

Impact of Scientific Findings on the Interpretation of the Holy Qr'an

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the effect of scientific findings on the interpretation of the Qur'an. As the greatest miracle of the prophet Muhammad PBUH, the miracles of the Qur'an are not limited to a certain time and form or type. As divine words, there can be no conflict between true scientific facts and the revelation of Allah who is all-true. The interpretation of Salaf ulamâ' is not infallible, preserved from mistakes. Correcting their views does not mean demeaning or insulting their position. The scientific discoveries put forward by the experts today are still potentially wrong in the future, therefore the interpretation of the Qur'an with scientific discoveries should not be forced. There are six effects of scientific findings that have had on the interpretation of the Qur'an; (a) the scientific findings corroborate one of the opinions put forward by ulamâ and clarify it, (b) scientific discoveries explain in more detail the opinion of one interpretation, (c) scientific discoveries provide some new interpretations, and the new interpretation is the more stronger, (d) scientific discoveries provide some new interpretations in addition to the other existing interpretations, where existing interpretations do not mutually interpret. This new interpretation did not become diligent, (e) scientific discoveries provide a new interpretation, but the interpretation is not stronger than the other existing interpretations, so, it becomes a distorted interpretation, and (f) scientific discoveries provide some new interpretations, and these new interpretations can be used as a basis for weakening and rejecting existing interpretations.

Keywords: Interpretation of the Qur'an, Scientific Findings, Scientific miracle of Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Qur'an is a miracle of the prophet Muhammad PBUH, proof of the truth of his message, for people who were at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an and the era after it. The miracle of Qur'an is not limited by time and place. Allah says; *"And ye shall certainly know the truth of it (all) after a while."*¹

¹ QS. Shâd/38:88

For this reason, one must not say that the miracles of the Qur'an that are proposed by ulamâ' today, including the scientific miracles of the Qur'an, are heretical in nature, so that the variety of miracles is only limited to what is said by the salaf ulamâ' at the time. Then. The truth is that there is no limit to the miracles of the Qur'an, and there is no evidence that shows that the miracles of the Qur'an are limited to a certain time or form.

The Qur'an is the word of Allah. And what Allah informs is the essence that cannot be doubted. Every scientific fact that has been concluded by experts through scientific research will not possibly contradict the information conveyed by the Qur'an. If there is a contradiction between the two, it may be due to two reasons; first, our weakness in understanding the meaning of the âyah, or second, errors in scientific research, so that scientific theory is called scientific fact. In short, scientific research that reveals scientific facts is one of the means to reveal the secret of the meaning of the Qur'an.

Therefore, for someone who wants to interpret the Qur'an in the present, it is very important for him to know a little bit about scientific discoveries related to with the meaning of a certain âyah, because the discovery is one of the means to understand the meaning of the âyah. When a scientific discovery is included in the interpretation of the Qur'an, then either directly or indirectly, it will be subject to criticism of interpretation, then whether the meaning is right or wrong, *râjih* or *marjûh*.

In the study of *usûl al-tafsîr*, it is not required that a *mufasssîr* should study the knowledge of the cosmos, but it is sufficient for him to rely on the words of experts in the field, who can be trusted because the nature of science is currently getting wider, and it is not possible for someone to master all the sciences. For this reason, there is no prohibition against quoting the opinions of trusted experts, in the fields of medicine, astronomy, geology, marine science, and other sciences, to be assisted in understanding the interpretation of âyah related to that field of science.

Reevaluating opinion of the salaf ulamâ' regarding the interpretation of a âyah, this does not mean that someone injures and insults the honor of the clerics, or thinks their knowledge is lacking. It must be understood that the purpose of this evaluation is to explain that the salaf ulamâ' understand the texts of the Qur'an according to their abilities and knowledge. And as humans, they are also not free from mistakes. No human being is infallible from error, except the Prophets. There is no obstacle to state that their opinion in interpreting a âyah is stronger (*râjih*) or weaker (*marjûh*), right or wrong.

Scientific research which is included in the study of scientific miracles of the Qur'an is not always free from errors, because the researchers are also human beings who may be right and may be wrong. Scientists are also not infallible from mistakes. The interpretation itself is understood as an attempt to understand the meaning of the Qur'an in terms of the dilemma of Allah's intentions from His words, within the limits of human capabilities.²

² Muhammad Abdul Azhîm az-Zarqânî, *Manâhil al-Irfân fî ulûm al-Qurân*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1st Ed, 1996), vol. 2, p. 4.

On this basis, the author is of the view that there is no problem if Muslims today understand and interpret the *âyah* of the Qur'an within the limits of their current abilities and knowledge, and later generations of Islam will also understand the *âyahs* of the Qur'an within the limits of their abilities and knowledge at that time, because *salaf ulamâ'* also understand the Qur'an within the limits of their abilities and the knowledge of their time.

IMPACT OF SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN

By comparing the interpretation of the *ulamâ'* with current scientific research, it can be said that scientific discoveries play an important role in the interpretation of the Qur'an. Scientific findings sometimes corroborate one of the opinions put forward by the *ulamâ'*, sometimes override one opinion over another, sometimes give a new, stronger understanding (*râjih*), sometimes even scientific discoveries can be used as a basis for weakening and rejecting the opinion of some *ulamâ'*. Below will be discussed in more detail.

