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An Analysis of the Meaning of Slander from the Perspective of Tafsir al-Qurtubi

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Abstract

The word “fitnah” in the Qur'an has diverse and contextual meanings, so it requires in-depth exploration to understand its dimensions and implications. Through text analysis method and hermeneutic approach, this study explores Al-Qurtubi's interpretation of the verses containing the word “fitnah”. The word “fitnah” in the Qur'an has a broad and diverse meaning, depending on the context of the verse. According to Imam Al-Qurtubi in his tafsir book, “Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an”, the word “fitnah” and its derivatives are mentioned in various forms, including verbs (fi'il), nouns (isim), and adjectives. “fitnah” and its derivatives are mentioned around 60 times in the Qur'an. However, this number may vary depending on the way the word is counted and interpreted. The word fitnah in its base form (isim) is mentioned 34 times in the Quran and in its verb (fi'il)

and adjective forms is mentioned 26 times in the Quran. The results showed that Al-Qurtubi interpreted fitnah in various contexts, such as tests, trials, chaos, misguidance, and torment. This study also reveals the importance of historical, linguistic, and social contexts in Al-Qurtubi's interpretation, as well as the relevance of the concept of fitnah in contemporary life.

Keywords: Fitnah, Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, Hermeneutics, Qur'an, Historical Context.

Abstrak

Kata "fitnah" dalam Al-Qur'an memiliki makna yang beragam dan kontekstual, sehingga membutuhkan eksplorasi mendalam untuk memahami dimensi dan implikasinya. Melalui metode analisis teks dan pendekatan hermeneutika, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi interpretasi Al-Qurtubi terhadap ayat-ayat yang mengandung kata "fitnah". Kata "fitnah" dalam Al-Qur'an memiliki arti yang luas dan beragam, tergantung pada konteks ayatnya. Menurut Imam Al-Qurtubi dalam buku tafsirnya, "Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an", kata "fitnah" dan turunannya disebutkan dalam berbagai bentuk, termasuk kata kerja (fi'il), kata benda (isim), dan kata sifat. "fitnah" dan turunannya disebutkan sekitar 60 kali dalam Al-Qur'an. Namun, angka ini dapat bervariasi tergantung pada cara kata tersebut dihitung dan ditafsirkan. Kata fitnah dalam bentuk dasarnya (isim) disebutkan 34 kali dalam Al-Qur'an dan dalam kata kerja (fi'il) dan bentuk kata sifatnya disebutkan 26 kali dalam Al-Qur'an. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qurtubi menafsirkan fitnah dalam berbagai konteks, seperti ujian, cobaan, kekacauan, kesalahan, dan siksaan. Penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan pentingnya konteks sejarah, bahasa, dan sosial dalam interpretasi Al-Qurtubi, serta relevansi konsep fitnah dalam kehidupan kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Fitnah, Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, Hermeneutika, Al-Qur'an, Konteks Sejarah

Introduction

In modern usage, fitnah is often understood to mean lying, unsubstantiated accusations, or defamation. However, in a broader context, fitnah can also include: political and social crises or turmoil, the misleading temptations of wealth, power, or worldly desires, and trials that test one's patience and faith.

The word "fitnah" in the context of the Qur'an has a very deep and diverse meaning. Fitnah in the Arabic dictionary means trial, disaster, torture, madness, astray, derived from the word "fatan," which means to test or try. (Qadriyani, 2021)

One of the central concepts in human life that is widely discussed in the Qur'an is slander. The word "slander" (فُتْنَة) in its basic form (isim) is mentioned 34 times in the

Qur'an, while in the form of a verb (fi'il) and its adjectives it is mentioned about 26 times. (Hsb, 2024) In the context of the Qur'an, the word slander has various meanings, including:

1. Test or trial, as in Surat Al-Anfal verse 28.
2. Torment or punishment, as in Surat Adz-Dzariyat verse 14.
3. Shirk or apostasy, as in Surat Al-Baqarah verse 191.
4. Temptation or deception, as in Surat Al-Mumtahanah verse 10.
5. Disunity or chaos, as in Surat Al-An'am verse 23.

