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Points of Convergence and Contextual Limits of the Meaning of *Wajh Allah* in Qs. *Al-Qashash* Verse 88

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ABSTRACT

Interpretations of verses concerning Allah's attributes often yield different meanings because of differences in exegetical methods and scholars' intellectual backgrounds, including in the expression wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. This study aims to identify points of convergence and variations in the meaning of wajhu Allah in this verse based on tafsir bil ma'tsur and tafsir bil ra'yi, while clarifying the contextual limits on generalizing the findings. The study adopts a qualitative library-research approach and analyzes ten exegetical works as its main corpus: five representing tafsir bil ma'tsur (Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim, Jami' al-Bayan, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim, Ma'alim al-Tanzil, and Ad-Durr al-Mantsur) and five representing tafsir bil ra'yi (Lubab al-Ta'wil, Al-Bahr al-Muhith, Tafsir Al-Jalalain, Irshad al-'Aql al-Salim, and Ruh al-Ma'ani), using the comparative method (muqaranah). The findings show that most exegetes in both methodological groups tend to interpret illa wajhah as affirming the Everlasting Essence of Allah. The phrase is also interpreted as referring to deeds performed sincerely for Allah, and in some interpretations to Allah's power and status. This convergence reflects the complementary relationship between transmitted authority and linguistic reasoning, rather than proof that the exegetes share the same theological foundations as a whole. A comparison with al-Tabari's interpretation of QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27, in which wajh is affirmed as an attribute of Allah, demonstrates that the tendency to interpret the expression as Allah's Essence and sincere deeds in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 is context-specific. It cannot be generalized as a rejection of wajh as an attribute of Allah in other verses. This study contributes to thematic Qur'anic exegesis by emphasizing the contextual nature of meaning in Qur'anic expressions.

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Introduction

The interpretation of verses concerning Allah's attributes has consistently attracted attention in Qur'anic exegesis, as differences in exegetical methods and scholars' intellectual backgrounds can produce variations in the meanings assigned to these expressions. One verse that raises this issue is QS. Al-Qashash verse 88, which states:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Linguistically, the expression wajhu Allah in this part of the verse allows for a broad range of meanings. Alfraidi (2026) shows that the word wajh has several metaphorical patterns of use. The six most dominant patterns are path, facing, appearance, surface, front side, and maintaining dignity. These findings indicate that the meaning of wajh has expanded through various metaphorical mappings according to its context of use. This semantic breadth allows the expression wajh to be interpreted in different ways, depending on the methodological approach employed by exegetes to derive its meaning.

In the scholarly tradition of Qur'anic exegesis, two main methodological approaches are tafsir bil ma'tsur and tafsir bil ra'yi. Lum'ah et al. (2025) define tafsir bil ma'tsur as an interpretive method that uses transmitted evidence, whether from the Qur'an itself, the Prophet's hadith, the statements of the Companions, or the views of the tabi'in, thereby producing interpretations that tend to be textual and conservative. In contrast, Hamid et al. (2024) explain that tafsir bil ra'yi relies on the exegete's ijtihad, requiring mastery of Arabic and other supporting disciplines to ensure that the resulting interpretation remains within the bounds of sound meaning. The fundamental differences between these two methods may produce significant contrasts when they are applied to the same verse, particularly verses containing expressions related to Allah's attributes, such as wajh.

Several studies have specifically examined the interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. Baz (n.d.) argues that the expression wajh in this verse affirms both the attribute of the Face and the entirety of Allah's Essence; the mention of the "Face" is an expression of honor, while its meaning refers to the Everlasting Essence of Allah. Similarly, Al-Barak (2020) classifies this part of the verse among the mutashabih verses, understood as expressing the existence of Allah's Essence without specifying its modality (takyif). Ghofar (2019), meanwhile, notes that scholars who employ figurative interpretation argue that "Face" cannot mean only a physical face that remains eternal while the Essence itself perishes. Rather, the term represents the complete eternality of Allah's Essence. These three views indicate that interpreting the

expression as Allah's Essence is widely referenced in the literature, although the arguments used to support it differ.

