



THE CONCEPT OF *MAQĀM MAḤMŪDAN* FROM IBN ‘AJĪBAH’S PERSPECTIVE IN *AL-BAḤR AL- MADĪD FĪ TAFSĪR AL-QUR’ĀN AL-MAJĪD*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to scrutinize the concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān* from Ibn ‘Ajībah’s perspective as presented in his exegesis, *al-Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Majīd*. *Maqāman maḥmūdān* holds significant importance in the spiritual understanding of Islam, signifying an esteemed position or rank granted to individuals during their earthly existence. While the majority of exegetes and Muslim scholars interpret *maqāman maḥmūdān* as conferring a special status upon the Prophet Muhammad, their views diverge on the means by which this status is achieved. Ibn ‘Ajībah posits that this rank can be attained through unwavering dedication and sustained effort. This research employs a semiotic textual analysis to explore Ibn ‘Ajībah’s exegesis. The study examines the meaning of the *maqāman maḥmūdān* verse in relation to its socio-historical context, deconstructs traditional interpretations, reconstructs these interpretations within the framework of contemporary thought, and applies the relevant interpretations to current concepts. The findings reveal that the notion of *maqāman maḥmūdān* bears both theological and practical implications. It underscores that *maqāman maḥmūdān* is an exclusive attribute of Prophet Muhammad, unattainable by ordinary individuals. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of the significance of spiritual concepts, specifically *maqāman maḥmūdān*. Ibn ‘Ajībah suggests that *maqāman maḥmūdān* can be achieved through consistency (*istiqamah*) and perseverance. He advocates for further exploration into the concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān*, examining the various ways in which individuals might attain this exalted rank.

Keywords: *Maqāman Maḥmūdān*, Ibn ‘Ajībah, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Majīd*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi konsep *maqāman maḥmūdān* dari perspektif Ibn ‘Ajībah dalam tafsirnya, *al-Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Majīd*. *Maqāman maḥmūdān* adalah posisi mulia dalam Islam yang sebagian besar ulama kaitkan dengan Nabi Muhammad, meskipun ada perbedaan pandangan mengenai cara mencapainya. Ibn ‘Ajībah berpendapat bahwa *maqāman maḥmūdān* dapat dicapai melalui dedikasi dan usaha yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis tekstual semiotik untuk memahami tafsir Ibn ‘Ajībah dan konteks sosio-historisnya, serta merekonstruksi interpretasi tradisional dalam kerangka pemikiran kontemporer. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *maqāman maḥmūdān* adalah atribut eksklusif Nabi Muhammad, yang tidak bisa dicapai oleh individu biasa. Ibn ‘Ajībah menekankan pentingnya *istiqamah* dan ketekunan dalam mencapai *maqāman maḥmūdān* dan mendorong penelitian lebih lanjut tentang konsep ini.

Kata Kunci: *Maqāman Maḥmūdān*, Ibn ‘Ajībah, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Majīd*



INTRODUCTION

Maqāman maḥmūdān is a distinguished rank mentioned in the Qur'an for Muslims, signifying a praiseworthy position in the sight of Allah SWT. Surah Al-Isra, verse 79, states, "And during a part of the night, pray *Tabajjud* beyond what is incumbent on you; it may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station." This verse elucidates the path to achieving the rank of *maqāman maḥmūdān*. Some scholars interpret this rank as specific to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The verse also implies that consistent and dedicated performance of *Tabajjud* prayer brings one closer to God, serving as intercession or assistance for humanity through *Tabajjud*.

Imam al-Thibrisi, in his book *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, opines that *maqāman maḥmūdān* refers to the station of intercession, where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will intercede for humanity. In this station, the Prophet is entrusted with a noble responsibility, with prophets and angels gathered under his command. Most scholars agree that *maqāman maḥmūdān* is the place the Prophet will occupy on the Day of Judgment when he intercedes for humanity. In this context, *maqāman maḥmūdān* becomes the focal point on the Day of Judgment, where the Prophet (PBUH) will act as an intercessor for humanity. This place is regarded as a high and honored position, where he will perform the sacred duty of defending and interceding for his followers (SI1981, 2022).

