

A Study of the Validity of Mujahid Ibn Jabr's Interpretation in the Interpretation of the Qur'an

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Abstract

[A Study of the Validity of Mujahid Ibn Jabr's Interpretation in the Interpretation of the Qur'an] Mujahid ibn Jabr (d. 102 AH) is one of the most prominent *tabi'īn* scholars whose tafsir has had a lasting influence on the development of Qur'anic exegesis. As a close student of Ibn 'Abbās, Mujahid became a key transmitter of *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr*, emphasizing narrations from the Prophet, his Companions, and early generations. His work, although not systematically codified in his lifetime, was later compiled and became one of the earliest references in Qur'anic interpretation. This study examines the methodology and validity of Mujahid's exegesis through textual analysis and critical evaluation of *sanad* and *matn*. The findings indicate that while his interpretations include strong, weak, and even very weak chains of transmission, they remain widely accepted among classical and modern scholars, particularly when consensus exists among the *tabi'īn*. Mujahid's *ijmālī* style, combining concise explanation with occasional *ijtihād*, demonstrates both his fidelity to transmitted knowledge and his openness to reasoned interpretation. This underscores the enduring importance of his tafsir in the historiography of Qur'anic studies and highlights its relevance for contemporary scholarship.

Keywords:

Mujahid ibn Jabr, Tafsir bi al-ma'thūr, Validity, Tabi'īn, Ijmālī method

ملخص

[مفهوم الوارة في دراسة الحياة الزهدية والتقوى في التفسير التستري] يُعدُّ مجاهد بن جبر (ت ١٠٢ هـ) من أبرز علماء التابعين الذين ترك تفسيرهم أثراً كبيراً في تطور علم التفسير. فقد كان من أبرز تلاميذ ابن عباس، واعتمد في تفسيره على منهج التفسير بالمأثور القائم على روايات النبي ﷺ والصحابة والتابعين. ورغم أنَّ تفسيره لم يُنَوَّن بشكل كامل في حياته، فقد جُمع لاحقاً وصار مرجعاً من أوائل المراجع في التفسير القرآني. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل منهج مجاهد وتقييم صحة رواياته من خلال دراسة الأسانيد والمتون. وتُظهر النتائج أن تفسيره يضم أسانيد قوية وضعيفة بل وشديدة الضعف، ومع ذلك فإن أغلب العلماء - قدامى ومعاصرون - قبلوه، خاصةً عند وجود إجماع بين التابعين. يتميز تفسير مجاهد بالمنهج الإجمالي الذي يجمع بين الإيجاز في الشرح وبين استخدام الاجتهاد عند الحاجة، مما يبين التوازن بين النقل والعقل في منهجه. وتؤكد هذه الدراسة أهمية تفسيره في تاريخ التفسير وراهنيته في الدراسات القرآنية المعاصرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مجاهد بن جبر، التفسير بالمأثور، الصحة، التابعون، المنهج الإجمالي

Abstrak

[Validitas Tafsir Mujahid Ibn Jabr Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an] Mujahid ibn Jabr (w. 102 H) merupakan salah satu ulama *tabi'īn* yang sangat berpengaruh dalam perkembangan ilmu tafsir. Sebagai murid utama Ibn 'Abbās, ia dikenal sebagai pelopor *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr* yang berlandaskan riwayat Nabi, sahabat, dan generasi awal Islam. Meskipun tidak menulis tafsir lengkap pada masanya, karya tafsirnya kemudian dihimpun dan menjadi salah satu rujukan tertua dalam penafsiran al-Qur'an. Penelitian ini mengkaji metodologi dan validitas tafsir Mujahid melalui analisis teks, kritik sanad, dan kritik matan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tafsir Mujahid memuat riwayat dengan sanad kuat, lemah, bahkan sangat lemah, namun tetap diterima luas oleh para ulama klasik maupun kontemporer, khususnya ketika terdapat *ijma'* di kalangan *tabi'īn*. Gaya penafsiran *ijmālī* yang singkat namun padat, disertai penggunaan *ijtihād* dalam batas tertentu, menggambarkan keseimbangan antara kesetiaan pada riwayat dan keterbukaan pada penalaran. Hal ini menegaskan pentingnya tafsir Mujahid dalam historiografi tafsir al-Qur'an serta relevansinya dalam studi kontemporer.