Nevertheless, few previous studies have specifically compared the interpretation of a single verse concerning Allah's attributes through two different methodological approaches. Hudzaifa (2021) examined verses about seeing Allah's Face in the Hereafter by comparing Tafsir al-Kasysyaf and Tafsir ats-Tsa'labi, but focused on verses other than QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. Ahadah (2022) compared al-Tabari's and al-Baydawi's interpretations of several mutashabih verses, including wajh, yad, and 'ayn, but the study was broad because it covered several expressions without focusing on one particular verse. Nasrun and Alwizar (2025), as well as Rahayu and Alwizar (2024), conceptually mapped the methodological classifications of tafsir bil ma'tsur, bil ra'yi, and bil isyari, but did not test their application to the interpretation of a specific verse. Meanwhile, Suatpandy (2025) compared al-Zamakhshari's and Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretations of istiwa in QS. Thaha verse 5, while Khoiry (2023) compared interpretations of verses concerning Allah's attributes, including wajh, in Tafsir Al-Munir and Tafsir Al-Aisar. Both studies, however, used different verses and exegetical corpora from the present study.

This mapping reveals a research gap: a lack of studies specifically analyzing the expression wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 through a comparative study (muqaranah) of tafsir bil ma'tsur and tafsir bil ra'yi, using an explicitly defined corpus of exegetical works for each methodological group. The novelty of this article has three aspects. First, in terms of the research object, it focuses on one specific verse, unlike Hudzaifa (2021), which examines other verses about seeing Allah's Face in the Hereafter, and Ahadah (2022), which covers several expressions related to Allah's attributes without focusing on a particular verse. Second, in terms of corpus structure, this study explicitly compares two methodological groups through ten works of tafsir, five representing bil ma'tsur and five representing bil ra'yi. This differs from Ahadah (2022), Suatpandy (2025), and Khoiry (2023), which compare two individual works or exegetes without organizing them as representatives of methodological groups. Third, in terms of application, this study empirically tests the classification of bil ma'tsur and bil ra'yi in interpreting one verse concerning Allah's attributes, unlike Nasrun and Alwizar (2025) and Rahayu and Alwizar (2024), which map these classifications conceptually without applying them to a specific verse. This article seeks to address the gap by focusing on one specific verse, allowing the variations and points of convergence in the interpretation of wajh to be examined in greater depth and with clearer direction than in previous, broader

studies. The article's contribution is proportionate: it deepens understanding of one particular verse rather than claiming findings that apply universally to all verses concerning Allah's attributes.

Accordingly, this article aims to explain the points of convergence and variations in the meaning of wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 based on tafsir bil ma'tsur and tafsir bil ra'yi, while also clarifying the contextual limits on generalizing the findings.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach and library research, focusing on the meaning of the expression wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 and comparing scholars' interpretations. The primary data sources consist of the Qur'an and ten exegetical works selected as the main corpus, divided into two groups. The tafsir bil ma'tsur group includes Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim, Jami' al-Bayan by al-Tabari, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim by Ibn Kathir, Ma'alim al-Tanzil by al-Baghawi, and Ad-Durr al-Mantsur by al-Suyuti. The tafsir bil ra'yi group includes Lubab al-Ta'wil fi Ma'ani al-Tanzil by al-Khazin, Al-Bahr al-Muhith by Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Tafsir Al-Jalalain by al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti, Irshad al-'Aql al-Salim by Abu al-Su'ud, and Ruh al-Ma'ani by al-Alusi. Secondary sources include works on Qur'anic sciences, such as Mabahits fi Ulum al-Qur'an by al-Qaththan, and scholarly journals relevant to the research topic.

The classification of exegetical works as bil ma'tsur or bil ra'yi in this study is based on each work's dominant overall tendency (ghalabah), rather than solely on its interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. Three criteria were applied in sequence. First, the primary source of authority: a work is classified as bil ma'tsur when its interpretation relies on transmitted reports (the Qur'an, hadith, and reports from the Companions and tabi'in), and as bil ra'yi when it relies on linguistic ijtihad and the exegete's reasoning. Second, the methodological character evident in its presentation: a predominance of transmitted reports and the identification of chains of transmission or transmitters indicates bil ma'tsur, whereas a predominance of nahw, sarf, balaghah, and reasoned tarjih indicates bil ra'yi. Third, classifications in Qur'anic sciences literature and previous studies, such as al-Qaththan and Nasrun and Alwizar (2025), serve as comparative references. A work was assigned to a group only when at least two of the three criteria were met. This classification reflects dominant tendencies rather than an absolute division, because works of bil ma'tsur still include interpretive judgments based on ijtihad, while works of bil ra'yi still cite transmitted reports.

