

The Construction of the Meaning of *al-aql* and *al-qalb* in *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*

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Abstract

This study examines the role of reason (*al-aql*) and heart (*al-qalb*) in the Qur'an as cognitive and spiritual tools for humans. QS. al-Ankabut: 43 emphasizes the importance of reason in understanding divine parables, while QS. al-A'raf: 179 highlights human negligence in not using the heart to grasp the meaning of Allah's verses. The method used is analytical interpretation, through the perspective of *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin Al-Razi, which is known for its rational and philosophical approach. This study concludes that in Al-Razi's interpretation, reason is understood as an intellectual ability that enables scholars (*al-'alimun*) to interpret the parables of the Qur'an in depth through the process of *ta'aqqul*, which is holistic thinking that integrates rational analysis with revelatory guidance. Reason plays a role in assessing truth in the aspects of belief, law, and ethics. Meanwhile, the heart is the center of spiritual awareness (*lathifah rūhiyyah*), which enables humans to experience a spiritual journey (*suluk*), attain knowledge of Allah (*wushul*), and purify the soul from diseases of the heart (*tazkiyah*). Failure to use the heart causes humans to go astray, even becoming lower than other creatures. The findings of this study show that reason and the heart complement each other. Reason functions as a tool for rational analysis, while the heart is the center of internalization of spiritual values. An imbalance between the two, for example, relying on reason without purifying the heart, has the potential to produce a superficial understanding. The implications of this research are important for Islamic education, namely the integration of cognitive and spiritual development in the curriculum, as well as for contemporary life, by emphasizing the balance between reason and heart in facing modern challenges such as spiritual crises and the spread of disinformation.

Kata Kunci:

al-aql, *al-qalb*,
konstruksi,
Tafsir Mafatih
al-Ghaib

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran akal (*al-aql*) dan hati (*al-qalb*) dalam al-Qur'an sebagai sarana kognitif dan spiritual bagi manusia. QS. al-Ankabut: 43 menekankan pentingnya akal dalam memahami perumpamaan ilahi, sementara QS. al-A'raf: 179 menyoroti kelalaian manusia yang tidak menggunakan hati untuk menangkap makna ayat-ayat Allah. Metode yang digunakan adalah tafsir analitis, melalui perspektif *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* karya Fakhruddin Al-Razi, yang dikenal dengan pendekatan rasional dan filosofis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa dalam tafsir Al-Razi, akal dipahami sebagai kemampuan intelektual yang memungkinkan orang berilmu (*al-'alimun*) menafsirkan perumpamaan al-Qur'an secara mendalam melalui proses *ta'aqqul*, yaitu berpikir holistik yang mengintegrasikan analisis rasional dengan bimbingan wahyu. Akal berperan menilai kebenaran dalam aspek keyakinan, hukum, dan etika. Sementara itu, hati merupakan pusat kesadaran spiritual (*lathifah rūhiyyah*), yang memungkinkan manusia mengalami perjalanan spiritual (*suluk*), mencapai pengetahuan tentang Allah (*wushul*), dan menyucikan jiwa dari penyakit hati (*tazkiyah*). Kegagalan menggunakan hati menyebabkan manusia tersesat, bahkan menjadi lebih rendah dari makhluk lain. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa akal dan hati saling melengkapi. Akal berfungsi sebagai alat analisis rasional, sedangkan hati menjadi pusat internalisasi nilai-nilai spiritual. Ketidakseimbangan antara keduanya, misalnya mengandalkan akal tanpa penyucian hati, berpotensi menghasilkan

pemahaman yang dangkal. Implikasi penelitian ini penting bagi pendidikan Islam, yaitu integrasi pengembangan kognitif dan spiritual dalam kurikulum, serta bagi kehidupan kontemporer, dengan menekankan keseimbangan akal dan hati untuk menghadapi tantangan modern seperti krisis spiritual dan penyebaran disinformasi.

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INTRODUCTION

In his exegesis, Al-Razi strives to uncover the meanings contained in each verse using reasoning, arguments, and evidence. *Tafsir al-Kabir Mafatih al-Ghaib* uses an analytical or *tahlili* methodology, which describes various aspects and dimensions of the verses. One of the important components in understanding Islamic teachings is studying the meanings of *al-aql* and *al-qalb* in the Quran. These two words are used in a unique and complex manner in several parts of the Quran, such as Surah al-Ankabut verse 43 and Surah al-A'raf verse 179. The word *al-aql* is often associated with human thinking ability, while *al-qalb* has a broader meaning that encompasses emotions and spiritual awareness.¹