Kata-kata Kunci:

Mujahid ibn Jabr, *Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur*, Validitas, Tabi'īn, Metode Ijmālī

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1. Introduction

Tafsir al-Qur'an is one of the disciplines that plays a central role in understanding the meaning of the holy verses of the Qur'an. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, efforts to interpret the Qur'an have continued to develop through the companions, tabi'in, and scholars in later periods. The tabi'in generation, as the successors of the companions in carrying out the understanding of the Qur'an, played an important role in the dissemination and development of interpretation. Their interpretations, when reaching a consensus, were agreed upon by the scholars of the Qur'an as authentic sources of Qur'anic interpretation (Muhsin, 2015).

The first period of exegesis ended with the passing of the Companions, and the second period of exegesis began with the Tabi'in, who were taught by the Companions, so that most of their information was received from the Companions. Just as several well-known Companions were renowned for their tafsir and were referred to in explaining some of the hidden meanings of the Book of Allah, so too were the tabi'in renowned for their tafsir. They spoke about tafsir and explained the hidden meanings to their contemporaries.

In interpreting the Qur'an, the tabi'in relied on several sources, including: the content of the Qur'an itself, the accounts they received from the companions of the Prophet, direct explanations from the companions, information obtained from the People of the Book through their books, as well as their ijtihad and thoughts in understanding the verses of the Qur'an (Pardi, 2022).

Many exegetical works narrate the opinions of the tabi'in, which were conveyed based on ijtihad and personal thought, without any direct narration from the Prophet or his companions. As mentioned earlier, the exegesis sourced from the Prophet and his companions did not cover all the verses of the Qur'an, but only those verses that were difficult for the people of that time to understand. Over time, the difficulty in understanding the Qur'an increased, so the tabi'in felt the need to supplement these shortcomings by providing additional tafsir (heny,

2023). Among the tabi'in figures who are widely known in the field of tafsir is Mujāhid Ibn Jabr.

Mujāhid Ibn Jabr was a prominent exegete among the tabi'in who was close to the companion 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, one of the leading figures in the science of exegesis. With a strong academic background, Mujahid was known as the pioneer of tafsir bi al-ma'tsūr, a method of interpretation based on the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and the early generations of Islam. This method became the main foundation for the development of tafsir and was adopted by many mufassir after him.

The Mujāhid tafsir is one of the oldest tafsirs that is still recognised as valid in Islamic scholarship. This tafsir does not cover the entire Qur'an in detail but is presented in a concise and compact form with an ijmālī style of interpretation. Geographical and historical influences also give it a distinctive flavour, as Mujāhid's exegesis relies heavily on the accounts of the companions and oral traditions that developed at that time. This reflects the tendency of exegesis in the era of the tabi'in, which began to introduce the context of the revelation of verses and broaden the understanding of the words in the Qur'an.

This article aims to examine the tafsir (exegesis) of Mujāhid Ibn Jabr, which was edited by Muhammad 'Abd al-Salām Abū al-Nail to obtain his Doctorate from Cairo University, in terms of the sources used, the method of interpretation, the validity of the interpretation, and the assessment of scholars towards the interpretation. By understanding Mujahid's tafsir, it is hoped that academics, researchers, and tafsir scholars can gain broader insights into the development of tafsir in the tabi'in era and its relevance in the study of al-Qur'an to this day.

2. Literature Review**2.1 Theoretical Review**

The study of *Tafsir Mujāhid ibn Jabr* cannot be separated from the context of the development of tafsir science during the tabi'in period. Mujāhid was known as Ibn 'Abbās's foremost student, who was most *thiqah* and had high authority in interpretation. The theory underlying research on

Mujāhid's tafsir is closely related to *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*, which is a method of interpreting the Qur'an based on the narrations of the Prophet, his companions, and the tabi'in. According to Asnin Syafiuddin (2015). this method is considered authentic because it is based on continuous transmission. Mujāhid used the *ijmālī* style of interpretation, which explains the meaning of verses concisely and succinctly without lengthy explanations.

