarat, Islam in Gujarat would have been much more developed then. Therefore, they argued that Islam in Indonesia originated from Malabar brought by traders that followed Shafi`i school in the 13th century. In addition, Islam in

Indonesia came from Malabar and Arabia in the 7th century AD, brought by Arab traders. Islam originated from Arabia and Hadramaut in the 7th century AD. This opinion is supported by Crawford, Keijzer, Neiman, Hollander, Hamka and Naquib al-Attas. According to Azyumardi 1) Islam came to Indonesia directly from Arabia, 2) professional scholars and preachers, 3) brought Islam) those who initially converted to Islam were kings and businessmen, and 4) most of the professional preachers came more real and massive in the 12th and 13th centuries AD (Azra 1996, 24-36).

Johns said that Islamic preaching was intensely and professionally carried out by wandering Sufis of the 13th century AD. The success achieved by the Sufis was supported by the ability to teach Islam in an attractive (fun) and harmonious way. They also emphasized conformity to Islam or continuity rather than changes in local religious beliefs and practices. Islam did not come with war and intrepid power, and this embodies syncretism. It is the pattern of Islam in Indonesia (Azra 1996, 24-36). The school of Islamic theology that came to Indonesia was the Ash'arī school of theology with the character of Sufism (Tarekat). Madrasas/Islamic boarding schools as centers of Islamic studies focus more on the subjects of Tafsir, Hadith, Law (Usul Fiqh and Fiqh) and Theology. In many Madrasas belonging to Ahl al-Hadith, theology lessons are not taught because this teaching is still under suspicion. Moreover, the understanding of rational theology (Mu'tazila school of theology) is considered not Ahl al-Sunnah.

Ash'arī school of theology was growing and stable in Indonesia when a number of scholars who studied in the Middle East, especially in Mecca and Medina, returned to Indonesia in the 17th and 18th centuries. These people, who are socially and intellectually included in the ulama community in the Middle East, study and follow Ash'arī school of theology, which they then distribute through the books they write. The great scholars of this century, including Hamzah Fansuri, Ar-Raniri, Abdul Rauf al-Singkili, Al-Maqasri and Muhammad Nafis Al-Banjari and Al-Palimbangi, were followers of Ash'arī school of theology (Azra 1996, 202-204). Steenbrink, in his research on the books used in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia in the 19th century AD, concluded that most of the books used by Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia were from the books on the development of Islamic thought. In addition, specifically in matters of theology, there are no books from rational theology or Mu'tazila theology. The books of *aqidah*/theology used in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries AD came from the books of the Ash'arī school of theology. The books included *Bahjat al-'Ulum* by Al-Samarqani, *Umm al-Barahin (ad-Darrah or al-Aqa'id al-Sughra)* by Al-Sanusi al-Husaini, *al-Mufid* by Sulaiman al-Jazuli, *Fath al-Mubin* by Muhammad al-Bajuri, *Kifayatul al-Awam dan al Miftah fi syarh ma'rifat al-Islam* by Muhammad bin Asy-Syafi'i, *Jauharat at-Tauhid dan Iftah al-Murid* by Ibrahim al-Laqani, and Book of Tafsir of *Jalalain* (Steenbrink 1994, 157-158). The authors and contents of these books follow the traditional Ash'arī school of theology. The *Bahjat al-'Ulum* by Al-Samarqan contains the six pillars of faith, the concept of faith, and the attributes of God.

Since the 1970s, many alumni of Indonesian students have completed their studies abroad, especially in Egypt/al-Azhar and from the West, and they have begun to introduce rational and contextual theological views in various forms. Harun Nasution introduces his Rational Islam, and Nurcholis Madjid teaches inclusive and substantive Islam. According to Harun Nasution, traditional theology has several characteristics, namely 1) a low position of common sense, 2) the freedom of humans in their will and actions, 3) freedom of thought which is bound by many dogmas, 4) distrust of *sunnatullah* and causality, 5) attachment to textual meaning of the Qur'an and Hadith, and 6) being static in attitude and thinking. Ash'arī and Māturīdī Bukhara represent this school of theology. (See Harun Nasution, *Rational Islam*) (Harun Nasution 1996, 116). Rational theology or *sunnatullah* theology has characteristics, among others 1) a high position of common sense; 2) human freedom in their wills and actions, 3) freedom of thought is only bound by the basic teachings in the Qur'an and Hadith, which are very few, 4) believe in *sunnatullah* and causality, 5) take metaphorical meanings from revealed texts, and 6) being dynamic in the attitude of thinking. The school of theology is represented by the Mu'tazila and Māturīdī Samarkand (Harun Nasution 1996, 112).

Modern Islamic theological thinking in Indonesia can be grouped into 1) neo-modernism, with the emphasis that Islam must be involved in the modernism struggle, and the scholar is Nurcholis Madjid; 2) socialism-democracy, with an emphasis on an Islamic mission that must give meaning to humans, and its scholars are M. Dawam Rahardjo and Adi Sasono; 3) universalism (internationalism), which emphasizes the universal nature of Islam which gives a fixed dictum, and its scholars are M. Amin Rais and A.M. Saifuddin; and 4) modernism, which emphasis is on the rational aspect and renewal of Islamic thought in accordance with modern conditions, and its scholars are Harun Nasution and Djohan Effendi (Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendi 1992, 157-175).