Data were collected through documentation, following the steps of thematic Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir maudhu'i) adapted to the muqaranah approach. These steps involved defining the research theme, compiling interpretations from both groups of exegetes, organizing the data systematically while considering the occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzul), understanding the relationship between the verse and its surah (munasabah), developing a systematic discussion framework, supplementing the data with relevant hadiths, and examining the verse thematically to reconcile the various meanings identified. The data were analyzed using the comparative method (muqaranah), comparing interpretations of wajhu Allah across the respective corpora to identify similarities, differences, argumentative patterns, and methodological tendencies in the interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88.

Results and Discussion

1. Interpretation of Wajhu Allah in Tafsir Bil Ma'tsur

Ibn Abi Hatim (1998) compiled four reports concerning the meaning of illa wajhah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. Mujahid, through the chain of al-Hasan ibn 'Arafah, from 'Ammar ibn Muhammad, from Abu Sa'id, from Khushaif, interpreted the phrase as deeds performed sincerely for Allah, rather than as a direct reference solely to Allah's Essence or attribute. Sufyan al-Thawri offered a similar interpretation, stating that righteous deeds performed to seek Allah's pleasure would endure, while everything else would perish along with the world. The third report, transmitted through 'Isa al-Madani, recounts a dialogue between 'Ali ibn al-Husayn and Ka'b al-Ahbar concerning twelve creatures exempted from the first death, emphasizing that Allah's eternity is absolute and not subject to death. The fourth report, from Muqatil, explains that destruction encompasses all living creatures in the heavens and the earth, with Paradise, Hell, the Throne, and the Kursi excluded.

Al-Tabari (2001) records two interpretations of this part of the verse. The first affirms the eternal existence of Allah's Essence as the only one that does not perish. The second interprets it in terms of deeds and intention: illa wajhah refers to everything done with the aim of seeking Allah's pleasure, a reading supported by references to Arabic poetry.

Al-Baghawi (1999) presents three layers of meaning. First, illa wajhah means "except Allah Himself," affirming the eternality of His Essence. Second, wajh is understood as "power," highlighting Allah's lordship, which never vanishes. Third, following Abu al-'Aliyah, illa wajhah refers to everything done in pursuit of Allah's pleasure.

Ibn Kathir (1998) states that Allah Himself is the one excluded from destruction. He supports this interpretation with a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah concerning Labid's verse, أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللهَ بَاطِلٌ, meaning that everything apart from Allah is false or void. Ibn Kathir also cites Mujahid and al-Thawri, who interpret illa wajhah as referring to whatever is intended solely to seek the Face of Allah, as also reported by al-Bukhari.

Al-Suyuti (n.d.) compiled several reports concerning the interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88, explaining the scope of creation's destruction and the meaning of the exception in the phrase illa wajhah. A report from Muqatil states that destruction encompasses living creatures in the heavens and the earth, while Paradise, Hell, the Throne, and the Kursi are described in that report as not perishing. Reports from Ibn 'Abbas and Mujahid interpret the exception as everything intended to seek Allah's pleasure. Sufyan further clarifies this meaning by linking it to righteous deeds.

2. Interpretation of Wajhu Allah in Tafsir Bil Ra'yi

Al-Khazin (1994) presents two interpretations. First, based on the linguistic principle that wajh commonly refers to the essence or complete reality of something, illa wajhah means "except Him Himself." Second, in the practical dimension, what is excluded from destruction is everything intended solely to seek Allah's pleasure.

Al-Andalusi (2000) systematically compiles six opinions. Al-Zajjaj interprets illa wajhah as "except Him Himself" based on a linguistic principle. Mujahid and al-Suddi understand it in the context of destruction through death, with the knowledge of scholars intended for Allah being exempted. Al-Dahhak gives the exception a broader scope, including the Throne, Paradise, and Hell. Another opinion interprets it as the eternity of Allah's kingdom and power. Abu 'Ubaydah understands wajh as Allah's rank, honor, and majesty, while

Sufyan al-Thawri interprets it as everything done for Allah Himself and directed entirely toward Him.

