KHILAFIYAH ABOUT THE ETERNITY OF HELLFIRE
(A STUDY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF AHQABA IN TAFSIR AT-THABARI BY ATH-THABARI)

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ABSTRACT

This article will discuss the meaning of ahqaba in the Al-Qur'an. The word ahqaba in the Qur'an is found in two verses and two derivations. In QS Al-Kahf verse 60 and QS An-Naba verse 23. The meaning of ahqaba in QS Al-Kahf verse 60 means Zamanan or dahran (for a century). As for QS An-Naba verse 23, there are many opinions regarding the meaning of ahqaba, some say it lasts 300 years, 80 years, 7000 years and every day is the same as 1000 years. There are also those who interpret ahqaba as long as Allah SWT wills. And finally, there are those who say that the verse Labitisina fiha ahqaba, this verse has been combined with the verse falan nazidakum illa 'adzaba. The method used in this article is a type of qualitative research where researchers try to understand and interpret human behavioral interaction events in certain situations from their own point of view. For this research, data was collected through literature study with a content analysis approach.

Keywords: Interpretation, Eternity, Hell

ABSTRAK


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1. INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is a divine gift, a source of knowledge and guidance for human beings. "The Qur'anul Karim is a divine call to all creatures" (Al-Qathan, 2015: 58). The Qur'an is a holy book that provides guidance, explanations, and criteria. The Qur'an has infinite potential meanings, always accepting the possibility of reinterpretation, which is never fixed and limited to just one interpretation (Wahyudi & Wahyudin, 2021). In a heavenly religion such as Islam, there are two main sources that are recognized, namely the Qur'an and As-Sunnah. This concept has been an agreement of Muslims since the beginning of Islamic history until today (Dalimunthe et al., 2021). Many reformers argue that the understanding of the Qur'an has stagnated, they assume that traditional methods have reduced the ability of the Qur'an to be relevant to the times (Naziha, 2021).

Muslims have long known that humans were created to serve Allah. In other words, every human being, whether male or female, worships only Him. God alone. Rather, the message is for people to glorify Allah and not associate partners with Him. People are invited to purify their worship and surrender to Allah sincerely. This is mentioned in many places in the Qur'an and hadith. "The world is a place for charity and work, and the hereafter is the true place of life, because it is there that all the efforts of humans and jinn will be rewarded" (Fatiah, 2020: 19).

The dialectic on hell has been ongoing since the early days of Islam. A comprehensive and universal source of information is found in the verses of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet. "Every doctrine that emerges from the Qur'anic verses cannot be separated from its relation to the final doctrine on the issue of eschatology. It would be more interesting, then, if the problem of hell is discussed in the tafsir of the Qur'an in the classical era. The classical period refers to the period in which Qur'anic exegesis began to develop as an independent discipline separate from hadith. This period began from the end of the Tabi'in period until the end of the Abbasid dynasty around 650 H/1258 M (Rahmi, 2010: 9).

The development of classical tafsir began in the first century until the third century of hijriyah. Classical interpretation begins with the first interpretation by the Prophet Muhammad of the verses, then followed by the interpretation done by his companions and the next generation, the tabi'in. History actually shows that Muslims' interpretation of their holy book. Tafsir always changes in line with the development of human civilization and culture. It is noted that the development from classical interpretation to contemporary interpretation cannot be separated from the historical roots in which the Qur'an was understood by the early generations of Islam. The Qur'an with the characteristics of al-ma'astur is the forerunner of the emergence of interpretations in the next generation (Masyhuri, 2014).
Among the classical scholars who are considered the first writers of tafsir include Sufyan bin Uyaynah, Waki’ bin Djarrah, Shu’bah bin Hajjaj, Yazid bin Harun, and Ibn Humaid. They were later followed by al-Thabari, who created a tafsir book known as 'Jami” al-Bayan fi Ta’wil Ayat al-Qur’an.” Other classical mufasirs include Abu Isaac al-Zujjaj (died 310 H) who wrote the tafsir Ma’anil Qur’an, Abu Bakr Ahmad al-Djashash (died 370 AH) who wrote the tafsir Ahkam al-Qur’an, Abu Ali al-Farisi (died 377 AH), Abu Bakr An-Naqas (died 324 H), and Abu Ja’far An-Nahhas (died 351 H). The sources of interpretation used in this classical period include the Qur’an al-Karim, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, the history of the companions, the history of the tabi’in, the history of the tabi’ittabî’n, the stories of the people of the book, ijtihad, and istinbat of the mufasir (Rahmi, 2010: 10).

