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To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i2/16355  DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i2/16355

Received: 03 March 2023, Revised: 06 April 2023, Accepted: 25 April 2023

Published Online: 09 May 2023

In-Text Citation: (Kadir et al., 2023)

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Vol. 12(2) 2023, Pg. 471 - 477
http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARPED

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Three Levels in the Interaction with Mutasyabihat Text in the Quran and Hadith

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Abstract
Mutasyabihat text in the Quran and hadith means the text that is not clear in term of it’s meaning. This mutasyabihat text brought Islamic scholars to study it deeply. However, there is an attitude to make an accusation of misguided (tadhlil) and even infidel (takfir) to other sect in Islam. This kind of attitude among muslim ummah is a symbol of extreme. In order to solve this problematic attitude, it is suggested three levels in term of the interaction with mutasyabihat text. First level ia a belief level towards mutasyabihat text. This level is the most important level to determine the belief of iman. While the second level is understanding level. There are many different views in this level. The difference at this level should not bring to the extreme attitude. While the third level is an attitude of muslim.

Keywords: Mutasyabihat Text, Tadhlil, Takfir, Harmony

Introduction
Mutasyabihat text is a Quranic text and hadith text regarding some aspect of the Nature of Allah. There are different opinions how to understand the mutasyabihat text. The different opinions has led to bad attitude where there is an attitude among some of Islamic scholars to make an accusation of misguided (tadhlil) and even infidel (takfir) to other sect interpretation. This kind of attitude is a symbol of extreme. Different opinions and views in the interaction with mutasyabihat text embedded with extreme attitude is a leading factor that has ruined the ummah unity. To solve the problematic extreme attitude, there is an urgent action to promote three levels in term of interaction with mutasyabihat text. Thus, this study aims to identified the three levels in the interaction with mutasyabihat text in the Al-Quran and Hadith.

The Existence of Mutasyabihat Text in the Quran
Allah said:

“He it is Who has revealed the Book to you; some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical...”. (Surah Aali ‘Imran (3) : 7).
In this verse, it has been mentioned that there are two types of text in the holy book of al-Quran. One type is *muhkamat* and another type is *mutasyabihat*.

The Meaning of *Mutasaybihad* Text

Allah said:
الرَّكْبِ أَحْكَمَتْ ءَايََّاتُهُۥ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتۡ مِن لَّدُنۡ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ 1

"(This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, form the Wise, All-aware". (Surah Hud (11) : 1).

Allah said:
اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَسْلَنَّ أَيَطِنَّ فِي الْقُرْآنِ آيََّاتٞ مُّحۡكَمَاتٍ هُنَّ آيَاتٌ مُّفۡهُمَّةٌ وَمَعَائِلٌ لاَّ تُفْهَمُ مَعَانِيَهَا فِيهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسْتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا 2

"Allah has revealed the best announcement, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah...". (Surah al-Zumar (39) : 23).

The words *uhkimat* and *mutasyabihan* in these two verses do not explain clearly the meaning of *mutasyabihat* in this topic.

Al-Qurtubi stated that Jabir ibn ‘Abdillah r.h. said as the meaning of al-Sya’bi and Sufyan al-Thawri statements:

المُحْكَمَاتُ مِنْ آيِ القُرْآنِ مَا عُرِفَ تَأۡثِرَ اللهُ عَلََ أَمُّ ٱلۡكِتَ ََٰبِ ٌٰ، وَمِنْهُ آیَاتٍ وَاضِحَاتِ الدِّلَٰلَةِ لاَ الْتِبَاسَ فِيهَا عَلََ أَوْ بَعْضِهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ فِيهَا اشْتِبَاهٌ F

"Al-muhkamaat from the Quranic verses is a word that known it’s takwil and understood it’s meaning and it’s interpretation, while *al-mutasaybihad* is a word that there is no way to do an action from the knowledge that Allah has stored it without sharing it with His creation”.

Ibn Kathir said:

يَخُبِرُ تَغۡلِيَ أنَّهُ نَزَّلَ عَلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَََاَبَ مِنۡهُ ءَايَٰتٞ مُّحۡكَمۡةۡ هُنَّ أُمُّ ٱلۡكِتَََاَبِ (أَصۡلُهُ ال مُعۡتَمَدُ عَلََيْهِ فِي الۡحُكَّامِ) وَأُخَرَ مُتَشَابِهَ َٰتُٰءۡ، لاَ تُفۡهَمُ مَعَائِلِهَا فِيهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا K

"Allah mentions that *muhkamaat* is exist in the al-Quran. The *muhkamaat* is the mother of a Book that is bright and clear clue, that there is no ambiguity over it to anyone. And also from the al-Quran, there are another verses that are not clear clue to many people or some of them...”.

