

**Recognizing the Concept of *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*
in the Light of Verses of Holy Qur'an
and *Aḥādīth* of Ahl al-Bayt (as)**

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Abstract

The term *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* has an important place in Islamic tradition, especially in Qur'anic commentary and mysticism, but also in other religious disciplines, such as dogmatic theology, principles of jurisprudence, jurisprudence, and philosophy. The main topics of this research revolve around the interpretation of the verse 3:7 in which *Muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihāt* are allocated a lot to discuss and debate. Here, another important issue named *ta'wīl* appears. *Ta'wīl* is used in connection with the *Mutashābihāt*; it is applied to all levels of meaning, from a simple, literal meaning to the hidden meanings. In the exegetical traditions, *ta'wīl* is mostly applied to the hidden meanings and esoteric exemplars of Quranic words. Since every passage of the Qur'an has a hidden meaning and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, the significance of the accurate meaning of *Mutashābihāt* and its communication with *ta'wīl* becomes obvious. This research will attempt to answer the question of whether *Mutashābihāt* are part of the Qur'an or they are used to describe the entire Quran. In order to do this, the study will document all verses of the Qur'an in which the *Mutashābih* or its derivatives have been used; it will analyze the major views among these to see how the authors justify their use of *ta'wīl*, and whether any of them provide an explicit methodology of how *ta'wīl* is known, and finally it will compare these various approaches to each other.

Keywords: Qur'an, *Ḥadīth*, *Muḥkamāt*, *Mutashābihāt*, Esoteric Interpretation, *Ta'wīl*, *Zāhir* and *Bāṭin*.

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Introduction

The main topic of this discussion is the seventh verse of *Surah Āle 'Imrān*, which has been the subject of controversy among the scholars of the Qur'an since the era of revelation. The common translation of that verse is as follows:

He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are clear verses (Muḥkamāt), which are the mother of the Book, and others are ambiguous (Mutashābihāt). Those in whose heart is sickness follow the ambiguous of them, seeking dissent and seeking their ta'wīl, and none knows their ta'wīl except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge. They say. 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'; yet none remember, but men possessed of minds.

One of the branches of Qur'anic studies pertains to the study of the *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* verses in the Book of God. According to most scholars of the Quran, the verses of the Qur'an are stated to be partly *Muḥkam* and partly *mutashābih* and they have stated that the *Mutashābih* verses must be understood in light of the *Muḥkam* ones. Let us explain the first statement first. The context shows the theme of this verse. It says that the verses of the Qur'an are classified into *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*.

Problem Statement

Dispute with the opinion of the majority of the scholars, is here that they interpret the *mutashābih* in contrast with the *Muḥkam* and saying 'Muḥkam' is derived from the verb *aḥkama* which means clear, decisive, confirmed and would refer to verses which are the substance and foundation of the Book in clear Arabic. Therefore, *Mutashābih* as a contrasted term to 'Muḥkam' in verse 3:7 would then be best understood as 'obscure, unclear, dubious or ambiguous' and not allegorical. These verses would not be the focus of the Book.

According to many scholars (Razi, v.2, p. 79-178; Nishaburi, v.3, p. 138), the term *Muḥkam* derives from *ihkām*, which is the act of making firm and strong, and *Mutashābih* derives from *tashābuh*, meaning similarity, and derives from the same root as *shubhah* (ambiguity, uncertainty, doubt) and *ishtibāh*, meaning making or becoming subject to doubt. In fact, The root from which 'Mutashābih'

takes form is SH-B-H and the verb *tashābaha* which means to be similar, alike, to resemble one another and in contrast, can also mean ambiguous. It means that if we focus on its roots (*Shabah*) it means to be similar and resemblance but ‘*Mutashābih*’ as a contrasted term to *Muḥkam* in verse 3:7 would then be ambiguity, uncertainty and doubt.

In contrast to verse 3:7, *Mutashābih* appears in its primary meaning in verse 39:23 and is used to describe the entire Quran.

God Almighty says in the verse (39:23): ("*God has revealed the best statement (Arabic: hadith), a Book with its parts resembling each other (Arabic: Mutashābihan) ...*")

Classical lexicons pick up the discussion and it is noted how the meaning of ‘ambiguous’ was also posited as being derived from its primary meaning of semblance and something being co-similar.