In line with this, Zamakhsyari suggests that the praiseworthy station can be interpreted as a location where its inhabitants

receive praise. This place encompasses all areas deemed honorable and noble. The distinction of this place lies in the fact that individuals there receive accolades from predecessors and successors, and are respected by all creatures. Every request made is met with graciousness, and every plea for intercession is accepted favorably (Muhammad al-Zamakhsyari, 1995). However, Quraish Shihab notes that in his interpretation of *maqāman maḥmūdān*, it is not specified who praises and the reason for the praise. It is possible that he is praised by all beings, and each person is commended for their beauty and benefit to themselves (Shihab, 2000).

The question arises whether a servant can attain *maqāman maḥmūdān* and what efforts are needed to achieve it. According to Al-Ghazali, possessing noble or praiseworthy character is the way to achieve *maqāman maḥmūdān*. This involves eliminating all reprehensible customs as prescribed by Islam and refraining from such actions while cultivating and loving good customs. This is a source of obedience and closeness to Allah SWT, making its study and practice an individual obligation for every Muslim (Abduloh & Ahyani, 2020).

Understanding *maqāman maḥmūdān* requires more than just lexical interpretation. It is crucial to consider the implications and guidelines for reaching this praiseworthy station. The research by Hafiz Muhammad Qasim and Nasir Ahmed Akhtar attempts to explain Ibn Ajibah's views on Shariah and Sufism (Qasim & Akhtar, 2019). They emphasize that practice and theory cannot be separated, just as sharia and *ṭariqah*. To reach

the praiseworthy station, a path (*tariqah*) must be followed.

Another perspective suggests that reaching *maqāman maḥmūdān* is not merely about following a path (*tariqah*) but involves the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (self-purification). The implications of this can be seen in an individual's daily habits. *Maqāman maḥmūdān* is not about who is at that level, but about those who strive to reach the praiseworthy level. The entire journey or path taken is reflected in praiseworthy individuals.

Examining the praiseworthy station (*Maqāman maḥmūdān*) in modern society, people are often driven by materialism and individualism, which undermines social concern. Such behavior does not reflect praiseworthy conduct, thereby hindering the path to *Maqāman maḥmūdān*. The processes of *takballi* (cleansing from reprehensible traits), *taballi* (adorning oneself with praiseworthy traits), and *tajalli* (spiritual unveiling) are essential (Khoiruddin, 2016).

However, the concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān* and its interpretation by Ibn 'Ajībah has not been extensively studied in contemporary Islamic scholarship. Therefore, it is important to analyze the relevance and concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān* in addressing ethical dilemmas and spiritual aspirations of the present time. By linking Ibn 'Ajībah's insights with contemporary socio-cultural contexts, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān*.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature review. The data utilized are qualitative, encompassing both primary and secondary sources (Idrees, 2011). The primary data source is "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī tafsir al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*," while secondary sources include books and journal articles related to *maqāman maḥmūdān* and the biography of Ibn Ajībah. The research adopts a thematic exegesis method, focusing on a single issue. Data collection begins with gathering verses related to *maqāman maḥmūdān*, which are then examined for aspects such as *asbabunnuzul* (occasions of revelation), and their Meccan and Medinan contexts. The analysis of Ibn 'Ajībah's "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī tafsir al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*" is conducted using a semiotic method.