Understanding the terms *al-aql* and *al-qalb* is crucial in answering this question. It is not uncommon for traditional interpretations of the Quran to face criticism due to a lack of strong empirical or theoretical evidence. Therefore, systematic research will enhance the credibility of traditional interpretations and provide new options that are more relevant to the present time. Understanding the meaning of *al-aql* and *al-qalb* is not only academic but also directly impacts everyone's behavior. For example, if we understand the importance of using reason every time we make a decision, then we will make wiser decisions.²

The word "reason" is mentioned at least 53 times in the Quran, with various variations of the word. Quraish Shihab believes that reason functions as a binding or restraining force. According to the majority of theologians, reason functions to acquire knowledge. The intellect can abstract objects perceived by the five senses. The intellect, according to Abdur Rahman Saleh, is a moral impulse, the ability to draw conclusions and lessons, and the ability to understand and describe something.³ As mentioned at the beginning, the function of the intellect is the ability to understand and describe. In the Quran, the word "*qalb*" is mentioned at least 184 times. The word *qalb* can be interpreted as heart, and some also interpret it as liver. However, as an organ of the body with cognitive functions, it refers to the brain.⁴

¹ M. Fatih, "Konsep Keserasian Al-Qur'an Dalam Tafsir Mafatihul Ghaib Karya Fakhrudin Ar-Razi: Perspektif Ilmu Munasabah", *PROGRESSA Progressa: Journal of Islamic Religious Instruction* 6, no. 2 (2022): 1-18.

² Yudril Basith, et al., "Optimalisasi Peran Pendidik Dalam Pendidikan melalui Integrasi Potensi Qalb dan Aql", *Indonesian Journal Of Islamic Religious Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 215-230.

³ Dedi Sahputra Napitupulu, "Elemen-Elemen Psikologi Dalam Alquran Studi Tentang Nafs, 'Aql, Qalb, Ruh, Dan Fitrah", *Psikoislamedia: Jurnal Psikologi* 4, no. 1 (2019): 57-71.

⁴ Miftah Nur Ilmi, et. al., "Makna Qalb dalam Al-Qur'an Berbasis Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghaib dan Neurosains", *Intelektualita* 12, no. 2 (2023).

Several previous studies have highlighted the role of reason and the heart in understanding the revelations of the Qur'an. Thoraya E. Abdel-Maguid and Rabie E. Abdel-Halim emphasize that the Qur'an encourages humanity to use reason critically and rationally, reject blind imitation of tradition, and use reason as an instrument to understand the signs of God in the universe.⁵ Nur Muliani highlights the function of the heart in Surah al-A'raf verse 179, finding that the heart not only acts as the center of feelings but also as a cognitive organ that works together with reason in the process of understanding.⁶ Afdhaluddin compares the interpretations of *Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi and *Jami' al-Bayan* by al-Thabari, showing that reason is the main instrument for interpreting revelation, although the approaches of the two exegetes differ: rational-philosophical in al-Razi and linguistic-historical in al-Tha'labi.⁷ MFB Manaf emphasizes that *qalb* encompasses the cognitive and spiritual aspects of humans, functioning as the center of understanding and acceptance of revelation that works synergistically with reason.⁸ Finally, Nurjannah and Suyadi link the perspective of the Qur'an with neuroscience, emphasizing that reason and *qalb* have broad roles, encompassing rational, emotional, and spiritual aspects, which are in line with modern scientific understanding.⁹

Although various studies have emphasized the role of reason and heart in understanding the revelations of the Qur'an, comprehensive studies that integrate both concepts in a contemporary context are still limited. Most studies tend to focus on one aspect—either reason or heart—without examining in depth how the two complement each other in shaping spiritual, ethical, and social understanding. Furthermore, few studies connect the classical perspective of tafsir with modern challenges, such as the information crisis, disinformation, and the complexity of contemporary life, so that a holistic understanding of the function of reason and *qalb* in everyday life still requires further exploration. It is this void that prompted this study to examine the interaction between reason and heart contextually in the perspective of *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs the *tahlili* Exegesis Method, a classical approach to Quranic interpretation. Etymologically, the term *tahlili* is derived from the Arabic root *halala-yuhallilu-tahlilan*, which carries meanings such as “to open, to unravel, to liberate, and

⁵ Thoraya E. Abdel-Maguid and Rabie E. Abdel-Halim, “The Qur’ān and the Development of Rational Thinking,” *Urology Annals* 7, no. 2 (2015): 135–140.

⁶ Nur Muliani, “The Role of Qalb and Intellect in Understanding Al-Qur’an: A Study on Surat Al-A’raf:179,” *Jurnal Studi Islam* 18, no. 2 (2021): 45–60.

⁷ Tsuluts Afdhaluddin, *Akal Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an (Studi Komparatif Tafsir Mafâtîh Al-Ghayb Dan Jami’ Al-Bayân Fî Tafsir Al-Qur’ân)* (Skripsi, Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, 2024).

