

## Islamic Critical Thinking on The Unity Thematic of Al-Qur'ān of Al-Asās Fī At-Tafsīr

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### Abstract

The thematic unity in Al-Qur'ān is one of the methods of interpretation used by a few contemporary tafsīr scholars. It is a method that proves Al-Qur'ān from the beginning to its end is a comprehensive law with a great structure and its verses are related to each other and not divided. While 'ilmu al-munāsabāt is the science that connects two things from one side to another side. It means connecting between the sūrah and the previous sūrah or the āyah with the āyah before or after. This study aims to analyse the thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān in the book Al-Asās fī Tafsīr written by Said Hawwa from the Islamic critical thinking perspective. The researchers used two methods; descriptive method and analytical method. The first method used to collect informations regarding the methodology on thematic unity that used by Said hawwa in his book Al-Asās fī Tafsīr. The second method used to analyse the concept, theories of thematic unity in Al-Qur'ān which was initiated by Said Hawwa, and to analyse its theories based on Islamic critical thinking perspective as Islamic scholar. By these two methods, the writer found that according to him, there are two parts thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān. First, the thematic unity in every Sūrah of Al-qur'ān, which detailed the unity into each āyah, each beginning, and each ending. Second, the thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān in general which centered from Al-baqarah as the main sūrah in Al-Qur'ān. These unities of theme resulted in a great coherent of Al-Qur'ān. In addition, based on Islamic Critical thinking perspective, the methodology of thematic unity that used by Said Hawwa was complied by all theories which include objective thinking, analytical thinking, conceptual thinking, critical thinking and Ijtihād.

Keywords: Islamic, critical thinking, tafsīr bir ra'yi, said hawwa, al-qur'ān.

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### ملخص البحث

إن الوحدة الموضوعية في القرآن هي واحدة من مناهج التفسير التي يستخدمها عدد المفسرون المعاصرون. إنها قاعدة تثبت أن القرآن من بدايته إلى نهايته هو محكم السرد متين الأسلوب ترتبط آياته ببعضه ببعض. في حين أن علم المناسبة هو العلم الذي يربط شيئين من أي وجه من الوجوه في كتاب الله تعالى. وتعني به ارتباط السورة بما قبلها وما بعدها، وارتباط الآية بما قبلها أو بعدها. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة منهج الوحدة الموضوعية للقرآن بعدة الأفكار الواردة في كتاب الأساس في التفسير الذي كتبه الشيخ سعيد حو من منظور التفكير النقدي الإسلامي. وقد استخدم الباحثان المنهجين الأساسيين؛ المنهج الاستقرائي والمنهج التحليلي. أما المنهج الاستقرائي تستخدم لجمع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمنهجية التي استخدمها الشيخ سعيد حوى في كتابه الأساس في التفسير. وأما المنهج التحليلي فقد تم استخدامه لتحليل المفهوم، ونظريات حول الوحدة الموضوعية في القرآن التي قام بها الشيخ سعيد حوى، ومناقشة نظرياتها من منظور التفكير النقدي كعالم إسلامي. من خلال هذين المنهجين، ظهر لنا أن هناك قسمين كبيرين في الوحدة الموضوعية للقرآن. أولاً: الوحدة الموضوعية في كل سورة القرآن، التي تفصل الوحدة في كل منها، كل بداية وكل نهاية. ثانياً، الوحدة الموضوعية للقرآن بشكل عام التي تتركز في سورة البقرة كمنطلق رئيسي في القرآن. هذه الوحدة من الموضوعات في القرآن دلت على شمولية الموضوع في القرآن. واستناداً إلى منظور التفكير النقدي الإسلامي، تمثل منهجية الوحدة الموضوعية التي استخدمها الشيخ سعيد حواء من خلال جميع النظريات التي تشمل التفكير الموضوعي والتفكير التحليلي والتفكير النظري والتفكير النقدي والاجتهاد. الكلمات المفتاحية: الإسلامي، التفكير النقدي، التفسير بالرأي، سعيد حوى، القرآن.