The research process involves several steps (Arbaoui, Alginahi, & Menacer, 2013). First, the exegesis to be studied, "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd*" by Ibn 'Ajībah, is selected. Second, important aspects related to the term *maqāman maḥmūdān* in the "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd*" are identified. Third, the term *maqāman maḥmūdān* is searched for in the relevant verses within the "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd*." Fourth, Ibn 'Ajībah's response to the meaning of *maqāman maḥmūdān* in the Qur'an is unveiled. Finally, the interpretation of "*Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd*" by Ibn 'Ajībah in presenting the meaning of *maqāman maḥmūdān* is analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography and Background of the Writing of *Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd* by Ibn Ajībah

Ibn ‘Ajībah was born in the region known as al-Khamis, located between the cities of Tangier and Tetouan, in 11 AH, although other sources suggest he was born in 1161 AH. Tangier and Tetouan are situated on the Mediterranean coast, directly bordering Europe. During that era, Tangier was recognized as the most formidable war stronghold in Northern Maghreb, now known as Morocco (Wahyuni, 2023). Ibn ‘Ajībah’s life journey was characterized by a profound love for knowledge and a commitment to practicing it. He lived during the 12th century AH or the 18th century AD and was renowned as a distinguished Sufi figure of his time, a period when the Muslim world was divided into several kingdoms, with the largest administrations under the Ottoman Turks and the Alawite Sharifs of Maghreb (Muslihin, 2023).

Ibn ‘Ajībah’s education began at home, where he was directly taught by his mother, who constantly prayed for him to become a pious child. Thanks to his mother’s prayers, Ibn ‘Ajībah emerged as a notable Sufi scholar. From a young age, he memorized the Qur’an and studied the science of Tajweed. He had a profound passion for reading and often secluded himself to read rather than play with his peers (HANAFI, 2019). Some researchers divide Ibn ‘Ajībah’s life into three periods: childhood (1747-1765 AD), adolescence when he began seeking knowledge (1765-1794 AD), and his peak intellectual period as

a productive Sufi master (1794-1809 AD) (M. I. F. Fauzi, 2022).

Ibn ‘Ajībah passed away on 7th Shawwal 1224 AH while visiting his teacher al-Buzaidi’s grave, succumbing to a plague. He breathed his last in his teacher’s village and was subsequently buried in Tetouan (Hairul, 2017). Concerning the writing of *Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd*, Ibn ‘Ajībah elucidated that the science of exegesis is a repository of knowledge and the best means to convey clear thoughts. He asserted that only those with high intelligence could be inspired to interpret the Qur’an. They must master exoteric sciences, such as Arabic language, Morphology, Syntax, Rhetoric, Jurisprudence, Hadith, History, and Sufism, and learn from those proficient in spiritual refinement (*ahl al-adbwaq*) (Firdaus, 2016).

Ibn ‘Ajībah emphasized that interpreting the Qur’an requires proficiency in various fields of knowledge. A commentator must understand exoteric sciences before grasping the esoteric meanings of the Qur’an. He also stressed the importance of learning from spiritual teachers who understand Sharia knowledge. According to him, the Qur’an has an exoteric meaning for the exoteric scholars and an esoteric meaning for the esoteric scholars. The esoteric exegesis is understood only by the esoteric scholars and is not valid unless it acknowledges the exoteric meanings. The esoteric meaning is always preceded by the understanding of the exoteric meaning and can only be comprehended by those whose hearts have been enlightened by Allah (Isbah & Ula, 2022). Ibn ‘Ajībah also cited a popular Sufi hadith stating that every verse

has both an exoteric and an esoteric meaning (Abshor, 2020).

Ibn ‘Ajibah’s exegesis is titled “*al-Babr al-Madid fi Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Majid*.” In its introduction, no specific reason for this title is mentioned, but from the meanings of *al-Babr* (ocean) and *al-Madid* (majestic), it can be inferred that he intended to assert that the Qur’an is a majestic book, akin to a vast ocean, containing profound meanings. This aligns with the Sufi belief that the Qur’an has multiple levels of meaning that can be unveiled by humankind (ibn ‘Ajibah al-Hasanī, 1224).