⁸ M. F. B. Manaf, “Qalb as the Center of Cognition and Spirituality in the Qur’an,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2015): 25–40.

⁹ Nurjannah and Suyadi, “Integrating Neuroscience and Qur’anic Perspective on Intellect and Heart,” *Journal of Religion and Science* 10, no. 1 (2025): 15–30.

to analyze.” This reflects the core principle of the method, which seeks to explore the text in depth and uncover its layered meanings.¹⁰ The *tahlili* method involves interpreting the Quran by arranging the surahs according to their chronological order of revelation, allowing the interpreter to understand the historical and situational context of each verse. Through this approach, every word and expression is examined both linguistically (*lafdziyyah*) and semantically (*ma'nawiyyah*),¹¹ enabling a comprehensive understanding of the text. Linguistic analysis focuses on the grammar, syntax, and diction of the Quranic text, while semantic analysis explores the underlying meanings, implications, and conceptual depth.

By combining these perspectives, the *tahlili* method provides a systematic and holistic framework that integrates linguistic precision with contextual comprehension. It not only clarifies the surface meanings of the Quranic verses but also illuminates the broader theological, ethical, and spiritual messages embedded within the text. Consequently, this method is particularly valuable for researchers seeking to bridge classical exegesis with contemporary issues, offering both analytical rigor and interpretive flexibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of *al-aql* in Surah al-'Ankabut: 43 in the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*

Verse 43 of Surah al-'Ankabut is one of the verses in the Qur'an that discusses the concept of intellect (*aql*) in understanding the parables given by Allah in the Qur'an. The verse reads as follows:

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ

“And these parables We set forth for mankind; and none will grasp their meaning except those who have knowledge.”

The term “*ya'qiluha*” (يَعْقِلُهَا) in Surah al-'Ankabut verse 43 is derived from the root word '*aql*' (عقل), which linguistically conveys the meanings of binding, restraining, or preventing. In the Quran, '*aql*' never appears as a noun (*ism*), but always as a verb (*fi'il*). Words stemming from this root occur 49 times in the Quran, with “*ya'qiluha*” in this verse being one example. Linguistic analysis suggests that in this context, '*aql*' refers to the capacity to understand, comprehend, and derive conclusions from the parables Allah presents. This indicates that '*aql*' is not a mere physical organ but rather a cognitive ability to analyze and interpret meaning.

In his *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*, Imam al-Razi interprets “*ya'qiluha*” as representing a profound intellectual capability to grasp the parables of the Quran. He stresses that these parables are intricate and layered, and thus only those with deep

¹⁰ Dian Erwanto, *Metodologi Penelitian Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: CV Bintang Semesta Media, 2023), <https://bintangpustaka.com/toko-buku/agama-islam/metodologi-penelitian-tafsir-al-quran/>.

¹¹ Kadar M. Yusuf, *Studi Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Amzah, 2016), 137.

knowledge (*'ālimūn*) can truly comprehend them. Al-Razi further categorizes the intellect into several stages according to its capacity:

1. *al-Uqul al-Hayyulaniyyah* (Material Intellect): the lowest stage, not yet enriched by experience or knowledge.
2. *al-Uqul bi al-Malakah* (Potential Intellect): the intellect with the potential to acquire initial knowledge.
3. *al-Uqul bi al-Fi'l* (Actual Intellect): the intellect capable of comprehending and applying knowledge.
4. *al-'Aql al-Mustafad* (Acquired Intellect): the highest level, which can access and reveal knowledge independently of sensory perception.

According to al-Razi, those who can understand the parables in QS. al-'Ankabut verse 43 are those who have reached a high level of intellect, particularly *al-'Aql al-Mustafad*. Al-Razi emphasizes the close relationship between intellect and knowledge in his interpretation.¹²

Al-Razi emphasizes the close relationship between intellect and knowledge in his interpretation. He interprets the phrase "*illa al-'alimun*" (except for those who have knowledge) as an indication that understanding the parables of the Qur'an requires a combination of intellectual ability and profound knowledge.¹³ In al-Razi's view, reason functions as a tool for acquiring knowledge, while knowledge is the result of a correct thinking process. Those who are knowledgeable (*'alimun*) are not only those who possess the ability to think but have also used that ability to gain profound knowledge about Allah, His signs of power, and His decrees.

Surah al-'Ankabut verse 43 appears after Allah gives a parable about those who take protectors besides Allah, like a spider that makes a house. This parable illustrates the weakness and fragility of the beliefs of the polytheists. Al-Razi sees a strong connection (*munasabah*) between verse 43 and the previous verses. He interprets that after Allah gives the parable, He then explains that the parable can only be understood by those who possess deep knowledge. In the context of the surah as a whole, al-Razi emphasizes that al-'Ankabut has a main theme about the test of faith and the difference between true faith and false faith. The parable of the spider and the explanation of who can understand it are part of that overarching theme.¹⁴

The Meaning of *al-qalb* in QS. al-A'raf 179 in the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*

QS. al-A'raf Verse 179 is one of the verses of the Qur'an that discusses the concept of *qalb* (heart) in the context of those who will become inhabitants of hell. This verse mentions that they have hearts but do not use them to understand the

¹² Fakhrudin al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*, (Bairut: Dar al-Ihya', 2000).

