The Discourse of Qur'anic Metaphors: The Embryo of Theological Sects Disputes in Comprehending the Holy Qur'an

This article aims to examine problems related to metaphors (majāz) found in the Qur'an which were debated by scholars of Arabic literatures during the classic times. Majāz, opposed to ḥaqīqah, is a part of the Qur'an language styles which triggers theological debates among its supporters. By using comprehensive and comparative analysis method this study indicated that the debates on the issue raises three opinions in theological sects; Firstly, the Ẓāhirī and Salafī sects reject the existence of majāz in the Qur'an. They refuse the interpretations of things that are not standardized in the text of the Qur'an. Secondly, the Mu'tazilah sect is exaggerated in accepting majāz and attacking other theological sects that are inconsistent with their interpretations of the text. Thirdly, the Ash'arī sect which is more moderate in confirming majāz. The starting point of their debates over majāz in the Qur'an is the difference in analysis and conclusions about the origin of language. The Ẓāhirī and Salafī groups conclude that language is solely a gift from God, so there should be no change in terms of meaning. The Mu'tazilah believes that language is an invention and human power, that's why a word may have more than one meaning. Whilst, the Ash'arī argues that language is indeed a human creativity, but it cannot be denied that God also plays a role in giving human abilities, so there are other possible meanings.

Keywords: The Qur'anic Metaphors; Theological Sects; the Classic Times

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Artikel ini bertujuan mengkaji persoalan metafora (majāz) dalam al-Qur'an yang diperdebatkan eksistensinya oleh para pakar susastra Arab pada masa klasik. Majaz sebagai lawan dari haqiqah merupakan bagian dari gaya bahasa al-Qur'an yang memantik perdebatan teologis antar para pendukungnya. Dengan pendekatan analisis komprehensif dan komparatif hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perdebatan masalah majaz memunculkan tiga pendapat dalam mazhab teologi; Pertama, sekte Ẓāhirī dan Salafī yang menolak eksistensi majaz dalam al-Qur'an. Mereka menolak interpretasi terhadap hal-hal yang tidak baku dalam teks al-Qur'an. Kedua, sekte mu'tazilah yang berlebih-lebihan dalam menerima majaz serta menyerang mazhab teologi lain yang tidak sejalan dengan interpretasi teks mereka. Ketiga, sekte al-Asy'ariyah yang bersikap moderat dalam menerima majaz. Titik awal dari perdebatan mereka tentang majaz dalam al-Qur'an adalah perbedaan analisis dan kesimpulan tentang asal usul bahasa. Kelompok Ẓāhirī dan Salafī berkesimpulan bahwa bahasa semata-mata merupakan pemberian Tuhan maka tidak boleh ada perubahan makna. Kaum Mu'tazilah berkeyakinan bahwa bahasa merupakan penemuan dan kuasa manusia, maka suatu kata bisa bermakna lebih dari satu. Sedangankan Asy'ariyah berpendapat bahwa bahasa memang kreatifitas manusia, namun tidak bisa dipungkiri bahwa Tuhan berperan dalam memberikan kemampuan kepada manusia, sehingga ada kemungkinan tafsiran lain.

Kata Kunci: Metafora al-Qur'an; Mazhab Teologi; Era Klasik

Introduction

As an authentic and perfect holy book, the Qur'an contains something that may captivate readers or listeners. The Qur'an is also considered sacred and must be accepted as a doctrine that is dogmatically and ideologically proceeded. Even so, without theological dogma factor that requires believers to glorify and believe in it, the inherent factors in the text of the Qur'an itself is already alluring. These inherent factors can considerably be found throughout the texts of the Qur'an. [1] Yet, it will absolutely be more satisfying to reason if the Qur'an is approached through a scientific-rational methodology. For this reason, the verses of the Qur'an must gain a touch of esoteric meaning (*ta'wīl*). This *ta'wīl* devices have raised various interpretations of language studies implementation, and among the thinkers' focus of study in the classic times is the discourse of metaphor (*majāz*) *vis a vis* denotation (*ḥaqīqa*).

Islamic scholars of the classic times have paid a great attention to studies on the effects of the Qur'an and its significance on the development of Arabic disciplines, particularly critical science (*naqd*) and literature (*balāga*). They discuss these studies from different perspectives so that various focus studies emerge according to their respective specialties. [2] The most urgent perspective in literary studies (*balāga*) is the discourse on *majāz* which requires independent historical analysis, particularly if it is related to the significance of the Qur'an in forming excellent literary expressions (*al-I'tibār al-balīg*). [3] These various forms of literary expressions in the Qur'an have later been the discussion by Islamic scholars from classic to modern times.

This discussion of literary expressions in the Qur'an includes the concept of metaphor (*majāz*) as an entry point for Arabic literary discourse in relation to the interpretation of the Qur'an, starting from al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) to Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī times (d. 471/1079). The origin of the concept of *majāz* has an important role because it is developing. The concept of *majāz* as a literary instrument here becomes very important because it plays an important role, both in the critical discourse of Arabic literature and in the *tafsīr* (interpretation) traditions. The concept of *majāz* used in modern Arabic studies has been commonly employed by classical Islamic scholars as opposed to term '*ḥaqīqa*'. [4] Such utilization is considered common, both in literary theories and in the field of theological discourses.

Classical exegesee are always involved in theological debates, so they make use of them as a weapon to breakdown the Qur'anic verses and strengthen their arguments. The understanding of the texts of the Qur'an is generally explored by experts who have previously specialized in certain fields of science and ideology, so that these texts of the Qur'an are potentially to be used as a tool to justify their views. Thus, the exegesee often get caught up in accentuating their interests as an interpretation of the texts of the Qur'an.[5] In terms of the controversy of *majāz* in the Qur'an, for instance, *Mu'tazilah* will employ the text of the Qur'an to justify the concept of *majāz* according to their ideology, so will *Ẓahirī* and *Sunnis*.

The issue of *majāz* in the Qur'an which later gives rise to theological debates can be divided into three basic trends; Firstly, the tendency of *Mu'tazila*h groups to employ *majāz* as a weapon to provide interpretations of texts that are not in line with their basic thoughts. Secondly, the tendency to reject *majāz* started by the *Ẓahirī* groups; they put themselves firmly against any

[1] Syihabuddin Qalyubi, *Stilistika Al-Qur'an: Makna Di Balik Kisah Ibrahim* (Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 2008), 1.

[2] Ahmad Atabik, "Teori Makna Dalam Struktur Linguistik Arab Perspektif Mufasir Masa Klasik," *Jurnal Theologia* 31, No. 1 (2020): 65–86.

[3] Nasr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd, *Al-Ittijāh Al-Aqli Fi Al-Tafsīr: Dirasat Fi Qadhiyāt Al-Majāz Fi Al-Qur'ān 'Inda Al-Mu'tazilah* (Beirut: Al-Markaz Al-Saqafi Al-Arabi, 1996), 5.

[4] M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2008), 106.

[5] Abdul Mustaqim, *Aliran-Aliran Tafsir: Dari Periode Klasik Hingga Kontemporer* (Kreasi Wacana, 2005), 72.

understanding of the texts that go beyond the outward appearance of language (denotative). They reject the interpretation of things that are not clear in the texts of the Qur'an. Strictly speaking, they reject *majāz* in the Qur'an. Thirdly, the tendency of *Ash'arī* groups to try to place themselves moderately between groups that are excessive in using *majāz*, such as *Mu'tazilah*, and groups rejecting the existence of *majāz*.[6]

Referring to the *view points* above, this study seeks to answer various questions that are regarding the concept of *majāz* in the Arabic literary criticism tradition which is closely related to the study of the Qur'an. These questions are; why the Arabic literary scholars are divided into several groups, some deny and some others confirm the existence of *majāz* in Arabic literature and in the Qur'an, and what kind of theological-philosophical frameworks are used by each group to define the concept of *majāz*. From the questions above, this study rests on an interpretive method which tries to reveal the reasons for the various levels of the concept of *majāz* in Arabic literature and that of in the Qur'an. Thus, this study also focuses on the philosophical-theological study of the discourse of *majāz* in the Qur'an during the classic times.