Methods and Interpretive Styles

Every exegete employs their own approach and preferences in interpretation. *Ijmali* (general explanation), *tablili* (analysis), *muqaran* (comparison), and *maudhu’i* are the four interpretive methods agreed upon by early Qur’anic scholars (Malaka, 2021). Considering the *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Madid*, Ibn ‘Ajibah’s interpretation employs the *tablili* method, an exegetical approach in which the interpreter endeavors to elucidate the contents of Qur’anic verses from various perspectives while considering the sequence of the verses as presented in the mushaf (Hashim, 2022).

In his tafsir, Ibn Ajibah applies two primary approaches: *tafsir bi al-ma’tthur* and *tafsir bi al-ra’yi*. These approaches are commonly used by exegetes to interpret verses by integrating other Qur’anic verses, hadiths of the Prophet SAW, companions’ interpretations, reasons for revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), and *qira’at*. One example of the *bi al-*

ma’tthur method in Ibn Ajibah’s tafsir is the interpretation of the Qur’an (Green, 2004).

A notable example of *asbab al-nuzul* cited by Ibn Ajibah is when interpreting Surah al-Baqarah (2):198. This verse was revealed concerning Muslims who felt guilty about trading during the Hajj season. During the pre-Islamic period, there were three famous markets: Ukazh, Mijnah, and Zul Majaz. With the revelation of this verse, Allah clarified that engaging in business during the Hajj season is not prohibited as long as it does not interfere with the primary objective, which is to perform Hajj perfectly. Another example of *asbab al-nuzul* is mentioned in the interpretation of Surah al-Tahrim (66):1, where a narration states that this verse was revealed regarding the Prophet’s declaration to abstain from consuming honey to please his wives, which seemed to suggest that he intended to forbid himself from something Allah had made lawful.

Ibn Ajibah also discusses various types of *qira’at*, such as when explaining Surah al-An’am (6):33 based on Nafi’s recitation, which reads “ya” with a *damma* (*layuhzunuka*) in accordance with Surah al-Anbiya (21):103, while others read it with a *fatha*, following the pattern of “*hazana-yahzunu*” and “*nasara-yansuru*.” Additional examples are found in the interpretation of Surah al-Nahl (16):66, where the word “*mufratun*” is read with a *kasra* (*mufritun*), which is the active participle of the word *ifrat*, meaning to exceed limits. When read with a *fatha*, it means the passive participle of *afrata*, and when read with *tashdid*, it means *mufarritun*, meaning hasty.

To understand the sources of *tafsir bi al-ra’yi* in this tafsir, one can observe the

exegete's efforts to comprehend the Qur'an by mastering the Arabic language, quoting Sufi poetry, *dalalah*, or citing opinions of other exegetes (Arsad, 2018). The following is an example of *bi al-ra'yi* sources in Ibn 'Ajibah's tafsir.

Ibn 'Ajibah is known for the simplicity of his interpretation, especially in paying attention to the interpretation of words in the Qur'an. Before elaborating extensively, Ibn 'Ajibah first explains several words that need translation, as seen in Surah al-Nazi'at (79):1-4. He explains that (والنازعات) refers to the angels who extract souls from bodies, (غرقا) means a deep extraction, (والناشطات نشطاً) refers to the angels who gently release souls from bodies, (والسابحات سبحاً) describes the angels swimming through the skies towards *Sidratul Muntaha*, and (فالسابقات سبقاً) depicts the preceding angels who carry the souls of disbelievers to hell and the souls of believers to paradise.

Furthermore, when Ibn 'Ajibah provides explanations for several verses requiring grammatical analysis, such as in Surah al-Baqarah (2):5-6, it is evident how he pays attention to linguistic rules (*i'rab*). For instance, the word (سَوَاءً) is explained as *khabar muqaddam*, (أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ) as *mubtada* for *hamzah al-taswiyah*, meaning that the warning or lack thereof is the same for these

disbelievers, and the word (غشاوة) as *mubtada* with the preposition serving as its *khabar*.