It has been mentioned in Tafsir al-Jalalayn:

أَصۡلُهُ ال مُعۡتَمَدُ عَلََيْهِ فِي الۡحُكَّامِ (وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَ َٰتُٰءۡ، لاَ تُفۡهَمُ مَعَائِلِهَا فِيهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُ اسۡتَأۡوَتُهَا لَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُعَذَّبُونَ مِنْهَا K

clear and bright clue its principle finalised upon it in term of law (and not understood its meaning like the beginning of certain chapter...”.

The nature of Allah is among matters that included under *mutasyabihat* text. Imam al-Suyuti said:

منَ المُتَشَابِهِ آيََّاتُ الصِّفَاتِ

“Among mutasyabihat is the text of God’s nature”. 473
Imam Nawawi said in Syarah Sahih Muslim:

وٌيُطْلَقُ عَلََ مَا وَرَدَ فِي صِفَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالََ مِ مَّا يُوهِمُ ظَاهِرُهُ ال جِهَةَ وَالتَّشْبِيهَ وَيَ حْتَاجُ إِلََ وِيلٍ

“And mutasyabih is called to the text of syarik in the nature of Allah which gives direction and similarity, and it needs to takwil concept”.

From these statements, among matters that included under mutasyabihat text is a verse of al-Quran and narrated hadith that discussed the nature of Allah where its meaning has ambiguity. The ambiguity leads to resemblance to a creation that illustrates the deficiency for Allah. For example, the laugh nature. This nature shows that people do not know what will happened. This nature gives an ambiguity if this nature is attributed to Allah because Allah knows everything.

Three Levels In The Interaction With Mutasyabihat Text

Islamic scholars have different views in understanding the meaning of mutasyabihat text. This difference view embedded with extreme attitude among some of the muslim scholars and ummah has ruined the ummah unity. Therefore, there is a need to interact with mutasyabihat text in a new approach. The new approach is to divide the process of interaction into three levels. Therefore, three levels should and must be applied in the interaction with text that considered as mutasyabihat.

First level

The first level is a faith to the text of al-Quran and the text of narrated hadith. Ini this level, it is understood generally that every group in Islam has faith to all text of al-Quran and narrated hadith including the text that has ambiguity or mutasyabihat. Imam al-Suyuti said:

وجمُهُ أهل السنة منهم السلف وأهل ال حديث علَ الإي مان بها

“And majority of Ahli Sunnah among them are Salaf and Ahl al-hadith have faith to the mutasyabihat text...”.

Every muslim and every group of muslim believe in al-Quran and hadith including the mutasyabihat text. They believe that it is al-Quran and narrated hadith. Al-Quran is narrated at the mutawatir level. Mutawatir means something beyond doubt. It has been mentioned as qat’i al-thubut (قطعي الثبوت). The text of al-Quran including mutasyabihat text is mutawatir and qat’i al-thubut. While the majority of narrated hadith is not mutawatir.

Generally, there is no quarrel at the first level among muslim group. All muslim believe in the text of al-Quran and the text of narrated hadith. It means that every school of thought including isbat, imrar, tafwidh and takwil believe in the text of al-Quran and narrated hadith.

There is an accusation that certain school of thought is not believe in mutasyabihat in the text al-Quran and narrated hadith. For example, a statement has mentioned:

وفي هذا الكلام ردَّ على أهل التأويل وأهل التَّمْثِيل لَّا لَّا كَانَ وَاحِدٌ مِنْهَمْ لَّمْ يَوُمَّنِي بِما جَاءَ عِنْ نَّالِهِ وَرَسُولِهْ عَلَ مُرَادِ الله وَرَسُولِه

“And in this statement, there is a rejection of the takwil concept and tamsil concept. It is because everyone of them has not believed with the text that revealed from Allah and His Messenger based on the the will of Allah and His Messenger”.

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This statement used the word (لم يؤمن). The appearance and fast understanding from this word shows that there are certain Muslim groups who do not believe in certain text of al-Quran especially the mutasyabihat text. The usage of the word (لم يؤمن) is not appropriate and not suitable to be mentioned to other Muslim groups. The usage of this word contains allegation that certain Muslim groups are not believe to mutasyabihat text. This kind of word will invite other groups to make same allegations. Therefore, it is a best practise to consider all Muslim groups have faith in the mutasyabihat text at the first level.

Second Level
At the second level, there are some differences among Islamic scholars to understand the mutasyabihat text. Therefore, there are some concepts like isbat concept, tafwidh concept and takwil concept. Al-Syaikh Ibn ‘Uthaymin said:

وأجمع السلف على إثبات الوجه لله تعالى ففيجع إثباته له بدون تحرير ولا تغيير ولا تكليف ولا تثبيت، وهو وجه حقيقي

“And al-Salaf generation agreed consensually that there is a face for Allah without changing or denying or determining or comparing. And it is a real face suitable to Allah”.