In this study, several verses other than Surah Al-Anfal verse 28 were chosen for further study, namely Surah Al-Baqarah verse 155, Surah At-Taghabun verse 15, Surah Al-Kahfi verse 7, Surah Al-Ankabut verses 2-3, and Surah Al-Fajr verses 15-16. These five verses have a strong connection in explaining the meaning of tribulation as a test, both from the material aspect, faith, and temporary worldly life. (Anam & Kharir, 2021)

The verses of the Qur'an structurally have a componential relationship between one verse and another verse with the same theme. In addition to having a basic meaning, these verses also have a range of correlational meanings (waḥdah al-naṣ binā'iyah mutarābiṭah al-ajzā'). Even more than that, the verses of the Qur'an have a cosmic relationship as a manifestation of the words of the Almighty God. (Affani, 2018)

For example, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 155 emphasizes that every human being will be tested with various forms of trials, such as fear, hunger, lack of wealth, and loss of loved ones. This verse illustrates that life in the world is not free from trials, and only those who are patient will get good news. Surah At-Taghabun verse 15 specifically states that wealth and children are trials for humans that can be obstacles to worship if not managed properly. This concept is also supported by Surah Al-Kahfi verse 7, which explains that everything on earth is made as an adornment and test for humans to see who has the best deeds. This emphasizes that the world and all its contents are not the main goal, but rather a means to test human faith. (Ulfatul, 2023)

Surah Al-Ankabut verses 2-3 reminds us that every believer will surely be tested, as were the previous nations. This verse dismisses the notion that faith alone is enough

without any tests. In other words, tests are an inseparable part of a person's journey of faith. Meanwhile, Surah Al-Fajr verses 15-16 describe how humans tend to be wrong in assessing Allah's tests. When given ample sustenance, they assume that Allah has honored them, but when tested with hardship, they feel that Allah has humiliated them. This verse teaches that tests are not always in the form of difficulties, but can also be in the form of luxury that can lead someone into negligence. (Salam & Ihya' Ulumudin, 2023)

A proper understanding of this word is very important, especially in the social and moral context of Muslims today. Al-Qurtubi, as one of the leading mufassir, provides an in-depth explanation of slander in his book, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*. Tafsir Al-Qurtubi is one of the main references in the study of classical interpretation, because of its systematic and comprehensive methodology. (Abidin & Zulfikar, 2017)

In the study of the interpretation of the Qur'an, there are various interpretation books that are used as the main reference by scholars and academics. One of the interpreters who has an important position in the field of interpretation, especially in legal verses, is Imam Al-Qurtubi. (Muhammad Ismail & Makmur, 2020)

Al-Qurtubi's Tafsir was chosen in this study for several main reasons. First, this tafsir is known to have a depth of analysis that covers not only the linguistic aspects, but also the legal aspects and philosophical meaning of a verse. Second, the strong jurisprudential approach in this tafsir provides a comprehensive understanding of the legal implications of the verses being interpreted. Third, Al-Qurtubi's Tafsir often connects the verses of the Qur'an with the historical context and how the verses can be applied in daily life. Fourth, this tafsir is very relevant in the study of life's tests, including how humans face various life challenges based on Islamic teachings. (Hsb, 2024)

The study of the meaning of slander in this study was chosen because the concept of tests or trials is one of the central themes in human life. However, there are previous studies that have studied this theme, including, Laela Qadriyani's Thesis - "The Meaning of the Word Slander in the Qur'an (A Semantic Review)", Khoirul Ritonga's Thesis - "The Meaning of the Word Slander in the Qur'an: Analysis of the Interpretation of Al-Sya'rāwī" and the journal of U. Latif - "The Concept of Slander in the Qur'an". The

research they have studied focuses more on the semantic approach, contemporary interpretation, or general thematic studies on the meaning of slander in the Qur'an. However, there has been no study that specifically analyzes the meaning of slander in the perspective of the Tafsir Al- Qurṭubī with the approach of Islamic jurisprudence and law.

Therefore, this research proposes two main problem formulations. First, what is the meaning and context of the word "fitnah" in the Al-Qur'an according to Tafsir Al-Qurtubi? Second, how does Al-Qurtubi explain the implications of the word "fitnah" in the social and moral life of Muslims?

Thus, this study specifically discusses how Tafsir Al-Qurtubi explains the meaning of slander in human life, including how to address wealth and children as tests that can determine the quality of a person's faith. This study also highlights how Tafsir Al-Qurtubi provides a perspective in facing these tests.

It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to enriching the understanding of Muslims regarding the concept of slander in the Qur'an and how to deal with it with the correct attitude according to Islamic teachings.

Theoretical Studies

In understanding the concept of slander as a test in Islam, a comprehensive theoretical study is needed regarding the term slander in the Quran, the concept of tests in human life, as well as Al-Qurtubi's interpretation perspective on verses that discuss slander.

