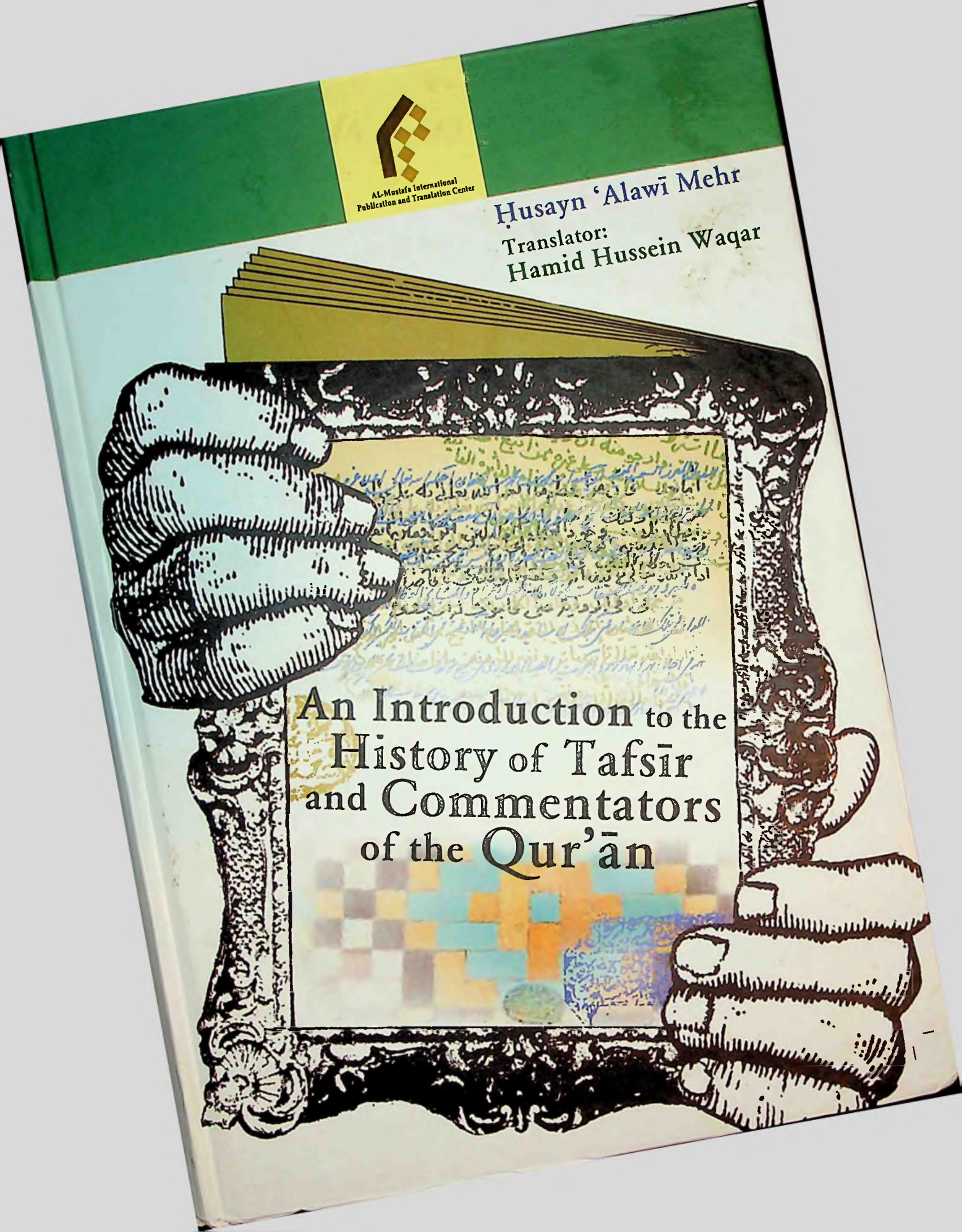
AL-Mustafa International
Publication and Translation Center

Ḥusayn ʻAlawī Mehr

Translator:
Hamid Hussein Waqar



An Introduction to the History of Tafsīr and Commentators of the Qur'ān



Research Sector

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سرشناسه:	علوی مهر، حسین، ۱۳۳۱ - Alawi Mehr, Husayn
عنوان قراردادی:	آشنایی با تاریخ تفسیر و مفسران .انگلیسی
عنوان و نام پدیدآور:	An introduction to the history of tafsir and commentators of the Quran/ by Husayn Alawi Mehr; translator Hamid Hussein Waqar.
مشخصات نشر:	Qum: Al-Mustafa International Translation and Publication Center, 2012 = 1390.
مشخصات ظاهری:	۳۶۸ ص.
فروست:	Research Sector
شابک:	978-964-195-610-5
وضعیت فهرست نویسی:	فیپا
یادداشت:	انگلیسی.
یادداشت:	کتابنامه: ص ۳۶۳؛ همچنین به‌صورت زیرنویس.
موضوع:	تفسیر - تاریخ؛ مفسران -- نقد و تفسیر.
شناسه افزوده:	وقار، حامدحسین، مترجم - Vaqar, Hamed Husain
شناسه افزوده:	جامعة المصطفی ﷺ العالمیه. مرکز بین‌المللی ترجمه و نشر المصطفی ﷺ
شناسه افزوده:	A-Mustafa International Translation and Publication Center
رده بندی کنگره:	BP ۹۲/۸۵۰۴۹۵۲ ۱۳۹۰
رده بندی دیویی:	۲۹۷/۱۹
شماره کتابشناسی ملی:	۲۶۸۸۱۵۲

Title: An Introduction to the History of Tafsīr and Commentators of the Qur'ān
By: Ḥusayn ʿAlawī Mehr
Translator: Ḥāmid Ḥusayn Wāqār
Year of publication: 1433 AH/ 1390 Sh/ 2012
Publisher: Qum: Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center
Print-run: 1000
ISBN: 978-964-195-610-5

© Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center

Distribution:
● Bookstore of Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center, Hujatiyeh Street, Qum, Iran. Tele fax: +98-251-7839305 - 9
● Bookstore of Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center, next to Jameat Al-Ulum, Salariyah T-Junction, Ameen Blvd, Qum, Iran. Tel/Fax: +98-251-2133106 / +98-251-2133146
www.miup.ir www.eshop.miup.ir
E-mail: admin@miup.ir root@miup.ir

Publisher's Introduction

«قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ عليه السلام يَقُولُ: آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ خَزَائِنُ فَكُلَّمَا فُتِحَتْ خِزَانَةٌ يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَنْظُرَ مَا فِيهَا»

Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn ('a): The verses of the Qur'ān are treasure chests. Whenever a treasure chest opens up, you ought to look inside it [to see what it has to offer].1

The Qur'ān has a deep interior along with its impressive exterior. There are numerous traditions that allude to the innumerous layers of esoteric meaning the Qur'ān has. Similar to the Qur'ān, man too has a number of interiors. Along with the complex physical human body, the study of which requires a number of rigorous years, man is composed of a number of incorporeal layers which are far greater in their complexity.

The inner meanings of the Qur'ān are accessible to man in as much as he is able to access his own inner self. Some people are confined to their physical material being and are heedless to any other form of reality. Others perceive their imaginal (*mithālī*) being along with their physical, while some have reached the degree in which they are able to perceive their intellectual (*'aqlī*) form. The spiritual journey into the Qur'ān and access to the realities of its treasures is dependent on the spiritual journey man takes in himself, which in turn is dependent on his level of purity (*ṭahārah*). If a person is able to purify his imagination, he will be able to access the imaginal treasures the Qur'ān has to offer. If he is able to purify his intellect, he will be able to access the intellectual treasures it has to offer. Of course, there are numerous grades and levels within both the purification of the imagination and intellect. One who manages to purify his self, and perceive his higher forms in reality is able to utilize the senses the forms have to offer. Just as we are gifted with our five outer senses in this material world, we are also gifted with senses in the other levels of our existence. The ability to use them grants us the ability to see, hear, smell and even touch the higher realities the Qur'ān has to offer. This is perhaps the meaning of the verse in which purification of the self is considered the key for being able to access its higher meanings:

---

1. Usūl al-Kāfī, volume 4, page 412, tradition 2.

﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ﴾

This is indeed a noble Qur'ān, in a guarded book, none shall touch it except the purified 56:77-79

«لا خيرَ في قراءة ليسَ فيهَا تَدَبرٌ»

Prophet (ṣ): There is no good in a recitation without contemplation

Another one of these keys is contemplation. Contemplation is itself a form of purification for a person who contemplates, empties his mind and heart from meddling thoughts and inclinations that run through them throughout the day. Once a person has cleansed himself of them and places his attention towards the book of God, he is able to reflect its hidden meanings in himself to the strength of his contemplation.

Memorization

«عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عليه السلام قَالَ: الْحَافِظُ لِلْقُرْآنِ الْعَامِلُ بِهِ مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَرَةِ»

Imam Sadiq ('a): A memorizer of the Qur'ān, who acts according to its ordinances shall sit at the banqueting table of the elect.[1]

The Arabic word for memorization is ḥifẓ, the literal meaning of it is to protect. Thus a person who memorizes the Qur'ān protects it. The levels of this protection too are as many as the levels of the Qur'ān itself. Some protect its outer form, which is in the form of words, while other excel and protect the inner forms of it until they become what the Prophetic traditions have referred to as carriers of the Qur'ān. The existence of such people becomes one with the Qur'ān.

Thematic Memorization Program

Thematic memorization programs hold a number of distinctions over sequential programs. One of its most vivid benefits is that the memorizer is able to contemplate on the verses based on each subject matter. Through the categorization of subjects, he is able to reflect on the deeper meanings along with memorizing the verses.

Sayyid 'Ali Mirdāmad Najafābādī must be thanked for his efforts in choosing and organizing the verses of the Qur'ān. The following people must also be thanked for their efforts: Rahmat 'Ābidī, Sayyid Mujtaba Awsiya, Raḥīm Haji-Khani, Yadullah Ridanejād, and all other people who helped produce this book.

We would like to note that we have used Ali Qulī Qarāī"s translation of the Qur'ān.

Al-Mustafa University Publications

1. Thawāb al-'Amāl, page 101.

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Author's Introduction

﴿...وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect.[1]

From the advent of Islam until the present day, Muslims in general and Islamic scholars in particular have given great importance to the Qur'ān. The Prophet (ṣ) was the first commentator on the Qur'ān and thus took the most important steps in explaining and commentating on its verses and in educating other commentators such as Ali ('a). The Imams of the Prophetic Household ('a) also played a key role in spreading Qur'ānic culture, correctly expositing the verses, and preventing distortion of the text or its meaning. The companions also tried, to the extent that they could, to uncover the hidden realities of the Qur'ān. After them, the generation of the Successorss (*tābi'īn*) continued to contribute to this important field of discourse. This process continued until the third century when some commentators of the Qur'ān started to write commentaries (*tafāsīr*). At least initially, traditions explaining ambiguous Qur'ānic terms were given the most importance. Later, verses were commentated on and explained with grammatical and theological points in mind. This continued until the contemporary age where the writing of tafsīr has reached its apex.

This book, as well as presenting a historical account of the development of Qur'ānic tafsīr writing and the major commentators

1. Qurān, 16:44.

who participated in it, aims to demonstrate the importance of tafsīr and identify the correct approach to undertaking it by critically examining the different methods of tafsīr that have been used through the ages.

Criteria that this book will use to examine the tafsīrs

The criteria that this book will use to examine tafsīrs are as follows:

1. Age: description of the age in which the author lived in and when the tafsīr was written along with the cultural and political conditions therein.

2. The name of the tafsīr: the name by which the commentary is most commonly known and other, less well-known names for it.

3. The name of the author: the name by which he is commonly known and any other names he might have had.

4. The sect of the author: an account of the theological inclinations attributed to the author - especially with regards to the Qur'ān - and criticism thereof.

5. The method of tafsīr and tendencies that the author used to explain the verses: the method the author adopted in producing the tafsīr in question. For instance, did the author explain some verses of the Qur'ān by refering to others (known as the Qur'ān by Qur'ān method) or by relying on traditions? Does the commentator display a tendency towards mysticism or theology?

6. If the commentary relied on traditions to explain verses, then what kinds of traditions did the author narrate?

7. The validity and value of the traditions included by the commentator; i.e. the strength of their chain (*sanad*) and the soundness of their text (*matn*) - the latter with particular regard to Isrā'īlīyāt.[1]

8. Examining the sources relied upon and arguments used in the tafsīr.

9. Examining the strengtht and weaknesses of each tafsīr.

10. A study of each tafsīr's introduction and (to the extent that is possible) the presentation of some of the commentator's opinions about various key subjects within the broader discipline of Qur'ānic sciences.

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1. Isrā`īlīyāt: narrations which appear to have been fabricated on the basis of other religious traditions, particularly Judaism and Christianity.

11. Examining the position of the author with regards to the Prophetic Household ('a) if the author is a Sunnī.

12. Providing an example or examples of how the commentator explains verses.

13. Examining the practical method of the author in tafsīr; meaning a description of the discussions that the author approaches at the beginning of the explanation of each verse. Does he first mention the various pronunciations and then examine the circumstances of revelation? Does he first explain the terminology in the verse and then mention grammatical points, traditions, the circumstances of revelation, and opinions of other commentators of the Qur'ān?

How to use this book

1. The topics of this book are arranged into fourteen chapters which can be used as a lesson plan for an introductory course on Qur'ānic commentary.

2. The commentaries and commentators of the Qur'ān are introduced in chronological order - according to the year in which the commentator died - from the age of the Prophet until the present (spanning fifteen centuries in total). Each chapter deals with a number of related issues; for instance, the religious, social and political conditions of the each century and any special ideas or ideologies that predominated at that time. Each tafsīr discussed will be examined according to its author's ideological tendencies, the methods he uses and the strengths and weaknesses therein. At the end of each discussion some questions will be provided for the reader to test their knowledge as well as some suggestions for further reading.

3. The organization and presentation of discussed issues have been given a unified structure so for ease of teaching and ease of comprehension for the researchers.

For teachers:

1. This text can be a four unit course, but since it has been organized into a two unit course one must refrain from remaining to long on one lesson.

2. Only the most important points are mentioned in each discussion; precise details and less well-known commentaries are bypassed for the sake of brevity. The teacher can present detailed tafsīrs as reports or by leaving part of the discussion up to the student in the form of a workshop.

3. Practical tafsīrs, along with the intellectual and practical methodology of the commentators of the Qur'ān are given importance.

4. Teachers should aid the students in research by drawing attention to the recommendations for further reading at the end of each section.

5. It is useful to use this text in tandem with the tafsīrs themselves, which can be brought to class so the students can gain more familiarity with them.

6. Furthermore, time should be put aside each term for the students to visit a specialized library on tafsīr and Qur'ānic sciences so that they can become familiar with tafsīrs up close.

