

Steadfastness of Faith "Thematic Tafsir of QS Ali Imran"

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Steadfast Faith; Thematic
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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the challenge of understanding and applying steadfastness of faith as expressed in QS Ali Imran verses 102-104 within contemporary Muslim life, bridging classical exegesis with modern realities. Given the pressures of globalization, cultural shifts, and technological changes, strengthening spiritual resilience is urgently needed to maintain social cohesion and personal faith. Prior research has explored aspects of faith, prayer, and cultural integration but lacks a comprehensive thematic approach that connects these teachings to current challenges. This study's novelty lies in synthesizing classical and modern hermeneutics to provide a holistic framework emphasizing patience, sincerity, and reliance on God, making the Qur'anic message practically relevant today. Using thematic interpretation, the research aims to deepen understanding of faith's role in fostering resilience and unity. The findings offer valuable guidance for Muslims, educators, and scholars, supporting spiritual steadfastness and social solidarity amidst modern trials, thereby contributing meaningfully to Islamic scholarship and community well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Steadfastness of faith in daily life is an essential element that is the foundation for Muslims in living a life full of dynamics (El-Aswad, 2012; Fakhrurrazi et al., 2024; Rahman, 2024). In the face of a world filled with challenges, tests, and temptations, steadfastness of faith plays a crucial role as a key pillar in defending religious principles (Sittser, 2019; Siwoku-Awi & Foluke, 2021). With steadfast faith, an individual is able to face trials, cope with pressures, and maintain spiritual harmony. In this context, Surah Ali Imran is one of the main sources of inspiration that provides guidance for Muslims on how to maintain steadfastness in the midst of life's trials. This surah not only covers the stories of the struggles of Muslims in the past, but also teaches relevant spiritual principles to be applied in modern life. One of the important events that is a reflection of the

steadfastness of faith described in Surah Ali Imran is the Battle of Uhud (Ezz, 2024). In this event, Muslims faced defeat which is a valuable lesson about the importance of strong faith, patience, and devotion to Allah. Verses such as QS. Ali Imran: 102-104 gives a profound message about the importance of maintaining piety, telling the truth, and living life with strong faith. Allah said:

102: "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا" 103: "يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَارَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ" 104: "إِنَّا عَرَفْنَا أَنَّكُمْ لَا تَحْتَمِلُونَ فَأَمَرْنَا بِرَأَاةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ وَرَسُولُهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا"

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak the truth. That Allah may repair your deeds and forgive your sins; And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed gained a great victory" (QS. Ali Imran: 102-104). This verse underlines that steadfastness of faith is not just a matter of belief, but is also reflected in deeds, words, and attitudes.

Despite the fundamental role of steadfastness of faith in the life of a Muslim, particularly when facing trials, there is limited comprehensive understanding of how the values of steadfast faith from QS Ali Imran (verses 102-104) can be effectively internalized and applied in modern life. The challenge lies in bridging the spiritual teachings with contemporary realities faced by Muslims amid rapid globalization and social change, where faith is frequently tested by external pressures and internal doubts (Abdullah, 2017; Tibi, 2023).

The urgency to study steadfastness of faith is heightened by the complex challenges Muslims face today, including cultural shifts, technological disruptions, and moral dilemmas. These factors often cause spiritual instability, leading to wavering faith or weakening religious commitment. Understanding how QS Ali Imran's teachings can strengthen individual and collective faith is crucial for fostering resilience and social cohesion in Muslim communities.

Moreover, the Battle of Uhud's lessons embedded in the surah provide timeless insights into maintaining spiritual fortitude and unity under adversity, making it imperative to explore how these teachings can be revitalized to address contemporary spiritual and social challenges.

Steadfastness of faith also has a wide impact in shaping the spiritual strength of Muslims, especially when facing various trials in life. Literature review shows that steadfastness of faith not only affects the spiritual life of individuals, but also has a positive impact on social life. For example, research conducted by Fauzan (2022) highlights the importance of a complementary relationship between prayer and effort. In the perspective of the Qur'an, prayer and effort are two inseparable elements in building steadfastness of faith. When Muslims face the trials of life, the combination of sincere prayer and maximum effort becomes the way to obtain help and success. Steadfastness of faith is also reflected in the individual's ability to face challenges with courage and wisdom. According to Ismah (2015), in her study that adopted the thought of Toshihiko Izutsu, the concept of faith in the Qur'an refers to a deep understanding of the meaning of words in the holy book. This understanding is not only intellectual, but also leads to the appreciation and consistent application of religious values.