To be more focused, this article will discuss one of the interpretations that appeared in the classical era (3rd century), namely tafsir At-Thabari by Abu Ja’far Muhammad Bin Ibn Jarir Athabari in interpreting the word ahqaba in QS Al-kahfi verse 60 and QS An-Naba verse 23.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This research is a type of qualitative research in which researchers try to understand and interpret the events of human behavioral interactions in certain situations from their own point of view. For this research, data is collected through literature studies with a content analysis approach (Wahyudi & Wahyudin, 2021).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Biography of Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Ath-Thabari

Ath-Thabârî whose name is Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Ibn Yazid Ibn Khalid ath-Thabari, he was born in Amul, the capital of the province of Tabaristan in 224 H and died 310 H (Ath-Tabari, 2015: 3). Ath-Tabari adheres to Ahlu al-Sunnah wal Jama’ah and supports the school of interpretation of the salaf scholars. Tafsir al-Tabari is an important work in linguistics, and history (Samsurrahman, 2014: 221). At the same time, the fields of hadith, fiqh, and Sufism also experienced developments in religious science. Among these was the period of hadith consolidation, during which six books of hadith known as Kutub al-Sittah were created, namely Sahih Bukhârî, Sahih Muslim, Sunan at-Tirmizî, Sunan Ibn Majah, Sunan Abû Dâud, and Sunan an-Nasâî. From 850 SM to 945 SM, there were no more attempts to form new schools of Islamic law. Sufism at that time had reached its full glory. Therefore, Abû A’la Afifi stated that the third century H/624 M and the fourth century H/625 M were the heyday of Sufism (Anwar, 2002).

Al-Tabari was raised, grew up, and developed in a family that was very concerned about education, especially in the religious field, along with the Islamic society that was developing advanced in its thinking. Such social conditions shaped al-Tabari’s personality and fostered a love of knowledge. Scientifically, his friendly environment has encouraged him to love knowledge since childhood (Yusuf, 2004: 20).
Ath-Tabari's education began in his hometown, Amul, a place good enough to establish a basic education system. After being raised by his own father, he was then sent to Rayy, Basrah, Kufa, Egypt, and Syria in the framework of al-rihlah fi thalab al-ilm. He studied with Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Humayd al-Razi in Rayy. After that, he headed to Baghdad to study with Ibn Hambal, but apparently Ibn Hambal had died. Al-Tabari then went to Basrah and Kufa, two major cities south of Bagdad, Muhammad bin Musa al-Harasi (W 248 H/862 M) (Yusuf, 2004: 5).

With the help of teachers such as Ahmad bin Yusuf Al-Salabi, al-Tabari stayed in Baghdad for a long time to concentrate on qira'ah and fiqh. His passion for learning continued; he studied qira'ah, grammar, and (Arabic) literature in various cities, including Hamzah and Warasy. In addition, al-Tabari once visited Beirut to deepen his knowledge of Qiraat to al-Abbas Ibn al-Walid al-Bairuni, and even met Ibn Ishaq, a famous historian in Egypt. With their help, Al-Tabari was able to write his greatest historical work, Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Mulk (Al-Munawar, 2001: 97).

Meaning of Ahqaba in Tafsir Ath-Tabari

The word ahqaba is mentioned twice in two forms. First, in the form of mufrod or singular in QS Al-Kahf verse 60. Second, in the plural form in QS, An-Naba verse 23. This is stated in the book Fathur Raman Li Thalibil Ayatil Qur'an (Al-Husni, n.d.: 108).

