

## **Resistance of The Disbelieving Quraysh Against The Prophet Muhammad in The Mecca Period: A Thematic Study of Ibn Kathīr in Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm**

**Muhammad Ilham** *Abstract*

**Habibie**

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin  
mdhabibie19@gmail.com

**Bashori**

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin  
bashori@uin-antasari.ac.id

**Syamsuni**

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin  
unggul\_suni@uin-antasari.ac.id



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*The resistance of the Disbelieving Quraysh to the da‘wah of the Prophet Muhammad saw. The Meccan period represents a crucial phase in the early history of Islam. This article aims to analyze the causes and forms of Quraysh resistance to the prophetic mission by examining Ibn Kathīr’s interpretation of relevant Qur’anic verses. This study employs a qualitative library research design using the thematic exegesis (tafsīr mawdhū‘ī) method as formulated by al-Farmāwī. The findings indicate that Quraysh opposition was not merely rooted in theological rejection of monotheism, but was also driven by strong fanaticism toward ancestral traditions, social arrogance of the Meccan elite, and concerns over the loss of economic and political dominance. The resistance manifested in a gradual and systematic manner, beginning with verbal propaganda and psychological pressure, followed by physical persecution of the weak, social and economic boycotts, and culminating in conspiracies to assassinate the Prophet Muhammad saw. Through Ibn Kathīr’s exegetical perspective, this study affirms that Quraysh resistance was structural and strategic in nature, aimed at preserving the established socio-political order in Mecca.*

**Keywords:** *disbelieving Quraysh, resistance, prophetic da‘wah, Ibn Kathīr’s exegesis, thematic interpretation*

## Abstrak

*Penolakan dan perlawanan kaum kafir Quraisy terhadap dakwah Nabi Muhammad saw. pada periode Makkah merupakan fenomena penting dalam sejarah awal Islam. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis sebab-sebab dan bentuk-bentuk perlawanan Quraisy terhadap misi kenabian dengan merujuk pada penafsiran Ibn Kathīr terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang relevan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan metode tafsir tematik (tafsir mawdhū'ī) sebagaimana dirumuskan oleh al-Farmāwī. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perlawanan Quraisy tidak semata-mata didorong oleh penolakan teologis terhadap ajaran tauhid, tetapi juga oleh fanatisme terhadap tradisi leluhur, arogansi sosial kaum elite, serta kekhawatiran akan hilangnya dominasi ekonomi dan politik di Makkah. Bentuk perlawanan tersebut termanifestasi secara bertahap, mulai dari propaganda verbal, tekanan psikologis, penyiksaan fisik terhadap kaum lemah, pemboikotan sosial-ekonomi, hingga konspirasi pembunuhan terhadap Nabi Muhammad saw. Melalui perspektif tafsir Ibn Kathīr, artikel ini menegaskan bahwa perlawanan Quraisy bersifat struktural dan sistematis sebagai upaya mempertahankan status quo kekuasaan.*

**Kata kunci:** *kafir Quraisy, perlawanan, dakwah Nabi, tafsir Ibn Kathīr, tafsir mawdhū'ī*

## INTRODUCTION

Pre-Islamic Arab society lived during the *Jahiliyyah* period, characterized by tribal fanaticism and frequent inter-tribal conflicts. Among other things, women lacked equal rights, slavery and usury were widespread, and social inequality was quite stark. In the religious sphere, the majority worshipped idols, although a small minority were familiar with the concept of monotheism. In general, social, political, and moral life at that time was not well-organized before the arrival of Islam.<sup>1</sup> As for Meccan society was organized around a tribal (*qabilah*) system in which political authority was exercised by tribal leaders (*sayyid al-qabilah*), characterized by social stratification, religious plurality, and ethnic diversity, encompassing distinctions between elites and the poor, freemen and slaves, as well as Arabs and non-Arabs. This social configuration formed the structural basis of Quraysh authority and dominance in Mecca.<sup>2</sup> Among these tribes, the Quraysh held a dominant position, a status consolidated by Qushay ibn Kilab, who centralized political leadership and regulated both political affairs and the administration of the Ka'bah. The majority of scholars hold the view that anyone who is a descendant of al-Nadhr ibn Kinānah is considered part of the Quraysh.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eep Saepuloh dkk., "Pemikiran dan Peradaban: Arab Pra-Islam dan Munculnya Peradaban Pada Masa Nabi Muhammad Saw", *Jurnal Transformasi Pendidikan Berkelanjutan*, vol. 6, no. 2, 149–52, <https://ejournals.com/ojs/index.php/jtpb/article/view/2015>.

<sup>2</sup> Bayu Bintoro, "Pluralisme dalam Islam: Konsep dan Praktik Masa Nabi Muhammad Saw", *Jurnal Moderasi*, vol. 4, no. 1, 22, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jm.2024.41.02>.

<sup>3</sup>Based on a hadith narrated by al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindī, who reported that when he came to meet the Messenger of Allah together with delegates from Kindah, he asked, "*O Messenger of Allah,*

The Quraysh tribe was known as a disorderly and turbulent group, fragmented, mutually hostile, prone to violence, and difficult to control. Nevertheless, Quraysh became a highly prominent tribal name in Mecca and assumed the role of guardians of the Ka‘bah, the sacred structure that served as a gathering place for idols and the center of Arabian worship. This tribe had already gained renown among the inhabitants of Mecca prior to the birth of the Prophet Muhammad *saw*.<sup>4</sup> Genealogically, the Prophet Muhammad originated from the Quraysh tribe, the emergence of a prophetic figure carried profound implications. A prophet, regarded as a divinely chosen human being, possesses fundamental distinctions from ordinary individuals, despite sharing the same human (*bashariyyah*) dimension. Classical Muslim scholars formulated specific criteria for prophethood. Ibn Kathīr, in *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, asserts that a prophet must be male, free (*not enslaved*), protected from moral and doctrinal flaws (*ma‘ṣūm*), and entrusted with divine revelation containing religious law from Allah. These criteria establish the legitimacy of prophethood.<sup>5</sup>