In the context of modern life, the challenges faced by Muslims are no less severe than in the past (Esack, 2013). Rapidly evolving technology, globalization, and rapid social change often give rise to various forms of tests of faith. In such a situation, Surah Ali Imran remains relevant as a source of inspiration that teaches Muslims to stick to religious principles. His verses provide

motivation to face challenges with courage, patience, and trust in God. For example, the lessons of the Battle of Uhud can be applied in the modern context as a reminder that defeat or failure is not the end of everything, but rather part of a learning process that strengthens faith and character. In addition, steadfastness of faith also helps individuals to remain consistent in living a life full of value and meaning. In many situations, strong faith provides clear moral guidance and helps a person to stay on the right track. For example, Muslims who face social pressures, such as discrimination or injustice, can find strength in their faith to persevere and fight for the truth. This view is in line with the message in QS. Ali Imran: 102-104, who emphasizes the importance of telling the truth and maintaining piety as a form of obedience to Allah.

There is a significant gap in integrating classical thematic exegesis with modern interpretative frameworks to articulate how steadfastness of faith can be operationalized amid modern trials. Most research fails to provide a comprehensive, thematic understanding that connects spiritual values, historical context, and practical applications relevant to today's Muslim experience.

This study uniquely applies thematic interpretation to QS Ali Imran, bridging historical exegesis by classical scholars with contemporary hermeneutic methods to elucidate the concept of steadfastness of faith. By combining spiritual, social, and cultural analyses, it offers a nuanced framework for applying Qur'anic teachings to modern challenges, emphasizing patience, sincerity, and reliance on God as vital spiritual resources.

This research aims to examine the meaning of faith contained in Surah Ali Imran, as well as how thematic interpretations can explore and explain the concept in the context of the lives of Muslims. Through a thematic interpretation approach, this research also seeks to answer the challenges of faith in the modern era by providing a deeper understanding of the firmness of faith. In addition, the analysis was carried out to see the relevance of faith steadfastness in improving the spiritual quality of Muslims and facing various challenges of life in this dynamic era.

This research provides spiritual guidance for Muslims seeking to strengthen their faith amid trials, offers religious educators enriched interpretive tools, and contributes to Islamic studies by integrating classical and contemporary exegesis. Additionally, it supports community resilience and social harmony by emphasizing shared values of patience, truthfulness, and faithfulness.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in this paper is a thematic interpretation approach, which focuses on the context analysis of the verses in Surah Ali Imran related to steadfastness of faith. This approach allows the author to explore the meaning of faith from historical, social, and spiritual perspectives. In this study, the author will refer to classical and contemporary interpretations, such as Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir al-Qurtubi, and Tafsir al-Razi, to explore interpretations related to the steadfastness of faith. In addition, the analysis will also involve authentic Hadith books as supporting references that provide further explanations about the steadfastness of faith in daily life. In analyzing thematic interpretation, the author will also refer to theories of interpretation developed by great scholars, including Qawa'id Tafsir outlined by Mahmud (2021). As explained by Mahmud (2021), the rules

of interpretation help in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an more accurately and in accordance with the context of the times. This thematic interpretation is not only relevant to understanding the firmness of faith in ancient times, but it also provides useful guidance for Muslims in the modern era, which is full of challenges and tests

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Keywords:

1. Steadfastness of Faith (الثبات على الإيمان):

In language, "thabat" means firm or firm, while "faith" refers to belief or belief in Allah SWT. Steadfastness of faith is the ability to remain firm in holding on to religious teachings despite being faced with various tests and challenges in life. This concept reflects a deep spiritual value, where a believer is required not to be wavering by worldly temptations or difficulties he faces. As exemplified by the prophets and apostles, steadfastness of faith is the foundation in facing all forms of tests, both in the form of rejection of society and physical suffering. According to Azizah et al. (2024), efforts such as those made by Achmad Djuwahir through the internalization of Qur'anic verses into the macapat phrase show a local approach to grounding religious values so that they are easier to understand by the community, including the values of faithfulness. "Achmad Djuwahir internalizes the understanding of Juz 'amma verses into Javanese macapat songs," wrote Azizah et al. (2024), which provides insight into how religious teachings can be conveyed in a way that is more relevant to the cultural context.