Muslim Abdurrahman groups the theological styles in Indonesia into 1) rational theology, which tends to modernize Islam; 2) hermeneutic theology, which tends to Islamization, and 3) transformative theology, which emphasizes the issue of justice and social inequality¹ (Mutaha Azhari and Abdul Munir Mul Khan 1983, 224-225). Based on the explanation above, the problem to be studied in this paper is the schools of theology contained in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The problem focuses on verses on theology related to anthropomorphism, *khalq al-Qur'an*, and *ru'yatullah*. The researcher then analyzed descriptively-comparatively to draw conclusions about the tendency of the school of theology.

This research method focuses on library research by collecting primary and secondary data. The primary data source is the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, published in 1996. The secondary data are the works of writers from rational theology, such as *Syarh al Ushûl al-Khamsah, Mutasyâbih Al-Qur'an* by Qadli Abd al-Jabbar (Mu'tazila scholar); *Al-Tauhîd* by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Māturīdī Samarkand scholar), and the works of writers from traditional theology, such as *Al-Ibânat'an Ushûl al-Diyânah, al-Luma'fi al-Radd'alâ ahl al-Zaigh wa*

al-Bida', *Maqâlât al-Islâmîyîn wa Ikhlâf al-Mushallîn* by Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari (Ash'arî scholar); and *Ushûl al-Dîn* by Abu al-Yusur al-Badawi (Mâturîdî Bukhara scholar). After then, to supply the secondary data, this research used *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* by Syahrastani, *al-Mazâhib al-Islamiyah* by Abu al-Zahrah, and Islamic Theology by Harun Nasution. After studying the sources above, it was found a number of verses of the Qur'an were used as *naqli* views by rational and traditional theology scholars, and then they explained their interpretation according to the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of interpretation is carried out by applying the interpretation of the rational and traditional theology to draw a conclusion about the schools of theology in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Discussion

Introduction to the Tafsir

The writing of this interpretation is managed by the Foundation for Translators and Interpreters of the Qur'an, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia with the Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No. 90 of 1972, and the Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No. 8 of 1973 chaired by Prof. Bustami A. Gani (Departemen Agama RI, 1996, IX). It is also supported by the Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Religion No. 30 of 1980, chaired by Prof. KH. Ibrahim Husein LML (Chairman) and members such as KH. Syukri Ghazali, Prof. H. Bustami A. Gani, Prof. Dr. KH. Muctar Yahya, Prof. KH. M. Salim Fachry, KH. Muchtar Lutfi El-Ansari, Dr. JS. Badudu, KH.M. Amin Nasir, HA. Azis Darma Wijaya, and KH. Nur Asjik, MA.

Three of the team members above, namely Prof. Bustami A. Gani, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Yahya, and KH. Nur Asjik, MA, are a student of the author of Tafsir, Al-Maraghi-Ahmad Mustafa al-Maraghi) Hasan Zaini 1997, 18-19). It may be one of the considerations in this interpretation based on the Book of Tafsir of al-Maraghi. Howard M. Federspiel, in his analysis of the targets to be achieved in writing this Standard Interpretation (Tafsir), argues that: 1) The writing of this Tafsir is part of the central government's five-year development plan and is evidence that the state is involved in disseminating the values of Islamic teachings to the community; 2) By involving Muslim scholars from various IAINs, they show maturity and ability as interpreters (tafsir experts); 3) The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia plans to create standards in the writing of interpretations (tafsir) and translations in Indonesia; and 4) Ability to explain the ideology of a group of Indonesians from outside the government called the National Muslim (Frederspiel 1996, 143-144).

Method and Sources

The Qur'an is the revelation of Allah revealed to His Messenger, Muhammad SAW, to be a guide for humans in life in this world and achieve happiness in the hereafter. Thus, interpreting the Qur'an cannot be merely based on thoughts, except for the explanation of His Messenger because he is the

first person to explain (*Mubayin*) and interpret (*Mufassir*) the Qur'an (Quraish Shihab 1994, 121-126). The method used in the Tafsir is based on the following procedure: paying attention to the hadiths of the Prophet, especially regarding the causes of the revelation of the verses; the opinions of the companions, *tabi'in* and *mufassir* (person who explain and interpret al-Qu'an) regarding the explanation and interpretation of the verses of al-Qur'an. The opinion of the *mufassir* used is the interpretation of the Qur'an based on the hadith, as well as sayings and opinions of companions. In addition, other verses are also considered because in the Qur'an, sometimes one or more verses are explained or interpreted by other verses (Departemen Agama RI 1996, VI).