During the early phase of the spread of Islam in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad *saw*. faced numerous challenges and obstacles from the disbelieving Quraysh. As the dominant tribe residing in Mecca. Harald Motzki, in his studies on early Islamic sources, argues that the earliest traditions, particularly reports found in the *sīrah* and ḥadīth literature, consistently portray the conflict between Muhammad and the Quraysh as an ideological-theological dispute. Through his *isnād-cum-matn* analysis, Motzki demonstrates that many early reports, which can be traced back to the first and second generations of Islam, emphasize the Quraysh’s rejection of the call to monotheism, their opposition to the critique of idol worship, and their denial of revelation and resurrection.<sup>6</sup>

Their resistance to the Prophet was not solely rooted only in these theological principles, but rather in entrenched social, political, and economic interests. The Qur’an, as reflected in Q.S. al-Zukhruf /43: 31, illustrates how the Quraysh questioned why the Qur’ān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad *saw*. rather than to a prominent figure from Mecca or Ṭā’if. In *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Azim*, Ibn Kathir explains that the Quraysh’s rejection was not merely due to ignorance of the truth, but rather stemmed from arrogance and worldly interests. In his interpretation of Q.S. al-Zukhruf /43: 31,

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*are you not part of us?”* The Prophet replied, “*No, we are from Banī al-Nadhr ibn Kinānah.*” Husain Mu’nis, *Tarikh Quraisy Dirasah Fi Tarikh Ashghar Qabilah ‘Arabiyyah Ja’alaha al-Islam A’zhama Qabilah Fi Tarikh al-Basyar*, Terj. Masturi Irham dan Mujiburrohman (Jakarta Timur: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2022), hlm. 62–63.

<sup>4</sup>Philip Khuri Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2010), hlm. 142.

<sup>5</sup>Muhammad Syafirin, “Konsep Kenabian Dan Wahyu Dalam Al-Qur’an: Kajian Teologis QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 136”, *Jurnal Moderasi*, vol. 1, no. 2, 145, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jm.2021.12.02>.

<sup>6</sup>Harald Motzki, “The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources”, *International Islamic University Islamabad*, vol. 1, no. 39(2000), 1–18.

he points out that the Quraysh questioned why revelation was not sent down to a prominent figure from Mecca or Ṭā'if. According to him, this attitude reflects class-based arrogance and the belief that spiritual leadership should belong exclusively to the social elite.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, in his commentary on Q.S. Ṣād /38: 4–8, Ibn Kathir explains that the Quraysh's accusations against the Prophet as a liar and a sorcerer arose from their fear of losing authority and political influence. He argues that although they acknowledged Allah as the Creator, they nevertheless continued to associate partners with Him because they sought to preserve their existing power structures and ancestral traditions.<sup>8</sup>

Based on this background, the article aims to analyze the causes and forms of the disbelieving Quraysh's resistance to the Prophet Muhammad *saw.* during the Meccan period from the perspective of Ibn Kathir's tafsir. The study focuses on his interpretation of Qur'anic verses depicting the Quraysh's rejection and examines how he uncovers the theological, social, and political dimensions behind their opposition. The main thesis advanced is that, according to Ibn Kathir, the Quraysh's resistance was an expression of arrogance and an attempt to preserve the status quo, even though they implicitly recognized the truth of the Prophet's message.

## METHOD

This study is a qualitative library research. The interpretive approach applied is thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawdhū'ī*) based on the methodological framework proposed by al-Farmāwī, namely a collection of verses from the Qur'an which have the same purpose, including certain titles or topics, arranging them according to the chronological order of the verses by aligning the purpose or reason the verses were revealed, then providing explanations of the verses, connecting one verse with another, classifying them, and taking legal instructions and conclusions.<sup>9</sup>

The steps of thematic interpretation according to Abd al-Hayy al-Farmāwī begin with determining the specific issue or theme to be examined, followed by collecting all Qur'anic verses related to that theme. These verses are then arranged according to their chronological order of revelation, accompanied by knowledge of their *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) to ensure an accurate understanding of their historical context. Next, the exegete examines the correlation of each verse within its respective sūrah and organizes the discussion into a systematic and coherent outline. The analysis is further complemented by relevant hadiths to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

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<sup>7</sup>al-Dimasyqī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 4, 108.

<sup>8</sup>al-Dimasyqī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 4, 24–25.

<sup>9</sup> `Abd al-Hayy Al-Farmāwiy, *al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Maudhu'i: Dirasah Manhajiyah Maudhu'iyah*, 9 ed.(Mesir: Dâr ath-Thabâ`ah wa an-Nasyr al-Islâmiyyah, 2005), hlm. 41.

Finally, all related verses are studied holistically by gathering those with similar meanings and reconciling verses that are general (*'ām*) and specific (*khāṣ*), absolute (*muṭlaq*) and qualified (*muqayyad*), or those that outwardly appear contradictory, so that they converge into a unified and harmonious conclusion without forced interpretation.<sup>10</sup>

The research procedures include: first, determining the main theme, namely the resistance of the Quraysh infidels to the da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad *saw.*; second, collecting Qur'anic verses relevant to the theme; third, examining and analyzing the interpretation of these verses in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr as the primary exegetical source; fourth, classifying the verses and interpretations into subthemes concerning the causes and forms of resistance; and fifth, synthesizing the thematic findings to produce a comprehensive and systematic conclusion. Finally, the interpretation of Quraysh resistance as presented in the Qur'an and classical Islamic exegesis.

## RESULT

### Study of Thematic Interpretation

Tafsir maudhu'ī is defined as an interpretation that collects verses from the Qur'an related to a particular theme and then explains them in depth. In Indonesian it is known as thematic interpretation.<sup>11</sup> The main goal is to obtain an integrated understanding and solution to thematic problems. This approach emphasizes the function of interpretation as explaining meaning, issuing laws, and applying the wisdom of verses in the context of the specified topic.

Thematic interpretation has its roots in the practice of *al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* during the time of the Prophet and continued to develop within the classical exegetical tradition, such as in the works of Al-Tabari. It later emerged explicitly as a distinct methodological approach in the twentieth century in Egypt, influenced by the thought of Al-Shatibi. One significant contribution was *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Mahmud Shaltut, which introduced ideas of thematizing the Qur'an, although its application was still limited to particular surahs.<sup>12</sup> Later, when Sayyid al-Kumi served as Head of the Department of Tafsir at the Faculty of Usul al-Din, Al-Azhar University, he further developed the maudhu'ī (thematic) method in a way that differed from earlier scholars. His efforts contributed to the production of numerous exegetical works employing the thematic approach, including *al-Futūḥāt al-Rabbāniyyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'īyyah li al-Āyāt al-Qur'āniyyah*. Subsequently, Abd Hayy al-Farmawi authored *al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'ī*, which provided a more systematic and structured framework for

<sup>10</sup> Al-Farmāwi, *al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudhu'ī: Dirasah Manhajīyyah Maudhu'īyyah*.