7. Since no human text is without error, I ask the teachers, students and researches who use this book to share their feedback and criticisms with me.

Ḥusayn ʿAlawī Mehr

1
General Principles

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with key concepts and the principle subjects of the history of tafsīr and the commentators of the Qur'ān. 2. The meaning of tafsīr and the meaning of its history. 3. Why should we be concerned with the history of tafsīr and what benefits does familiarity with it have? 4. The major sources examined in this field of study, along with a history of this discussion and the most important works produced therein. 5. A brief discussion about the very first tafsīr to be produced.

Etymology of the term

The Arabic term تفسير (*tafsīr*) stems from the root فسر which means expression, clarification,[1] removing a curtain, and discovering.[2] It is defined in the Arabic dictionary, *Tāj al-`Urūs,* as follows:

«الفسر الابانة و كشف المغطى...»

"The term فسر means to clarify or to remove a curtain."[3]

There is a difference of opinion about whether this term is originally Arabic or not. Some Near-Eastern experts do not consider it to be so; rather they suggest that the term entered into the Arabic language, in the same manner as the terms فرائت and كتاب, and thus its origin must lay in non-Arabic languages.[4] This school of thought

1. Fīyūmī, Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr, root فسر, p.472
2. Azharī, Tahdhīb, v.12, p.406; also refer to Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī, al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qurān, v.9, p.86
3. Muhammad Murtaḍa Zabīdī, Tāj al-`Urūs, v.7, p.349
4. This is the opinion of Blosher, narrated by Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, Sih Muqālah dar Tārīkh-i Tafsīr, p.12

argues that the term was probably taken from Aramaic, Syriac or Palestinian Christians.[1] However this opinion has not proven popular amongst historical etymologists (especially Arabic scholars). Rather, they claim that its root is فسر which was most likely derived from the root سفر. Both of these words have the meaning of discovering or removing a cover[2] with the difference that سفر is the 'pulling of the curtain' of material issues so that they could be seen. For instance, when a woman uncovers her face the term فسرت المرأة is not used; instead the term سفرت المرأة عن وجهها is used.[3] In addition to this, the term تفسير is completely in accordance to Arabic grammatical rules and possesses various verbal forms.

Tafsīr as a technical term used by Muslim scholars has been coined for the practice of clarifying the concepts and meanings found in verses of the Qur'ān.

ZaraKashshī, a Qur'ānic sciences scholar, states:

«هو علم يفهم به كتاب الله تعالى المنزل على نبيه محمد و بيان معانيه و استخراج احكامه و حكَمه»

"Tafsīr is a science which is used to understand the book of Allah which was revealed to His Prophet, Muhammad (ṣ); it clarifies its meanings; it derives its rulings and secrets."[4] 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (r) defines the science of tafsīr in the following way:

«هو بيان معانى الايات القرآنية والكشف عن مقاصدها و مداليلها»

"Tafsīr expresses the meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān; it clarifies the meanings of them."[5] The above definitions indicate that the intended meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān must be discovered through the study and practice of tafsīr.

In conclusion, tafsīr cannot be described in Qur'ānic sciences as pronunciation, tajwid, translation, ponderance, explanation of terminology, or description of non-Qur'ānic terminology.[6] Near

1. Kulūd Jilīyūt, Tafsīr dar Dūrān-i Bāstān, Dāyirah al-Ma 'arif-i Qurān-i Līdan, v.2, p.100.
2. Sih Muqālah dar Tārīkh-i Tafsīr, p.12
3. Rāghib Iṣfahānī, Muqaddamah fī al-Tafsīr, narrated from Muahmmad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasirūn fi Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.13.
4. Zarakashī, al-Burhān fī `Ulūm al-Qurān, v.1, p.13.
5. Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, al-Mīzān, v.1, p.4.
6. Refer to: Muhammad Ali Riḍā'ī, Dar Amadī bar Tafsīr-i `Ilmī-yi Qurān-i Karīm, p.22; Ḥusayn `Alawī Mehr, Rawashhā wa Garāyishhā-i Tafsīrī, p.20.

Eastern studies confessed to the point that if the term tafsīr – although it is possible to be used as an explanation of holy texts – is used independently then it means tafsīr of the Qur'ān.[1]

What do we mean by "a history of tafsīr"?

History, put simply, is the practice of describing past events. Tafsīr, as was mentioned, means discovering the meanings of the Qur'ān. The history of tafsīr, then, describes the development of tafsīr up until the present day, looking at how it developed and changed to reach its current form.

This book sets out to examine tafsīr from the conception of the genre to the contemporary age by mentioning the changes that take place in each century which demonstrate new methods of writing tafsīrs. The high and low points of tafsīrs throughout the centuries are discussed. Since the ideology and character of the commentator of the Qur'ān can play a decisive role in how he writes the tafsīr, these ideologies are also briefly described.

Taking this into account, it becomes clear that the subject of the history of tafsīr and commentators of the Qur'ān and the examination of tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān are in accordance to the various centuries that they lived, from the age of the Prophet until the contemporary period.

Why study the history of tafsīr?

There is no doubt that understanding the history of any science will make the student aware of the destiny of that science. This awareness is very important in helping the student to understand the subjects that the science encompasses. Therefore the history of Qur'ānic commentary and commentators, insofar as it is concerned with the history of how the divine words of the Qur'ān have been explained, will bring the student closer to understanding the verses of the Qur'ān themselves.

In addition to this, there are other points in existence which indicate the necessity and importance of such a study as compared to

1. Tafsīr dar Dūrān-i Bāstān, Dāyirah al-Ma`arif-i Qurān-i Lidan, v.2, p.99; Dāyirah al-Ma`arif-i Islam, article: Tafsīr.

other disciplines. Some of these points are as follows:

1. In the history of tafsīr, the beginnings, development, successes and failures which occurred in regards to the tafsīrs and the commentators of the Qur'ān are discussed. The interrelationship between the different tafsīr works is made apparent as well.

2. This science elucidates the importance that Islamic scholars gave to the Qur'ān and the science of tafsīr.

3. The history of tafsīr examines and clarifies the shortcomings that existed along the path of writing tafsīrs (in the eighth and ninth centuries) and the various motives behind writing tafsīrs.

4. Tafsīrs displaying ingenuity and originality of thought on the part of the author are differentiated from those which are merely recombinations of ideas from other tafsīrs, without contributing anything new to the discipline themselves.

5. The methods that the commentators of the Qur'ān used in their tafsīrs are studied and evaluated, which will necessarily provide insight into other fields such as mysticism, ḥadīth studies, history, theology, philosophy and science.

6. Through the examination of the history of tafsīr the various dimensions of the Qur'ān's miraculous nature, especially its intellectual miracles, can be unearthed.

7. Examining tafsīrs and their history aid us in the recognition of various theological sects, such as the Asha'rites, Mutazailites, and Imamites. The reason behind this is that each commentator of the Qur'ān explains the Qur'ān in accordance to his sect's beliefs.[1]

8. The verses regarding religious rulings and the branches of religion, which are related to jurisprudence, are recognized. The reason for this is that the Qur'ān only generally mentioned them, but the tafsīrs express their particulars through the transmission of traditions from the Prophet (ṣ).

History

Independent books about the history of tafsīr were not written in the past. Discussions about this subject are spread throughout various

1. The Shia believe that the correct version of Islam is reflected in Shi'ism because it takes its belief system from the words of the infallibles (a) which stem from revelation.

books. Works such as Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* and the books of *Rijāl* make a general mention of the commentators of the Qur'ān and tafsīrs. The most important of the latter are as follows: The *Fihrist* of Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.460), *Rijāl Najāshī* (d.450), The *Fihrist* by Ibn Nadīm (d.390), and *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* by Ḥajjī Khalīfah (eleventh century). Some commentators of the Qur'ān, from the fifth century onwards, would mention earlier works of tafsīr and briefly examine them. For instance, *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.460) explains seven methods existent in the compilation of tafsīrs in its introduction. An important commentator of the Qur'ān is mentioned as an example of each method.[1]

With the passage of time, commentators of the Qur'ān wrote independent books in order to organize and list the names of tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān as well as examine their time periods. These are commonly titled *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān.*

In the tenth century, Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d.911) independently wrote the book *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān.* In this book he listed 136 commentators of the Qur'ān. After him, Dāwūdī (d.945) and Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Ṣan`allah Kūzah Kanānī (d.980) continued this project. Another important work is *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān,* produced by Adnahway in the eleventh century.

Amongst the Shia the following books written in the present century can be named: *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān Shia* by 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, *Tafsīr al-Ma`thūr wa Taṭwīruh `Ind al-Shia al-Imamiyah* by Iḥsān Amīn, and *Sayr Taṭāwur Tafāsīr Shia* by Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī.

Scholars of Qur'ānic sciences also dedicated parts of their books to tafsīr and commentators of the Qur'ān, for instance: Suyūṭī (d.911) in *al-Itiqān.*[2] In the eightieth section of his discussions on Qur'ānic sciences, he discusses the stages of commentators of the Qur'ān, the tafsīrs of the companions, and the commentators of the Qur'ān after them. Zarqānī in *Manāhil al-`Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān,*[3] in the twelfth section, discusses

1. Ṭibyān, v.1, p.16.
2. al-Itiqān, v.4, p.196-245.
3. Manāhi al-`Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān, v.2, p.4.

tafsīr and commentators of the Qur'ān. 'Allāmah Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr in *Ta'sīs al-Shia*[1] and 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (r), in *Qur'ān dar Islam*, mentions the categories of commentators of the Qur'ān. But, the first work to the history of tafsīr was the *Tārīkh al-Tafsīr* by Qāsim Qaysī, which was published in 1966.[2]

Other books have been written after this with similar titles. These books are:

Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr by Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, *Tārīkh Tafsīr Qur'ān Karīm* by Ḥabīb Allah Jalālīyān, *Tārīkh Tafsīr* by 'Abd al-Wahhāb Ṭāliqānī (printed by *Intishārāt Nīwī*), *Tārīkh Tafsīr Qur'ān Karīm* (in the first hijrī century) by Dr. Suhrāb Marūtī (printed by *Nashr Ramz*), *Muffasirān Shia* by Dr. Muhammad Shāfi'ī, and *Tafsīr al-Ma'thūr wa Taṭawaruh 'ind al-Shia al-Imamiyah* by Iḥsān Amīn.

Other books written in this field in recent decades include: *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* by Dr. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, *Darasāt fī al-Tafsīr wa Rijālih* by Abū Yaqẓān `Aṭṭīyah al-Jabūrī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* by Ayatullah Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, and *Mu'jam Muṣannifāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by 'Abd al-Karīm Shawwākh.

It should be noted that encyclopedias such as: *al-Dharīyah ila Taṣānif al-Shia* by Ḥājj Aqā Bazurg Tehranī, *Ayyān al-Shia* by Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-ḥadīth* by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, *al-Fihrist* by Ibn Nadīm, and *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* by Ḥājjī Khalīfah are general sources which discuss the commentators of the Qur'ān and tafsīrs amongst other works.

The first written tafsīr

The writing of tafsīrs started in the first half of the second century AH; at the beginning these commentaries were nothing more than compilations of traditions to do with Qur'ānic exegesis. In this period, traditions explaining the Qur'ān where compiled with other traditions as chapters in books of traditions. People such as Yazīd ibn Hārūn Salāmī (d.117), Abān ibn Taghlib (d.141), Shu`bah Ḥajjāj

1. Ta'sīs al-Shia, p.322.
2. This book is printed in Najaf published by Majma` al-`Ilmī al-`Irāqī.

(d.160), Wakī` ibn Jarrāḥ (d.197), and Sufyān ibn `Ayinah (d.198), all prominent scholars of traditions.[1]

Shortly thereafter, tafsīrs begin to appear that were written independently. But with regards to which was the very first such tafsīr to be written, there is a wide difference of opinion and arriving at a certain conclusion on this topic is very difficult. There are, however, several possibilites:

1. Ibn 'Abbās (d.68)[2]

Some people believe that Ibn 'Abbās (d.68) was the first person to compile a tafsīr. Ṭabarī narrates in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*:

«رأيت مجاهداً يسأل ابن عباس عن تفسير القرآن و معه الواحه فيقول له ابن عباس: أكتب: قال حتى سأله عن التفسير كله»

"I saw Mujāhid with tablets while he was asking Ibn 'Abbās about tafsīr. Ibn 'Abbās told him: 'Write!' It seems as if this continued until the explanation of the entire Qur'ān was asked and written down.'"

Some believe that the indication in this tradition is that Ibn 'Abbās had a tafsīr. But, this tradition does not indicate that Ibn 'Abbās had a written tafsīr. Although, Fīrūzābādī, the author of the *Qāmūs*, compiled a book called: *Tafsīr Tanwīr al-Maqāyas min Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās.*

2. Sa'īd ibn Jubayr (martyred in 94 or 95)

Dhahabī writes: "'Abd al-Mālik Marwān (d.86) asked Sa'īd ibn Jubayr to write a tafsīr of the Qur'ān for him and Sa'īd ibn Jubayr wrote it. `Aṭṭīyah ibn Dīnār found this book in the divan. Since he did not see Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, he narrated it from him omitting the chain between them. This tradition clearly states that Sa'īd ibn Jubayr wrote a tafsīr of the Qur'ān. There is no doubt that his tafsīr existed before the death of 'Abd al-Mālik Marwān (d.86).[3]

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1. Refer to Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.144.
2. The personalities of Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin Jubayr, Mujāhid, and `Ikrāmah will be introduced in the third and fourth chapters while discussing the periods of the companions and the Successors to the companions.
3. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasirūn, v.1, p.144.

The modern Qur'ān researcher Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, while categorizing these opinions, writes in this regard: "Since Sa'īd ibn Jubayr is considered to be the most knowledgeable successor to the companions (*tābi`ī*) by the Shia and Sunni scholars, and there are traditions about the existence of his complete tafsīr one can strongly assume that he is the first author to write a commentary on the Qur'ān.[1]

But, since Sa'īd ibn Jubayr's tafsīr is not existent, this opinion cannot be accepted uncritically.

3. Mujāhid ibn Jabbār (d.104)

Ayatullah Ma'rifat considers the tafsīr from Sūrah Baqarah until the end of the Qur'ān, which was transmitted by Abū Yassār 'Abdullah ibn Abī Najīḥ Thaqafī Kūfī (d.131) to be attributed to Mujāhid ibn Jabbār. The authorities in ḥadīth, such as Bukhārī, trusted this. Ibn Taymīyah counted it amongst the most authentic tafsīrs.