## Introduction

### Introduction

Being islamic thinkers is an absolute heavy task. Many scholars of past and present that contribute their thoughts in great works. One of them is in the field of interpretation of Al-Qur'ān. The scholars of interpretation are required to translate the contents of the Al-Qur'ān and explain it to the ummah in an easily language without leaving the boundaries. It is also about making ijtihād how to explain the law of God becomes more applicable to mankind, and to prove that Al-Qur'ān has a great coherent. Therefore, it takes an intelligent mind, a pure heart and a sharp mind.

According to Az-Zurqāni, “Al-Qurān Al-Karīm from its beginning to its end it is a solid narration, a detail speech, a coherent structure, a strong connection between its chapters and verses, and its carry a strong miracle. No found in its part a dissociation, its end relates to its beginning.”

The thematic unity is one of exegesis methodology that used by a few contemporer tafsīr scholars, such as Al-Baqā'I (Tanāsubul Āyat Wa Suwar), Assuyūthi (Qathful Azhār Fī Kasyfil Asrār), Muhammad Thahir Ibnu 'Asyur (At-tahrīr wa At-tanwīr) and Said Hawwa (Al-Asās fī At-tafsīr). Said Hawwa was one of a pioneer scholar who interpret Al-Qur'ān with the method of thematic unity. In other words, he tried to read al-Qur'ān and associate the content into a whole unity that relate to each other.

For example, Said Hawwa tried to relate the meaning of sūrah An-Nās to sūrah Al-Baqarah. He said, “The story of Adam (peace be upon him) ends in Surat Al-Baqarah by the Almighty saying:

[وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ] [البقرة: 39]

“And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”(Al-Baqarah:39). In the story of prophet Adam in sūrah Al-Baqarah we saw the danger and weevil of the devil, while in sūrah An-Nās we saw that there are evils from jinn, and there are evils from mankind, and they are the disbelievers that mentioned in the last story of Adam from Al-Baqarah.

By this method, he became one of the first scholar who could denied the allegations of orientalist about inconsistency Al-Qur'ān from one phares to another phrase, and from a chapter to another chapter. On the other side, the thematic unity that used by Said Hawwa has not been reviewed from Islamic critical thinking persepctive. Thus, this paper is focused on analysing the methods of thematic unity of Said Hawwa in his book Al-Asās Fī Tafsīr.

#### Al-Asās fī At-Tafsīr

Al-Asās fī At-Tafsīr is among Said Hawwa's prominent works in the field of islamic thinking. This book becomes reference for many people, scholars, students, or whoever wants to learn about tafsīr. He mentioned the goal for his writing on his book Kay lā Namdhī ba'īdan 'an ihtiyajati ash-r, for his tafsīr as below:

It is destined to understand Al-Qur'ān and highlights an aside of important aspect from its great structure. In addition, it is designate to refuse any suspicions from the enemy of Islam who reject the issue on arrangement of Al-Qur'ān and the thematic unity in Al-Qur'ān.

It is designated to answer many questions that asserted on impossiblity of living under Al-Qur'an's philospohy.

It is designated to build a great personality that based on Al-Qurān's value for ummah, and interpreates an applicable action.

It is designated to present a true believe that far from any refusion of Allah.

#### The importance of research in the thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān

Said Hawwa mentioned this issue in the introduction of Al-Asās fil Manhaj, "Our scholars have been researching in the issue of the connections between verses of chapters in Al-Quran, and the connections between the chapters in Al-Qur'an. Here comes the text of partition in chapters of Al-Qur'ān: part At-Athiwāl, part Al-Miain, part Al-Matsāni, and part Al-Mufassshol. But unfotunately, there has been no scholars who complete the research in this issue as a whole. In other hand, People nowadays are asking the connections between verses of Al-Qur'ān and its chapters. So here I am, trying to get it done."

In addition, he is trying to explain the difference of his tafsīr from other books of tafsīr by saying, “The first characteristic from this tafsīr is presenting for the first time in the world a new theory and methodology in the thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān. This issue has been researched by many scholars, but they merely stop in connecting between the meaning of one chapter to another chapter, or in connecting the meaning of the beginning of chapter and its ending.”

