

# The Engagement In Qur'anic Sciences: A Correlation Between *al-Manṭūq wa al-Mafhūm* and Gracia's Hermeneutics

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## Abstract

This article aims to observe the substantive contact between the concept of *al-manṭūq wa al-mafhūm* in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the three functions of Gracia's hermeneutics. This article focuses on elaborating both conceptions substantively and applying them to some verses of the Qur'an to understand the rendezvous of both concepts, particularly in the interpretative sphere. This article uses both semantic and interpretative approaches in order to analyze the objects. Based on this result, it is found that there is a substantive contact between both conceptions. Firstly, both conceptions are used to determine the original meaning of the text; the *uṣūl al-fiqh* employs the term of *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*, while Gracia's hermeneutics uses the "historical function." Secondly, both conceptions can also be used to produce new contemporary meanings; the *uṣūl al-fiqh* utilizes the term of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*, while Gracia's hermeneutics employs the "meaning function." Third, a certain response must be made to the contemporary meaning. In this regard, the *uṣūl al-fiqh* stipulates this in the process of *istinbāṭ al-ḥukm*, while Gracia's hermeneutics calls this as the "implicative function."

**Keywords:** *al-Manṭūq*, *al-Mafhūm*, Gracia, Hermeneutics.

## Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengobservasi tentang adanya kontak secara substatif antara konsep *al-manṭūq dan al-mafhūm* dari *uṣūl al-fiqh* dengan konsep "tiga fungsi" (three functions) dari hermeneutika Gracia. Artikel ini fokus dalam mengelaborasi aspek substantif dari kedua konsep tersebut kemudian mengaplikasikannya ke dalam beberapa ayat al-Qur'an sehingga titik temu di antara kedua konsep tersebut dapat dipahami, terutama di dalam dunia penafsiran. Artikel ini menggunakan pendekatan semantik dan interpretatif dalam menganalisis kedua konsep tersebut. Dari hasil analisis ditemukan bahwa terdapat sebuah kontak secara substatif yang terjadi antara kedua konsep tersebut. Pertama, kedua konsep digunakan untuk menentukan makna asli dari teks; *uṣūl al-fiqh* menggunakan istilah *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* sedangkan hermeneutika Gracia

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menggunakan “historical function.” Kedua, kedua konsep juga digunakan untuk memproduksi makna kontemporer; *uṣūl al-fiqh* menggunakan istilah *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* sedangkan hermeneutika Gracia menggunakan “meaning function.” Ketiga, kedua konsep juga menuntut adanya respons atas makna kontemporer tersebut. Dalam *uṣūl al-fiqh*, hal ini termasuk dalam proses *istinbāṭ al-ḥukm*, sedangkan menurut Gracia, hal ini termasuk dalam “implicative function.”

**Kata Kunci:** *al-Manṭūq*, *al-Mafhūm*, Gracia, Hermeneutika.

## Introduction

The study of the Qur'an before the 20th century was dominated by classical methods framed within the field of Qur'anic sciences (*ulūm al-Qur'ān*). This also applies to the interpretation of the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> Various terms in classical interpretation such as *al-muḥkam wa al-mutasyābih*, *az-zāhir wa al-mu'awwal*, *at-tafsir wa at-ta'wil* emerged. In later periods, some terms in interpretation did not only occur in the field of Qur'anic sciences but also in other fields of Islamic sciences, such as *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). Therefore, multiple theories found in *uṣūl al-fiqh* can be used as methods of interpretation. For instance, the theory of *al-manṭūq wa al-mafhūm* which deals with the meaning expressed can also be found in other Qur'anic sciences. Therefore, there is a kind of engagement of some terms in various Quranic sciences.

In the 20th century, the study of the Qur'an, particularly interpretation, was enriched by various contemporary approaches.<sup>2</sup> This was the result of philosophical inquiries that focused heavily on language during the century.<sup>3</sup> One of the most popular methods in interpretation was hermeneutics. Originally, Hermeneutics emerged in the Western world as part of biblical interpretations. Prominent scholars were developing and promoting hermeneutics as contemporary method of interpretation in Western World, including Schleiermacher, Gadamer, and Gracia. Henceforth, most classical scholars opposed the interpretation of the Qur'an using hermeneutical methods.<sup>4</sup> This is

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Ridho Syakirin, “Hadis Studies Methodology of Interpretation Kontribusi Tafsir Kontemporer Di Era Modern : Studi,” *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022): 175–87.

<sup>2</sup> Annas Rolli Muchlisin, “Tafsīr Studies in Western Academia: A Bibliographical Survey,” *Suhuf: Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an Dan Budaya* 15, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v15i2.725>.

<sup>3</sup> Lukmanul Hakim et al., “Qur'anic Interpretation Method and Its Impact on Contemporary Interpretation,” *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 26, no. 2 (2018): 142, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v26i2.4577>.

<sup>4</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Nawasea Press, 2009).

mainly because these two methods, both *tafsir* or *ta'wil* (exegesis) and hermeneutics, originated from different "worlds" and different objectives as well.<sup>5</sup> That such understanding according to some scholars should not be taken into consideration in this contemporary period where blocks, differences, as well as obstacles had been tried to be avoided. Those scholars who were developing and promoting such idea, in Islamic World, include Fazlur Rahman, Hasan Hanafi, Muhammad Arkoun, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.