Therefore, this research revolves around two axes: semantics and methodology based on two sources of Islam (the Book and Sunnah); including topics like: Description of *Muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihāt*, another approach to the meaning of *Mutashābihāt*, description of *Taʾwīl*, the meaning of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, those who possess the knowledge of *taʾwīl*.

Another approach to the meaning of *Mutashābihāt*

In addition to the two occurrences, *Mutashābihāt* and *tashabaha*, in 3.7, the root from sh/b/h occurs in ten other instances in the Qur'an. In eight of these, the meaning is clearly that of similarity, resemblances and sameness between two objects (cf. 2.25, 70, 118; 4.157; 6.99, 141; 13.16; 39.23). In six instances, it is used in adjectival form *Mutashābih/mushtabih*, as in Sura 6 where the word appears four times and denotes how the fruits of heaven, specifically pomegranates and olives, are similar (*Mutashābihan/mushtabihan*) and yet dissimilar (*ghayr Mutashābihin*). In all these examples, the word has positive connotations derived mainly from the positiveness of the items being compared. i.e. olives, pomegranates. It is only when it is used as a verb i.e. in derivatives such as *shubbiha*, *tashābahat*, *tashābaha* that negative connotations of prevarication, distortion and false or pretended confusion set in. In 4.157, for example, the verb *shubbiha* is used to indicate that it was not Christ who was killed and crucified but that it

‘appeared to be so’ to some people (*shubbiha lahum*). In 13.16, polytheists are ridiculed for seeming to be confused between what God has created and what their idols have allegedly created. Perhaps the more famous and oft-quoted example of false resemblances is 2.70, where the Israelites three times ask Moses to pray to God to identify for them which heifer they were supposed to slaughter in expiation for a murder. The verb *tashābaha* (‘to become similar’) is here used by the Israelites: ‘They (Moses’ people) said: Call upon your nurturer to clarify to us what is she (The cow). The cows looked similar to us (In a confusing way). And we, if the God willed, are/will be gifted with guidance.’

The Qur’an (11:1) explains the first designation by declaring that it is "a book whose verses are precisely, clearly or unambiguously set forth" (*uhkimat*). Here the purpose of *Muḥkam* is to provide clear guidance. With regard to the second designation, the Qur’an (39:23) says: "God has sent down the best speech, a *Mutashābih* book (*kitabān Mutashābihan*)". The word *Mutashābih* here means resembling one another in verbal expression.

The third statement asserting that the Qur’an (3:6) is both *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* "He it is Who has revealed the Book to you: some of its verses are decisive (*Muḥkam*), they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical (*Mutashābih*)." The *Muḥkam* here refers to verses whose meaning is apparent and are in need of no interpretation. The *Mutashābih* on the other hand cannot be readily understood and must therefore be needed for its *tawil*.

The word *Muḥkam* is derived from *hakama*, meaning he prevented, whence *ahkama*, i.e. he made a thing firm or stable), is that of which the meaning is secured from change and alteration, and *Mutashābih* (from *shib-h*, meaning likeness or resemblance) is that which is co similar or conformable in its various parts, and *mutahabihat* are therefore things like or resembling one another, hence susceptible of different interpretations. Therefore, when it is stated that the whole of the Book is *Muḥkam*, the meaning is that all its verses are decisive, and when the Qur’an is called *Mutashābih* (39:23), the meaning is that the whole of it is conformable in its various parts; while in the verse under discussion is laid down the important principle how verses susceptible

of different interpretations may be interpreted so that a decisive significance may be attached to them. The Qur'an establishes certain principles in clear words, which are to be taken as the basis, while there are statements made in allegorical words, or susceptible of different meanings, the interpretation of which must be in consonance with the other parts and the spirit of the Book.

