

Comparative Analysis of Kalam Interpretations of Bait al-Maqdis Verses in Sunni, Mu'tazilah, and Shi'a Exegeses

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the comparative interpretation of the verses of Bait al-Maqdis by scholars of kalam schools of thought, namely Sunni, represented by Tafsir Mafātīḥ al-Ghaib by Fakhr al-Dīn ar-Rāzī; Mu'tazilah, represented by Tafsir Al-Kasasyāf by Az-Zamakhshari; and Shi'a, represented by Tafsir Al-Qummī by 'Alī bin Ibrāhīm Al-Qummī. It also seeks to contextualize the comparative analysis of the interpretations of Bait al-Maqdis verses. This research employs a library research method, with data presentation arranged thematically. For data processing, the researcher uses the content analysis method. The findings reveal that the interpretations of the Sunni and Mu'tazilah kalam schools share many similarities, while the interpretations of the Shi'a kalam school tend to differ, often reflecting sectarian ideologies. The conclusion of this article emphasizes that to liberate Bait al-Maqdis from modern-era colonialism, the Muslim community must seriously prioritize the issue of Bait al-Maqdis as a central concern and study it with accurate knowledge, including the interpretation of Bait al-Maqdis verses, to avoid biased interpretations influenced by specific sectarian tendencies.

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1. Introduction

In the medieval period, various styles of interpretation began to emerge, particularly during the late Umayyad dynasty and the early Abbasid dynasty. This momentum reached its peak during the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (d. 170 AH). He paid full attention to the development of knowledge during that era. The Islamic world at that time was at its zenith, and the period became known as the Golden Age [\[1\]](#)

The knowledge that developed within the Islamic community during the medieval period and directly intersected with Islamic sciences included disciplines such as theology (*'ilm al-kalam*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), mysticism (*tasawwuf*), linguistics (*'ilm al-lughah*), literature (*adab*), and philosophy (*falsafah*). Due to the significant number of people deeply interested in each discipline,

many began using their knowledge as a framework and methodology to understand the Qur'an or even to seek the Qur'anic basis to legitimize their theories. Consequently, various types of Qur'anic exegesis emerged, such as theological exegesis (*tafsir kalami*), jurisprudential exegesis (*tafsir fiqhi*), mystical exegesis (*tafsir sufi*), scientific exegesis (*tafsir 'ilmi*), socioliterary exegesis (*tafsir adabi ijtimai*), philosophical exegesis (*tafsir falsafi*), and others.[2]

Borrowing the term from Prof. Abdul Mustaqim (b. 1972 CE/1392 AH), the development of exegesis during the affirmative phase was based on ideological reasoning. This phase followed the formative phase, which, according to Mustaqim, took place during the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his companions, and the generation of the *tabi'in*. During the formative phase, the interpretation of the Qur'an relied on the *al-riwayah* method, which was based on the Qur'an, hadith, the sayings of the companions (*qaul sahabat*), and the sayings of the *tabi'in*. In contrast, the affirmative phase, as described by Mustaqim, occurred during the medieval period when Qur'anic exegesis became heavily influenced by political, sectarian, or ideological interests. Consequently, the Qur'an was often used as a tool to legitimize such interests. Exegetes during this phase were frequently "infected by certain ideologies" before delving into the field of *'Uhum al-Qur'an wa Tafsir*. [3]

The dynamics of the development of exegesis during this phase were marked by a shift in the tradition of interpretation from *tafsir bi al-ma'thur* to *tafsir bi al-ra'y*. [4] The use of reason (rationality) became increasingly prominent, although it was often accompanied by ideological biases, particularly in theological matters (*kalam*). As a result, various interpretations emerged, reflecting tendencies aligned with the disciplines and ideological schools adhered to by the exegetes. Diverse styles (*lawn*) of interpretation appeared during this phase, including theological interpretations (*tafsir kalami*). Borrowing the term from 'Abid al-Jabiri, this period witnessed a transition from an oral culture to a culture of writing and scholarship (*min thaqafah musyafahah wa al-riwayah ila thaqafah al-kitabah wa al-dirayah*) [5].