In Tafsir Al-Jalalain, al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti (n.d.) briefly interpret illa wajhah as "except Him Himself." Abu al-Su'ud (n.d.) offers a similar interpretation, affirming that Allah's own Essence is excluded from destruction.

Al-Alusi (1994) states that the one excluded from destruction is the Exalted Essence of Allah. He bases this on an ontological argument: the existence of everything apart from Allah is not intrinsic but continually dependent on Allah, such that it is as if it does not exist. Al-Alusi also explains that using wajh to mean essence is an established form of metonymy (majaz mursal) in the Arabic linguistic tradition. The Qur'anic wording illa wajhah, rather than illa iyyahu, was chosen because it carries its own eloquence and grandeur.

3. Points of Convergence and Variations in Meaning

A comparison of the meanings of wajh in the two groups of tafsir reveals points of convergence, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Interpretations of the Expression Wajh in QS. Al-Qashash Verse 88

Exegete	Approach	Meaning of Wajh
Al-Tabari	Bil ma'tsur	Allah's Essence; sincere deeds
Ibn Kathir	Bil ma'tsur	Allah's Essence; sincere deeds
Ibnu Abi Hatim	Bil ma'tsur	Sincere deeds; scope of the destruction of living creatures
Al-Baghawi	Bil ma'tsur	Allah's Essence, power, and sincere deeds
Al-Suyuti	Bil ma'tsur	All creation perishes; sincere deeds
Al-Khazin	Bil ra'yi	Allah's Essence; sincere deeds
Abu Hayyan	Bil ra'yi	Zat, amal,kekuasaan/kedudukan dan beberapa pendapat lain
Al-Alusi	Bil ra'yi	Allah's Essence and linguistic/ontological explanation
Al-Jalalain	Bil ra'yi	Allah's Essence
Abu as-Su'ud	Bil ra'yi	Allah's Essence

Most exegetes in both groups tend toward the meanings of Allah's Essence and sincere deeds. Ibn Kathir, al-Baghawi, al-Tabari, and the report from Ka'b al-Ahbar agree that illa wajhah affirms Allah's Essence. This aligns with al-Khazin, al-Zajjaj as cited by Abu Hayyan, Al-Jalalain, and Abu al-Su'ud in the bil ra'yi group. The meaning of sincere deeds is also reported from Mujahid and Sufyan al-Thawri in both groups, as recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim, al-Suyuti, al-Tabari, al-Baghawi through the opinion of Abu al-'Aliyah, al-Khazin, and Abu Hayyan.

The two groups differ in their routes of substantiation. Bil ma'tsur emphasizes reports transmitted from earlier generations through chains of transmission (isnad), whereas bil ra'yi builds its arguments through linguistic principles and reasoning, as seen in the linguistic arguments of al-Khazin and al-Zajjaj and the ontological and rhetorical argument of al-Alusi.

4. Limits on Generalizing the Findings

A comparison with QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27 shows the contextual limits of the findings above. Allah says:

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Al-Tabari (2001) interprets this verse by affirming wajh as an attribute of Allah, with dzu al-jalali wal ikram functioning as an adjective (na't) for the expression al-wajh. This differs from al-Tabari's treatment of wajh in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88, where it is interpreted as Allah's eternal Essence and deeds performed with sincerity.

5. Convergence on the Meaning of Allah's Essence as a Methodological Meeting Point

The tendency of most exegetes in both groups to interpret illa wajhah as affirming the Everlasting Essence of Allah indicates that this interpretation has a strong cross-methodological standing. Linguistically, this tendency accords with al-Ashfahani's (1991) explanation that although wajh originally means a bodily part, it has developed metaphorically to refer to the Essence itself, as also seen in its use in QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27. This lexical basis explains why both exegetes who rely on transmitted reports (Ibn Kathir, al-Baghawi, and al-Tabari) and those who use linguistic reasoning (al-Khazin, al-Zajjaj as cited by Abu Hayyan, Al-Jalalain, and Abu al-Su'ud) can reach similar conclusions despite using different lines of argument. This is consistent with Nurizka et al. (2026), who emphasize that mastery of nahw, sarf, and balaghah is essential for interpreters to avoid misreading verses, since Qur'anic language contains explicit and implicit meanings that

cannot be fully conveyed through literal translation. In this framework, the shared direction of interpretation in both groups suggests that exegesis, regardless of method, relies on the same linguistic tools, even when the preferred sources of authority differ.