The Concept of Metaphor in Arabic Literature

Arabic literary scholars often put *majāz* and *ḥaqīqah* in opposing ways. Such action is common, both in literary theories, in the Qur'an studies and in theological fields. In the traditions of Arabic literary studies and the Qur'an interpretation studies, understanding the concept of *majāz* as a tool for literary expressions is a must before moving on to other discussions in *majāz* studies, including about the flow of this *majāz* study development. The urgency of defining the concept of *majāz* must take

precedence, considering that studies on *majāz* which have been published to date mostly cover the flow of *majāz* development, neglecting the concept of *majāz* definition, so that the concept is still unknown in depth.

The concept of *majāz* is closely related to the study of transfer of meaning, from denotative (*ḥaqīqah*) to metaphorical forms (*majāz*). [7] Etymologically, *majāz* is opposite to *ḥaqīqah*. Literally, *ḥaqīqah* comes from the word '*al-šabat*' which means something certain or in accordance with reality. Whilst, *ḥaqīqah* in term is a word that remains in its original meaning, without *taqdim* (word meaning that takes precedence) and *ta'khīr* (word meaning that is put in the end). Literally, *majāz* is derived from the word '*al-jāwaza*' which means to exceed, as it is said "*jāwaztu hāža al-makān*" (I exceed this place) means to pass or exceed. Ibn Qudāmah defines it as word which is used, not for what is specified in the justified form.[8]

Ibn Manẓūr in '*Lisān al-'Arab*' explained that the word *majāz* derives from the root word j-w-z, which means 'to cut' or 'to move'. This meaning is not much different from that of *majāz*, that is, transfer of *ḥaqīqī* (denotative) meaning to another meaning related to it (metaphor). Whereas, the meaning of '*aur* from which the term *isti'ārah* is taken is not listed in the Qur'an.[9] Therefore, it is natural that it includes the last term to appear in *balāga* terminology. On the other hand, '*maśal*' is the most widely used term among the commentators. Besides, it is often listed in the Qur'an, while the term '*kinayah*' is less used, compared to *maśal*. [10] This is because, in one hand, it is alluded to very little in the Quran, and on the other hand, its literary value designation is lack of clarity.

Arabic literary experts commonly prioritize the use of *haqīqa* (denotative) meaning rather

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[6] Nasr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: Al-Markaz Al-Saqafi Al-Arabi, 2014), 122.

[7] Ali Al-Ali, Ahmad El-Sharif, And Mohamad Sayel Alzyoud, "The Functions And Linguistic Analysis Of Metaphor In The Holy Qur'an," *European Scientific Journal* 12, No. 14 (2016).

[8] Jalāluddīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fi 'Ulum Al-Qur'an, Vol. 2*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiah, 1996), 233.

[9] Jamaluddin Muhammad Ibnu Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-Arab, Vol. 5*, (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1998), 351.

[10] Nor Ichwan, *Memahami Bahasa Al-Qur'an: Refleksi Atas Persoalan Linguistik* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 222.

than that of *majāz* (metaphor) meaning. At the same time, Arabic linguists also emphasize the necessity of a relationship between the use of language words in *ḥaqīqī* way and that of their *majāzi*. The essence of a *lafaẓ* (word) can particularly be specified in certain fields of knowledge, so that its naming is in accordance with the place where it is used. Suppose its use is in line with language term, it then can be referred to as *haqīqa lugawiya*. Furthermore, if its use is in conformity with *shara'* term, then it can be referred to as *haqiqa shar'iya*, and so on .[11] This also applies to the meaning of *majāz*, so there are what-so-called *majāz lughawi*, *majāz lafẓī* and so on. In general, the use of both *ḥaqīqī* and new *majāz* meanings can be determined after the *lafaẓ* has been put together in a sentence or used in a conversation. To be able to find out the true meaning of a *lafaẓ*, one thing that can be done is through *Sima'i* way, that is, by listening to how linguists interpret it, while the meaning of *majāz* can be found through studies on *qarinahs* (hints) that accompany the *lafaẓ*. [12]

In his monumental masterpiece entitled '*Asrār al-Balāga*', Al-Jurjānī also defines *majāz* by referring to the distinction between rational arguments and linguistic *dalalah*. According to him, the distinction between language and rational meanings comes from conception. This has led to the distinction in *majāz* occuring in word and in its structure levels. *Majāz* at the word level by al-Jurjānī is called *majāz lugawī*, whilst at the word structure, it is called *majāz aqlī*.[13] He argues that word structure only occurs to the speaker to refer to meaning, which is arranged in the speaker. The distinction made by al-Jurjānī between *majāz lughawi* and *majāz aqli* is based on differences in language and utterance. Language is a group of words in an irregular form, while utterance is an orderly series of words that point to the speaker's intention.

Commenting on al-Jurjānī's conception above, Abū Zayd stated that the concept of *majāz* must pay attention to the relationship between the meaning of a word being converted, switched, and that of its *majāzi*, which becomes the trasferred target, which is an important part of the definition of *majāz*. *Majāz* means every word that is meant as something beyond converted by its foundational components since there is something between the second meaning and the first one. *Majāz* also means, every word that is made beyond what is converted into something that is not. Thus, it must rely on the meaning of a word that is actually being converted, with the notion that the use of a word metaphorically (*majāzi*) must rely on a relationship between the meaning of *majāzi* and that of *ḥaqīqī*.[14]

Majāz as a figurative language in Arabic literature intends to reveal meanings that are far to being close, abstract to being concrete and to shorten utterances that are deemed difficult to express. Figure of of speech (*majas*) is one of the richness of language uses, the use of certain varieties to obtain certain effects, the overall characteristics of the language used by a group of literary writers and their distinctive ways of expressing thoughts and feelings both in spoken and written forms. The use of *majāz* or *majas* is often studied in literature which is useful in providing expressions of artistic values with a variety of vocabularies. Basically, some figures of speech which are studied are expressions or practical figurative languages spoken by humans in general, so that the statements produced are familiar to those hearing them. *Majas* is often seen as synonymous to figurative language, but

[11] Ichwan, 222.

[12] Mochammad Mu'izzuddin, "Majaz Al-Qur'an Karya Abu 'Ubaidah," *Alfaz (Arabic Literatures For Academic Zealots)* 2, No. 1 (2014): 62–71.

[13] Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjāni, *Asrār Al-Balāgah*, (Cairo: Dar Al-Madani, 1989), 15.