<sup>11</sup> Usman, *Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2009), hlm. 311.

<sup>12</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), hlm. 112–13.

the application of the thematic interpretation method.<sup>13</sup> Its development was further continued by contemporary scholars such as Abd al-Sattar, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Mustafa Muslim, Muhammad Quraish Shihab, and Abdul Mustaqim, who each contributed to refining and expanding the methodological framework of thematic interpretation in various academic and intellectual contexts.

Tafsir *maudhū‘ī* (thematic interpretation) possesses a dynamic character because it focuses on a specific title, topic, or theme, allowing the Qur’an to remain relevant and contextual in responding to contemporary challenges—an idea often expressed in the principle *ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wa makān* (valid for every time and place). Through this focused thematic approach, the Qur’an is continuously engaged as a living source of guidance, ensuring its teachings remain applicable and responsive to emerging social, intellectual, and moral issues.<sup>14</sup> According to Abd Hayy al-Farmawi, thematic (*maudhū‘ī*) interpretation is divided into two forms: thematic plural and thematic singular. Thematic plural focuses on examining a single surah comprehensively in order to identify its central theme by analyzing the interconnection between its verses. In contrast, thematic singular gathers verses from various surahs that address the same topic, then analyzes them systematically and comprehensively to produce an integrated and holistic conclusion.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Mustafa Muslim classifies thematic interpretation into three categories: thematic by word (*lafẓ*), thematic by surah, and thematic by Qur’anic theme. Thematic by word traces a specific term throughout the Qur’an and analyzes all verses in which it appears; thematic by surah studies a single surah in depth to uncover its principal theme; while thematic by theme collects and examines verses related to a particular issue. In addition, Abdul Mustaqim introduces the concept of thematic-conceptual research, which explores concepts not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’an but implicitly embedded within its teachings, such as “Psychology in the Qur’an,” derived from verses concerning *nafs* (self), *qalb* (heart), and *‘aql* (intellect).<sup>16</sup>

The thematic interpretation method of Abd Hayy al-Farmawi is more appropriate for this research because its focus lies in collecting verses from various surahs that relate to the theme of the Quraysh’s resistance during the Meccan period, and then analyzing them comprehensively to identify patterns, forms, and their theological-historical significance. This theme is not confined to a single surah but is dispersed across multiple verses, making the thematic singular approach

<sup>13</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, IV (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2019), hlm. 331.

<sup>14</sup> Abdul Djalal, Feirian Yazdajird Iwanebel, dan Moh Yardho, “Tipologi Tafsir Maudui Di Indonesia”, other UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2020, hlm. 43–44, <http://repository.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/16/>.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Farmāwiy, *al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Maudhu‘i: Dirasah Manhajiyah Maudhu‘iyyah*, 40–41.

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2015), hlm. 61–62.

methodologically more relevant. Academically, this model enables a systematic, integrative, and contextual analysis, while maintaining argumentative coherence by situating all related verses within a unified thematic framework.

### **Thematic Criteria of Quraysh Resistance**

The criteria for selecting verses that explain the causes of the Quraysh's resistance to the Prophet's mission during the Meccan period are based on passages that explicitly or implicitly indicate the reasons for their rejection. These include Q.S. Luqmān (31):21, which reflects fanatic adherence to ancestral traditions; Q.S. al-Zukhruf (43):31 and Q.S. Šād (38):4–8, which represent elite class arrogance; Q.S. al-An'ām (6):52, which highlights social discrimination; and Q.S. Quraysh (106):1–4 together with Q.S. Sabā' (34):34–35, which illustrate economic and political motives. These verses fulfill historical-Makkiyyah criteria (revealed within the socio-historical context of Mecca) as well as socio-theological representativeness (encompassing theological, social, and economic-political dimensions as motives of resistance).

Meanwhile, the criteria for verses addressing the forms of resistance include: (1) thematic-axiological criteria, namely verses that explicitly portray concrete acts of resistance such as verbal propaganda and accusations of sorcery or poetry (Q.S. al-Šāffāt [37]:36; al-Anbiyā' [21]:5), delegitimization of prophethood (Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:48; al-Furqān [25]:9), social pressure against marginalized believers (Q.S. al-An'ām [6]:52), coercion and persecution (Q.S. al-Naḥl [16]:106), and assassination plots (Q.S. al-Anfāl [8]:30); (2) chronological-historical criteria, referring to verses connected to the Meccan conflict prior to the Hijrah; and (3) representative-structural criteria, reflecting the staged escalation of resistance from ideological propaganda and psychological pressure to physical violence, socio-economic boycott, and ultimately conspiracy. Academically, the establishment of these criteria is reinforced through the authoritative exegetical analysis of Ibn Kathir, ensuring that the identification of both causes and forms of resistance is textually grounded, methodologically systematic, and scientifically accountable within the framework of thematic singular interpretation.

### **Biography of Ibn Kathir**

Ibn Kathir (701–774 H) was a prominent Muslim scholar whose contributions span Qur'anic exegesis, ḥadīth criticism, and Islamic historiography.<sup>17</sup> Born in Majdil in 701 AH, he lost his father, himself a Shāfi'ī scholar and preacher, at an early age, a circumstance that shaped his early intellectual development. In 707 AH, he moved to Damascus under the care of his elder brother, where he grew within one of the most

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<sup>17</sup>Ismā'īl bin 'Umar bin Katsīr al-Dimasyqī, *Al-Bidāyah Wa al-Nihāyah*, jilid 1, (Beirut-Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2015), hlm. 11.

vibrant scholarly environments of the Mamluk period.<sup>18</sup> Ibn Kathīr memorized the Qur'an before the age of ten, forming the foundation for his later exegetical scholarship. His intellectual orientation was strongly influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, whose emphasis on textual evidence, critical engagement with transmitted reports, and opposition to speculative theology significantly shaped Ibn Kathīr's methodological approach. In ḥadīth studies, he was trained by Al-Mizzi, from whom he developed expertise in isnād criticism and rijāl evaluation. His historiographical perspective was also informed by Al-Barzali, whose historical methodology influenced Ibn Kathīr's integrative approach to political, biographical, and religious history.