The meaning of ahqaba in the interpretation of Ath-thabari in QS Al-Kahf verse 60:

وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِفَتٰىهُ لََ اَبْرَحُ حَتّٰى اَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ اَوْ اَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا

Translation:
"And remember when Moses said to his servant, 'I will not stop until I reach the confluence of the two seas. (until I reach the confluence of the two seas; or I will go on for years. for many years.'"

In the interpretation of Ath-Tabari:
"Ath-Tabari interprets the word huquba with zamanan and dahran, which means an age or a thousand years. huquba means mufrad and its plural is ahqaba. The Arabs used to say I am in a period of a thousand years (At-Tabari 2015, 8: 99)."

The meaning of ahqaba in the interpretation of Ath-thabari in QS, An-Naba verse 23:

لّٰبِثِينَ فِيهَاۤ اَحقَابًا

"They stayed there for a long time"

In Tafsir Thabari, many scholars of tafseer differ in their opinions on the meaning of ahqaba in verse 23 of Surah An-Naba. There are four opinions of the scholars of ta'wil:

First, who interpreted ahqaba with staying for 300 years:
"Imran Ibn Musa al-Fazaz said: from Abdul harith Ibn said: from Ishaq Ibn Suwaid, from Bashir Ibn ka'ab, said that the meaning of huqba is to stay for 300 years, each year 360 days, and each day 1000 years."

Secondly, those who interpreted ahqaba as staying for 80 years:

"Ibn Humaid reported from Mahran reported from Sufyan reported from 'Imaruduhni reported from Salim Ibn Abi Al-Ja'ad reported: Ali Ibn Abi Talib RA at the time of the Hijrah: What do you get the word huqb in the Qur'an revealed by Allah SAW, said we will get the meaning of staying for 80 years every year 12 years, every day is equal to 1000 years.

'Ibn Hamid narrated to us, he said: Mahran narrated to us, on the authority of Abu Sinan, on the authority of Ibn Abbas, he said: Al-Huqab: eighty years. Abu Kuraib narrated to us, he said: Jabir bin Nuh narrated to us, he said: Al-A'mash told us, on the authority of Saeed bin Jubayr, in his saying: "We will remain in it for many generations." He said: eighty years, years: a year is three hundred and sixty days, one day is like a thousand years. At-Thabari doubts this."

'Bishr narrated to us, he said: Yazid narrated to us, he said: Saeed narrated to us, from Qatada, Allah said: "We will certainly remain in it for some time" and this is something that cannot be interrupted. If there is one period then there will be another period. It was mentioned to us that the period of huqub is eighty years."

Ibn Abdul-Ala narrated to us, and he said: Ibn Thawr narrated to us from Muammar, from Qatada, in his saying: 'Ahqab' he said: We have been told that Ahqab is eighty years of the last year.

'Ibn Hamid narrated to us, he said: from Mahran, from Abu Jaafar, on the authority of Al-Rabi' ibn Anas, "to remain in it for some time." No one knows the meaning of ahqab except Allah swt, but the meaning of huqub means eighty years, one year equals three hundred and sixty days, and each day equals a thousand years."

Thirdly, those who interpret ahqaba as staying for 70 thousand years:

Ibn Abd al-Rahim al-Barqi narrated to me, he said: Amr b. Abi Salamah narrated to me, on the authority of Zuhair, on the authority of Salem, he said: I heard Al-Hasan asked about the words of Allah: "We will remain in it for generations." He said: As for the times, no one can count them other than the eternity in Hell. But they mentioned that one huqub means seventy thousand years, and each day is counted as one thousand years, making it 70,000 years.

Amr ibn Abd al-Hamid al-Amli told us, he said: Abu Usama told us, on the authority of Hisham, on the authority of al-Hasan, in his words: "We will certainly remain there for some time." He said: As for when, no one knows, and as for huqub, it means: seventy thousand years, and one day is like a thousand years."