[14] Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjāni, *Dalāil Al-I'jāz*, (Cairo: Dar Al-Madani, 1987), 45.

in fact, *majas* is indeed classified into figurative language.[15]

In *Balāga* (Arabic rhetorics) studies, *Majāz* is a part of *Bayan* studies which happens to be one of several branches, such as *Tashbih* (which is the foundation for the formation of *majāz*) and *Kināyah*. In general, these three discussions of *Bayān* studies only talk about the *Ḥaqīqī* and *Majāzī* meanings. Likewise, *Tashbīh* (likeness) which brings together and delivers two *tharafs* (parties) between *ḥaqīqī* (*mushabbah*) and *majāzi* (*mushabbah bihi*) meanings and it may be the other way around. Meanwhile, *majāz* eliminates one of the two *tharafs* containing *alaqah* (relation) which can be reconciled with its *ḥaqīqī* and *kinayah* meaning. This contains the denotative expression which is meant to be another or denotative meaning and sometimes this functions to insinuate and so on.[16]

All the things mentioned above are figurative language phenomena which indicate a change in the designation of denotative words and their beyond original meanings. Parable (*maśal*), for example, is often used by the Qur'an to be similar to the meaning of likeness (*tashbīh*) of an object to another. Therefore, parable (*maśal*) meaning is very close to the meaning of likeness (*tashbīh*). One thing which shows this harmony is that the word '*shibh*' found in the Qur'an is not mentioned unless it has the meaning of likeness, similarity, and ambiguity between two things. If something is likened, meaning that there is a similarity and ambiguousness that is difficult to distinguish.

The Development of Metaphor in the Qur'anic Semantics

In modern studies of Arabic literature, the concept of metaphor (*majāz*) grows and becomes established through the Moslem theological scholars efforts, particularly *Mu'tazilah*. In

interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, they base their philosophical rationality on studying metaphors from both Arabic literary and the Qur'an semantic sides. Moreover, their studies barely move from that to go into the substance of universal concepts which are the truly essence and underlying the concept of *majāz* found in the books of *Balāga* scholars, especially early generations, such as al-Jurjānī, al-Sakkākī and al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwaynī. [17] In comprehending the concept of Arabic literature and the Qur'an semantics, it cannot be separated from universal concepts coming from the interpretation of the Qur'an texts since the Arabic literature studies basically appear as the experts' understanding of the contents of the Qur'an finds its way.

The study of *majāz* as a terminology in relation to theological thoughts is not easy to determine and make sure when the word or term *majāz* was first used. First of all, it must be differentiated between *majāz* as a term and *terminus technicus* in literary criticism and it is an explicit meaning. In this case, Joseph van Ess's study showed that in the first century of hijri, the word *majāz* in the framework of theological argumentation was substantially used. The substantive meaning intended is the notion of *majāz* as a non-lexical and connotative meaning. For instance, van Ess's interpretation on Hasan Muhammad al-Hanafiya's (d. 100 H) theological arguments which is seen as *majāzi* or beyond lexical boundaries understanding. [18]

Apart from theological arguments, the use of *majāz* in Islamic disciplines in general, except to the study of the Qur'an interpretation and Arabic literary theories, is still rarely employed. In other words, the use of *majāz* is only found in three Islamic disciplines, namely theology, literature, and the Qur'an interpretation. According to Abū Zayd, the first Arabic literary expert to have used the term *majāz* as opposed to *ḥaqīqī* was al-Jāhiẓ.

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[15] H Mardjoko Idris, "Majaz: Persoalan Teologis Atau Bahasa?," (Article, Uin Sunan Kalijaga, 2009), Accessed April 3, 2021, Http://Digilib.Uin-Suka.Ac.Id/8618/1/H.

16 Umar Khitab Umar Al-Rushdi, "Al-Majaz Fi Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Sunnah Baina Al-Ijazah Wa Al-Man'i," Multaqa

Ahl Al-Lugah, 2009, Accessed April 7, 2021 Https://Www.Ahlalloghah.Com/Showthread.Php?T=1469.

[17] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 121.

[18] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 109.

He argued that *majāz* includes borrowing word or expression, parable, reverse (*qalb*), antecedent (*taqdīm*), ending (*ta'khīr*), omission *(hazf)*, satire (*ta'rīḍ*), simile (*kināyah*), and the others. [19] Al-Jāḥiẓ's concept is a figurative language phenomenon showing a change in the designation of words and their beyond prevalent meanings. Although the figurative language above has been mentioned and formulated since Ibn Abbas and was again referred to by al-Jāḥiẓ and developed by Ibn Qutaibah.[20]

In terms of theological disputes embryo, Ibn Abbas's ijtihad (an effort to dig out Islamic law) in interpreting the Qur'an texts cannot be separated from the context of *takwil* (explanation) which has been the center of debates among theologians since the exit of *Khawārij* group from Ali ibn Abi Talib forces due to their rejection of arbitrage (*taḥkīm*) principles. Ibn Abbas was the Ali ibn Abi Talib's messenger to debate with *Khawārij* in order to put them back in the right track from their fallacies. In these debates, the *Khawārij* used to employ the verses of the Qur'an to strengthen their arguments, so that the debates only led to textual understanding of the Qur'an. This made Ali prohibit Ibn Abbas from arguing with them by making use of the arguments (*dalīl*) of the Qur'an, because the Qur'an has many perspectives. The *Khawārij*'s various perspectives in interpreting the Qur'an have raised various *dalālah* (meaning of a text). The abundant perspectives in understanding the Qur'an by the theological sects are the embryos in the study of *majāz* in the Qur'an.[21]

These debates keep going by classical commentators. They are always involved in the debates of *kalām* (theology), so they use the debates as a weapon to explain the texts of the Qur'an and strengthen their arguments. The word *maṡal*, which Arabic literary experts consider as part of *majāz*, used by Ibn Abbas cannot be separated from the disputes in Arabic literature (*balāga*) which he often uses in describing the holy verses of the Qur'an. Mujahid, a student of Ibn Abbas, used this method to explain verses from their denotative (lexical) meanings, as in the God's words: "*You are already aware of those of you who broke the Sabbath. We said to them, "Be disgraced apes!*" (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 65). Mujāhid said that they were not turned into apes, but it was only a parable that Allah gave them, just like the one depicting a donkey reading holy books. This *ta'wīl* (explanation) was later rejected by Imam al-Tabari. Mujahid also appeared in theological debates. His opinions emphasize rationality, especially when providing interpretations and testimony on substance.[22]

The metaphorical problems in the Qur'an have been a relationship of debate between the terminology of *balāga* and *theology*, which is increasingly exposed in the era of Muqātil ibn Sulaiman (d. 150/767). In his work entitled *Al-Wujūh wa al-Naẓāir fi al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, he describes the textuality of the Qur'an. [23] The emergence of Muqātil's work is based on his refutation of the concept of God manifestation in humans (*tajsīm*). His work also depicts the impression of diversity in the text meaning (*dalālah*) of a word because it follows the diversity where the sentence goes. Muqātil's work also spans several words, sentences, and even letters in the Qur'an. This implies that Muqātil seriously conducted studies and explained the meaning of the texts in their various editorial forms. The diversity of these word meanings has also become an embryo for the growing studies of metaphors in the Qur'an.

For instance, when interpreting the word '*kufr*' with its various derivations in the Qur'an, Muqātil Ibn Sulaimān stated that it has 4 (four) meanings: first, *al-kufr bi tauḥīdillāh* (denying Allah's oneness), found in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 6 and Q.S. Muhammad [47]: 32. Second, *kufr al-*

[19] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 224.

[20] Ibnu Qutaibah Al-Dainūrī, *Ta'wīl Musykil Al-Qur'ān* (Makkah: Maktabah Al-Ilmiyah, 1987).

[21] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 70.

[22] Zayd, 129.