One characteristic feature of Ibn 'Ajibah's interpretation is the use of Arabic poetry after explaining each verse. A clear example is seen in the interpretation of Surah al-Qalam (68):1, where he quotes a verse: "A pen made from a weak and hollow reed is sharper than a long, curved spear, sharper than an arrow when released from its bow, and bolder than a lion that ignites hearts when it appears on the battlefield." This demonstrates his ability to combine textual interpretation with the beauty of Arabic literature (Sharifian, 2021).

Efforts to Achieve *Maqāman Maḥmūdān* According to Commentators and Sufi Experts (Tasawuf)

This discussion delves deeply into Muhammad Arkoun's semiotic analysis of "*maqāman maḥmūdān*" in various interpretations, inviting a closer look at the historical and social context of this term. In Arkoun's semiotics, "*maqāman maḥmūdān*" as a sign consists of the signifier, which are the words referring to "*maqāman maḥmūdān*," and the signified, which includes the meanings behind this term such as the praiseworthy status of Prophet Muhammad on the Day of Judgment, intercession, and praise from both creatures and God. Understanding this term in its historical context, Arkoun emphasizes the importance of considering how scholars like Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari (Muhammad al-Zamakhshari, 1995), Quraish Shihab (Shihab, 2000), Hamka (Hamka, 1983), and Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (SI1981, 2022) interpreted this term

according to the social and cultural backgrounds of their times.

Arkoun opens up possibilities for hidden or overlooked meanings in traditional interpretations, for instance, by questioning the development and acceptance of the concept of intercession within Islamic tradition. Recognition of the plurality of meanings is also crucial; various interpretations from scholars show that “*maqāman maḥmūdān*” can mean the praiseworthy position on the Day of Judgment, a revered place of honor, or the intercession of Prophet Muhammad. Through intertextuality, we see how these interpretations relate to each other and form a more comprehensive understanding of “*maqāman maḥmūdān*.” With Arkoun’s semiotic approach, this analysis not only enriches our understanding of the concept of “*maqāman maḥmūdān*” but also challenges singular interpretations, opening up possibilities for new meanings relevant to contemporary contexts (Kuru, 2008).

The views of Sufi experts such as Imam al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and Jalaluddin Rumi (Lewisohn, 1998) are also crucial. In Arkoun’s semiotic approach, *maqāman maḥmūdān* as a sign consists of signifiers like “the pinnacle of all *maqām*,” “true closeness and love for Allah,” and “the highest degree achieved through the purification of the heart,” with the signified being the meanings behind these terms, such as the culmination of the spiritual journey, closeness to Allah, and divine knowledge and wisdom (Sayfulina, 2013). Arkoun emphasizes the importance of understanding these views in the historical context of each scholar, where the tradition

of tasawuf was evolving and influencing religious understanding in their times.

Through deconstruction, we can uncover layers of meaning about *maqāman maḥmūdān*, for instance, by examining how al-Ghazali (Griffel, 2009) saw it as the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey, while Ibn Arabi (Ibn al-Arabi, 1852) considered it a spiritual state attained by the Prophet, and Rumi (Varma, 2016) described it as the highest stage of divine love and union with God. Arkoun’s theory also acknowledges the plurality of meanings, as seen in the various interpretations of these scholars. These views are interconnected through intertextuality, forming a more comprehensive understanding of *maqāman maḥmūdān*.

“*Dhillab*,” meaning disgrace or humility, is the opposite of praiseworthy. This condition includes ignominy, which involves submission to defeat wherever they are unless they hold fast to the religion of Allah (Hermansen, 2009), as explained in Surah Ali Imran, verse 112:

صُرِّبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلَّةُ أَيَّنَ مَا تَتَفَوَّأُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُورٍ بَغَضٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَصُرِّبَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ^ط ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ^ط ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا
يَعْتَدُونَ

In Arkoun’s semiotics, signs consist of the signifier and the signified. In this verse, words such as “humiliation,” “the rope (religion) of Allah,” “the rope (covenant) with humans,” “wrath from Allah,” and

“suffering” serve as signifiers, while the signified are the mental, social, and spiritual conditions experienced by the infidels as a result of their actions.

