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Conceptualizing the Quran as a Weighty Word: An Analysis of *Qaulan Tsaqila* in *Tafsir Al-Lubab fi 'Ulum al-Kitab*

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Abstract

This study aims to conceptualize the Qur'an as a "weighty word" (*qaulan tsaqila*) through an analysis of Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5 in Ibn 'Adil's *Tafsir Al-Lubab*. This study employs a library research approach with a descriptive-analytical method, focusing on the interpretation of *qaulan tsaqila* and the various meanings compiled by Ibn 'Adil. The topic is significant because the expression *qaulan tsaqila* has been interpreted in diverse ways within the classical exegetical tradition, indicating a multilayered understanding of the "weightiness" of divine revelation. The findings show that Ibn 'Adil presents four principal interpretations of *qaulan tsaqila*: the command of night prayer (*qiyam al-layl*), revelation, the declaration of monotheism (*kalimah tauhid*), and the Quran itself. These interpretations represent complementary forms of *ikhtilaf tanawwu'* rather than mutually exclusive meanings. Furthermore, the interpretation of the Qur'an as *qaulan tsaqila* encompasses seven major dimensions: the normative burden of religious obligations, its confrontational weight for those who reject the truth, the authority and majesty of the Divine Word, the spiritual and psychological readiness required to receive revelation, its blessings in this world and the hereafter, the enduring nature of the Quran's miracle, and the inexhaustible breadth of its meanings. These findings conceptualize the Qur'an as a "weighty word" whose weight signifies not merely difficulty, but also responsibility, authority, blessing, permanence, and profound meaning. The study contributes to thematic Qur'anic studies by demonstrating the relevance of the classical method of *jam' al-aqwal* for developing a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of Qur'anic concepts.

Keywords: Qur'anic Studies, *Qaulan Tsaqila*, Weighty Word, *Tafsir Al-Lubab*, Qur'anic Interpretation.

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INTRODUCTION

The language of the Quran plays a significant role, as every word choice conveys profound theological, spiritual, and pedagogical meanings. One of the powerful expressions in the Quran is the term *qaulan tsaqila* in Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5: “Indeed, We shall send down to you a weighty word.”⁴ Classical exegetes have offered various interpretations of the meaning of “weighty” as intended in this verse.⁵ The diversity of interpretations indicates that the term cannot be understood in a single sense, but rather requires an exegetical approach capable of accommodating the breadth of meanings contained within it.

In classical tafsir, differences and variations in the meanings of a verse are often understood as a richness of intellectual heritage in which various interpretations complement one another and represent the breadth of meaning inherent in revelation itself. This approach is particularly evident in encyclopedic tafsir works that systematically compile the views of earlier scholars.⁶ One prominent work in this category is *Tafsir Al-Lubab*, written by Ibn Adil, an eighth-century Hijri exegete from Damascus.⁷ With its strong linguistic approach and method of *jam' al-aqwal*, *Tafsir Al-Lubab* functions not merely as a compilation of opinions, but also as an intellectual map that records the dynamics of classical exegetical thought.⁸

A thematic analysis of a key Quranic concept or term has considerable potential to produce a comprehensive and multilayered understanding of its meaning.⁹ This study begins with the premise that the term *qaulan tsaqila* does not merely describe “weight” in a literal sense, but reflects the complexity of the responsibility associated with revelation.¹⁰ In this context, investigating the meaning of *qaulan tsaqila* is particularly relevant, especially for identifying the diversity of its interpretations and subsequently presenting a broad and complementary synthesis of meaning within a coherent conceptual framework.

This study focuses on Ibn Adil’s interpretation of Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5 in *Tafsir Al-Lubab*. More specifically, it aims to identify the various meanings attributed to *qaulan tsaqila*, map and analyze each interpretation, and formulate the

⁴ Quran, al-Muzzammil [73]:5.

⁵ Abu Ja’far al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan ‘an Ta’wil Ay al-Qur’an* (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 2000), 23:674; Isma’il Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azhim* (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jauzi, 1431 H), 7:405-407; Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1999), 30:179.

⁶ Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir* (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1993), 35-36; Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2000), 1:57-60; A. Sholahudin Akhyar, et al., *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Tafsir* (Penerbit Lakeisha, 2026).

⁷ Umar ibn Ali Ibn ‘Adil, *al-Lubab fi ‘Ulum al-Kitab* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah).

⁸ Muhammad Abd al-Rahman al-Shayi’, “Ibn ‘Adil wa Tafsiruhu al-Lubab” *Majallat Jami’at al-Imam Muhammad ibn Saud al-Islamiyyah*, no. 17 (1417 H): 15.

⁹ Abu Abd Allah al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami’ li Ahkam al-Qur’an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2006), 19:34; al-Husayn ibn Mas’ud al-Baghawi, *Ma’alim al-Tanzil* (Riyadh: Dar Tayyibah, 1997), 8:246; Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, *al-Bahr al-Muhit* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), 8:380.