Ibn Kathīr's intellectual legacy is most clearly reflected in his major scholarly works, particularly *Tafsir al Quran al Azim*, which is characterized by a sustained reliance on Qur'anic intertextuality, extensive engagement with prophetic traditions, and careful use of reports transmitted from the Companions and the early generations. These features reflect his broader scholarly formation in ḥadīth criticism and historical inquiry, shaping his concern for transmission reliability and contextual coherence in exegetical reasoning. Most notably, Ibn Kathīr authored *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-‘Aẓīm*, commonly known as *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, which remains one of the most widely studied Qur'anic commentaries. Building upon the methodological tendencies noted above, the work demonstrates a consistent balance between textual fidelity and historical contextualization, thereby securing Ibn Kathīr's position as a central figure in the classical exegetical tradition.<sup>19</sup>

This historiographical sensitivity is further reflected in *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, an important historical encyclopedia that illustrates his commitment to situating religious narratives within broader historical developments. The coexistence of exegetical and historiographical writing within his corpus therefore reveals a coherent scholarly orientation in which transmitted knowledge is preserved while its historical setting is carefully reconstructed.<sup>20</sup> Ibn Kathīr passed away on Thursday, 26 Sha' bān 774 AH. His funeral was attended by a large gathering of Damascus residents, and he was buried near the grave of Ibn Taymiyyah outside Bāb al-Naṣr, in accordance with his will. His enduring influence across multiple disciplines confirms his status as a foundational scholar whose works continue to shape Islamic scholarship and modern academic inquiry.

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<sup>18</sup>al-Dimasyqī, *Al-Bidāyah Wa al-Nihāyah*, jilid 1, 12.

<sup>19</sup>Maliki, "Tafsir Ibnu Katsir: Metode dan Bentuk Penafsirannya," *el-Umdah* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 78.

<sup>20</sup>Rosihon Anwar, *Melacak Unsur-Unsur Israiliyat dalam Tafsir al-Thabari dan Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Bandung: CV Pustaka Setia, 1999), hlm. 70.

**Ibn Kathīr's Exegesis in *Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm***

According to the literature on the history of Qur'anic exegesis, this work is commonly known under the title *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*. However, there is no definitive certainty regarding the original title explicitly assigned by Ibn Kathīr himself. This uncertainty stems from the fact that Ibn Kathīr did not clearly state the title of his work in its introduction, as was customary among many classical scholars. Consequently, this situation has given rise to differing opinions among scholars and researchers concerning the origin of the tafsīr's title.<sup>21</sup> 'Alī al-Ṣābūnī argues that the title indeed originated from Ibn Kathīr, whereas other scholars maintain that it was later assigned by subsequent generations of scholars as a descriptive representation of the tafsīr's content and character. In the absence of conclusive textual evidence and given the limited access to early manuscripts, the only certainty is that this tafsīr is authentically the intellectual and literary product of Ibn Kathīr.<sup>22</sup>

Methodologically, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* is classified as *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* and employs the *tahlīlī* method of interpretation.<sup>23</sup> This approach emphasizes a systematic and sequential explanation of Qur'anic verses according to the canonical order of the muṣḥaf (*tartīb muṣḥafī*), while addressing various aspects related to each verse. Ibn Kathīr begins his interpretation by citing the verse or group of verses under discussion, followed by a concise and generally accessible explanation of their overall meaning. In many instances, he interprets a verse by means of other Qur'anic verses, making *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* one of the defining characteristics of his exegetical method.<sup>24</sup>

Subsequently, Ibn Kathīr reinforces his interpretations with prophetic traditions, including *marfū'* ḥadīths with connected chains of transmission as well as other relevant reports related to the verses discussed. He not only cites these traditions but also frequently evaluates their authenticity, distinguishing between those that are authoritative and those that are not. In addition to prophetic traditions, the views of the Companions, the Tābi'ūn, and early Muslim scholars occupy a central position in his tafsīr. Ibn Kathīr often cites their opinions as part of an effort to trace the understanding of the Qur'an among the earliest generations of Islam.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Ibn Kathīr presents the opinions of earlier exegetes and subsequently exercises discernment in selecting

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<sup>21</sup>Maliki, "Tafsīr Ibnu Katsīr: Metode dan Bentuk Penafsirannya," 78.

<sup>22</sup>Maliki, "Tafsīr Ibnu Katsīr: Metode dan Bentuk Penafsirannya," 78.

<sup>23</sup>Nabila Fajriyanti Muhyin and Muhammad Ridwan Nasir, "Metode Penafsiran Ibnu Katsīr dalam Tafsīr al-Quran al-'Azhim," *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsīr* 8, no. 01 (2023): 151.

<sup>24</sup>Nur Faiz Maswan, *Kajian Deskriptif Tafsīr Ibnu Katsīr* (Jakarta: Menara Kudus, 2002), hlm. 64.

<sup>25</sup>Jul Hendri, "Ibn Katsīr (Telaah Tafsīr al-Quran al-'Azhim Karya Ibn Katsīr)," *Nuansa: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Kemasyarakatan* 14, no. 2 (2021): 246–247.

among these views. In certain cases, he endorses the opinion he deems strongest based on textual evidence and methodological coherence. At times, he also advances his own interpretations in an argumentative manner, particularly when he believes a given view aligns more closely with the contextual meaning of the verse and the principles of Islamic law. Although linguistic analysis is present in his tafsir, it does not constitute its primary focus. Linguistic explanations are offered selectively, only when they are deemed necessary to clarify the meaning of a verse, either through defining specific terms or by demonstrating their usage in other Qur'anic contexts.<sup>26</sup>

As a practical of these methodological principles, the interpretation of Ibnu Katsir on Surah al-Baqarah (2): 47 demonstrates how he presents the verses, explains their general meaning, and reinforces the interpretation through transmitted reports from early authorities. This example reflects his consistent reliance on tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr and the analytical (taḥlīlī) method within a concrete exegetical context.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اِسْرَائِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِيۤ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاِنِّيۤ اَفْضَلْتُكُمْ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