2. Test (الابتلاء):

The term "ibtila" comes from the root word "bala," which means test or trial. The exam is not only limited to physical difficulties, but also includes spiritual and mental aspects. In the Islamic perspective, testing is Allah SWT's way of measuring the level of faith and steadfastness of His servants. The trials that humans face can be in the form of loss, economic hardship, or other challenges that require the strength of faith to face them. As stated by Azizah et al. (2024), the application of religious values into local cultural forms, such as tembang macapat, is an effective way to help people understand the meaning of exams in their lives. With this approach, test scores as a means of spiritual improvement can be more accepted by the wider community.

3. Patience (الصبر):

Patience or "sabr" means resilience in facing difficulties, both physically and psychologically. In the Qur'an, patience is often mentioned as one of the main qualities of a believer that must be cultivated to face the trials of life. Patience does not only mean refraining from complaining, but also continuing to strive in obedience to Allah SWT in the midst of various challenges. According to Azizah et al. (2024), the application of values such as patience can be bridged through local cultural methods. Achmad Djuwahir, for example, used the macapat song to convey messages of patience in the context of Javanese life, making this concept easier to understand and apply by the local community.

Verses of the Qur'an

Surah Ali Imran, verses 102-105:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ 103: "يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَارَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ ۖ 102: "وَرَسُولُهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا" 104: "إِنَّا عَرَفْنَا أَنَّكُمْ لَا تَحْتَمِلُونَ فَأَمَرْنَا بِرَاءَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ"

Translation: "O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak the truth. That Allah may repair your deeds and forgive your sins; and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed gained a great victory."

Classification and Asbab Nuzul

Surah Ali Imran is included in the category of surah Madaniyah, which means that its verses were revealed after the migration of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to Medina. This surah has the privilege of conveying teachings and instructions to Muslims, especially in the face of the severe trials of life. One of the main themes in this surah is the steadfastness of faith, which is relevant to the various challenges faced by Muslims. The verses in Surah Ali Imran were revealed in the context of major events, including after the defeat of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. At that time, Muslims experienced a great test that shook their faith, so the revelation that came down was intended to provide spiritual and moral reinforcement to face the ordeal firmly. The Nuzul asbab from several verses in this surah specifically provides enlightenment for Muslims to remain steadfast in their faith despite facing severe trials. The defeat in the Battle of Uhud became an important background for the descent of verses that emphasized the importance of determination. In this context, these verses serve as a source of motivation, arouse the spirit of Muslims, and instill the belief that Allah's help is always with those who are patient and pious. According to the view of As-Suyuthi (2020), understanding the reasons for the descent of verses or Asbab Nuzul is an important step in uncovering the meaning and wisdom contained in the Qur'an. This knowledge allows us to understand how historical context can enrich the appreciation of the message of the Qur'an.

Rochman (2020) underlines the importance of Asbab Nuzul as the key to understanding the meaning of Qur'anic verses in depth. For example, the verses in Surah Ali Imran relating to steadfastness of faith were revealed to provide guidance for Muslims to remain optimistic and rely on Allah despite facing painful defeat. These verses serve as a reminder that trials are part of the journey to perfection of faith. By knowing the cause of the revelation of the verse, Muslims can more easily apply the teachings of the Qur'an in the context of daily life, especially in challenging situations. Surah Ali Imran also contains an invitation to Muslims to strengthen solidarity and correct the shortcomings after experiencing defeat. The defeat in the Battle of Uhud is a valuable lesson in the importance of unity, mature strategy, and solid faith. These verses teach Muslims not to give up and to keep improving themselves. This is relevant in various aspects of modern life, where individuals are often faced with failures that test the firmness of their faith.