It should be noted that the meaning of *muhakm* and *Mutashābih* in the verse 3:7 should be interpreted according to 11.1 ('A book whose verses have been made decisive and then explained in detail' – *kitābun uḥkimat āyātuhu thuma fuṣṣilat*); all the verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamāt* while 39:23 (*kitāban Mutashābihan mathānī*) implies that all the verses of the Quran are *Mutashābihāt*. To resolve the issue, commentators usually deal with all three verses together, saying that there is a general *Muḥkam/Mutashābih* and a particular *Muḥkam/Mutashābih*. The first has to do with verses 11.1 and 39.23 in which the *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih* are taken to mean 'perfected/decisive' and 'consistent' respectively. The second has to do with verse 3.7 and all the various interpretations of *Muḥkamat/Mutashābihāt* that this generated. Obviously, it is clear that in all three examples, these binary terms are not meant to be regarded as opposite but rather as complementary terms. It is perhaps significant that the opposite of the word *Mutashābih* is *ghayr Mutashābih* and not *Muḥkam*; this is quite explicitly referred and reiterated in 6.114 and 6.99. It also be noted that although the *Muḥkamat* are presented as fundamental and as the essence of the book (*umm al-kitāb*), that does not mean that the *Mutashābihāt* should in any way be considered less important. An alternative interpretation is to view them as having part-whole relationships where the *Muḥkamat* are the source *ayas* that are capable of generating all the *Mutashābihāt*. The notion of similarity encapsulated in the word *Mutashābihāt* would seem to strengthen this idea that they are somehow derived from the *Muḥkamat* hence their stated similarity or resemblance. In addition, the use of the phrase *umm al-kitab* (the source or origin of the book) would seem to further reinforce the notion of the *Muḥkamat* as the primordial source, akin to the *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz* (preserved tablet), out of which all *ayas* in the Quran and other scriptures are derived. It is also significant to note that,

according to 11.1, the revelation of the Quran is a two-stage process, as suggested by the conjunction *thumma* which denotes a sequence in time. Although some commentators have preferred to view *thumma* here as a coordinating conjunction, it is more commonly used and generally understood in the language to mean sequence; the first stage involves the establishing of fundamental principles and commandments; the second stage involves generating a multitude of *ayas* detailing and explicating these principles and injunctions. There thus appear to be two categories: one fixed for all time, reserved for fundamental discourse, and another for those that reiterate, expound, and comment. There is no question of the two terms being opposites and because it is never made explicit what the *Mutashābihāt* are supposed to ‘resemble’, the word can designate either the subdivision of the Quran into similar-looking *ayas* or the subdivision of the *Muḥkamāt* into *ayas* that resemble it but are yet different from it. The implication of this two-stage process is that the *Muḥkamāt* and the *Mutashābihāt* cannot be considered separately; they must be viewed in combination as components in a system of interdependent verses in which, on the one hand, the verses that are *Mutashābihāt* are the counterparts of the *Muḥkamāt* verses, and on the other hand, they themselves are in turn the counterparts of each other.

Here is another important point which has been neglected by many scholars and it is the real meaning of the word *ukhar* (أُخْر) in the verse 3:7. In contrast with its common translation, *ukhar* means *thumma* (ثم); regarding to this meaning, the accurate meaning of the word *ukhar* in the verse 12:46 and 3:7 will be as the following:

(12:46): “Of this and the king said, “I see seven fat kine whom seven lean ones devour, and seven green ears of corn and then they were converted to seven withered. O chiefs, expound to me my vision if it be that you can interpret visions.”

(3:7): He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are *Muḥkamāt*, which are the mother of the Book, and then (at the same time) they are *Mutashābihāt*.



Description of *Ta'wīl*

Esoteric interpretation (*Ta'wīl*) of the Qur'an which includes attribution of esoteric or mystical meanings to the text by the interpreter is different from the conventional exegesis/commentary of the Qur'an, called *Tafsīr*. Esoteric interpretations do not usually contradict the conventional (in this context called exoteric) interpretations; instead, they discuss the inner levels of meaning of the Qur'an. A *Hadith* (Kulayni, v. 4, p. 398-399; Majlisi, v. 89, p. 78) from the Prophet states that the Qur'an has an inner meaning, and that this inner meaning conceals a yet deeper inner meaning, and so on (up to seven levels of meaning), has sometimes been used in support of this view.

Most Muslim scholars believe that many passages of the Qur'an have a hidden meaning not readily apparent to the reader "The whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, which cannot be comprehended directly through human thought alone. Only the prophets and the pure among the saints of God who are free from the dross of human imperfection can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence." (Tabataba'i, Shi'ite Islam, p. 99) Therefore, because of its great significance and, we will start our discussion with the meaning of *ta'wīl* in the Qur'an and *Ḥadīth*.