Contemporary religious studies, including the interpretation of the Qur'an, can be viewed from various perspectives. It is no longer limited to just one perspective; it is not solely related to the normativity of Divine teachings - although this phenomenon remains to be the character of this religion- but it can also be examined from different perspectives, such as the history of certain religions, the understanding of religious norms, including religious practices, rituals, and traditions that they experience and engage in daily life. However, dichotomy between theological and rational approach underlying the study of religions in the Western world should not be applied for studying and developing Islamic sciences, since there is no such dichotomy in Islamic world. In the case of how to interpret the Qur'an, it seems obvious how Muslim scholars had developed method not only comprehensive but also relevant to be used for dealing with issues occurring in this contemporary world. So much so that, it seems unnecessary to alter *tafsir* or *ta'wil* with hermeneutics while the former was substantially more comprehensive than the latter, for it can still be regarded as rational until it is still relevant for contemporary discourses, even though its theological aspect is unremoved.

Based on these facts, it is important to take a note that in one hand, the existence of both methods imply the difference between two methods of interpretation along with their respective terms and theories that can enrich scholars' approaches in the interpretation, but on the other hand, those terms and theories can be contradicted to or overlapped each other if one cannot understand the substance of those theories. Therefore, in this article, I attempt to provide theoretical insight of both theories from the Arabic world and Western world in term of interpretation in order to understand the interconnection between both theories as well as the correlation which subsequently leads to understand the engagement of both concepts. In this case, I would take the theory of *al-manṭūq wa*

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<sup>5</sup> Mohamad Khoiril Anwar and Abdul Rasyid Ridho, "Kontroversi Penerapan Hermeneutika Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an," *El-'Umdah* 3, no. 2 (2021): 217–44, <https://doi.org/10.20414/el-umdah.v3i2.2877>.

*al-mafhūm* of *uṣūl al-fiqh* -which often used as a tool of Qur'an's interpretation by traditional Muslim scholars- and hermeneutical theory of J.E. Gracia as a representation of contemporary interpretation of Western tradition, and then applies them to several verses of the Qur'an. Finally, by applying these two methods in the Qur'an, the interconnection between these two methods can be understood and, subsequently, the rendezvous of Qur'an's interpretation of both traditions can be discovered.

## The Conception of *al-Manṭūq wa al-Mafhūm*

The term "*al-manṭūq*" is the passive form of the Arabic verb "*naṭaqa*" (نَطَقَ), which means "something that is spoken"<sup>6</sup> or, in simple words, the "literal meaning of word."<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, "*al-mafhūm*" is derived from the verb "*fahima*" (فَهِمَ), which means "something that is understood"<sup>8</sup> or "implied/implicit meaning."<sup>9</sup> Conceptually, various definitions had been provided by numbers of scholars regarding the terms of "*al-manṭūq*" and "*al-mafhūm*." Ali Asy-Syaukāni, for instance, defines "*al-manṭūq*" as "meaning indicated by the expression when (that expression) is spoken."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Ali al-Aṣbihāni, Khuḍari Bik, Jiwār Mugniyyah, and other scholars also provide the same definition.<sup>11</sup> As for Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Futuhi, he defines "*al-manṭūq*" as "the meaning derived from the expression according to what is spoken."<sup>12</sup> Based on these conceptions, it can be concluded that "*al-manṭūq*" refers to the "explicit meaning indicated by the expression" or the "meaning derived from a word as it is spoken."

As for "*al-mafhūm*," scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* also provide definitions that are arguably similar. 'Ali As-Subki, for instance, defines "*al-mafhūm*" as meaning indicated by the expression but not at the time when the expression is spoken.<sup>13</sup> In line with this notion, al-Futūḥi also defines "*al-mafhūm*" as meaning derived from something that definitely exists but is not indicated by the expression.<sup>14</sup> Based on

<sup>6</sup> Syauqi Daif, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit* (Kairo: Maktabah asy-Syuruq ad-Dauliyyah, 2004). 47.

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Cachia, Hans Wehr, and J. Milton Cowan, "A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1985, <https://doi.org/10.2307/602745>. 975.

<sup>8</sup> Syauqi Daif, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit*. 704.

<sup>9</sup> Ruhi Baalbaki, "Al-Mawrid: A Modern Arabic-English Dictionary," *Dar Ilm Lil Malayin*, 1970, <https://www.noor-book.com/كتاب-المورد-قاموس-عربي-انكليزي-pdf-pdf>. 1085.

<sup>10</sup> Ali Asy-Syaukani, *Irsyad Al-Fuhul Fi Ilm Al-Usul* (Riyad: Dar al-Fadilah, 2000). 763.

<sup>11</sup> Mahmud bin Abd ar-Rahman al-Asbihani, *Bayan Al-Mukhtasar* (Kairo: Dar as-Salam, 2004). 624.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abd al-Aziz bin Ali al-Futuhi, *Syarh Al-Kaukab Al-Munir* (Riyad: Maktabah al-'Abikan, 1993). 473.

<sup>13</sup> Abd al-Wahhab bin Ali as-Subki, *Jami' Al-Jawami' Fi Usul Al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Dar Kutub Ilmiyyah, 2002). 22.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abd al-Aziz bin Ali al-Futuhi, *Syarh Al-Kaukab Al-Munir*. 473.

these definitions, it can be concluded that "*al-mafhūm*" refers to the "implicit meaning contained within an expression" or the "actual meaning inherent in an expression but not indicated by the expression itself when it is spoken."

### *Al-Ma'nā al-Manṭūq*

Linguistic expressions, either verbal or non-verbal, carry meaning that the speaker intends to convey to the audiences. This meaning can sometimes align with structural elements (explicit), and at other times, it may align behind structural elements (implicit). The meaning that aligns with the expression is referred to as "*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*" or, in other words, the meaning that can be directly grasped by its literal structure. For instance, when a lecturer says to students in a classroom, "Playing mobile phones in class is not allowed," it explicitly conveys the prohibition of playing mobile phones in class. Similarly, if there is a sign on campus that says, "No smoking," it also indicates the explicit meaning of the prohibition of smoking on campus.