Scientific Discoveries Share One of The Opinions Expressed by The *Ulamâ'*, While the Majority of Them Have Some Other Opinions

The *mufasssîrûn* sometimes mention many opinions in interpreting a *âyah*, then they choose the strongest (*tarjih*) among the opinions that exist. Sometimes, based on scientific findings, one of the opinions considered weak by *salaf ulamâ'* for certain reasons, can be considered the strongest opinion (*rajih*), because it is supported by a scientific fact. For example; when interpreting QS. at-Thûr/52:6; "*And by the Ocean filled with Swell.*"

In interpreting the word "*al-masjûr*", the *ulamâ'* put forward several opinions, among others:

1. *Al-masjûr* means *al-Mûqad*, which is what is burning. This opinion was expressed by Ali bin Abi Talib, Mujâhid, Ibn Athiyyah, and Abdur Rahman bin Zayd.³
2. *Al-masjûr* means *al-mamlû'*, that is full. This opinion was put forward by Qatâdah, al-Hasan, Abu Salih, and Ibn As-Sâ'ib.⁴
3. *Al-masjûr* means *al-yâbis*, which is dry and has lost its water.⁵
4. *Al-masjûr* means *al-mahbûs*, which is imprisoned.⁶
5. *Al-masjûr* means *al-muktalath 'azbuhu bi milhihi*, which is a mixture of plain and salty (brackish). This opinion was expressed by Ibn al-jauzi.⁷
6. *Al-masjûr* means *al-fârigh*, which is empty.⁸
7. *Al-masjûr* means *al-mamnu' al-makfuf an al-ardhi lialla yaghmuruha fa yughriq ahlaha*, namely blocked from the land, so that those who live on the land will not drown. This opinion was put forward as-Suddî.⁹

³ Ibn al-Jarîr at-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-bayân fî Ta'wîl Âyi al-Qur'ân*, (Egypt: Mustafâ al-Bâbî al-Halabî), vol. 27, p. 19

⁴ Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr fî 'ilm at-Tafsîr*, (Beirut: al-maktab al-Islâmî, 3rd Ed, 1984), vol. 8, p. 47-48. Ibn al-Jarîr at-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-bayân fî Ta'wîl Âyi al-Qur'ân*, vol. 27, p. 19

⁵ Fakhruddin ar-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr wa mafâtiḥ al-Ghayb*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1st Ed, 1990), vol. 28, p. 205. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr fî 'ilm at-Tafsîr*, (Beirut: al-maktab al-Islâmî, 3rd Ed, 1984), vol. 8, p. 47-48.

⁶ Ibn al-Jarîr at-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-bayân fî Ta'wîl Âyi al-Qur'ân*, vol. 27, p. 19. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr fî 'ilm at-Tafsîr*, vol. 8, p. 47-48. Fakhruddin ar-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr wa mafâtiḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 28, p. 205.

⁷ Ibn al-Jarîr at-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-bayân fî Ta'wîl Âyi al-Qur'ân*, vol. 27, p. 19. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr fî 'ilm at-Tafsîr*, vol. 8, p. 47-48. Fakhruddin ar-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr wa mafâtiḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 28, p. 205.

⁸ Al-Tsa'labî, *al-Jawâhir al-Hisân fî ilm at-Tafsîr*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-A'lamî), vol. 4, p. 214

⁹ Ibn al-Kasîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Azhîm*, (Egypt: Dâr al-Sya'b), vol. 4, p. 241.

Of the seven opinions stated above, al-Tabarî chose the second opinion, namely full, as the strongest opinion (*râjih*).

When the opinions above are compared with the results of current scientific research, it is found that the land on which humans live on it has an outer crustal layer, which has many plates, the length and width of which can reach hundreds of kilometers, with a depth of length and width ranging from 65 to 150 kilometers. Through these plates, the hot steam of the earth's crust, which has a very high degree of heat, burns the oceans. Although there is a lot of sea water, it is unable to extinguish the geothermal energy, because the level of heat can reach more than a thousand degrees Celsius.¹⁰

Geologists have also found that there are more volcanoes at the bottom of the ocean than the volcanoes that appear on land. The researchers also explained that because there is no oxygen on the ocean floor, the lava from volcanoes on the ocean floor is very hot. There is no word that better describes the heat than the word "*al-Masjûr*" which means burning.¹¹

In conclusion, the interpretation of the word "*al-masjûr*" with the meaning of burning is very precise. And this meaning is included in one of the opinions mentioned by al-Tabarî. However, al-Tabarî did not choose it as the strongest opinion, because according to the abilities and knowledge he had in his day, the sea did not burn and did not produce fire, so he preferred the second opinion.

If at the time of al-Tabarî, research on volcanoes under the ocean had been found, then al-Tabarî would have chosen the first opinion. Because he himself stated that in language, the word *sajara* is the root of *masjûr*, means *awqada* which is the root of the word *mûqad*, which means burning.¹²

Another example, Allah says in QS al-Anbiyâ' /21:30; "*Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?*"

The *mufasssirûn* differ in their interpretation of the above *âyah* as follows;

- First: al-Hasan, Qatâdah, Said bin Jubair, and one of the narrations from Ibn Abbâs interpreted it as "heaven and earth were once a tightly attached unit, then Allah separated the two, where Allah raised the sky upward, and determined the position of the earth as recently."
- Second: Abu Sâlih, Mujâhid, and al-Suddi interpreted it as "the sky which is layered first is a tightly sticky unity, then it is made into seven heavens, that is the meaning of "*al-fatq*", as well as what happened with the earth."