¹⁰ Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawi, *al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Mawdu’i* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jumhuriyyah, 1977), 19-20.

conceptual dimensions that emerge from interpretations of the Quran as a “weighty word.” This study also seeks to affirm the relevance of classical tafsir methodology based on the compilation of exegetical opinions for contemporary Quranic studies. Amid the tendency of modern scholarship to emphasize approaches centered on a single meaning, the method of *jam’ al-aqwal* offers a model of synthesis capable of accommodating interpretive plurality without eliminating the unity of meaning.¹¹ Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the enrichment of thematic Quranic studies, particularly in understanding the concept of human responsibility as the recipient of revelation.

Ultimately, this study is not limited to describing the meanings of *qaulan tsaqila*, but also situates the term within a broader reflection on the relationship between revelation and human life. By systematically examining Ibn Adil’s interpretation, this study is expected to open a space for dialogue between the classical tafsir heritage and the needs of contemporary religious understanding. This approach further emphasizes that the depth of the Quran’s meanings remains relevant to be explored across generations, in accordance with humanity’s ongoing efforts to understand and implement the Divine message in an ever-changing life.

METHOD

This study employs library research using a descriptive-qualitative approach, focusing on the analysis of tafsir texts. The primary data source is *Tafsir Al-Lubab* by Ibn Adil, particularly its interpretation of Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5. Secondary data sources include classical tafsir works, hadith literature, and relevant scholarly studies addressing the theme of *qaulan tsaqila*.

Data were collected through documentation and systematic textual examination. The data were analyzed using content analysis of the tafsir text through the following steps: (1) identifying the various interpretations of *qaulan tsaqila* in *Al-Lubab*; (2) classifying the differences of opinion that emerge; (3) thematically analyzing the concept of the Quran as *qaulan tsaqila*; and (4) developing a reflective synthesis of its theological implications. This approach was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the construction of the meaning of *qaulan tsaqila* within the discourse of contemporary Islamic studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of Ibn Adil al-Hanbali

Imam Ibn Adil is known by his full name, Abu Hafs Siraj al-Din Umar ibn Ali ibn Adil al-Hanbali al-Dimashqi al-Numani. The nisbah *al-Hanbali* indicates his affiliation with the Hanbali school of jurisprudence, while *al-Dimashqi* indicates his

¹¹ Ibtisam al-Saffar, *Mu’jam al-Dirasat al-Qur’aniyyah*, 332; Nur Haqim, et al., 2025. “Sejarah Perkembangan Tafsir Pada Periode Modern”. *Hamalatul Qur’an : Jurnal Ilmu Alqur’an* 6 (1):175-83; Ahmad Agus Salim, and Hazmi Ihkamuddin. 2022. “Telaah Perkembangan Tafsir Periode Modern”. *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* 4 (2):95-106.

association with Damascus as the city where he was born and resided. Meanwhile, the nisbah *al-Numani* refers either to a place known as Numan or to a lineage tracing back to the Companion Numan ibn Bashir.¹² The exact dates of Ibn Adil's birth and death are not clearly established in the classical literature. Some reports place his death around 880 H, although this report is considered weak. Based on biographical information concerning his teachers and students, his lifetime is more plausibly estimated to have spanned from the late seventh to the late eighth century AH, approximately 675–775 H. Ibn Adil may therefore be classified among the prominent scholars of the eighth century Hijria.¹³

Damascus, Syria, was the principal city where Ibn Adil pursued his scholarly education. Among his notable teachers was Imam Ibn al-Shihnah al-Najjar (d. 730 H). In terms of jurisprudential affiliation, Ibn Adil was a Hanbali scholar and adhered to the theological principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah. His scholarly expertise was broad and profound, particularly in the fields of hadith and tafsir. Among his students was the well-known scholar Imam Nur al-Din al-Haythami (d. 807 H).¹⁴ His most significant surviving scholarly legacy is the monumental tafsir entitled *Al-Lubab*, which demonstrates his extensive mastery of the Arabic language, qiraat, hadith, jurisprudence, and the Quranic sciences. This work reflects the depth of his intellectual engagement with tafsir and testifies to his long-standing scholarly dedication, with its compilation presumably taking several decades. Ibn Adil is therefore regarded as one of the influential exegetes of Damascus during the eighth century Hijria.¹⁵

2. Profile of Tafsir *Al-Lubab*

Ibn Adil's tafsir is entitled *Al-Lubab fi 'Ulum al-Kitab*, meaning "The Essence of the Sciences of the Quran." It was first published in 1998 in 20 Arabic volumes by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, with a total length of more than 11,000 pages.¹⁶ Based on its introduction and the discussions in the opening chapters, the following are the main characteristics of *Al-Lubab*:

- a. Compilation method of tafsir (*jam' aqwal*): The introduction states that the work brings together the views of various scholars concerning the interpretation of the Quran. This demonstrates that the tafsir has an integrative and encyclopedic character, incorporating a wide range of interpretations from earlier exegetes.