According to Khalid 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Ak (d. 1420 AH), there are three main factors that lead some exegetes to fall into the trap of ideological subjectivity, theological reasoning (*kalam*), fanaticism, or sectarianism, and sometimes even deviate in their interpretations. The first factor is the ill intentions of hadith fabricators who falsely attributed their words to the Prophet ﷺ or his companions to support their wrongful objectives. These fabrications can be uncovered by consulting books on biography (*tarjamah*) and hadith narrators (*rijal al-ruwah*). The second factor is when an exegete understands the meaning of a verse but interprets it in a way that aligns with their personal beliefs or ideological inclinations. Lastly, the third factor is when exegetes rely solely on linguistic analysis in their interpretations without considering the context of the sentences within the verse being explained. [6] Mustaqim adds another factor to complete the explanation: the fourth factor is the tendency of rulers to intervene in interpretations. It is evident that authorities often influence exegeses to legitimize their power. [7]

The interpretation of verses influenced by ideological bias from theological sects (*kalam*) extends beyond debates on issues such as faith and disbelief, the status of major sinners, and the names and attributes of God. It also includes interpretations of verses related to *Bait al-Maqdis*, which are often laden with theological sectarian tendencies. This has led the researcher to explore examples of verses concerning *Bait al-Maqdis* as interpreted by scholars of *kalam* in their exegeses, focusing particularly on the Sunni, Mu'tazilite, and Shi'ite theological schools. Moreover, the study of *Bait al-Maqdis* becomes even more compelling as part of the rich intellectual heritage of Islam, given its significance as a center of blessings and its deep historical roots in Islamic tradition. This is further amplified by contemporary issues that highlight ongoing humanitarian crises and the colonization of Palestine, the inhabitants of *Bait al-Maqdis*.

2. Method

This research is qualitative and included in the type of library research, namely, research carried out using literature (libraries) in the form of books, notes, or reports of previous research results, [8] with primary sources including *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606

AH), representing the Sunni-Ash'ari school; *Tafsir Al-Kashshaf* by Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH), representing the Mu'tazilite school of theology; and the Shi'ite-oriented *Tafsir Al-Qummi* by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi (d. 329 AH). Secondary sources are drawn from other similar exegetical works. The author employed the comparative interpretation method (*muqārin*) to analyze the gathered data.[9] The data will be presented thematically (*maudhu'i*),[10] a method well-known in the study of Qur'anic sciences and exegesis, which involves collecting verses that share a particular theme. In this study, verses related to *Bait al-Maqdis* will be gathered, focusing on: the geography of *Bait al-Maqdis* in QS At-Tin [95]: 1-3; the Isra' and Mi'raj in QS Al-Isra' [17]: 1; and the promise of the inherited land of *Bait al-Maqdis* in QS Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105. As for the method of processing the collected data, the researcher employs the content analysis method.[11]

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Baitul Maqdis: Definition and History

Etymologically, *Bait al-Maqdis* consists of two words. The first is *Bait*, which can mean sword sheath, grave, family, Kaaba, palace, honor, a part of a place, or house/residence.[12] The second word, *al-Maqdis*, means a sacred or holy place.[12] From the definitions of these two words, it can be concluded that, etymologically, *Bait al-Maqdis* refers to a house or place that is sacred.[13]

Nevertheless, exegetes sometimes specifically use the term *Bayt al-Maqdis* to refer to *al-Aqṣā Mosque*. [14] From these two perspectives, it can be concluded that *Bayt al-Maqdis* is a holy, pure, and blessed land due to the many prophets who were sent to and resided in it. Meanwhile, the center of blessing in that land is the *al-Aqṣā Mosque*. [15]

In the book by Sheikh Salamah Muhammad al-Harafi (b. 1957 CE), it is mentioned that *Bait al-Maqdis* has no fewer than 29 names, including: Jerusalem, Yabus, Bait El, Aelia Capitolina, Nur al-Islam, Nur al-Ghassaq, Yarah, Kailah, Irbanah, Evan, Madinah al-Anhar, Madinah al-Wadyan, Rasyalim, *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*, Al-Qaryah, Al-Madinah al-Jadidah, Al-Zaitun, Al-Sahirah, Al-Mutahharah, Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah, Al-Ard Al-Mubarakah, *Bait al-Maqdis*, Baitullah al-Muqaddas, Al-Quds al-Mahrousah, and Al-Quds as-Sharif. [16].