From an epistemological perspective, there is debate regarding the validity of the tabi'in's interpretations. Some scholars, such as Imam Ahmad, differ in their accounts: some accept the tabi'in's interpretations as evidence, while others reject them. Ibn Taymiyyah emphasises that the opinions of the tabi'in are not binding evidence unless there is *ijma'* (consensus) among them. Meanwhile, most classical exegetes accept the interpretations of the tabi'in because they are based on the companions and have high historical transmission value. Thus, the theory used in this study is the theory of the validity of *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr* and the role of the tabi'in's interpretations in the authority of Qur'anic exegesis.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research method. Primary data is sourced from the book *Tafsīr Mujāhid ibn Jabr*, edited by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām Abū al-Nail (1989). Secondary sources include classical and contemporary tafsir literature, such as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, as well as academic studies on tabi'in tafsir methodology.

The method of analysis used is intertextual analysis, which compares Mujāhid's interpretations with those of his companions, other tabi'in, and later exegetes. This analysis allows researchers to assess the position of Mujāhid's interpretations in the development of classical exegesis and to identify distinctive patterns of thought.

In addition, this study uses the methods of sanad and matan criticism to assess the validity of Mujāhid's tafsir history. Sanad criticism aims to examine the strength of the chain of transmission, while matan criticism is used to test the conformity of the tafsir's content with the principles of the

Qur'an, hadith, and Arabic linguistic rules. The validity of the tafsir is tested through the dialectics of scholars, both those who accept and those who reject the tafsir tabi'in as evidence.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Biography

Mujāhid Ibn Jabr is categorised as one of the tabi'in exegetes. Mujāhid Ibn Jabr's full name (some also call him Mujāhid ibn Jubair) is Abū al-Hajjāj Mujāhid bin Jabr al-Makkī al-Makhzūmī al-Muqri'. He is known by the nickname Abū al-Hajjāj, or Abū Muhammad, or Abū al-Najjāh. Apart from being famous as an exegete, he was also known as a muhaddis (hadith scholar), hafīz (memoriser of the Qur'an), faqīh (jurist) and muqri' (reciter) as well as an expert in several disciplines he studied (Zulfikar, 2019).

This figure was born in Mecca in 21 AH to a Muslim family during the caliphate of Umar bin al-Khattāb. There are many differing accounts regarding the year of his death, with some stating that Mujāhid died in 104 AH after the caliphate of Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Others say that he died in 100, 101, 102, and 103 AH. However, what is clear is that Mujāhid died in the city of Mecca at the age of 83 while prostrating. He was prayed for at the Grand Mosque (al-ahmad, 2024). This means that during his lifetime, Mujāhid lived through two periods of Islamic rule, namely the era of the Khulafā' al-Rāsyidīn Umar bin al-Khattāb and the Umayyad dynasty of Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.

In addition to being a leading exegete of the tabi'in generation, he was also Ibn 'Abbās' most trusted student. This made his interpretations widely referenced by great scholars such as Imam al-Shafi'i, Imam al-Bukhari, and others in the field of exegesis. Historically, Mujāhid's tafsir was one of the monumental works of its time. In fact, al-Dzahabi quoted a narration from 'Abd al-Salam bin Harb from Mus'ab, who stated that Mujāhid was the most knowledgeable tabi'in in the field of tafsir. Like other tabi'in, Mujāhid did not write a complete book of tafsir. However, the interpretations of this generation of tabi'in, including Mujāhid's interpretations, were widely quoted by later scholars in the form of narrations. In this era, tafsir

historians say that tafsir is an important component of hadith books.

The students of Mujāhid included: 'Ikrimah, Fā'id bin Umar, Qat'adah bin Di'āmah, Umar bin Dinar, Muhammad bin Muslim bin Tadarras, Umar bin 'Abdull a1>h bin Ubaid, Ayyūb bin Kīsān, Faiar bin Khalīfah, and 'Abdullāh bin 'Awn. In addition to these names, there were many other students of Mujāhid scattered throughout the Arabian Peninsula, such as 'Abd Allāh bin AbīNajīh, 'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Sulaimān bin Mihrān, Muslim bin Kīsān, and many others.