The writing of this tafsir does not intend to lead to certain tendency (styles). It will only develop a standard interpretation to explain in a simple way the intent and purpose of the verses that have been translated into the Qur'an and its translation. The reference source of interpretation is an interpretation using the *tahlili* (Ali Hasan al-'Aridl 1994, 41-42) method with different tendencies. *Tafsir al-Maraghi* (W.1945) (Hasan Zaini 1997, 181), al-Manar tafsir by Rasyid Ridha (W. 1935), tafsir by Sayyid Qutub (W.1966) (al-Qattan 1996, 514), al-Waadlih tafsir by Muhammad Mahmud Hijaz with the tendency of *al-Adabi al-Ijtima'i* (Al-Farmawi 1994, 27-29), and tafsir by al-Qasimi (W. 1914) (Abd. Jalal 1988, 73) with a broad systematic (*Ithnab*) and all of these interpretations include the tafsir of the modern period. Tafsir by Qurtubi (W. 671 H) is a Tahlili interpretation with a very broad style of *fiqh* (law) by prioritizing the problem of *khilafiyah* and the arguments of each opinion and commenting on them. Even though he represents the Maliki interpretation of *fiqh*, he is fanatical about his school (al-Qattan 1996, 520).

Tafsir by al-Baidlawi (W. 691 H) (al-Shabuni 1984, 264) and Al-Alusi (W. 1271 H) is *bi al-Ra'yi* tafsir (*al-Dirayah*). From the point of view of *fiqh*, al-Alusi's interpretation includes the followers of the Hanafi school (Ali Hasan al-'Aridl 1994, 60). Tafsir by Ibn Katsir (W. 774 H) is *bi al-Ma'tsur* tafsir with the tendency to Ash'arī school of theology, and in terms of *fiqh*, it is included in tafsir of Shafi'i school (al-Qattan 1996, 527-528). Based on the author's study by comparing the books of tafsir used as references by this Tafsir, the tafsir method used is seen from the perspective of the source of tafsir, and then this tafsir is included in *tafsir bil-Izdliwaji* (combination) between *bi al-Ma'tsur (Riwayah)* and *bi al-Ra'yi (Dirayah)*, and based on the order of the verse, it is included in *tafsir Tahlili*, and based on the style (tendency), it is included in *al-Adabai al-Ijtima'i*.

Systematics or Technique

This interpretation consists of 11 volumes, each consisting of 3 chapters, and 1 volume of the Muqadimah of the Qur'an and its Tafsir. The systematics used in this interpretation (tafsir) is to first put forward the preamble of the surah to be interpreted, which contains the naming of the surah, the number of verses, the place where the surah descends, the main contents and the meaning of the surah with the previous surah. Then, it describes the subject/topic of the problem (discussion) that will be discussed, then it quotes one or several verses that will be interpreted as

well as the translation. Furthermore, the interpretation is compiled by mentioning *munasabah* (relationship of the verse with the previous verse). If there is hadith that explains the reasons for the revelation of the verse/surah, the hadith is quoted. In this interpretation, there is no vocabulary meaning or global meaning, but immediately interpreted verse by verse in a language style that is easy to understand. Suppose there is a difference of opinion among the interpreters on the matter discussed in verse. In that case, the opinion of the *Jumhur Ulama* is taken and included in the footnotes of the opinions of other scholars. After the interpretation is deemed adequate, the discussion is made within points to ease the reader's understanding.

To make it easier for readers to find the subject matter that will be known in the table of contents, each volume contains the main topics discussed. In the last volume, a bibliography is included to add insight for readers who want to know more about the interpretation. Therefore, this systematic or technique (broadness of discussion) includes the writing technique of al-Manhaj al-Wasith (medium, not too broad or *ithnabi* and not too short or *ijazi*) (Ali Hasan al-'Aridl 1994, 42) by focusing on (emphasize of explanation) the meaning and purpose of the interpreted verses. In addition, this book of tafsir includes the first *al-Jama'i* tafsir in the Islamic world.

Attributes of God

The discussion about the attributes of Allah is related to the issue of *al-Tawhid* or the Oneness of Allah (Harun Nasution 1987, 52). It is whether God has attributes or not and if He has, whether that attribute is *qadim* with the existence or not. If that attribute is *qadim*, of course, there are many things that are *qadim* apart from the existence of Allah, it will lead to many who are *qadim* besides Allah (*ta'addud al-quduma'* or multiplicity of eternal). As a result, it will lead to the notion of *syirk* or polytheism, which is of course contrary to the principle of monotheism. Mu'tazila solves the problem of *ta'addud al-quduma'* by saying that Allah has no attributes, and then this understanding is known as *Mu'attilah*, and those who maintain the existence of attributes in Allah are known as *Sifatiyah*. Mu'tazila, the understanding of the attributes of God, as explained by *Ash'ari*, is negative. God does not have the attribute of knowledge, power, life, hearing, sight, and so on. It does not mean that God does not have knowledge, power, life, hearing, sight, and so on. God absolutely knows, has power, lives, hears, sees, and so on, but knowing, having power, living, hearing, seeing, and so on is not attributes that can be defined literally. The meaning of God knows is that God knows with His knowledge and His knowledge is He Himself. God reigns with His power and that power is Him, God lives by His life, and that life is Him. This principle also applies to what are considered His attributes, so there is no difference between the attribute and His existence, said Abu Huzail (Abu al-Hasan Ibn Ismail al-Asy'ari 1969, 178).