Some examples of Quranic verses that scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* often use to determine (Islamic) laws through the concept of "*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*" are: "*And establish prayer and give zakah*" (The Qur'an 2: 43). The explicit meaning ("*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*") derived from this verse can be directly understood from its literal structure, which is the obligation to perform prayer and give zakah. Another example can be found in the verse: "*And do not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned*" (The Qur'an 6: 121). The explicit meaning ("*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*") of this verse indicates the prohibition of consuming something without mentioning the name of Allah (not saying "*basmillah*" before eating). Also the verse: "*And do not cooperate in sin and aggression*" (The Qur'an 5: 2). This verse carries the explicit meaning of the prohibition of assisting acts of aggression, as indicated by its literal structure. These examples demonstrate how the explicit meaning of the verses can be derived directly from their structures and are subsequently used by scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* to construct legal rulings i.e. Islamic laws.

If these verses are observed carefully, we will notice that "*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*" has different meanings. For instance, in the first example, "*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*" is not limited to the obligation of performing prayers alone, but also encompasses fulfilling all the conditions and pillars that determine the validity of prayer. In the contrary, the third example has a broader scope of meaning related to various negative actions, but it could also be used by someone in specific situations, such as intending only acts like stealing or gambling as "bad things."

Considering the scope of these meanings, some scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* divide "*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*" into two categories,<sup>15</sup> namely: *al-manṭūq aṣ-Ṣarih* which refers to explicit meanings where the indicated meaning includes comprehensive and total meaning (*dalālah muṭābiqah*) or partial meaning (*dalālah taẓammun*), and *al-manṭūq gair aṣ-Ṣarih* which refers to non-explicit meanings where the indicated meaning includes external associations (*dalālah al-iltizām*).

*Dalālah muṭābiqah* refers to the comprehensive implication of all the elements included in *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*.<sup>16</sup> For instance, the expression "And establish prayer" (وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ) carries the explicit meaning of the obligation to perform prayer, which includes all the elements involved in the act of prayer, such as takbir (saying "*Allāhu Akbar*"), standing, bowing, standing up straight after bowing, prostration, sitting, reciting the Tasyahhud, and so on. The comprehensive implication of all these elements within the *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* is what is meant by *Dalālah muṭābiqah*.

On the other hand, *dalālah at-taẓammun* refers to the partial implication of some elements included in *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*.<sup>17</sup> For instance, in the expression "And do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (وَلَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ), if we consider *dalālah at-taẓammun*," the expression also entails the prohibition of assisting each other in actions that can provoke hostility, such as engaging in fights, selling sharp weapons during riots, and so on. These actions are part of the partial implication of the overall elements that contribute to the intended meaning mentioned above.

Meanwhile, *dalālah al-iltizām* refers to the external elements that are supposed to be present in *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* and simultaneously determine its completeness, whereas in the same time, these elements are not part of *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*.<sup>18</sup> For instance, in the previous verse "And establish prayer," in addition to the explicit meaning of the obligation to perform prayer, it also includes related elements that are outside the scope of *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* but still determine the validity of the prayer, such as the requirement of ablution (*wuḍū'*), covering the *'aurah* (parts of the body that should be covered), and facing the *qiblah* (the direction of prayer). This conception is basically in line with the principle of "*mā lā yatimmu al-wājib illa bihi fahurwa wājib*" (what is necessary for the completeness of an obligation is also considered obligatory) in *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abd al-Aziz bin Ali al-Futuhi. 473.

<sup>16</sup> Abd al-Wahhab bin Ali as-Subki, *Jami' Al-Jawami' Fi Usul Al-Fiqh*. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Abd al-Wahhab bin Ali as-Subki. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmad bin Idris al-Qarafi, *Al-'Iqad Al-Manzum Fi Al-Khusus Wa Al-Umum* (Makkah: Dar al-Kutub, 1999). 259.

### *Al-Ma'nā al-Mafhūm*

Contrarywise, if *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* of a word or expression is referred to explicit meaning of words or expressions, then *al-ma'nā al-mafhūq* is the opposite, which means the implicit meaning of words or expressions. Henceforth, the intended meaning is not explicitly stated in the structure, rather implied within the structure. This can be understood through the presence of shared cause (*illah*). For instance, when a lecturer says to a student, "You are not allowed to use a mobile phone in class," besides the explicit meaning, which is the prohibition of using a mobile phone in class, there are also other implicit meanings that are contained within, even though they are not clearly stated by the sentence. These implicit meanings include the prohibition of joking with other students, for instance, or sleeping in class, or playing with a notebook. These prohibitions are implicit meanings that are contained within the expressed statement because they share the same cause (*illah*) as the prohibition of using a mobile phone, which is the potential disruption of the class. The implicit meaning that encompasses these additional prohibitions is what is referred to as *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*.

Some examples of Quranic verses that are often used by scholars of uṣūl al-fiqh to determine legal laws through the concept of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* are "So do not say to them [so much as], 'uff' [hush]" (the Qur'an 17: 23). The explicit meaning of this verse is the prohibition of saying "shush" to parents. However, the implicit meaning (*al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*) includes other prohibited actions such as insulting, rebuking, slapping, or hitting them. All of these additional meanings share the same cause (*illah*) as the initial prohibition, which is hurting parents, either physically or psychologically. Similarly, the verse "So the freeing of a believing slave is required" (the Qur'an 4: 92). has the explicit meaning of the obligation to free a believing slave as expiation for unintentionally killing another believer. However, the implicit meaning (*al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*) includes the prohibition of freeing a non-believing slave as a substitute for the expiation.

In both cases, the implicit meanings go beyond the explicit meanings and encompass additional prohibitions or obligations that are related to the shared cause (*illah*). These examples illustrate how the concept of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* allows for a deeper understanding of the intended meanings in Quranic verses and helps in deriving legal rulings.