This tafsīr was published in Pakistan in 1989 through the efforts of Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmīyah. Ṭabarī narrates from it in his tafsīr about seventy times.[2]

4. Farrā Nahwa[3] (d.207)

Many historians, including Ibn Nadīm,[4] and commentators of the Qur'ān believe that Farrā Nahwa, the author of *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, was the first person to compile a tafsīr. Although Dr. Dhahabī, the author of *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, does not accept this.[5]

Tafsīr Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān is a work that has been printed many times. A three volume set of this tafsīr exists today. Ibn Shahrāshūb presents a chain in *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* from himself to Farrā. He deems the books *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, *Lughāt al-Qur'ān*, and *al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'* to have been written by Farrā and considers him to be one of the most active authors in the field of Qur'ānic sciences.[6] This appears to be the strongest opinion.

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1. Sih Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.75.
2. al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.341.
3. Farrā', Yaḥya bin Zīyād Aqṭa`, famously known as Yaḥya al-Farrā' (d.207) was one of the students of Kisā'ī and was present in the event of Fakh.
4. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.99.
5. al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.143.
6. Refer to 'Aqīq Bukhshāyashī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, p.469.

5. 'Akramah (d.105)

Ibn Nadīm mentions in *Fihrist*,[1] while listing the tafsīrs of the Qur'ān, a tafsīr by 'Ikrāmah.

6. Ibn Jarīḥ (d.105)

It has been recorded that Ibn Jarīḥ wrote a tafsīr on three large sections of the Qur'ān.[2] Dhahabī, after narrating various alternate opinions, argues that Ibn Jarīḥ was the first person to compile a tafsīr. He accepts this opinion keeping in mind that three major parts of the Qur'ān were commentated on and keeping in mind the great need that people had for Qur'ānic verses in their rulings and other issues. It can be said that before Farrā there were individuals who wrote complete tafsīrs. But, at the end of the discussion, Dhahabī appears to change his mind and hestitates, writing: "We cannot, with certainty, consider a specific person as the first author of a tafsīr. Only if all of the tafsīrs from the beginning of the period of the compilation of tafsīrs were at our disposal we would be able to determine who the first author was.[3]

Summary

1. Tafsīr literally means discovery, removal of a curtain, and clarification. In religious terminology it is a science which clarifies divine words and phrases.

2. Translation, recitation, ponderance, explanation of terms, and expression of non-Qur'ānic terms is not tafsīr.

3. The history of tafsīr deals with the explanation of events that happened in the past regarding the tafsīrs of the Qur'ān and the commentators of the Qur'ān.

4. Through examination of the history of tafsīr, the importance that scholars gave to the Qur'ān and the shortcomings of the path of writing tafsīrs is made clear. From another perspective, becoming familiar with the history of tafsīr will also acquaint the student with the various methods and motives of tafsīr writers, the miraculous

1. al-Fihrist, p.59.
2. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.155.
3. Ibid.

aspects of the Qur'ān and different sects and their doctrines.

5. The classical scholars did not write independent books on the history of tafsīr, but they discussed this issue in the introductions to some tafsīrs (for instance *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī) and books of the science of the transmitters of traditions (for instance *Rijāl* by Shaykh Ṭūsī and *al-Fihrist* of Ibn Nadīm). Lists of commentators of the Qur'ān (for instance *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān* by Suyūṭī, Adnahway, and Dāwūdī and *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān Shia* by 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī) can also be mentioned. The first book titled Tārīkh Tafsīr in this field was written by Qāsim al-Qaysī (d.1964).

6. There are differences of opinions about the author of the first tafsīr. Some believe that the first tafsīr was written by Ibn 'Abbās, some Mujāhid ibn Jabbār, some Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, some Farrā', some 'Akramah, and finally some Ibn Jarīḥ. It seems that it would be more correct to assume that Farrā' Naḥwa was the author of the first tafsīr.

Questions and research points

1. How do we define tafsīr?

2. What are outside of the scope of tafsīr when it is used in religious terminology?

3. What issues are dealt with in the history of tafsīr?

4. Keeping in mind the importance of the history of tafsīr, what benefits does studying tafsīr's history have?

5. Introduce some sources of classical scholars and some sources of contemporary scholars regarding the history of tafsīr.

6. Explain the different opinions about who was the first author of tafsīr.

7. Examine the stages of Sunni and Shia commentators of the Qur'ān by using the books: *al-Itiqān* (by Suyūṭī), *Qur'ān dar Islam* (by 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī), and *Ta'sīs al-Shia* (by Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr).

8. Briefly find what tafsīrs exist written by the companions and the Successorss to the companions. List them.

2
Tafsīr in the Era of the Prophet (ṣ)

Goals of this chapter: 1. Examination of the Prophet's (ṣ) school of tafsīr and the method of explaining the verses of the Qur'ān during the age of the Prophet (ṣ). 2. Why was it necessary for the Qur'ān to be explained by the Prophet (ṣ) in general, and those verses regarding religious law in particular? 3. The two modes of explanation used by the Prophet (ṣ): training and teaching, general and specific. 4. The role of the Prophetic Household ('a) as the primary source for the people to refer to with regards to the Qur'ān, as indicated by the Prophet (ṣ) himself.5. The methods of tafsīr that the Prophet (ṣ) himself used when explaining the Qur'ān.

Introduction

At the beginning of Islam, people relied upon the divinely-given knowledge and radiant character of the Prophet (ṣ) in order to understand the Qur'ān. He, as the first commentator of the Qur'ān, recited the Qur'ān for people and taught them the words of the verses:

﴿...يتْلُو عَلَيهِمْ آياتِهِ وَيزَكِّيهِمْ وَيعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ...﴾

"...to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom...".[1]

He also explained the verses to the people. Allah makes clear that one of the Prophet's most important duties is the explanation and clarification of the Qur'ānic verses:

﴿...وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَينَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيهِمْ...﴾

"...We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify

1. Qurān, 62:2.

for the people that which has been sent down to them...".[1]

The Qur'ān was revealed in a very eloquent, literary style of Arabic. Grasping the basic meaning of a verse might be easy for someone who is Arab-speaking, but this is not sufficient for a *proper* understanding of the Qur'ān. Despite Ibn Khaldūn's rather exaggerated claim that all the terms and expressions therein are universally understood, the full depth of the Qur'ān's meaning is not clear to everyone.[2] Just because the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic, it does not mean that any Arab-speaker can understand it. A full comprehension of its verses is not possible simply by virtue of knowing a language; rather, in many cases rational reasoning[3] is necessary. See, for instance, the reasoning with the following verse:

﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللهُ لَفَسَدَتَا...﴾

"Had there been gods in them other than Allah, they would surely have fallen apart."[4]

Another example is the setting argument in Prophet Abraham's ('a) reasoning:

﴿...لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ﴾

"I do not like those who set."[5]

Furthermore, there are many instances where the Qur'ān discusses religious rulings but suffices itself with general principles of an act without mentioning the particulars. The Qur'ān states, for instance:

﴿أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ...﴾

"Maintain the prayer from the sun's decline till the darkness of the night."[6]

What is the technical meaning of the term 'prayer' in this verse? What are its components, its parts, and its conditions? These particulars have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Likewise, the particulars regarding Ḥajj, charity, etc, have not been mentioned.

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1. Qurān, 16:44.
2. He writes: "The Qurān was revealed in the Arabic language according to the rules of eloquence; therefore all of them understand it." Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddamah Ibn Khaldūn, p.279.
3. Aḥmad Amīn, Fajr al-Islam, p.196.
4. Qurān, 21:22.
5. Qurān, 6:76.
6. Qurān, 17:78.

It is clear that these verses are in need explanation; an ordinary person cannot fully understand what they refer to simply by reading them. This important task has been put on the shoulders of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and the Prophetic Household ('a). Imam Ṣādiq ('a) says:

«انّ رسول الله ﷺ نزلت عليه الصلاة و لم يسم الله لهم ثلاثاً و لا اربعاً حتى كان رسول‌الله ﷺ وهو الذي فسرّ لهم ذلك...»

"Prayer was revealed to the Prophet (ṣ); but Allah did not state if it had three or four components. The Messenger of Allah was the one who explained the components of the prayer to the people."[1]

In addition to this, the Qur'ān uses examples, allegories, and metaphors, for instance:

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ...﴾

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche...".[2]

An Arab understands the term 'light' (*Nūr*), but the statement that Allah is light, the quiddity of this light, and the reason why it has been likened to a niche all need explanation. Likewise, the allegorical verses, the universals, the general concepts, and the obscurities, all need explanation. The Qur'ān also has esoteric meanings and the most suitable person to express the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān is the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) himself. The Prophet said:

«انّ للقرآن ظهراً و بطناً و لبطنه بطناً الى سبعة ابطن...»

"Verily, the Qur'ān has exoteric and esoteric meanings; there are esoteric meanings for each of its exoteric meanings; up to seventy esoteric meanings behind each one..."[3] In conclusion, the foundational responsibility of the Prophet (ṣ) was to explain the meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān in a clear way so that they are placed at the disposal of the people in order for them to learn which path is the correct path.

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1. Kulaynī, Uṣūl Kāfī, v.1, p.286.
2. Qurān, 24:35.
3. Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī, v.1, p.31, muqaddamah 4.

The Prophet's (ṣ) tafsīr school

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) was the first teacher of and commentator on the Qur'ān. He taught tafsīr of the Qur'ān in his tafsīr school through various methods. Amongst his students, we can discern two groups; a general school and a private school. He would disseminate knowledge of the Qur'ān through these in the following ways:

1. General method

The prophet taught the general public in this method of tafsīr. This method was performed in two forms:

1. Verbally: The Prophet (ṣ) undertook the explanation of the Qur'ān by verbally explaining the meaning of certain verses. Many traditions explaining the verses of the Qur'ān have been narrated from him. Many of the traditions that Suyūṭī narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) are of this nature.

2. Practice: The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) also taught Qur'ānic terminology and the concepts of the verses to the people through presenting practical examples. He stated, by way of explaining the method of prayer in the verse:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ...﴾

"And establish prayer,"[1] and other similar verses by telling his followers:

«صلّوا كما رأيتمونى أُصلّى»

"Pray how you see me pray."[2] And in explanation of the verse

﴿...وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ...﴾

"And it is the duty of mankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House,"[3] he said:

«خذوا عنّى مناسككم»

"Take the rituals from me. [i.e. Perform them in the same manner as I perform them]."[4]

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1. Qurān, 2:43.
2. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.85, p.279.
3. Qurān, 3:97.
4. Ibn Abī al-Jumhūr Aḥsā'ī, Ghawālī al-Li'ālī, v.1, p.215 and v.4, p.34.

2. Specialized method and training commentators of the Qur'ān

The Prophet (ṣ), in addition to the general method, undertook more specialized modes of teaching. These were performed in two ways:

1. In groups: When verses of the Qur'ān were revealed, the Prophet (ṣ), in addition to reciting them and teaching them to the public, would teach their meanings and explanations to a number of prominent companions (such as Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubay ibn Ka'b). The companions also learned the intentions and meanings of the verses and religious rulings.[1]

Ṭabarī narrates the following in his tafsīr from Ibn Mas'ūd: "When one of us learned ten verses we did not go ahead to other verses until we learned the complete meaning of those verses and put them into practice."[2] Likewise, there is a tradition that states when the companions asked the Prophet (ṣ) to recite verses of the Qur'ān and they learned ten verses they would not advance until they acted in accordance to them. 'Abd al-Raḥman Sulamī states: "We learned the Qur'ān and how to put it into practice together."[3]

2. Specialized training: The Prophet (ṣ) gave particular importance to Ali ('a) than he did anyone else. He trained him in all affairs, including tafsīr of the Qur'ān's verses, so that Ali ('a) would be prepared to be his successor and an intellectual reference point for the people. Imam Ali ('a) states: "There was not a verse that was revealed to the Messenger of Allah in which I did not compile it. Likewise, there is not a verse in the Qur'ān which the Messenger of Allah did not read for me and teach me its tafsīr."[4]

Ali ('a) states in a lengthy tradition: "I sat alone with the Prophet each night and day. I was always with him. The companions knew that the Prophet did not interact with anyone in the way he interacted with me. Sometimes he would come to my house and sometimes I would visit him in which we would speak alone. He would even ask his wives to leave; nobody remained except me. But whenever he came to my house and we spoke together, Fatimah ('a)

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.174.
2. Ibid.
3. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, pgs.27-28.
4. Aḥmad bin Ali Ṭabarī, al-Iḥtijāj, v.1, p.207.

and my children were not asked to leave. Whenever I asked about a matter he would answer. When he became silent and I finished asking questions he would start."

Then he said:

«فما نزلت على رسول‌الله ﷺ آية من القرآن الّا أقرأنيها واملاها عليّ فكتبتها بخطى وعلّمنى تأويلها وتفسيرها وناسخها ومنسوخها ومحكمها ومتشابها وخاصها وعامها ودعا الله ان يعطينى فهمها و حفظها فما نسيت آية من كتاب الله تعالى ولا علماً أملاه عليّ و كتبته منذ دعا الله لى بمادعا رحمه الله»

"A verse was not revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) unless he read it for me and dictated it to me. I wrote it down and the Prophet taught me the explanation, the verses which abrogated others and the verses which were abrogated, the clear and the allegorical verses, and the special and general verses. The Prophet (ṣ) would beseech Allah to give me the understanding of the verses and the memorization of them. I have not forgotten any verse and the teachings of it since he prayed for me."

This tradition, and other similar traditions that are many in number, teach us that the Prophet (ṣ) particularly favored Ali ('a) in regards to teaching him all issues, especially divine sciences and the Holy Scripture.

With regards to the deep understanding that the Imam had of the Qur'ān, it would be sufficient to transmit the following tradition from the Imam himself:

«والله مانزلت آية الّا وقد علمتُ فيما نَزَلَتْ و اين نَزَلَتْ و عَلى مَنْ نزلت انّ ربّي وهب لي قلباً عقولاً ولساناً طلقاً سؤّلاً»

"I swear by Allah that there has not been a verse revealed in which I did not know what it was revealed about, where it was revealed, and who it was revealed about. Allah has given me a heart full of the light of intelligence and knowledge and a free tongue full of questions."[1]

The Prophet (ṣ), after spreading the religion of Islam and establishing the Islamic government in Medina, started to solve the

1. Balādharī, Insāb al-Ashrāf, p.99; Muhammad Hādī Ma'rafat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.215.

social and political problems of the people. He did not have much time to publicly explain the verses of the Qur'ān or to invite a group of people and teach them the explanations. Rather, if it happened that a person would ask a question during a meeting the Prophet (ṣ) would answer his question and the companion would benefit from it. But, Imam Ali ('a) said: "The companions of the Prophet (ṣ) were not able to consecutively ask him questions. Rather, the companions loved it when a nomadic Arab or traveler from a distant land would come and ask the Prophet (ṣ) questions and then he would answer them. The companions would listen and take benefit from them."[1]

The bulk of Prophetic traditions in the field of tafsīr

In regards to the number of traditions about tafsīr that have been transmitted from the Prophet (ṣ), Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, in the last discussion of *al-Itiqān*, narrates about 250 traditions with both valid and invalid chains of narration from the Prophet (ṣ) where he explained verses of the Qur'ān. But, there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars of Islam regarding how much the Prophet (ṣ) explained the Qur'ān and how many such traditions we have. These opinions can be divided into three categories:

First opinion: the explanation of all meanings and terms in the Qur'ān

This opinion states that the Prophet (ṣ) explained all of the expressions and terms found in the Qur'ān. This tafsīr, apparently, includes all of the chapters and verses of the Qur'ān. Ibn Taymīyah (d.728) supported this opinion. He reasoned for it with the following points:

1. Qur'ānic proof: The Qur'ān introduced the Prophet (ṣ) as being the explainer and clarifier of the Qur'ān, as he said in the following verse:

﴿...وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ...﴾

"...We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people..."[2] Clarification means expressing the meanings and terms.