¹⁰ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, (Damascus: Dâr Ibn Hajar, 2nd Ed, 2005), p. 456.

¹¹ Ahmad bin Sâlim Bâ Duwailân, *Mausû'ah Âyah wa Mu'jizah*, (Riyadh: Dâr Thuwaiq li an-nasyr wa at-Tauzi', 1st Ed, 2006), vol. 1, p. 18.

¹² At-Tabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 27, p. 19-20.

- Third: Ar-Râzi and Abu Muslim al-Isfahânî argued that "the meaning of *"al-fatq"* is *"al-îjâd wa al-khalq"* which means creating. This is like the word of Allah *Fâthir as-Samâwât wa al-Ardh.*"
- Fourth: Ibn Abbas, al-Hasan, Ikrimah, and majority of *mufasssirûn* interpreted that "heaven and earth were once solid, then Allah separated the sky by sending rain, and separated the earth from plants and trees. This fourth opinion is considered the most diligent (strong) rather than other existing opinions, especially contextually (*siyâq*) to support interpretation, by mentioning it in its continuation about water.¹³

Scientific discoveries show that the universe was originally a single entity in the form of a huge collection of gases that were very thick and hot and luminous. This is the meaning of the word *"ar-ratq"*. Then there was a big bang. That is the meaning of *"al-fatq"*.¹⁴

In short, interpretations that are in line with scientific findings have actually been put forward by some ulamâ'. However, this opinion was previously considered to be weak (*marjûh*). With the existence of this scientific evidence, this opinion becomes persistent, while what the majority of *mufasssirûn* proclaims becomes confused.

Scientific Discoveries Explain in More Detail One of The *Mufasssirûn's* Opinions in Interpreting The Âyah

This second form is very important in rejecting any doubts about the meaning indicated by a âyah, and what is meant in Arabic, because it is not uncommon for some people to think that a Qur'anic meaning cannot exist, because they do not know the procedure, and why. Here, scientific discoveries play a role in explaining the meaning that exists in an interpretation. Example; Allah says in QS. Al-Hijr/15:15; *"They would only say: "Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery."*

The *mufasssirûn* say that there are two interpretations in understanding who is the subject of the previous âyah; *"Even if We opened out to them a gate from heaven, and they were to continue (all day) ascending therein."*

The first opinion states that the subjects in the sentence "they kept ascending upon it" were angels. Meanwhile, the second opinion states that the subject is the polytheists. Those who interpret that the subject are polytheists differ in their opinion in understanding the next âyah *"sukkirat abshâruna"*.

In general, there are two opinions expressed, namely;

- First: blindfolded and obstructed from seeing, as water is blocked, so it cannot flow. This opinion was expressed by Mujâhid.
- Second: his sight was taken.¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid*, vol. 17, p. 18-19. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 5, p. 348.

¹⁴ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 379-380. Ahmad Mustafâ Mutawallî, *al-Mausû'ah az-zahabiyyah fi I'jâz al-Qur'ân al-Karîm wa as-Sunnah an-nabawiyyah*, (Cairo: Dâr Ibn al-jauzî, 1st Ed, 2005), p. 15.

¹⁵ Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 14, p. 386.

Referring to current scientific discoveries, it is found that the universe is filled with dense darkness for the majority of its parts. Bright light during the day in the half of the globe facing the sun does not exceed a thickness of 200 kilometers above sea level. If a person rises to a high altitude, he will see the sun getting closer and closer and more invisible and darker black. The person who rises to another level cannot see, even though the eye is healthy and can function. At a certain height, he will feel as if his eyes are bewitched so that he cannot see. This is what the Qur'an implies in the *âyah*; *"And if We opened to them one of the (doors) of the heavens, then they continued to rise above it, surely they would say: "Behold, it is our view that is obscured, even We are people who have been exposed to magic".*¹⁶

In conclusion, this scientific discovery is able to explain what the words of the polytheists were difficult to understand by *mufasssîrûn* before this discovery was obtained.

Scientific Discoveries Add Some New Opinions to Interpretation, And Are Considered to Be Industrious Opinions, While the Other Opinions Are Obscure

This third form is the form with the most examples. That is, scientific discoveries show a new meaning that has not been touched on by previous salaf *ulamâ'*, even though the meaning it shows is a clear meaning without coercion (*takalluf*), even though the new meaning was unexpected and unknown at the time the salaf *ulamâ'* interpreted the *âyahs* of the Qur'an. For Instance; Allah says in QS. An-Nûr /24:40; *"Or (the Unbelievers' state) is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds: depths of darkness, one above another: if a man stretches out his hands, he can hardly see it! for any to whom Allah giveth not light, there is no light!"*

The *ulamâ'* differed in their understanding of the word "*al-Mawj*" in the above *âyah*, as follows;

- First: al-Tabarî mentions "*min faqwi al-Mawj mawjun âkhar*", that is, "above the waves there are other waves." However, he did not explain how this happened.
- Second: Ibn al-Jauzî mentions "*yatba'u al-mawj mawjun, hatta kâna ba'dhahu fawqa al-ba'dh*", that is, "the waves in the ocean go hand in hand, one wave follows the other."¹⁷

Recent scientific discoveries reveal that in the depths of the ocean there are deep waves born from the expansion of the surface that separates two water levels with different pressure, temperature, tides, and the influence of wind gusts. These waves resemble waves on the surface of the sea, but it is not easy to see them from above the water surface.¹⁸

By comparing the results of scientific discoveries, and the interpretations of the salaf *ulamâ'*, it is clear that what scientific discoveries say is more powerful and worthy of comparison than the opinions of other salaf *ulamâ'*. The meaning that is understood is that there are two waves which are the same - as essential, "like pitch blackness in the ocean. which is deep, which is covered by (deep) waves, over which the waves (above sea level)."