Therefore, Said Hawwa mentioned the objective of interpreting Al-Qur'ān based on his theory in the thematic unity:

Firstly, it is to present one of the miracles of Al-Qur'ān from its structure. Ar-Rāzi said in his tafsīr on sūrah Al-baqarah, “Al-Qur'ān is miraculous from its words, its meaning, and its structure of verses.”

Secondly, it is to refuse the suspicions that questioned by orientalists about the impossibility of thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān. Said Hawwa said, “I’ve been asked many times about this issue, and I answered that al-Qur'ān is the words of Allah, the Almighty God. It has connections not only in its verses but in all verses, chapters, as one unity. With Allah’s guidance, I completed this issue in Al-Asās fī Tafsīr.”

The Orientalists and the enemies of Islam have been challenging in the issue of thematic unity of the Quran, they claimed that the verses of Quran are not collected by the context, and there are no coherent between all verses. Goldziher, a Jewish orientalist stated in his book *Madzāhib At-Tafsīr Al-Islami* about this issue. “Al-Qur'ān from the beginning of Islamic history has not been made the tendency toward the true belief of Tauhīd except a little victory.” This statement is meant to refuse the coherent of verses in Al-Qur'ān and the thematic unity in it. Goldziher was supported the statement of Syi’ah that denied the origin of Al-Qur'ān.

Replied to this issue, Said Hawwa said in his book *Al-Asās fī Tafsīr*, “The coherent in the chapters of Al-Qur'an is one of the miracle from Al-Qur'ān its self, that beyond the reach of human mind” Said Hawwa also stated the mistake done by a scholar – may Allah forgive him – by thinking that the arrangement of all chapters in Al-Qur'ān are based on their time of revelation, which is according to Said Hawwa is not correct at all due to absence of evidence from the text. According

to hawa, the arrangement of chapters in Al-Quran is an absolute action done by Allah which only he, who knows the 'ibrah, and beyond the reach of human mind.

Although there were few contradicitions about thematic unity, the contemporary tafsīr scholars replied, that true definition of thematic unity was not implied such a compile of books of art. For example, a book of fictional story which has method to keep a story in line. Al-Qur'ān is a guidance book consist of stories and events that suitable for some conditions, and some context.

The Thematic Unity of Al-Qur'ān according to Said Hawwa

Divided into two parts:

The thematic unity in every sūrah of Al-qur'ān

Comperhensive view of each sūrah

This method was used by Said to explain the main meaning of each sūrah. By this method, it helps people to reflect and to caputre the main goal of each sūrah before read the whole sūrah.

Providing the context of each sūrah

For example: As stated in his words of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, "Sūrah Al-Mā'idah explain about the break of promise, a refusion to Allah's order, and destroying the earth. Allah ask us in Sūrah Al-Maidah to not have this behaviour so that we are not becoming sinners or losers. This order is completing what Allah told in sūrah An-Nisa, which explain us to do good deeds."

In addition, Said tried to relate the contex of sūrah al-Mā'idah by two verses of Al-baqarah 26 and 27.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا ۚ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا مَثَلًا ۚ يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا ۚ وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾﴾ [البقرة: 26-27]

“Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?" He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient. Who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth? It is those who are the losers.” [Al-baqarah 26-27]

Said Hawwa said, “these two āyah from sūrah Al-baqarah explain the path of kufr (refusion) and Nifāq (betrayal) and those who do that, called Al-Kāfirun and Al-Munafiqūn. Hence, Al-Maidah comes with a warning to liberate human from those bad deeds.”

From the explanation above, it is stated that Said tried to be making ijtihād by relating the context of sūrah maidah and sūrah al-baqarah.

Relating between the beginning of each sūrah and its theme.

For example:

Said said in the beginning of sūrah al-qiyāmah, “The beginning of sūrah Al-Qiyāmah is talking about Allah’s promise of the judgement day, and that beginning is the context of whole sūrah.”

{لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (١) وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ (٢)} [القيامة: 1-2]

“I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And I swear by the reproaching soul to the certainty of resurrection.” [Al-Qiyāmah: 1-2].

Relating between the beginning of sūrah and its end

In tafsīr of sūrah As-Syu’arâ, Said Hawwa related between the opening of sūrah and its end. “We highlight that the end of this sūrah is stating the Allah is the only God and Muhammad is his messenger. And the connection between the opening and the ending is clear. Which Allah Said,

طسم ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾ لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾ [الشعراء: 1-3]

“Ta, Seen, Meem. These are the verses of the clear Book. Perhaps, [O Muhammad], you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers.” [As-Syu'ara 1-3] and the end of sūrah

﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾﴾ [الشعراء: 192-194]

“And indeed, the Qur'an is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down. Upon your heart, [O Muhammad] - that you may be of the warners -.” [As-Syu'ara 192-194].

Relating between the beginning of sūrah and its position

For example, Said stated that sūrah Yusuf is an explanation from sūrah al-baqarah âyah 23:

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ [البقرة: 23]

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a sūrah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers” [Al-baqarah:23].

The connection between these âyah from al-baqarah and sūrah yusuf is; Sūrah Yusuf begin with the explanation that Allah is the one who deliver Al-Quran to Muhammad, and Muhammad before the revelation was incautious. Thus, sūrah yusuf end with the details of Yusuf so that become the evidence of authenticity of Al-Quran.

The unity of thematic on verses of Al-Quran

Here comes an example;

In sūrah Ar-Rahmān āyah 7,

﴿وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ﴾ [الرحمن: 7]

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance” [Ar-Rahman:7] Said Hawwa concluded the relation between the raising of heaven and establishing the balance by saying, “the mention of



establishing the balance, after mentioning the Raising of heaven indicate the discovery of total dimensions of balances. And the mention of balance here, is also a sign of Allah's gift to humankind."

Relation between the end of sūrah and its theme, positions, and meaning.

In sūrah At-Thalāq, Said related the ending of sūrah with its context which closed by,

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾ [الطلاق:12]

"It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge." [At-Thalāq:12. Allah close this sūrah by explanation of the goal of his law is to guide mankind. Why? Because his knowledge is covered in everything. Which is similar to content of sūrah that stated about Allah's power.

From the explanation above, it is clearly shown that Said Hawwa was the initiator to use this methodology on his tafsīr.

The thematic unity of Al-Qur'an in general

According to Said Hawwa, every single sūrah in Al-Quran is related to sūrah Al-baqarah as the foundation of Al-Qur'an, and Al-baqarah is the details of what sūrah al-Fātihah generalized. Hence, Said Hawwa comes with great conclusion that never explained before by any scholar of tafsīr. To make an easy understanding, here is the table of the relation between each sūrah in Al-Qur'ān to sūrah Al-Baqarah.

Number	Partition of Al-Qur'ān Consist of Sūrah	Explained from the āyah of Al-baqarah,
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## 1 At-Thiwāl

(The longest) Al-baqarah to At-Taubah

Āli Imron to At-taubah 1-39

Al-Anfāl and At-Taubah 217

## 2 Al-Mi'ain

(One hundred āyah in average) Yūnus 1-2

Hūd 21

Yūsuf 23, 24

Ar-ra'du 26

Ibrāhim 257, 258

Al-Hijr

An-Nahl 210

Al-isra' 211

Al-Kahfi 212

Maryam 213

Thāha

Al-Anbiya' 6

Al-hajj 21, 22

Al-Mu'minūn 25, 29

An-Nūr 208

Al-Furqān 213

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As-Syu'aro	252
An-Naml	252
Al-Qoshosh	252
3 Al-Matsāni	
(Sūrahs which often repeated by readers)	Al-'ankabut to Qāf
4 Al-Mufassshol	
) the details)	Adz-dzāriyat to An-Nās

Why is sūrah Al-baqarah?

From the table above, it is clearly stated that Said Hawwa tried to relate the meaning of all sūrah with the content from sūrah Al-baqarah. And here raised a question. Why?