1. Iskāfī, al-Mi`yār wa al-Muwāzinuh, p.304; al-Tafsīr was al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.175.
2. Qurān, 16:44.

2. Traditional (*ḥadīth*) proof: The companions have narrated that when the Prophet (ṣ) would teach them ten verses he would not advance unless they learned them completely and acted in accordance to them. In conclusion, the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) learned the Qur'ān, understood it, and put it into practice all at once.[1]

3. Rational proof: When a book is compiled for a group of people they generally learn the issues raised in the book. For instance, a book written about medicine or accounting is not compiled without explanation and descriptions. The Qur'ān is also a book of law for the Muslims and the best book that has come including a complete legal system for the salvation of mankind; for the success of mankind in this world and the next. Is it possible that the issues raised in this book were not taught to the people?[2] (The duty of the Prophet [ṣ] to tell the people whatever was determined for them.)

Second opinion: the tafsīr of a few verses

According to this view, the Prophet (ṣ) only explained a few verses of the Qur'ān. Some of the supporters of this view are Khuwayī[3] and Suyūṭī (d.911). He states:

«قلت: الذي صحّ من ذلك قليل جداً بل اصل المرفوع منه في غالب القلّة»

"Valid traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) about tafsīr are very few. Traditions where one or more of the people in the chain of narration have been omitted, and which have been attributed to him are extremely rare."[4]

This group embraced the following arguments in order to prove their opinion:

1. Ṭabarī (d.310) narrates a tradition from 'Ayishah, who said: "The Prophet (ṣ) only explained a few verses of the Qur'ān, which Gabriel taught to him, to the people."[5]

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.4, p.169.
2. Ibn Taymīyah, Muqaddamah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr, p.35; al-Itiqān, v.4, p.169.
3. Badr al-Dīn Zarakhshī, al-Burhān, v.1, p.16; Ayatollah Ma'rifat, considers the correct pronunciation of this term to be Khuwayī; al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.177. He was a scholar of the seventh century (d.637). He originated from Azerbaijan and lived at the same time as Fakhr Rāzī. He became a judge in Damascus and died there. He said: "That is unattainable except in very few verses.".
4. Al-Itiqān, v.4, p.174 (chapter: ummuhāt makhūdh al-Tafsīr).
5. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.37.

2. Allah invited the people to ponder over the verses of the Qur'ān so that they could obtain understanding of the Qur'ān. There are not clear statements to the effect that the Prophet (ṣ) was obliged to explain all of the verses found therein. This would fundamentally be in contradiction to the people's invitation to ponder over the verses. Therefore, the Prophet (ṣ) only explained some of the verses of the Qur'ān and left many of the explanations up to the people themselves. In addition to this, there are only about 250 traditions narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) in which he is explaining and clarifying verses of the Qur'ān.

3. The Prophet (ṣ) invited some of the companions, such as Ibn 'Abbās, to learn the science of tafsīr. He prayed:

«اللهم فَقِّهْهُ في الدين و عَلِّمْه التأويل»

"O' Allah grant him a deep understanding of religion and the knowledge of the hidden aspects of the Qur'ān."[1] According to this, the Prophet (ṣ) left the explanation of some verses to other people; so that they would explain the Qur'ān. He did not believe that it was necessary to personally explain the entire Qur'ān.

Third Opinion: Explanation of most of the verses

This opinion, which is closer to moderation, states that the Prophet (ṣ) explained many verses of the Qur'ān. The reason behind this is that all of the verses of the Qur'ān do not need explanation. Some verses can be understood by reference to dictionaries, grammatical rules, or pondering upon them. It was revealed for the general public in such a way that they did not have to think a great deal to understand what it meant. See for example, the verses:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ...﴾، ﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾

"Do not approach the orphan's property, except in the best [possible] manner...,"[2] and "Do not approach fornication. It is indeed an indecency and an evil way."[3]

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1. Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Musnad (Sharḥ by Aḥmad Muhammad Shākir), v.4, p.127.
2. Qurān, 6:152 and 17:34.
3. Qurān, 17:32.

Dr. Dhahabī supports this opinion. Taking the criticism of the two previous opinions into account, it can be said that this opinion is the best, though not without modification.

The following points should be considered:

1. The tradition narrated by 'Ayishah which states that the Prophet (ṣ) only explained to the people a few of the verses that Gabriel taught him has the following problems:

First, Ṭabarī, who narrated this tradition, considers it to be tampered with due to its chain of narration.[1]

Second, this tradition is in contradiction to the traditions which state that some of the companions (for instance Ali ['a]) had complete knowledge of the Qur'ān.

Third, if the chain of narration is considered correct, it means that whenever Gabriel revealed verses to the Prophet (ṣ) he would teach them to the people. Since the revelation of the Qur'ān was gradual, the verses were revealed in pieces and the Prophet explained them to the people gradually.[2]

2. All of the Qur'ān does not need to be explained because, as was mentioned, the Qur'ān was revealed in the Arabic language in an Arabic environment so that the people could easily understand it. Allah states:

﴿وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ﴾

"Certainly We have made the Qur'ān simple for the sake of admonishment. So is there anyone who will be admonished?"[3]

3. Some issues raised in the Qur'ān can be understood by referring to a dictionary or grammatical rules.

4. The number of traditions regarding tafsīr that Suyūṭī narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) is apparently about 250 traditions. But, it is certain that this number is not exhaustive because, on one hand, the Prophet's (ṣ) lifestyle and the traditions of the Prophet regarding the

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1. The transmitter of this tradition is Muhammad bin Ja`far Zabīdī who had been reproached. Bukhārī states that traditions transmitted by this person should not be followed. Refer to: Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.37.
2. Ḥusayn 'Alawī Mehr, Rawashhā wa Garāyishhā Tafsīr, p.107 (with additional material).
3. Qurān, 54:17.

roots and branches of religion, which are in congruence with the Qur'ān are added, and on the other, by expanding the City of Knowledge and the bequeethment of his knowledge to his successors, a huge school was founded which met the needs of the people. Therefore he did not leave any ambiguity in the heavenly scripture.

The Prophet (ṣ) prepared Ali ('a) and his children to inherit divine knowledge, including the tafsīr of the Qur'ān, in order to perpetuate the religion of Islam and clearly identify the intellectual reference point after him. Imam Ali ('a) learned his knowledge of tafsīr in their complete forms from the Prophet (ṣ). While the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) prayed for him he asked that this knowledge also be given to his children. The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

«يا علي! أكتب ما أُملي عليك، قلت يا رسول الله اتخاف عليّ النسيان؟ قال: لا، وقد دعوت الله ان يجعلك حافظاً ولكن لشركائك الائمة من ولدك»

"O' Ali, write what I dictate to you." Ali ('a) said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah, 'Are you afraid that I will forget?' 'The Prophet said: 'No, I prayed to Allah that you memorize it, but in regards to the Imams after you, who will be of your children, I am worried."[1]

In a tradition, Imam Ḥasan ibn Ali ('a) said:

«انّ العلم فينا و نحن اهله و هو عندنا مجموع كله بحذافيره و انّه لا يحدث شي الى يوم القيامه حتى ارش الخدش الّا و هو عندنا مكتوب باملاء رسول الله و خط عليٍّ بيده»

"We have the entirety of knowledge and we are deserving of it. Its entirety, with all of its specifics is with us. Everything that will happen until the Day of Judgment, even the blood money for a scratch on a person's skin, is written for us in the handwriting of Ali ('a) and with the signature of the Prophet (ṣ)."[2]

In conclusion it can be said that whatever Imam Ali ('a) said was from the Prophet (ṣ). Likewise, the words of the remaining pure Imams ('a) and the traditions explaining the verses of the Qur'ān from them that have reached the present age, can be attributed to the Prophet (ṣ). The collection of these traditions is numerous and would cover the explanation of the entire Qur'ān, or at least most of

1. Shaykh Ṣadūq, al-Amālī, p.327.
2. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.44, p.100.

the Qur'ān. In other words, according to what was mentioned, the Prophet (ṣ) had two lessons of tafsīr and many traditions in accordance to these two can be obtained:

1. The general school of tafsīr. The number of traditions from this school, according to some, (for instance Suyūṭī) is limited and is faced with many problems from the point of view of their chains of narration and their texts. They comprise approximately 250 traditions.

2. The private school of tafsīr: Imam Ali ('a) and the Prophetic Household ('a) studied in this manner so as to become an intellectual reference point for the general public to whom the people could refer after the Prophet (ṣ). Just as was understood from previous traditions, in this school, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) explained most of the Qur'ān, if not the entire Qur'ān, but not for all of the companions.[1] Many traditions which depict Imam Ali's ('a) extensive knowledge argue this point because Ali ('a) was a student of the Prophet's (ṣ) school; he was the first person who was ordered to compile the scripture after the Prophet's (ṣ) demise which was accompanied with explanation of the verses which were abrogated and the verses which abrogated other verses, with the circumstances of revelation, and with the general and specific verses.

Ibn Nadīm states: "The first scripture that was compiled was Ali's ('a) scripture. This scripture was present with the family of Ja'far." Then he said: "I saw the scripture with Abū Ali Ḥamzah Ḥasanī. It was written in Ali's handwriting and some of the pages were missing. The children of Ḥasan ibn Ali inherited it."[2]

Conclusion

From the above, it should be clear that the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) - i.e. those regarding the roots and branches of religion which are in agreement with the Qur'ān - and the traditions of the Imams from his Household ('a), the rightful successors to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), are numerous. It would be in such a way that it could be said that the Prophet (ṣ) mentioned all of the meanings of the Qur'ān.

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1. Muhammad Bāqir Ḥakīm, 'Ulūm al-Qurān, p.254.
2. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, pgs.47-48.

Professor Ma'rifat has also expressed this opinion.[1] An explanation of this is that in *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī Samarqandī* alone, which is a tafsīr up to the end of Sūrah Kahf, there are about 2,700 traditions. In *Tafsīr al-Burhān* by Muḥaddath Baḥrānī there are about 16,000 traditions and in *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn* by Ḥawīzī there are about 14,000 traditions. Traditions have also been transmitted regarding the branches of religion and religious rulings which have not reached us. For instance, the verses:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ...﴾، ﴿...وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا...﴾

"And maintain the prayer, and give the zakat...,"[2] and: "...And it is the duty of mankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House—for those who can afford the journey to it...,"[3] which generally point to prayer, charity, and the pilgrimage. But, the details of these actions (the number of components, the people whom charity is given to, the amount which deems charity obligatory, and the number of times one walks around the Ka'bah) have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. The reason behind this is clear; as a book of law, the Qur'ān mentions the universal precepts, but these are to be taken alongside the *Sunnah,* which serves to explain the particulars thereof. The Prophet (ṣ) said:

«الا وانی اوتیت القرآن و مثله معه یعنی السنه»

"The Qur'ān was given to me; and its like [the *Sunnah*] is with me."[4] In conclusion, the explanation and details of religious rulings is the responsibility of the Prophet (ṣ) and the Infallible Imams ('a).

Types of the Prophet's (ṣ) tafsīr

1. Explanation of Qur'ānic terminology

The Prophet (ṣ) sometimes would explain specific Qur'ānic terminology in order to describe a verse. This type of tafsīr is divided into two categories:

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.179.
2. Qurān, 2:43,83,110; 22:78.
3. Qurān, 3:97.
4. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.175.

A. The explanation of terminology regarding religious rulings. Zurārah transmitted a tradition from Imam Bāqir (ʿa) where he stated that `Ammār ibn Yāsir came to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and told him: "O' Messenger of Allah, I became *junūb* [in the night] and did not have water." The Prophet asked him to explain the method of *tayammum*. `Ammār said: "I took my clothes off and rolled on the dirt."

The Prophet said: "Donkeys roll around like that. Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, said:

﴿...فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا...﴾

"...then make *tayammum* with clean ground..."[1] Then in order to clarify religious *tayammum* he said:

«ضَرَبَ بِيَدَيه عَلَى الارض ثُم ضَرَبَ احْداهُما على الأُخْرى، ثُم مَسَحَ بجَبينه ثُم مَسَحَ كَفَّيه كلٌ واحدَة عَلَى الأُخْرى فَمَسَحَ اليُسْرى عَلَى اليُمْنى واليُمْنى عَلَى اليُسرى»

"Hit both of your hands on the ground then hit one against the other. After this wipe the forehead. Then, wipe the right hand with the left hand and the left and with the right hand."[2]

Ṭabarī narrates a tradition in his tafsīr from the Prophet (ṣ) about the 'middle prayer' mentioned in the verse:

﴿حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى...﴾

"Be watchful of your prayers, and [especially] the middle prayer..."[3] The Prophet said: "That prayer is the *`aṣr* (afternoon) prayer."[4]

B. The explanation of terminology not related to religious rulings. The Prophet (ṣ) explained many terms in the Qur'ān that had nothing to do with religious rulings. For instance, he said:

«انَّ المَغضوب عَلَيهم هُمُ اليهودُ و انّ الضالّين النّصارى»

"Verily, the 'incurred Your wrath' are the Jews and the 'astray' are the Christians."[5] This opinion is almost unanimous amongst the Sunni

1. Qurān, 5:6.
2. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ḥurr al-'Amulī, Wasā'il al-Shia, v.2, p.977, Abwāb tayammum, bāb 11, ḥadīth 9; similar traditions: h.2, 4, 5, and 8.
3. Qurān, 2:238.
4. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.2, p.555.
5. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.244.

and Shia commentators of the Qur'ān.[1]

Also, the Prophet explained the term 'praiseworthy station' in the verse:

﴿...عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا﴾

"...It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station."[2] He said:

«هو المقامُ الذى اَشْفَعُ فيه لأمَّتى»(وفي لفظ«هي الشّفاعة»)

"This is the station where I will intercede for my *ummah*."[3] Therefore, he explained the 'praiseworthy station' as being the 'station of intercession.'

2. Explanation of words

Sometimes the meanings of some words used in the Qur'ān were not clear for the companions. In this regard they would ask the Prophet (ṣ) what the meaning of so and so word was. The Prophet would then explain it.