¹³ Fuad Arif Noor, "Otak dan akal dalam ayat-ayat neurosains", *Manarul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmiah Studi Islam* 18, no. 1 (2018): 115-140.

¹⁴ Husna Maulida, "Kajian Kitab Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghaib Karya Fakhruddin al-Razi", *JIQSI: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an dan Studi Islam* 2, no 2 (2024): 121-140.

verses of Allah. In this study, we will explore the meaning of "*qalb*" in the verse based on the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi, a prominent scholar in the tradition of Quranic exegesis known for his rational and philosophical approach.

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

And indeed, We have created many from among the jinn and mankind for Hell (because of their misguidance). They have hearts with which they do not understand (the signs of Allah), and they have eyes with which they do not see (the signs of Allah), and they have ears with which they do not hear (the signs of Allah). They are like cattle, rather, they are even more misguided.

The word "*qalb*" (قلب) etymologically comes from the root word "*qalaba*," which means to turn over, change, or flip. This word indicates the nature of the heart that often changes. In the Qur'an, the word *qalb* and its derivatives are mentioned 168 times, indicating the importance of this concept in Islamic teachings. In the context of QS. al-A'raf verse 179, the word *qalb* (قُلُوبٌ) is combined with the word "*yafqahun*" (يَفْقَهُونَ) which means to understand, comprehend, or know deeply. The combination of these two words indicates that the heart (*qalb*) has the function of understanding something, which shows the process of thinking through the heart. In the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*, al-Razi provides an in-depth interpretation of the meaning of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179. According to al-Razi, *qalb* in this verse is not merely a physical organ, but rather refers to the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of humans that have the ability to understand, think, and reflect.¹⁵

Al-Razi mentions that there is another opinion about *qalb*, which is usually interpreted as the heart or feelings, but rather a linguistic metaphor that means thought and contemplation (الخاطر والتدبر). This shows that al-Razi sees the *qalb* as the center of human cognition and understanding, not merely a physical organ.¹⁶

One interesting aspect of al-Razi's interpretation is his view on the relationship between *qalb* and intellect. In QS. al-A'raf verse 179, al-Razi sees that the word "*yafqahun*" (understanding) associated with *qalb* indicates that *qalb* has cognitive functions similar to the intellect.¹⁷ In his interpretation, al-Razi mentions that a healthy *qalb* is one that is able to receive and understand the truth, while a sick *qalb* is one that is closed off from the truth. The people mentioned in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 have a sick or closed heart, so they cannot understand the signs of Allah's power even though they have eyes to see and ears to hear. Al-Razi also emphasizes that the heart (*qalb*) is the seat of faith and conviction. People with a healthy heart will have strong faith and be able to understand the truth, while those with a sick heart will tend towards disbelief and hypocrisy. One interesting aspect of the discussion about *qalb*

¹⁵ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

¹⁶ Nur Mulian, Ahmatnizar Ahmatnizar, "Hubungan Akal dan Hati Dalam Al-Qur'an", *El-Thawalib* 3, no. 1 (2022): 79–90.

¹⁷ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

is the debate about its physical location. In Islamic tradition, there is a difference of opinion on whether *qalb* refers to the heart or the brain.¹⁸

The Meaning of *Qalb* in the Qur'an Based on the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* and Neuroscience," it is mentioned that al-Razi tends to view *qalb* as referring to the brain, not the heart. This is based on al-Razi's interpretation, which emphasizes the cognitive function of *qalb*, more aligned with the brain's function than the hearts. Al-Razi also mentioned that "the heart is the first organ to be created and the last to die." The interpretation that the heart (*qalb*) is the last to die, which gives the meaning of the heart as the brain, is supported by neuroscientific findings that the last sign of death is the cessation of brain activity. However, it should be noted that this view is not fully accepted by all scholars. Some traditional scholars, such as Al-Ghazali, tend to see *qalb* as referring to the heart, although they also acknowledge the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of *qalb*.¹⁹

Al-Razi's interpretation of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 has important theological implications. By emphasizing the role of *qalb* as the center of understanding and knowledge, al-Razi underscores the importance of using reason in understanding religion. However, al-Razi also emphasizes that reason has limitations and needs to be guided by revelation. This reflects his position in the theological debate about the relationship between reason and revelation, where he seeks a middle ground between extreme rationalism and textual traditionalism. Al-Razi's interpretation also has important psychological implications. By emphasizing the relationship between *qalb* and reason, al-Razi provides a foundation for an integrative understanding of human psychology, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.²⁰