4.2. Background to the writing of the tafsir by Mujāhid bin Jabr

The background to the writing of the book Tafsīr Mujāhid ibn Jabr by Abū Na'īl can be understood through several important factors. First, the Tafsīr Mujāhid manuscript is very old, having been written in the first half of the 6th century AH. The rarity of this manuscript is of great concern, because after research, only one copy was found, stored in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah (the Egyptian Library). This makes it a very valuable manuscript, but also fragile in terms of preservation.

Secondly, Mujāhid ibn Jabr's fame as a leading exegete lends strong legitimacy to the importance of this work. He was known as a respected scholar whose knowledge was recognised by great scholars. His reputation was further strengthened by his expertise in the field of interpretation, which he learned directly from the companions of the Prophet. Mujāhid himself stated that he took his interpretation from seventeen companions, so it is not surprising that Sufyān al-Thawrī said: "If you receive an interpretation from Mujāhid, then that is sufficient for you."

Thirdly, Mujāhid's work was widely quoted by later scholars. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, relied heavily on Mujāhid's interpretation, quoting more than two thousand accounts from him in Jāmi' al-Bayān. This fact shows how widespread Mujāhid's interpretation was in the development of the classical interpretation tradition.

In addition, Mujāhid's extensive knowledge also

strengthened his position as an exegete. In the field of qirā'āt, great figures such as Ibn Kathīr al-Dārī and Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' used to recite the Qur'ān to him. Adz-Dzahabī even referred to Mujāhid as "the teacher of qirā'āt and mufasssir experts." In the field of fiqh, great imams such as al-Shāfi'ī also referred to him. As for the field of hadith, Mujāhid narrated from a number of prominent companions and scholars, and many scholars and hadith experts later narrated from him..

4.3. Sistematika dan Metode Penulisan Kitab Tafsir Mujāhid

This book of Mujāhid's tafsir is the result of Muhammad 'Abd al-Salām Abū al-Nail's doctoral dissertation at Cairo University in 1976 AD/1396 AH. In his study of Mujāhid's tafsir manuscripts, Abu al-Nail relied on Mujāhid's accounts scattered throughout tafsir books such as the tafsir ath-Thabarī, tafsir Ibn Katsīr, tafsir al-Tsaurī, and tafsir al-Durr al-Mantsūr by al-Suyūi (Syafiuddin, 2015).

The book of tafsir by Imam Mujāhid ibn Jabr, edited by Dr Muhammad 'Abd as-Salām Abūal-Nail, consists of several discussions, namely an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction discusses: Tafsir before Mujāhid and during his time, and covers the following topics: The meaning of tafsir and takwil and the differences between the two, the four parts of tafsir (what Arabs know in their language, what no one is excused for not knowing, what only Allah knows, what scholars know through their ijtiḥad), tafsir during the time of the Prophet and his companions. The first chapter discusses the life and knowledge of Mujāhid. The second chapter discusses Mujāhid's methodology in tafsir. The third chapter contains Mujāhid's tafsir, which has been researched and verified as authentic. In the conclusion, AbūNail includes a summary of the important points discussed in the research, the main conclusions, and suggestions and recommendations (Abdusalam, 1989).

This book of exegesis by Imam Mujāhid ibn Jabr consists of only one volume containing interpretations of the Qur'an in the form of hadith. This commentary is studied from a constructivist perspective, purely as a bibliographical study focusing on Mujāhid ibn Jabr's commentary as

primary data, and analysing the data using the intertextuality method. Thus, this book provides a clear picture of the work and thoughts of Mujahid ibn bin Jabr as a mufassir from among the tabi'in.

Mujahid gained much knowledge from his teacher, Ibn 'Abbas, and followed and agreed with him in interpreting many verses. However, in some matters, he also had different views, especially regarding the use of ra'yu (personal opinion) in interpreting some verses, as will be explained further. Therefore, the method used by Mujahid in his interpretation includes a brief explanation of the linguistic meaning, mention of asbab an-nuzul, derivation of laws, utilisation of accounts from the People of the Book, and the use of ra'yu within permissible limits.