¹⁶ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-l'jâz al-Ilmî fî al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 342-343.

¹⁷ At-Tabarî, *Jâmi' al-bayân*, vol.18, p. 150. Ibn al-Jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 6, p. 50.

¹⁸ Abdul majîd al-Zindânî, *Bayyinât ar-Rasûl wa Mu'jizâtuhu*, (Yemen: Markaz al-Buhuts Jâmi'at al-îman, 2nd Ed, 2004), p.113. Muhammad Muhsin Hîtû, *al-Mu'jizah al-Qur'aniyyah*, (Beirut: Muassasah ar-Risâlah, 3rd Ed, 1998), p.195.

Another example; Allah says in QS. Ar-Rahmân /55:19-22; "*He has let free the two bodies of flowing water, meeting together, Between them is a Barrier which they do not transgress, Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? Out of them come Pearls and Coral.*"

The commentators mentioned several opinions about the meaning of "*al-bahrain*" two seas;

- First: Ibn Abbas, and Said bin Jubair stated; "There are two oceans, one in the sky and one on earth. This opinion was shared by al-Thabarî.
- Second; al-Hasan and Qatâdah stated; "There are two seas, the Persian sea and the Roman sea."¹⁹
- Third: "there are two oceans, a sea of fresh water and a sea of salt water." This opinion was shared by Imam al-Râzi.²⁰

Those who interpret it with fresh and salty seas, still understand that *dhamir huma* (*Yakhruju min-huma al-Lu'lu'u wa al-Marjân*), returns to one of the two seas, namely the sea of salt water, because if it comes out of one of the seas, as if coming out of the two seas. Scientific findings show that the two oceans in question are the same - the same salt ocean, but each ocean has different characteristics from the others, in terms of heat and cold, fresh and salty, the living things that live in it. The meaning "between the two there is a limit which is not exceeded by each". The two oceans with different characteristics will not transcend one another even though the water is both mixed.²¹

The scientific findings above are not found in one of the opinions of the salaf *ulamâ'*. When compared to the scientific facts of the results of this research with the opinion of the salaf *ulamâ'*, this new meaning is stronger and worthy of being recited, for several reasons, among others;

- First: If the word "*al-Bahr*" which is the ocean is mentioned, it is understood that the sea is salty water.
- Second: the opinion which states that the two seas are interpreted as fresh and salty seas, causing the word "*al-bahr*" to be understood not in terms of *zâhir*. With new interpretations that are in line with scientific findings, the interpretation of the word is based on its *zâhir* (outward) meaning.
- Third: with this new interpretation that is in line with this scientific discovery, the impossibility of understanding the sentence "*yakhruju min-huma*" is gone. Because, there is no need to force the interpretation of *dhamir* back to one type of ocean, namely the salt sea. Pearls and coral come out of the same two oceans - equally salty.

Another example; Allah says in QS. Al-Furqân /25:53; "*It is He Who has let free the two bodies of flowing water: One palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; yet has He made a barrier between them, a partition that is forbidden to be passed.*"

¹⁹ Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 12, p. 128.

²⁰ Fakhruddin ar-Râzî. *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 29, p. 89. Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 27, p. 128-129. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 8, p. 112-113.

²¹ Abdul majîd al-Zindânî, *Bayyinât ar-Rasûl wa Mu'jizâtuhu*, p. 74-75. Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fî al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 447.

The *Mufasssirûn* interpret the word "*al-Hijr al-mahjûr*" in the above âyah with the following opinions;

- First: Allah made between the two seas, the fresh river and the salt sea, a barrier that limits one of the two to the other, by His commandments and His provisions.
- Second: Ibn al-Jauzi interprets Allah forbidding the two seas to defeat one another over the other.
- Third: al-Râzi interpreted the words uttered by those who took refuge in Allah. This meaning is *majâzi* in nature, as if each sea has taken refuge in Allah from the other seas.²²

Recent scientific discoveries show that among the best meanings for "*al-Hijr al-mahjûr*" is the area of brackish water where fresh and salt water combine, where they combine to produce water that is neither fresh nor salty. Living things that live in brackish water areas are different from those that live in salt water or fresh water. Thus, the water area is divided into three areas; fresh water, salt water, and brackish water, based on the types of living things that live in each area. Thus, the meaning of the âyah "He made between the two walls and boundaries that hinder", that each region has boundaries with other areas, where if a creature that lives in salt water moves to fresh or brackish water, surely he will die. Likewise, a creature that lives in fresh water, if it moves to salt or brackish water, it will also die.²³

It is clear, how scientific discoveries reveal new meanings that have not been previously mentioned by the salaf *ulamâ'*. However, this new meaning has become the strongest interpretation (*râjih*), because the meaning given is most suitable to the *zâhir* meaning of each word of the âyah.