While Mu'ammarr does not use adjectives, he uses the word *al-ma'ani* (understanding) for the attributes of Allah (Abu al-Hasan Ibn Ismail al-Asy'ari 1969, 168). According to al-Jubba'i, the attributes of Knowledge, *Quadrat* are conditions (*al-ahwal*), while conditions (*al-hal*) do not exist,

are unknown, not *qadim* (eternal) and not temporal, but are actually related to the existence. Therefore *al-hal* (condition) are aspects and concepts for one existence (*dzat*), with which *al-hal* (condition) existence (*dzat*) can be known and distinguished from other existence (*dzat*). Thus, the existence of God is One, and the attributes are merely conditions and conceptual problems that can be known only through the path of existence (*dzat*). (Ibrahim Madkour 1995, 58-59). Abu Hashim believes that God knows, *qudrat*, and *hayat* is not defined by attributes but by His existence. Meanwhile, what is called attribute refers to *al-ahwal* (states) in His existence (Subhi 1985, 311).

According to Ash'ari school, Allah has attributes, and those attributes are eternal. These attributes are not God's existence but manifest in existence itself. Since these attributes are not God, nor other than God (*al-Sifat laisat zatuh wa la ghairuh*) does not lead to many eternal besides God. The Ash'ari school of theology later will experience development in understanding the attributes of Allah (al-Syahrastani 1997, 76-77). Meanwhile, Maturidi Samarkand admits that God has had attributes since the *azali* era, without separating active attributes (actions). According to them, nature is not something outside of God and not separate from God's substance. Because attribute will not exist without existence, thus it will not lead to *qadim* with God's existence (Harun Nasution 1987, 137). Moreover, Maturidi Bukhara principally says that God has attributes. However, to distinguish God from many eternal things, they say that God's attributes are eternal through the eternity contained in God's existence, not through the eternity of the attributes themselves. Therefore, the attributes themselves are impermanent (al-Bazdawi 1963, 34). Furthermore, it will be discussed about *tasybih* (anthropomorphism), *khalq al-Qur'an* (the attribute of *kalam*) and seeing God in the afterlife (eschatology).

Anthropomorphism

This matter has become a topic of discussion among theologians because there are verses in the Qur'an that describe God as having physical properties, such as in Surah Thaha verses 5 and 39, Surah al-Qashash verse 88, Surah al-Rahman verse 27, Surah al-Insan verse 9, Surah Shad verse 75, Surah al-Maidah verse 64, Surah al-Zumar verse 67, and Surah al-Fajr verse 22. According to Mu'tazila, God cannot be said to have physical attributes. Therefore, the verses above must be understood metaphorically (*majazi*) to be in accordance with the holiness and glory of Allah. Meanwhile, Maturidi Samarkand agreed with Mu'tazila regarding these physical attributes. They interpret verses that describe God in numbers, such as the face, hands, eyes, and feet, with the power of God. For example, *Istawa* is interpreted to mean that Allah went to the 'Arasy and created it in an even, straight and orderly state. These verses are signs of Allah's power and the perfection of His power (Abu Zahrah, t.th, 219).

Meanwhile, Ash'ari argues that God does not have physical attributes like other creatures. God, as mentioned in the Qur'an, also has a face, hands, eyes, and so on. However, it is not the same as what humans have (creatures), it is *la yukayyaf wa la yuhadd* (cannot be described in terms of how

and its limitations) instead. God says in Surah al-Shura verse 11, but as mentioned by Abu Zahra, in *al-Ibanah*, Al-Ash'ari interprets verse 10 of Surah al-Fath that the hand of Allah is a hand worthy of Allah, but in *al-Luma'* the word *yad* is interpreted as power (Abu Zahrah t.th, 220). While Maturidi Bukhara, as al-Bazdawi said, the hands, face, eyes, and ears are not members of the body of God, but they are the same as other attributes such as knowledge, power and authority (al-Bazdawi 1963, 28). Furthermore, the interpretation of the verses concerning the description of physical attributes for God will be explained sequentially in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to find the tendency of kalam thought contained in this book of tafsir.

Surah Thaha verse 5 explains that the Creator of the heavens and the earth is the Most Gracious God who resides above 'Arasy. Staying on the 'Arasy is unlike a human sitting on a chair or vehicle because it equates the Creator with a creature. Because the way and the nature of Allah sitting on 'Arasy is not the same as sitting that is known to humans. It is solely the authority Allah, which is what God justifies, just like His Word (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 16, h. 147-148). For example:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ۝ ١١

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing (Surah al-Syura, 42:11).

Surah Taha verse 39 explains about three blessings of Allah to the Prophet Musa, and one of them is the care of Musa in the Pharaoh's Palace under the supervision, observation, and care of Allah.