A historian specializing in *Bait al-Maqdis*, Mujiruddin al-Hanbali, once said:

“There is not a single inch of land in Bait al-Maqdis where a prophet sent by Allah has not prayed and supplicated, or where an honored prophet of Allah has not resided.”. [16]

Bait al-Maqdis is located in the central region of Palestine, on a hill with an elevation ranging between 38 and 720 meters above sea level. [17] It lies at the center of strategically significant cities in the region, being 88 kilometers from Amman, 380 kilometers from Beirut, 290 kilometers from Damascus, and 580 kilometers from Cairo. Additionally, it is 52 kilometers from the Mediterranean Sea, 22 kilometers from the Dead Sea, and 250 kilometers from the Red Sea. [18]

The *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*, [19] as it is famously known today, did not exist in its current structure during the Isra' and Mi'raj. What existed at the time was a mosque site surrounded by walls with gates, enclosing a large open court yard. This is what is referred to as *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*. When Islam emerged, the structure had not yet been built, but the site was already recognized and revered as sacred. [18] During the Medina period, various efforts were made by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to conquer *Bait al-Maqdis*. These included the Battle of Mu'tah in 8 AH, the Battle of Tabuk in 9 AH, and the dispatching of the military expedition led by Usamah bin Zaid (d. 54 AH) in 11 AH. Eventually, during the era of the Islamic Caliphate, Muslims succeeded in defeating both the Persian and Roman empires, leading to the liberation of *Bait al-Maqdis* and *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* in 15 AH.

Bait al-Maqdis holds a significant place in Islamic history as a symbol of tolerance and coexistence with followers of other religions, such as Christians and Jews. When 'Umar ibn al-Khattab conquered the city in 15 AH (637 CE), he granted security and protection to all the inhabitants of Aelia (Jerusalem) through a written agreement known as *Al-'Uhdah Al-'Umariyyah*. This treaty was witnessed by four companions of the Prophet ﷺ and prominent Islamic military commanders of the

time: Khalid ibn al-Walid (d. 21 AH), ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (d. 43 AH), ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf (d. 32 AH), and Mu‘awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (d. 60 AH).[14]

3.2. The Derivation of Bait al-Maqdis in the Qur'an

In the following discussion, the author will present two tables to provide a clearer depiction of *Bait al-Maqdis* through terms or derivations [20] that refer to its other names or titles as mentioned in the Qur'an:

Table 1. Terms Directly Referring to Other Names or Titles of *Bait al-Maqdis*

No	Derivation	Meaning	The Placement of Bait al-Maqdis Verses in the Qur'an
1	الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا	The First Qibla of Muslims	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143
2	الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ	The Blessed Land/Region	QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 1
	مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَعَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا	Surrounding it, Within it, East and West of it, Entire Universe	QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 137
	الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا		QS. Saba' [34]: 18
	الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ		QS. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 71
	إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا		QS. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 81
3	الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ	The Holy Land	QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 21

The table below illustrates the terms or derivations referring to the name of a specific area within Bait al-Maqdis:

Table 2. Terms Referring to Areas Within *Bait al-Maqdis*

No	Derivation	Meaning	The Placement of Bait al-Maqdis Verses in the Qur'an
1	الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا	<i>Al-Aqṣā Mosque</i>	QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 1
2	مُبْتَلًىكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ	Jordan river	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 249
3	مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا	The Eastern Place (Mihrab Maryam)	QS. Maryam [19]: 16
4	مَكَانًا قَرْصِيًّا	The Eastern Place (Mihrab Maryam)	QS. Maryam [19]: 22
5	إِلَى رِبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ	A Tranquil Elevated Land with Flowing Water	QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]: 50
6	فِي غَيْبَتِ الْجُبِّ	The Bottom of the Well	QS. Yusuf [12]: 10 & 15
7	الْبُدُو	Village or Hamlet	QS. Yusuf [12]: 100