Similar to *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*, there are also differences in the types of meanings between the two examples as mentioned before; the first example has an implied meaning that is consistent with the stated meaning, while the second

example is the opposite. In this matter, the scholars of uṣūl al-fiqh then divide *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* into two divisions: *mafhūm al-muwāfaqah* (conforming implication) and *mafhūm al-mukhālafah* (contradictory implication), each of which further has several subdivisions.<sup>19</sup>

### *Mafhūm al-muwāfaqah*

*Mafhūm al-muwāfaqah* is the implied meaning contained within a word or phrase that is in line with its stated meaning (*al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*). This implied meaning can either be stronger than the stated meaning or equally as strong.<sup>20</sup> If the implied meaning is stronger than the stated meaning, it is referred to as *faḥwa al-khiṭāb* (intended implication). On the other hand, if the implied meaning is equally as strong as the stated meaning, it is referred to as *laḥn al-khiṭāb* (equivocal implication).<sup>21</sup>

Regarding, *faḥwa al-Khiṭāb*, there are several verses in the Qur'an that can be used as examples in this regard, including the verse *فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أَفْ*. The stated meaning of this verse is the prohibition of saying "hush" to parents, as explained. However, the implied meaning is the prohibition of shouting, scolding, slapping, hitting, and so on. This latter meaning falls under the category of *faḥwa al-khiṭāb* (intended implication) because all of these actions are stronger and more hurtful to parents compared to the stated meaning, which is merely saying "shush."

On the other hand, in *laḥn al-Khiṭāb*, there are also several verses in the Qur'an that can be used as examples, including the verse *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا* (the Qur'an 4: 10). The stated meaning of this verse is the prohibition of consuming the wealth of orphans, as indicated by the wording. However, the implied meaning is the prohibition of wasting wealth of orphans, for instance, by squandering, burning, destroying, and so on. This latter meaning falls under the category of *laḥn al-khiṭāb* (equivocal implication) because it has an equally strong meaning as the stated meaning; it means that both the rightful owner and others cannot possess and enjoy the wealth, whether it is consumed by someone else, wasted, burnt, or destroyed.

<sup>19</sup> Mahmud bin Abd ar-Rahman al-Asbihani, *Bayan Al-Mukhtasar*. 764.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Asy-Syaukani, *Irsyad Al-Fuhul Fi Ilm Al-Usul*. 764.

<sup>21</sup> Abd al-Wahhab bin Ali as-Subki, *Jami' Al-Jawami' Fi Usul Al-Fiqh*. 22.



## *Mafhūm al-mukhālafah*

*Mafhūm al-mukhālafah* is the implied meaning contained within a word or phrase that is opposite to the stated meaning.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in the verse فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ, the stated meaning is the obligation to free a believing slave as expiation for unintentionally killing another believer. However, the implied meaning is the prohibition of freeing a non-believing slave as a substitute for the expiation. This latter meaning falls under the category of *mafḥūm al-mukhālafah* (contradictory implication) because freeing a non-Muslim slave is contrary to freeing a Muslim slave as indicated by the stated meaning.

In this regard, the scholars of uṣūl al-fiqh classify *mafḥūm al-mukhālafah* into several types. Herewith, I will discuss six of the most common and important types as follows:

Firstly, *mafḥūm aṣ-ṣifah* (Implication of Attribute): This occurs when the implied meaning is related to a specific attribute. For instance, in the verse فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ, the implied meaning is related to the attribute of "believer" that the slave to be freed must possess.

Secondly, *mafḥūm asy-syarat* (Implication of Condition): This occurs when the implied meaning is related to a condition. Usually, this includes terms of إِذَا (if) or إِنْ (if) and the like. For instance, in the verse وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمْلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ (the Qur'an 65: 6) the implied meaning is related to the condition of being "pregnant" that the divorced wives must meet in order to receive financial support from their husbands. If they are not pregnant, then the husbands are not obligated to provide financial support.

Thirdly, *mafḥūm al-gāyah* (Implication of Limitation): This occurs when the implied meaning is related to a specific limitation. This often includes terms of إِلَى (until) or حَتَّى (until) and the like. For instance, in the verse فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى (the Qur'an 2: 230) the implied meaning is related to the limitation imposed on a woman who has been divorced twice but wishes to reconcile with her former husband. She can only remarry her former husband "after she marries someone else." If she has not passed this limitation, which is marrying someone else, the husband is not allowed to remarry her.

Fourthly, *mafḥūm al-ḥaṣr* (Implication of Exception): This occurs when the implied meaning introduces an exception or specification. This often includes terms like إِلَّا (except) or إِنَّمَا (rather). For instance, in the verse وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ (the Qur'an 2: 45) the implied meaning is related to the exception for those who

<sup>22</sup> Mahmud bin Abd ar-Rahman al-Asbihani, *Bayan Al-Mukhtasar*. 624.

are able to show patience in seeking assistance. This can only be done by the "humble ones," referring to those who consistently demonstrate obedience. Thus, if they are not among the humble ones, they would find it difficult to fulfill this requirement.

Fifthly, *mafhum al-adad* (Implication of Number): This occurs when the implied meaning is related to a specific number or quantity, which automatically excludes other numbers or quantities. For example, in the verse فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً (the Qur'an 24: 4) the implied meaning is related to the number or quantity of lashes in the punishment of flogging. It is prohibited to impose the punishment of flogging on someone who falsely accuses a chaste woman of adultery with a number other than what has been specified, which is 80 lashes. Thus, administering 10 lashes or 100 lashes would be invalid.