*O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you over all nations of your time.*

In his interpretation of this verse, Ibn Kathir explains that Allah reminds the Children of Israel of the various blessings bestowed upon their forefathers and predecessors, including the favor of sending messengers from among themselves, the revelation of scriptures to them, and their distinction over other nations of their time.<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the statement of Allah Swt *وَاِنِّيۤ اَفْضَلْتُكُمْ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ*, Ibn Kathir cites a narration from Abū Ja'far al-Rāzī, from Rabī' ibn Anas, from Abū al-'Āliyah, who said: *“Their superiority was manifested through authority, the sending of messengers, and the revelation of His scriptures to the communities of that time, for every era has its own people.”*

According to Ibn Kathīr, the verse should be understood in this manner because this community (the Muslim ummah) is superior to the Children of Israel, as indicated by the statement of Allah SWT:

<sup>26</sup>Maswan, *Kajian Deskriptif Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, 65.

<sup>27</sup>Nabila Fajriyanti Muhyin and Muhammad Ridlwan Nasir, *Metode Penafsiran Ibnu Katsir dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Adzim*, “*Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*”, vol. 8, 1 (2023), 152.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمُ  
الْفَاسِقُونَ

*You are the best nation brought forth for humankind: you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah. If the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are some who believe, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.*

Ibn Kathir also cites a hadith found in the *Musnad* and *Sunan*, narrated from Mu'āwiyah ibn Ḥaydah al-Qushayrī, in which the Messenger of Allah Saw said:

أَنْتُمْ تَوْفُونَ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُهَا وَأَكْرَمُهَا عَلَى اللَّهِ

*“You are comparable to seventy nations; you are the best and most honored nation in the sight of Allah.”*

In terms of interpretive orientation, *Tafsir Ibn Kathīr* exhibits a pronounced juridical inclination, while still accommodating other dimensions such as *qirā'āt* and historical context. This tendency reflects Ibn Kathīr's background as a Shāfi'ī jurist and a distinguished ḥadīth scholar. Manna' al-Qaṭṭān characterizes Ibn Kathīr as a mufassir proficient in multiple disciplines, including jurisprudence, ḥadīth, and history, all of which are clearly reflected in his exegetical work. The juridical orientation becomes especially apparent in his interpretation of legal verses, where he frequently cites the opinions of the leading jurists and engages in discussions of scholarly disagreement.<sup>28</sup> Regarding its structure, *Tafsir Ibn Kathīr* is a comprehensive exegetical work that covers the entirety of the Qur'an, beginning with Sūrat al-Fātiḥah and concluding with Sūrat al-Nās. In the introduction to his tafsir, Ibn Kathīr outlines the foundational principles of Qur'anic interpretation and emphasizes the superiority of *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* over

<sup>28</sup>Manna' Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhith fī Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, terj. Mudzakir AS, (Bogor: Litera AntarNusa, 2019), hlm. 537.

speculative rational approaches. The systematic arrangement follows the order of the muṣḥaf, and Ibn Kathīr often interprets thematically related verses together, thereby highlighting the interconnectedness (*munāsabah*) between verses.

## DISCUSSION

### Causes of the Resistance of the Disbelieving Quraysh to the Prophetic Mission of Muhammad *saw*.

The rejection of the Prophet was more than a theological issue; rather, it was closely tied to the threat posed to the traditionally and economically entrenched political status and leadership authority of the Quraysh.<sup>29</sup> One of the most fundamental causes of the resistance of the disbelieving Quraysh was their fanatic attachment to ancestral traditions and religious practices. Allah *swt.* said that Q.S. Luqmān (31):

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَوْا كَانَ  
الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

*When it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed!" they answered, "(No). We actually (only) follow the customs we learned from our ancestors." Will (they follow their ancestors,) even though Satan actually calls them to the punishment of burning fire (hell)?(Luqman/31:21)*

Ibn Kathīr explains that when the polytheists were invited to follow the revelation revealed to the Messenger, comprising divine laws that embody true guidance, they rejected the call and instead insisted on adhering to the beliefs and practices inherited from their forefathers. This response, according to Ibn Kathīr, demonstrates that their opposition was not grounded in rational argument or valid religious evidence, but rather in uncritical loyalty to deeply rooted socio-religious traditions.

Ibn Kathīr further strengthens this interpretation by linking the verse to Q.S. al-Baqarah (2):170, thereby employing a Qur'ān-by-Qur'ān interpretive approach to show that such traditionalist resistance represents a recurring pattern among disbelieving communities. Through this intertextual reference, he highlights that elevating ancestral customs as the ultimate criterion of truth reflects the absence of genuine *ḥujjah*, as inherited practices were privileged despite their clear contradiction with divine guidance. Moreover, Ibn Kathīr interprets the concluding part of the verse—describing

<sup>29</sup>W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 134–35.

Satan's call toward blazing punishment—as an indication that blind adherence to tradition not only signifies an epistemological failure but also entails serious spiritual consequences. Within this framework, the fanatic attachment to ancestral heritage emerges as a central explanatory factor behind the Quraysh's resistance to the Prophet's monotheistic message.<sup>30</sup>

As a reinforcement of the preceding interpretation, the perspective of Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'di provides an elaboration that aligns with the view of Ibn Kathir regarding the Qur'anic critique of traditionalist fanaticism. Al-Sa'dī explains that the Qur'anic rebuttal is directed not only toward the generation rejecting revelation but also toward their forefathers who functioned as sources of religious legitimacy. He emphasizes that following misguided ancestors cannot serve as a valid justification, particularly when those ancestors had responded to Satan's call, walked under his influence, and ultimately fell into confusion and misguidance.