Al-Razi sees the *qalb* as the center of human personality that controls thoughts, feelings, and behavior. This aligns with modern psychology's view that emphasizes the importance of integrating thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the formation of a healthy personality. Al-Razi's interpretation also has important implications for Islamic education. By emphasizing that the *qalb* has the function of understanding and thinking, al-Razi underscores the importance of education that not only focuses on intellectual development but also on spiritual development. According to al-Razi, good education should encompass the development of the *qalb*, which includes the development of thinking, understanding, and feeling abilities. This is in line with the concept of holistic education in Islam, which encompasses intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development.²¹

Al-Razi's interpretation of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 has similarities and differences with other classical mufassir interpretations. Like al-Thabari, al-Razi

¹⁸ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

¹⁹ A. S. Irwana, "Analisis Hubungan Hati dan Akal dalam Al-Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf 179 (Analisis Penafsiran Hamka dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar)", *Tashdiq: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2024).

²⁰ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

²¹ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

emphasizes that the *qalb* has the function of understanding and thinking. However, al-Razi provides a deeper philosophical dimension in his interpretation. Al-Razi also differs from exegetes like Al-Zamakhshari in his approach to the relationship between the heart and the intellect. While al-Zamakhshari, who was of the Mu'tazilite school, tended to prioritize the intellect, al-Razi sought a middle ground between the intellect and revelation.

Al-Razi's interpretation also has similarities and differences with modern mufassir interpretations. Like Muhammad Abduh, al-Razi emphasizes the importance of using reason in understanding the Qur'an. However, al-Razi places more emphasis on the limitations of reason and the importance of guidance from revelation.

Al-Razi also differs from modern exegetes like Sayyid Qutb in his approach to *qalb*. While Sayyid Qutb tends to emphasize the emotional and spiritual aspects of *qalb*, al-Razi places more emphasis on its cognitive and intellectual aspects. Al-Razi's interpretation of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 has significant relevance in the contemporary context. In the current era of information and technology, the ability to understand and analyze information is becoming increasingly important. Al-Razi's emphasis on the importance of developing the *qalb* as the center of understanding and knowledge aligns with the modern society's need to continuously learn and develop themselves. His view that the heart (*qalb*) has cognitive functions similar to the intellect (*aql*) is also in line with the interdisciplinary approach in modern education.²² Moreover, al-Razi's efforts to find a middle ground between reason and revelation can inspire contemporary efforts to reconcile science and religion. His integrative approach, which combines various disciplines, is also in line with the interdisciplinary trends in contemporary research.²³

Based on the study of the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi, it can be concluded that the meaning of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 is the center of human understanding and knowledge that has cognitive, emotional, and spiritual functions. Al-Razi emphasizes that the *qalb* is not merely a physical organ, but rather the spiritual and intellectual dimension of humans that has the capacity to understand, think, and reflect. He also highlights the close relationship between the *qalb* and the intellect, where the *qalb* serves as the place or vessel for the intellect to think and comprehend.²⁴

Al-Razi's interpretation of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 has important implications for theology, psychology, and Islamic education. His emphasis on the importance of developing *qalb* as the center of understanding and knowledge aligns with the modern society's need to continuously learn and develop. Thus, the study of al-Razi's interpretation of *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 not only provides a deeper

²² Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

²³ Aldila Winda Pramita, et al., "Konsep Al-Qalb Dan Al-Aql", *Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Sosial Keagamaan* 2, no. 3 (2025): 506-512.

²⁴ Al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*.

understanding of the concept of *qalb* in the Qur'an but also offers inspiration for intellectual and spiritual development in a contemporary context.²⁵

The Construction of the Meaning of *al-aql* and *al-qalb* in al-Razi's Perspective

In this discussion, the researcher will analyze the construction of the meaning of *aql* in QS. al-Ankabut verse 43 and *qalb* in QS. al-A'raf verse 179 based on the interpretation of Fakhruddin al-Razi in the book *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. These two verses were chosen because they hold special significance in understanding the concepts of *aql* and *qalb* in the Qur'an. QS. al-Ankabut verse 43 speaks about parables that can only be understood by knowledgeable people (*al-'alimun*) through their intellect, while QS. al-A'raf verse 179 explains about people who have hearts (*qulub*) but do not use them to understand (*yafqahun*).