Definition of Slander in the Qur'an

Etymologically, the word fitnah comes from the root word ف-ت-ن (fa-ta- na), which means a test, trial, or something that tests a person's faith. In the Qur'an, the term fitnah and its derivatives appear more than 60 times with various meanings according to the context of the verse. This word can refer to a test of faith, punishment or torment, misguidance or temptation, to shirk or disbelief. Therefore, understanding the concept of fitnah correctly is very important for a Muslim to be able to face various tests of life wisely and avoid worldly negligence. (Nuraini & Husniyani, 2021)

According to Imam Al-Qurṭubī in his commentary *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, the word *fitnah* and its derivatives are mentioned in various forms in the Qur'an, both as verbs (*fi'il*), nouns (*isim*), and adjectives (*sifat*). In its basic form (*isim*), the word *fitnah* appears 34 times, one of which is in QS. Al-Baqarah (2:191), which reads: (And *fitnah* [chaos] is more dangerous than murder). (Qurthubi, 1964)

Meanwhile, the derivatives of the word *fitnah* in the form of verbs and adjectives are found around 26 times, with various meanings adapted to the context of the verse. In some verses, *fitnah* describes chaos or disputes that occur in society, as mentioned in QS. Al-Baqarah (2:193). On the other hand, *fitnah* can also mean disbelief or deviation from religious teachings, as explained in QS. At-Taubah (9:49). In addition, in some verses, *fitnah* is understood as a torment or punishment given to those who disbelieve, as in QS. Az-Zariyat (51:14). (Mardan, 2008)

Not only that, in some contexts, slander has the meaning as a form of warning so that humans do not fall into error, as explained in QS. Al-Anfal (8:25). Slander can also mean temptation or deception that leads astray, whether from Satan or humans, as stated in QS. Al-Hijr (15:39).

Thus, based on the interpretation of the Qurṭubī, the word *fitnah* in the Qur'an has a broad scope of meaning, not only limited to tests or trials, but can also refer to social divisions, deviations from faith, punishment for those who disbelieve, and temptations that can lead humans astray from the path of truth.

Al-Qurtubi's Interpretation of Fitnah in the Qur'an

Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, known by its full name *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, is one of the books of interpretation that is widely used as a reference in understanding the verses of the Qur'an. Imam Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 H) is known as a commentator who has a legal (fiqh) approach in his interpretation. (Kharomen, 2018)

Based on the interpretation of Imam Al-Qurtubi in his book of interpretation, "*Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*", the meaning of the word "*fitnah*" in the Al-Qur'an has a wide scope. The following is about the meaning of "*fitnah*" in the Al-Qur'an from Al-Qurtubi's perspective:.

Imam Al-Qurṭubī in his commentary *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān* explains that the term fitnah in the Al-Qur'ān has various meanings depending on the context of the verse. One of the main meanings of fitnah is as a test or trial from Allah which aims to test a person's faith and piety. This trial can be in the form of goodness such as wealth and health, or badness such as poverty and disease, as mentioned in QS. Al-Ankabut (29:2-3). This test serves to distinguish who is truly a believer and who is only pretending. (Qurthubi, 1964)

Apart from being a test, fitnah is also interpreted as chaos and disputes that occur in society. In QS. Al-Baqarah (2:193), fitnah is associated with social instability due to religious deviation or oppression of believers. (Qurthubi, 1964) Furthermore, in QS. At-Taubah (9:49), fitnah has the meaning of disbelief or deviation from religious teachings, which shows how someone can fall into misguidance due to ignoring the truth.

Another meaning of fitnah is as a form of torture or punishment that Allah inflicts on disbelievers and wrongdoers. In QS. Az-Zariyat (51:14), fitnah describes the punishment promised to those who deliberately reject the truth. In addition, in QS. Al-Anfal (8:25), fitnah is understood as a warning from Allah so that humans do not fall into sin and disobedience. (Qurthubi, 1964)

From these various explanations, it can be concluded that slander in the perspective of the interpretation of the Al-Qurṭubī does not only refer to the trials faced by humans, but also includes social, moral, and spiritual aspects.

Discussion of the Book of Tafsir Al-Jami' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān

Abu Abdillāh Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Abu Bakr Ibn al-Farh al-Anshārī al-Khazrajī al-Andalusī, better known as al-Qurṭubī, was a great scholar who was born in Cordova, Spain, around 486 H/1093 AD and died in the month of Shawwal in 567 H/1172 AD. However, there are different opinions regarding the year of his death, as mentioned by al-Dzahabi who noted that he died in 671 H. Al-Qurṭubī is known as an expert in the field of Islamic interpretation and law, with his most monumental work, namely *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*. This work is not only the main reference in the

study of interpretation but is also very influential in the development of Islamic law because of its in-depth discussion of the legal verses in the Qur'an. (Falah, 2023)