Firstly, Imam As-Suyūthi said about the secret in revealing sūrah Al-baqarah in Madīnah, “Sūrah Al-baqarah was revealed in Madīnah, Madīnah is a symbol and foundation of Islamic state, and it was a capital of Islamic law, the start for those converters of Islam to pursue a new religion, the centre of dakwah against non-islamic state in Makkah .. And the characteristic of the believers who fully surrender to Allah, was mentioned in a chapter in sūrah Al-baqarah. Sūrah Al-baqarah also the most complete sūrah which consist all the law, thus, it is named similarly with city of madīnah. Means, it is the centre of knowledge.”.

Secondly, Said Hawa in the beginning of sūrah al-baqarah, narrated around 10 ahādith about the virtue of sūrah al-baqarah, one of them is narrated from Abu Umāmah. Rasulullah PBUH said, “Read Al-Qur'ān, it is beneficial to the companions on the Day of Resurrection, read the Zahrawain: sūrah Al-baqarah and Āli 'Imrān; they come on the Day of Resurrection as if they were clouds. Then he said: Read Al-baqarah, it is a blessing to read it, it is a failure to leave it.” In brief,

Said Hawwa believed that with this hadith and ātsar, he tried to relate each sūrah by sūrah Al-Baqarah. So that Al-Qur'ān has a unity of theme.

Analytical view of the researchers

Contribution in the field of exegesis or tafsīr is not an easy task. Particularly interpreting the meaning of Al-Qur'an. Because Al-Qur'an is the words of Allah, the guidance of mankind. Thus, whoever contribute in this work, should has a pure intention. With great ability comes great responsibility. So, did Said Hawwa in his Al-Asās fī Tafsīr. He shown his ability to become one of most influential scholars in Islamic thinking. At least, as an Islamic thinker, he did many methods of thinking in order to deliver the meaning of Al-Qur'ān in this book. Those methods are:

Objective thinking

Said Hawwa did not only write a book on tafsīr, but many books with various themes. It shows that he masters the basic of Islamic knowledge. So, before he writes this Al-Asas fī Tafsīr, he decided the goal and the objective of this book. As stated above:

It is destined to understand Al-Quran and highlights an aside of important aspect from its great structure. In addition, it is designate to refuse any suspicions from the enemy of Islam who reject the issue on arrangement of Al-Qur'ān and the unity of thematic in Al-Qur'ān. Based on this objective, it is shown that Said willing to prove that Al-Qur'ān has a role as a mu'jiz (the strong that weakens the others) based on its great structure in every āyah and sūrah. As Allah said

﴿قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾ [الإسراء: 88]

“Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.” [Al-Isra:88].

In addition, Muhammad Ali Al-Shabuni in his book al-Tibyan mentions the aspects of the miracle of the Qur'an as follows:

Al-Qur'ān's arrangement is beautiful, it is different from the arrangement in other arabic language.

Al-Qur'ān's uslūb (sentence stucture) are unique uslūb that are different from all Arabic uslūb.

It contains an impossibility threat and unopens opportunities for a human to create the same structure.

Al-Qur'ān has a complete form of legislation and law with more details exceeds every man-made law.

Al-Qur'ān does describe ghāib (magical things) that cannot be understood except by revelation itself.

Al-Qur'ān does not contrary to modern general knowledge that ascertained by truth.

Al-Qur'ān contains the principles of sciences in it.

Al-Qur'ān has a great influence on its believers and its enemies.

It is designated to answer many questions that asserted on impossibility of living under Al-Qur'ān's philosophy. This objective also stated in Al-Qur'ān,

(إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا) [الإسراء:9]

“Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward.” [Al-Isra':9].

It is designated to build a great personality that based on Al-Qur'ān's value for ummah, and interprets an applicable action. A tafsīr scholar has a heavy duty to explain the words of Allah to humankind that Allah's words are applicable to any conditions, any law, any time, any society, and any place. It is like Allah said,

(مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يُوْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِّي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ) [آل عمران:79]

“It is not for a human [prophet] that Allah should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, "Be servants to me rather than Allah," but [instead, he would say], "Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied." [Āli Imrān:79].