The word *ta'wīl* is from *a-w-l*, which means to return, to revert, which means going back to the original of a word to see what its meaning and connotations are. (Suyuti, v. 2, p. 221-222) Tabatabai defines *ta'wīl* as to lead back or to bring something back to its origin or archetype and says *ta'wīl* is derived from the word *al-awl* (to return). *Ta'wīl* of an ambiguous verse is its "returning base" to which it is returned. *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'an is the source from which it gets its realities. For want of a better word, it is mostly translated as interpretation, final interpretation, or the end; although these words do not convey its true connotation. (Tabatabai, *Tafsir al-Mizān*, v. 3, p. 35-44)

Some other scholars say *ta'wīl* is derived from the word *al-awl* (to return). *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'an is the source from which it gets its realities. (Firuzabadi, *Al-Qamus*, Under the topic of *al-ta'wīl*) Both *tafsir* and *ta'wīl* have been used in the Qur'an in the sense of exposition and



explanation (Furqan, 32). Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifat is of the opinion that the word *ta'wīl* occurs seventeen times in the Holy Qur'an:

1. Five times in the sense of the ultimate outcome (*ma'al*; 4:59; 17:35; 7:35 twice; 10:39);
2. Eight times in the sense of interpretation of dreams (12:6, 21, 36, 37, 44, 45, 100, 101); and
3. Four times in the sense of interpreting the *Mutashābih* (3:7, twice; 18:78, 82).

Some scholars consider *ta'wīl* to mean foregoing the literal meaning of a text for its metaphorical sense without violating the norms of the Arabic language for metaphorical usage, and in consonance with metaphorical relations, such as referring to a thing by the name of something similar to it or by its cause or that of something which is closely associated with it. Some have held *ta'wīl* to mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt* and the finding of a second meaning for the text which is called its inward or esoteric sense (*baṭn*) as opposed to its apparent and literal meaning (*ẓahr*).

Here we don't agree with the viewpoint of some scholar who says, *ta'wīl* is based on reason and personal opinion (*ra'y*), while *tafsīr* is based on the material transmission of the Prophet himself or through his companions or his successors in the form of hadith. In this view, *ta'wīl* is generally defined as "interpretation according to rationality" while *tafsīr* is "interpretation in accordance with what has been transmitted". (Massimo Campanini, p. 69-73)

Thalabi in his *tafsīr* has a chapter on the meaning of interpretation and hermeneutics (*tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*) and the difference between them. He says that the function of *tafsīr*, according to many scholars, is the unveiling (*al-kashf*) of the subject matter of the verse, its story, its meaning, and the reasons behind its revelation. *Ta'wīl*, on the other hand, is the rendering of the meaning of the verse (*ṣarf al-āyah*) into a different meaning that it might entertain (*ma'ná yahtamiluh*) which is consistent with what comes before and after it.

Thalabi goes on to explain that because *tafsīr* is restricted to the subject matter (*sha'n*) of the verse and the reasons behind its revelation, and because *tafsīr* is based on information that one learns from the tradition, it is an area in which one cannot adduce new material; *tafsīr*

thus involves all the information the scholars have received about certain verses from previous generations reaching back to Muhammad and his followers: the why and when about them. *Tafsīr* as such is a matter which depends on learning (*sama'*) and therefore it is forbidden (*maḥduūr*) to speculate in this area. Since *ta'wīl* is the art of explaining the Qur'an in a way that is coherent and consistent, it is not forbidden for scholars to engage in it as long as the explanation is in agreement with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. (Walid A. Saleh, p. 92-93)

Here, as we mentioned before, *ta'wīl* is based on traditional sources as it has been transmitted from the Prophet and it is not based on rationality. Some have stated that tafsir relates to denotation (*'ibārah*) while *ta'wīl* relates to connotation (*isharat*). Muhammad Husayn Dhahabi, a scholar of the Qur'an and history of *tafsir*, writes that *tafsir* relates to narration (*riwāyah*) and *ta'wīl* to critical study (*dirāyah*). (Dhahabi, p. 154) The Qur'an itself speaks about the necessity of *ta'wīl* and so have the Imams, the Companions, and Qur'anic scholars of later eras. But not everyone is competent to do the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an and the Qur'an itself (in accordance with evidence to be cited) as well as many traditions point out that erroneous and illegitimate *ta'wīl* is the work of the perplexed victims of false and misleading creeds. However, a correct and legitimate *ta'wīl*, which unravels the meanings of the Qur'anic *Mutashābihāt*, is the duty of *those who are firmly grounded in knowledge (rāsikhūna fi al-'ilm)*, that is, those who are learned in religion, who follow a correct creed, and understand the subtleties of language and discourse. Later in this article, we will have more to say about the *rāsikhūn* who know the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an. (Khorramshahi, v. 3, no.3 Autumn 1997/1418)