Surah Taha verse 39 explains about three blessings of Allah to the Prophet Musa, and one of them is Musa's bringing up in the Pharaoh's Palace under the supervision, observation, and care of Allah (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 16, h. 175). Verse 88 of Surah al-Qashash and verse 27 of Surah al-Rahman are interpreted that everything in this world will be destroyed except the existence of Allah (God Himself), because He is eternal and lives forever (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 20, h. 417-418). Surah Shâd verse 75 explains God's warning to Satan for his reluctance to prostrate to honor Adam, God's creature who has been created by His authority (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 23, h. 442). Meanwhile, verse 64 of Surah al-Maidah explains the accusations of the Jews against Allah being miserly (*yad Allah maghlulat*), but on the contrary, the blessings of Allah are spread wide (*yadah mabsuthatan*) (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 6, h. 458-460). Surah Al-Zumar verse 67 states that the earth is in His hands, and the heavens are rolled up with His right hand, which means nature is in His power. The true nature cannot be known because it includes things that are unseen and left to Allah, and no one is like Him (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 24, h. 520). Verse 22 of Surah al-Fajr explains when the earth is shaken (Doomsday), the power and greatness of Allah are seen, and the angels line up, which is likened to the greatness and power of a king when He comes in the midst of soldiers (Departemen Agama RI 1996, Juz 30, h. 727).

Based on the explanation of the interpretation of the verses above, it can be concluded that in this Tafsir, the attributes of God are recognized, and the attributes that describe God as being in *jisim* (anthropomorphism) are believed to exist, but in they are not the same as those in humans (creatures). However, it is also necessary to carry out interpretations (tafsir), such as the word '*aiyuni* with care and supervision, *wajhah* with the existence of God, and *yad* with power (strength) and grace. By considering the tendency to interpret verses about anthropomorphism, this Tafsir tends to the moderate school of theology between Ash'ari and Maturidi Samarkand. On the one hand, it accepts anthropomorphism which is essentially handed over to God. On the other hand, it seeks to have interpretation as done in al-Maturidi or Mu'tazila.

Khalq al-Qur'an

This topic is a continuation of the discussion about the attributes, whether *kalam*, the attribute of existence, or the attribute of *af'al* (actions) is created or *qadim*. According to the Mu'tazila, *kalamullah* is the same as *sama'*, *bashar* is not the nature of existence since it is not *qadim*. In the Qur'an, there are commands and prohibitions, promises and threats, such as the command to establish prayer. If the Qur'an is *qadim*, it must have existed since the beginning (*azali*, the era before Allah SWT created humans). There are various stories in the Qur'an ranging from the Prophet Adam to Isa, and they have existed since the *azali* era. The Qur'an consists of surahs, verses and letters revealed gradually, called *baharu* (Subhi 1985, 130-134). The verses of the Qur'an that are used as *naqli* view are Surah Hud verse 1, Surah al-Hijr verse 9, Surah al-Anbiya' verse 2, Surah al-Zumar verse 23 (Abd. Jabbar 1965, 531-532) Surah al-Syu'ara verse 5, Surah al-Kahf verse 109, and Surah al-Baqarah verse 106 (Subhi 1985, 130-134). For example

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message, and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption) (Surah al-Hjr: 9).

Verse 1 of Surah Hud describes that the Qur'an is new because it is composed of letters and collected in written form into one, which is not *qadim*, said Abd Al-Jabbar (Abd. Jabbar, 1965, 531). The word *Al-zikr* in Surah al-Hijr verse 9 means the Qur'an, which is revealed and characterized as new (*muhdas*) as in Surah al-Anbiya' verse 2 and Surah al-Syu'ara verse 5. Every new one is a creature (Subhi 1985, 132) If the Qur'an is *qadim*, it will not be preserved and revealed gradually (*matsani*) (Abd. Jabbar, 1965, 532). If the Qur'an is *qadim*, there must be no changes such as in Surah al-Kahf: 109 and al-Baqarah: 106 above (Subhi 1985, 132). Ash'ari admit the attributes of God, and one of the attributes of God is *kalam* (to speak) because the Qur'an is the word of God, so it is *qadim* or not new (created). The word of God according to Ash'ari is an abstract *meaning* with the nature of *azali*, which is not composed of letters and sounds. Here, the Qur'an is called *qadim*. (al-Syahrastani 1997, 77). The Qur'an, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through Jibril

consists of letters, words, verses, and surahs, which is written and read is *dalalah* (guidance) on *kalam azali*. *Dalalah* is a creature or new, while the *madlul* (designated) is *qadim* or *azali*, or what is read is new and what is behind the reading is *Qadim* ((Subhi 1985, 69-77). The naqli view used as arguments are al-Rum verse 25, al-A'raf verse 54, al-Nahl verse 40, al-Kahf verse 109, Yasin verse 82, and al-Mukmin verse 16 (al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibanah*, t.th, 85-88).

The word *bi amrihi* in verse 25 of Surah al-Rum implies *kalamullah*, and *kalamullah* are not creatures. The creature is created by *kalamullah* or Allah's command. Allah's commands have existed since *azali* era. Therefore, *kalam* is not a creation, and the Qur'an is *qadim*, as mentioned in surah al-A'raf verse 54 (al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibanah*, t.th, 86). Verse 40 of surah al-Nahl and surah Yasin verse 82 are interpreted by al-Ash'ari as creatures or creations created with the word "kun". If the word of God is not *qadim*, then the word "kun" must be new. The word "kun" will not exist if another "kun" word does not precede it, and the other "kun" word is preceded by another "kun" word, and so on, so that there is a series of missing "kun" words that never ends (*tasalsul/infinite progress*). It is impossible because the word "kun" or the word of God must be *qadim* (al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibanah*, t.th, 87). Verse 109 of Surah al-Kahf is understood to mean that if all the sea water is used as ink to write down the words of Allah, it will certainly not be enough, as Allah's knowledge is unlimited. If Allah's words are written out, then Allah will be surely silent, and this is impossible (al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibanah*, t.th, 88). Verse 16 of surah al-Mukmin shows evidence that there was no creation when Allah's word was said. Therefore, *kalamullah* is not included in the category of creation (creature) (al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibanah*, t.th, 89).