This cross-methodological convergence relates to Ibrahim's (2026) account of the dynamics of tafsir bil ma'tsur and bil ra'yi. Ibrahim (2026) argues that the development of these two approaches should not be understood as a linear shift from one method to another, but as an integrative process in which transmitted knowledge and rational reasoning complement each other within a coherent interpretive framework. In interpreting wajh in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88, the shared direction of meaning in both groups reflects this complementary relationship between transmitted authority and linguistic reasoning.

6. The Ethical Dimension of Sincere Deeds and Its Presence Across the Corpus

Beyond the meaning of Allah's Essence, the emphasis on deeds performed sincerely for Allah appears consistently in both groups of tafsir. This is shown by reports from Mujahid and Sufyan al-Thawri compiled in the bil ma'tsur corpus (Ibn Abi Hatim, al-Tabari, al-Baghawi through Abu al-'Aliyah, and al-Suyuti) as well as in the bil ra'yi corpus (al-Khazin and Abu Hayyan). The presence of this meaning in both groups is related to the findings of Hazuar et al. (2026) on the concept of ikhlas in the Qur'an. Based on a semantic and Sufi-oriented study of Tafsir Al-Wajiz by Wahbah al-Zuhayli and Ruh Al-Ma'ani by al-Alusi, Hazuar et al. (2026) conclude that, in worship, ikhlas means purifying devotion solely for Allah, while deeds intended to gain people's praise constitute riya'. This finding is especially relevant to the use of Ruh Al-Ma'ani as one of this study's main sources. It shows that emphasis on sincerity is not merely a feature of bil ma'tsur, which relies on reports from earlier generations, but is also present in bil ra'yi works that depend on reasoning and linguistic analysis. Thus, the ethical and spiritual dimension of wajh can be understood as a layer of meaning not restricted to one particular exegetical approach.

7. Power and Status as Minor Variations

In addition to the two dominant meanings, some interpretations in al-Baghawi's work within the bil ma'tsur group, as well as opinions compiled by Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi and Abu 'Ubaydah in the bil ra'yi group, interpret wajh as Allah's power or status. These variations occur less frequently than the meanings of Allah's Essence and sincere deeds. Their presence in both groups, however, shows that the lexical breadth of wajh described by al-Ashfahani (1991), including dimensions of orientation, intention, and the reality of

something, also allows interpretations related to Allah's lordship beyond the affirmation of His Essence alone.

8. The Broad Range of Interpretations in Tafsir Bil Ra'yi

Differences in presentation among works in the bil ra'yi group show that breadth of interpretation is not uniform across all works using this method. Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi systematically compiles six different opinions, whereas Al-Jalalain and Abu al-Su'ud present their conclusions very briefly. This characteristic accords with al-Bugha's (1998) explanation that tafsir bil ra'yi requires exegetes to master various supporting disciplines, meaning that each work's style of presentation may differ depending on the depth and range of sources used by its author. Thus, differences in presentation among works within the same methodological group can be understood as a variable independent of the method category itself, rather than as evidence of inconsistency in applying bil ra'yi.

9. Al-Alusi's Ontological Argument and Its Conceptual Foundation

Al-Alusi makes a distinctive contribution through an ontological argument: the existence of everything apart from Allah is not intrinsic but continually dependent on Allah, making it seem nonexistent when compared with the eternity of His Essence. This argument is related to the concept of wajib al-wujud (necessary existence) in Islamic philosophy and kalam. Zarkasyi (2011) explains that this concept, first systematically formulated by Ibn Sina, distinguishes necessary existence (wajib al-wujud), which depends on nothing other than itself, from possible existence (mumkin al-wujud), which includes everything apart from Allah and is contingent upon causes outside itself. Within this framework, al-Alusi's argument can be understood as follows: since all created beings belong to the category of mumkin al-wujud, their existence always remains subject to the possibility of nonexistence. In an essential sense, they can therefore be described as if nonexistent when compared with Allah, the sole wajib al-wujud. This ontological argument shows that, in al-Alusi's case, tafsir bil ra'yi can reach a level of philosophical abstraction grounded in an established metaphysical framework within Islamic thought, an elaboration not found in the bil ma'tsur works on this same verse.