Arkoun emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and social context in which this text emerged. This verse discusses *jizyah*, a tax paid by non-Muslims as citizens under Islamic governance, signifying the political and social relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims of that era. The signifiers “humiliation” and “suffering” indicate the level of degradation experienced by the infidels; this can be seen as a direct consequence of their rejection of Allah’s verses and their unjust killing of prophets.

Arkoun’s approach also offers an intertextual perspective within this text, allowing for a deeper understanding of the relationships between these verses and other verses in the Qur’an. For instance, there is a possibility for infidels to avoid humiliation by accepting faith or making fair agreements with Muslims, considering the exceptions granted to those who “hold onto the rope (religion) of Allah and the rope (covenant) with humans.” This creates a dynamic where religious and social laws interact.

This verse acknowledges that not all people of the book are the same, with some, like Abdullah bin Salam and his companions, believing and attaining a different status compared to the majority who are wicked and disobedient. This indicates that the category of “infidel” is not monolithic and encompasses various levels of faith and behavior.

Using Qur’anic semiotics theory, we can see that this verse not only describes the punishment inflicted upon the infidels but also demonstrates the complex relationship between faith, social law, and spiritual conditions. Their humiliation and suffering result from their own actions, denying Allah’s verses and committing injustices, while the exceptions and different treatments for believing people of the book affirm the presence of plurality and dynamic interaction within the Qur’anic text.

In simpler terms, the humiliation received by an individual is due to their non-compliance with the rope of Allah (Allah’s decrees and determinations). The main obstacle in achieving *maqāman maḥmūdān* is being disconnected from the rope of Allah. Another challenge is *al-habl min al-nas*, emphasizing the importance of social piety alongside personal piety. Someone who achieves *maqāman maḥmūdān* must demonstrate this piety in their social behavior. Therefore, *maqāman maḥmūdān* is not something unattainable for a servant if they go through the process while continuously staying connected with Allah SWT and maintaining their relationships with fellow humans. *maqāman maḥmūdān* is a level of self-quality that reaches a praiseworthy place after a long process, as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW. Ibn Ajibah explains that achieving *maqāman maḥmūdān* requires deep process and struggle.

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ
الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ

فَتَهَجَّدَ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا
مُحْمَدًا

In the exegesis of *al-Bahr al-Madid fī Tafṣīr al-Qurʾān al-Majīd*, Ibn ‘Ajibah provides an extensive explanation of prayer (salat), encompassing its various meanings regarding timing and wisdom. Salat Dzuhur and Ashar are indicated when the sun declines, while Salat Maghrib and Isha are signaled by twilight. Salat Fajr is referred to in the Qur’an due to its longer recitations and the witnessing of angels at dawn, highlighting the significance of this time. The night prayer, challenging to perform, is greatly rewarded with Allah’s promise of elevating an individual to a lofty position, namely, the esteemed intercession (*shafa’ah*). A hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah emphasizes the importance of this intercession, illustrating the unique position of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in granting Shafa’ah to his followers.

According to the semiotic theory of the Qur’an, this analysis indicates that Ibn ‘Ajibah underscores the importance of contextual and historical understanding in interpreting the Qur’an. Arkoun stresses the necessity of historical and social contexts in comprehending religious texts and how these texts are perceived and applied in daily life. Ibn ‘Ajibah illustrates that the profound meaning of prayer extends beyond mere rituals, embodying broad social and spiritual implications. For instance, the night prayer is seen as a means to achieve *maqāman maḥmūdān*, a praiseworthy status attained through diligence and commitment in worship and self-improvement.