Scientific Discoveries Add Some New Opinions in Interpretation, But Do Not Contradict the Other Opinions Expressed by Commentators, As All Opinions Can Be Considered Correct

Sometimes it happens, scientific discoveries reveal a new significance that has not been previously discussed by the commentators. However, a new meaning this is not stronger than other meanings suggested by Salaf *ulamâ'*. Each meaning derived from a variety of interpretations as equally true, as it does not conflict with one another. What is shown by scientific discoveries in this form only play a role in expanding the existing meaning in âyah. For example, Allah says in QS. Az-Zâriyât/51:49; "*And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction.*"

The *mufasssirûn* have different opinions in interpreting the above âyah, as follows;

- First: "Of all things, Allah made two different types, such as happiness and misery, guidance and error." This opinion was expressed by Mujâhid. This pair is related to the meaning.
- Second: "two partners means male and female."²⁴

²² Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 19, p. 25. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 6, p. 96. Fakhruddin ar-Râzî. *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 24, p. 87.

²³ Abdul Majîd al-Zindânî, *Manthiqah al-mashab wa al-hawajiz bayn al-Bihâr fî al-Qur'an al-karîm*, (Yemen: markaz al-Buhuts li Jâmi'at al-îman), p. 5-6.

²⁴ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 27, p. 8.

- Third: "two groups and two kinds, such as male and female, sea and land, day and night."²⁵

Scientific discoveries show that matter is created in pairs. In atoms, there are protons there are electrons, there are positive currents there are negative currents. Pairing does not only exist in the atom alone, but also exists in those that are larger than it.²⁶

This is in line with what Allah says in QS. Yâsîn/36:36; "*Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.*"

In conclusion, although scientific research suggests new meanings, this meaning is not stronger than other opinions. This new meaning is an extension of the meaning contained in the âyah without having to conflict with other meanings.

Another example; Allah says in QS. Al-Târiq/ 11; "*By the Firmament which returns (in its round).*"

The *ulamâ'* differed in their interpretation of the above âyah, as follows;

- First: the word "*ar-Raj'u*" means rain that falls repeatedly. This opinion was put forward by Ibn Abbâs, and addressed by ar-Râzi.
- Second: the word "*ar-Raj'u*" means good gifts and gifts.
- Third: the word "*ar-raj'u*" means the sun and moon come and return over and over again.²⁷

Current scientific discoveries suggest that water that evaporates due to the sun's heat rises to the earth's air layer (atmosphere), and eventually forms clouds that make it thicker. These clouds move with gusts of wind from areas with high air pressure to areas with low air pressure. These thick clouds play a role in reflecting back up to 80% or 90% of the sunlight coming into space. In addition, clouds also pull some of the rays and break them apart. If not for this reflection, the degree of heat on the earth's surface would be very high, making it impossible to inhabit.

The earth's air layer (atmosphere) also acts as a protective shield that can protect the earth from comets and meteors. So, the meaning of "*ar-Raj'u*" in the eyes of scientific discovery, the sky has a mechanism that is arranged by Allah to reflect part of the sun's rays repeatedly reset. If that mechanism did not exist, then all creatures on earth would perish because of the high temperature of the sun's rays.²⁸

²⁵ Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 8, p. 41. At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 27, p. 8. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 29, p. 64.

²⁶ Abdul Hamîd al-Tharâwanah, *al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'ân al-Karîm: al-kawn wa al-mâ'u*, (Amman: Dâr al-Furqân, 1st Ed, 2003), p. 32-33.

²⁷ Fakhruddin ar-Râzî. *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 31, p. 120.

²⁸ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausû'ah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'ân al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 353. Muhammad Râtib an-Nabulsi, *Mausû'ah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'ân wa al-Sunnah*, (Damascus: Dâr al-maktabî, 2nd Ed, 2003), p. 43.

The new meaning put forward by this scientific discovery does not contradict other meanings put forward by previous salaf ulamâ', but this new meaning expands the meaning contained in the âyah.

Another example, Allah said in QS. Ar-Rûm/30:1-3; *"A. L. M. The Roman Empire has been defeated, In a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious."*

In interpreting the word "*adnâ al-Ardhi*", the *mufasssîrûn* understand it as the land (area) of Syria (currently in Syria, Palestine, and Jordan), which is part of Roman territory, because that is the closest area to Arab land (area). And *aliflaam* which is in the word "*al-Ardhi*" is understood as *aliflaam 'ahdiyyah*.²⁹

Scientific findings put forward by historical researchers state that the war that took place between Rome and Persia, where the Persians defeated the Romans took place in the Azri'at and Bushra regions, with the Dead Sea area. Geographical photographs using satellites show that the area that has the lowest land surface in the world is the area near the Dead Sea in Palestine, which is lower than the sea level of about 395 meters.³⁰

In conclusion, the word "*adnâ*" can be understood with two meanings; first: "*al-Aqrab*" which is the closest, second: "*al-Akhfadh*" which is the lowest ground level. These two meanings are true, not contradicting each other. Scientific discoveries expand the meaning contained in a âyah.