According to what is cited above and a number of traditions from the Prophet's Family that indicate there are various levels of meanings in the Holy Qur'an and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, how can we agree with some have held that the verses of the Qur'an are stated to be partly *Muḥkam* (decisive) and partly *mutashābih* (allegorical) and *ta'wīl* to mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt*? This declaration cannot be approved unless we accept that all the verses of the Qur'an while are *Muḥkam*, they are also *Mutashābih*. According to 11.1 ('A book whose verses have been made

decisive and then explained in detail' – *kitabun uḥkimat āyātuhu thuma fuṣṣilat*); all the verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamat* while 39:23 (*kitāban Mutashābihan mathāni*) implies that all the verses of the Quran are *Mutashābihāt*; and a number of hadiths that declare the whole Qur'an possesses and inner (*bāṭin*) and outer (*ẓāhir*), it is concluded that belongs to the inner (esoteric) meaning of the verses. Otherwise, there will be a big paradox between some hadiths declaring that the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, and the fact that the verses of the Qur'an are partly *Muḥkam* and partly *mutashābih* and *ta'wīl* only mean interpretation of *Mutashābihāt*. To resolve the issue, we must consider the verses of the Qur'an to have a set of interconnected and also interrelated to each other and its verses should be interpreted in the light of the similar verses. Regarding this fact, the verse 3:7 should be interpreted with the help of the verses 11.1, 6.114 and 6.99 and the traditions are as the following:

“In truth, the Qur'an possesses an inner and outer”. (Kulayni, v. 4, p. 549; Saduq, 'Ilal al-Sharāyī', p. 606)

“In truth, the Qur'an possesses an inner and outer, and its inner possesses another inner up to seven inners”. (Sayyid Haidar Āmuli, p. 530)

The meaning of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*

In some traditions, it is the structural form of Qur'anic passages that is intended by the word *ẓāhir*, not the outward meaning of it. In these traditions, *bāṭin* refers to “meaning” and it includes all levels of meanings - from a surface (external) meaning to a deep one. In fact, these traditions note that both the structure and the meaning of the Qur'an are remarkable. The rhythmic letters, words and statements in the Qur'an also possess deep meanings. The following traditions imply the application of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. (See, Methodology of Qur'an Interpretation, Shaker, Muhammad Kazem, vol. 16 (1): (143-166)).

Imam Ali said: “Certainly the outward of the Qur'an is wonderful and its inward is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never cease; its amazements will never pass away.” (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 18)

“The outward of the Qur'an is reciting, and its inward is understanding.”

(Fayḍ Kāshani, vol. 1, p. 29) “The outside of the Qur’an is reciting and its inside is *ta’wīl* (hermeneutics).” (Ālusi, vol. 1, p.7)

Clearly, it is the words of the Qur’an that are recited, not their meanings! Therefore, the term *zāhir* in this group of traditions refers only to the words of the Qur’an and their extraordinary structure. There are traditions which interpret *zāhir* literally and *bāṭin* as the wider context, including all levels of non-literal meanings.

Imam Baqir (as) said: “The outward of the Qur’an is the meaning that includes only the persons about whom the verses of the Qur’an were sent down, and its inside is the meaning that includes other people—those who are similar to the first group throughout history.” (Fayḍ Kashani, vol. 1, p. 27)

The Prophet said: “The outward of the Qur’an is God’s law and its inward is His knowledge.” (Majlisi, vol. 74, p. 136)

Imam Sadiq said: “The outward of the Qur’an is *tanzīl* (descent), and its inside is *ta’wīl* (hermeneutics).” (Şaffār, p. 216)

From the above traditions, it can be inferred that the Qur’an has meanings other than the literal ones.

Two ways of *Qirā’ah* (Those who possess the knowledge of *Ta’wīl*)

According to the other reading, the translation of the relevant part of the verse will be as follows: *and none knows their ta’wīl except Allah, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. They say: 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'.* It means that the ayah (3:7) can be read in two ways. The first is to stop here, “...and no one knows its *ta’wīl* except for Allah. And those grounded in knowledge say....” This is how ibn Mas’oud and Ubay bin Ka’b would recite it. The second is to read it, “...and no one knows its *ta’wīl* except for Allah and those grounded in knowledge. [They] say....” and this was the recitation of ibn Abbas.