[23] Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān, *Al-Wujūh Wa Al-Naẓāir Fi Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm*. Dubai: Markaz Jum'Ah Al-Majid Li Al-Saqafah Wa Al-Turāṡ, 2006.

juḥūd (denying something already known), found in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 89 and Q.S. al-An'ām [6]: 20. Third, *al-kufr bi al-ni'mat* (denying amenities), found in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 153 and QS. al-Naml [27]: 40. Fourth, *al-bara'ah* (free from sin) mentioned in the QC. Ibrāhīm [14]: 22, QC. al-Ankabūt [29]: 25, and QC. al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 4.[24]

Muqātil strongly believes that a word has a certain meaning or perspective. This is evidently seen when he provides hints to the original meaning, the denotative one (*al-ma'nā al-ḥaqīqī*). The point he's saying is that a word has one original meaning that is popular and can spontaneously be understood when spoken. Another example, in the Qur'an, the word '*maut*' is used to denote five meanings: *semen* (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 28), *perverted from tauhid* (monotheism) (Q.S. al-An'ām [6]: 122), *barren land* (Q.S. Faṭīr [35]: 9), *the land overgrown with little vegetation* (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 57), and *death* (Q.S. Alī Imrān [3]: 185 and Q.S. Zumar [39]: 30).[25] Muqātil emphasized that '*death*' in the sense of a release of spirit is used in the God's words "*Every soul will taste death*" (Q.S. Alī Imrān: 185). Thus, the last meaning is the primary or original meaning (*ḥaqīqī*), while some of the previous meanings are secondary meanings.

Another Arabic literary expert who focuses his work on the field of *majāz* is Abū 'Ubaidah (d. 207 H), specifically and emphatically he wrote his work entitled *Majāz al-Qur'ān*. In this work, Abū Ubaidah focuses on the study of the Qur'an figurative language. Abu Ubaidah attempted to expose the existence of external factors, particularly the confined understanding of the Qur'an textuality caused by grammatical errors among officials of non-Arab descents. This affects the commentators' methods in their exegetical works which tend to discuss textuality of the Qur'an, starting from the analysis of

sentence structure (*I'rāb*) to the discussion of literature (*mabāḥiṡ balāgiyah)* and figurative language (*uslūbiyah*). In his work, Abū Ubaidah also related nahwu to word form and sentence structure. This is different from contemporary scholars who think that nahwu discipline is limited only to knowing the final condition of a sentence, both in its structure and in its redaction .[26]

According to Abū Ubaidah, *majāz* is the Arabs' way to state their intentions and goals, and to explain what happens in sentences in the form of *taqdim* (preceding the word), *ta'khīr* (putting the word in the end), *ḥazf* (omitting the word), or others. *Ḥazf* (word omission) is considered as a metaphor (*majāz*), because in *hafz* (omission) and *maḥẓūf* (words omitted), a mutual understanding between the speaker and the partner to talk to (*mukhāṭab*) about the words is required. For example, when commenting on the God's words: "*As for those turning a gloomy face, Why did you disbelieve after having believed*?' (QC. Ali Imran: 106). Abu Ubaidah explained, 'When the meaning is both known, the Arabs shorten the sentence. The verse should originally say, "*As for those turning a gloomy face, it will be said to them, 'why did you disbelieve after having believed'*?", the clause '*it will be said to them*' is omitted for abbreviation.[27]

Another Arabic literature contemporary with Abu Ubaidah is al-Farrā' (d. 209 H). In terms of the metaphorical concept of the Qur'an, he did not use the term *majāz* as used by Abu Ubaidah in the title of his work. He preferred using verb *tajawwaza*, which means to exceed.[28] The word was chosen when commenting on the verse., '*Famā rabiḥat tijāratuhum*' ((But, this trade is profitless) QS. al-Baqarah: 16). He assumed relying the word *ribḥ* (profit) on the word *tijārah* (trade) is a form of expression that exceeds the denotative expression (*ḥaqīqī*). The use of the

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[24] Muqātil Ibn Sulaiman, *Al-Wujūh Wa Al-Nazāir Fi Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm* (Dubai: Markaz Jum'Ah Al-Majid Li Al-Saqafah Wa Al-Turāṡ, 2006), 27.

[25] Sulaiman, 269.

[26] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 130.

[27] Zayd, *Al-Ittijāh Al-Aqli Fi Al-Tafsīr: Dirasat Fi Qadhiyāt Al-Majāz Fi Al-Qur'ān 'Inda Al-Mu'tazilah*, 210.

[28] Moh Muhtador Nawafi, "Eksistensi Majas Dalam Alqur'an Sebagai Khazanah Keilmuan Islam," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 14, No. 2 (2017): 239–52.

verb *tajawwaza* in this context shows that the concept of *majāz* or *tajawwuz* conveyed by al-Farra' is one step ahead of the concept developed by Abu Ubaidah. This is because the meaning of *tajawwaza fi al-kalām* is synonymous to *takallama bi al-majāz* (speaking in a metaphorical figurative language).[29]

The concept of *tajawwuz* can be analyzed from al-Farra's description in an attempt to put the Qur'an expressions back into the Arabic figurative language. The concept of *tajawwuz* or the Qur'an metaphor, when associated with the verse *al-Baqarah*:16 above, raises the understanding that profit or loss only occurs in goods. Thus, the meaning can be understood. In other words, the metaphor which relies on the word *tijarah* does not cause confusion in meaning, because there is a close relationship between traders or doers who actually earn profits and the goods that result in profits or losses.[30] With such a metaphor pattern, a listener and reader can directly and easily understand the intended meaning from the expression, namely the trader's profit through his trade. The phrase "*their trade is profitless*" is in correspond to the clause taken from QC Muhammad: 21 *'fa iza' azama al-amru'* (*when fighting was ordained*). The basic meaning of *'azama* is to intend to or eager to. In the context of this verse, the verb meant is used for something meant ."[31]

The flow of the subsequent development of the Qur'an metaphor was in the hands of a literary figure who was also the *Mu'tazilah* theologian named al-Jāhiz (d. 868). In his monumental work called *al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin*, he developed a theory of language even at the language philosophy level.[32] The analysis and theory of language developed by al-Jāhiz reflected the *Mu'tazilah* theological thinking to

which he was affiliated. Al-Jāhiz's study on the language of the Qur'an begins with an explanation of the general discourse on *kalam* discipline which has many aspects. First of all, he talks about meaning (*al-ma'na*), in which he makes the difference between determining meaning or intention and determining a word as compared to a word, a multi-dimensional meaning. He reveals the significance (*dalalah*) in five aspects, namely: word (*lafaz*), sign (*ishārah*), convention (*al-'aqd*), writing (*khatt*), and adverbial (*al-ḥal*). According to al-Jāhiz, these five aspects are elements that reject discourse, both in oral and in language. [33]

Such as al-Farra', al-Jāhiz did not only use the term *majāz* as the opposite of *ḥaqīqah*. In his various works, al-Jāhiz used several terms that are in line with *majāz*, such as *matsal*, *tashbih*, *ishtiqaq*, of which use refers to another meaning. He perceived these various terms as *isti'arah* or *majāz* in a general sense, where *isti'arah* is placed under *majāz*. His perspective on these various terms prompted him to conduct a more intensive study on the verses of the Qur'an which discuss the depiction of Satan in Q.S. al-Ṣaffaāt [ā]: 65, '*ṭal'uhā ka'annahu ru'ūs al-syayāṭīn* (*bearing fruit like devils' heads*).[34] Al-Zamakhsyarī defines '*ru'ūs al-syayaṭīn*' as plants with bad odor growing in Yemen.[35] Meanwhile, Islamic theologians do not understand the verse as what commentators interpret. Theologians interpret the devils' heads as a symbol of the wicked and rebellious genies' behavior.