Lastly, *mafhum al-laqaab* (Implication of Designation): This occurs when something is designated or attributed to another thing, such as a name, attribute, or category, which automatically excludes others. For example, the phrase "Ahmad is late for class" implicitly implies that other students besides Ahmad are not late for class. This type of implication is known as *mafhum al-laqaab*. Similarly, in the verse وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا (the Qur'an 16: 36) the implied meaning is that Allah sent messengers only to the specific community mentioned and not to others.

## Gracia: A Brief Scholarly Background

Jorge J. E. Gracia is a philosopher born in Cuba in 1942. He is a professor of philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at the University at Buffalo in New York. He completed his undergraduate program (B.A.) in philosophy at Wheaton College, his graduate program (M.A.) in the same field at the University of Chicago, and his doctoral program at the University of Chicago, also in the same field.<sup>23</sup> Based on his academic background, it is not surprising that Gracia has an excellent way of thinking regarding philosophy, including philosophy of language and hermeneutics. Gracia's expertise has been demonstrated by numerous works he has produced, including books and articles, some of which are: "A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology," "Text: Ontological Status, Identity, Author, Audience," "Texts and Their Interpretation," "Can There Be Text Without Audiences? The Identity and Function of Audiences," "Can There Be Texts Without Historical Authors?", "Author and Repression," "Textual

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<sup>23</sup> Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Identity," "Where is Don Quixote? The Location of Text and Works," "The Interpretation of Revealed Texts: Do We Know What God Means?", Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, "Relativism and the Interpretation of Texts," "The Ethics of Interpretation," "A Theory of the Author," in W. Irwin (ed.), "The Death and Resurrection of the Author," "History/Historiography of Philosophy."<sup>24</sup>

## The Conception of Gracia's Hermeneutics

The idea of Gracia's hermeneutics actually refers to the fact that the main objective of interpretation is to create an understanding of the meaning of the text in the eye of contemporary audiences. This means that in addition to revealing the historical meaning of a text according to the author's perspective, an interpreter must also be capable of providing understanding to the contemporary audience regarding the content of the text. However, providing understanding of the text in the eye of contemporary audience has its own complexities as well as difficulties, as there are many differences occur between the period where the text firstly produced and the contemporary period. Given the fact that contemporary audiences also do not have access to the author of the text, it is impossible for them to discover the actual meaning of the text as intended by the author. This only means that they only understand the author's intentions through the text, and not through the author. Therefore, according to Gracia, an interpreter needs to provide additional explanations or clarifications regarding the interpreted text – whether these explanations align exactly with the author's intentions or not– in order for the content of the text to be comprehensible to the contemporary audience. In other words, as long as an interpreter has not provided additional explanations regarding the interpreted text, they have not done their interpretive work properly.

Gracia asserts that interpretation involves three elements: 1) the - interpreted- text (interpretandum), 2) the interpreter, and 3) additional explanations or clarifications (interpretans).<sup>25</sup> The interpretandum refers to the historical text or the text that is being interpreted, while the interpretans is the additional information provided by the interpreter to enhance the understanding of the interpretandum for contemporary audiences. In classical interpretation, for

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<sup>24</sup> Khoirul Imam, "Relevansi Hermeneutika Jorge J. E. Gracia Dengan Kaidah-Kaidah Penafsiran Al-Qur'an," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, no. 2 (2016): 251, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v17i2.1291>.

<sup>25</sup> Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Uloomul Qur'an*. 56.

instance, there is a verse that says *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best"* (the Qur'an 16: 125). The words "wisdom" (*ḥikmah*) and "in a way that is best" are interpreted by al-Maḥalli and as-Suyūṭī, for instance, as referring to "the revelation of the Qur'an" and "engaging the opponent by presenting evidence, both from the Quran and other sources"<sup>26</sup>

Additional explanations in interpretation are intentionally provided by the interpreter to facilitate a better understanding of the intended meaning of the verse by the contemporary audience. Whether or not these explanations align exactly with the original intentions of the author of the text -in this case, Allah- is secondary. The main objective is to ensure that the meaning of the verse can be comprehended more easily by the contemporary audience.

Based on this elaboration, it should be underlined that, according to Gracia, the task of interpretation goes beyond merely explaining the text in accordance with the original intentions of the author. It involves providing understanding to the contemporary audience regarding the content of the text, making it more easily comprehensible for them. This is done by offering additional explanations from the interpreter. Due to these tasks, Gracia's hermeneutics is often classified as an 'objective-cum-subjective' approach. On one hand, Gracia aims to uphold the objectivity of the text by maintaining its historical meaning, but on the other hand, he also seeks to provide further elucidation of the text to ensure its relevance to the contemporary audience. Consequently, this inevitably affects the subjective value of the text.

The task of interpretation is further formulated by Gracia into three specific functions of interpretation, namely: 1) the historical function, 2) the meaning function, and 3) the implicative function.

Historical function, as explained by Gracia in "A Theory of Textuality" aims to re-create in the contemporary audience the act of understanding of the historical author and historical audience of the historical text."<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, meaning function aims to create in contemporary audience acts of understanding warranted by the meaning of the text, whether such acts were or were not had either by the author or historical audience of the text."<sup>28</sup> Whereas implicative function aims to produce in contemporary audience acts of understanding

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<sup>26</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Mahalli and Abd ar-Rahman bin Abu Bakar as-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Adhim* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1991). 199.

<sup>27</sup> Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*. 153-154.