Scientific Discoveries Add Some New Opinions to The Interpretation of A Âyah, But They Are Weak and Distorted When Compared to The Others

Sometimes some experts expand the study of *I'jâz ilmî* in the Qur'an. Some of them try to find many theories which are basically very weak in designating the word of âyah to the intended meaning. Even if the meaning is understood, it is an understanding that is forced (*takalluf*). Such interpretations are ambiguous, and it is inappropriate for certain verses to be forced to support a particular theory.

For example, Allah said in QS. Al-Mursalât/77:25-26; *"Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together. The living and the dead."*

The word "*kifâta*" which is taken from the root word "*kafata*" literally means to collect. However, the ulamâ' differed in their understanding of the âyah, as follows;

- First: the earth gathers the living on its surface, and the dead in its stomach.
- Second: the earth collects the dirt which is separated and scattered from living things.
- Third: the earth collects all that humans need to meet their needs, from eating and drinking, because all food and drink is from the earth.³¹

²⁹ At-Thabari, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 21, p. 20. Ibn al-jauzi, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 6, p. 288. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 25, p. 85.

³⁰ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 270. Muhammad Râtib an-Nabulsi, *Mausû'ah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*, p. 137. Ahmad bin Sâlim Bâ Duwailân, *Mausû'ah Âyah wa Mu'jizah*, p. 144.

³¹ At-Thabari, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 29, p. 236-237. Ibn al-jauzi, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 8, p. 449. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 30, p. 240.

Some researchers and experts are of the view that this âyah indicates one of the important laws of life on earth, namely the law of gravity. They interpret the word "*kifâta*" with "*al-Jazb*" which means interesting. Without this law of gravity, humans cannot live above the earth's surface.³²

On closer examination, this scientific signal is not very clear. Forcing the interpretation of a verse in order to show the existence of the law of gravity is an act of coercing interpretation (*takalluf*). If this meaning is to be mentioned in the interpretation, then this interpretation is not the strongest interpretation (*râjih*) but is *marjûh*.

Another example, Allah said in QS. Al-Qiyâmah/75:3-4; "*Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones? Nay, we are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.*"

The *mufasssirûn* interpret the above âyah with the following meaning:

- First: "*'a nusawwiya banânahu*" means that Allah will rearrange the fingers and toes of a human being brought back to life into one part. This opinion was put forward by Ibn Abbâs, Ikrimah, said bin Jubair, and chose the majority of *mufasssirûn* as a diligent opinion.
- Second: Allah almighty will reassemble each person's fingers as they were before he died, even though he was a child. This opinion was conveyed by Ibn Qutaibah, al-Zajjâj, and chose by Ar-Râzi as the stronger opinion (*râjih*).³³

Thâhir bin Ashûr stated: "*'a nusawwiya banânahu*" means that Allah recreated the fingers perfectly. The word *taswiyah* is Metaphor comes from *al-khalq*, namely creation, because what is rearranged is the same as when it was first created."³⁴

Scientific findings show that every human finger has a different fingerprint from one person to another, even between twins even though the fingerprints are different.³⁵

Although the scientific discovery of fingerprints can be considered as one of the new opinions in interpreting the âyah, this opinion is considered unclear for the following reasons;

- First: this interpretation comes out of the literal meaning of "*al-Banân*", because "*al-banân*" literally means the finger of the hand, or the tip of the finger.³⁶ "*An-nusawwiya banânahu bima fiha min bashmah*", we collected the fingers again including the fingerprints in them.
- Second: the word "*at-taswiyah*" can be interpreted as the meaning of creating and forming perfectly, and it can also be interpreted as making something the same. If the word *al-banân* is interpreted with the meaning of fingerprints, this meaning only matches the meaning of the first *at-Taswiyah*, but not suitable for the second meaning,

³² Muhammad Muhsin Hîrî, *al-Mu'jizah al-Qur'aniyyah*, p. 214. Muhammad Râtib an-Nabulsi, *Mausû'ah al-l'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*, p.123.

³³ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 29, p. 175. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 8, p. 417-418. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 30, p. 192.

³⁴ Ibn Ashûr, *al-Tahrîr wa al-Tanwîr*, (Tunis: Dâr sahnûn), vol. 14, p. 341

³⁵ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausû'ah al-l'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 169-170. Ahmad Mustafâ Mutawallî, *al-Mausû'ah az-zahabiyyah fi l'jâz al-Qur'ân al-Karîm wa as-Sunnah an-nabawiyyah*, p.299.

³⁶ Ibn Manzhûr, *Lisân al-Arab*, (Beirut: Dâr Shâdir), vol. 13, p. 60

because, if it means "Allah is able to equalize everyone's fingerprints", then it is not appropriate.

In fact, the sign of Allah's power is more visible when the fingerprints of each person are different from one another. The context of this verse wants to show the power of Allah, so what should be highlighted is that which is more difficult and stranger, not easier, in human eyes.

Scientific discoveries add new opinions to interpretation, and explain the error of one of the opinions expressed by *mufasssirrûn*. One of the important contributions of scientific findings on the interpretation of the Qur'an is to straighten out the misinterpretation of the *âyah* of the Qur'an at a certain time. Some people consider the human interpretation of the *âyah* of the Qur'an to have the same holiness as the text of the Qur'an itself. Many people make the opinion of the *salaf ulamâ'* as an opinion that cannot be wrong, because they are the ones who best understand the contents of the Qur'an after the Prophet. Such an attitude over time gave birth to the view that the interpretation of the *salaf* should not be blamed, so that it was considered infallible as the Prophet was infallible.

