



The Meeting Of Two Seas In The Interpretation Of Thantawi Jauhari And Zaghoul Al-Najjar

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Abstract

Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar are two of the many interpreters who approach the interpretation of the Qur'an with a scientific approach. Both try to present the scientific side of the Qur'an, both have different periods and statuses, Thantawi Jauhari is a philosopher while Zaghoul al-Najjar is a scientist who interprets. The purpose of this study is to explain how the interpretation of the verse about the meeting of the two seas in the Qur'an from the perspective of the mufassir and scientists who interpret the related verses. And to find out the differences in interpretation of the meeting of the two seas according to the perspective of Thantawi Jauhari as a mufassir and the perspective of Zaghoul al-Najjar as a scientist who interprets the Qur'an. This research is a qualitative research by collecting data to be analyzed. In data collection, the author uses a literature study technique. The data collected comes from two types of sources, namely primary and secondary. The primary sources that the author uses in this study are "Tafsir al-Jawahir fi al-Qur'an al-Karim" by Thantawi Jauhari and "Tafsir Ayat al-Kauniyah fi al-Qur'an al-Karim" by Zaghoul al-Najjar, while the secondary sources that the author uses are theses, journals and other interpretation books that are relevant to this study. Based on this research, similarities and differences were found in the interpretation of the meeting of the two seas according to Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar. Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar agreed to interpret the meaning of al-bahrain in Q.S al-Furqan [25]: 53 as fresh water and salt water. Thantawi Jauhari also interpreted the cause of the two seas not merging as being caused by a divine barrier, while Zaghoul explained that the two seas not merging was due to the existence of a barrier between the two seas caused by two different water characteristics.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, scientists began to research and study various phenomena of the meeting of two seas that taste salty with fresh water. Based on research by scientists, it is known that the two types of water do not mix with each other. Meanwhile, the Qur'an which was revealed in the 7th century AD (14 centuries ago) has explained this phenomenon through His word in Q.S. al-Rahman verse 19: (Ismail and Yahya, 2023).



Meaning: *He lets the two seas flow and then they meet* (QS. al-Rahman: 19)

The Mufasssir differ in interpreting the meaning of al-bahrain in this verse. According to Thahir Ibn 'Asyur, al-bahrain is interpreted as the Euphrates River in Iraq and the Persian Gulf on the coast of Basyah (Shihab, 2009). There are also those who interpret it as the meeting of two seas whose waters do not mix, which are fresh water and salt water. Thantawi Jauhari stated that what is meant by the meeting of the two seas is that Allah allows the two salty seas with the fresh sea to flow side by side and meet so that salt water and fresh water are not found mixing and do not exceed between the two (Jauhari, 1932). Zaghloul al-Najjar interpreted the verse about the meeting of the two seas in Surah al-Rahman verses 19-20 that what is meant by the two seas are two seas that mix but not a perfect mixture and he argued that the two seas are influenced by the mass of water and the special characteristics of the water that are different in each sea (al-Najjar, 2007).

In Surah al-Rahman verses 19-20 it is meant that there are two seas that are separated because of a dividing wall that cannot be crossed. Scientifically, the boundary divides the two seas so that each has a different temperature, salt content, density and physical force (Maghfirah, 2015). The expression about the meeting of the two seas is mentioned in Surah al-Furqan (25): 53, al-Rahman (55): 19-22, Faṭir (35): 12, and al-Naml (27): 61, al-Kahfi (18): 61, all of these letters are *makkiyyah* (Zuhayli, 2013).

Scientific interpretation is an effort to understand the Qur'an which contains scientific signs from the perspective of modern science. According to Husain al-Dzahabi, scientific interpretation discusses scientific terms in the narration of the verses of the Qur'an, and tries to explore the scientific dimension and reveal the secrets of its miracles related to scientific information that was not known to humans at the time of its revelation so that this is proof that the Qur'an is not a human composition (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an Badan Litbang Diklat Kemenrian Agama RI, 2013).