8	وَادِ النَّمْلِ	The Valley of the Ants	QS. An-Naml [27]: 18
9	هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةُ	Village or Land	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 58
10	مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ	Village or Land	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 259
11	فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ	The Nearest Land to Arabia (Dar'a) and the Lowest Point on Earth (Dead Sea)	QS. Ar-Rūm [30]: 1-4
12	مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ	The Rock of <i>Bait al-Maqdis</i>	QS. Qaf [50]: 41
13	وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ	The Land of Fig and Olive Trees	QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3

All the previously mentioned verses are Makkiyyah (revealed in Mecca), except for QS. Al-Maidah: 21, QS. Al-Baqarah: 58, and QS. Al-Baqarah: 259, which were revealed in Medina (*Madaniyyah*). These verses clearly indicate that during the Meccan phase, especially before the event of Isra' and Mi'raj, the monotheistic teachings of Islam were deeply interconnected with the monotheistic traditions of earlier revealed religions. Many of the previous prophets lived, preached, and passed away in *Bait al-Maqdis*. As Khalid Abd. al-Fattah el-Awaisi eloquently puts it: “*The Qur'an connects the heart of a Muslim to this land spiritually through these verses and physically through their prayers, both before and after Isra', from the very early stages of Islam.*”.[21]

3.3. Kalam Interpretation of the Verses of Bait al-Maqdis

Broadly speaking, the focus of this research lies on the locations mentioned in verses related to *Bait al-Maqdis*, where differing interpretations, particularly among *kalam* exegetes, are evident. The researcher seeks to analyze and contextualize these interpretations in light of the thoughts of key figures and their followers, using a historical and geopolitical approach relevant to contemporary times.

3.3.1. The Geography of Bait al-Maqdis in QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3

One of the earliest Makkiyyah surahs revealed in Mecca, which is believed to be the first reference to *Bait al-Maqdis* in the Qur'an, is Surah At-Tin. According to Al-Zuhri (d. 124 AH), this surah was the 27th surah revealed in Mecca [22]. The first three verses of Surah At-Tin contain oaths related to entities that symbolize immense goodness and blessings.

Allah says:

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ وَطُورِ سَيْنٍ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ

“By the fig and the olive, By Mount Sinai, And by this secure city [Makkah].”.
(QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3)

Fakhr al-Dīn ar-Rāzī concludes that the interpretation of QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3 should be understood in its literal meaning, as Allah swears by these entities due to their immense benefits and significance [23]. Such as the benefits of consuming figs for health and as medicine, the advantages of olive oil as a source of light and food, the interpretation of dreams in a positive sense, and so on. As for the implicit meanings interpreted by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, there are many versions. However, in general, compared to other Sunni interpretations, his explanation is that the mountain where figs grow symbolizes the mission of Prophet Isa (Jesus), the mountain where olives grow represents the place where most prophets from the Children of Israel were sent, Mount Sinai is the place where

Prophet Musa (Moses) was sent, and the secure city refers to the place where Prophet Muhammad was sent [24].

This interpretation aligns with the exegeses of other Sunni scholars, such as the tafsir by Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), who states: “In each of these three places, Allah sent a prophet and messenger among the Ulu al-‘Azmi (the resolute prophets) who spread the three major religions. First, the place of the fig and the olive, namely Bait al-Maqdis, where Allah sent Prophet ‘Isa, the son of Maryam. Second, Mount Sinai, where Allah spoke to Prophet Musa, the son of ‘Imran. Third, Mecca, the secure city—those who enter it are safe—where Allah sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ” [25].

Meanwhile, Az-Zamakhshari, a Mu’tazilite exegete, tends to have an interpretation similar to that of the Sunni school of thought. However, Az-Zamakhshari provides a grammatical analysis (*i’rab*) of the word *Sinin*, which is not mentioned in the *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib* [26].

As for the tafsir of the Shi’a kalam school represented by Al-Qummi, it provides only a brief (*ijmali*) interpretation of QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3, stating that it relates to the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and the infallible (*ma’sum*) Imams;

قَالَ: وَالتِّينِ: رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَالزَّيْتُونِ: أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، وَطُورِ سِينِينَ: الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ، وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ: الْأَيُّمَةُ.