This is also Ibn Taimiyah’s opinion. This opinion based on isbat (إثبات) concept that conform to the text of syarak in term of literal meaning. This concept does not bring to the similiarness with creation. It is mentioned in Syarh al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyyah:

في هذه الآيات الثلاث يثبت الله لنفسه عينًا يرى بها جميع الحضائض، وهي صفة حقيقيَّة لله عز وجل على ما يكون، فلا يقتنع إثباتها كونها جارية مركبة من شحم وعض وغليظه

“In these three verses, Allah has mentioned ’ayn (eye) that He sees all mankind. This is a real nature for Allah almighty that suitable to Allah. This mention does not bring to nature where it is a part of body composed from fat, white vein and so on”.

Tafwidh means submission. It means that surface meaning of text of syarak is not required (or undesirable) but the real meaning is submitted to Allah. Then if it has mentioned the hand of Allah, the surface meaning of the text of syarak is not required but the real meaning is submitted to Allah.

Imam al-Suyuti said:

ويُجمِّهُن أهل السَّنَةِ بِشَهْدَةِ المَهْدٍ وَأَحَلَ الحَدِيثَ عَلَى الإِيمَانِ بِهَا وَتَفْوِيضِ مَعْنَاهَا إلى الله، وَلا تَفْضِلُهَا مَعَ تَنْزِيْهَا

“And Majority of Ahl Sunnah among them are al-Salaf and Ahl al-Hadith on the track of believe to the text and submission the real meaning to Allah, and we not elaborate it as well as purify it from it essence (that understood by imagination of people).....”.

Al-Syeikh Ibrahim al-Bayjuri explained this principle:

وقولهُ أَوْ قَوْضُ أَيْ بَعْدَ التَّأْوِيل الإِجْمالِيّ الَّذِي هُوُ صَرْفُ اللَّفْظِ عَنْ ظَاهِرِهِ فَبَعْدُ هَذَ التَّأْوِيل قَوْضُ المَرَادِ مِنَ النَّصِّ المَعْوَهِ إِلَٰهِيَّ تعَالَ

“... and his word (submit it) that it after takwil in bulk that is turning it from the surface meaning. After that process of turning, sumbit the required meaning from the text of syarak to Allah”.

In this different explanation, it is a difference to understand mutasyabihat text. In all school of thought between the concept of isbat, the concept of tafwidh and the concept of takwil, all these concepts has surfaced the first level.
These two levels also existed in the other text of syarak. For example in fiqh. All scholars in Islamic studies from different school believe in the text of al-Quran that the waiting time or ‘iddah for woman that has been divorced is three quru’. This term of three quru’ is mentioned in al-Quran. So, this is the first level. On the second level, there are differences among scholars to understand the meaning of three quru’. Al-Syafi‘i school of thought understand that three quru’ is three times of clean from menstruation, while Hanafi school of thought understand that three quru’ is three times of menstruation. There is no accusation of misguided (tadhlil) or infidel (takfir) between these two schools of thought. Therefore, it is better to use the same concept in fiqh to understand the ambiguity in the text of syarak.

Third level
The third level is a attitude level among muslim who involved in the discussion of mutasyabihat text. Unfortunately, some muslim people has a bad attitude which bring to the extreme attitude such as to make an accusation of misguided (tadhlil) and even infidel (takfir) to other sect interpretation. This extreme attitude coming from the second level of interpretation without the first level. This extreme attitude forgot that their differences is only in interpretation, not in the basic of the text. This extreme attitude is not willing to live harmoniously with the differences thinking. Therefore, is must be changed to the good attitude such as respect the others.

The people today need to live harmoniously with diffrence of religion. Islam has tolerance towards difference religion. Therefore, it is a must for muslim people to live with harmony and tolerance among muslim people who has difference view.

Conclusion
The three level in the interaction with mutasyabihat text can be categorize as shown in figure 1.1 as shown below.

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5 Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, al-Jami’ Li Ahkam al-Quran, juz. 3, h. 117, interpretation verse 228 surah al-Baqarah.
This study contributes to contextual contribution by identify the three levels in the interaction of mutasyabihat text, it will solve some problematic attitude among muslim that like to make an accusation of misguided and infidel towards some groups in Islam that has different opinion in understanding mutasyabihat text. First level is the critical level to determine between iman and non iman. In general, all groups in Islam believe to the mutasyabihat text. Difference happens in the second level. The difference of understanding of mutasyabihat text must not bring the ummah to the problematic attitude. With the application of these three levels, it is a big hope that muslim ummah will not have an attitude of accusation to each other.

Reference