Thantawi Jauhari is a scholar and philosopher in the modern Islamic world. Thantawi is always active in following the development of science, both through books and through magazines or newspapers. Science, interpretation is one of the sciences that attracts his attention. One of the interpretations written by Thantawi Jauhari is the Jawahir interpretation, consisting of 13 volumes. In this interpretation, Thantawi presents issues related to science and tries to combine and link what is called the Qur'an with scientific discoveries. The method used by Thantawi in compiling this interpretation book is tahlili (Firmansyah, 2021). According to al-Dzahabi, Thantawi sometimes strengthens his opinions with what is contained in the Gospel of Barnabas. In fact, Thantawi strengthens matters related to religious issues with philosophical theories (Hakim 2019).

On the other hand, there are also *Mufasssir* who have a different understanding regarding the meeting of the two seas in the Qur'an with a scientific explanation, one of which is Zaghloul al-Najjar. He is a geology expert from Egypt. According to him, the Qur'an is a book of miracles in terms of language and literature, moral beliefs, historical information and also in terms of science. Zaghloul al-Najjar wrote a

commentary with a scientific character to help many people understand the Qur'an from a scientific aspect. One of his works is a book entitled *Tafsir Ayat al-Kauniyyah Fi al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Firmansyah, 2021).

Zaghoul al-Najjar compiled his writing based on modern and classical writing methods. The purpose of classical compilation is that Zaghoul al-Najjar compiled discussion verses or letters following the arrangement found in the Qur'an, starting from the letter al-Baqarah to al-Nas, but the discussion focused on writing his book is more directed at verses related to science, this is based on his expertise in the field of science (Firmansyah, 2021).

The advantage of Zaghoul al-Najjar is that he is a pure scientist, so if he interprets with the verses of the Qur'an, of course his abilities are not in doubt. Zaghoul al-Najjar prefers the concept of *maudhu'iy* in his interpretation which makes his interpretation more measurable because he prefers verses that intersect with science, his interpretation books are not many, namely three volumes so that they are more efficient and effective (Firmansyah, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to explain how the interpretation of the verse about the meeting of the two seas in the Qur'an from the perspective of the *mufassir* and scientists who interpret the related verses. And to find out the differences in interpretation of the meeting of the two seas according to the perspective of Thantawi Jauhari as a *mufassir* and the perspective of Zaghoul al-Najjar as a scientist who interprets the Qur'an.

METHODS

In writing this research, the author uses a qualitative research type with the *Library research* method, namely the author will collect data sources in the form of books and previous research citing them from various theories and opinions related to the topic in question. Both in the form of primary and secondary data (Hadi, 1994).

The method used by the researcher is *muqaran*, namely the researcher uses a comparative method. What is meant by the *muqaran* or comparative method is Comparing the text of the verses of the Qur'an that have similarities or similarities in editorial in a theme, Comparing the verses of the Qur'an with conflicting hadiths, Comparing various opinions of scholars of interpretation in interpreting the Qur'an. The benefits of this research method are to obtain a precise understanding of the problem being discussed, by looking at the differences in the elements being discussed (Baidun, 1998).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study shows the results of the analysis of the phenomenon of the meeting of two seas in the interpretation of Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar, namely that there are differences and similarities in the interpretation of verses regarding the meeting of two seas, including

1. The Meeting Place of the Two Seas in QS. al-Kahfi [18]: 60

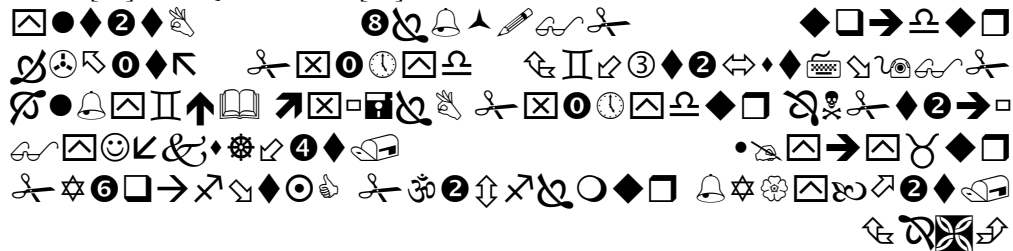


Meaning: "And (remember) when Moses said to his servant, 'I will not stop (walking) until I reach the Meeting of the Two Seas; or I will walk for years.'" (QS. al-Kahfi [18]: 60).