<sup>28</sup> Gracia. 160.

whereby those audiences understand the implications of the meaning of the text.”<sup>29</sup>

The three functions as mentioned can be applied to the interpretation of texts as a whole, including the text of the Qur'an. For instance, there is a verse about the commandment to treat parents kindly, which states *"And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy"* (the Qur'an 17: 24). This verse is then interpreted by scholars like al-Qurṭūbi, for instance, as indicating that the attitude of humility mentioned in this verse includes being polite, gentle, and showing other acts of kindness.<sup>30</sup> In more detail, it could also encompass speaking respectfully, refraining from using foul language, avoiding rebuking or even physically harming them. When connected to the three functions of Gracia's interpretation, the historical function encompasses the historical meaning as indicated by the interpretandum (the interpreted verse), which is the act of humbling oneself before both parents. The meaning function involves the various interpretans (additional explanations) provided by the interpreter, in this case, al-Qurṭūbi, to enhance the understanding of the text for the contemporary audience. This includes aspects such as being polite, gentle, speaking respectfully, avoiding harsh language, refraining from rebuking or physically harming parents. As for the implicative function, it represents the implied meaning that arises from the interpretation itself. In this case, it can be seen from the stage of *"istinbāt al-ḥukm"* (deducing the law) in the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which highlights the obligation or duty to always humble oneself before parents, including treating them well, being polite, gentle, speaking respectfully, avoiding harsh language, rebuking, physical harm, and other respectful behaviors based on the principle of *"al-aṣl fī al-amr li al-wujūb"* (the default ruling of a command is obligation).

Although these three functions of interpretation broadly cover the two dimensions of historical and contemporary interpretation, the emergence of these functions does not come without any challenges. Instead, it raises a new problem known as *"the interpreter's dilemma,"* as identified by Gracia. On one hand, if an interpreter provides additional explanations in their interpretation, they may distort the original text, but on the other hand, if they refrain from providing additional explanations, it becomes nearly impossible for them to facilitate understanding for the contemporary audience to comprehend the interpreted text. This is due to the vast temporal gap between the time of interpretation and the

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<sup>29</sup> Gracia. 154.

<sup>30</sup> Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, *Mabāhīs Fī Uḥūm Al-Qur'an* (Riyad: Mansyurat al-Asr al-Hadis, 1973). 251.

time of the text's creation, as well as the significant differences in culture and historical context between the two periods.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, when an interpreter provides additional information, it significantly influences the subjectivity and objectivity of the interpretation's outcomes. This means that an interpretation will be considered "highly subjective" if the interpreter pays little attention to the text being interpreted and the historical factors that play a role in determining the meaning of the text. On the other hand, an interpretation will be regarded as "highly objective" if, in that interpretation, historical texts (interpretandum) and the determining factors of historical meaning are prioritized.

In summary, the interpreter's dilemma poses challenges regarding the distortion of the text through additional explanations, the difficulty of conveying the intended meaning to the contemporary audience, the temporal and contextual gaps between the interpreter and the author of the text, and the impact on the subjective and objective aspects of interpretation.

Gracia indeed recognized this dilemma. Therefore, in order to this issue, he proposed a concept known as 'the Principle of Proportional Understanding.' This principle suggests that in interpretation, the amount, ratio, and quantity of understanding possessed by the contemporary audience should be proportionate to the amount, ratio, and quantity of understanding possessed by the historical audience.<sup>32</sup> This means that the interpreter should strive to achieve a balanced understanding between the historical context and the contemporary context. The goal is to bridge the temporal and cultural gaps by ensuring that the contemporary audience comprehends the text to a similar degree as the historical audience did. By applying the Principle of Proportional Understanding, the interpreter aims to maintain the integrity of the historical meaning while also making the text relevant and accessible to the contemporary audience. This principle emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between historical accuracy and contemporary relevance in the interpretation process.

Indeed, regardless of the dilemma faced by interpreters in the interpretation process, the three functions of Gracia's interpretation, namely historical function, meaning function, and implicative function, can still be valuable in the interpretation of the Qur'an, which has traditionally been dominated by classical interpretive models. By utilizing Gracia's concept of interpretation, the understanding of the Qur'anic text goes beyond the literal level

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<sup>31</sup> Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Uloomul Qur'an*. 57.

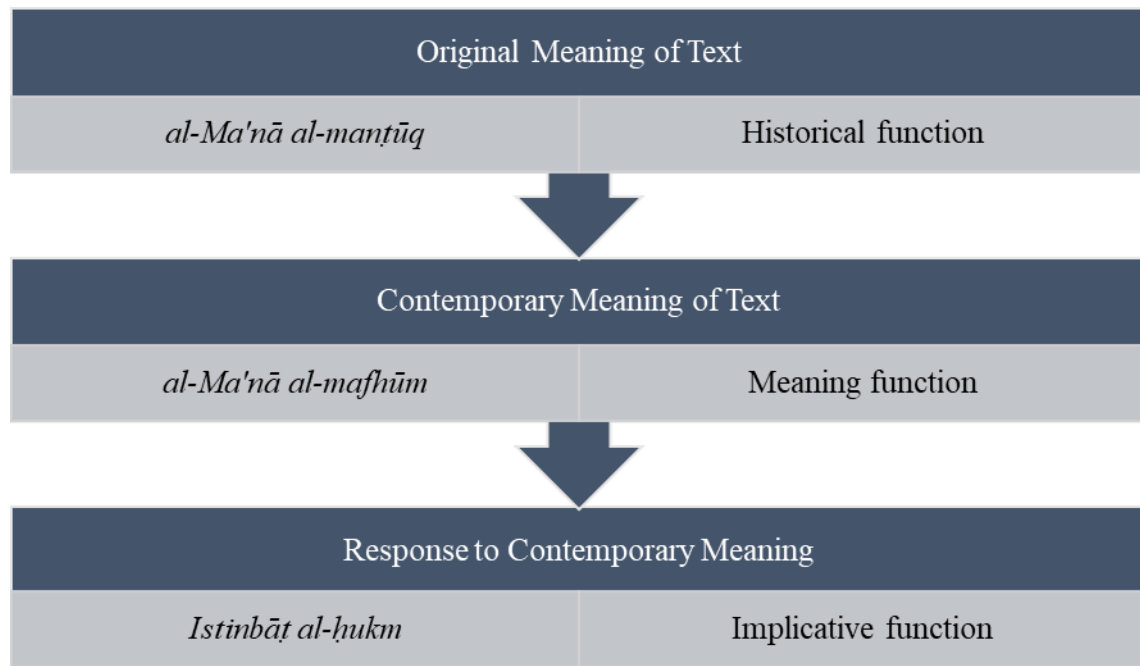
<sup>32</sup> Syamsuddin. 57.