“Al-Tin refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, al-Zaitun refers to Amir al-Mu’minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, Tur Sinin refers to Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and Haza al-Balad al-Amin refers to the Imams.” [27].

In another Shi’a tafsir, *Nur al-Thaqalain*, by ‘Abd ‘Ali ibn Jum’ah al-‘Arusi al-Huwayzi (d. 1112 AH), the interpretation of QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3 is similar to that of Al-Qummi, focusing on the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and the infallible (*ma’sum*) Imams. However, there is a slight difference in the sequence of interpretation [28]. As for the Shi’a hadith narration in the book *Al-Khisal*, it interprets the verses with a geographical meaning chosen by Allah, referring to: Madinah, Bait al-Maqdis, Kufah, and Mecca [29].

The conclusion that can be drawn is that both Sunni and Mu’tazilite interpretations are largely identical. Meanwhile, Shi’a interpretations tend to align with their ideological stance, specifically the beliefs of the *Shi’a Imamiyyah Ithna ‘Ashariyyah* sect.

3.3.2. Isra’ dan Mi’raj in QS. Al-Isra’ [17]: 1

The event of Isra’ and Mi’raj of the Prophet ﷺ, which occurred in the 10th year after Prophethood and is mentioned in QS. Al-Isra’ [17]: 1, is the only verse that specifically names a part of *Bait al-Maqdis*: *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*. In contrast, other verses usually only allude to it indirectly.

Allah says:

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنَ الْإِبْتِغَاءِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

“Glory be to Him who took His servant (Prophet Muhammad) by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram to Al-Aqṣā Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing”. (QS. Al-Isra’ [17]: 1)

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī mentions in his tafsir regarding the location of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*. He said:

وَقَوْلُهُ: إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى اتَّفَقُوا عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ مِنْهُ بَيْتُ الْمَقْدِسِ وَاسْمُهُ بِالْأَقْصَى لِيُعَدَّ الْمَسَافَةُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَقَوْلُهُ: الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ قِيلَ بِالْإِمَارِ وَالْأَرْهَارِ، وَقِيلَ بِسَبَبِ أَنَّه مَقَرُّ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَمَهْبِطُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ.

“Regarding Allah's words: "to Al-Aqṣā Mosque," the scholars unanimously agree that the verse refers to Bait al-Maqdis. The mosque is called Al-Aqṣā Mosque due to the great distance between it and Masjid al-Haram. Concerning Allah's words: "whose surroundings We have blessed," it is said that this refers to the abundance of fruits and flowers in the area. Others interpret it as a source of blessings because Bait al-Maqdis (centered around Al-Aqṣā Mosque) was the dwelling place of prophets and is graced by the presence of angels” [24].

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī firmly believed that the location of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* is indeed in *Bait al-Maqdis*, in accordance with the consensus (*jumhur*) of scholars. Similarly, the Mu'tazilite school holds the same view, with Az-Zamakhshari explicitly interpreting *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* as a mosque located in *Bait al-Maqdis*.

Zamakhshari said:

وَالْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى: بَيْتُ الْمُقَدَّسِ، لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ حِينَئِذٍ وَرَاءَهُ مَسْجِدٌ بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ يُرِيدُ بَرَكَاتِ الدِّينِ وَالْدُّنْيَا، لِأَنَّهُ مُتَعَبَّدٌ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ وَفْتِ مُوسَى وَمُهِيطُ الْوَحْيِ، وَهُوَ مُحْفُوفٌ بِالْأَنْهَارِ الْجَارِيَةِ وَالْأَشْجَارِ الْمُثْمِرَةِ.

“Al-Aqṣā Mosque refers to Bait al-Maqdis, which at the time of the Isra' and Mi'raj event had no physical structure visible. The phrase "the mosque whose surroundings We have blessed" signifies blessings in both religious and worldly aspects. Its blessings stem from Al-Aqṣā Mosque being the place of worship for all prophets since the time of Prophet Musa and the center where divine revelations were sent down. Bait al-Maqdis is also described as being filled with flowing rivers and fruitful trees” [26].