Ibn 'Abbās states:

«سأل رجُلٌ رسولَ اللهﷺ قال: اَرأيتَ قول الله... ﴿الَّذينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْءَانَ عِضِينَ﴾ ما عضينُ؟ قالﷺ: آمَنوا بِبَعضٍ و كَفروا بِبَعضٍ»

"A person asked the Messenger of Allah (ṣ): "I have come across the words of Allah: "who reduced the Qur'ān into pieces ['*iḍīn*]." What does '*iḍīn* mean?" He (ṣ) said: "Believing in part [of the Qur'ān] and rejecting part [of the Qur'ān]."[4]

In another tradition Suyūṭī narrated:

«قيل يا رسولَ الله ماالعدل؟ قالﷺ العدلُ، الفديةُ»

"It was said: "O' Messenger of Allah, what does '*adl* mean in the verse:

﴿وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ﴾

"...nor any ransom ['*adl*] shall be received from it..."]?" He (ṣ) said: " '*Adl* is ransom."[5]

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1. Ṭabarasī, Majma` al-Bayān, v.1, p.35.
2. Qurān, 17:79.
3. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.254, he states that this tradition has many chains of narration.
4. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.253.
5. Ibid, p.245.

3. 35Stipulation (taqīd) of an absolute (muṭlaq) expression

Valid articles of the *Sunnah* can stipulate an absolute Qur'ānic expression and specify a universal one. Sunni and Shia scholars have commonly accepted this.[1] An example of how the words of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) can stipulate a Qur'ānic absolute is the prohibition of buying and selling weapons from enemies who are at war with Islam. Allah permitted sale in the Qur'ān by stating:

﴿...أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيعَ...﴾

"...Allah has allowed trade..."[2] But, the Prophet (ṣ) conditionalized this absolute permission.

The Prophet stated in his will to Ali ('a):

«ياعليُّ! كَفَرَ بالله العظيم مِنْ هذه الأُمّة عَشَرةٌ...الى اَن قال: وبايعُ السّلاحِ مِن اهلِ الْحرب»

"O' Ali, ten groups of this *nation* have rejected Allah, the Grand..." Then he said: "One of them is those that sell weapons to enemies who are at war with Islam."[3]

Another case where an absolute ruling is seen in the Qur'ān is the implementation of a will. Allah states:

﴿...مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيةٍ يوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَينٍ...﴾

"...after [paying off] any bequest they may have made or any debt [they may have incurred]..."[4] A will, as mentioned in this verse, is absolute. In conclusion, if a person made a will out of his entire estate, it would be correct and permissible. But this ruling is conditionalized in jurisprudence.

The following has been narrated from Imam Ṣādiq ('a):

«كان البَراءُ بنُ مَعرور الانصارى بالمدينة وكانَ رسولُ‌اللهﷺ بمكةَ وانّه حَضَرهُ الموتُ وكان رسولُ‌اللهﷺ واصحابُه والمُسلمونُ يُصلّون الى بيتِ المقدس، و اَوْصَى البراءُ اذا دُفن ان يُجْعَلَ وجهُه تلقاءَ النبيﷺ الى القبلة واَوْصى بثلث ماله فَجَرَتْ به السنّه»

"Barā' ibn Ma`rūr, a companion of the Messenger of Allah, was in Medina when he passed away. The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) was still in

1. Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, al-Bayān, p.399.
2. Qurān, 2:275.
3. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.12, p.71.
4. Qurān, 4:12.

Mecca at the time and prayed facing Jerusalem. He gave two suggestions:

1. Bury him facing the Ka'bah [because the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) was in Mecca]. Barā' wanted to be buried facing the Prophet (ṣ).

2. Barā' made a will regarding one-third of his estate. Both of them made the *Sunnah* of Barā' the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ)."[1]

The phrase 'revealed in the Qur'ān' is seen in some of the scripts of this tradition.[2]

4. Specifying a universal

One of the forms of the Messenger of Allah's (ṣ) tafsīr was specifying some of the universal statements found in the Qur'ān. As we said above, the majority of the scholars accepted the opinion that multiply-transmitted (*mutawātir*) traditions and single-transmitted traditions are able to specify a universal of the Qur'ān.

One of the universal rulings of the Qur'ān that was specified by the *Sunnah* is the inheritance of a child. Allah states:

﴿يوصِيكُمُ اللهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ...﴾

"Allah enjoins you concerning your children: for the male shall be the like of the share of two females."[3] A son inherits two times that of a daughter. The *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) has specified this universal. The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

«قال رسول الله ﷺ: لا ميراثَ لِلْقاتِل»

"There is no inheritance for the murderer."[4]

5. Tafsīr of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān

Ibn Mas'ūd states: "When the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ﴾

1. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, Furū` al-Kāfī, v.7, p.10.
2. Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.1, p.66. Barā' bin Ma`rūr Anṣārī Khazrajī was one of the first people to pledge alliegance to the Messenger of Allah (s) in 'Uqbah. But, he passed away in Medina before the Prophet (s) migrated there. When the Prophet (s) entered Medina he visited his grave and prayed for him.
3. Qurān, 4:11.
4. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.17, p.388.

'Those who have faith and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing—for such there shall be safety, and they are the [rightly] guided,'[1] was revealed people became worried. They asked the Messenger of Allah (ṣ): "O' Messenger of Allah, who amongst us has oppressed their own souls?" The Prophet (ṣ) said: "It is not what you have understood. Have you not heard what the righteous servant of Allah [Luqmān] said? He said:

﴿...إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

"...Polytheism is indeed a great injustice."[2] Oppression in the verse means polytheism; not all forms of oppression."[3]

In a tradition, Ibn Kathīr narrates from the Prophet (ṣ) in regards to the tafsīr of the verse:

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيبِ لَا يعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ...﴾

"With Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him..."[4] He used the 34th verse of Sūrah Luqmān in his explanation:

«مفاتيح الغيب خمسة: ان الله عنده علم الساعة و ينزل الغيث و يعلم ما في الارحام و ماتدري نفس ماذا تكسب غداً وماتدرى نفس بايّ ارض تموت ان الله عليم خبير»

"There are five treasures of the Unseen: knowledge of the hereafter, falling of rain, what is in the wombs, what a soul will obtain tomorrow, and where a person will die; Verily Allah is the Knower; the Aware."[5]

6. Ethical points

The Prophet (ṣ) said on the day that Mecca was conquered:

«يا ايها الناس ان الله قد اذهب عنكم بالاسلام نخوة الجاهلية و تفاخرها بآبائها ان العربية ليست باب ووالدة وانما هولسان ناطق فمن تكلم به فهو عربي الا و انكم من آدم و آدم من تراب و ﴿...إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ...﴾»

1. Qurān, 6:82.
2. Qurān, 31:13.
3. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.4, p.212; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-`Aẓīm, v.2, p.160, seven traditions with the same meaning have been narrated.
4. Qurān, 6:59.
5. Tafsīr al-Qurān al-'Aẓīm, v.2, p.145.

"O' people, through the blessings of Islam, Allah has destroyed the arrogance of the Age of Ignorance and the pride of the Arabs in their ancestry. Being Arab does not mean that you are from a certain father and a certain mother; rather Arabic is a language. Whoever speaks that language is an Arab. Know that all of you stem from Adam and Adam stems from dirt.

'...Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you...'»[1][2]

The biggest ethical advice of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) was that Arabs must not take pride in their fathers and ancestors; they must not consider themselves superior over others. Rather, the criterion for superiority is piety.

There is a tradition from the Prophet (ṣ) in which he explained the verse:

﴿وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مَيسَرَةٍ...﴾

"And if [the debtor] is in straits, let there be a respite until the time of ease...,"[3] on a hot day in the following way:

«من سَرَّه ان يظلّه في ظلّ عرشه يوم لاظلّ الاّ ظلّه فلينظر غريماً او ليدع معسراً»

"A person who would be happy if Allah let him stand in the shade of his Throne of the Day of Judgment must be patient with those that owe him money; he must give him respite and forgo a person who is in poverty."[4]

A tradition was revealed about the verse:

﴿يا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا...﴾

"...O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins..."[5] It states: "An elderly man who walked with a cane came to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and asked: "O' Messenger of Allah, I have deceived, committed sins, and committed despicable actions. Will

1. Qurān, 49:13.
2. Mashadī Qumī, Kanz al-Daqā'iq, v.12, p.349; also refer to: Ali bin Ibrāhīm, Tafsīr al-Qumī, v.2, p.322.
3. Qurān, 2:280.
4. Muḥaddath Baḥrānī, al-Burhān, v.1, p.261.
5. Qur'ān, 39:53.

Allah forgive me?" The Prophet asked: "Do you bear witness to the oneness of Allah?" He responded: "Yes, and I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (ṣ) said: "Allah has forgiven your despicable actions and your sins."[1] Despair in divine mercy is one of the negative ethical traits that are not in congruence with the Islamic ethical system. Man must have hope in his life; he must be energetic moving towards salvation.

7. Imamah and guardianship

There has been a tradition by the Prophet (ṣ) about the verse:

﴿...وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيه اللَّهَ فَسَيؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"...and whoever fulfils the covenant he has made with Allah, He will give him a great reward,"[2] about the guardianship of and allegiance to the Infallible Imams ('a). He said: "One who pledges allegiance has pledged allegiance to Allah:

﴿يَدُاللهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ﴾؛

'...the hand of Allah is above their hands...'.[3]

«معاشر الناس! فاتقوالله وبايعوا علياً امير المؤمنين والحسن والحسين والائمه كلمة طيبة باقية يهلك الله بها من غدر ويرحم بها من وفى ﴿فَمَن نَّكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ...﴾»

O' people, fear Allah and pledge allegiance to Ali, the Commander of the Faithful; to Ḥasan, to Ḥusayn, and the Imams who are pure and eternal words. Allah destroys the one who betrays and has mercy on the one who fulfills. '...So whosoever breaks his oath, breaks it only to his own detriment...'.[4»5]

The following has been narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) about the verse:

﴿...إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

"...I am making you the Imam of mankind.' Said he, 'And from among my descendants?' He said, 'My pledge does not extend to the

1. Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, v.4, p.59.
2. Qurān, 48:10.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Kanz al-Daqā'iq, v.12, pgs.280-281.

unjust:"[1] "The invitation to Abraham ('a) continued through me and Ali ('a) because neither of us prostrated to an idol. "

«فاتخذني نبياً واتخذ علياً، وصياً»

"Allah chose me as a prophet and Ali as a vicegerent."[2]

8. Characteristics of hell

It has been narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) that he said the following about the verse:

﴿إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ﴾

"Indeed it throws up sparks [huge] like palaces[3]:"

«تزفر النار بمثل الجبال شرراً»

"The mouth of the fire of hell is like sparks of mountains."[4]

The Prophet (ṣ) said the following about the verse:

﴿لَابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا﴾

"to reside therein for ages:"[5] "A person who enters the fire will not leave it unless he resides in it for ages."

Then he said:

«(حقب) بضع وستون سنة والسنة ثلاثمأة وستون يوماً وكل يوم كالف سنة ممّا تعدّون...»

"*ḥaqab* is a little more than 60 years; each year has 360 days; each day is similar to 1000 years of this world."[6]

Summary

1. The Prophet (ṣ) was the first commentator of the Qur'ān; according to the 44th verse of *Sūrah Naḥl* he had the responsibility of explaining the Qur'ān.

2. The Qur'ān has sufficed itself to universals with regards to its legal injunctions. Universals have been mentioned in many verses, especially the verses regarding religious rulings. Likewise, because it

1. Qurān, 2:124.
2. Kanz al-Daqā'iq, v.2, p.139.
3. Qurān, 77:32.
4. Kanz al-Daqā'iq, v.14, p.89.
5. Qurān, 78:23.
6. Ṭabarasī, Majma' al-Bayān, v.9 and 10, p.643.

has examples, allegories, and metaphors, as well as esoteric meanings, it needs to be explained.

3. The Prophet (ṣ) had two schools of tafsīr. One school or method was public and the other private. In the public school verses were taught to people and they were shown the Qur'ānic concepts and religious rulings in practice. In the private school, some of the companions were taught tafsīr. But, most of his knowledge, especially the entirety of tafsīr, was taught to Ali ('a) so that he could become the reference point for the people after the Prophet (ṣ).

4. There are three opinions regarding the number of traditions from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) regarding tafsīr. One opinion states that the Prophet (ṣ) explained the entire Qur'ān (Ibn Taymīyah). The second opinion states that the Prophet only explained a few verses (Suyūṭī). The third opinion, which is the moderate opinion, states that the Prophet explained most of the verses of the Qur'ān (Dr. Dhahabī). But, this opinion, through corrections (namely by adding traditions by the Infallible Imams ['a] and the Prophet [ṣ], as well as the practical lifestyle of the Prophet [ṣ]), would incur a larger portion or the entirety of the Qur'ān, especially since he taught Ali ('a) the tafsīr of the entire Qur'ān.

5. The traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) regarding tafsīr are in various forms. For instance, some of them describe Qur'ānic terminology (for instance *tayammum* and the 'middle prayer'), some of them describe Qur'ānic words, some of them serve as stipulations for an absolute, some of them specify a universal, and some of them explain the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān.

Questions and research points

1. Which verse states that the main duty of the Prophet (ṣ) was to explain the Qur'ān?

2. What proofs are there which denote the permissibility of explaining the Qur'ān?

3. The Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic and able to be understood; can people read the Qur'ān and understand it well? Explain.

4. What methods did the tafsīr school of the Prophet (ṣ) have?

5. How did the Prophet (ṣ) train his private students to become

commentators of the Qur'ān? Who did he train?

6. How many traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) about tafsīr are there? Summarize the various opinions.

7. Explain three forms of the Prophet's (ṣ) Methodologys with examples.

8. Refer to *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn* and present a few examples of the Prophet's (ṣ) tafsīr regarding theological issues. Each example should have a title and brief explanation.

9. Divide the class into a few groups. Each group should research parts of *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Ibn Kathīr or *Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr* by Suyūṭī and list the traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) on the first chart.

10. The same research should be performed with *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn* by Ḥawīzī; the traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) should be listed on the second chart.

11. According to the research data, some of the traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) should be recorded and attributed to the following titles: description of words, description of terms, constraining absolutes, specifying universals, ethics, and beliefs.

Charts

3
Tafsīr in the Period of the Companions

Goals of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with the most famous commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the companions and their Methodologys. 2. Recognition of the characteristics of tafsīrs during the period of the companions.

Prelude

The Arabic term *ṣaḥabah* is literally the plural form of *ṣaḥabī* which stems from the root صحب meaning escort, comrade. The term *ṣāḥib* means attendant, favorite, or neighbor.[1] But, as a religious term, there are differences of opinions regarding the meaning of *ṣaḥabah*. It has been defined in various ways.