Theological Arguments of Metaphor Study in the Qur'an

Metaphor is a part of the Qur'anic discourse. Literary experts, as described above, pay a great attention to metaphorical verses in the Qur'an,

[29] Zayd, *Al-Ittijāh Al-Aqli Fi Al-Tafsīr: Dirasat Fi Qadhiyāt Al-Majāz Fi Al-Qur'ān 'Inda Al-Mu'tazilah*, 122.

[30] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 144.

[31] Abū Zakariyā Yahyā Bin Ziyād Al-Farrā', *Ma'Ānī Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: 'Alam Al-Kitab, 1983), 14–15.

[32] Abu Uthmān Amrs Ibn Bahr Al-Jāhiz, *Al-Bayān Wa Al-Tabyīn*, (Cairo: Maktabah Al-Khanjī, 1998), 76.

[33] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 116.

[34] Zayd, *Al-Ittijāh Al-Aqli Fi Al-Tafsīr: Dirasat Fi Qadhiyāt Al-Majāz Fi Al-Qur'ān 'Inda Al-Mu'tazilah*, 123.

[35] Muhammad Ibn Umar Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kasshāf 'An Haqāiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl Wa 'Uyūn Al-'Aqāwil Fī Wujūh Al-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2016).

which have led to heated debates among them.[36] Some of them even reject it (represented by the *Ẓahirī* and in this contemporary era represented by the *Wahhābī-Salafī*), some use metaphors excessively (represented by the *Muʿtazilah* group), some are more moderate (represented by the *Sunni Ashʿarī* group). The starting point of their debates about *majāz* in the Qur'an is the difference in terms of analysis and conclusions about the origin of language. The *Ẓāhirī* group concludes that language is solely a gift from God. Whilst, the *Muʿtazilah* believes that language is humans' invention and power, the *Ashʿarī* schooler argues that language is indeed human creativity, but it cannot be denied that God also plays a role in giving human abilities.[37] Their debates will be reviewed in depth. accompanied by theological analysis of the three tendencies above:

A. The Group Rejecting Majāz: Ẓāhirī and Salafī

The group rejecting *majāz* is based on the assumption that *majāz* is very susceptible to lies. They argue, *majāz* is an expression used when denotative (*haqīqa*) statement is hard to express in a speech. This could not have happened in the Qur'an.[38] In this case, this group can be divided into three generations; Early generations before Ibn Taymiyyah era, generations of Ibn Taymiyyah, and generations after Ibn Taymiyyah era. The classification of these three generations is based on empirical evidence in the manifestation of their thoughts and writings, which reject the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an.

First, Abu Dāwūd al- Ẓāhirī's Generation

The earliest generations who rejected the existence of metaphor in the Quran were Dāwūd al-Ẓahirī and his son, Abū Bakr Muhamad al-

Ẓāhirī, the leader of Ẓāhirī Sect. This generation has left no traces of written scientific works. Therefore, the next generations did not specifically understand the Ẓāhirī thoughts of rejecting *majāz*, including reasons and factors causing this rejection. Fortunately, the following generations eventually revealed their rejection from linguists who deduced information from the words of the Ẓāhirī people, which was later conveyed to their students.[39]

The Ẓāhirī Sect rejection of metaphor is not only on the issue of the Qur'an, but also in Arabic literature. Their refusal sets out from their understanding of language. According to them, language is merely a gift from God. Therefore, the Qur'an must be kept away from the interference of *majāz*. It does not mean that *majāz* occurrs or exists in language, but doesn't in the Qur'an. For that reason, if this is not the case, this kind of concept will discord on one of the basic axioms, saying that that the Qur'an was revealed using Arabic based on the way they express their goals.[40]

In rejecting the metaphor of the Qur'an, the Ẓahirī Sect provides two basic axioms about its ambiguity. First, for the believers in its existence, *majāz* does not exist unless there are propositions and arguments (*qarinah*) that strengthen its existence. It means that without the two, *majāz* will not be available since there is no use of it. Second, if it does exist in the Qur'an, whilst the Qur'an is the words of Allah, then it can particularly be said that Allah is the creator of *majāz*, and this naming is indeed not worthed for Allah according to the scholars' agreement.[41]

Although Dāwūd al-Ẓahirī and his adherents are among those who reject the existence of Majaz in the Qur'an, this does not imply that all Ẓāhirī adherents share this

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[36] Yayan Nurbayan, "Metaphors In The Quran And Its Translation Accuracy In Indonesian," *Indonesian Journal Of Applied Linguistics* 8, No. 3 (2019): 710–15.

[37] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 107.

[38] Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fi 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān, Vol. 2*, 232.

[39] Umar Khaṭṭāb Umar Al-Rushdī, "Al-Majaz Fi Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Sunnah Baina Al-Ijazah Wa Al-Man'," *Multaqa Ahl Al-Lugah*, August 2009, Https://Www.Ahlalloghah.Com/Showthread. Php?P=58033.

[40] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 126.

[41] Al-Rushdi, "Al-Majaz Fi Al-Qur'ān Wa Al-Sunnah Baina Al-Ijazah Wa Al-Man'i."

perspective. Imam Hazm, the leader of the al-Ẓāhirī sect, did not discuss the presence of majaz in language in his monumental work *Al-Iḥkām fi Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* in the chapter of *al-Majāz* and *Tashbīh*, but rather skipped it and addressed the dispute between scholars whether majaz existed in the Qur'an or Sunnah or not. In his discussion, Ibn Ḥazm is more inclined to the view that the existence of majaz in the Qur'an is permitted to certain limitations. In order for the majaz to occur, Ibn Hazm stated:

Every word that Allah has rendered from its proper linguistic meaning to another, if He stipulated it as worship, both *qaulī* and *'amalī* such as prayer, alms, hajj, fasting, usury and other things, it cannot then be referred to as majaz, rather than an actual name, and the *ism ḥaqīqī* arranged according to what Allah has convicted to.[42]

After all, Dāwūd al-Ẓāhirī is widely regarded as the early generation who rejected the existence of majaz in the Qur'an. Meanwhile, Malik bin Anas, the author of *Muwatta' Malik*, is not classified as a scholar who rejects the existence of majaz in the Qur'an, as quoted by al-Zahabi in his book *Kitb al-'Arsh*, with his famous statement, *"Al-Istiwā' Ma'lūm wa al-Kayf Majhūl, al-Imān bih Wājib, wa al-Su'āl 'anh Bid'ah."*[43] This is due to the fact that Imam Malik never explicitly stated his rejection of the possibility of majaz in the Qur'an or al-Sunnah.

Second, Generations of Ibn Taymiya

Supporters of the Salaf Sect mention that Ibn Taymiya is a scholar who has played a role in salafi thoughts to this day. His full name is Taqiyuddin Ahmad bin Shihabuddīn. He was born in Harran, Damascus in 661 H and passed away in 728 H in the same city. His monumental works which are often referred to by salafis are *Iṡbāt al-Ṣifāt wa al-'Uluw wa al-Istiwā'*, *Iṡbāt al-*

Ma'ād wa al-Radd' Alā Ibn Sīnā, Majmū'ah Fatāwā Ibn Taimiyah, Dar'u Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa al-Naql, Al-Ijtimā' wa al-Iftirāq fi Masāil al-Imān wa al-Talāq.[44] Upon his various works, Abū Zahra concluded that Ibn Taymiya adhered to *aqidah salaf*, emphasizing that everything confirmed by the Qur'an and explained by the *Sunna* must be accepted. The human mind does not have the authority to describe the Qur'an, interpret it, except to which is indicated by the various sentence structures of the Qur'an and which is little covered by hadiths.[45] Thus, the Sunnis assume that Ibn Taymiyya is a salaf figure who gives a lack space for reasoning, so that his thinking is somewhat conservative.