Furthermore, al-Sa'dī clarifies that the reference to Satan's call toward blazing punishment serves as a rhetorical argument exposing the weakness of blind imitation (*taqlīd*). If the forefathers were demonstrably misguided, then following them represents not commendable loyalty but the continuation of deviation. Within this framework, Satan's call is understood not as an expression of care or affection, but rather as a manifestation of hostility and deception that gradually leads human beings toward deserving punishment.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, al-Sa'dī's interpretation expands Ibn Kathīr's analysis by highlighting the psychological and moral dimensions of traditionalist *taqlīd*, particularly how the dominance of social authority can obscure awareness of misguidance. Both exegetes consistently maintain that resistance to the message of monotheism is rooted in the glorification of tradition lacking revelatory foundation, as well as in an epistemological failure to distinguish between divine authority and inherited social influence. The integration of these interpretations demonstrates that fanatic attachment to ancestral heritage is not merely a theological phenomenon, but also a social mechanism that perpetuates collective misguidance and contributes significantly to explaining the polytheists' rejection of the prophetic message.

From this explanation, it becomes apparent that a primary motive behind their rejection was an emotional and socio-cultural attachment to ancestral religious heritage characterized by idol worship and the veneration of traditional symbols. This rejection reflects their fear of losing a long-established cultural identity. They worried that embracing Islam would erase the legacy of their forefathers, which constituted a source

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<sup>30</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 3, 402.

<sup>31</sup>Abdurrahman bin Nashir al-Sa'di, *Taisīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān*, trans. Muhammad Iqbal et al, vol. 5, (Jakarta: Darul Haq, 2016), hlm. 542.

of collective pride. In this context, fanaticism toward ancestral traditions functioned as a major barrier to accepting the transformative message of Islam. They preferred to preserve inherited beliefs rather than embrace teachings perceived as foreign and disruptive to the local religious order. Ali Imron also notes that Quraysh cultural resistance to monotheism was not based solely on theological arguments, but also on anxiety over the erosion of their traditional religious and cultural structures.<sup>32</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad's message, which emphasized social equality, posed a direct challenge to the hierarchical social structure that benefited the Quraysh elite. They rejected Islam because it promoted egalitarian values that undermined the stratified system sustaining their authority. This rejection was also shaped by social perceptions that viewed the Prophet Muhammad as originating from an "ordinary" background and therefore unworthy of spiritual leadership. Accepting his message, in their view, meant recognizing the authority of someone they regarded as socially inferior. Q.S. al-Zukhruf (43): 31:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

*They (also) said, "Why was this Qur'an not revealed to (one of) the dignitaries of these two countries (Makkah and Taif)?" (Az-Zukhruf/43:31)*

This verse illustrates how the Quraysh questioned why the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad *saw.* rather than to a prominent figure from Mecca or Ṭā'if. According to Ibn Kathīr, this question reflects the Quraysh belief that spiritual leadership and divine revelation should be granted only to those of high social status.<sup>33</sup> This class-based arrogance becomes even more evident in the interpretation of Q.S. Ṣād (38):4–8,

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكُفِرُونَ هَذَا سِحْرٌ كَذَّابٌ أَجَعَلَ الْإِلَهَةَ  
إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّا هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ وَانطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ امشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى

<sup>32</sup>Ali Imron, "Resistensi Budaya Arab Pra-Islam Terhadap Ajaran Tauhid," *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, vol. 25, 1 (2017): hlm. 45.

<sup>33</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 4, 108.

الهِتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْأَخْرَةِ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ  
أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ ذِكْرِي بَلْ لَمَّا يَدُوقُوا عَذَابِ

*They were amazed because a warner (apostle) had come to them from among them. The disbelievers said, "This man is a sorcerer who lies a lot. Has he made the gods just one God? Indeed, this is truly something very surprising." Then their leaders went (saying), "Go and remain (worshipping) your gods. Indeed, this is truly a desirable thing. We have never heard of this in the last religion. This (teaching of the oneness of Allah) is nothing but a fabricated (lie). Why was the Qur'an revealed to him among us?" Actually they are in doubt about My book. However, they (doubt because) they have not felt My punishment. (Sad/38:4-8)*

Quraysh leaders expressed astonishment and resentment toward the Prophet's message. They accused him of being a liar and a sorcerer and viewed monotheism as an attempt to seize political leadership. Ibn Kathīr explains that such accusations stemmed from the elite's inability to accept prophetic authority emerging outside their established power structures.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, this class bias is evident in the Quraysh attitude toward the Prophet's followers from marginalized backgrounds. Ibn Kathīr's commentary on Q.S. al-An'ām (6): 52

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ ۗ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ  
حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ  
الظَّالِمِينَ

*Do not (Prophet Muhammad) drive away those who call on their Lord in the morning and evening, while they hope for His pleasure. You do not bear the slightest responsibility for their actions and they (nor) do not bear the slightest responsibility for*

<sup>34</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 4, 24–25.

*your actions, so you (have no right) to expel them. (If you do it,) you will be among the wrongdoers. (Al-An'am/6:52)*

Quraysh leaders felt humiliated seeing the Prophet sitting among the poor and oppressed. They even demanded that he expel these companions as a precondition for dialogue. This verse affirms that Islam rejects social discrimination and instead elevates the dignity of the marginalized an approach perceived as a direct threat to the Quraysh social hierarchy.<sup>35</sup>

Islam was also perceived as a threat to Quraysh economic and political stability, particularly because it risked disrupting trade and authority centered around the Ka'bah. They feared that Islamic teachings would diminish their influence in Mecca's economic and political life. The Quraysh had strong incentives to preserve the existing system, as it served their economic and political interests. Consequently, Islam was viewed as a destabilizing force that could dismantle the order they had carefully constructed. According to Setiawan, the Prophet Muhammad's mission directly challenged Quraysh economic-political hegemony, and their harsh reaction represented a defensive response to changes that threatened the ruling elite of Mecca.<sup>36</sup> In Ibn Kathīr's interpretation of Q.S. Quraysh (106):1-4,

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٌ الْفِهْمَ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي  
أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ ۖ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ۚ

*Due to the custom of the Quraysh, (namely) their custom of traveling in winter and summer (thus gaining many benefits), let them worship the Lord (owner) of this house (the Kaaba), who has given them food to relieve hunger and protected them from fear. (Quraisy/106:1-4)*

It is explained that the Quraysh enjoyed security and prosperity due to Mecca's strategic position as a commercial and religious center. These blessings should have led them to affirm God's oneness; instead, they were exploited to sustain a system of

<sup>35</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 4, 24-25.