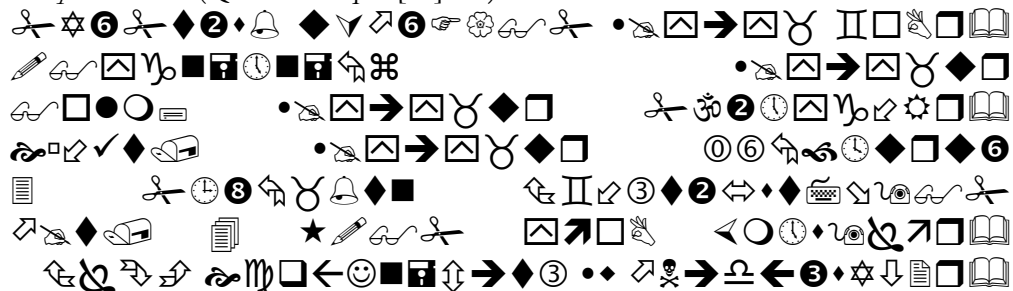
In this verse, Thantawi interprets the place where the two seas meet, namely the meeting place of the Persian sea and the Roman sea from the east, or

the sea of Sharia knowledge and the science of reality (Jauhari, 1931). The strongest opinion about the two seas is the Rum sea and the Qalzum sea or the White sea and the Red sea. The meeting place of the two is at Lake Murrah (bitter) and Lake Timsah (crocodile) or at the meeting place of the two Gulfs of Aqabah and the Suez Canal in the Red Sea. This area is the stage of the history of the Children of Israel after their Exodus from Egypt (Quṭb, 2000). Referring to the book "tafsir ayaat al-kauniyah fii al-Qur'an al-Kariim" Zaghoul did not provide any comments regarding this verse.

2. Differences in the Character of the Two Seas in QS. Al-Furqan [25]: 53, QS. Al-Naml [27]: 61, QS. Al-Fāṭir [35]: 12.



Meaning: "And it is He who allows two seas to flow (side by side); this one is fresh and fresh and the other is salty and bitter; and He has made between them a wall and barrier that prevents it." (QS. Al-Furqan [25]: 53)



Meaning: "or who has made the earth a place to live, and who made rivers in its gaps, and who made mountains to (strengthen) it and made a separation between two seas]? Is there (another) God beside Allah? even (in fact) most of them do not know." (QS. Al-Naml [27]: 61)



Meaning: "and there are no equals (between) two seas; this one is fresh, fresh, pleasant to drink and the other is salty and bitter. And from each sea you can eat fresh meat and you can produce jewelry that you can wear, and in each of them you see ships sailing across the sea so that you can seek His bounty and so that you may be grateful." (QS. Al-Fāṭir [35]: 12)

In his book *al-Jawaahir fii tafsir al-Qur'an* Thantawi explains, the phrase *hadzaa'adzibun furaatun* which means that which can quench thirst and refresh, then in the phrase *wa baadzaa milhun ujaajun* it means bitter which is very pungent and cannot quench thirst. Both do not exceed each other and do not mix. Thantawi also explains that the two oceans are fresh water and salt water, which

one cannot be separated from the other, this is because river water (fresh) comes from rain water, and rain water comes from evaporation from the ocean, so that river water that comes from the rain returns to the sea. So salt, steam, clouds and rivers are very related (Jauhari, 1932).

Similar to Thantawi, Zaghoul in his interpretation explains that the phrase '*adḥbun furātun*' means fresh water that tastes good, so in the phrase *bahrun 'adḥbun furātun* it means a river with very fresh water. In the phrase *milbun ujaajun* it means very salty and bitter water, namely the sea with variations in its salt content. In this phrase, Zaghoul associates it with the fire *ajajat an-nar* which means a very blazing and blazing fire. So in this verse, Zaghoul interprets the phrase as very salty and bitter water because if this water is drunk it can burn human intestines due to its salt content (al-Najjar, 2007).