In terms of metaphor, Ibn Taymiyya is known as a scholar who rejects the *majāz* perceptivity of the verses of the Qur'an, hadith and Arabic in general. This can be understood because he wanted to quit this perceptivity which had excessively (extremely) been done by other scholars in providing description (*ta'wīl*) on the attributes of Allah (this group is well known as '*Mu'aṭṭilah*'). In their point of view, these attributes are only negative, not positive in nature.[46] Ibn Taymiyyah wanted to revive the salaf scholars' tradition, that is, stipulating (*iṡbāt*) to Allah what has been stipulated for Him through His holy book and through His Prophet's speech, refusing anything that must be rejected for Him which is in the Qur'an as well as in the hadith. However, this noble goal is excessive if you have to deny the existence of the meaning of *majāz in* Arabic as a whole.[47]

Ibn Taymiyya's rejection of the *majāz* existence in the Qur'an refers to his refusal to divide words into *haqīqa* and *majāz*, he argued that every word in the book of Allah and His Messenger is bound by an explanation of its

[42] Ali Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hazm, *Al-Iḥkām Fī Uṣūl Al-Aḥkām*, *Vol. 4* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2010), 529–30.

[43] Abū Abdullah Muhammad Al-Żahabī, *Kitāb Al-'Arsh*, *Vol. 2* (Riyad: Adwa Al-Salaf, 1999), 189.

[44] Taqiyuddin Ibnu Taimiyah, *Dar'u Al-Ta'ārud Al-'Aql Wa Al-Naql Aw Muwāfaqah Ṣarīh Al-Manqūl Lisarih Al-Ma'qūl* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997), 5.

[45] Abu Zahrah, *Tārīkh Al-Mażāhib Al-Islāmiyah* (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1995), 192.

[46] Ibrahij Ibn Mansur Al-Turky, *Inkār Al-Majāz 'Inda Ibnu Taimiyah* (Riyad: Dar Kunuz Ishbiliya, 2018), 180.

[47] Khotimah Suryani, "Kontroversi Makna Majaz Dalam Memahami Hadis Nabi," *Dar El-Ilmi: Jurnal Studi Keagamaan, Pendidikan Dan Humaniora* 6, No. 1 (2019): 157–84.

meaning, so that there is no *majāz* in anything of the case, however, what is there is the whole essence. For instance, when Ibn Taymiyyah interpreted Q.S. al-Ḥadīd [57]: 4: "*He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then established Himself on the Throne. He knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes out of it, and whatever descends from the sky and whatever ascends into it. And He is with you wherever you are. For Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.*" Outwardly, without contradiction, in that verse, Allah resides above Throne, at the same time, He is also with us. In this regard, Ibn Taymiyyah said: "One would not think that something of it is partially contradictory to the other. That is because the word '*ma'a*' in language, if pronounced, is only *al-muqaranah al-mutlaqah* (absolute participation) without touching or following each other, taking place on the right or on the left. If bound by a meaning, it will show inclusion in that meaning.[48]

The theological basis of Ibn Taymiyya's rejection on majāz is also influenced by the *Salaf* group determination on the attributes of Allah described in the Qur'an, for instance, Allah has hands, Allah has a face, Allah rises and falls. These must be interpreted as an outward (denotative) text and must not be interpreted metaphorically (*majāzī*). [49] In this case, Ibn Taymiyya stated that in understanding the attributes of Allah, the salaf sect is in between nihilism (eliminating attributes with His creatures) and anthropomorphism (equalizing God with His creatures).[50] This Ibn Taymiyya's salaf method also believes in Tauhid *asmā 'wa ṣifāt* by stipulating what Allah has on Himself and on His Messenger, without *taḥrīf*, and *ta'ṭīl*, *takyīf* and *tamṣīl*. Besides, stipulating without *tamsil*, purifying without *ta'ṭīl*, stipulating all the

attributes of Allah and denying the equality of the attributes of Allah with His creatures.[51]

Third, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah (Ibn Taimiyya's Post Generation)

The third generation rejecting metaphor in the Qur'an is Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah. He was Ibn Taymiyyah's student. Many of his theological thoughts are influenced by his teacher. [52] Therefore, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (d. 751) also rejected the division of words into *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi*. He argued that those who divide speeches into *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi* have no rational ground basis, or shari'a or language. This is because reasoning has no place in relation to the meaning of words and the specification of words they refer to, both *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi*. Due to word's reference to its meaning, if it is rational, no one, of course, does not know the meaning of a word. Religion does not want such a division, and no single linguist has openly asserted that the Arabs divide their language into *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi*. [53]

In depth, Ibn Qayyim explained that the division of speech into *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi* is not based on minds, religion, even language. According to him, speech is just a matter of convention. Ibn Qayyim's argument is also used as a reference by scholars from the salafi groups of the current era. On the other hand, arguments believing in the existence of *majāz* certainly assume that there is a historical development of language meaning, as well as the existence of initial meaning called *ḥaqīqī*, whose existence precedes the meaning called *majāzi*. This argument also assumes there is a relationship between the meanings of *ḥaqīqī* and *majāzi*. To Ibn Qayyim, all of these are merely assumptions or claims of which validity cannot be accepted. The point is, Ibn Qayyim does not only reject the basis of language conventions, but he also rejects the

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48 Idris, "Majaz: Persoalan Teologis Atau Bahasa?"

49 Al-Turky, *Inkar Al-Majaz 'Inda Ibnu Taimiyah*, 169.

50 Zahrah, *Tarikh Al-Mazahib Al-Islamiyah*, 193.

51 Ahmad Atabik, "Corak Tafsir Aqidah (Kajian Komparatif Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Aqidah)," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, No. 2 (2016): 209–23.

52 Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, "Al-Tibb Al-Nabawi" (Riyad: Dar El-Salam, 2012), 5.

53 Zakariya 'Ali Yusuf, *Al-Shawaiq Al-Mursalah Fi Al-Radd 'Ala Al-Jahmiyah Wa Al-Mu'attilah* (Cairo: Maktabah Al-Qahirah, 1989), 241–42.

claim on *ḥaqīqī* preceding its existence rather than *majāzi*.[54]

Fourth, Muhammad Amin al-Shinqithi (Ibn Taimiyya's Post Generation)

Al-Shinqithi is a modern commentator affiliated with the Salafi sect. He rejected the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an. This rejection is set forth in his work entitled, Man'u *Jawaz al-Majāz fī al-Munazzal li al-Taʿabbud wa al-Iʿjāz*. His arguments are; first, according to him, the argument used by scholars accepting *majāz* in the Qur'an is to employ general or universal propositions in language. In this case, everything that is legitimate or applicable in language, it may also be applied in the Qur'an.[55] However, he confirms that it is not true, for there are several things in language that are prohibited from being used in the Qur'an, one of which is *uslub rujuk* in *badi'* discipline.