<sup>36</sup>Maulana Rumi Setiawan, "Transformasi Kekuasaan dalam Dakwah Nabi Muhammad: Perspektif Politik Islam," *Jurnal Al-Hikmah*, vol. 19, 1 (2020): 100-112.

polytheism that underpinned their economic interests.<sup>37</sup> A similar critique appears in Q.S. Sabā' (34):34–35,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ وَقَالُوا  
نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

*We do not send a warner to a land, unless the people who live in luxury (in that land) say, "Indeed, we disbelieve in your apostleship." They said, "We have more wealth and children (than you) and we will not be punished. (Saba'/34:34-35)*

Condemns elites who equate wealth and social status with divine approval. The Quraysh regarded prosperity as evidence of the legitimacy of their position and therefore rejected the Prophet's message, which threatened the symbols of their economic superiority".<sup>38</sup>

The resistance of the disbelieving Quraysh toward the prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad represents one of the most significant dynamics in the early history of Islam. Their rejection was not merely rooted in theological differences, but was also shaped by various deeply entrenched social, cultural, economic, and political factors within Meccan society at the time. The Islamic message brought by the Prophet called for the affirmation of pure monotheism, the establishment of justice, and the elimination of long-standing *jāhiliyyah* practices that had been inherited through generations. This situation provoked strong opposition from the Quraysh, particularly because they perceived the new faith as a threat to their ancestral religious identity, a challenge to the social hierarchy dominated by the elite, and a potential disruption to their established economic and political interests. Therefore, understanding the causes of Quraysh resistance, ranging from fanaticism toward ancestral traditions, social class bias and elite arrogance, to concerns over economic and political stability, is essential for comprehensively grasping the challenges faced by the Prophet's mission during the Meccan period.

### **Forms of Resistance by the Disbelieving Quraysh to the Prophetic Mission of Muhammad *saw*.**

<sup>37</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsîr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 4, 483.

<sup>38</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsîr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 4, 483.

The Quraysh sought to undermine the position of the Prophet Muhammad *saw.* by disseminating negative propaganda, accusing him of being a sorcerer, poet, or madman. These actions aimed to damage the Prophet's reputation and prevent people from following his teachings. Verbal resistance constituted an initial strategy employed by the Quraysh in confronting the Prophet's mission. By shaping negative public opinion, they attempted to deter society from engaging with Islam. Quraysh propaganda functioned as a campaign of delegitimization against the moral authority of the Prophet Muhammad, who was beginning to gain public sympathy in Mecca.<sup>39</sup> In Ibn Kathīr's commentary on Q.S. al-Šāffāt (37):36,

وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّا لَتَارِكُوا آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍ<sup>ق</sup>

*They said, "Should we abandon our worship because of a mad poet?" (As-Saffat/37:36)*

It is explained that the Quraysh accused the Prophet Muhammad *saw.* of being a poet, sorcerer, and liar.<sup>40</sup> These accusations were not intended as rational critiques of the content of the message, but rather as strategies of delegitimization designed to undermine the Prophet's credibility in the eyes of society. Q.S. al-Anbiyā' (21): 5,

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاتٌ أَحْلَامٍ بَلِ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوْلُونَ

*In fact, they said, "(The Qur'an is the fruit of) empty dreams. In fact, he (Prophet Muhammad) fabricated it. More than that, he was a poet. So, let him bring us a sign (miracle) like the apostles who were sent before."* (Al-Anbiya'/21:5)

This verse describes the hard-heartedness and denial of the disbelievers toward the Qur'an. According to Ibn Kathīr's tafsīr, this verse reveals the confusion and internal contradictions of the polytheists in assessing the Qur'an. They held no consistent position, instead putting forward baseless and conflicting accusations. At times, they

<sup>39</sup>Nani Suprapti, "Strategi Propaganda Kaum Quraisy dalam Menghadapi Dakwah Islam," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 30, 1 (2022): 74–78.

<sup>40</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 4, 6.

described the Qur'an as confused dreams (*adghāth ahlām*), at other times as a fabrication invented by the Prophet Muhammad *saw.*, and at other times as poetry or even sorcery. These varying claims reflect the weakness of their arguments and the blindness of their hearts to divine truth. This attitude is also affirmed in other verses, such as Q.S. al-Isrā'(17): 48 and al-Furqān(25): 9, which state that they are misguided and unable to find the right path.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, the verse records the disbelievers' demand that the Prophet Muhammad *saw.* produce miraculous signs similar to those granted to previous prophets, such as the she-camel of Prophet Šāliḥ, the staff and shining hand of Prophet Moses, or the miracles of Prophet Jesus. However, Allah clarifies that the granting of extraordinary signs does not necessarily lead to faith, as earlier communities still rejected and those clear signs. Therefore, when hearts persist in arrogance and denial, no miracle can bring benefit.

The followers of the Prophet, particularly slaves and individuals from marginalized backgrounds, became targets of physical persecution by the Quraysh. They were subjected to severe torture in an attempt to force them to abandon Islam and return to their former beliefs. These actions reflect Quraysh efforts to suppress the growth of the Muslim community through intimidation and violence. However, despite enduring various forms of brutality, the Prophet's companions remained steadfast in their faith, demonstrating resilience and courage in the face of adversity. Ironically, Quraysh repression appears to have strengthened internal Muslim solidarity, as believers endured shared trials in defense of their faith.

Q.S. al-Naḥl (16): 106 explains the ruling concerning those who disbelieve after having believed.

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ  
بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*Whoever disbelieves in Allah after believing (he incurs Allah's wrath), except for those who are forced (to say the words of disbelief), while his heart remains calm with his faith (he does not sin). However, whoever is willing to (accept) disbelief, Allah's*

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<sup>41</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsîr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 3, 157.

*wrath will fall upon him and for them there will be a great punishment. (An-Nahl/16:106)*

According to Ibn Kathīr's tafsīr, this verse refers to people who consciously apostatize, willingly opening their hearts to disbelief and feeling at ease with it for worldly interests. Such individuals incur the wrath of Allah and will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter, because their hearts are sealed and no longer receptive to guidance. However, the verse provides an exception for those who are compelled to utter words of disbelief while their hearts remain firm and tranquil in faith. Ibn 'Abbās stated that this verse was revealed in relation to 'Ammār ibn Yāsir, who was tortured by the polytheists until he was forced to comply with their demands. The Prophet Muhammad *saw.* affirmed that as long as 'Ammār's heart remained steadfast in faith, he bore no sin, and he was even permitted to repeat such statements if coercion recurred.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars unanimously agree that in situations of necessity, a Muslim may verbally express disbelief under compulsion while maintaining faith internally. Nevertheless, remaining patient and steadfast even to the point of death is considered more virtuous, as exemplified by figures such as Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ, Ḥabīb ibn Zayd, and 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥuḍhāfah. These narratives emphasize the virtue of unwavering faith while also reflecting the mercy and wisdom of Islamic law.