The recitation of ibn Abbas goes back to interpretation (*tafsīr*) and the reading of ibn Mas’oud is of actualization. One of the proofs of this is ibn Abbas saying that I am of the people of knowledge and know the *ta’wīl*.

Ibn Qutayba, a prominent Sunni scholar who passed away in 276 AH, gives many arguments about how to understand the "*rāsikhūn fil-Ilm*" and *ta’wīl* passage in the Quran. He says that if the *rāsikhūn fil-*

Ilm had no share in the knowledge of the *Mutashābih* except saying, "We believe in it, all is from our Lord," then they would have no superiority over the students or even the ignorant because all of them say "We believe in it, all is from our Lord,". He states if it is permissible to say that the Prophet knew ambiguous (*Mutashābih*) so His scholar companions knew too. He adds there is a famous tradition comprising a prayer made by the Messenger of God for Ibn Abbas, the outstanding scholar of the Quran: "O God, make him learned in the religion and teach him *ta'wīl*".

This tradition clearly indicates that *ta'wīl* is something that can be understood by the "*rāsikhūn fil-ʿIlm*". (Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'an, p. 98-101)

Tabataba'i says: "What is, then, the reply to the question asked in the beginning? Does anyone, other than God, know the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an? The majority of Twelver Shi'a answers: "Yes, the Qur'an proves the possibility of the knowledge of its *ta'wīl* for someone other than God", although this verse does not prove it.

Tabataba'i states that there is no conjunction, exception or qualification in this absolute statement. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Qur'an's interpretation is reserved for God. Nevertheless, there may be other proofs to show that someone, other than God, may know this *ta'wīl*. There are in the Qur'an instances in which an absolute restriction of one verse has been qualified by another. Take the example of the knowledge of the unseen. The Qur'an has declared in many verses that it is confined to Allah: *Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen but God (27:65). Say: The unseen is only for God (10:20). And with Him are the keys of the unseen - none knows them but He (6:59).*

And after all these restricting statements, comes the following verse: *The Knower of the unseen! He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle. (72:26-27)*

This verse clearly says that some persons other than Allah, that is, the chosen apostles, are given the knowledge of the unseen.

Now time has come to discuss the first statement: Other verses of the Qur'an prove that it is possible for someone, other than God, to have the knowledge of the Qur'an's *ta'wīl*." (Mizān, vol. 3, p. 35-44)

On the other hand, al-Sharif al-Raḍī, a prominent Shi'i scholar who passed away in 406 AH in his book *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fil-Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* accepts the reading the verse (*Al-i 'Imrān*, 7: "and none knows their *ta'wīl* except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge ...") with *atf* and says that there are many reasons that this verse is concerned to join those who are firmly rooted in knowledge (*rāsikhūn fil- 'Ilm*), with Allah, in the knowledge of the Book's *ta'wīl*. He states that not only the Prophet know the *Qur'anic Mutashābihāt* and *ta'wīl* but the infallible Imams and others who are learned in religion, also know the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an. (*Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, p. 7-14)



Conclusion

In conclusion, we should again back to our discussion to summarize that, in contrast with who states that the verses of the Qur'an have been divided into two categories and classified to be partly *Muḥkam* and partly *Mutashābih*, the whole verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *Muḥkamāt* while all the verses of the Quran are also *Mutashābihāt*; and The most Muslim scholars believe that every passages of the Qur'an have a hidden meaning not readily apparent to the reader and the whole of the Qur'an possesses the sense of *ta'wīl*, of esoteric meaning, which cannot be comprehended directly through human thought alone. Only the prophets and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge (*rāsikhūn fil-ʿIlm*) can contemplate these meanings while living on the present plane of existence. According to this view, the accurate meaning of the seventh verse of the Surah Āl-e ʿImrān will be as the following:

He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book; in it are Muḥkamāt, which are the mother of the Book, and then (at the same time) they are Mutashābihāt. Those in whose heart is sickness follow that of it which is unspecific of them, seeking dissent and seeking their ta'wīl, and none knows their ta'wīl except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge. They say. 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'; yet none remember, but men possessed of minds.



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