Second, the verses considered *majāz* by scholars, according to him, are not *majāz*, but are other Arabic *uslubs* that do not eliminate the denotative (*ḥaqīqī*) meaning. Third, suppose the Qur'an is interpreted using *majāz* or another meaning, the action is then considered to negate the genuine meaning expressed by the Qur'an. Fourth, regarding *majāz* in the Qur'an, it was never revealed at the Prophet, friends or tabi'in times. Its early use was during Abu Ubaidah time. Fifth, in terms of attributive verses, al-Shinqithi explained that these verses must be interpreted using denotative meaning; this is based on two reasons: 1) believing and having faith in everything stipulated by the Qur'an, 2) denying the likeness of Allah to His creatures.[56]

B. The Groups with Exaggerated Approval; *Mu'tazilah*

Mu'tazilah was the early Islamic sect that prioritized more rational reasoning than textual reasoning or *naqlī* propositions. In finding out a proposition to establish theology, they adhered to the premises of logic, except in unknown problems beyond *naqli* (textual) propositions. Their belief in the power of minds is limited only by their respect for Sharia commandments. Every problem arising is confronted with minds; things that make sense are admitted and those that do not are rejected. [57] The *Mu'tazilah*'s thoughts is influenced by several things: First, their base is in Iraq and Persia. Both places were wide open to remnants of ancient cultures and civilizations. Second, many of his followers were mostly free slaves and non Arab descents. Third, many ancient philosophical thoughts have influenced their minds. They mingled a lot with Jews, Christians and others, then they brought these thoughts and spread them to the Arabs.[58]

Metaphor as a literary study expands to the study of the Qur'an. The concept of metaphor (*majāz*) in the study of the Qur'an grows well along with the development of theological thoughts, particularly the *Mu'tazilah* sect. This can be seen in their works predominantly related to *majāz*, such as al-Jāhiẓ and al-Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar's works. According to him, the concept of *majāz* can be traced from his theory on the nature or origin of human language compared to God's language. He argued that *majāz* is the opposite of *ḥaqīqah*. In his monumental work entitled *Al-Mugnī fī Abwāb al-Tauḥīd wa al-ʿAdl*, he discusses about theological aspects and his discussion on *majāz* is within the framework of the Qur'an language status as the created language or 'creature'. [59] Therefore, the language of the

[54] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 128.

[55] Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shinqithi, *Man'u Jawaz Al-Majaz Fi Al-Munazzal Li Al-Ta'bbud Wa Al-I'jaz* (Jeddah: Dar 'Alim Al-Fawaid, 2003), 25.

[56] Mochamad Zaenur Rifqi, "Penolakan Majāz Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Atas Kitab Man'u Jawāz Al-Majāz Fi Al-Munazzal Li Al-Ta'abbud Wa Al-I'jāz Karya Al-Syinqīṭī),"

2015, Http://Digilib.Uin-Suka.Ac.Id/19523/1/Bab I%2c V%2c Daftar Pustaka.Pdf.

[57] Abdel Qahir Al-Bagdadi, *Al-Farqu Baina Al-Firaq* (Cairo: Maktabah Ibnu Sina, 1989), 153.

[58] Zahrah, *Tārīkh Al-Mażāhib Al-Islāmiyah*, 129.

[59] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 121.

Qur'an can be approached and analyzed by human knowledge. This is based on the *Mu'tazilah*'s thoughts stating that the Qur'an is a 'creature'.

In discussing *majāz*, Abd al-Jabbar revealed its concept in terms of language meaning terminology (*al-dalalah al-lugawiyah*). According to him, the meaning of a language lies in its convention and the speakers' intention as well. In connection with this terminology, he states, "We go on with the transfer of lexical meaning for one reason or another that is agreed upon, from the basic to the 'fixed' meaning or vice versa, and this process of meaning transfer does not violate the meaning."[60] Thus, it can be concluded that the concept of *majāz*, according to his analysis, is a transfer of meaning from its basic or lexical meaning to other broader meanings. [61]

According to Abd al-Jabbar, the use of majaz in Arabic often adds to the '*balaghah*' of a speech, whereas the Qur'an is a miracle that was revealed in Arabic, so it is not surprising that it contains majaz that can add to the beauty and effectiveness of an expression. Abd al-Jabbar stated in this case,

Allah desires that the Qur'an be written with the utmost eloquence in order to serve as a guide to the Prophet Muhammad's truth. He understands that this cannot happen if only words are used in their literal sense (haqiqa), in which case Allah must use majaz and isti'arah. The use of this majaz and isti'arah method to make the Qur'an more like the way Arabs speak and more profound in miracles.[62]

Before Abd al-Jabbar, the pioneer of the Mu'tazilah figure who had the concept of *Majāz* in the Qur'an was al-Jāhiẓ. Al-Jāhiẓ is a linguist as well as a scholar who was the first to have introduced *majāz* as the opposite (antonym) to *ḥaqīqah* (denotative) meaning we know today. In the matter of *majāz*, he relates it to the semantic

uslub (figurative language) of the Qur'an. For example, in understanding the piece of the verse al-Nahl: 69, "*From their (bees) bellies comes forth drink (honey)*". He asserted, honey is not a type of drink, but when it is mixed with water, then it's called a drink. And, it is called honey as a drink since honey will serve as a drink. His viewpoint is not widely understood by most Arabs, because this expression is of the pride of the Arab elites in deciphering a string of words to be widely used.[63] This is so-called 'transfer of meaning' according to al-Jāhiẓ.

Furthermore, he stated that this transfer of meaning is closely related to *majāz*. He has at least two conditions that allow the transfer of meaning from one word to another. Transfer of meaning can occur if, first; there is a relation or association between the lexical meaning and the transferred meaning. Second; the transfer of meaning is the result of general convention, and is not an individual creation. These requirements show that al-Jāhiẓ has and masters an advanced methodological awareness of the complex art of speaking as a means, either in colloquial language or in literary areas.[64] As a pioneer, he did not systematically describe the problems of *majāz* yet, as has been done by Abd Jabbar above.

In supporting the *Mu'tazilah* theology, al-Jāhiẓ linked *majāz* with problems of language and knowledge. In his opinion, Allah is the only Lord who knows all problems human with their mind can't solve. All objects of knowledge -whether related to universe, animals, including human language- are nothing but the creation made by Allah. Based on the above premise, al-Jāhiẓ assessed that the existence of various forms of *majāz* in the Qur'an is typically a gift from Allah as well as an evidence of its existence in the Qur'an. His thoughts about *majāz* in the Qur'an which confirmed the *Mu'tazilah*'s views were

[60] Al-Qadi Abd Al-Jabbar, *Mutashābih Al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1997), 72.

[61] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyāt Al-Ta'wīl*, 129.

[62] Al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih Al-Qur'ān*, 74.

[63] Ekawati Ekawati, "Majaz Al-Qur'an Dalam Perspektif Sejarah (Studi Perbandingan Antara Abi Ubaidah,

Al-Jahizh Dan Qadhi 'Abdul Jabbar)," *Hikmah: Journal Of Islamic Studies* 15, No. 2 (2020): 338–58.

[64] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 117.

much expressed in his work entitled *Kitab al-Hayawan*. In this work, he narrates animal stories mentioned in the Qur'an which are packed with semantic stylistic descriptions, such as the story of the Hud-hud bird, the conversation of ants, human communication with genies, devils and so on.[65] In his work, he also makes use of *ishtiqaq, matsal, tashbih,* and *majāz* as a similar meaning.

C. Moderate Groups: Ash'arī Scholars

In terms of Islamic theological sects, Al-Ash'arī is considered a moderate sect in *aqidah* issues. In the case of Allah's nature verses, the Ash'arī is sect employs the *ta'wil* (interpretation) method, or selects a secondary meaning rather than the original meaning (closely similar to *majaz*). Although there are differences between the early and later generations of al-Ash'ari (khalaf). Al- Ash'arī is (and the salaf generation) take hold of *tafwīḍ*, in this case by submitting the *mutasyābihāt* verse issues to Allah. without providing a detailed explanation. [66] In the meantime, for al-Asy'ariya scholars (*khalaf* generation), *mutasyābihāt* verses, when understood in literal meaning (*ẓāhir* or *ḥaqīqah*), have implications for the attributing of God to creatures or in an understanding that cannot be understood by its goals and objectives, then providing the meaning of another language (performing *ta'wīl*) with the appropriate meaning for the Essence of Allah is much better.[67] The Ash'ariya scholars became interested in the *ta'wīl* issue following the development of *majāz* in the Qur'an.