and delves into deeper and more detailed meanings. As a result, the Qur'an does not remain static or limited to a particular point in time, but rather becomes dynamic and relevant in every era. It enables interpreters to explore the multifaceted meanings and implications of the text, taking into account historical, cultural, and contemporary contexts. This approach ensures that the Qur'an remains relevant and applicable to different times and societies.

### The Correlation Between Uṣūl al-Fiqh's *al-Mantūq wa al-Mafhūm* and Gracia's Hermeneutics

There are several other Qur'an's verses -particularly those related to law- that are worth examining and interpreting using the classical methods of *al-mantūq* and *al-mafhūm*, and then combining them with the modern interpretive model of Gracia's hermeneutics. By employing both of these interpretive models, the meaning of the text can be discovered, and therefore, the engagement of Qur'anic sciences can be understood specifically.

In this regard, I have found that there are similarities in term of the essence of both theories, namely in the conception of *al-mantūq wa al-mafhūm* in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the three functions of Gracia's hermeneutics. In this sense, both conceptions are used to determine the original meaning of the text. The first model of interpretation employs the concept of *al-ma'nā al-mantūq*, while the second model uses the "historical function." Similarly, both conceptions can also be used to produce new contemporary meanings in accordance with developments. The first model of interpretation utilizes the concept of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*, while the second model employs the "meaning function." Lastly, based on these new contemporary meanings, certain response can be conducted for the present time. In this case, the first model of interpretation falls under the category of *istinbāt al-ḥukm* which leads to stipulating Islamic law, while the second model falls under the implicative function.



In order to elaborate the conception of this rendezvous of Qur'anic sciences from both perspectives, namely *al-manṭūq wa al-mafhūm* of uṣūl al-fiqh and the three functions of Gracia's hermeneutics, herewith I would deliver some cases of the Qur'an and analyze it by applying both concepts simultaneously so the conception of the engagement can be understood comprehensively.

Verse One: An-Nisā': 10.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا.

"Indeed, those who unjustly consume the wealth of orphans are actually swallowing fire into their bellies, and they will enter a blazing fire (Hell)."

This verse explains the punishment for those who wrongfully take the wealth that rightfully belongs to orphans. If they indeed do so unjustly, then the Qur'an clearly states that they will certainly go to Hell. In other words, through the use of informative language (*al-kalām al-khabari*), the Qur'an intends to command Muslim community not to engage in such behavior. This understanding can be derived because expressions of demand, including commands and prohibitions, can be conveyed through direct expressive language (*al-kalām al-insyā'i*) or informative language (*al-kalām al-khabari*) with the intention of command.<sup>33</sup> As for the reasons of revelation (*asbāb an-nuzūl*) of this verse, I have not found them explicitly stated. However, it is highly likely that they are closely related to the culture of the Arabs in the past, who were fond of giving wealth to

<sup>33</sup> Mustafa al-Gulayaini, *Jami' Ad-Durus Al-Arabiyyah* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Asriyyah, 1987). 197.



their eldest sons, hoping that they would be able to preserve the honor and legacy of their fathers.<sup>34</sup>

This verse literally commands the Muslim community not to wrongfully take the wealth of orphans, as the consequence is going to Hell. This literal meaning is none other than *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* from the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, as it is the original meaning explicitly indicated by its structure and can be readily understood as it was revealed. This meaning aligns with Gracia's "historical function," considering that the function of this meaning is to recreate the understanding held by the original author of the text and the historical audience in the minds of contemporary audiences, as demonstrated by the literal meaning of the interpretandum itself. In other words, from a historical function standpoint, the text simply addresses the prohibition of taking the wealth of orphans. However, the specific modes of taking that wealth are not explicitly explained in the text. Contemporary audiences require an interpretant to better understand the intended meaning of the text. This is where the "meaning function" plays a significant role. It means that in interpreting the interpretandum, an interpreter can, or even should, provide an interpretant to enable contemporary audiences to better understand it. For instance, al-Qaṭṭān explains that taking the wealth of orphans refers to any action that removes the wealth from its original owner,<sup>35</sup> such as burning it, squandering it, discarding it, stealing it, and so on, regardless of whether this meaning is precisely what the original author, Allah in this case, intended - regardless of the Islamic belief that Allah knows all things. This interpretant falls under the "meaning function." Based on the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, this explanatory meaning is considered within the area of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* since it is not explicitly explained in the text but can be understood implicitly. As for the "implicative function" of this verse, it can be seen from the implications of its meaning as understood by contemporary audiences, which means that Muslims are prohibited from taking the wealth that rightfully belongs to orphans, including burning, spending, squandering, discarding, stealing, and so on. In the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, this implicative conclusion is obtained through the process of *istinbāt al-ḥukm* based on the principle of *al-aṣl fi al-amr li al-wujūb*.

Verse Two: An-Nisā': 58

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا.

<sup>34</sup> Ismail bin Umar bin Kasir al-Quraisyi, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim* (Beirut: Dar Tayyibah li an-Nasyar wa at-Tauzi', 1999). 219.