Steadfastness of faith is the core message of the verses that were revealed after the Battle of Uhud. In this regard, Surah Ali Imran not only serves as a spiritual strengthener, but also as a practical guide for Muslims. These verses emphasize the importance of patience, tawakal, and consistent effort in the face of difficulties. Muslims are invited to understand that defeat or trial is

not the end of everything, but part of the learning process that matures faith. This perspective is essential to apply in daily life, especially in situations full of challenges and changes. As a surah Madaniyah, Surah Ali Imran also reflects the dynamics of the life of Muslims in the early days in Medina. The transition from Makkah to Medina brought great changes in the social, political, and spiritual life of Muslims. This surah, with its powerful Asbab Nuzul, is one of the main sources for Muslims to understand how to face challenges with determination. This historical context provides insight into how the verses of the Qur'an are relevant in various situations, both in the past and present.

Connecting Verses with the Contents of Surah in General

Surah Ali Imran as a whole gives an invitation to Muslims to strengthen their faith and face life's trials with patience, sincerity, and determination. The verses that discuss the steadfastness of faith are not only relevant in the context of the Battle of Uhud, but also offer universal guidelines for Muslims in their daily lives. The steadfastness of faith that is the core message in this surah is closely related to patience in facing trials, sincerity in accepting Allah's provisions, and deep conviction in His help. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught his people to always adhere to the teachings of Islam, even in the most difficult conditions, as a way to maintain their spiritual and moral strength. The verses in Surah Ali Imran that speak of steadfastness of faith serve as an important reminder for Muslims not to be easily swayed by the pressures of life or trials that befall them. These messages instill confidence that Allah is always with those who are patient, fearful, and trust in Him. These verses also teach the importance of returning to the teachings of Islam as a solid life grip in the face of challenges. In the historical context, these verses are especially relevant after the events of the Battle of Uhud, where Muslims needed spiritual reinforcement to bounce back from defeat.

As explained by Quraish Shihab (2020), understanding the messages in the Qur'an requires the right approach so that their meaning can be understood correctly according to the context and purpose of the verse descent. One particularly useful approach is thematic interpretation, where verses with similar themes are studied in depth and linked together to gain a more comprehensive understanding. This approach allows us to see how the verses in Surah Ali Imran complement each other in conveying the message of steadfastness of faith. For example, verses about steadfastness of faith not only remind Muslims to be patient and pious, but also emphasize the importance of solidarity and unity in facing life's trials. In Surah Ali Imran, these messages are delivered in a very strategic way, given the condition of Muslims at that time which needed encouragement to remain united and strengthen their faith. The thematic interpretation approach helps us understand that the messages have a profound relevance not only to the time, but also to the challenges of modern life facing Muslims today.

The steadfastness of faith emphasized in Surah Ali Imran also includes aspects of sincerity in worship and obedience to Allah. These verses teach that true faith is not only seen in prayer or worship, but also in the way one faces trials with patience and sincerity. This steadfastness is a reflection of the belief that God always gives the best for His servants, even when trials feel very

heavy. This message is particularly relevant for Muslims in their daily lives, where they are often faced with situations that test the sincerity of their faith. In addition, Surah Ali Imran teaches the importance of optimism in facing trials. His verses remind us that every test has wisdom and that God will not give trials beyond the ability of His servants. This optimism is an integral part of steadfastness of faith, which helps Muslims to remain enthusiastic and not lose hope. The messages of this surah become practical guidelines for Muslims in managing emotions and facing life's challenges with firm conviction.

Analysis

1. Thematic Interpretation Approach

The thematic interpretation approach is one of the methods used to understand the verses of the Qur'an based on certain themes, such as steadfastness of faith. This approach aims to explore the meaning of verses that have the same theme in more depth by relating the context, relationship between people, and the purpose that the Qur'an wants to convey. In this case, thematic interpretation focuses not only on the linguistic analysis of the words contained in the verse, but also pays attention to the historical, social, and spiritual context that surrounds it. In Surah Ali Imran, steadfastness of faith is one of the prominent themes. The verses in this surah emphasize the importance of maintaining faith in the midst of the various trials faced by Muslims, especially after the events of the Battle of Uhud. Through the thematic interpretation approach, the meaning of faith steadfastness can be understood holistically by relating it to the values of patience, sincerity, and tawakal to Allah. This approach allows us to see how these values are not only relevant in the context of the Battle of Uhud, but also in the face of the various challenges of modern life.