The systematics of writing the interpretation of *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* shows a systematic and comprehensive method. Al-Qurṭubī begins his interpretation with a preface that discusses various aspects of the science of the Qur'an, including its virtues, how to read it, and the history of the collection and order of letters in the mushaf. In his interpretation, he follows the order of the mushaf, starting from the letter al-Fatihah to the letter al-Nās. Each letter is discussed by mentioning its virtues, names, and the laws contained therein. In explaining the verses, al-Qurṭubī often presents the opinions of scholars, compares various views, and carries out tarjih (selection of the strongest opinion) based on solid arguments. He also provides language analysis by referring to classical Arabic poems, and discusses aspects of *qira'āt*, *i'rāb*, and *nasikh-mansukh*. (Sholeh, 2018)

In terms of methodology, tafsir al-Qurṭubī uses the *bi al-iqtirān* approach, which combines *tafsir bi al-ma'tsūr* (based on history, such as the hadith of the Prophet, the opinions of companions, and tabi'in) with *tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (based on reason and in-depth analysis). *As-Sayyid Muhammad Alī Iyāsī* stated that al-Qurṭubī tended to use tafsir bi ar-ra'yi, but still used tafsir bi al-ma'tsūr as the main basis. Apart from that, his method of explanation is *muqārīn* (comparison), where he collects various opinions of tafsir scholars, then chooses the strongest one based on the evidence and qarinah. Another characteristic of this tafsir is the tafsīlī approach (broad and in-depth explanation), with many references to aspects of language, fiqh, and supporting arguments. (Sholeh, 2018)

In terms of interpretation, the interpretation of al-Qurṭubī is very thick with nuances of fiqh. In each of his discussions, he often links the verses of the Qur'an with Islamic law and fiqh issues that develop in society. He not only explains the law based on a particular school of thought but also compares various opinions from different schools of thought, making it one of the richest books of interpretation in Islamic law discourse. (Sholeh, 2018)

Thus, the tafsir *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī is one of the main references in the study of Islamic interpretation and law. Its structured writing system,

methodology that combines various approaches, and its dominant style in the field of fiqh make it a work of interpretation that is not only valuable in the context of Islamic science but also relevant in the lives of Muslims to this day.

Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach. Literature studies allow researchers to explore in-depth understanding of Islamic texts and relate them to the context of life. (Abidin & Zulfikar, 2017)

The data used in this study consists of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the Quran and Tafsir Al-Qurtubi as the main material in understanding the meaning of the verse being studied. Meanwhile, secondary sources include books, journals, and scientific articles relevant to the research theme, such as classical tafsir studies, Islamic studies, and research related to the concept of property and children in Islam. The use of secondary sources aims to enrich the analysis and provide a broader perspective in understanding the verse.

Result

According to Al-Qurṭubī, one of the great commentators in the classical Islamic treasury, the meaning of "fitnah" in the Qur'an is very dependent on the context of the verse where this word is used. Etymologically, the word "fitnah" comes from the root word fatana which means burning metal to test its purity. This meaning then developed in a religious context into a "test" or "trial" given by Allah to humans, to see their steadfastness and sincerity in faith. Al-Qurṭubī in al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān emphasizes that fitnah is part of the sunnatullah, namely the law of nature or divine decree that applies to all humans as a means of proving the quality of faith. In many verses, Al-Qurṭubī mentions that this test covers various aspects of life, from wealth to suffering, from pleasure to calamity.

Kind of Slander

Al-Qurṭubī also identified two main forms of fitnah that a Muslim can experience: external and internal.

1. External Fitnah is a form of fitnah that comes from outside the individual, such as pressure from the enemies of Islam, propaganda or provocation that tries to shake faith, and disinformation that confuses Muslims in understanding the teachings of their religion. In Islamic history, there are many events that show how this external fitnah can disrupt the stability of the community, even causing social and political chaos. Al-Qurṭubī's interpretation of QS. Al-Anfāl: 25 emphasizes that social disasters caused by external fitnah can befall the entire community, not limited to the perpetrators of injustice alone.
2. Internal Fitnah includes all forms of trials that arise from within, such as doubts about the truth of revelation, inconsistency in worship, and temptations of lust that can lead someone to moral deviation. In the interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah: 155, Al-Qurṭubī explains that fear, hunger, and loss are forms of internal tests that demand patience and steadfastness of faith from each individual.