In interpreting the Qur'an, Mujāhid sought to explain the verses concisely, succinctly, and without lengthy explanations, so that his interpretations could be easily understood by Muslims studying them. This method is also characteristic of the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās. Mujāhid did not interpret the verses of the Qur'an comprehensively from beginning to end, but only interpreted some of the verses of the Qur'an in concise and compact language. Thus, it can be concluded that the method adopted by Mujāhid is the ijmāli method (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

Mujāhid ibn Jabr's interpretation has the style of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur, which is interpreting the Qur'an by quoting previous opinions, both from the interpretations of the companions and even the Prophet himself. However, sometimes Mujahid's interpretation is also coloured by the style of bi al-ra'yi, where he makes ijtihad to explain the meaning of the Qur'an. In this regard, Mujāhid's interpretation refers to his main teacher, Ibn 'Abbas, and he also sometimes mentions the interpretations of other companions or tabi'in.

For example, his interpretation of Allah Ta'ala's words in Surah Al-Qashash:

"إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَأْدُكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ"

The first meaning, Ibn 'Abbas said that what is meant by "ma'ad" (مَعَاد) is heaven. But Mujahid gave

another meaning, namely that it refers to Mecca, the place of your birth.

And al-Himyari added: it means the place of return after migration. Mujahid said: "Your place of birth," and referred to Ibn Fāris' interpretation that "al-ma'ād" means the place of return. And it is associated with the words of the Prophet ﷺ to Makkah: "You are the land I love most; if it were not for my people expelling me from you, I would not have left."

The second meaning attributed to Mujahid is from the interpretation of "ma'ād" that: Ibn Jubair said: "ma'ād ar-rajul baladah" (a person's return to his homeland), because he carried out activities in that country and returned there.

And there is another opinion that the meaning is: this person went to his country, meaning he returned. And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left Madinah to perform the farewell pilgrimage and stopped in Makkah, then returned to Madinah. So some ahli tafsir memahami bahwa yang dimaksud with "ma'ād" meaning to return to one's place of origin, or to return on the Day of Judgement.

Mujāhid's interpretation has a distinctive feature in that it employs ijtihad and does not interpret the wording with a literal meaning, but rather explains a deeper meaning. This provides evidence that Mujāhid prioritised the use of ijtihad and reason in his interpretation of the Qur'an (Mundzir, 2021).

4.4. Source of Interpretation: The Tafsir of Mujahid bin Jabr

Mujāhid Ibn Jabr, a prominent tabi'in exegete, is recognized for his unique approach to Qur'anic interpretation, which integrates both transmitted (*bi al-ma'tsur*) and rational (*bi al-ra'yi*) sources (Zulfikar, 2019; Rochimah et al., 2024). His tafsir draws from the Qur'an itself, prophetic traditions, the opinions of Companions, and Isra'iliyyat, while also employing ijtihad, setting him apart from other tabi'in mufassir (Zulfikar, 2019; Rochimah et al., 2024). Mujāhid's close connection to Ibn 'Abbas enhances the authenticity of his narrations (Rochimah et al., 2024). His interpretive style is characterized by brevity and clarity, focusing on

essential points without extensive elaboration (Zulfikar, 2019; Rochimah et al., 2024). While he is noted for rational interpretations, he generally aligns with mainstream scholarly views and avoids anthropomorphism (Kaya, 2021). In contrast, other *tabi'in* exegetes, such as Ibn Abi Hatim, relied almost exclusively on transmitted sources (Rasyidah et al., 2024).

Mujāhid ibn Jabr, a prominent *tabi'ī*, is recognized for his significant contributions to Qur'anic interpretation, particularly in Makkah, and is noted for his close scholarly connection to Ibn 'Abbās (Rochimah et al., 2024; Qudratullah et al., 2021). His tafsir methodology draws from two main sources: *bi al-ma'tsur* (relying on the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, companions' opinions, and *isra'iliyyat*) and *bi al-ra'yi* (personal *ijtihad*), with a preference for concise, direct explanations using the *ijmali* method (Zulfikar, 2019; Rochimah et al., 2024). Mujāhid's narrations are considered among the most authentic chains from Ibn 'Abbās, though not all attributions to Ibn 'Abbās are reliable (Qudratullah et al., 2021). Additionally, Mujāhid was influential in Qur'anic recitation and had a broad scholarly impact, though his tafsir does not cover every verse and remains focused on essential points (Rochimah et al., 2024)."