Ibn ‘Ajibah also emphasizes that prayer is not solely about physical execution but also about a close relationship with Allah (SWT) and positive social impact. This aligns with Arkoun’s view that understanding religious texts should involve critical reflection and contextual awareness. Consequently, attaining *maqāman maḥmūdān* is not instantaneous but the result of continuous effort and commitment to self-betterment and sincerely obeying Allah’s commands. This meaning is reflected in actions and behaviors that demonstrate closeness to Allah and benefit humanity (Ibn ‘Ajibah al-Ḥasanī, 1224).

In contemporary terms, an individual who achieves *maqāman maḥmūdān* is someone who continuously strives to draw nearer to Allah (SWT), not merely by fulfilling obligations and avoiding prohibitions but also by committing to constant self-improvement (R. Fauzi, 2023). This pursuit manifests in actions and behaviors that reflect this noble status.

In Ibn ‘Ajibah’s interpretation, there is no explicit explanation about the correlation of the verses. However, his discussion focuses on a deep understanding of the meanings. Observing the correlation of the subsequent verses suggests that the culmination of Prophet Muhammad’s (SAW) effort in maintaining his night prayers, despite being forgiven for his sins, significantly impacted his social life. This will be further explained in the following discussion on the implications of *maqāman maḥmūdān* in practice.

The Implications of *Maqāman Maḥmūdān* in Ibn Ajibah's Interpretation

This discussion will elucidate the connection or relevance (*munasabah*) of the preceding verse. The implications of the esteemed status (*maqām*) attained by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) can be observed through his daily life, characterized by living in truth and bringing benefits (*maslahah*) to his surroundings and the people around him (Abdul-Hamid, 2015). As will be further explained in the following verse:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مَدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مَخْرَجِ
صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَقُلْ جَاءَ
الْحَقُّ وَّرَهَقَ الْبٰطِلُ اِنَّ الْبٰطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ٨١

This verse provides guidance to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), inspiring him to express gratitude verbally and supplicate to Allah. Previously, he was taught to express gratitude through actions, particularly prayer, which constitutes supplication. To receive praise throughout one's life, one must seek righteousness after making a promise to attain a high status. Additionally, this can be linked to the efforts of the polytheists to expel him from Mecca, indicating his imminent departure from the city. This verse teaches us to pray, asking to be included in all things and places permitted by Allah, both in this world and the hereafter, in a proper and honorable manner. Furthermore, he is instructed to request to be liberated from any situation in the right way, leading towards the glory of Allah. He is also endowed with strength, power, and unspoken evidence to defend himself against his enemies (Ibn 'Ajibah al-Ḥasanī, 1224).

This signifies the high status of the Prophet in the sight of Allah and the acceptance of his supplications. The verse also reaffirms that the teachings of monotheism and the true religion will triumph over polytheism, which will ultimately vanish. Falsehood, being temporary and dependent on external factors, will disappear, whereas the truth, which has strong internal factors, will endure. “*min ladunka*,” meaning from the side of Allah, encompasses things beyond human comprehension, including those that are supra-rational. “*sulṭbān*” can mean power, kingdom, or clear evidence, and in this context, it involves the Prophet's request to be granted what he needs (El-Rouayheb, 2010).

In line with the above statement, the praiseworthy position is the best version of a servant. Being in goodness means being beneficial to others and bringing prosperity to one's own life and the lives of others. Living in truth will always bring ease and clarity to every matter. As explained in the continuation of the verse Al-Isra: 82:

وَنُنزِلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَلَا
يُرِيْدُ الظَّالِمِيْنَ اِلَّا خَسٰرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

The use of the letter “*waw*,” often starting this verse with the meaning “whereas,” indicates that this verse seems to be related to the previous one. If we understand it correctly, this verse signifies that the Qur'an was revealed as a remedy to alleviate doubts and ailments that may reside in the human heart. The Qur'an is also a mercy for the

believers, and disbelief will only lead to loss for the wrongdoers. “*Shifā*” not only means healing or medicine, but it also signifies the transition from deficiency and absence to gaining benefits, as experienced by those who reach a commendable position. *maqāman maḥmūdān* also reflects an attitude of distancing oneself from arrogance and pride when receiving blessings, and not falling into despair when facing difficulties. Such an attitude is not praiseworthy, as affirmed in the following verse, QS. Al-Isra: 83.