Derivatives of the Word Fitnah in the Quran

In the Qur'an, the word "fitnah" and its derivatives appear in various forms and meanings. Some of the derivatives of the word include:

1. *Fitnah*: in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 191, this word refers to chaos or injustice that is greater than murder, indicating that fitnah can mean destructive actions that cause social and faith damage.
2. *Fatana*: appears in QS. Al-'Ankabut verse 2, where Allah states that humans will be tested to prove their faith. This word shows that testing is inevitable in religious life.
3. *Yaftinu*: as in QS. Adz-Dzariyat verse 13, this word carries the meaning of misleading or disturbing the steadfastness of faith, usually done by disbelievers to believers.
4. *Muftanun*: in QS. Ad-Dukhan verse 17, this word is used to refer to people who are being tested or are experiencing slander, both physically, spiritually and socially.

Implications of Slander in Muslim Life

Fitnah in the life of a Muslim has various implications that should not be underestimated. First, fitnah functions as a spiritual selection mechanism, distinguishing between those who truly believe and those who pretend (hypocrites). Second, fitnah can also be a form of warning from Allah for a society that is starting to move away from the values of justice, truth, and piety. In a social context, fitnah can be in the form of collective torture, widespread error, and chaos. Apart from being a test, fitnah is also interpreted as chaos and disputes that occur in society. In QS. Al-Baqarah (2:193), fitnah is associated with social instability due to religious deviation or oppression of believers. (Qurthubi, 1964) Furthermore, in QS. At-Taubah (9:49), fitnah has the meaning of disbelief or deviation from religious teachings, which shows how someone can fall into misguidance due to ignoring the truth.

Here are the initial results in tabular form to make it easier to understand:

Aspects	Explanation
The Meaning of Fitnah in the Qur'an According to Al-Qurṭubī	Fitnah has various meanings depending on the context of its use. Etymologically, slander refers to a test or ordeal that aims to test the steadfastness of a person's faith.
Types of Slander	External: Negative influence from parties hostile to Islam, such as provocation and disinformation. Internal: Doubt and inconsistency in faith.
Derivatives of the Word Fitnah in the Qur'an	<i>Fitnah</i> : A test, trial, or disorder (QS. Al-Baqarah 2:191). <i>Fatana</i> : To test or try (QS. Al-'Ankabut 29:2). <i>Yaftinu</i> : To test or mislead (QS. Adz- Dzariyat 51:13). <i>Muftanun</i> : A person who is tested or afflicted with slander (QS. Ad-Dukhan 44:17).

**Implications
of Slander in
Muslim Life**

Fitnah not only tests faith but can also mean torture, misguidance, or chaos. Therefore, understanding the meaning of fitnah in its various contexts is important so that Muslims can face trials wisely and remain steadfast in their faith.

Discussion

The Meaning of Fitnah in the Qur'an According to Al-Qurṭubī

In the Qur'an, the word fitnah has various derived forms that are used in various contexts. One of its forms is فِتْنَةٌ (fitnah), which in its basic form isim (noun) means test, trial, or chaos. For example, in QS. Al-Baqarah (2:191), it is stated that "fitnah is more dangerous than killing," indicating that chaos in society can be more destructive than bloodshed.

In addition, there are verb forms such as فَتَنَ (fatana) which means "to test" or "to try." In QS. Al-Ankabut (29:2), Allah confirms that every believer will definitely be tested to prove the sincerity of his faith: "Do people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe,' and they will not be tested?"

Another form is يَفْتِنُ (yaftinu) in fi'il mudhari' (a verb that indicates the present or future tense), which can mean "to test" or "to mislead," as in QS. Adz- Dzariyat (51:13), which describes the punishment for those who go astray in hell.

Meanwhile, مُفْتَنُونَ (muftanun) in the form of isim maf'ul (a noun that indicates something that is subject to action) means "one who is tested" or "one who is subject to tribulation," as in QS. Ad-Dukhan (44:17), which tells of the test that was imposed on the people of Pharaoh before the arrival of Prophet Moses.

From these various derivations, it is clear that the concept of fitnah in the Qur'an does not only refer to a test of faith but can also mean torture, error, or chaos. Therefore, understanding the meaning of fitnah in its various contexts is very important so that a Muslim can be wise in facing life's trials and remain steadfast in his faith.

Fitnah has various meanings depending on the context of its use. Etymologically, slander refers to a test or ordeal that aims to test the steadfastness of a person's faith.

Wealth and Children as a Test

Allah SWT said:

"Know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and that surely with Allah is a great reward."