10. Convergence in Meaning Does Not Indicate a Shared Theological Foundation

The convergence of interpretations across the two methodological groups must be approached cautiously, because the theological backgrounds of the bil ra'yi exegetes examined here are diverse. Al-Khazin is associated with the Shafi'i school (Dzulfahmi et al.,

2021); Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi's Al-Bahr al-Muhith shows the influence of Ash'ari kalam (Baehaki, 2022); al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti, the authors of Tafsir Al-Jalalain, both belonged to the Shafi'i school (Fuad, 2013); Abu al-Su'ud shows a Maturidi tendency (Ghazal, 2026); while al-Alusi's position is more complex, as Ruh Al-Ma'ani engages with various theological schools while also showing a Salafi tendency in some aspects of its orientation (Nafi, 2002; Suraju, 2021). This diversity indicates that similarities in the interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 cannot be taken as proof of a comprehensive unity of theological foundations among the exegetes. A shared meaning in one particular verse is context-specific and does not automatically reflect broader agreement in creed.

11. Limits on Generalization: The Dependence of Meaning on Qur'anic Context

Al-Tabari's differing treatment of wajh in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 and QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27 establishes an important methodological limit for interpreting the findings above. In QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27, al-Tabari affirms wajh as an attribute of Allah, with dzu al-jalali wal ikram functioning as an adjective (na't) for al-wajh. This differs from his interpretation of QS. Al-Qashash verse 88, which points to Allah's eternal Essence and deeds performed sincerely. This difference can be understood through the principle of interpreting the Qur'an by the Qur'an (tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an). Rohman (2025) explains that this type of interpretation may occur in a connected form (muttasil), when the explanatory verse directly follows the verse being explained, or in a separate form (munfashil), when the relationship is found in another verse or surah that is not located nearby. This principle shows that an expression in the Qur'an may receive different explanations depending on the context of the sentence and the comparative verses, without this constituting a contradiction in meaning.

This pattern differs from the one identified by Suatpandy (2025) in the study of istiwa, where interpretive differences arose between two different exegetes (al-Zamakhshari and Ibn Taymiyyah) concerning the same verse. In the present study, the difference occurs within the work of the same exegete, al-Tabari, when interpreting two different verses containing a similar expression. Comparing these two patterns confirms that variations in interpreting verses concerning Allah's attributes may arise either from differences between exegetes interpreting the same verse or from differences in context across verses interpreted by the same exegete. Therefore, this study's conclusion that wajh tends to mean Allah's Essence and sincere deeds applies specifically to QS. Al-Qashash verse 88. It cannot be

generalized as a rejection of wajh as an attribute of Allah in other Qur'anic contexts.

12. Implications and Contribution

Overall, the discussion above shows that the interpretation of wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 reflects an interaction between the lexical range of wajh, the methodological characteristics of each exegetical approach, and the principle of contextual meaning in the Qur'anic exegetical tradition. The contribution of this study is proportionate to the thematic analysis of one specific verse: it clarifies that cross-methodological convergence in interpretation can occur without assuming a shared theological foundation, and that the contextual limits of a verse must be considered before drawing comprehensive conclusions about an expression concerning Allah's attributes.

Conclusion

Most exegetes in both groups interpret wajhu Allah in QS. Al-Qashash verse 88 as Allah's Everlasting Essence and deeds performed with sincere intention for Allah. Both meanings appear in each methodological group, although not in every work. The meanings of Allah's power and status are also found, but only in some exegetes and much less frequently.

The difference between the two approaches lies in the means of substantiation, not in the overall direction of interpretation. Tafsir bil ma'tsur supports its interpretations with reports transmitted from earlier generations through chains of transmission, whereas tafsir bil ra'yi supports them through linguistic principles and reasoning, as seen in the linguistic arguments of al-Khazin and al-Zajjaj and the ontological-rhetorical argument of al-Alusi. This shared direction of interpretation reflects the complementary relationship between transmitted authority and linguistic reasoning.

These findings are limited to the verse and corpus examined. Similarity in meaning does not prove that the exegetes share the same theological foundations, since the schools of thought and tendencies of the bil ra'yi exegetes studied are diverse. Al-Tabari's interpretation of QS. Ar-Rahman verse 27, which affirms wajh as an attribute of Allah, shows that the meaning of this expression depends on the context of the verse. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other verses containing similar expressions and cannot serve as the sole reference for determining the status of wajh Allah in the Qur'an.

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