¹² Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *al-A'lam*, 5:58; Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Adanawi, *Tabaqat al-Mufasssin*, 418.

¹³ Muhammad ibn Ali al-Dawudi, *Nayl al-Sa'irin fi Tabaqat al-Mufasssin*, 243; Umar Rida Kahlala, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin*, 2:568.

¹⁴ Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, ed. Abd al-Aziz al-Jundi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah), 5:339; Carl Brockelmann, *Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabi*, 6:466.

¹⁵ Haji Khalifa, *Kashf al-Zunun*, 2:1543; Isma'il Basha al-Baghdadi, *Hadiyyat al-'Arifin*, 1:794.

¹⁶ Umar ibn Ali Ibn 'Adil, *al-Lubab fi 'Ulum al-Kitab* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah), 1:1-21 (muqaddimah).

- b. Linguistic approach (*lughawi*): Ibn Adil pays considerable attention to linguistic aspects, including etymology (*isytiqaq*) and grammatical analysis (*I'rab*). The work contains specific sections discussing the origins of words, their grammatical functions, and aspects of *balaghah*.
- c. Ahl al-Hadith exegetical orientation (*Hanbali*): Ibn Adil's scholarly character, reflected in his careful and extensive use of transmitted sources, led him to pay close attention to attributing opinions to his teachers and to the reference manuscripts available in his time. He subsequently synthesized these materials within the comprehensive structure of his tafsir.
- d. Balanced use of exegetical sources: *Al-Lubab* can be classified as a tafsir based on transmitted reports (*bil matsur*), particularly in its presentation of transmitted material without complete chains of transmission, while also employing reasoned interpretation (*bil rayi*) through a strong and detailed linguistic approach.

The principal distinctive features of Ibn Adil's *Al-Lubab fi 'Ullum al-Kitab* in comparison with other tafsir works can be summarized in several aspects:

- a. Extensive scholarly coverage: Consistent with its full title, *Al-Lubab fi 'Ullum al-Kitab* ("The Essence of the Sciences of the Quran"), the work does not merely interpret Quranic verses but also incorporates various branches of Quranic sciences in considerable depth.
- b. Integration of *Al-Durr al-Masun*: One of its most notable features is Ibn Adil's incorporation of the entire contents of *Al-Durr al-Masun* by al-Samin al-Halabi into his tafsir. *Al-Durr al-Masun* itself is an authoritative reference in the field of *irab* (grammatical analysis) and the linguistic study of the Quran.¹⁷
- c. Precision and long-term scholarly dedication: Several sources indicate that the processes of collecting, writing, copying, and preparing the final manuscript (*tabyid*) required extraordinary intellectual dedication and an extensive period of time, reportedly more than twenty years.¹⁸
- d. Systematic structure: Despite its considerable length, the tafsir is organized concisely into short and highly specific sections (*fusul*) addressing particular themes. These range from the meanings of Quranic verses and qiraat to jurisprudential, philosophical, and theological issues.

3. Interpretation of Surah al-Muzzammil Verse 5 in Tafsir *Al-Lubab*

Verse 5 of Surah al-Muzzammil can be fully understood by considering its position within the sequence of the opening verses of the surah. The verse occurs in the midst of repeated and intensive commands to perform *qiyam al-layl*, indicating a

¹⁷ Ahmad ibn Yusuf al-Samin al-Halabi, *al-Durr al-Masun fi 'Ullum al-Kitab al-Maknun* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994).

¹⁸ Abd al-Rahman al-Shay'i, "Ibn 'Adil wa Tafsiruhu al-Lubab" *Majallat Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad ibn Saud al-Islamiyyah*, no. 17 (1417 H): 15.

close semantic relationship between the Prophet's spiritual preparation and the command that he was about to receive. Allah the Exalted says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَرْمُلُ. فَمِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا. نَصَفَهُ أَوْ أَنْقَصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا. أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا. إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

"O you wrapped in garments, stand [in prayer] at night, except for a little – half of it, or subtract from it a little, or add to it. And recite the Quran with measured recitation. Indeed, We shall cast upon you a weighty word."¹⁹

This verse can be understood as a divine announcement to the Prophet Muhammad concerning the nature of his prophetic mission and the character of the revelation he was about to receive. In his *Al-Lubab*, Ibn Adil presents various interpretations of the meaning of *qaulan tsaqila* ("a weighty word") in this verse, as follows:

First interpretation: *Qaulan tsaqila*, or "a weighty word," refers to Allah's command in the preceding verses requiring the Prophet Muhammad to perform *qiyam al-layl*. It is described as weighty because carrying out this command requires strenuous spiritual effort and considerable exertion.²⁰