Fourthly, those who interpret ahqaba as staying as long as Allah wishes:
'Ali (ra) narrated to us, he said: Abu Shalih narrated to us, he said: Muawiyah bin Shalih narrated to me, from Amir bin Jashb, from Khalid bin Maadan, in his saying: "You will remain in it for generations" and his saying: "Unless your Lord wills" that they are among the monotheists of the Qibla. If someone asks: What do you think about this hadith? It is said: What Qatada said from al-Rabi' ibn Anas about this is more correct. 

'If he said: The disbelievers have no punishment with Allah except forever, it is said: Al-Rabi' and Qatada said that these ages have no end and no cessation. It could mean: They will remain in them for some time in this kind of torment, namely: "They will not taste any cold or drink in it, except hot, dark-colored water." Then when their time has passed, another punishment will come for them, as Allah SWT says in His Book: And that the transgressors have the evil of hell as their return. So taste the boiling water and pus, and it is a pair, and this verse is the same meaning as the verse ahqaba.

Fifthly, this verse has been abrogated:

'It was narrated from Muqatil ibn Hayyan concerning this: Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahim al-Barqi informed me, he said: Amr ibn Abi Salamah informed me, he said: I asked Abu Muadh al-Khorasani about the words of Allah: "We will remain in it for a certain period of time," so he told us about Muqatil ibn Hayyan, saying: This verse has been abrogated by the verse 'falan nazidakum illa azaba', "We will not add to you anything but torment". Ath-Tabari interpreted 'labitsina fiha ahqaba' as a statement of news, and a statement of news cannot be erased or abrogated unless the statement is in the form of a command or prohibition" (Ath-Tabari 2015, 12: 234-236).

Some of the above opinions can be concluded that the meaning of ahqaba related to the eternity of hell is, the time period is for 300 years, 80 years, up to 70 thousand years. Each day is equal to 1000 years. There are also those who say that the meaning of ahqaba by leaving the time limit to Allah SWT. And there are those who say that the verse 'labitsina ahqaba' has been deleted with 'falan nazidakum illa 'azaba'. What is interesting is that Ath-Tabari gave two responses to those who interpreted the meaning of ahqaba. First, those who interpreted ahqaba as a period of 80 years, saying, I doubt this. Secondly, Ath-Tabari rejects those who think that this verse has been abrogated or transcended. Looking at At-tabari's two responses, it can be seen that he is actually more inclined to the opinion that the duration of Hell is limited. This is also in line with the meaning of haqaba in Arabic dictionaries.

In the dictionary Lisanul Arab, it is mentioned that the meaning of ahqaba is 80 years:

'Al-Azhari said: It is stated in his tafsir: Eighty years, so his age according to Tsa'lab's interpretation is less than eighty years, because Moses (peace be upon him) did not reach eighty years of age, nor did he reach more, because the rest of his life at that time did not reach 80 years."' The plural of huqub is Ahqab.

'Ibn Haram said: Al-Abbas inherited, before Muhammad, two prophets who dwelt in the heart of Mecca for generations. He said: huqub means eighty years, and a year is three hundred and sixty days, and one day is equal to one thousand years of the world. He said: This is not something that indicates a purpose, as some people think, but what indicates
the purpose is the time, five or ten years, and it means that they remained in it for centuries. As one period passes, another follows; Al-Zajjaj said: The meaning is that they will remain in it for a certain period of time, and during that time they will not feel the cold or get a drink, and they will remain in Hell forever, as said by Allah SWT. In the hadith 'I swear and I will worship those who worship', ḥuqub is the plural of Ḥiqba with kasra which means years and huqba with Dhamah which means Eighty years or more, and the plural is hiqab and qara hiqaba (Mandzhur, n.d., 4: 174).'

Likewise, the dictionary Al-lughoh Al-Aliyah states that the meaning of ahqaba is 80 years:
الأحقاب مدة معينة في زمن معين

"Ahqab is a certain period of time within a certain time (Hijawi 2014: 100)."