Al-Qurṭubī in his interpretation explains that this verse confirms that wealth and children are a trial (slander) for humans. In this context, slander means a test and trial that Allah gives to test a person's faith. (Mukmin & Agussalim, 2023)

The meaning of wealth as a test In his commentary, Al-Qurṭubī mentioned that fitnah in this verse means ikhtibār (test). Allah SWT tests people with wealth, both in the form of space and narrowness. If someone gets abundant wealth, then he is tested by how he uses it - whether it is in accordance with Allah's command or whether it leads him to sin. (Muhajirin et al., 2024)

While the meaning of children as a test is that children are a trust and a test. Al-Qurtubi emphasizes that children are a great trust from Allah, as well as a test for parents. They can be a source of happiness, but can also be the cause of someone's negligence in worship. In history, many people loved their children more than their obedience to Allah, which ultimately made them fall into mistakes. (Qurthubi, 1964)

Al-Qurṭubī cites an incident that befell *Abū Lubābah*, a companion of the Prophet who had wealth and children among the *Banī Qurayẓah*. His affection for them prompted him to be lenient towards the Jews, which later led to the revelation of this verse:

(Az-Zamakhsharī also mentions this narration in his commentary). This shows that love for wealth and family can be a barrier to obeying Allah's commands. Therefore, Allah warns that humans should prioritize Allah's rights over their personal rights: "So give priority to His rights over your rights." (Qurthubi, 1964)

So it can be concluded that wealth and children are tests for humans, not only as worldly blessings but also as trials that can determine the extent to which a person remains steadfast in his faith and piety. Love for wealth and children should not exceed love for Allah. If someone prioritizes the world over the commandments of Allah, then he has failed in facing this test. Humans must prioritize the rights of Allah over personal interests. As Al-Qurṭubī advises: "Fa āthirū ḥaqqahu 'alā ḥaqqikum" (Put the rights of Allah before your rights). (Nuraini & Husniyani, 2021)

Slander ('Ibtila)

In the interpretation of Al-Qurṭubī, verse (QS. Al-Fajr: 15-16): Allah says:

As for man, when God tests him and then honors him and gives him pleasure, he says, "My Lord has honored me."

Meanwhile, when He tests him and restricts his provision, he says, "My Lord has insulted me."

Highlighting the human attitude towards the test (*ibtilā'*) given by God. *Ibtilā'* in this verse includes two forms: first, the test with pleasure (*imtihān bin- ni'mah*), and second, the test with the scarcity of sustenance (*imtihān bil-faqr*).

In the interpretation of Al-Qurṭubī, the concept of *ibtilā'* or test is not merely suffering or calamity, but rather part of the *sunnatullah* in human life. This test can come in various forms, either in the form of ample sustenance or its hardship. However, humans often make mistakes in responding to it. (Qurthubi, 1964)

When someone is given ample sustenance, he tends to assume that this wealth is a sign of honor in the sight of Allah. He says, "My Lord has honored me," as if the abundance of wealth is proof that he is more special. In fact, according to Al- Qurtubi, ample sustenance is just one form of test. A believer who understands this fact will respond to it with gratitude, utilize his wealth in obedience to Allah, and not be deceived by the world. (Qurthubi, 1964)

On the contrary, when Allah restricts a person's sustenance, some people will feel humiliated. He will say, "My Lord has humiliated me," as if economic hardship is a sign of evil in the sight of Allah. In fact, poverty is not humiliation, but another test that requires patience and faith. A believer who understands this truth will not be affected by

worldly circumstances, but remains convinced that true honor in the sight of Allah lies in piety, not in the abundance or scarcity of wealth.

Al-Qurṭubī emphasized that this way of thinking is more reflective of the character of a disbeliever who does not understand the essence of life. They judge glory and humiliation solely based on worldly aspects, without seeing the deeper meaning behind the tests given by Allah. On the contrary, a believer will always measure his glory from the extent to which he gets guidance to obey Allah, not from the material things he has. Thus, whether in easy or narrow circumstances, a believer will remain within the corridor of true faith, responding to every test with gratitude and patience.

According to Ibn ‘Abbās’ interpretation, this verse was revealed in relation to Quraysh figures who were wealthy but rejected the truth, such as ‘Utbah bin Rabī‘ah, Abū Hudhayfah bin Al-Mughīrah, Umayyah bin Khalaf, and Ubay bin Khalaf.

They consider that the wealth they have is a sign that they are more noble in the sight of Allah, while the poor are considered a group that is insulted by Him. This kind of thinking reflects the arrogance of the Meccan polytheists who rejected the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad, on the grounds that most of his followers came from poor circles.