Second interpretation: *Qaulan tsaqila*, or "a weighty word," refers to revelation, with its "weight" signifying the intense and overwhelming state experienced by the Prophet when receiving revelation.²¹

Third interpretation: Ibn Adil cites al-Qushayri's view that *qaulan tsaqila*, or "a weighty word," refers to the declaration of faith (*kalimah tauhid*), *La ilaha illallah*. Although this declaration is easy and light to pronounce with the tongue, it is exceedingly weighty on the scale of deeds.²²

Fourth interpretation: The "weighty word" or *qaulan tsaqila* refers to the Quran itself. Regarding the meaning of *tsaqil* ("weighty") in relation to the Quran, Ibn Adil cites numerous views from the early scholars, explaining the meaning of "weighty" in the following ways:

- 1) *First meaning*: The Quran is weighty because of the obligation to implement all the laws and religious teachings contained within it.²³
- 2) *Second meaning*: Its weight lies in the obligations and legal boundaries prescribed within it.²⁴
- 3) *Third meaning*: Its weight refers to the halal and haram provisions contained in the Quran that must be observed.²⁵
- 4) *Fourth meaning*: Its weight lies in the obligation to put the teachings and contents of the Quran into practice.²⁶

¹⁹ Quran, Al-Muzzammil:1-5.

²⁰ Ibnu 'Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²¹ Ibnu 'Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460-461.

²² Ibnu 'Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:461.

²³ Tafsir of al-Muzzammil:5, Ibnu 'Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²⁴ The view of Qatadah. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²⁵ The view of Mujahid. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²⁶ The view of Hasan al-Basri. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

- 5) *Fifth meaning*: The Quran is weighty because it contains promises (*waad*) and warnings (*waid*), as well as rulings concerning what is lawful and unlawful.²⁷
- 6) *Sixth meaning*: The Quran is weighty for hypocrites because it exposes their secrets and undermines their false beliefs.²⁸
- 7) *Seventh meaning*: The Quran is weighty for unbelievers because its arguments refute their polytheism and condemn their idols.²⁹
- 8) *Eighth meaning*: Weight refers to honor and nobility, meaning that the Quran is noble, sacred, and honored. The term *tsaqil* can sometimes denote something noble and highly esteemed. In Arabic, the expression "*Fulan tsaqil alayya*" may indicate that a person is highly respected and valuable.³⁰
- 9) *Ninth meaning*: Weight signifies strength and authority. The term *tsaqil* may be understood in the sense of *razin*, meaning firm, substantial, dignified, and majestic.³¹
- 10) *Tenth meaning*: The Quran is described as weighty because it can only be borne by a heart granted guidance in monotheism and divine assistance (*tawfiq*). Revelation cannot be adequately carried except by a heart strengthened through divine guidance and a soul adorned with *tawhid*.³²
- 11) *Eleventh meaning*: Weight refers to blessing and the value of reward. The Quran is weighty because it is filled with blessings in this world and will make the scale of deeds heavy in the Hereafter.³³
- 12) *Twelfth meaning*: Weight signifies firmness and permanence. The Quranic miracle is everlasting and will never disappear. It remains firmly established, just as a heavy object remains firmly fixed in its place.³⁴
- 13) *Thirteenth meaning*: The Quran is described as weighty because of the vastness of its meanings, which can never be exhausted through interpretation. Ibn Adil emphasizes that human reason cannot encompass the entirety of the Quran's meanings at once. The theologians explore its rational dimensions, the jurists derive its legal rulings, scholars of language and grammar examine the beauty of its wording, and scholars of *balaghah* investigate the subtleties of its meanings. Yet every generation that follows continues to discover new insights and meanings that were not reached by previous generations. Therefore, the task of understanding the Quran can be likened to carrying a massive and exceedingly heavy mountain, something that cannot possibly be borne by a single person.³⁵

²⁷ The view of Abu Aliyah. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²⁸ The view of Muhammad ibn Kab. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

²⁹ Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

³⁰ The view of al-Suddi. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

³¹ The view of al-Farra'. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:460.

³² The view of al-Hasan ibn al-Fudayl. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:461.

³³ The view of Ibn Zayd. See Ibn Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:461.

³⁴ Ibnu 'Adil, *Al-Lubab*, 19:461.

³⁵ *Al-Lubab*, 19:461.

The various interpretations of *qaulan tsaqila* compiled in *Al-Lubab* demonstrate the breadth of the exegetical horizon inherited from classical Muslim scholars. In Ibn Adil's presentation, these interpretations are not presented as mutually exclusive meanings, but rather as a multilayered spectrum of meanings that complement one another. Therefore, an analytical and classificatory approach is necessary to understand this diversity systematically and to reveal the underlying conceptual patterns as an integrated whole.