Likewise, in the book Ma'ani Al-Qur'an it is explained that the meaning of ahqab is 80 years:
الحقب ثمانيون سنة و السنة ثلاث مائة وستون يوما اليوم منها ألف سنة من عدد أهل الدنيا

"Al-Huqub is eighty years, and a year is three hundred and sixty days, and a day is one thousand years, according to the reckoning of days in the world (Al-fara 2017: 432)."

The stages of character education
To clarify who is the subject and object of this verse, it is better to look at the asababnuzul of the related verse. First, the Asbabunuzul of Surat Al-Kahf is not found in Thabari's interpretation. It is only explained that this verse explains the story of Prophet Moses dialoguing with his son Yusa'.

"Allah swt said to the Prophet Muhammad: Remember, O Muhammad, when Moses bin Imran said to his servant Yosa': (I will not go) He said: I will go on until the two seas meet."

Secondly, the asababnuzul of Surah An-Naba is:
The words of Allah swt about: "They wonder about the news about which they differ, No, then they will know, No, then they will know". Allah says: O Muhammad, what did the polytheists ask Allah and His Messenger from among the Quraysh. As mentioned about them, they began to quarrel and argue about what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) mentioned to them, namely the establishment of his prophethood, and having to believe in what he brought from Allah, and believing in the day of resurrection. Then Allah said to his Prophet. So this is the cause of what makes people wonder and quarrel.

There were some Arabs who said: What do the Quraysh talk about in the Qur'an? He replied: What do they wonder about? As if they were asking about what they were asking the Qur'an about, then he informed and said: Their dispute is between those who believe and those who disbelieve, so that is their difference of opinion, and the words of Allah swt: (What distinguishes them). These are the two groups: the believers and the liars. Allah says when mentioning them: (So they questioned each other) about this news that was told. And that is what the exegetes say (Ath-Tabari 2015, 12: 322-323).
Issued from Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim, from Hasan said; when the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent, they wondered about the news that the Prophet brought. So Surah An-Naba was revealed (As-Suyuthi 2002: 284).

Ath-Thabari has clearly mentioned the reason for the revelation of QS An-Naba is about the questions of the polytheistic Quraysh people who questioned the prophethood of the prophet Muhammad as a messenger, questioned what the Prophet preached, and questioned about the day of resurrection after death. So the object of QS An-Naba, verse 23 is "They dwell in hell for many years", they are the polytheistic Quraysh.

4. CONCLUSION

The meaning of ahqaba in QS Al-Kahf verse 60, "aw amdhiya huquba", means that Moses said, I will walk for many years until I meet the two seas. The meaning of until means that there is a time limit. While the meaning of ahqaba in QS An-Naba verse 23, 'Labistina fihah ahqaba', (They stay in it for many years). The interpretation is that they stay in hell for 300 years or 80 years, or 7000 years and a day is counted as 1000 years. besides that there are also those who interpret that the limit of their time in hell is left to Allah swt. There are also those who say that this verse has been abrogated or mansukh with the verse "falan nazidakum illa 'azaba" (there is no addition other than a painful punishment).

Ath-Thabari doubts those who interpret ahqaba as a period of 70 years. Ath-Thabari also rejects the abrogation or transfiguration of QS An-Naba verse 23 with "falan nazidakum illa 'Adzaba". It is as if Ath-Tabari supports the opinion that the duration of Hell is limited, according to the opinions of the existing mufasirs. The object of QS An-Naba verse 23 is the polytheistic Quraysh. The meaning of ahqaba according to Arabic dictionaries. Such as, Oralul Arabic, Al-Lughah Aliyah and Ma'ani Al-Qur'an means not eternal. But limited to a specified time. For 80 years, each day is counted as 1000 years.

It can be concluded that the study of the eternity of hell in the interpretation of Ath-thabari is impermanent and limited in time.

References