According to Shihab (2020), the thematic interpretation approach helps provide a comprehensive understanding of the messages of the Qur'an. By connecting verses that have similar themes, this approach is able to present a more in-depth and systematic explanation. In the context of steadfastness of faith, the verses of Surah Ali Imran are like QS. Ali Imran: 102-104 can be analyzed to show how piety, patience, and optimism are the main pillars for individuals in facing life's trials. The thematic interpretation approach also encourages us to understand the relevance of the verses of the Qur'an in daily life. For example, the verse that commands Muslims to remain steadfast in the faith teaches the importance of having a strong mentality and not being easily shaken by worldly temptations. Through thematic interpretation, this message can be expanded into practical guidelines that direct Muslims to always adhere to religious principles in every aspect of their lives.

2. Scholars' Opinion

The opinions of the scholars of interpretation provide a deep understanding of the importance of steadfastness of faith in the life of a Muslim. Al-Tabari, one of the leading scholars, emphasized that steadfastness of faith is an essential trait that every Muslim must possess to be able to face the various trials that come from Allah. According to him, steadfastness of faith is the key that allows a person to remain strong and unwavering in facing life's trials. This, as expressed by Al-Tabari, is part of the path to spiritual success and the blessings of life (Rokim, 2017). Meanwhile, Al-Qurtubi,

another scholar of interpretation, provided a perspective that strengthened Al-Tabari's views. In his commentary, Al-Qurtubi emphasizes that patience is one of the manifestations of the steadfastness of faith. According to him, patience based on strong faith will enable a person to face the trials of life with a calm heart and strong faith in Allah. Al-Qurtubi also added that the combination of patience and steadfast faith is the main requirement for a person to attain glory in the sight of Allah.

The thoughts of these scholars provide an important foundation for understanding how the firmness of faith can be applied in daily life. They show that steadfastness of faith is not only about confidence in the heart, but also about real action in the face of life's challenges. Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi, for example, agree that steadfastness of faith is a combination of belief in Allah, patience, and tangible actions that reflect that faith. In addition, this view is also relevant to strengthen the spirit of Muslims in facing the challenges of modern times. The steadfastness of faith described by scholars can be a guide for dealing with social pressures, worldly temptations, and various other forms of testing. By internalizing these teachings, a Muslim can build a strong and principled character, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

3. Analysis with a Spiritual Approach

The spiritual approach in interpretation teaches us that steadfastness of faith is not only a visible action in the world, but also a manifestation of a strong relationship with God. In facing life's challenges, both in social and individual aspects, Muslims are expected to remain steadfast in faith and patience. As explained by Husnan and Supriyanto (2020), the application of thematic interpretation theories provides a deeper insight into how each verse in the Qur'an, including those that discuss the steadfastness of faith, has relevance and application in daily life. This shows that thematic interpretation not only provides a more comprehensive understanding, but also provides direction for Muslims to remain steadfast in their faith, especially when facing severe trials.

The contemporary approach to interpretation and hermeneutics of the Qur'an, as described by Shofiyah et al. (2023) and Sulthoni (2019), also provides a new perspective in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, including those related to the steadfastness of faith. Hermeneutics offers a new way of understanding sacred texts more relevantly in modern contexts, which can help Muslims meet the challenges of the times while still adhering to the solid principles of faith.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis of QS Ali Imran verses 102-104 through thematic exegesis, this study concludes that steadfastness of faith is a vital spiritual and social principle for Muslims facing modern challenges. The findings reveal that faith firmness is deeply intertwined with patience, sincerity, and reliance on Allah, which collectively enable believers to navigate trials and maintain moral integrity. The historical context of the Battle of Uhud enriches the understanding of these verses, illustrating how early Muslims were encouraged to uphold unity and resilience after defeat. The study also highlights the significant role of classical scholars such as Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi, whose interpretations emphasize faith steadfastness as a blend of belief and practical action. Contemporary hermeneutical approaches further provide relevance by linking ancient teachings to present-day struggles, supporting Muslims in building a principled character.

amid social and technological transformations. These insights not only deepen theological comprehension but also offer practical guidance for sustaining social solidarity and spiritual well-being. Future research is recommended to explore the application of thematic Qur'anic interpretation in diverse cultural contexts, particularly investigating how steadfastness of faith can be cultivated through educational programs and community engagement to enhance resilience among younger generations.

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