4. The Meaning of *Qaulan Tsaqila* as the Command to Perform *Qiyam al-Layl*

In *Tafsir Al-Lubab*, Ibn Adil presents the first interpretation of the phrase *qaulan tsaqila* in QS al-Muzzammil verse 5 as referring to the command to perform *qiyam al-layl* mentioned in the preceding verses. This interpretation arises from the structural relationship between the verses within the sequence of commands concerning nighttime worship. Ibn Adil cites al-Zamakhshari, who explains that the verse constitutes a *jumlaḥ itiradh* (parenthetical statement) within the structure of the passage.³⁶ In Quranic rhetoric, such a parenthetical statement does not function as an isolated additional meaning, but rather serves to reinforce the meaning by explaining the reason underlying the preceding statement.³⁷ Thus, the verse functions as a *talil* (cause or rationale) for the preceding command, emphasizing why the Prophet was repeatedly instructed to rise during the night. Accordingly, the expression "a weighty word" specifically refers to the practical burden of the obligation to rise at night or perform *qiyam al-layl* mentioned earlier.

Qiyam al-layl is described as "weighty" because nighttime is naturally a period of tranquility, rest, and sleep. Going against this natural tendency requires considerable *mujahadah* (spiritual struggle) to resist drowsiness, discipline the body, and maintain consistency in worship amid the stillness of the night. From this perspective, the term *tsaqil* indicates the burden of the difficulty involved in religious practice (*mashaqqah al-amal*). This burden is not merely physical, but also concerns the heart and soul, as it requires earnestness, patience, and spiritual readiness to remain standing for extended periods in worship.

This interpretation emphasizes the close relationship between spiritual preparation and the prophetic mission. *Qiyam al-layl* is viewed as a form of spiritual training that prepares the Prophet to bear the weight of the *risalah*. Thus, "a weighty word" can be understood as an initial stage in the formation of spiritual resilience before the Prophet undertook the broader responsibilities of preaching and conveying the divine message. This interpretation highlights a contextual approach that connects the meaning of the verse to the preceding sequence of commands,

³⁶ Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kasysyaf 'an Haqa'iq Ghawamid al-Tanzil* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2009), 4:638.

³⁷ Ibnu Hisyam al-Anshari, *Mughni al-Labib 'an Kutub al-A'arib* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1998), 1:214-216.

thereby understanding *qaulan tsaqila* as a burden of worship that serves as the foundation for prophetic preparedness.

5. The Meaning of *Qaulan Tsaqila* as Revelation

In the second interpretation, Ibn Adil understands *qaulan tsaqila* as referring to revelation. This interpretation is based on hadith reports and narrations describing the profound difficulty experienced by the Prophet when receiving revelation. In a narration transmitted by Zayd ibn Thabit, he relates that when revelation descended while the Prophet's thigh was resting on his own, he felt the Prophet's thigh become extremely heavy, as though the weight would crush or break his own thigh.³⁸

The Prophet also explained that revelation would sometimes come in the form of the sound of a bell (*salsalat al-jaras*), which was the most difficult form of revelation for him. The intensity of this experience was such that the Prophet described feeling as though his life were being taken away whenever revelation descended. The severity of the experience was also evident in his physical condition after the revelation had ceased. Even when revelation descended on an extremely cold day, the Prophet's forehead would be covered with profuse sweat immediately after the revelation ended.³⁹

The weight of revelation was not experienced by human beings alone but was also manifested in animals. Reports state that when revelation descended while the Prophet was riding his camel, the animal would lower its neck toward the ground under the weight and become unable to move until the revelation had ended.⁴⁰ These narrations demonstrate that revelation was not merely the transmission of a message, but a profound spiritual event accompanied by intense physical effects and extraordinary pressure upon the Messenger and even his immediate surroundings. At the same time, the weight of revelation also suggests the profound significance of revelation itself as the trust of the great prophetic mission that had to be borne and conveyed to humanity.

6. The Meaning of *Qaulan Tsaqila* as the *Kalimah Tauhid*

Ibn Adil cites a third interpretation that understands "the weighty word" as the *Kalimah Tauhid*, because although it is light and easy to utter, it possesses immense value in the sight of Allah. Numerous hadith reports mention the great value and virtue of the *Kalimah Tauhid*, including the following:

لَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَقُولُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ إِلَّا بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَجْهَهُ كَالْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ وَلَمْ يُرْفَعْ لِأَحَدٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَمَلٌ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ قَالَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِ أَوْ زَادَ.

"No servant says *La ilaha illa Allah* one hundred times except that Allah will raise him on the Day of Resurrection with a face shining like the full moon. On that day, no deed

³⁸ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azhim*, 7:406.

³⁹ Haidith of Ahmad, no. 7071; Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azhim*, 7:406.