A distinctive feature of Mujāhid's interpretation is his emphasis on *ijtihad*. It is important to understand why Mujāhid emphasised the power of *ijtihad* in interpreting the Qur'an, whereas another *mufasssir* from the same madrasah, Sa'id bin Jubair, emphasised quoting the opinions of Ibn 'Abbas or other companions. This was due to a decline in the number of people who were knowledgeable and understood tafsir during Mujāhid's time (Abu An-Nail 1989).

4.5. The Validity of Mujahid's Tafsir

The role of the *tabi'in* in the field of Qur'anic interpretation cannot be denied. This is evidenced by the many explanations of the *tabi'in* generation that were quoted by subsequent generations. However, the next issue that arises is the legality of their interpretation of the Qur'an. Can their interpretation be used as evidence (argument) that can be relied upon?

When examined closely, the root of the problem regarding the legality of *tabi'in* interpretation is related to its status as a source of reference for tafsir *bi ar-riwayah*. The scholars have agreed that in tafsir *bi ar-riwayah*, there are four best ways or methods of interpreting the Qur'an, namely:

Tafsir *bil-Ma'tsur* represents a foundational method of Qur'anic interpretation that relies on authentic narrations and established sources rather than personal opinion (Rahma et al., 2024; Othman, 2023). This interpretive approach follows a hierarchical methodology: first, interpreting the Qur'an with other Qur'anic verses; second, using the Prophet Muhammad's hadith; third, employing the opinions of the companions (*sahabat*); and fourth, utilizing the views of the *tabi'in* (Rahma et al., 2024; Firdaus et al., 2022). The method is also known as *riwayah tafsir* or *manqul tafsir*, emphasizing its reliance on transmitted accounts (Rahma et al., 2024). While there is scholarly consensus on the first three sources, the inclusion of *tabi'in* opinions remains debated, with some scholars considering them part of the *ma'tsur* tradition (Zuhry et al., 2021). This approach ensures reliable interpretation by drawing from sources closest to the Prophet's teachings and understanding (Othman, 2023).

The interpretation of Mujahid is narrated through chains of transmission of varying strength. Some of the chains are strong, some are weak, and some are even very weak. There are fifteen main chains of transmission used in the narration of Mujahid's tafsir, but only five of them are considered strong. The rest are divided between weak and very weak. Most of the chains of transmission used by Ibn Jarir At-Thabari also originate from Mujahid's teachers.

Thus, it can be concluded that Mujahid's interpretation has strong *sanad* in some of its accounts, and weak in others. Of the fifteen *sanad*, eight are classified as weak. Therefore, it can be said that, in general, Mujahid's interpretation does not reach the level of *mutawatir*.

However, the strength of Mujahid's interpretation lies not only in its *sanad*, but also in his method of interpretation and the number of

topics he discusses. Based on research, Mujahid's interpretation discusses around thirty-nine topics, which include interpretations from Ibn Umar, Ibn Mas'ud, and others. He also quoted the views of his companions and *tabi'in*, presenting them thematically and in depth.

However, not all parts of the interpretation were conveyed directly by Mujahid. Some of his interpretations came from his students or were quoted from other sources. Therefore, there is still doubt in attributing all of these interpretations directly to Mujahid. In the Qur'an, whoever interprets with his own opinion is guilty. Therefore, Mujahid's fear of this was so great that it caused him to cry and fear in real terms as a form of fear of error.

The position of the *tabi'in's* interpretation has become controversial among scholars, whether their interpretation can be used as evidence (argument) that can be used as a reference. Scholars have differing opinions on whether the *tabi'in's* interpretation can be used as a reference if there are no accounts from the Messenger of Allah or his companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Imam Ahmad, may Allah be pleased with him, has two accounts regarding this matter: one that accepts the interpretation of the *tabi'in* and another that rejects it. Some scholars argue that the interpretation of the *tabi'in* cannot be used as a reference, as stated by Ibn 'Aqil and narrated from Shu'bah. Supporters of this opinion argue that *tabi'in* did not hear directly from the Messenger of Allah, unlike the companions who narrated interpretations based on what they heard directly from the Prophet. In addition, they did not witness the context and circumstances when the Qur'an was revealed, so there is a possibility of error in understanding the meaning of the verses. The fairness of the *tabi'in* also cannot be ascertained as the fairness of the companions. Abu Hanifah even once said: *"What comes from the Prophet, we accept wholeheartedly. What comes from the companions, we may choose. As for what comes from the tabi'in, they are human beings just as we are human beings."*