Abū Rīyāḥ writes: "A companion is a person who either sat with the Prophet or saw him."[2] Shahīd Thānī writes: "The term companion applies to those who met the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), believed in him, and died following Islam."[3]

There is no doubt that the companions were not equal in regard to knowledge, understanding of tafsīr, and Qur'ānic sciences. These differences are visible in the words of the companions themselves.

It has been narrated that Abū Bakr was asked about the explanation of the verse:

﴿...كَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقِيتًا﴾

1. Fakhr al-Dīn Ṭarīḥī, Majma' al-Baḥrayn, v.2, p.584.
2. Shaykh Maḥmūd Abū Rīyāḥ, Aḍwā' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, p.348; Majma' al-Baḥrayn, v.2, p.585.
3. Zayn al-Dīn Shahīd Thānī, al-Darāyah fī 'Ilm Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth, p.120.

"...and Allah is prepotent over all things."[1] He answered: "Which heaven will provide shade for me and which land will accept me if I say something about Allah's scripture which I do not know."[2] Anas related that `Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb read the verse:

﴿وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا﴾

"fruits and pastures,"[3] while on the pulpit and then said: "I know what the word fruit (*fākihah*) means, but what does 'pasture' (*ab*) mean?" He then pondered over it for awhile and said: "I swear on my soul that this is difficult."[4] Mujāhid narrates from Ibn 'Abbās, who said: "I did not know the meaning of the verse:

﴿...فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...﴾

"...the originator (*fāṭir*) of the heavens and the earth..,"[5] until two nomads started arguing next to a well. One of them said: 'I originated (*faṭurtu*) it.' And the other said in response: 'I originated (*Ibtida'tu*) it.' Then, I understood that the term '*faṭr*' could be used to mean originator."[6]

In any case, differences amongst individuals are essential. The companions of the Prophet (ṣ), due to their understanding, keenness, and the rest of the gifts and potentials, were on various levels of knowledge and merits. Allah has created a measure and capacity:

﴿...قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا﴾

"...Certainly Allah has set a measure for everything."[7] Another verse reads:

﴿أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا...﴾

"He sends down water from the sky whereat the valleys are flooded to [the extent of] their capacity...".[8]

After the term companion has been clarified, the matter of who

1. Qurān, 4:85.
2. Aḥmad 'Aṣimī, Muqaddamat fī `Ulūm al-Qurān, p.183.
3. Qurān, 80:31.
4. Abū Isḥāq Shātibī, al-Mawāfiqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī`ah, v.9, p.87.
5. Qurān, 6:14.
6. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.4.
7. Qurān, 65:3.
8. Qurān, 13:17.

the commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the companions were and who were the most famous of them must be dealt with.

Suyūṭī states in *al-Itiqān*:

«اشتهر بالتفسير من الصحابة عشرة: الخلفاء الاربعة وابن مسعود وابن عباس وأُبَي بن كعب و زيد بن ثابت وابوموسى الاشعري و عبدالله بن الزبير...»

"The most famous companions in tafsīr were ten: the four caliphs, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Ubay ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thābit, Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arī, and 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr." Then he said: "Amongst the caliphs, the most traditions regarding tafsīr have been recorded from Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. Very few traditions have been recorded from the other three."[1]

After listing the people mentioned above, Dhahabī writes in *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*: "We will only discuss Ali ('a), Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ubay ibn Ka'b because many traditions about tafsīr have been narrated from them. We will not however discuss the others."[2]

Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a)

Although Dhahabī is a devout Sunni, he nevertheless praises numerous characteristics of Ali ('a); his opinions will be cited. He writes: "Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib was Qurayshī, Hāshimī, and the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet [ṣ] (the husband of Fatimah ['a]). The progeny of the Prophet (ṣ) will stem from Fatimah ('a). He was the first young person to accept Islam and attest to the Prophet (ṣ). He migrated to Medina with the Prophet (ṣ). It is said that the verse:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ...﴾

"And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.4, p.196; in the continuation he tries to explain the point that the other three caliphs have very few traditions regarding Tafsīr. He states that the reason is that they died earlier. Then, he narrates traditions regarding the merits of Imam Ali bin Abī Ṭālib (a).
2. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.69, in addition to these four people, he lists the names of the other people, for instance, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, and writes: "We will refrain discussing them due to the minute amount of traditions regarding Tafsīr narrated from them".

of Allah..,"[1] was revealed about him. He was present in all of the wars, except Tabūk where the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) placed him as his successor amongst his family.

"The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) gave the standard of Islam to him in many battles. He said on the day of Khaybar: "I will give the standard to one who Allah will grant victory to; who loves Allah and His Messenger and who Allah and His Messenger love." Then he put the standard in the hands of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a). The Prophet (ṣ) labeled him as a brother amongst his companions. He said:

«انت اخي في الدنيا و الآخرى»

"You are my brother in this world and the next." He is one of the ten people who were given the glad tidings of paradise." He continued: "Merits were collected in him in which nobody else has.

" Ali ('a) was a river of knowledge, had strong reasoning, and healthy derivation, therefore many writings, speeches, and poems were conducted in his favor. He had wisdom and insight which could penetrate concealed matters. The companions would refer to him in many affairs and problems (intellectual and religious).

"The Prophet (ṣ) left the judgment of Yemen up to him and prayed for him in the following:

«اللهم ثبّت لسانه واهد قلبه»

"O' Allah, make his speech firm and guide his heart." He was a successful human being who spoke correctly and with wisdom. He solved crises in such a way that he became a metaphor:

«قضية ولا اباحسن لها»

'A problem without Abā al-Ḥasan to solve it.' This is not astonishing because he was raised in the household of prophethood and was fed the milk of prophetic knowledge."

Dhahabī said the following about Ali's ('a) station in regards to tafsīr:

«فكان اعلم الصحابه بمواقع التنزيل و معرفة التأويل و قد روي عن ابن عباس انّه قال: ما اخذت من تفسير القرآن فعن علي‌بن ابي‌طالب»

1. Qurān, 2:207.

"He was the most knowledgeable amongst the companions about the circumstances of revelation of verses and the understanding of the inner meanings. The following has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās: 'Whatever is taken from me regarding tafsīr of the Qur'ān it is from Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.'" After narrating traditions from the companions about Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib's knowledge, he writes:

«وغير هذا كثير من الآثار التي تشهد له بانّه كان صدر المفسّرين»

"In addition to these there are many others written in books which testify to him being at the head of the commentators of the Qur'ān."[1]

Without a doubt, in accordance to present evidence and authoritative traditions narrated by Shias and Sunnis, the most knowledgeable person regarding religion, religious rulings, and the Qur'ān, after the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), was Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a). His knowledge was taken from the Prophet's (ṣ) knowledge and inspiration from the Lord.

The Messenger of Allah's (ṣ) words about Ali's ('a) knowledge

The Prophet (ṣ) said:

«انا مدينةُ العلمِ و عليٌ بابُها فَمن اَرادَ العلم فَليأت البابَ»

"I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. So, whoever wants knowledge come through the gate." Renowned Sunni scholars, such as Ṭabarī, Ibn Mu'īn, Ḥakīm, Khāṭib, and Suyūṭī consider this tradition to be authentic. More than 140 major scholars of traditions reasoned using this tradition and considered it to be one of the valid and certain traditions. More than 20 of them consider its chain of narration to be perfect.[2]

Salmān Farsi narrates that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

«اَعلَمُ اُمَّتي من بَعدي عَليُّبنُ ابيطالب»

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, pgs.94-96, the reason that this was narrated from Dhahabī is because he rebukes Shias in his book. He made many excuses for the fact that the other caliphs did not have traditions about Tafsīr.
2. Refer to: 'Allāmah Amīnī, al-Ghadīr, v.6, pgs.61-97; Ibn `Asākir, Tārīkh Damashq, v.2, pgs.983-999.

"The most knowledgeable person of my *ummah* after me is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib."[1]

In another tradition, the Prophet said:

«عليٌّبنُ ابيطالب اَعلمُ النّاسِ بالله»

"Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib is the most knowledgeable person regarding Allah."

In another tradition, he said the following to his daughter Fatimah Zahrā' ('a):

«زوجُك خيرُ اهلى، اعلَمهم علماً وافضلُهم حلماً واوّلُهم اسلاماً»

"Your husband is the best person in my family; he is the most knowledgeable amongst them, the best amongst them in forbearance, and the first of them in Islam."[2]

Abū Amāmah narrates the following from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ):

ـاعلمُ اُمتي بالسُّنة والقَضاء بَعدى عليٌّبنُ ابى طالب»

"The most knowledgeable of my nation in the *Sunnah* and judgment is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib."[3]

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) told Ali ('a):

«انّ الله اَمَرَنى اَنْ اُدْنيك ولا اُقصيكَ و اَن اُعَلّمك ولا اَجْفوك فَحَقيقٌ عَلَىَّ اَن اُعَلّمَكَ و حَقيقٌ عليك اَن تَعى»

"Allah ordered me to be close to you; not to distance myself from you. He ordered me to teach you; not to shirk your rights. Therefore, my duty is to teach you and it would befit you to listen well and memorize."[4]

It has also been narrated from the Prophet (ṣ):

«عليٌّ مَعَ القرآن و القرآنُ مَعَ عَليٍّ لَن يَفتَرقا حتّى يَردا عَلَىَّ الحوضَ»

"Ali is with the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān is with Ali. They will not separate from each other until they meet at the Fountain."[5]

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1. Ibn Shahrāshūb, Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib, p.49.
2. `Allāmah Amīnī, al-Ghadīr, v.2, p.44.
3. Ibid.
4. Al-Mi`yār wa al-Mawāzinuh, p.301, narrated from Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.216.
5. Ḥakīm Nayshābūrī, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, v.3, pgs.124-126; Tārīkh Damashq, v.3, pgs.124-125.

In another tradition the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) states:

«عليٌّ بابُ علمي و مُبيِّنُ لامّتي، ما أُرسلتُ به من بَعدي»

"Ali is the gate to my knowledge and the clarifier of my message to my *nation* after me."[1]

Ali's ('a) knowledge in his own words

Imam Ali ('a) has spoken about his own knowledge. Here we will cite a few instances of these traditions:

«ايّها النّاسُ سلُوني قَبلَ اَن تفقَدوني فَلانا بطُرق السَّماء اَعلَمُ منّى بطُرق الارض»

"O' people! ask me before you lose me, because certainly I am acquainted with the passages of the sky more than the passages of the earth."[2]

«يَنحَدر عنّى السّيلُ ولا يرقى الىَّ الطَّيرُ»

"The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly up to me."[3]

«يا معشرَ النّاس سلونى قبلَ اَنْ تفقدوني، سَلوني فانّ عندي علمُ الاوّلينَ و الآخرين. اَما والله لَوثَنى لِي الْوَسادة حَكَمْتُ بين اهلِ التوراة بتوراتهم. ثم قال: سلوني قبل ان تفقدوني فو الذي فَلَق الحَبَّةَ و بَرَءَ النَسَمَةَ لَو سَألتموني عَن آية آية لأُخبرَتَّكم بوقت نُزولها و فيمَ نَزلَت...»

"Ask me before you lose me, for with me is the knowledge of the beginning and the end. But, by Allah, if I had been granted success, I would have ruled amongst the people of the Torah by the their Torah." Then he said: "Ask me before you lose me, by the One who splits the seed and the One who releases the breeze, if you ask me about a verse I will inform you of the time it was revealed and who it was revealed about."[4]

«انّ رسولَالله عَلَّمني الفَ بابٍ من الحلال و الحرامِ ممّا كانَ و ما يَكون الى يومِ القيامة كل بابٍ منها يفتح الفَ بابٍ...»

"Verily, the Messenger of Allah taught me one thousand doors of the

1. Ali Mutaqī Hindī, Kanz al-'Ammāl, h.32981.
2. Nahj al-Balāghah, speech 189.
3. Ibid, speech 3.
4. Shaykh Mufid, Irshād, p.23.

permissible and prohibited from what exists and what will exist until the Day of Judgment. Each door opened another thousand doors..."[1]

«والله ما نَزَلَت آيةٌ الّا وقدْ عَلِمْتُ فيما نَزَلَتْ وأينَ نَزَلَتْ و عَلَى من نَزَلَتْ انّ ربّي وَهَبَ لي قَلباً عَقولاً و لساناً طلقا سَؤلاً»

"By Allah, a verse was not revealed unless I knew what it was revealed about, when it was revealed, and who it was revealed about. My Lord has given me a rational heart and tongue free and full of questions."[2]

Kulaynī narrates the following from the Imam in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*:

«فما نَزَلَت على رسول الله آيةٌ من القرآن الا أقْرَأنيها و أمْلاها عَلَيَّ فكتبتُها بخَطّي و عَلَّمني تأويلَها وتفسيرَها وناسخَها ومنسوخَها ومُحكَمها و متشابهَها وخاصَّها وعامَّها ودَعَاالله أن يُعطيَني فهْمَها وحفظَها فما نَسيتُ آية من كتاب الله ولا علماً املاهُ عَلَيّ و كَتَبْتُه مُنذَ دَعا اللهَ لي بما دَعَا...ثم وَضع يَده عَلى صدْري و دَعَا اللهَ أن يَملأَ قَلبي علماً و فَهماً و حكماً و نُوراً، فقلْتُ يا نبيَّ الله ـ بابي انت و أمي ـ مُنْذ دَعَوت اللهَ لي بما دَعَوتَ لم أنسَ شيئاً ولَمْ يَفُتني شيءٌ لم أكتُبه. أفتتخوفُ عَلَيَّ النسيانَ فيما بعد؟ فقال ﷺ لا، لستُ أتخوّفُ عليك النسيانَ والجَهلَ»

"No verse of the Qur'ān was revealed to the Messenger of Allah unless he would read it to me, dictate it to me, and I would write it down with my handwriting. He would then teach me its hidden meanings, explanation, what it abrogates, what abrogates it, if it is a decisive verse, or if it is an allegorical verse, what specifies it and what is included in it. He would pray to Allah that He would give me understanding and memorization of it. I have not forgotten a verse from Allah's scripture or knowledge that was dictated to me and I wrote it down since he prayed for me with the supplication...Then he put his hand on my chest and prayed to Allah to fill my heart with knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and light. I said: 'O, prophet of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom, from the time that you prayed to Allah for me I have not forgotten anything. I have not lost anything that I did not write down. Are you

1. Ali Mutaqī Hindī Ḥawayrī, Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.4, p.444.
2. Kanz al-'Ammāl, h.36404.

afraid that I will forget in the future?' He said: 'No, I have never feared that you would forget or be ignorant."[1]

This tradition suffices as evidence of Ali's ('a) depth of knowledge and his unparalleled status after the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).