Meanwhile, in the letter al-Naml, Zaghoul interprets the meaning of *al-bahrain* in the letter al-Naml [27]: 61, meaning two salty sea waters, both of which have different natural and chemical characteristics, a similar thing is also mentioned in QS. Al-Rahman: 19 (al-Najjar, 2007). This is based on several arguments, including:

First, the word al-bahr in Arabic is used to refer to saltwater seas and also freshwater rivers. However, if used in general, then the meaning of al-bahr is saltwater. And if used specifically then it is in accordance with the scope of that specificity (such as the meaning of al-bahrain in the letter al-Furqan [25]: 53). While the word al-bahrain in this verse shows its generality, so in this verse Zaghoul interprets the word al-bahrain as two saltwater seas with different chemical characteristics.

Second, the description of the word al-bahrain is also explained in the letter al-Rahman verse 22:



Meaning: "From both of them come pearls and coral". (Q.S. al-Rahman [55]: 22).

Al-marjan is a semi-precious stone taken from the skeleton of a sea animal that only lives in salt water. *Al-lu'lu'u* is a pearl that grows from inside the shell of a clam which is a sea animal that only lives in salt water (al-Najjar, 2007).

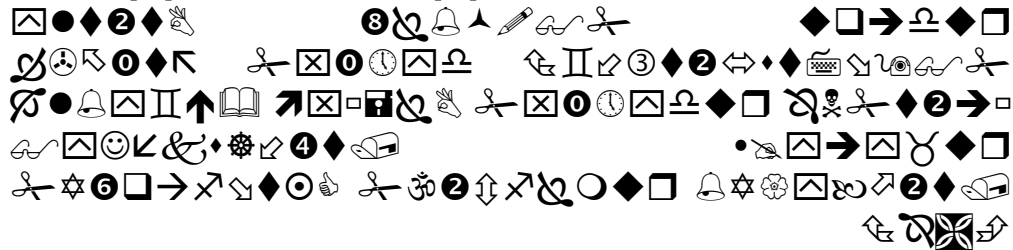
Third, the Qur'anic instructions on the greatness of the separator between the two seas, salty and fresh, with a boundary line. This is because of the delta, where the front and surrounding areas contain sediment blocks, in addition to mixed water (brackish) fresh water and salt water on the edge of the river when the two meet. On the other hand, the Qur'anic instructions on the separator of the two seas (in general) with the expression "*barḥakb*" or "*hijaz*" only, namely brackish water between fresh water and salt water that is different, both vertically and horizontally (al-Najjar, 2007).

Fourth, it is scientifically proven that various water masses are adjacent and mixed, but not completely mixed, even though there are various efforts and activities of ocean currents and waves to mix the two adjacent water masses. However, the maximum result of this effort is the formation of a belt or barrier in the form of brackish water (between salty and fresh) which functions to maintain the two adjacent water masses so that they remain completely separate, where each is as if it were a sea that stands alone. The characteristics of adjacent water masses remain different between seas and seas within the same sea (al-Najjar, 2007).

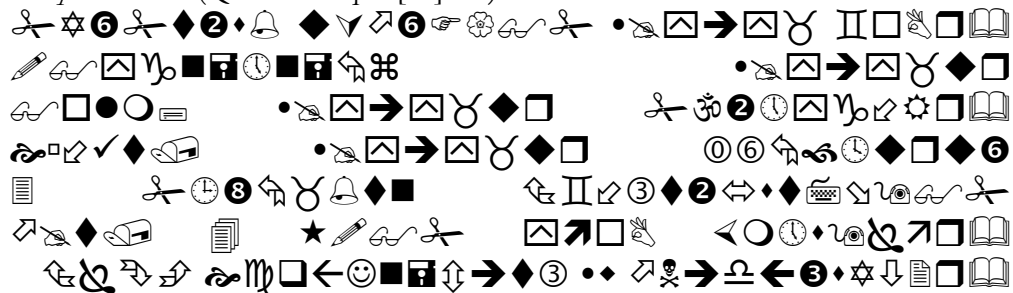
In line with the differences in water characteristics, the occurrence of these differences in water characteristics is caused by temperature, salt content, density, and oxygen levels dissolved in it. The results of the study prove that water in the

sea and ocean is divided into several masses that are adjacent vertically and horizontally. When changes in water characteristics vertically are faster than horizontally, then the differences in water characteristics vertically are clearer than horizontal differences (al-Najjar, 2007).