In Islamic history, we also see how the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as Bilal bin Rabah, Shuhaib Ar-Rūmī, and Salman Al- Fārisī experienced difficulties in their lives, but they remained steadfast in their faith. On the contrary, many wealthy leaders of Quraysh perished in their disbelief. (Qurthubi, 1964)

This verse is a reminder that trials in the form of ease and hardship are part of the sunnatullah. A believer must understand that what determines glory in the sight of Allah is not worldly wealth, but piety and obedience to Him.

Types of Tests in Life

"And We will certainly test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives, and fruits. And give good tidings to the patient."

In his interpretation, Al-Qurṭubī explains that trials in human life are a sunnatullah that cannot be avoided. These trials are given to distinguish who is truly

faithful and who is weak in faith. Based on the interpretation of QS. Al- Baqarah: 155, Al-Qurṭubī mentions several forms of trials that humans commonly experience:

1. Test in the Form of Fear (*Al-Khawf*)

This fear can appear in various forms, such as threats from enemies, social instability, or anxiety about losing something valuable. Ibn ‘Abbās interpreted this fear as referring to a real threat from enemies, especially in the context of war. Meanwhile, Imam Ash-Shafi‘ī argued that the most important fear is the fear of Allah, which can prevent a person from committing sins. (Qurthubi, 1964)

2. Trial in the Form of Hunger (*Al-Jū*)

Occurs as a result of a lean season, drought, or difficult economic conditions. According to Ibn ‘Abbās, this test is related to natural disasters which result in food shortages. On the other hand, Ash-Syāfi‘ī interprets that hunger can also have a broader meaning, including hunger experienced in worship, such as fasting during Ramadan. (Qurthubi, 1964)

3. Test in the Form of Loss of Property (*Naqṣ Min Al-Amwāl*)

One form of test described in this verse. The loss can occur due to war, natural disasters, or certain economic policies. Ibn ‘Abbās interpreted that the loss of property could be caused by war or economic disruption that occurred in society. Meanwhile, Asy-Syāfi‘ī added that the obligation to pay zakat can also be considered a form of test for some people, especially for those who have a strong attachment to property. (Qurthubi, 1964)

4. Test in the Form of Loss of Soul (*Naqṣ Min Al-Anfus*)

Loss of life (*Naqṣ Min Al-Anfus*), whether due to war, illness, or other calamities. Ibn ‘Abbās interpreted this loss of life as death due to jihad in the way of Allah. Meanwhile, according to Ash-Shafi‘ī, loss of life also includes illness that weakens a person, as a form of test from Allah to His servant. (Qurthubi, 1964)

5. Test in the Form of Loss of Agricultural Produce (*Naqṣ Min Ats-Tsamārāt*)

Finally, the test in life can also be in the form of loss of agricultural products (*Naqṣ Min Ats-Tsamārāt*). This includes crop failure, food shortages, or loss of blessings

in agricultural products. Ibn ‘Abbās interpreted that this test could be in the form of decreased agricultural production and reduced sustenance obtained from the land. Ash-Syāfi‘ī added that this loss of agricultural products could also be interpreted as the loss of children, because in Arabic, children are often referred to as "fruits of the heart," which has a similar meaning to the results of an effort. (Qurthubi, 1964)

Social Implications of Fitnah in the Perspective of Tafsir Al-Qurṭubī

In his interpretation of various verses that discuss slander, such as in QS. Al-Anfāl, QS. Al-Fajr, and QS. Al-Baqarah, Al-Qurṭubī provides a deep understanding of the nature of the trials that befall humans and the social implications that arise from them. Slander in the context of the Qur'an includes various forms of trials, trials, and temptations that test a person's faith, whether in the form of fear, hunger, loss of property and life, or social chaos.

1. Slander as a Test of Faith and Social Resilience

In QS. Al-Baqarah: 155, Allah emphasizes that humans will be tested with various difficulties, including fear, hunger, and loss of property and life. Al-Qurṭubī explains that this test is not only individual but also has social impacts. When a society experiences economic instability or external threats, social solidarity is the key to facing this trial. If society is able to be patient and united, they will be able to pass the test well. Conversely, if they are divided, slander can trigger social destruction. (Ulfatul, 2023)

2. Slander in the Form of Power and Social Injustice

In QS. Al-Fajr: 15-16, Allah describes how humans often misunderstand the meaning of tests. When given ample sustenance, a person considers himself to be honored, while when tested with difficulties, he feels humiliated. Al-Qurṭubī emphasizes that this mistaken understanding can have implications for social injustice. Rich people who feel honored can become arrogant and negligent in helping the poor, while poor people who feel humiliated can lose hope and view life with pessimism. This social inequality, if left unchecked, will give rise to conflict and instability in society. (Qurthubi, 1964)