Meanwhile, the Shi'a believe that the location of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* is in the heavens, differing from the Sunni and Mu'tazilite understanding, which states that *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* is in *Bait al-Maqdis*. Furthermore, the Shi'a also assert that the mosque in Kufah holds greater significance than the mosque in *Bait al-Maqdis*.

‘Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-Qummi narrates a lengthy account regarding the Isra' and Mi'raj event. However, the hadith concerning Isra' and Mi'raj is derived from Shi'a literature, all of which state that the location of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* is not in *Bait al-Maqdis* but in the heavens. This narration is also found in the tafsir *Nur al-Thaqalain*:

حَدَّثَنِي حَالِدٌ عَنْ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَيَّارٍ عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَزْدِيِّ عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْجُعْفِيِّ قَالَ: كُنْتُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ قَاعِدًا وَأَبُو جَعْفَرٍ فِي نَاحِيَةٍ، فَرَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَنَظَرَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ مَرَّةً وَإِلَى الْكَعْبَةِ مَرَّةً، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا" وَكَرَّرَ ذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ. ثُمَّ التَفَتَ إِلَيَّ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ يَقُولُونَ أَهْلُ الْعِرَاقِ فِي هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ يَا عِرَاقِي؟ قُلْتُ: يَقُولُونَ أَسْرَى بِهِ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْمُقَدَّسِ، فَقَالَ: لَيْسَ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ أَسْرَى بِهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ إِلَى هَذِهِ وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ، وَقَالَ: مَا بَيْنَهُمَا حَرَمٌ...

“One day, I was sitting in the mosque (Masjid al-Haram) with Abu Ja'far beside me. He raised his head, sometimes looking at the sky and sometimes at the Ka'bah. Then he recited the first verse of Surah Al-Isra' and repeated it three times. Afterward, he turned toward me and said, 'What do the people of Iraq say about this verse, O you from Iraq?' I replied, 'They say that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ journeyed by night (Isra') from Masjid al-Haram to Bait al-Maqdis.' He said, 'It is not as they say. Rather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ journeyed by night (Isra') from this to this,' and he gestured with his hand toward the heavens. Then he added, 'Between the two is sacred (haram)’” [27].

In another Shi'a tafsir titled *Kitab al-Safi fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* by Muhammad bin Murtada (d. 1091 AH), after quoting the first part of QS. Al-Isra' [17] up to the words *bāraknā ḥaulahū*, he explains: "This refers to the kingdoms of Al-Aqṣā Mosque, which are in the heavens...". He then narrates a Shi'a hadith similar to the one previously mentioned by the researcher and also cites another Shi'a hadith, as follows:

عَنِ الصَّادِقِ أَنَّهُ سُئِلَ عَنِ الْمَسَاجِدِ الَّتِي لَهَا الْفَضْلُ؟ فَقَالَ الْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ، وَمَسْجِدُ الرَّسُولِ ﷺ. قِيلَ: وَالْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى؟ فَقَالَ: ذَاكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَيْهِ أَسْرَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ. فَقِيلَ: إِنَّ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ بَيْتَ الْمُقَدَّسِ. فَقَالَ: مَسْجِدُ الْكُوفَةِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْهُ.

"From Ja'far al-Sadiq, it is narrated that he was once asked about mosques that hold special virtues. He replied, "Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Rasul." He was then asked, "And what about Al-Aqṣā Mosque?" He responded, "That is in the heavens; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed Isra' to it." When asked further, "Indeed, people say it is in Bait al-Maqdis," he replied, "Masjid Kufah is superior to it" [30].

The conclusion that can be drawn is that both Sunni and Mu'tazilite schools have no disagreement regarding the location and meaning of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*, as explicitly mentioned in Surah Al-Isra' [17]:1, affirming it to be in *Bait al-Maqdis*. However, in the Shi'a perspective, *Al-Aqṣā Mosque* mentioned in the verse is interpreted as being in the heavens, not the one in *Bait al-Maqdis*. Furthermore, the hadith attributed to Ja'far al-Sadiq stating that *Masjid Kufah* is superior suggests an ideological stance within the Shi'a sect. This emphasis aims to highlight the significance of Kufah, which was the capital of the Islamic caliphate during the era of Caliph 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, over the mosque in Sham (*Bait al-Maqdis*), the administrative center of the Umayyad dynasty, which historically rivaled the leadership of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