The Quraysh imposed a boycott on *Banū Hāshim* and the Muslim community, prohibiting social interaction and trade with them as a means of isolation and pressure. Muslims were forbidden from engaging in commercial transactions or marriage alliances with other tribes and were confined to a designated area. This boycott lasted for three years and aimed to weaken the Muslim community economically and socially, with the expectation that they would ultimately capitulate. The boycott caused severe suffering, including shortages of food and basic necessities. Nevertheless, Muslims remained patient and resilient throughout this ordeal. This act of boycott demonstrates the extent of Quraysh determination to halt the spread of Islam through all available means. According to Syahrin, the Quraysh boycott was not merely intended to cripple Muslim logistics, but also to fracture internal Muslim unity through extreme economic pressure.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur`ân al-'Azhîm*, jilid. 2, 530.

<sup>43</sup>Alfi Syahrin, "Ketahanan Sosial Umat Islam Pada Masa Boikot Quraisy," *Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, vol. 11, 2 (2019): 134–145.

Q.S. al-An'ām (6): 52 firmly emphasizes the prohibition against the Prophet Muhammad *saw.* expelling believers who were socially and economically marginalized yet sincere in their faith and worship.

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ<sup>ق</sup> مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ  
حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ  
الظَّالِمِينَ

*Do not (Prophet Muhammad) drive away those who call on their Lord in the morning and evening, while they hope for His pleasure. You do not bear the slightest responsibility for their actions and they (nor) do not bear the slightest responsibility for your actions, so you (have no right) to expel them. (If you do it,) you will be among the wrongdoers. (Al-An'am/6:52)*

According to Ibn Kathīr's tafsīr, this verse commands that those who consistently call upon Allah morning and evening, understood by many scholars as the performance of the obligatory prayers, should be kept close and honored, not distanced. Their worship is carried out solely to seek the pleasure of Allah, not for worldly gain. Allah further clarifies that the Prophet bears no responsibility for their reckoning, nor do they bear responsibility for his. Therefore, expelling them in order to satisfy the demands of the Quraysh elite would constitute an act of injustice. Ibn Kathīr relates this meaning to the response of Prophet Noah *as.* who rejected criticism of his followers from among the weak.<sup>44</sup> The verse was revealed in response to pressure from prominent Quraysh leaders, such as Abū Jahl and others, who demanded that the Prophet remove poor companions like Bilāl, Ṣuhayb, Khabbāb, and 'Ammār so that they might consider embracing Islam. Allah rejected this discriminatory logic and affirmed that honor in His sight is determined not by social status, but by sincerity of faith and piety.

When earlier efforts failed to halt the Prophet's mission, the Quraysh resorted to plotting his assassination. They agreed to kill the Prophet collectively so that responsibility would be distributed among the tribes, preventing Banū Hāshim from seeking retribution. This plan illustrates the extreme level of hostility and the desire to eradicate Islam at its roots. The Quraysh plotted the assassination of the Prophet during a meeting at Dār al-Nadwah, viewing his death as the definitive solution to end Islamic da'wah. This conspiracy demonstrates the magnitude of the threat Quraysh perceived in

<sup>44</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 2, 124.

the Prophet's mission and their willingness to commit extreme acts to preserve their authority. However, God protected the Prophet from their plot, enabling him to migrate to Medina and continue his mission. The Hijrah thus marked a turning point in Islamic history. The assassination plot described in Q.S. al-Anfāl (8): 30

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ  
اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينِ

*(Remember) when the disbelievers plotted against you (Prophet Muhammad) to detain, kill or expel you. They tricked them and Allah retaliated against them. Allah is the best avenger of deceit. (Al-Anfal/8:30)*

Understood by Ibn Kathīr as part of a systematic effort to extinguish Islamic da'wah. From this perspective, the Hijrah represents a strategic phase that not only thwarted Quraysh violence but also marked a decisive shift in the struggle for Islamic propagation.<sup>45</sup> The most extreme form of resistance was conspiracy and deception aimed at permanently ending Islamic da'wah. Ibn Kathīr's commentary on Quraysh plans to detain, expel, or kill the Prophet Muhammad *saw*. Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that this verse exposes the corruption of Quraysh elite intentions at the peak of their hostility.<sup>46</sup>

Based on Ibn Kathīr's interpretation, the forms of Quraysh resistance display a structured escalation: beginning with verbal propaganda, progressing to psychological and social pressure, intensifying into physical violence and economic boycotts, and culminating in assassination plots. This escalation reflects the profound fear of Quraysh elites toward the social transformation introduced by Islam. Such resistance was not spontaneous, but rather a calculated, phased strategy aimed at preserving ideological, social, and political dominance in Mecca.

## CONCLUSION

Ibn Kathīr's exegetical framework, Quraysh resistance to the Prophet's da'wah was a structurally grounded and multi-dimensional phenomenon rather than a mere episodic or purely theological rejection. The findings show that opposition was driven by interlocking factors: fervent attachment to ancestral traditions, entrenched class

<sup>45</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 2, 277.

<sup>46</sup>al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm*, jilid. 2, 277.

hierarchies and elite arrogance, and the protection of economic-political interests centered on Mecca and the Ka'bah. Correspondingly, the forms of resistance followed a patterned escalation, from verbal delegitimization and ideological propaganda, through social and economic sanctions and physical persecution, to organized conspiracies aimed at eliminating the prophetic threat. By framing opposition as a coherent strategy for defending established power relations, Ibn Kathīr's tafsīr contributes an interpretive model that links Qur'anic discourse to broader socio-political dynamics. This model enriches contemporary discussions in Qur'anic studies and sīrah scholarship by highlighting how revelations interact with vested social structures and by offering a template for comparative analyses of resistance to reformative religious movements.

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