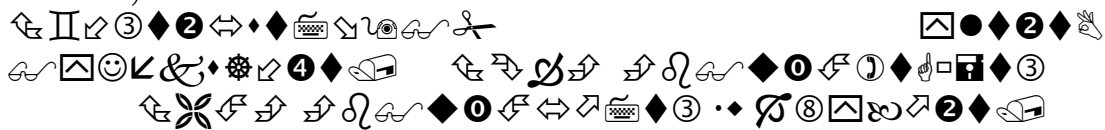
3. The Boundary Between the Two Seas in the letter QS. Al-Furqan [25]: 53, QS. Al-Naml [27]: 61, QS. al-Rahman [55]: 19-20.



Meaning: "And it is He who allows two seas to flow (side by side); this one is fresh and fresh and the other is salty and bitter; and He has made between them a wall and barrier that prevents it." (QS. Al-Furqan [25]: 53)



Meaning: "or who has made the earth a place to live, and who made rivers in its gaps, and who made mountains to (strengthen) it and made a separation between two seas]? Is there (another) God beside Allah? even (in fact) most of them do not know." (QS. Al-Naml [27]: 61)



Meaning: "He lets the two seas flow freely, then they meet, between them is a barrier that neither of them transgresses." (Q.S. al-Rahman [55]: 19-20.)

Thantawi interprets the word *barzakh* as a dividing wall that is divine in *ilahiyyah*. *Haajizun* and *laa yabghhiyyan* mean what prevents them from mixing, so that there is no mixing of the two waters (fresh and salty). From Thantawijauhari's interpretation of the verses which discuss the boundary of the two seas, the cause of the absence of mixing of the two seas is due to the divine boundary wall (*barzakh*) which exists between the two seas, namely salty and fresh (Jauhari, 1932).

Zaghloul al-Najjar interprets the meaning of *barzakh* in this verse as the boundary between two seas, as mentioned in QS. al-Furqan. The meaning of the boundary between the two seas is that there is no mixing between the two seas (salt and fresh). The reason for this absence of mixing is due to the strength of the waves and ocean currents, the strength and continuity of the water current in the river, the level of contact and sediments found at the bottom of the river and the floating of fresh water on salty sea water (al-Najjar, 2007).

Zaghloul said that each fresh water and salt water have natural and chemical characteristics that keep them completely separate, even though both boundaries are united at the river mouth. This happens because there is a separating wall of sediment at the river mouth which causes the fresh water flow to branch into two branches. From these two branches, fresh water flows in the

form of a smooth layer, floating on a layer of salt water, and at the boundary a salt water belt is formed due to the influence of the tide, this salt water belt functions as a separator between fresh water and salt water (al-Najjar, 2007).

In the letter of al-Naml and al-Rahman, Zaghoul explains that what is meant by al-bahrain in these two verses are two salty sea waters that both have different natural and chemical characteristics, the occurrence of differences in water characteristics is caused by temperature, salt content, density, and oxygen levels dissolved in it. This can be known by measuring the temperature and salinity of the water mass that fills various seas and oceans that cover 71% of the earth's surface area, estimated at five hundred and ten million square kilometers, it is clear that both vary greatly from one sea to another, even within one sea (vertical and horizontal). The results of the study prove that water in the sea and ocean is divided into several masses that are adjacent vertically and horizontally. When changes in water characteristics vertically are faster than horizontally, then the differences in water characteristics vertically are clearer than horizontal differences (al-Najjar, 2007).

Along with the changes in the natural and chemical characteristics of water masses such as temperature, evaporation rate, rainfall, etc., the surface mass of water also changes vertically and horizontally, mixing and exchanging temperature and salt content, but remaining completely separated by an invisible and direct boundary in the form of a water boundary line that has middle characteristics. However, sea water and ocean water appear similar, due to the hidden boundary between water masses (al-Najjar, 2007).