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ
الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا ۝۸۳

The previous verse illustrates the profound estrangement of polytheists from the Qur’an, which is indeed a great blessing from Allah SWT. This verse further emphasizes that such an attitude is often characteristic of those who are spiritually ill. It highlights their feelings of pride and despair. Clearly, this verse indicates that when humans are endowed with blessings such as strength, wealth, and ease of life, they tend to forget Allah, who bestowed these upon them. They may even become arrogant. However, when they face adversities such as illness or poverty, they tend to despair and lose hope in Allah’s mercy (Brown, 2012).

This explanation provides an insight that the life of someone not on the righteous path is always marked by darkness. In this context, “*al-haq*” is interpreted as closeness to the Qur’an, which reflects the best version of humanity, i.e., living in harmony with the Qur’an (Melchert, 2014). The subsequent

verse affirms that every individual will act according to their own capacity or the path they choose. Thus, the process of attaining one’s best self (*maqāman maḥmūdān*) is not uniform, as explained in the following verse, QS. Al-Isra: 84.

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى
سَبِيلًا ۝۸۴

This verse may be related to the previous verses by posing a question. The earlier verses state that believers benefit from the presence of the Qur’an, while disbelievers who distance themselves from Allah and His blessings suffer loss and misfortune. It is as if someone asks: why do believers gain benefits while disbelievers experience loss? This is explained by the verse under interpretation, which states that every person takes a stance and acts according to the condition of their soul, disposition, and morality.

The word “*yākilab*” is used to refer to a branch of a single path. Ibn ‘Ashur employs this term to describe a person’s path or behavior. Sayyid Qutb understands it as a way and tendency. This interpretation is accurate. It indicates that every individual has inclinations, potentials, and dispositions that drive their actions. However, scholars categorize humans into four types. Certain individuals prefer worship over research and learning. The third type is those who work hard, and the fourth type consists of talented individuals. Each person focuses on their own activities. Conversely, there are introverted individuals who enjoy solitude and do not like socializing, as well as

extroverted individuals. There are courageous individuals and timid ones. Certain individuals are generous, while others are stingy; some are forgiving, while others are vindictive. There are those who are grateful, and others who refuse to acknowledge favors (Seesemann, 2009). Thus, the process towards the best version (*maqāman maḥmūdān*) of each individual is inevitably different; the journey of one person in achieving their best version will never be the same as another's.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that in his commentary, *Al-Babr al-Madid fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid*, Ibn 'Ajibah provides a unique perspective on the concept of *maqāman maḥmūdān*, or the praised station, and focuses on the process of achieving this esteemed rank. Through his interpretation, Ibn 'Ajibah offers a profound understanding of the spiritual journey and the attainment of divine grace. He emphasizes the importance of striving towards this praiseworthy position, which represents the pinnacle of spiritual accomplishment and closeness to the Divine. Ibn 'Ajibah's perspective highlights the transformative nature of spiritual growth and the multifaceted dimensions of Qur'anic interpretation. Through his exegesis, he invites readers to engage deeply with the text, encouraging introspection, devotion, and a steadfast commitment to spiritual excellence. Ultimately, Ibn 'Ajibah's exploration of *maqāman maḥmūdān* serves as a source of inspiration for readers on the path of spiritual enlightenment, enriching their understanding of the Qur'an and inspiring them towards

greater piety and devotion in their Muslim lives

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