3.3.3. The Promise of the Inherited Land of Bait al-Maqdis in QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105

In this discussion, the researcher focuses on the verse that indicates the promise of an inherited land granted by Allah on this earth. From the apparent meaning (*zahir nas*) of Surah Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105, it is clear that this inheritance is to be granted to Allah's righteous servants. There is no limitation to a specific race or people; as long as individuals meet the criterion of righteousness, they qualify for this divine promise. On this matter, there is no disagreement among scholars regarding the condition of righteousness (*salihah*) as the requirement for receiving the land inheritance promised by Allah.

Allah says:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

"And We have already written in the Book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention that the land [of Paradise] is inherited by My righteous servants" QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105

This verse becomes increasingly intriguing for discussion and research due to the differing opinions (*ikhtilaf*) among scholars regarding the meaning of *al-ard* (the land) mentioned in the verse. Some scholars interpret *al-ard* as Paradise, which will be inherited by the believers. Others argue that it refers to the entire earth, which will be inherited by the faithful. A third opinion is that it specifically refers to the land of Bait al-Maqdis, a sacred and blessed region tied to the history of the prophets and the righteous.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his tafsir, mentions that the term *al-ard* in Surah Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ فَفِيهِ وَجُوهٌ: أَحَدُهَا: الْأَرْضُ أَرْضُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالْعِبَادُ الصَّالِحُونَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْعَامِلُونَ بِطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى ... وَثَانِيهَا: أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى سَيُورِثُهَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ... وَثَالِثُهَا: هِيَ الْأَرْضُ الْمُقَدَّسَةُ يَرِثُهَا الصَّالِحُونَ.

“The meaning of Allah's statement, "That the land will be inherited by My righteous servants," has been interpreted in various ways. Some scholars argue that the land refers to Paradise, with the righteous being the believers who perform acts of obedience and devotion to Allah. Others suggest it refers to the physical earth, indicating that Allah will grant dominion over it to the believers as part of their conquests and divine rewards in this world. A third interpretation is that the land specifically denotes Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah (Bait al-Maqdis), symbolizing its spiritual and historical significance as a sacred inheritance for the righteous. These perspectives highlight both the spiritual and worldly dimensions of Allah's promise” [24].

The meaning of *al-Ard* is interpreted as *Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah*, referring to the land of *Bait al-Maqdis*. Those who support this interpretation cite Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 137, where the audience (*mukhatab*) is the Children of Israel. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī further adds that at the end of times, this land will be inherited by the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ when Prophet Isa descends from the heavens to defeat the Dajjal.

On the other hand, Az-Zamakhshari provides a more concise interpretation of Surah Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105 compared to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mafatih al-Ghaib*. He comments that the "inherited land" refers to the land that believers will inherit after the departure of disbelievers. He supports this by citing Allah's words in Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 128 and [7]: 137. Regarding the differing opinions on the meaning of *al-Ard*, Az-Zamakhshari briefly mentions the interpretations without delving into extensive detail. Regarding the opinions that differ on the meaning of *al-Ard*, Az-Zamakhshari mentions that it has been interpreted in various ways

وَعَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: هِيَ أَرْضُ الْجَنَّةِ. وَقِيلَ: الْأَرْضُ الْمُقَدَّسَةُ، تُرِثُهَا أُمَّةٌ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

“According to Ibn ‘Abbas, the term *al-Ard* refers to the land of Paradise. However, others interpret it as referring to *Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasah* (Bait al-Maqdis), which will be inherited by the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ” [26].

In the Shi'a tafsir by ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, his commentary on Surah Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105 does not provide a detailed explanation of this verse. This aligns with the *ijmali* (concise) approach of *Tafsir Al-Qummi*, which only offers a general interpretation of the meaning of verses. He even truncates the verse to the phrase “*anna al-ard yarithuha 'ibadiya al-salihun*” (that the land is inherited by My righteous servants). Below is a quotation of his statement:

وَقَوْلُهُ: (أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ) قَالَ: الْقَائِمُ عَلَيْهِ سَلَامٌ وَأَصْحَابُهُ.