The construction of the meanings of *aql* and *qalb* in al-Razi's interpretation will be analyzed in two main dimensions. *First*, the concept of *aql* will be examined in its status as *'ilmun* (knowledge) encompassing three aspects: *aqidah*, *syari'ah*, and *akhlaq*. *Second*, the concept of *qalb* will be analyzed in its status as *fahmun* (understanding) covering three aspects: *suluk*, *wushul*, and *tazkiyah*. This division is based on the understanding that *aql* and *qalb* have complementary functions in shaping a complete human personality.²⁶

Thus, the researcher will present an in-depth analysis of the construction of the meanings of *aql* and *qalb* in QS. al-Ankabut verse 43 and QS. al-A'raf verse 179 based on the interpretation of Fakhruddin al-Razi in the book *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, with a focus on the dimension of *'ilmun* (knowledge) for *aql* and *fahmun* (understanding) for *qalb*. This analysis is expected to provide new insights into understanding the relationship between *aql* and *qalb* as two complementary entities in shaping a complete human personality according to the Islamic perspective.²⁷

1. The Concept of *Aql* (Status of Knowledge)

The study of *aql* (intellect) and *qalb* (heart) in the Qur'an is an important theme in Islamic thought, particularly in the interpretation of *Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi. This interpretation is known for its rational and philosophical approach, as well as the author's ability to integrate various disciplines. In this study, the construction of the meanings of *aql* and *qalb* in QS. al-Ankabut: 43 and QS. al-A'raf: 179 will be discussed based on the *Mafatih al-Ghaib* interpretation, as well as the concept of *aql* as the status of knowledge in the context of *aqidah*, *syari'ah*, and *akhlaq*.²⁸

²⁵ Amrina Rasyada Kamaruzaman, et al., "Qalb, Shadr dan Fuad: Satu Korelasi Mengikut I'jaz Bayani dan Tafsir al-Quran", *Malaysian Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2023): 37-48.

²⁶ Mulian Ahmatnihar, "Hubungan Akal dan Hati Dalam Al-Qur'an...", 79-90.

²⁷ Firdaus M. Yunus, et al., "Konsep Akal Menurut Perspektif Alquran dan Para Filsuf", *Ar-Raniry: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2020): 56-69.

²⁸ M. R. Romdhon, Masruchin Masruchin, "Konsep Akal Menurut Fakhr Al-Rāzi dalam Tafsir Mafāṭih Al-Ghāib", *KACA: Jurnal Dialogis Ilmu Ushuluddin* 13, no. 2 (2023): 226-241.

In interpreting QS. al-Ankabut: 43, al-Razi emphasizes the relationship between *aql* (intellect) and knowledge. According to al-Razi, the word "*ya'qiluha*" (understanding it) in this verse indicates that reason is a means to comprehend the parables given by Allah. Meanwhile, the phrase "*illa al-'alimun*" (except for those who have knowledge) shows that such understanding can only be achieved by those who possess knowledge. Al-Razi emphasizes that reason in QS. al-Ankabut: 43 is not merely the ability to think in general, but rather the ability to understand deeply based on knowledge. Thus, there is a close relationship between reason and knowledge, where reason becomes a tool for acquiring knowledge, and knowledge serves as the foundation for reason to understand Allah's parables.

Al-Razi establishes a close relationship between the intellect (*aql*) and the heart (*qalb*) in his interpretation. According to him, *aql* is the ability to understand and think, while *qalb* is the place where the thinking process occurs. In other words, the heart (*qalb*) serves as a vessel for the intellect (*aql*) to function. In the context of QS. al-Ankabut: 43 and QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi shows that both *aql* and *qalb* have the same cognitive function, which is to understand (يَفْقَهُونَ and يَعْقِلُهَا). The difference lies in the context of the verses, where QS. al-Ankabut: 43 emphasizes the ability to understand Allah's parables, while QS. al-A'raf: 179 emphasizes the failure to use the heart to understand Allah's verses. Al-Razi views *aql* not only as a tool for acquiring knowledge but also as the status of knowledge itself.²⁹ In his interpretation, al-Razi states that *aql* is knowledge (العقلُ هُوَ الْعِلْمُ), which indicates that reason and knowledge have an inseparable relationship. Here is the concept of *aql* as the status of knowledge in three main aspects:

a. Reason in the context of *aqidah*

In the context of *aqidah*, al-Razi emphasizes that reason plays an important role in understanding the belief in the Oneness of Allah, faith in the unseen, and the explanation of the Qur'an. According to him, reason can understand the basic principles of faith through correct thinking and reasoning.³⁰ Al-Razi argued that reason can understand the existence of Allah and His attributes through the signs of His power in the universe. However, he also acknowledges that reason has limitations in perfectly understanding the essence of God. Therefore, reason needs to be guided by revelation to achieve a correct understanding of faith.

In the Tafsir *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, al-Razi explains that the knowledgeable (الْعَالِمُونَ) in QS. al-Ankabut: 43 are those who use their intellect to understand the truth of the creed contained in the parables of the Qur'an. Thus, *aql* becomes the status of knowledge in the context of *aqidah* when used to understand and believe in the truth about Allah and His teachings.