3. Slander in the Context of War and Political Instability

In QS. Al-Anfāl: 25, Allah warns that fitnah does not only befall oppressors, but can also affect the entire community. Al-Qurṭubī explains that fitnah in this verse refers to chaos and strife that can destroy a nation. When society is unable to control conflict, whether in the form of civil war, legal injustice, or oppressive policies, then the impact of fitnah will be felt by all parties, including those who are not directly involved in the conflict. (Falah, 2023)

4. Slander as an Influence of Disobedience in Society

In several other verses, slander is also associated with the spread of sin and moral deviation. When religious values begin to be abandoned and society prioritizes worldly matters, slander in the form of social unrest, oppression, and injustice will emerge. Al-Qurṭubī emphasizes that the blessings of a society depend on the extent to which they are able to maintain morality and carry out Allah's commands. If a people allow slander to develop without any attempt at improvement, then they will experience destruction as happened to previous nations. (Syaridawati et al., 2024)

The Meaning of Slander According to Contemporary Scholars

In classical interpretations such as those of Al-Qurṭubī, fitnah is understood as a test or trial from God, which can take the form of suffering, social conflict, or even moral deviation. This interpretation is normative and theocentric, focusing on the role of humans in receiving and responding to divine trials. However, if we include a hermeneutical framework such as that developed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, the understanding of the concept of fitnah can be expanded in historical and social contexts.

Abu Zayd sees the text of the Qur'an not as a static entity, but as a product of the interaction between divine revelation and the reality of human history. In this case, the concept of naskh (abrogation) according to Abu Zayd is not only legal, but also a sign of social transformation and changes in the conditions of the people. If this approach is applied to the verses about slander, then slander can be read as a historical and social reality that demands an active and contextual response from Muslims, not merely as a test of fate. (Moch, 2022)

Muhammad Abid al-Jabri, in his approach that focuses on the rationality of language (known as the bayān approach), emphasizes that the meaning of slander in the

Qur'an is not sufficiently understood as a spiritual test from God. More than that, slander can also refer to forms of disturbance that occur in social and intellectual life, such as the spread of misleading information (disinformation), the domination of one group over another in terms of thought or power (discourse hegemony), and moral decay in society.

In al-Jabri's view, to deal with various forms of slander like this, Muslims need to use common sense, think critically, and maintain ethics in their communal life. In other words, the interpretation of slander should not only give rise to a resigned or fatalistic attitude, but rather encourage the emergence of collective awareness to build a more just, open, and moral society.

With this approach, al-Jabri wants to invite us to read the Qur'an not only as a sacred text, but also as a guide to forming a healthy, civilized, and responsible human civilization. Therefore, understanding slander becomes part of humanity's efforts to fight injustice and ignorance through clear thinking and ethical actions. (Mostfa, 2024)

Conclusion

According to Imam Al-Qurṭubī in his commentary, *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān*, the word *fitnah* and its derivatives appear in various forms, including verb (*fi'i*), nouns (*isim*), and adjectives (*sifat*). Based on Al-Qurṭubī's commentary, the word *fitnah* in the Qur'an has a broad scope of meaning, not only limited to tests or trials, but can also refer to social divisions, deviations from faith, punishment for those who deny, and temptations that can lead humans astray from the path of truth. Based on Al-Qurṭubī's commentary on QS. Al-Baqarah: 155, QS. Al-Fajr: 15- 16, and QS. Al-Anfāl: 25, the meaning of slander in the Qur'an includes several aspects: Slander as a Test of Faith: Slander is a test from Allah to test the steadfastness of faith, both in the breadth and narrowness of life. This test can be in the form of fear, hunger, loss of property, life, or agricultural products. Patience and trust are the keys to dealing with it. Slander as a Misunderstanding in Judging Favors and Misfortunes: Humans often make mistakes in judging tests, such as considering wealth as glory and poverty as humiliation.

This misunderstanding can worsen social inequality. *Fitnah* as Social and Political Chaos: *Fitnah* can also be a social and political disaster, such as disputes,

injustice, and oppressive policies, which can destroy a nation if not handled wisely. Fitnah in the Form of Moral and Religious Deviation: The spread of immorality and being far from religious teachings can cause moral damage, injustice, and injustice that culminate in punishment from Allah. With a critical hermeneutic approach as proposed by Abu Zayd and al-Jabri, the reading of the verses about fitnah in the Qur'an, as interpreted by al-Qurtubī, becomes more contextual and relevant. Fitnah is not only a matter of spiritual trials, but also a social, cultural, and political phenomenon that demands dynamic and morally responsible interpretation awareness.

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