Zaghoul gives an example of the boundary between two seas, one of which is the Mediterranean Sea at its meeting with the Atlantic Ocean in the Strait of Gibraltar. The salt content in the Mediterranean Sea increases gradually because the quantity of water there evaporates every year reaching three times the rainfall and flowing river water. Along with evaporation in the summer, the salt content in the surface water of the Mediterranean Sea also increases, then its density increases and it descends to the seabed. The seabed and cold water with a relatively high salt content and density flows through the Strait of Gibraltar and then from above the coral rock formed in the strait flows rapidly towards the seabed of the eastern Atlantic Ocean in the form of a tongue of water with a high salt content and density (al-Najjar, 2007).

Every mass of water that enters from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and that exits from that sea to the Atlantic Ocean and the water that settles in certain parts of the sea and ocean mixes with other water masses, but does not mix completely. This is because of the formation of a layer of water that has characteristics that are intermediate between the two adjacent water masses. Between the two adjacent water masses, a water belt is formed that has intermediate characteristics called the "water front separating the two adjacent water masses". This water front separates the two adjacent water masses so that there is a barrier between the two water masses (al-Najjar, 2007).

Zaghoul mentioned that this water front has been revealed in the Qur'an in the word al-barzakh or al-hijaz, namely the boundary as stated in the verse being discussed. Although this cannot be seen directly. However, the boundary between the two seas is true, as Zaghoul has explained. The water boundary really separates two adjacent water masses.

Based on the explanation of the interpretation of the meeting of the two seas according to Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar above, the author will attach a table analyzing the similarities and differences in the meeting of the two seas according to Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar:

| No | Themes and verses | Equality | Difference |
|----|-------------------|----------|------------|
|----|-------------------|----------|------------|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The place where the two oceans meet in QS. al-Kahfi [18]: 60 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Thantawi, the meeting place of the Persian Sea and the Roman Sea from the east, namely the Rum Sea and the Qalzum Sea or the White Sea and the Red Sea. or the meeting place of the two Gulfs of Aqabah and the Suez Canal in the Red Sea. • According to his book, Zaghoul does not provide any commentary on this verse. |
| 2 | The differences in the character of the two oceans in Q.S. Al-Furqan [25]: 53, QS. al-Naml [27]: 61, QS. al-Fāṭir [35]: 12. | In Al-Furqan [25]: 53, Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar state that what is meant by al-bahrain in this verse is fresh water and salt water. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In QS. al-Naml [27]: 61 and QS. al-Fāṭir [35]: 12, Thantawi explains that what al-bahrain means in this verse is fresh water and salt water • In QS. al-Naml Zaghoul explains the meaning of al-Bahrain as salt water and salt water which has different natural and chemical characteristics. • Zaghoul did not provide any comments on QS. al-Fāṭir [35]: 12. |
| 3 | The boundary between the two seas in QS. al-Furqan [25]: 53, QS. al-Naml [27]: 61, QS. al-Rahman [55]: 19-20. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thantawi</i> explained that what is meant by <i>barẓakh</i> is a divine barrier • Zaghoul explains that the meaning of <i>barẓakh</i> in QS. al-Furqan [25]: 53 is that there is no mixing between the two seas (salt and fresh) which is caused by the difference in the characteristics of the water. • In QS. al-Naml [27]: 61 and QS. al-Rahman [55]: 19-20 Zaghoul explains that what is meant by <i>barẓakh</i> is the water front which is a characteristic boundary in the middle caused by differences in water density, this causes the two salt waters to be unable to mix perfectly. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning of <i>maraja al-bahrain</i> according to Zaghoul al-Najjar is the mixing of two seas but not perfect mixing, which is caused by <i>barzakh</i>. |
|--|--|--|---|

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results above, it is concluded that Thantawi Jauhari and Zaghoul al-Najjar agree that what is meant by the two seas in QS. al-Furqan [25]: 53 is fresh water and salt water, but in the letter al-Naml [27]: 61 and al-Rahman [55]: 19 Zaghoul interprets the meaning of the two seas in this verse as salt water and salt water which have different characteristics. Thantawi Jauhari also interprets the cause of the two seas not merging is due to a divine barrier, while Zaghoul explains that the two seas not merging is due to the existence of a barrier between the two seas caused by two different water characteristics.

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