<sup>35</sup> Manna' Khalil al-Qattan, *Mabahis Fi Ullum Al-Qur'an*. 253.

*"Indeed, Allah commands you to fulfill trusts to their rightful owners" (the Qur'an 4: 58).*

In general, this verse explains that Allah commands all Muslims to constantly uphold trustworthiness and maintain mutual trust. The use of the word "commands" (أمر) indicates that the obligation to maintain trust is strongly emphasized, especially since this word is directly attributed to Allah as the original author of the text. Although specifically, this verse was revealed in the context of entrusting the key of the Kaaba to Uṣmān bin Ṭalḥah,<sup>36</sup> it does not necessarily mean that the meaning of this verse is limited to that particular event. Instead, it applies to all times and events (*al-'ibar bi 'umūm al-lafz, la bi khuṣūṣ as-sabab*), encompassing the broader meaning beyond the specific incident.

The explicit meaning conveyed by the verse, which is the command to maintain mutual trust, is considered *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq* from the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. This meaning aligns with Gracia's "historical function" considering that the meaning conveyed by the interpretandum is intended to create an understanding held by the original author of the text, in this case, Allah, as well as the historical audience at the time the text was revealed. The command to uphold trust is indeed global as it can manifest in various concrete actions. That is why some classical interpreters have provided interpretations in their explanations. For instance, Ibn Taimiyyah explained that implicitly, the verse also pertains to various issues that can undermine or erode the trust of others, such as deception or borrowing money from others but not returning it. These actions are part of the overall elements that contribute to the meaning of maintaining trust as intended above.<sup>37</sup> In the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, Ibn Taimiyyah's explanation of the text falls under *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm* since it is not explicitly indicated by the structure of the text but is implicitly implied. The explanations provided by Ibn Taimiyyah and other interpreters by giving such interpretations can facilitate contemporary audiences in understanding the text, regardless of whether the explanation is exactly the same as what the original author intended or not. This understanding is referred to as the "meaning function" by Gracia. Furthermore, after understanding the explicit and implicit meanings of the verse, the audience becomes aware of the implications of that understanding; they are required to uphold trust through various actions that can influence it, as indicated by *al-*

<sup>36</sup> Al-Wahidi, "Asbab Nuzul Al-Qur'an," [www.alwarraq.com](http://www.alwarraq.com), n.d. 55.

<sup>37</sup> Ahmad bin Abd al-Halim bin Abd as-Salam bin Abdullah Ibn Taimiyyah, "Usul Al-Fiqh," [alwaqfeya.com](http://alwaqfeya.com), n.d. 135.

ma'nā al-mafhūm, which in uṣūl al-fiqh requires a process of istinbāṭ al-ḥukm first. This implicational understanding falls under the "implicative function" in Gracia's hermeneutics.

These cases are just a few examples of Quranic verses that can be subjected to the applicative combination of the concepts of *al-maṭṭūq* (expressed meaning) and *al-mafhūm* (implied meaning) in uṣūl al-fiqh with the three functions of Gracia's hermeneutics. It is possible that further research can be conducted to discover more detailed and comprehensive meanings, especially considering the contemporary era we live in. Moreover, by examining these cases, we finally see that there is a sort of engagement in Qur'anic sciences, which means that some discussions as well as topics within sciences that focus on Qur'an's verses and the interpretation of Qur'an have similar substance (a meeting point) between those respective disciplines. This does not only mean that Qur'anic sciences have a similar substance with respective point of views, but also have a possibility to enlarge as well as to complete each other's perspectives so we can discover a more detailed and comprehensive result in the future regarding the Qur'anic studies.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that *tafsir* and *ta'wil* is not an obsolete method of interpreting the holy Qur'an in this contemporer period, even though some contemporer Muslim scholars said that *tafsir* and *ta'wil* needs to be modified to be accord with the spirit of or even to be altered with hermeneutics. Two methods originating from two different worlds, namely the concept of *al-maṭṭūq wa al-mafhūm* from the perspective of uṣūl al-fiqh and the three functions of Gracia's hermeneutics have exhibited how the former has perspective richer than that of the latter, even though both have similar procedurs to be followed in order to discover contemporary meaning of the holy Qur'an for contemporary audiences.

The concept of *al-maṭṭūq* refers to the meaning derived from the literal wording of the text, while *al-mafhūm* refers to the meaning derived from something that is definitely present but not explicitly indicated by the wording. As for Gracia's conception of hermeneutics, it encompasses three elements that must be present in interpretation: the interpreter, the interpretandum, and the interpretans. According to Gracia, the general function of interpretation is to create understanding of the text being interpreted in the minds of contemporary audiences. He further breaks down this general function into three interpretative functions: the historical function, which aims to recreate the understanding held by the original author and historical audience in the minds of contemporary

audiences; the meaning function, which aims to create an understanding in the minds of contemporary audiences that can help them grasp and develop the meaning of the text, regardless of whether that meaning is exactly the same as intended by the original author or not; and the implicative function, which aims to elicit an understanding in the minds of contemporary audiences so that they comprehend the implications of the interpreted text.

Based on this research, I have identified three important points related to the above-mentioned models of interpretation. Firstly, both conceptions as offered by these models can be used to determine the original meaning of the text. The first model of interpretation employs the concept of *al-ma'nā al-manṭūq*, while the second model uses the historical function. Secondly, both conceptions can also be used to produce new meanings in accordance with developments. The first model of interpretation utilizes the concept of *al-ma'nā al-mafhūm*, while the second model employs the meaning function. Thirdly, from these new meanings, wisdom or relevant laws can be derived for the present time. The first model of interpretation falls under the category of *istinbāṭ al-ḥukm*, while the second model falls under the implicative function.

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