The companions, *tâbiîn*, and *tabi' tâbiîn* (followers), commonly known as the *salaf ulamâ'* are indeed the ones who understand the Qur'an the most, because they are experts in Arabic, experts in understanding, and in their *warâ'* (attitudes) and *taqwâ* (faith). However, an important question to be answered, has the *salaf* interpreted all the meanings contained in the al-Qur'an? And are they preserved (infallible) from errors in understanding the Qur'an? Have they revealed all aspects of the miracle of the Qur'an? Starting from the questions above, other questions were born;

- First: is it permissible for the people after *salaf sâlih* to interpret the Qur'an with a meaning that has not yet been interpreted as *salaf sâlih*?
- Second: may it be for the *ummah* through scientific discoveries to reject and blame some of the opinions of *salaf ulamâ'*, when their interpretations contradict scientific discoveries?

In answering the questions above, the writer will explain them in stages;

- First: it must be distinguished between interpreting word in language and applying a meaning to a reality. The literal meaning of a word is general and comprehensive, it can include more than one meaning. However, when applying a meaning to the reality at hand, it may be that there is only one meaning from several meanings it includes, which is highly influenced by context (*siyâq*) or reality (*wâqi'*) and so on.
- Second: when a *mufasssir* performs *ijtihad* in understanding one of the texts of the Qur'an, then the meaning he will understand is based on his assumption. When he considers that one of the meanings of several contained in a *âyah* is not the intention of the *âyah*, then it turns out that the person's assumption is wrong, when scientific findings mention the opposite, then the meaning that he considers far away becomes the guide in the interpretation of the *âyah*. Because, there can be no contradiction between true knowledge and proper understanding of revelation.

On the basis of the above explanation, the writer considers that there are several interpretations of one or two *salaf ulamâ'* which clearly contradict scientific findings that can

be rejected. Moreover, Rasulullah explained that the goodness of *khairu qur'un* (the phase of the friends, tabi'in, and tabi tabi'in) is a collective good, which shows that in general if they agree then their agreement is not wrong.

For example, Allah said in QS. ar-Ra'd/13:8; *"Allah doth know what every female (womb) doth bear, by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion."*

In interpreting the word "*Wamâ taghîdhu al-Arhâm wa Tazdâdu*", the *mufasssirûn* differ as follows;

- First: What is less than her nine months of pregnancy, by sending her menstrual blood, and what is excess in her pregnancy of nine months, because of what perfection is what is less than nine months of pregnancy by sending menstrual blood. This opinion was put forward by Ibn Abbâs, Mujâhid, said bin Jubair, Qatâdah, Ibn Zayd, ad-Dhahhâk, Muqâtil, Ibn Qutaibah, and al-Zajjaj.³⁷
- Second: what is lacking from a fetus that has fallen due to a lack of months, and what is increased from a child born because of a perfect month. This opinion was expressed by al-Hasan.³⁸
- Third: who was born before, and who will be born later. This opinion was expressed by Qatâdah and as-suddî.³⁹
- Fourth: this means how many children will be born, it could be one, two, three, or four.⁴⁰

Of the four opinions available, the first opinion is the most famous.⁴¹

Recent scientific discoveries in the field of medicine show that the word "*ghaid al-Arhâm*" means not just a miscarriage, but it means a fetus that died before its creation was complete.

During this period, the fetus breaks down and loses its marks, as if it was swallowed by the uterus, as water is swallowed by the earth. In the case of twins, at the beginning of the pregnancy, sometimes one of the fetuses breaks down and is like being swallowed by the womb. Even though there are some scholars who interpret the verse in line with scientific findings, such as as-Sa'di who interpreted: "the uterus can be reduced, or perishing, or shrinking, and the fetus in it can also grow bigger, but the majority of mufasssirûn interpret this *âyah* as "the blood that is seen by the pregnant woman from her genitals, which affects the increase in the fetus in the womb, so that it is more than 9 months."⁴²

Scientific discoveries in the field of medicine explain the misinterpretation of the majority of *ulamâ'* in relation to the presence of blood coming out of the genitals and the increasing time the fetus is in the womb. This opinion is not supported by any scientific evidence. In short,

³⁷ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 13, p. 109-112.

³⁸ Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 4, p. 308. At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 13, p. 109-112.

³⁹ Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 19, p. 13-14. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 4, p. 308.

⁴⁰ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 13, p. 109-112. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 4, p. 308. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 19, p. 13-14.

⁴¹ Ibn Athiyyah al-Andalusî, *al-Muharrar al-Wajîz*, vol. 3, p. 298.

⁴² Abdurrahman al-Sa'dî, *Taysîr al-karîm ar-Rahmân*, vol 1, p. 414.

scientific findings can also provide important explanations for the inaccurate interpretation of salaf ulamâ'.