According to Maturidi Samarkand, the word of God is a meaning that stands on His existence because it is one of the attributes that are united with existence (*dzat*), which is eternal. *Kalam* (words of God) is not composed of letters and sentences, so it is not a creation (new). Something new is *'aradh*, and *'aradh* cannot stand on the existence of Allah. Al-Qur'an consists of letters, sentences and expression (*lafadz*) that can be read, which is new (Abu Zahrah t.th, 218-219). Meanwhile, according to Maturidi Bukhara, the word of God is something that stands on His existence, while that consisting of letters, sentences, and surahs is not the word of God, but is called the Qur'an (*kitabullah*). The naming of the Qur'an with *kalamullah* is in a figurative language (*majazi*), because it is a sign of the existence of *kalam nafsi* (al-Bazdawi 1963, 61). Furthermore, the interpretations contained in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the verses of the Qur'an will be explained successively to find out the tendencies of *kalam* thought contained in the book.

Verse 1 of the Surah Hud explains that the Qur'an is a book of which verses are neatly arranged, the explanation is detailed, and the meaning is clear. Therefore, it is impossible that the letters, words, and location of the Qur'an is interchangeable. It is because it was sent down from God, the All-Wise, and All-Knowing (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 11 p. 465). Verse 9 of surah al-Hijr

explains that God revealed and preserved the Qur'an from various kinds of efforts or human intervention to destroy, reduce, and change its verses (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 14 p. 259). Verse 2 of surah al-Anbiya 'informs the negligent and ignorant of the polytheists when the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet and read to them. They listened to the verses, made fun of them, and played around (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 17 p. 305). Verse 5 of surah al-Syu'ara' also explains the arrogant attitude of the polytheists when they hear the verses of the Qur'an was read (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 19 p. 63).

Verse 23 of Surah al-Zumar explains that Allah sent down the best words, namely the noble Qur'an, some of its verses resemble other verses, both in explaining the laws, truth, *hujjah*, wisdom, and so on (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 23 p. 470). Surah al-Kahf verse 109 is in response to the accusations of the Jews regarding the contradiction between verse 269 of surah al-Baqarah and verse 85 of al-Isra'. It is said that if the ocean were the ink to write down the words of my Lord and His knowledge, the seawater would run dry before all the words of my Lord were written, even if the seawater was added to that much more because the sea is limited while God's knowledge and words are unlimited (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 16 p. 32). Verse 106 of Surah al-Baqarah explains that whichever verse is deleted, or replaced with another verse, or left out, Allah will replace it with a better verse that is more in line with the benefit of His servant or replace it with a verse of the same law and value as previous verse (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 2 p. 202).

Verse 25 of Surah al-Rum informs that the establishment (creation of) the heavens and the earth by the grace of Allah (*bi amri*) is His power and ability (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 21 p. 585). Verse 54 of Surah al-A'raf further emphasizes that there is harmony, order, and various objects in the heavens and on earth, all because of the creator, Allah, the All-Knowing and Wise (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 8 p. 442). Verse 40 of Surah al-Nahl and verse 82 of Surah Yasin explain that if Allah wishes to create something or bring someone to life who has died in the hereafter, it is enough for Allah to say "*kun fa yakûn*" (be, according to His will). His) which does not take a certain amount of time but just a blink of an eye (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz XIV, p.390, juz XXIII, p.276).

Verse 16 of Surah al-Mu'min explains that in Mahsyar later, Allah will say to all the people who have gathered: "To whom does the kingdom belong today?", so no one answered, then Allah himself answered with His words: "To Allah belongs The One and Only, He has no associate partner, The One who conquers everything with His power and might." (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 24 p. 565). Meanwhile, verses 21-22 of Surah al-Buruj explain that the Qur'an is a noble book of Allah, stored in *Lauh al-Mahfudz*, and no one can match it in terms of content and wording. It is preserved from falsification and alteration in response to the disbelievers who say the Qur'an is the stories of the ancients (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 30 p. 685).

Based on the excerpts of the interpretation of the verses contained in this Tafsir, there is no clear explanation of the novelty or *qadim* of the Qur'an. However, the definition given to the Qur'an

is *kalamullah* (the word of Allah), which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW in Arabic through the Makailat of Jibril which starts from surah al-Fatihah and closes with surah al-Nas which is received in *mutawatir* and compiled in *mushaf* (Departemen Agama RI 1996, muqadimah p. 20-21). The Qur'an is one of the actualizations of the nature of Allah's words, and Allah's attribute is *qadim*. Thus, it can be presumed that the tendency of this commentary on the Quran is *qadim*, that is, it tends to the view of Ash'ari school of theology.