Ali ('a) states the following in regards to his and his family's knowledge of the Qur'ān, and them being the most suitable it:

«وهذا القرآنُ انّما هُو خطٌ مسطورٌ بينَ الدّفتين، لا ينطقُ ولا بدّله من ترجُمان و انّما ينطق عنه الرّجالُ ولمّا دعانا القومُ الى اَن نُحَكّمَ بيننا القرآنَ لم نكن الفريقَ المتولّى عن كتاب الله سبحانه و تعالى، و قد قال الله سبحانه»

"The Qur'ān is a book, covered, between two flaps, and it does not speak. Therefore it needs to have an interpreter. Men alone can be such interpreters. When these people invited us to name the Qur'ān as the arbitrator between us, we could not be the party turning away from the Book of Allah, since Allah has said:

﴿...فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ...﴾

"...And then if ye quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Prophet...".[2]

«فرَدُّه الى الله اَن نَحكُمَ بكتابه و رَدُّه الى الرّسول اَنْ نأخُذَ بسنّته. فاذا حُكم بالصّدق في كتاب الله فنحن اَحقُّ النّاس به، وانْ حُكم بسُنّة رسول‌الله ﷺ فَنَحْنُ احقُّ النّاس و اَولاهُم بها»

Reference to Allah means that we decide according to the Qur'ān while reference to the Prophet means that we follow his *Sunnah*. Now therefore, if arbitration were truly done through the Book of Allah, we would be the most rightful of all people for the Caliphate; or if it were done by the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), we would be the most preferable of them."[3]

The companions opinions about Ali's ('a) knowledge

The most famous commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the companions are four people: Ali ('a), Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubay ibn Ka'b, and 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās. All of the companions are unanimous about Ali ('a) being the most knowledgeable amongst them and their

1. Uṣūl al-Kāfī, v.1, p.64.
2. Qurān, 4:59.
3. Nahj al-Balāghah, speech 125.

superior in all affairs, especially in the tafsīr of the Qur'ān.

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, who is one of the most famous commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the companions after Ali ('a), states: "A large portion of what I learned about tafsīr is from Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a).[1]

Likewise, he said:

«عليٌّ عَلِمَ علماً علَّمَهُ رسول‌الله ﷺ ورسول الله ﷺ علَّمَه الله فَعلْمُ النَّبي من علْم الله، وعلْمُ عَليٍّ منْ علْم النَّبي، و علْمي من علم عليٍّ عليه السلام وما علْمي و علْمُ اصحاب محمد ﷺ في علْم عليٍّ الّا كقطرة في سبعة اَبْحُر»

"Ali had his knowledge taught to him by the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and Allah taught the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). Therefore, the knowledge of the Prophet (ṣ) is from the knowledge of Allah and the knowledge of Ali is from the knowledge of the Prophet; and my knowledge is from Ali's knowledge. My knowledge and the knowledge of the other companions of Muhammad (ṣ) in front of the knowledge of Ali is like a drop of water compared to the seven seas."[2]

In another place he said:

«لقد اُعْطي عليُّبن ابي طالب تسعة اَعْشار العلم، و اَيْمُ الله لَقَد شارَكَهُم في العُشر العاشر»

"Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib has been given nine-tenths of knowledge. By Allah, the rest of mankind only shares one-tenth of knowledge with him." This shows that knowledge has ten parts and Ali was given nine parts of the ten. In another tradition Ibn 'Abbās states:

«فكان لعَليٍّ منها اربعة اجزاء و لسائر الناس جزء شاركهم عَليٌّ فيه فكان اعلمُهم»

"Knowledge has been divided into five parts amongst mankind. Ali ('a) has been given four parts and the other part, which is for the rest of mankind, has been shared with him. So, he is the most knowledgeable of them."[3]

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd said:

«وانّ القرآن اُنزل على سبعة احرف، ما منها حرف الا و له ظهر و باطن»؛ «و انّ عليَّ بن ابي طالب عندَه منه الظّاهرُ و الباطنُ»

"The Qur'ān was revealed upon seven letters and each letter has an

1. Ibn Shahrāshūb, Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib, v.1, p.321, Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.40, p.157.
2. Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, Sa`d al-Sa`ūd, pgs.285-286.
3. Ibn Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārikh, v.3, p.200.

esoteric and exoteric meaning. Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib has knowledge of the esoteric and exoteric meanings."[1]

Sa'īd ibn Musayib states:

«ماكان احدٌ من النّاس يَقولُ سَلُوني غيرَ علي‌بن ابي‌طالب»

"Nobody amongst mankind can say: 'Ask me,' other than Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib." He continues:

«كان عُمر يَتَعَوَّذُ من مُعْظَلَة ليس لها ابوالحسن»

"'Umar seeks refuge from the day when he faces a dilemma without Abū Ḥasan [Ali] being there for him."[2]

Abū Ṭufayl states: "Ali ('a) said:

«كان علي عليه السلام يقول: سَلوني، سلوني، سلوني عن كتاب الله تعالى، فَوَ الله ما من آيـة الّـا و اَنـا اَعْلَمُ اُنزلَت بليل او نهار...»

'Ask me. Ask me. Ask me about the book of Allah. By Allah, there does not exist a verse unless I know whether it was revealed in the night or in the day...".[3]

Masrūq ibn Ajda` Hamadānī, a jurist from amongst the successors to the companions (d.62) and a companion of Ali ('a), said:

«انتَهي العلمُ الى ثلاثة عالم بالمدينة عليُّبنُ ابي طالـب و عـالمٌ بـالعراق عبـدُالله بـن مـسعود و عـالمٌ بالشّام ابي الدرداء، فاذا التَقَوْا سَألَ عالمُ الشام و عالمُ العراق عالمَ المدينة و هو لمْ يَسألهم».

"Knowledge was completed in three people: Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib in Medina, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd in Iraq, and Abū al-Dardā' in Damascus.

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1. Ibn Athīr, Asad al-Ghābah, v.4, pgs.22-23.
2. Ibn Athīr, Asad al-Ghābah, v.4, pgs.22-23; Ibn Ḥijr, al-Iṣābah, v.2, p.509; Baladhiri, Asbāb al-Ashraf, v.2, p.100; Since the term 'Salūnī' cannot be used for anyone other than Ali (a), it must be said that before Ali (a) the Prophet (s) said this. But, after him the only person who would be worthy of stating such a thing would be Ali bin Abī Ṭālib (a). It is true that people after him also proclaimed this sentence (claiming a high level of knowledge), only to be dishonored, such as Hishām bin 'Abd al-Malak, Muqātal bin Sulaymān, Qatādah, and others who 'Allāmah Amīnī mentioned in al-Ghadīr, v.6, pgs.195-197. One example will suffice: Hishām bin Ḥakam performed the pilgrimage in the year 107. He recited for the people and said: "Ask me; there is nobody more knowledgeable than me." A person from Iraq asked about the sacrifice and Hishām was unable to answer him. He then came down from the pulpit. (al-Ghadīr, v.6, p.195).
3. Ibid.

If there was piety the scholar of Damascus and the scholar of Iraq would ask the scholar of Medina and he would not ask them."[1]

Mas'ūdi (d.364) writes in *Ma`rūj al-Dhahab*: "Issues which give merit to the companions of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) are: precedence in accepting faith, migration, helping the Prophet (ṣ), proximity and family ties, zeal in the way of the Prophet (ṣ), knowledge about the divine scripture and tafsīr of the Qur'ān, fighting in the way of Allah, piety, asceticism (*zuhd*), judgment, ruling, jurisprudence, and knowledge. Ali ('a) obtained great merit in all of these fields and ultimately gained a larger portion of them than anyone else. Statements of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) during the brotherhood pact: "You are my brother," and other statements such as:

«أنت منّي بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلاّ أنّه لا نبيّ بعدي»

"You are to me as Aaron was to Moses except there is no prophet after me,"

«مَن كنتُ مولاه فعليّ مولاه، اللّهم وال من والاهُ وعاد من عاداه...»

"Whoever I am their master than Ali is their master, O' Allah aid whoever aids him and spite whoever spites him..," are exclusive to him."[2]

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) was born three years before the migration. He spent a great deal of time with the Prophet (ṣ) during his childhood because of the family ties they shared. He was thirteen years old when the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) passed away (some have said that he was fifteen years old). Thereafter, he became associated with a number of influential companions, such as Ali ('a), until he died at the age of 70 in the year 68 in Ṭā'if.[3]

Despite his young age , Ibn 'Abbās would often meet with the Messenger of Allah (ṣ); Ṭabarasī and Muḥaddath Qumī write: "A pitcher of milk was brought to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) while Ibn 'Abbās was on the right side of the Prophet (ṣ) and Khālid ibn Walīd was sitting to his left. The Prophet (ṣ) drank the milk and

1. Ibn 'Asākir, Tārīkh Damashq, v.3, p.51.
2. Ali bin Ḥusayn Mas`ūdī, Ma'ūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar, v.2, p.437.
3. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.70.

told Ibn 'Abbās: "You drink what is left, but would you be satisfied with Khālid ibn Walīd drinking from it?" Ibn 'Abbās said: "No, I would not give preference to anyone in drinking the remaining drink of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) than myself." Ibn 'Abbās then drank the remaining milk.[1]

One day Ibn 'Abbās's father sent him to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) for a task. When Ibn 'Abbās reached the Prophet (ṣ) he was speaking with Gabriel ('a). Ibn 'Abbās's shyness prevented him from breaking their private discussion (he also did not recognize Gabriel). He returned to his father and told him what he saw. Then, he went back to the Prophet (ṣ) (but explained that he did not want to bother him). The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) hugged him, placed his hand on his chest, and said:

«اللّهم فقّهه في الدين وانتشر منه»

"O' Allah grant him deep knowledge in religion and spread [Islam] from him."[2]

Ibn 'Abbās and `Ali's ('a) guardianship (wilāyah)

All historians consider Ibn 'Abbās to have been a supporter of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) and to have followed him in tafsīr. Islamic researchers consider him to have been one of the closest students of the Imam ('a); the affection that he had for the Prophetic Household in general, and Imam Ali ('a) in particular, was enormous. He has valuable words in this regard. Ibn 'Abbās is one of the transmitters of the *Ghadīr* tradition which clearly states Imam Ali's ('a) guardianship and caliphate. He has also described the event.[3] Ḥāfiẓ Sijistānī, narrates through Ibn 'Abbās:

«وجبَت والله في أعناق القوم»

"By Allah, it [Ali's guardianship] has become an obligation upon the necks of the nation."[4]

Kashshī, an important scholar of Rijāl, narrates the following

1. Ṭabarasī, Makārim al-Akhlāq, p.22; Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Bahar, v.2, p.150.
2. Ṣāfīnah al-Bahar, v.2, p.150.
3. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.227.
4. 'Allāmah Amīnī, al-Ghadīr, v.1, p.52.

from Ibn ʿAbbās at the end of his sickness:

«إنّ رسول الله ﷺ أنبأني أنّي سأهاجر هجرتين: فهاجرة مع رسول الله ﷺ، وهاجرت مع علي عليه السلام وأمرني أن أبرأ من خمسة: من الناكثين، وهم أصحاب الجمل، ومن القاسطين وهم أصحاب الشام، ومن الخوارج، وهم أهل النهروان، و من القدريّة، ومن المرجئة. ثمّ قال: اللّهمّ، أشهد أنّي أحيا على ما حيى عليه عليّ بن أبي طالب عليه السلام و اموت على مامات عليه علي بن ابي طالب ثم مات».

"The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) prophesized to me that I will have two migrations: I will migrate with the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and I will migrate with Ali (ʿa). He commanded me to keep aloof from five things: From the *Nākithīn*, who are the companions of the Camel, from the *Qāsiṭīn*, who are the companions of Damascus, from the *Khawārij*, who are the people of Naḥrawān, from the *Qadarīyah*,[1] and from the *Murji'ah*.[2] Then he said: "O' Allah, I lived according to how Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib lived and I will die according to how Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib died." Then he passed away."[3]

Another tradition narrated by ʿAṭṭā states: "When Ibn ʿAbbās was in Ṭā'if bedridden due to sickness, we visited him with a group (about thirty people) of the influential people of Ṭā'if. Ibn ʿAbbās was ill and weak. We greeted him and sat down. Ibn ʿAbbās asked: ' ʿAṭṭā, who are these people?' I said: 'Sir! These are the influential people of this town: 'Abdullah ibn Salmah ibn Ḥaṣaram al-Ṭā'ifī, 'Ammārah ibn Abī al-Ajlah, Thābit ibn Mālik...' I named the people present one by one and introduced them. Then, the people who accompanied me came close to him and told him: 'O' cousin of the Prophet, you saw the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and you heard what you had to hear. Make us aware of the divisions in this *nation*. Some consider Ali (ʿa) to take precedent over others and some consider him

1. This was a sect who did not believe in freewill; rather believed that man acts in accordance to his destiny.
2. This is a sect that believed that those of faith will receive divine forgiveness even if this belief allows a person of faith to sin. They believe that sin does not harm faith. They consider the intention to be principle and the action to be secondary. (Shahrāstānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, v.1, p.139).
3. Muhammad Kashī, Ikhtiyār Ma`rifah al-Rijāl, v.1, p.277.

to be the successor to the Noble Prophet (ṣ) after others [the three caliphs]. Make us aware of the secrets and reality of this matter.'"

'Aṭṭā said: "Ibn 'Abbās gained strength and said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) say:

«عليٌ مع الحقّ والحقّ معه، وهو الإمام والخليفة من بعدي، فمَن تمسّك به فاز ونجا، ومَن تخلّف عنه ضلّ وغوى»

'Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali. He is the Imam and the caliph after me. Whoever holds fast to him will be victorious and receive salvation. Whoever disobeys him will be misguided and stray from the right path.' In the end he said:

« من تمسّك بعترتي من بعدي كان من الفائزين»

'Whoever holds fast to my progeny after me will be amongst the victorious.'" 'Aṭṭā said: "When the people who visited him left, Ibn 'Abbās told me: 'O' 'Aṭṭā, take my hand and help me go to the courtyard of the house.'

"Sa'īd and I took his hands and brought him outside to the courtyard. Ibn 'Abbās raised his hands to the sky and said:

«اللّهم، إنّي أتقرّب إليك بمحمّد وآل محمّد، اللّهم إنّي أتقرّب إليك بولاية الشيخ عليّ بن أبي طالب عليه السلام»

'O' Allah, verily I seek proximity to you through Muhammad and the family of Muhammad. O' Allah, I seek proximity to you through the guardianship of Shaykh Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a).' He repeated the second portion of the prayer until he fell down. We moved fast and when we wanted to pick him up from the ground he had already left this world. May Allah have mercy upon him."[1]

Ibn 'Abbās was praised by the Prophet (ṣ), Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, the companions, and the Imams ('a). Ayatullah Ma'rifat writes: "The Imams from the progeny of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) had great affection for him. They remembered him with much importance and righteousness. Shaykh Mufīd in *Ikhtiṣāṣ* narrates through Imam Ṣādiq ('a): 'My father [Imam Bāqir ('a)] really felt affection towards

1. Abū al-Qāsim Ali bin Muhammad Khazzāz Rāzī, Kifāyah al-Athār, pgs.290-291; Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.36, p.287.