⁴⁰ Hadith of Ahmad, no. 24868; Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azhim*, 7:406; Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 2:505.

will be raised that is more virtuous than his deed, except that of someone who says the same or says more.”⁴¹

This hadith emphasizes that whoever repeatedly recites it will be raised with a radiant face, and that on that day no deed will be more virtuous than his deed except that of one who recites it as many times or more. This description demonstrates that “weight” does not necessarily refer to physical difficulty, but may also signify the greatness of value and the magnitude of reward. The meaning of “weight” is further emphasized in a hadith stating that if the seven heavens and the seven earths were placed on one side of a scale and the *La ilaha illa Allah* were placed on the other, the *Kalimah Tauhid* would outweigh them. The Prophet said:

لَوْ أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعَ وَ عَامِرُ هُنَّ غَيْرِي وَالْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ جُعِلَتْ فِي كِفَّةٍ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فِي كِفَّةٍ لَمَأَلَتْ بِهِنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

“If the seven heavens and all their inhabitants – other than me – and the seven earths were placed on one side of a scale, and La ilaha illa Allah were placed on the other, La ilaha illa Allah would outweigh them.”⁴²

This hadith emphasizes the theological weight of the *Kalimah Tauhid* as the foundation of the entire Islamic teaching. The *Kalimah Tauhid* is the foundation of faith, a means of salvation from the Hellfire, and a cause for entering Paradise for those who make it the final statement of their lives. The Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ عَلَى النَّارِ مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَتَنَعَّى بِذَلِكَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ.

“Indeed, Allah has forbidden the Hellfire for whoever says La ilaha illa Allah, seeking thereby the Face of Allah.”⁴³

مَنْ كَانَ آخِرُ كَلَامِهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

“Whoever’s final words are La ilaha illa Allah will enter Paradise.”⁴⁴

Thus, the meaning of “weight” in relation to the *Kalimah Tauhid* is associated with an eschatological dimension: it is weighty on the scale of deeds and has profound consequences for salvation in the Hereafter. Furthermore, another hadith indicates that the *Kalimah Tauhid* is the most virtuous form of remembrance. The hadith states:

أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

“The best form of remembrance is La ilaha illa Allah.”⁴⁵

The numerous virtues and merits of the *Kalimah Tauhid* mentioned in hadith explain why some scholars interpret *qaulan tsaqila* as referring to the *Kalimah Tauhid*. This is because the *Kalimah Tauhid* represents the core of all deeds, the source of sincerity, and the central orientation of worship. Its “weight” carries profound

⁴¹ Abd al-‘Azim al-Mundhiri, *al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib*, 2:272.

⁴² Hadith of Ibnu Hibban, no. 6218.

⁴³ Hadith of Bukhari, no.425 dan Muslim, no 33.

⁴⁴ Hadith of Abu Dawud, no. 3116.

⁴⁵ Hadith of Tirmidzi, no. 3800.

consequences for faith, sincerity, and salvation in the Hereafter. This exegetical interpretation thus highlights the moral-theological dimension of the term *tsaqil*: it is weighty on the scale of deeds on the Day of Resurrection and possesses immense value in the sight of Allah.

7. The Concept of the Quran as *Qaulan Tsaqila* (A Weighty Word)

The fourth interpretation compiled by Ibn Adil asserts that *qaulan tsaqila* in Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5 refers directly to the Quran itself. Ibn Adil then explains that the “weight” of the Quran does not constitute a single meaning, but rather represents a multidimensional concept encompassing a broad and comprehensive range of meanings. Based on an analysis of the thirteen interpretations compiled in *Al-Lubab*, the Quran as *qaulan tsaqila* can be conceptualized through the following seven dimensions:

a. Normative-Tashri Dimension (The Burden of Religious Obligations)

This dimension demonstrates that the weight of the Quran does not end with the moment of revelation but continues through the obligation to implement its teachings. Revelation is not merely something to be heard or recited; it must be embodied in real life, and this is where the weight of the Quran becomes manifest. A believer, for example, is not merely expected to admire verses concerning honesty, but must also bear the social consequences of choosing honesty even when it is difficult and personally burdensome.⁴⁶ Thus, “weight” in this context refers to the burden of life transformation demanded by the Quran.

The same applies to verses concerning obligations, legal boundaries, commands and prohibitions, lawful and unlawful matters, as well as promises and warnings. The Shariah does not merely provide guidance but also establishes clear boundaries that must be observed. Its weight becomes apparent when human beings must restrain themselves from what is prohibited or fulfill obligations that require sacrifice. Examples include the obligation to perform prayer on time, zakat, which entails giving up part of one’s wealth, and the prohibition of *riba*, which may require changes in one’s personal economic practices. Promises of reward and warnings of punishment also add a psychological dimension to this weight, as human beings live with an awareness of the consequences of their actions in the Hereafter.⁴⁷ Thus, the weight of the Quran encompasses the moral, legal, and spiritual responsibilities embedded in its verses.

b. Confrontational-Sociological Dimension (The Weight of the Quran for Those Who Reject Truth)

This dimension highlights how the weight of the Quran is experienced differently by different groups of people. For hypocrites, the Quran is weighty

⁴⁶ Evi Febriani, Citra Oktaviani, and Muhamad Kumaidi. "Pendidikan Akhlak Perspektif Al-Qur'an." *Jurnal Syntax Admiration* 5, no. 4 (2024): 1081-1093.