Seeing God in the afterlife (eschatology)

This discussion arises related to seeing God in the hereafter, whether He can be seen with the eyes (physical) or with spiritually. According to Mu'tazila school of theology, God cannot be seen later in the afterlife with eyes because God is not composed of matter and form. God is immaterial. The material cannot grasp the immaterial. Humans see something requires the sense of sight (eyes). Eyes are materials and can only see the material ones. God is impossible for humans to see with the eye. For God is formless and takes place. What can be seen is only what takes place. If God can be seen, surely now in the world, God can also be seen as requested by the Prophet Musa. In fact, Musa could not see God. Thus, later, He also cannot be seen with eyes (Abd. Jabbar 1965, p 248-253).

The *naqli* view by the Mu'tazila are verse 103 Quran Surah al-An'am, verses 22-23 Quran Surah al-Qiyamah, verse 143 Quran Surah al-A'raf, verse 110 Quran Surah al-Kahf, verse 51 Quran Surah ash-Syura (Abd. Jabbar 1965, 233-265). For example:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives (all) vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted. (Surah al-An'am: 103)

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

(Some) Faces, that Day, will be radiant, looking at their Lord (Surah al-Qiyamah: 22-23).

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation, or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise. (Surah ash-Syura: 51).

For Abd al-Jabbar, verse 103 of the Quran Surah al-An'am asserts that God cannot be seen with the eyes in this world, now and in the hereafter as well. Because *nafi* (negation) in this verse is not related to time and place (Abd. Jabbar 1969, 255). The word *nazhirah* in verse 23 of the Quran Surah al-Qiyamah does not mean seeing God with your eyes later but waiting for God's reward. Because the word *wujuh* in this verse is not a specific human organ but is a whole person. Because in the

next verse (25), the word *wujud* is associated with guessing (*tazunnu*). Thus, the word *wujud* is irrelevant here to mean the face, which is a human organ (Abd. Jabbar 1965, 247). God's answer in verse 143 of the Quran Surah al-A'raf applies not only to Prophet Musa, but also to other Prophets and to all believers, because the word *lan* here is *li al-ta'bid* (forever). The continuation of this verse is actually an affirmation that Musa would not be able to see God at all. Because it turned out that the hill was destroyed, not silent as usual, as explained in the continuation of the verse. Due to this reason, God cannot be seen with the eye (Abd. Jabbar 1965, 265).

Surah al-Kahf verse 110 does not describe an encounter with God in a physical form but is a recompense (promise) of God with a reward as a consequence of the good deeds that have been done in this world. Verse 51 of Surah al-Shura also asserts that God did not speak to Musa directly, because God is not material. Therefore, through the intermediary of angels. Ash'ari school thinks otherwise that God can be seen with their own eyes in the hereafter. Because what cannot be seen is what has no form. What has form must be seen. God has a form because God can be seen. God is a substance that can see everything that exists, including seeing Himself. Therefore, God can also create humans to be able to see Him (al-Asy'ari, *al-Ibanah* t.th, 76).

The argument for Ash'ari uses verses 22-23 of Quran Surah al-Qiyamah, verse 143 of Quran Surah al-A'raf, verse 103 Quran Surah al-An'am, verse 26 Quran Yunus, verse 35 Quran Surah Qaaf, verse 44 Quran Surah al-Ahzab, and verse 15 Quran Surah al-Mutaffifeen (al-Asy'ari, *al-Ibanah* t.th, 65-72). The word *nazirah* in verses 22-23 Quran al-Qiyamah should not be interpreted as thinking (*takfir*), or paying attention (*i'tibar*), because the afterlife is not a place to think and pay attention. It should not also be interpreted as waiting (*intizhar*) because when the word *nazhar* is mentioned together with the word *wajh*, it means seeing with your eyes (al-Asy'ari, *al-Ibanah* t.th, 66). Verse 143 of the Quran Surah al-A'raf should not be understood as Musa asked for something impossible because it was not in accordance with the nature of his prophethood. It is just a possible thing. Therefore, seeing God is not impossible. And the word *lan* in the verse is not *nafi* forever. It is only in this world, not in the afterlife. Therefore, seeing God in the hereafter is not impossible, but it may depend on God's will (Subhi 1985, 67).

In verse 26 of Surah Yunus, the word *ziyadah* (additional reward) sees God as the pinnacle of heavenly pleasures. It is in line with Surah Qaaf verse 35, the word *mayazid* in this verse is interpreted as seeing God. In line with verse 44 of Surah al-Ahzab, the word *yalqunah* means they will see their Lord. And only the disbelievers will not be able to see God later in the afterlife, as in verse 15 of Surah al-Mutaffifeen. The eyes of the disbelievers will be veiled (covered) so that they cannot see God, while the believers will not have the hijab (veil) so that they can see God (al-Asy'ari, *al-Ibanah* t.th, 71-72). For Maturidi Samarkand, God can be seen in the hereafter, even something that must and is true, but it cannot be explained how the situation is. Only God knows what form and nature it is. Because it is a doomsday situation that only Allah knows (Abu Zahrah t.th, 220-221).