Al-Ash'arī scholars confirm the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an. They are moderate towards the issue of *majāz* opposed by the Ẓahirī and Salafi groups and the *Mu'tazilah* group as the excessive supporters. The al-Ash'arī scholars accept it on very strict conditions. Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889) in his book, *'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān'*

describes several explanations about the concept of *majāz* in the Qur'an. Theoretically, he divides the concept into two categories, *lafzi* (literally) and *ma'nawi* (semantically).[68] This division leads to a further division of the two categories. He argues that discourse and discussion of teachings and beliefs about the Qur'an supremacy, *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, which have recently emerged cannot be separated from those two aspects of language, *lafẓī* and *ma'nawī*. *Lafẓī* refers to lexical and structural meaning, while *ma'anawi* is a theory of meaning.

In promoting the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an, he defines it as a form of speech styles or speech arts. The word *majāz* used by Ibn Qutaibah includes metaphor (*isti'arah*), reciprocal (*maqlūb*), reversal arrangement (*taqdīm wa ta'khīr*), elliptic (*ḥaẓf*), repetition of words and syllables (*tikrār*), indirect speech (*ikhfā'*), direct speech (*iẓhār*), and so on. *Majāz* in this sense, according to him, is considerably found in the Qur'an, especially one that is opposite to *ḥaqīqa*. *Ḥaqīqa* in this case is understood as a lexical or literal meaning. For example, *birds sing*; no birds, in fact, can sing, but they chirp. For this reason, if someone says *a bird sings*, meaning that the verb *sing* going beyond the lexical meaning boundaries of the word.[69]

In refuting the rejection of *majāz* in language, even more in the Qur'an, Ibn Qutaibah stated that this refusal implies that the majority of expressions and sentences in the Qur'an is considered 'lies' because it does not comprehend the veritative or actual meaning.[70] When *majāz* is considered a "lie" or "something that lies", all verbs used for animals and plants are then wrong. Likewise, most expressions used by the community are also wrong because they say, "*The tree grows big*", or "*The hill stands tall*", and so on. Even more, metaphorical sentences have commonly been used by the Arabs as a part of

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[65] Zayd, *Al-Ittijāh Al-Aqli Fi Al-Tafsīr: Dirasat Fi Qadhiyāt Al-Majāz Fi Al-Qur'ān 'Inda Al-Mu'tazilah*, 125.

[66] Abu Hasan Al-Ash'ari, *Al-Ibānah 'An Uṣūl Al-Diyānah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 2010), 154.

[67] Zahrah, *Tārīkh Al-Maẓāhib Al-Islāmiyah*, 234.

[68] Al-Dainūrī, *Ta'wīl Musykil Al-Qur'ān*, 19.

[69] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 119.

[70] Al-Dainūrī, *Ta'wīl Musykil Al-Qur'ān*.

language styles in communicating with others, such as in; "*Zaid asad* (lion)", to describe Zaid's bravery in taking action.

Ibn Qutaibah's moderate attitude in arguing against groups that do not acknowledge the existence of *majāz* is also perceptible when he does not necessarily admit all *Mu'tazilah*'s exaggerated interpretations and metaphorical understandings in employing metaphors. Very often, he rejected their reasoning towards the Qur'an. One example of which is his criticism of metaphorical interpretations of God's justice and human freedom. Thus, it is clear that Ibn Qutaibah's confirmation and recognition of the existence of *majāz*, especially in the Qur'an are different from the *Mu'tazilah*'s, al-Jāhiẓ in particular. In other words, both scholars confirm the existence of *majāz*, but the "breadth" of the concept is understood differently by the two and it depends on their respective theological backgrounds.[71]

Another Arabic literary expert affiliated with the Ash'arī sect who talks a lot about *majāz* in the Qur'an is al-Jurjānī. Like his predecessors, he emphasizes that *majāz* is opposite to *ḥaqīqah*, and prioritizes the use of *ḥaqīqī* language over *majāzi*. At the same time, he also emphasizes the necessity of a relationship between the use of *ḥaqīqī* (denotative) words and that of their his *majāzi* (metaphor). The notion of this relationship, according to him, does not mean that *majāz* is based on interaction to express new experiences, but it is more than that. It is intended to maintain the distinction and affirmation of the *ḥaqīqī* meaning and to negate the assumption on lies in *majāz*, as alleged by the *Ẓahirī* groups.

In strengthening his argument about the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an, al-Jurjānī stated, *ḥaqīqī* is any word which is meant to be something appropriate when the author creates it. The clause '*the author creates it*' here refers to a conventional dimension that is recognized by language, whether the convention comes from

human or is divine in nature.[72] According to him, a word is veritative (*ḥaqīqah*) when it refers to its original or basic meaning, avoiding the possibility of other connotative meanings. Thus, what is meant by him regarding *majāz* in principle is the transfer of meaning from lexical to literary, or from denotative to connotative meaning. For instance, the word, '*yad* (hand)' is to be connotated with action, power, and the word '*asad* (lion)' with bravery. [73] From the explanation above, it can be seen that there is a moderate attitude of the Ash'arī supporters understanding *majāz* in the Qur'an.

Conclusion

Metaphor was at first a literary study and it expands to the study of the Qur'an. The concept of metaphor (*majāz*) in the study of the Qur'an develops along with the development of theological thoughts. The use of term *majāz* in Islamic disciplines is considerably found in three Islamic disciplines, namely theology, literature, and the Qur'an interpretation. This discussion of literary expressions in the Qur'an includes the concept of metaphor (*majāz*) as an entry point for Arabic literary discourse in relation to the Qur'an interpretation from al-Jāhiẓ's era (d. 88) to Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's time (d. 1078).

The debate over the issue of *majāz* has become an embryo of disputes between theological sects in comprehending the Qur'an which is based on three sects trends; the first is the *Ẓahirī* and *Salafi* sects rejecting the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an. They refuse the interpretations of things which are not standardized in the text of the Qur'an. They require understanding the text in a literal manner better than giving description or providing *majāz* meaning. The second is the *Mu'tazilah* sect that is exaggerated in accepting *majāz* and attacking other theological sects which are inconsistent with their interpretations of the text. The third is the *Ash'ári* sect with their moderate attitude in accepting *majāz*. The *Ash'arī* scholars lay the

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[71] Zayd, *Isykāliyāt Al-Qira'āt Wa Aliyat Al-Ta'wīl*, 219.
[72] Zayd, 131.

[73] Setiawan, *Akar-Akar Pemikiran Progresif Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an*, 123.

foundation and special requirements in understanding a text in order to whether be described and interpreted in terms of *majāzi* or not.

The debates between theological sects originated from their debate over the existence of *majāz* in the Qur'an are related to differences in analysis and conclusions about the origin of language. The *Ẓāhirī* and *Salafi* groups conclude that language is solely a gift from God, so there should be no change in meaning in a text, the text only has one meaning, that is, the *ḥaqīqī* (denotative) meaning. The *Mu'tazilah* believes that language is an invention and human power, so a text may have more than one meaning. Whilst, the *Ash'arī* argues that language is indeed a human creativity, but it cannot be denied that God also plays a role in giving human abilities, so there is a possibility that a text has another meaning.

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