However, the majority of exegetes argue that the words of the *tabi'in* in exegesis are acceptable

because most of their understanding comes from the companions. Mujāhid, for example, said: *"I read the mushaf to Ibn Abbas three times from beginning to end, stopping at each verse and asking about its meaning."* Meanwhile, Qatadah said: *"There is not a single verse in the Qur'an that I have not heard something about."* Therefore, most exegesis scholars narrate the opinions of the *tabi'in* in their works and make them a reliable source.

A more moderate opinion states that the words of the *tabi'in* in tafsir should not always be accepted, except in matters that cannot possibly originate from opinion. In such cases, their interpretations can be used as a reference if there are no other stronger accounts. However, if there is any doubt that they may have taken it from the People of the Book, then it is best to disregard their statements and not use them as a reference. If the *tabi'in* agrees on an interpretation, then it must be accepted, and one must not deviate from it.

The papers converge on a shared claim about the authority of *tābi'īn* interpretations and how Ibn Taymiyyah situates them within Sunni legal theory. As Rohman and Witro (2022) show, reports from the Successors (*tābi'īn*) belong to the transmitted (*riwāyah / bi al-ma'thūr*) strand of tafsīr, yet their probative force in law depends on agreement: where the *tābi'īn* concur, their view can be treated as a strong argument; where they differ, their statements lose binding force for later generations. Abu Bakar (2023) reaches the same conclusion for hadith/tafsīr usage and catalogs *tābi'īn* interpretive methods—such as adhering to the apparent sense (*ẓāhir*), reading some commands as recommendation (*ḥaml al-amr 'alā al-nadb*), and restricting general import in specific contexts—clarifying how their reasoning actually works in practice.

Placed against Ibn Taymiyyah's *uṣūl*, this makes sense: he elevates verifiable Companion consensus as authoritative, while later consensuses are more difficult to establish; therefore, *tābi'īn* views are respected evidence but not independently binding unless they unify (Abu Bakar, 2023; Hoover, 2024). Methodologically, Ibn Taymiyyah's legal reasoning is more context-sensitive than a simple literalism: Al-Matroudi (2008) shows how he re-reads *istiḥsān*

not as free preference but as principled specification/distinction of the operative cause—an example of reconciling seemingly conflicting positions by differentiating applications. This sits within a broader communicative theory of texts that Muhammad M. Yunis Ali (2000) calls a Salafite pragmatic model, distinct from the mainstream Ash'arī–Hanafī model and helps explain why Ibn Taymiyyah can affirm transmitted authority while still permitting carefully delimited reasoning.

4.6. Conditions of interpretation during the time of the Prophet and his companions

Allah SWT revealed the Qur'an in the most eloquent Arabic. The Arabs renowned for their linguistic arts and varied rhetoric already recognized the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as an honest and trustworthy leader. Yet the Qur'an came with a beauty, precision, and persuasive power that surpassed anything they had known. Unable to equal it, they were captivated and increasingly driven to study and understand its message.

As Allah's messenger, Prophet Muhammad SAW understood the Qur'an deeply and thoroughly, because Allah Himself guaranteed its preservation and explanation, as mentioned in His words:

"Indeed, it is We who have collected it (in your heart) and (made you skilled) in reciting it. When We have finished reciting it, then follow its recitation. Then, indeed, it is We who will explain it." (QS. Al-Qiyamah: 17-19).

As for the companions of the Prophet, they understood the Qur'an in its general meaning, especially in relation to the laws contained therein. However, to understand the deeper and more detailed meanings, they could not rely solely on their knowledge of Arabic. Therefore, they needed to conduct further studies and ask the Prophet Muhammad directly, especially when encountering verses that were general, global, had multiple meanings, or were difficult to understand. This is because there are parts of the Qur'an that cannot be easily understood without the guidance of the Messenger of Allah.