The *naqli* argument by al-Maturidi is the same as that of al-Ash'ari. Based on verse 103 of Surah al-An'am, it is understood that the interpretation of al-idrak here is meaningless if God cannot be seen. Therefore, God can be seen with the eye (Al-Maturidi 1979, 77). If God could not be seen, of course the Musa's request in verse 143 of Surah al-A'raf was foolish, and so it was impossible because Musa was a prophet and a messenger (revelation) (Al-Maturidi 1979, 78). Verses 22-23 of Surah al-Qiyamah is also understood by al-Maturidi, as seeing God with eyes instead of waiting because: 1) The hereafter is not a place of waiting; the waiting time is in the world where events occur; 2) The hereafter is a place to receive the recompense; 3) The letter *jar ila*, when used in the word *al-nazhar* does not mean waiting but seeing or looking; 4) Looking at the beautiful is a great pleasure, while waiting is not a great pleasure. Therefore, the meaning contained in this verse must be seeing God with your own eyes (Al-Maturidi 1979, 79).

Maturidi Bukhara, God can also be seen with the eyes because God will show Himself as He wills. God is unseen in the world because He does not show Himself. In the hereafter, God will show Himself to whom He wills and at the time He wills (Abd. Jabbar 1965, 87). The *Naqli* argument for al-Bazdawi is the same as that used by Ash'ari. In order to find the tendency towards the interpretation of the verses of seeing God later in the hereafter, sequentially the interpretations contained in the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs will be presented. Surah al-An'am verse 103 interprets that Allah cannot be reached by human senses, because human senses are created from matter and can only reach material things. Meanwhile, God is immaterial, so it is natural that humans cannot sense (see) Him.

Only human senses cannot reach Allah only as long as humans are still alive in this world. However, in the hereafter, humans can see Allah with their own eyes (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz VII, p 238-239) as emphasized in verses 22-23 of Surah al-Qiyamah. They see (*nazhara*) their Lord, which means looking at God without a barrier (seeing with your eyes) as in the hadith, "Indeed you will see your Lord with your own eyes" (HR. Bukhari) (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 19 p 511-512). It is possible that those who can see God in the hereafter are believers and unbelievers cannot. They are veiled (covered) from the grace of seeing Allah, as confirmed in Surah al-Mutaffifeen verse 15 (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 30 p. 657). Verse 143 of Surah al-A'raf interprets Allah's revelation directly to Musa without any intermediary. Then Musa also wanted to see Allah clearly, so he asked, "O my Lord! Show Your holy substance! Give me the strength to see You clearly!" Then Allah replied, "O Musa! You will not be able to see Me!" The Hadith defines it as follows:

Allah's hijab (barrier) is Nur; If the Nur was to be exposed (opened), surely the light of His face would burn all creatures whose sight of God reaches them. (HR. Muslim).

The context of this verse is seeing God in the world because seeing God in the hereafter can later happen to believers as the greatest blessing (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 9 p. 583-584). Verse

110 of Surah al-Kahf emphasizes that anyone who hopes to meet Allah in the hereafter, let them worship sincerely and make Allah the only one in a *rububiyah* and *uluhiyah* manner (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 16 p. 33). Verse 51 of Surah ash-Shura explains that Allah spoke to His Messengers in three ways as follows: 1) Reveal to the Apostle by planting understanding in their hearts; 2) Speak directly by using the barrier between God and His servant who is spoken to; this method was used by God to the Prophet Musa; 3) By the intermediary of Jibril (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 25 p. 80-81).

Verse 26 of Surah Yunus interprets that heaven is the reward for those who do good deeds, added to the pleasure of seeing (knowing) God truthfully (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 11 p. 368). Verse 35 of Surah Qaaf interprets that the reward for them is provided in heaven whatever they want, and pleasures they have never seen with their eyes, never heard with their ears, and never imagined in their hearts, added by seeing God as the pinnacle of all pleasures (Departemen Agama RI 1996, juz 26 p. 480). Based on the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the verses regarding seeing Allah in the hereafter, it can be concluded that God cannot be seen while humans are in the world because humans are made up of matter, while Allah is immaterial. However, according to the Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Allah can be seen with humans' eyes in the hereafter as the highest pleasure for the believers in heaven. However, this will not happen to the disbelievers because they have been deprived of the pleasure of seeing God. If the problem of *ru'yatullah* in this Book of Tafsir is examined, it appears close to the understanding of Ash'ari (*Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah*). In other words, Allah can be seen in the hereafter with their own eyes later, for believers who go straight to heaven. However, this does not apply to wretched believers or those who transit first in hell because the scales of their good deeds are not heavy.

Conclusion

Anthropomorphism (the nature of the body) believes that God has a physical nature, but its existence is not the same as that of a creature. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret the verses of anthropomorphism, such as the word *wajh* with God's existence, *yad* with power, and the grace of God. The Tafsir by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, regarding the *Khalq Qur'an* and seeing God in the hereafter, tends to refer to the thought of the Ash'ari, where the Qur'an is *Qadim*, as well as seeing God with the eye by believers in the hereafter as the highest reward for the good they have done in the world.

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