²⁹ Tistigar Sansayto, et al., "Konsep Ilmu Menurut Fakhr al-Din al-Razi", *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam* 16, no. 2 (2018): 160-177.

³⁰ M. Fatih, "Konsep Keserasian Al-Qur'an Dalam Tafsir Mafatihul...", 1-18.

b. *Aql* in the context of shari'ah

In the context of shari'ah, al-Razi views *aql* as a means to understand Allah's laws and the wisdom behind them. According to him, reason can understand the reasons and purposes behind Allah's commands and prohibitions, so that humans can practice shari'ah with the correct understanding. Al-Razi explains that in fiqh discussions, he consistently interprets verses related to laws by mentioning discussions of various fiqh schools, accompanied by preference for the Shafi'i school he follows. This shows that he uses reason to understand and analyze sharia laws.³¹

In the context of QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi emphasizes that the failure to use the heart to understand (يَفْقَهُونَ) includes the failure to understand Allah's laws and the wisdom behind them. Thus, *aql* attains the status of knowledge in the context of sharia when it is used to understand and correctly implement the laws of Allah.

c. Reason in the context of morality

In the context of morality, al-Razi views reason as a means to know truth and goodness. According to him, reason can distinguish between good and bad, allowing humans to form noble character. Al-Razi emphasizes that a healthy mind will guide humans towards good morals, as reason can understand the consequences of good and bad actions. He also asserts that reason needs to be nurtured and educated to guide humans towards noble character.³²

In the context of QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi explains that those who do not use their hearts to understand (يَفْقَهُونَ) are those who cannot distinguish between good and evil, thus they are likened to livestock, even more misguided. Thus, *aql* becomes the status of knowledge in the context of akhlaq when used to understand and practice true moral values. In the context of the status of knowledge, al-Razi views *aql* not only as a tool for acquiring knowledge but also as the status of knowledge itself.³³ In the context of aqidah, *aql* becomes a means to understand the belief in the Oneness of Allah and faith in the unseen. In the context of shari'ah, *aql* becomes a means to understand the laws of Allah and the wisdom behind them. In the context of akhlaq, *aql* becomes a means to know truth and goodness.

2. The Concept of *Qalb* (Status of Fahmun / Understanding)

Al-Razi in his tafsir *Mafatih al-Ghaib* emphasizes that *qalb* has the status of fahmun (understanding). In his interpretation of QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi explains that the word "يَفْقَهُونَ" (understanding) indicates that the *qalb* has the function of understanding the verses of Allah. This understanding is not merely a rational

³¹ Safdhinar M. An Noor, et. al., "Rethinking Mu'âsyarah bil Ma'ruf: A Maqâshid Syari'ah Cum-Mubâdalah Approach", *At-Turas: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2024): 12-24.

³² Arroisi, Jarman, *Psikologi Islam: Membaca Anatomi Pemikiran Jiwa Fakhr al-Din al-Razi* (Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press, 2022).

³³ Sansayto, et al., "Konsep Ilmu Menurut Fakhr al-Din al-Razi...", 160-177.

understanding, but also a spiritual understanding that involves the inner dimensions of a person.

Al-Razi also stated that the verse indicates that the mind (العقل) is knowledge (العِلْم) and the place of knowledge is the heart (*qalb*). Thus, the *qalb* as the status of *fahmun* serves as a vessel for knowledge and spiritual understanding. This understanding encompasses three important aspects of the spiritual journey: *suluk*, *wushul*, and *tazkiyah*.

a. *Qalb* in the context of *suluk*

Suluk in the terminology of Sufism refers to the spiritual journey of a servant towards Allah SWT. Linguistically, *suluk* comes from the Arabic word "*thariqat*," which means path, state, or flow in the line of something. In the spiritual context, *suluk* is the process of a journey towards Allah by following a predetermined path.

Al-Razi in the interpretation of *Mafatih al-Ghaib* views the heart (*qalb*) as an important instrument in the process of *suluk*. According to him, the *qalb* that possesses the status of *fahmun* (understanding) becomes a means to undertake a spiritual journey towards Allah. In the process of *suluk*, the *qalb* functions as a tool to comprehend the signs of Allah's greatness and His guidance. In QS. al-A'raf:179, al-Razi interprets that those who do not use their *qalb* to understand (يَفْقَهُونَ) are those who cannot properly traverse the path of *suluk*. They are likened to livestock, even more astray, because they do not use their hearts to understand the signs of Allah's greatness and His guidance. The process of *suluk* according to al-Razi involves the use of the heart to understand spiritual realities and draw closer to Allah. In this context, the *qalb* as the status of understanding becomes a means to undertake a spiritual journey with a correct understanding of Allah and His teachings.

b. *Qalb* in the context of *wushul*

Wushul in the terminology of Sufism refers to a spiritual achievement in which a servant reaches Allah SWT. Linguistically, *wushul* means to arrive. Whereas "*wushul ilallah*" means reaching Allah, which is a spiritual achievement of someone who has overcome spiritual obstacles and barriers.