It is designated to present a true believe that far from any refusion of Allah as a revealer.

Analytical thinking

The ability of analysing is the basic needs for every Islamic thinker. In this book, Said Hawwa already shown his great analysis in most of the words he wrote. He mostly quoted his explanation from the words of other scholars such as Ibnu Katsīr, An-Nasafī, Sayyid Qutb in Fī Zhilālil Qur'ān and from Al-Alūsi in Rūhul Ma'ani. The reason was stated by Said Hawwa him self in the end of his introduction of his tafsīr, "It was not from my doing to strengthen the first chapters of my book, I used mostly from Ibnu Katsīr and tafsīr An-Nasafi, because not many references and resources when I was in jail, while I begin to write this book. Both these tafsīr are famous tafsīr. If Ibnu Katsīr was famous by his tafsir bil ma'tsūr, then tafsīr an-nasafi was famous by its brief issues on matters regarding I'tiqodiyyah (tauhid) and madhhabiyah."

The way of Said Hawwa presenting his tafsīr was also used dirāsah tahlīliyyah (analytical method). The systematics of writing in general was Said Hawwa always presents an introduction before each sūrah. Than he includes each sūrah to different category that divided into At-Thiwal, Al-Mi'ain, Al-Mufasshol, or Al-Matsāni. Each sūrah than explained its relations (munāsabah) with other sūrah.

The methods of interpretation of Sa'id Hawwa can be formulated as follows:

First, he explained some āyat based on its munāsabah (connections) category from the sūrah before, and from the āyat before, and from sūrah al-baqarah in general.

Second, he interpreted the āyah, explaining the general meaning of āyah.

Third, he explained the munāsabah (connections) between maqtha' or faqrah.

Fourth, he than explained the 'ibrah (lessons) from each āyah.

For example, he wrote the words of opening before he begins to explain each sūrah. As stated in his words of sūrah Al-Māidah, "sūrah Al-Maidah explain about the break of promise, a refusion to Allah's order, and also destroying the earth. Allah ask us in sūrah Al-Maidah to not have this

behaviour so that we are not becoming sinners or losers. This order is completing what Allah told in sūrah An-Nisa, which explain us to do good deeds.”

As an additional information, Said hawwa was known as a scholar with muslim brotherhood background, he did not have any particular opinions regarding some important basic issues, such as his orientations in āyat about kalām (tauhid), fiqh (jurisprudence), and tasawwuf except he quoted mostly the opinions from madzhab asy'ariyyah in āyah regarding kalam, and various madhāhib in fiqh without being rigid in one madhhab.

#### Conceptual thinking

Another ability that required by Islamic thinker is conceptual thinking. Without thinking the concept of his works, Said Hawwa would not have find the concept of the thematic unity of Al-Qur'an. So based on this concept, he writes all his thought about interpretation of Al-Qur'an. Which resulted a great theory.

One, he proved that Al-Qur'ān has a coherent (wihdahtul maudhu') in one great theme.

Two, he proved that Al-Qur'ān has relations (munāsabāt) between each āyah to āyah, between āyah to sūrah, between sūrah to sūrah, and between each sūrah to sūrah al-baqarah.

The explanation was written above.

#### Critical thinking

It is important for any scholar to not just receive the knowledge, but it should be criticizing, especially when it crosses the boundaries of Islamic foundation. So, did Said Hawwa try to criticize some scholar. As stated above, The Orientalists and the enemies of Islam has been challenging in the issue of thematic unity of the Quran, they claimed that the verses of Quran is not collected by the context, and there are no coherent between all verses. Goldziher, a jew orientalist stated in his book Madzāhib At-Tafsīr Al-Islami about this issue. “Al-Qur'an from the beginning of Islamic history has not been made the tendency toward the true believe of Tauhīd except a little victory.”