⁴⁷ Imam Tabroni, Dyah Erawati, Imam Maspiyah, and Hilma Sa'adatunnisa. 2022. "Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Tuntunan Syariat Rasulullah SAW". *Journal of Education and Culture* 2 (1):53-56.

because it exposes hypocrisy and dismantles their pretensions. Every verse concerning sincerity or condemning *riya* becomes a mirror that reveals the corruption within them. For unbelievers, meanwhile, the Quran is weighty because its arguments invalidate polytheistic beliefs and the traditions of idol worship. Likewise, verses concerning *tawhid* challenge and refute established structures of belief within polytheistic societies and among the People of the Book.⁴⁸ In this sense, the weight of the Quran refers to the social pressure and confrontation that emerge when revelation encounters human rejection.

c. The Authority of Revelation (The Majesty and Nobility of the *Kalamullah*)

This dimension shifts the meaning of “weight” toward nobility and authority. In Arabic usage, something described as “weighty” may also signify high value, greatness, and honor. The Quran is weighty because of its exalted and sacred status, which cannot be compared with ordinary human speech. It is also weighty in the sense of being powerful, substantial, and authoritative, possessing an authority that cannot be surpassed. When the Quran speaks, for example, about justice, its verses establish a moral standard that transcends merely human norms and regulations.⁴⁹ Thus, weight here does not refer to a burden, but to the greatness, value, and authority of revelation that distinguish it from all other forms of speech.

d. Spiritual-Psychological Dimension (Burden of Spiritual and Inner Readiness)

This dimension emphasizes inner readiness as a prerequisite for bearing the Quran. The message of the Quran can only be borne by a heart granted *tawfiq* and adorned with *tawhid*. This indicates that the weight of the Quran is spiritual in nature: not every heart is capable of bearing it. A person may read the same verse as another person, yet only a purified and receptive heart may fully experience its depth and be moved to put its message into practice.⁵⁰ For example, verses concerning patience may appear ordinary to some people, but to a spiritually receptive heart they can become a source of strength that transforms the way one responds to the trials of life.

e. Eschatological Dimension (Blessing in This World and the Hereafter)

This dimension understands “weight” in terms of blessing and reward. The Quran is weighty because of the magnitude of its reward and because it will make the scale of good deeds heavy in the Hereafter. Even reciting a single letter carries multiplied reward, especially when the Quran is memorized, practiced, and conveyed to others.⁵¹ In this world, the blessing of the Quran can be manifested in inner tranquility and a clear sense of direction in life. In the Hereafter, this weight

⁴⁸ Choiruddin Hadhiri, *Klasifikasi Kandungan Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2025).

⁴⁹ C Hadhiri, *Akhlaq dan Adab Islami* (Jakarta: PT Bhuana Ilmu Populer, 2015).

⁵⁰ Amelia Maulida, “Adab dalam Ibadah: Reaktualisasi Nilai-Nilai Spiritual dan Sosial dalam Pembentukan Karakter Muslim,” *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2025): 590–597.

⁵¹ Robiatul Adawiah, Bayu Endru Subiyakto, and Irfan Fauzan. “Keutamaan dan Adab Membaca Al-Qur'an dalam Pembentukan Karakter Muslim.” *AT-TAKLIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Multidisiplin* 3, no. 1 (2026): 249-254.

becomes a tangible advantage on the scale of deeds. Thus, “weight” here represents a beneficial weight rather than a negative burden.

f. Ontological-Historical Dimension (The Permanence of the Quranic Miracle)

This dimension interprets “weight” as the firmness and permanence of the Quranic miracle. The Quran remains firm, unchanged, and undiminished by the passage of time. While many human texts lose their relevance over time, the Quran continues to be recited, memorized, studied, and used as a source of guidance throughout history.⁵² This permanence can be likened to a heavy object that does not easily shift from its position. Weight here signifies the stability of truth that transcends space and time.

g. Epistemological Dimension (The Vastness of the Quran’s Meaning)

The final dimension locates the weight of the Quran in the vastness and depth of its meanings, which can never be fully exhausted. Scholars from various disciplines have continued to discover new layers of meaning across generations. Scholars and intellectuals with different areas of expertise have examined the Quran surah by surah, verse by verse, down to individual sentences, words, and even letters. Yet every generation continues to discover new understandings and forms of knowledge that had not been reached by previous generations.⁵³ Therefore, comprehending the entirety of the Quran can be likened to carrying a massive mountain, something that cannot be borne by a single human being. This weight consequently becomes a collective intellectual and spiritual responsibility for humanity throughout history until the Day of Resurrection. Here lies the culmination of the meaning of *qaulan tsaqila*: the Quran is a weighty word because of the responsibilities it entails, its majesty and authority, its permanence, its blessings, and the inexhaustible depth and breadth of its meanings.