“And regarding His words: “*anna al-ard yarithuha 'ibadiya al-salihun*” (that the land is inherited by My righteous servants), he [‘Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi] said: “It refers to *Al-Qā'im 'alayhi salam* and his followers” [27].

In his interpretation, ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi does not associate the “*inherited land*” with a specific location. Instead, he focuses on the meaning of the term *al-Salihun*, which he interprets as referring to *Al-Qaim 'alayhi salam*, known as Imam Mahdi in Shi'a belief, who is considered their twelfth Imam.

The conclusion from this comparison is that there are no significant differences among *kalam* exegetes regarding the meaning of *al-Ard*—it is interpreted as either Paradise, the earth in general (conquered from disbelievers), or specifically *Bait al-Maqdis*. However, Shi'a tafsir reflects their ideological inclination, interpreting *al-Salihun* as their twelfth Imam and his loyal followers, who are believed to inherit and govern the earth.

Finally, to facilitate understanding of the comparative *kalam* interpretations of verses related to *Bait al-Maqdis*, the researcher will present the data in the table below:

Table 3. Comparative Kalam Interpretations of Verses Related to Bait al-Maqdis

No	Interpretation of the Verses of Bait al-Maqdis	Schools of Kalam		
		Sunni	Mu'tazilah	Shi'a
1	The Geography of Bait al-Maqdis in QS. At-Tin [95]: 1-3	The literal meaning refers to an oath by three places where prophets were sent: <i>Bait al-Maqdis</i> , Mount Sinai (<i>Tur Sina</i>), and Mecca	The interpretation is the same as that of the Sunnis, with additional grammatical analysis (<i>i'rab</i>) of the word <i>sīnīn</i>	The Prophethood of the Prophet ﷺ and the Imamate of the infallible (<i>ma'sum</i>) Imams
2	Isra' dan Mi'raj in QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 1	<i>Al-Aqṣā Mosque</i> is located in <i>Bait al-Maqdis</i>	<i>Al-Aqṣā Mosque</i> is located in <i>Bait al-Maqdis</i>	<i>Al-Aqṣā Mosque</i> is in the heavens, and Masjid Kufah is superior. Al-Qummi does not provide an interpretation, aligns with the Sunni view, but adds that it refers to Al-Mahdi and his followers
3	The Promise of the Inherited Land of Bait al-Maqdis in QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 105	Al-Ard refers to Paradise, or the earth in general conquered from disbelievers, or it is <i>Bait al-Maqdis</i>	The same as the Sunni interpretation, without including the general earth	

4. Conclusion

The interpretations of *kalam* schools from Sunni and Mu'tazilite traditions show notable similarities in their exegesis of verses related to Bait al-Maqdis. Any differences that exist are minor and not significant. In contrast, the interpretations from the Shi'a *kalam* school often incorporate doctrinal elements from their teachings, resulting in interpretations that diverge significantly from the literal (*zahir*) meaning of the verses.

This can also be substantiated by historical evidence. Sunni and Mu'tazilite dynasties collaborated in the construction and development of *Al-Aqṣā Mosque*, beginning with the era of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan and continuing through the Abbasid Caliphate (under Caliph Al-Ma'mun, who followed Mu'tazilite thought), establishing Bait al-Maqdis as a hub of Islamic scholarship. Conversely, Shi'a history is marked by a dark chapter regarding the fall of Bait al-Maqdis to the Crusaders in 1099 CE, during the Fatimid Dynasty, which adhered to the Isma'iliyyah Imamiyyah Ithna 'Ashariyyah school of thought. Many historians strongly argue that the Fatimid Dynasty played a significant role in the loss of Bait al-Maqdis to the Crusaders.

Looking ahead, research on Bait al-Maqdis should be expanded to enrich the body of knowledge on this vital location, including studies on geopolitics, Islamic heritage, and other related fields. Finally, to liberate Bait al-Maqdis (Palestine) from modern colonialism, the Muslim community must

prioritize this issue, treat it as a central concern, and study it with authentic and accurate knowledge, including the exegesis of verses concerning Bait al-Maqdis.

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