Another example, Allah said in QS. At-Thalâq/12; *"Allah is He Who created seven Firmaments and of the earth a similar number. Through the midst of them (all) descends His Command: that ye may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah comprehends, all things in (His) Knowledge."*

The mufasssîrûn have different opinions in interpreting the word "*wa min al-Ardhi mitslahunna*" as follows;

- First: according to Ibn Abbas and Qatâdah "seven separate earths, on each earth there are creatures."
- Second: the seven layers of the earth, where each layer is connected above the other.
- Third: seven climates.⁴³

Al-Qurthubî commented: "The majority of ulamâ is of the opinion that the seven layers of the earth are one above the other. Between every two earths the distance is the same as from one heaven to another. And on each layer, there is a creature of Allah who lives on it."⁴⁴

Scientific discoveries show that the earth consists of seven different layers, where each layer has a different structure, thickness, degree of heat, and the type of matter in it. What is clear here, even what the salaf ulamâ' describe that between one layer and another the distance is the same as the layer from one sky to another, and each layer has a special population of Allah's creatures, is not proven to be true as explained in scientific discoveries.

Another example, Allah said in QS. al-An'am/6:125; *"Those whom Allah (in His plan) willeth to guide,- He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying,- He maketh their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus doth Allah (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe."*

The mufasssîrûn differed in their interpretation of the above âyah as follows;

- First: according to Athâ 'al-Khurasâni, the âyah he above describes the parable of an infidel's chest tightness like a person who tries to go up to the sky, then he is unable to do so. Likewise, the disbelievers want to extinguish the light of Islam, but they are unable to tighten their chest like a person whose chest is tight because they are unable to rise to the sky.
- Second: this âyah describes the parable of an infidel who keeps away from Islam as a person who ascends to heaven away from the earth.⁴⁵

It is undeniable that the two interpretations above are born from the perception that it is impossible for a person to fly up into the sky, so it is inconceivable what happens when someone

⁴³ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 28, p. 153-154. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 30, p. 36.

⁴⁴ Al-Qurthubî, *al-Jâmi' li Ahkâm al-Quran*, vol. 18, p. 174-175

⁴⁵ At-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, vol. 8, p. 30. Ibn al-jauzî, *Zâd al-Masîr*, vol. 3, p. 121. Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *at-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*, vol. 13, p. 150.

flies and goes to the sky. This review is in line with the comments of Ibn Abbâs; "Just as humans cannot go to the sky, monotheism and faith cannot penetrate the hearts of unbelievers."⁴⁶

Al-Qurthubi also commented: "Allah made the parable of the disbeliever who fled from the Faith and considered it heavy, because he had endeavored for something he could not do, as ascending to heaven was also incapable of doing."⁴⁷

Abu Su'ûd al-Imâdi commented: "Ascent to heaven is something that is beyond human ability. This shows that faith cannot also enter into the hearts of unbelievers, as is incapable of humans to ascend to heaven."⁴⁸

Scientific discoveries show that humans can rise to the earth's sky, even humans have ascended to the moon. Modern science shows that every time humans rise to a higher level of the earth's surface, the air pressure decreases. Oxygen decreases the more a person flies high. Less inhaled air certainly makes a person's chest even more tight, the mind becomes more dizzy, and so on.⁴⁹

In short, scientific findings rectify the wrong perception of the interpretation of the salaf ulamâ before, because in essence they also interpreted this âyah with the limitations of their abilities and knowledge as well as the understanding they had in their time.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation in this paper, several conclusions can be drawn;

1. The Qur'an is a miracle at the time of the prophet, and in all ages. There is no single argument and evidence that shows that the miracles of the Qur'an are related to a certain time, and form or type.
2. The Qur'an is the word of Allah, the creator of the universe. It is impossible to contradict the correct scientific facts with divine revelations in the Qur'an and the correct hadith.
3. Salaf scholars are not infallible (preserved from mistakes). Realizing their understanding which is considered inaccurate does not mean demeaning their position, any more insulting them. This is inseparable from the fact that each person is greatly influenced by their understanding of the Qur'an according to their time and limitations of their abilities and knowledge.
4. The scientific findings put forward by experts today do not mean that opinions are not potentially wrong in the future. Maybe that opinion is not in accordance with the verse of the al-Qur'an which is interpreted by it with full force (*takalluf*). However, the most important thing in understanding the verse of Allah is the maximum effort within the limits of human capabilities.
5. There are six influences that scientific findings have had on the interpretation of the Qur'an;
 - a. Scientific findings corroborate one of the opinions put forward by ulamâ and clarify it
 - b. Scientific discoveries explain in more detail the opinion of one interpretation

⁴⁶ Ibn al-Katsîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Azhîm*, vol 2, p. 176. As-Suyuthi, *ad-Dur al-Mantsûr*, vol. 3, p. 356.

⁴⁷ Al-Qurthubî, *al-Jâmi' li Ahkâm al-Quran*, vol. 7, p. 82.

⁴⁸ Abu Su'ûd al-Imâdi, *Irsyâd al-Aqli as-Salîm ilâ mazâyâ al-Quran al-Karîm*, vol. 3, p. 183.

⁴⁹ Yusuf al-Hâj Ahmad, *Mausûah al-I'jâz al-Ilmî fi al-Qur'an al-Karîm Wa as-Sunnah al-Muthahharah*, p. 347.

- c. Scientific discoveries provide new interpretations, and the new interpretation is stronger (*râjih*)
- d. Scientific discoveries provide new interpretations in addition to the other existing interpretations, where existing interpretations do not mutually mutually interpret. This new interpretation did not become diligent.
- e. Scientific discoveries provide a new interpretation, but the interpretation is not stronger than the other existing interpretations, so it becomes a distorted interpretation.
- f. Scientific discoveries provide new interpretations, and these new interpretations can be used as a basis for weakening and rejecting existing interpretations.

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