8. Synthesis and Implications of the Interpretation of *Qaulan Tsaqila*

The synthesis of the preceding discussion demonstrates that the expression *qaulan tsaqila* in Surah al-Muzzammil verse 5 cannot be confined to a single, exclusive meaning. The various interpretations, whether understood as the command to perform *qiyam al-layl*, revelation, the *Kalimah Tauhid*, or the Quran itself, all demonstrate the broad semantic range of the language of revelation, which operates on multiple levels. This diversity does not indicate contradictions among the interpretations, but rather reflects the character of *ikhtilaf tanawwu*, namely variation in meaning in which different interpretations complement one another. Theologically, this also demonstrates that revelation does not address only one dimension of human life, but simultaneously encompasses worship, faith, history, and human civilizational responsibility. Thus, the “weight” of the Divine word

⁵² Diah Ayu Rahmani and Alwizar. 2024. “I’jazul Qur’an (Mukjizat Al-Qur’an)”. *Hamalatul Qur’an : Jurnal Ilmu Ilmu Alqur’an* 5 (2):647-57.

⁵³ Imam Agus Setiawan. “Risalah Mukjizat Al Qur’an dari Aspek Sejarah”. 2025. *Journal of Ulumul Qur’an and Tafsir Studies* 4 (1): 9-17.

reflects the broad scope of the prophetic mission, which extends beyond the individual experience of the Prophet and encompasses the moral, social, and intellectual transformation of humanity as a whole.

The implications of this discussion demonstrate that the concept of *qaulan tsaqila* ultimately positions the Quran as a source of guidance for human life in both this world and the Hereafter. The weight of revelation is not a burden that weakens human beings, but an entrusted responsibility that ennobles them through the duties it entails. This trust requires spiritual preparedness through nighttime worship, firmness of faith through *tawhid*, psychological readiness to receive revelation, and intellectual readiness to understand and implement its teachings across generations. Within this framework, the weight of the Quran becomes precisely a sign of the dignity of the human role as the bearer of the Divine trust. Therefore, understanding *qaulan tsaqila* should not stop at textual description, but should lead to an integrated awareness—both outward and inward—that revelation demands total commitment through faith, righteous action, knowledge, and perseverance as humanity's response to the majesty of the Divine Word.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the meaning of *qaulan tsaqila* in *Al-Lubab* encompasses four principal interpretations: the command to perform *qiyam al-layl*, revelation, the *Kalimah Tauhid*, and the Quran itself. These four interpretations are not contradictory but constitute *ikhhtilaf tanawwu*, in which different meanings complement one another in explaining the nature of revelation. The interpretation that specifically understands the Quran as *qaulan tsaqila* gives rise to seven major dimensions: the burden of religious obligations, the weight experienced by those who reject the truth, the majesty of the *Kalamullah*, the spiritual and psychological readiness of the recipient of revelation, blessings in this world and the Hereafter, the permanence of the Quranic miracle, and the inexhaustible breadth of its meanings. Thus, the weight of revelation should not be understood as a burden that weakens human beings, but as a trust that requires lifelong commitment to faith, righteous action, knowledge, and perseverance.

This study also demonstrates that Ibn Adil was an eighth-century Hijria exegete from Damascus who occupies an important position in the tafsir tradition through his monumental work, *Al-Lubab fi 'Ulum al-Kitab*. His exegetical method is characterized by *jam aqwal*, through which he systematically compiles and presents the diverse opinions of earlier scholars, while also demonstrating the strength of a *lughawi* approach through its integration with *Al-Durr al-Masun*. The analysis of *qaulan tsaqila* illustrates how this method of compiling exegetical opinions can generate a comprehensive and multilayered understanding of Quranic meaning.

This study contributes to the enrichment of thematic Quranic studies while reaffirming the relevance of classical exegetical methodology based on the compilation of scholarly opinions for developing a deeper understanding of Quranic

verses. It also opens avenues for further research, particularly through exploring interpretations in *Al-Lubab* in dialogue with contemporary scholarly discourse, conducting comparative studies with other classical tafsir works, and undertaking broader thematic studies of Quranic terms and concepts. Accordingly, the study of *qaulan tsaqila* should not remain limited to a description of its meanings, but should also contribute to a broader understanding of human responsibility as the bearer of the *Kalamullah*.

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