This statement is meant to refuse the coherent of verses in Al-Quran and the thematic unity in it. Goldziher was supported the statement of Syi'ah that denied the origin of Al-Quran. Moreover, the criticism came from Dr. Richard Bell, (1991, 1993) who was a prominent Qur'an scholar from Scotland, and has an outstanding academic career in Edinburgh university has addressed about thematic incongruity or non relatedness in Qur'ānic discourse. Bells comments focused primarily on philological and exegetical matters.

Motivated by these hesitations, said Hawwa used his inventions on thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān to criticize those wrong assumptions. He said, "I have tried in this interpretation to fill this gap with the belief that the secrets of the unity of thematic in Qur'ān is not limited, and the talk on this subject was demanded by public, particularly some orientalist who tried to question the Muslims or accusing the Qur'ān, or accusing Muslim scholars, I have become convinced that this issue (wihdatul maudhu') must be covered, and the reader will see this tafsīr, which by Allah's help, is fully covered and well explained. The reader will see the validity of our intentions in this coverage whenever he read a new page of this tafsīr."

### Ijtihād

There is no a new theory without effort of ijtihād. Said Hawwa tried his best to initiate the theory of thematic unity of Al-Qur'an in writing his tafsīr, which is resulting a great conclusion. As example is the divide of every sūrah in Al-Quran and their relationship with sūrah Al-baqarah as written on the table above. He said it him self, "The first characteristic of this tafsīr, may be its main feature that I introduced it for the first time - as far as I know - a new theory on the subject of Qur'anic thematic unity, a subject that has many scholar tried and authored in various books and resulted in many things, but most of the results were only finish in connecting between āyahs in a sūrah, or the connections between a beginning of sūrah and ending of the sūrah before, and they did not far from this - as far as I know -."

Finally, as Ibnu Taimiyah said, Al-Qur'ān has three main themes in general, ilāhiyyāt (divinities), nubuwwāt (prophecies), syarāi' (laws).

### Conclusion



From the explanation above, it can be concluded that:

Said Hawwa was born to be a good Islamic scholar. Instead of sat and watched, he fought and struggled, to create as many as possible contribution for ummah. Even this book was written while he imprisoned in syria. The work of Said Hawwa in tafsīr, shows us the importance of researching Al-Qur'an by the theory of the thematic unity. It is to present the miracoulus of Al-Qur'ān, and to refuse the suspicions of enemy of Islam about the incoherent of Al-Quran.

Although Said Hawwa was not the one who iniated the theory of relating between sūrahs in Al-Qur'an, many scholars before his presence, already researched. Only the difference is the scholars before him merely research in general without focusing and detailed as Said Hawwa did. Among them are; Al-Baqā'i in his book *Nuzhumudurur Fī Tanāsubil āyat wassuar*, Al-Alūsi in his book *Rūhul Ma'ani fī Tafsīril Qur'anil 'Azhim Wa Sab'ul Matsāni*, Ar-Rāzi in his books *Mafātihul ghoib*, and As-Suyūthi in his book *Tanāsuqi durur Fī Tanāsubi suar*. And from the contemporer scholars such as Muhammad Rasyid Ridha in his book *Tafsīr Al-Manar*, and Sayyid Quthb in his book *Fī Zhilālil Qur'an*.

There are two main thematic unity in Al-Qur'ān according to Said Hawwa. First, the thematic unity in every Sūrah of Al-qur'ān, which detailed the unity into each āyah, each beginning, and each ending. Second, the thematic unity of Al-Qur'ān in general which centered from Al-baqarah as the main sūrah in Al-Qur'ān. These unities of theme resulted in a great coherent of Al-Qur'ān.

Said Hawwa's theory about the thematic unity in Al-Qur'ān, - which stated Al-Fātiḥah as the foundation, and Al-baqarah is the centre of Al-Qur'an, and every sūrah except those sūrah are the explanation from Al-baqarah- indicates the hard work of islamic critical thinking on ijtihād in order to deliver great islamic thinking. Not stay in stagnant nor jumūd.

Based on Islamic critical thinking perspective, Said Hawwa's work had complied with all basic theories of Islamic critical thinking. He fulfilled the objective thinking, the analytical thinking, the conceptual thinking, the critical thinking, and did Ijtihad as a moslem scholar.



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