Al-Razi in his commentary *Mafatih al-Ghaib* views the heart (*qalb*) as an important instrument for achieving *wushul*. According to him, the *qalb* that possesses the status of *fahmun* (understanding) becomes a means to achieve *wushul* to Allah. In this context, *wushul* does not mean the unification of essence between God and His creatures, but rather the attainment of true knowledge about Allah.

As-Syarqawi in the book *al-Minahul Qudsiyyah alal Hikam al-Athaiyyah* states that *wushul ilallah* clearly means knowledge about Allah obtained through witnessing with the inner eye, a testimony that suffices a person without the need for evidence and proof. This understanding aligns with al-Razi's view of the heart (*qalb*) as a vessel for spiritual comprehension.

In QS. al-Ankabut: 43, al-Razi interprets that the knowledgeable (الْعَالِمُونَ) are those who can understand Allah's parables with their intellect. This understanding

becomes a path for them to achieve *wushul* to Allah. Thus, the heart (*qalb*) as the status of understanding (*fahm*) becomes a means to achieve closeness (*wushul*) with the correct understanding of Allah and His verses.

c. *Qalb* in the Context of *Tazkiyah*

Tazkiyah in the terminology of Sufism refers to the process of purifying the soul from reprehensible traits and filling it with commendable qualities. Linguistically, *tazkiyah* comes from the word "*zaka*," which means pure, to grow, and blessed. In a spiritual context, *tazkiyah al-qalb* is the process of purifying the heart so that it can receive divine light.

Al-Razi in the tafsir *Mafatih al-Ghaib* views *tazkiyah* as an important process in maintaining the heart (*qalb*) to continue functioning as a vessel of understanding (*fahmun*). According to him, the heart that has been purified through the process of *tazkiyah* will be more capable of understanding the verses of Allah and attaining true knowledge.

In QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi interprets that those who do not use their hearts to understand (يَفْقَهُونَ) are those whose hearts have not been purified through the process of *tazkiyah*. As a result, they cannot understand the verses of Allah and His guidance correctly. The process of *tazkiyah al-qalb* according to al-Razi involves several stages, namely takhalli (purifying the heart from blameworthy traits), tahalli (adorning the heart with commendable traits), and tajalli (the unveiling of the veil between the servant and Allah). In this context, the heart, as the seat of understanding, becomes the object of purification so that it can function optimally as a vessel for spiritual comprehension.

Al-Razi in his commentary *Mafatih al-Ghaib* establishes a close relationship between *qalb*, *aql*, and *fahm*. According to him, *aql* is the ability to understand and think, while *qalb* is the place where that thinking process occurs. In other words, the *qalb* serves as a vessel for the *aql* to function.

In the context of QS. al-Ankabut: 43 and QS. al-A'raf: 179, al-Razi shows that both *aql* and *qalb* have the same cognitive function, which is to understand (يَعْقِلُهَا and يَفْقَهُونَ). The difference lies in the context of the verses, where QS. al-Ankabut:43 emphasizes the ability to understand Allah's parables, while QS. al-A'raf:179 emphasizes the failure to use the heart to understand Allah's verses.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of QS. al-Ankabut: 43 and QS. al-A'raf: 179 in Fakhruddin al-Razi's *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib*, it can be concluded that *al-aql* (intellect) and *al-qalb* (heart) are two central elements in Islamic epistemology. *Al-aql* is understood as a cognitive tool that enables humans to interpret divine parables, such as the metaphor of the spider, to grasp the essence of transcendental truth. Razi emphasizes that the function of *al-aql* is not limited to logical reasoning but also involves connecting knowledge with faith (*ta'addul*), so that only the knowledgeable (*al-'ālimūn*) can

utilize it optimally. Meanwhile, *al-qalb* is described as the center of spiritual consciousness, which, if inactive, can reduce humans to a level lower than other creatures. Razi distinguishes between the heart as a physical entity and as a metaphysical entity (*lathifah rūhiyyah*), where failure to activate it spiritually leads to negligence (*ghaflah*) regarding the purpose of creation. These two concepts complement each other: *al-aql* functions as a tool for analyzing truth, while *al-qalb* serves as a vessel for internalizing divine values. An imbalance between the two, such as using intellect without the purification of the heart, results in a shallow and non-transformative understanding. This finding aligns with Razi's view, which highlights the integration of rationality and spirituality as the key to achieving *ma'rifatullah*.

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