The methods of interpretation today are carried out in several ways. *First*, interpretation of the

Qur'an with the Qur'an, where one verse explains another. *Second*, interpretation of the Qur'an with the Sunnah, where the Prophet provides explanations of certain verses, such as the procedures for prayer, fasting, and Hajj. *Thirdly*, interpretation based on the understanding of the companions, especially those who often accompanied the Prophet, such as Ibn Abbas and Ibn Mas'ud, who excelled in understanding asbab an-nuzul (the reasons for the revelation of verses).

In terms of the level of understanding among the companions, not all companions had the same understanding of the Qur'an. Some companions had a deep understanding due to their closeness to the Messenger of Allah, such as 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Ibn 'Abbas, and Ibn Mas'ud. However, there were also companions who had difficulty understanding certain words in the Qur'an. For example, Umar bin Khattāb and Abū Bakr did not know the meaning of the word "الأب" in QS. 'Abasa: 31.

The development of Quranic interpretation (tafsir) has evolved significantly from the Prophet's era to modern times. During the Prophet Muhammad's time, interpretation was conducted directly by him and his companions with straightforward understanding, remaining oral and undocumented (Hayatuddin & Hakim, 2023). The companions' period was characterized by concise interpretations that did not cover all verses, utilizing three main sources: the Quran, Hadith, and ijtihad according to their scholarly capacity (Aziz, 2022; Salsabila, 2023). Their interpretations are considered authoritative after the Quran and Hadith due to their direct understanding of revelation contexts (Aziz, 2022). The tabi'in period marked significant development with more systematic methods, detailed explanations, and the emergence of interpretation schools in Mecca, Medina, and Iraq, though this period saw increased fanaticism and selective interpretation practices (Hayatuddin & Hakim, 2023; Salsabila, 2023; Faqih, 2024). Modern interpretation incorporates scientific methodologies and addresses contemporary social conditions (Hayatuddin & Hakim, 2023; Salsabila, 2023).

5. Conclusion

Mujahid bin Jabr was born in 21 AH and died around 104 AH in Mecca. He was known as a mufassir, muhaddis, faqih, and muqri' who was skilled in various disciplines of Islamic science. Mujahid was a trusted student of Ibn Abbas and narrated many interpretations from him. His students were spread across various Islamic regions, ensuring that his ideas continued to influence the science of tafsir for generations to come.

Mujahid's interpretation is an important reference because it is one of the oldest interpretations that still survives today. This tafsir was written based on direct narrations from the companions and is unique in its style of interpretation. Mujahid's tafsir is widely quoted by scholars such as al-Thabari and Ibn Kathir. In addition, this tafsir book has been researched and verified by Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Abu al-Nail as part of his dissertation at Cairo University.

Mujahid's tafsir consists of an introduction, three main chapters, and a conclusion. His method of exegesis is ijmalī, which means explaining the meaning of verses concisely without prolonging the discussion. Mujahid also relies on the accounts of the companions and occasionally uses ijtihad in interpreting certain verses. This methodology makes Mujahid's exegesis concise but still scientifically and historically substantial.

The primary sources of Mujahid's interpretation are the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet, the accounts of the companions, and the opinions of the People of the Book who converted to Islam. He also used the ijtihad approach in interpreting several verses. Unlike other tabi'in exegetes, Mujahid emphasised the power of reason in understanding verses that did not have direct narrations from the Prophet or his companions. This demonstrates the freedom of thought in exegesis during the tabi'in era.

The validity of Mujahid's interpretation is quite strong because its chain of transmission is directly connected to the Companions, especially Ibn Abbas. The majority of scholars accept the interpretations of the tabi'in as an important reference in the science of interpretation, especially if there is agreement among them. However, some scholars argue that the interpretations of the tabi'in cannot

be used as evidence if they do not have a history from the Prophet or his companions. Nevertheless, Mujahid's interpretation still has high academic value and is one of the main references in the study of Islamic interpretation.

Scholars have diverse views on the interpretations of the tabi'in. Most accept Mujahid's interpretation because it has a strong basis in tradition, while others reject it because it does not originate directly from the Prophet. A moderate opinion states that the interpretations of the tabi'in can be accepted if they do not contradict primary sources such as the Qur'an and hadith. Therefore, Mujahid's interpretation is still respected and used as a reference in various classical and contemporary exegetical studies.

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