Ibn 'Abbās.'"[1] He also lost his sight at the end of his life because according to some sources he cried so excessively after the tragedy of Karbala about the tribulations that the Prophetic Household faced until he become blind because of crying.[2]

'Allāmah Ḥillī writes in *Khulāṣah*: "Ibn 'Abbās was a companion of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and a friend of Ali ('a); one of his students. His sincerity for the Commander of the Faithful was too well-known to be hidden from anyone."[3]

In any case, almost all Islamic scholars, from the age of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) to the present, praise Ibn 'Abbās. The only criticism that is mentioned about him is that some of the traditions, which Kashshī narrated, rebuke Ibn 'Abbās.

Shahīd al-Thānī criticizes these traditions and writes: "The traditions that Kashshī narrated in determent of Ibn 'Abbās are five traditions. The chains of narrations of each one of them are weak."[4] 'Allāmah in *Khulāṣah* writes: "Ibn 'Abbās is more superior than these negative attributions. We have answered these types of attributions in their respective places."[5] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, while showing the weakness of the chains of narrations of these traditions, considers them to stem from envy and hatred of him. He writes: "A person such as Ibn 'Abbās is a huge Islamic scholar. Others will envy him and attempt to denegate him by attributing negative things to him." He then recites a poem meaning: When one does not reach the level of a respected person; when one does not obtain the merits that he obtained, he will have hatred and enmity.[6]

Muḥaqiq Tustarī, the author of *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, also rejects the critical traditions narrated about Ibn 'Abbās. He counts Ibn 'Abbās to be of the

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.227.
2. Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, Sa'd al-Sa'ūd, p.285, Many poets praised Ibn 'Abbās for defending the Prophet's Household (a), for instance, the famous poet Abu Muhammad Sufyān bin Mas`ab 'Abdī Kufī, who was asked to write a poem in commemoration of Imam Ḥusayn (a) by Imam Ṣādiq (a).
3. 'Allāmah Ḥillī, Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl, p.51; Abū al-Qāsim al-Khoī, Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.10, p.229.
4. Muhammad bin Ismā`īl Māzandārānī, Muntaha al-Maqāl, p.186.
5. `Allāmah Ḥillī, Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl, p.103, chapter 2, harf 4.
6. Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsi, p.213.

servants of Imam Ali ('a) , someone who was sincere in pledging allegiance with Imam Ḥasan ('a) and a very valuable personality.[1]

To conclude: there is no doubt amongst Islamic scholars about the trustworthiness of Ibn 'Abbās, his love of the Prophetic Household ('a) and Imam Ali ('a), and him being a student in tafsīr. Likewise, after Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) and the Prophetic Household ('a), he led the companions in tafsīr.

Tafsīrs attributed to Ibn 'Abbās

A tafsīr written by Ibn 'Abbās does not exist today. Fundamentally, that such a book ever existed is open to question. But there are several tafsīrs which have been attributed him:

1. *Tanwīr al-Maqāyās min Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās.* This tafsīr was compiled by Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb Fīrūzābādī, a famous etymologist and the author of al-*Qāmūs al-Muḥīt.*[2]

2. *Ṣaḥīfah Ali ibn Abī Ṭalḥah 'an Ibn 'Abbās fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm.*[3]

3. *Gharīb al-Qur'ān fī Shi'r al-Arab.* About 250 Qur'ānic words have been mentioned in this book in which Nāfi` ibn Arzaq asked Ibn 'Abbās about. These words are mentioned with their meanings supported by Arabic poetry.[4]

4. *Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās 'an al-ṣaḥabah.*[5]

5. *Tafsīr al-Jalūdī 'an Ibn 'Abbās.*[6]

6. *Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās.*[7]

7. *Tafsīr 'Ikrāmah `an Ibn 'Abbās.*[8]

From the above tafsīrs, the first three have survived and been published. The fourth and fifth tafsīrs are attributed to Ibn 'Abbās by Najāshī in *al-Rijāl* and the sixth and seventh tafsīrs are mentioned by Ibn Nadīm in *al-Fihrist.*

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1. Muahmmad Taqī Tustarī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, v.6, pgs.2-65.
2. Muṣṭafa bin 'Abdullah Ḥājjī Khalīfah, Kashf al-Ẓunūn, v.1, p.502.
3. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.5, he narrates this with evidence. This Tafsīr has been printed in Cairo with research by Rāshid 'Abd al-Mun`im al-Rijāl. .
4. Ibid, v.2, p.51 (nu' 36), Suyūṭī narrates a large portion of them.
5. Aḥmad bin Ali Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.168.
6. Ibid.
7. Muhammad bin Isḥāq bin Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.53.
8. Ibid.

Ibn 'Abbās's Methodology

Ibn 'Abbās was a student of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a). According to his own words, whatever he learned of tafsīr he learned from him. The most common approach that has been ascribed to him in tafsīr is the usage of Arabic words and poetry as well as the transmission of traditions from the Prophet (ṣ); although he also used verses of the Qur'ān to explain other verses and referred to the circumstances of revelation. A few of the methods of tafsīr used by Ibn 'Abbās will be listed:

1. The usage of Arabic poetry: traditions denote that Ibn 'Abbās used Arabic poetry in order to obtain the meaning of words used in the Qur'ān. This shows his proficiency in etymology and Arabic literature. The following has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās: "If you ask me about the astonishing nature of the Qur'ān (*Gharīb al-Qur'ān*), search for the answer in poetry for 'verily, poetry is the Arabic divan."[1]

Some have criticized this method because it would necessitate Arabic poetry becoming the root and the Qur'ān becoming a branch of it.[2] However this criticism is not relevant because the Qur'ān was revealed in classical Arabic. When a certain case is not clear than one must refer to evidence and reasoning, placing it in the framework of the Arabic language. This does not mean that the Qur'ān is somehow inferior to or dependent upon Arabic literature.[3]

The most expansive work where Ibn 'Abbās uses Arabic poetry as evidence is the answers to the questions by Nāfi` ibn Azraq. Nāfi` and Najdah ibn 'Arīm asked Ibn 'Abbās questions, seeking him to provide from Arabic poetry. He used evidence taken from Arabic poetry in each one of his answers. This case includes about 250 words used in the Qur'ān. Suyūṭī has narrated the majority of these cases in *al-Itiqān*.[4]

A person asked about the verse:

﴿وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا...﴾

"and a compassion and purity from Us."[5] Ibn 'Abbās answered:

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1. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.51.
2. Ibid.
3. Ali Akbar Babā'ī, Makātib Tafsīrī, v.1, p.185.
4. Al-Itiqān, v.2, pgs.51-77.
5. Qurān, 19:13.

"Compassion from us." It was asked: "Do Arabs recognize this meaning of the word?" He said: "Yes, have you not heard what Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd said:

ابا منذر افنيت فاستبق بعضنا حنانيك بعض الصهر اهون من بعض[1]

"The term *ḥanān* means mercy."

2. Arabic words: one of the methods of tafsīr used by Ibn 'Abbās is that he would use common words, especially those used by nomadic Arabs, in order to understand Qur'ānic terminology. It is famous that Ibn 'Abbās said:

﴿...فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...﴾

"I did not know the meaning of "originator [*fāṭir*] of the heavens and the earth"[2] until two nomads came to me and argued about a well. One of them said: 'I originated (fāṭir) it." The other said: 'I started (Ibtidā') it."[3] Ibn 'Abbās learned the meaning of the term *'fāṭir'* from these two nomads.

Zamakhsharī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās after the verse:

﴿إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ﴾

"and indeed he thought he would never return (*yaḥūr*),"[4] that he did not know the meaning of the term *'yaḥūr'* until I heard an Arab nomadic woman tell her daughter: "*Ḥūrī* (meaning return)."[5]

3. Explaining the verses of the Qur'ān by the verses of Qur'ān: One of the best methods of tafsīr is to use the Qur'ān to explain its own verses. One uses the words of the person speaking in order to explain what he has said in another place or at another time. The Prophet (ṣ), Ali ('a), and the Prophetic Household ('a) used this method of tafsīr.

Ibn 'Abbās said in regards to the verse:

﴿قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ...﴾

1. Diwan Maḥrufah bin al-'Abd, p.120; al-Itiqān, v.2, p.53, the translation of the poem is: Abū Mundhar, you have destroyed a part of us, allow your mercy to make a part of the city easier than the other part..
2. Qurān, 35:1.
3. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.4.
4. Qurān, 84:14.
5. Kashāf, v.4, p.198.

"They will say, 'Our Lord! Twice did You make us die, and twice did You give us life,"[1] which depicts dying and being brought to life twice: "Before you were brought to life you were dead (this is the first death). Then, you were created and this is being brought to life once. Then, you will die and be placed in a grave. This is the second death. Then, on the Day of Resurrection you will be raised to life; being brought to life for the second time." Ibn 'Abbās supports this with another verse of the Qur'ān, which is similar to the first verse:

﴿كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

"How can you be unfaithful to Allah, [seeing that] you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, and then He shall bring you to life, and then you will be brought back to Him?".[2,3]

4. Using the circumstances of revelation: Knowing the circumstances of revelation plays an important role in understanding the Qur'ān. The reason for this is that the Qur'ān was revealed in certain times and at certain events. Clarifying that event will elucidate the meaning of the verse.

One of the obligations of the greater and lesser pilgrimage is *sa'ī* between Safa and Marwa. But, Allah states:

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا...﴾

"Indeed Safa and Marwah are among Allah's sacraments. So whoever makes Ḥajj to the House, or performs the nation, there is no sin upon him to circuit between them."[4] The apparent meaning of the phrase 'no sin upon him' is that it is not prohibited. A question arises, why is such a phrase used when *sa'ī* is obligatory?

Ṭabarī narrates that a person asked 'Abdullah ibn `Umar about this verse. He said: "Go to Ibn 'Abbās and ask him because he is more knowledgeable about what was revealed to Muhammad (ṣ)." He said: "I went to Ibn 'Abbās and asked him. He responded: 'There were idols on Safa and Marwah, when people became Muslim they refrained from *sa'ī* between Safa and Marwah [due to

1. Qurān, 40:11.
2. Qurān, 2:28.
3. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Durr al-Manthūr, v.5, p.347.
4. Qurān, 2:158.

the idols] until this verse was revealed."[1]

5. Using the words of the Prophet (ṣ) as evidence: Many traditions in regards to tafsīr have used the words of the Prophet (ṣ) and his *Sunnah*. This is seen in the Prophetic Household's ('a) method of tafsīr as well as traditions from the companions and the Successorss to the companions. Ibn 'Abbās narrates a tradition from the Prophet (ṣ), mentioned in *Tafsīr Adbār al-Sujūd*, regarding the verse:

﴿وَمِنَ اللَّيلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ﴾

"And glorify Him through part of the night and after the prostrations."[2] The tradition states that one night he stayed with the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) until morning. The Prophet prayed two components of prayer before the Morning prayers. Then, he went outside for the Morning prayers and said: "O' Ibn 'Abbās, two components of prayer before the Morning prayers is 'after the stars' and the two components of prayer after the Sunset prayers are 'after the prostrations."[3]

These are cases which comprise the bulk of Ibn 'Abbās's Methodologys. In addition to these, there are a few points about Ibn 'Abbās that are worthy of mention:

1. Ibn 'Abbās's knowledge of history and geography,[4] his being a student of Imam Ali ('a), and his personal derivation in some cases are deserving of examination.

2. His reliance on Jewish and Christian sources has been exaggerated, for instance Goldziher, an orientalist, and Aḥmad Amīn Miṣrī have argued this case. Their opinions have been critiqued elsewhere.[5]

3. The traditions regarding tafsīr from Ibn 'Abbās have been transmitted through various chains of narration. Suyūṭī narrates nine of these chains. Some of them have been rejected by researchers.[6]

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1. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.2, p.28; al-Durr al-Manthūr, v.1, p.159.
2. Qurān, 50:40.
3. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-'Aẓīm, v.4, p.234.
4. Refer to Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.249.
5. Refer to Muhammad Hādī Ma'fifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.252 and up; Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, pgs.109-113.
6. Refer to al-Itiqān, v.4, p.207 and up. This can be examined in the mentioned sources as well.

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd

Ibn Mas'ūd is one of the most famous commentators of the Qur'ān and companions of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). He passed away in Medina when he was 62 years old and is buried in the Baqī' Cemetery.[1]

He was the first person to recite the Qur'ān openly and with a loud voice in Mecca so that it reached the ears of the Quraysh. He was harassed and even assaulted while doing this.[2]

Since Ibn Mas'ūd memorized the Qur'ān, he was given a lot of attention by the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) loved to hear the Qur'ān being recited by him.[3] The second caliph, during his caliphate, sent him to Kūfah to teach the people of Kūfah the Qur'ān and religious rulings.[4] Masrūq ibn Ajda` said: "'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd recited a chapter [of the Qur'ān] to us and then transmitted a tradition about it to us. He explained it throughout the day. All of the companions confessed to his merits and knowledge about the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.[5] He should be considered the founder of tafsīr in Kūfah because the Kufan commentators of the Qur'ān during the age of the Successorss to the companions followed his tafsīr.[6]

A large portion of what Ibn Mas'ūd knew about tafsīr was taught to him by Ali. `Alqamah said: "One day Ibn Mas'ūd said: 'If you know someone more knowledgeable about the Qur'ān than myself I would have traveled to see him.' A person asked him: 'Have you met Ali ('a)?' He responded: 'Yes, I have met him and learned the Qur'ān from him. He taught me how to recite the Qur'ān. He was the best person and most knowledgeable person after the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). I considered him as a smooth river.'"[7]

Many traditions regarding tafsīr have been narrated from him in Shia and Sunni sources.

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1. He was born about 30 years before the migration in Mecca and passed away in the year 32 in Medina. Refer to: Sayr A'lam al-Nubūlā', v.1, p.462.
2. Ibn Hishām, al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah, v.1, p.314.
3. Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.131.
4. Abū Bakr Muhammad Khāṭib Baghdadī, Tārīkh Baghdad, v.1, p.147.
5. Ibn Athīr, Asad al-Ghābah, v.3, pgs.256-260.
6. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.87.
7. Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, Sa'd al-Sa`ūd, p.258; Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.89, p.105.

Ibn Mas'ūd transmitted a tradition from the Prophet (ṣ) about the verse:

﴿لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا...﴾

"There they will have whatever they wish..."[1] which is about the inhabitants of heaven. He narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said: "In heaven, if you desire [to eat] a bird, a bird will be cooked and prepared before you."[2]

There are many traditions in existence which show that Ibn Mas'ūd was a follower and Shia of Ali ('a). Traditions which state that the caliphs after the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) will be the same number of the Isrealite chiefs have been transmitted by him.[3] He is also introduced as one of the people who was present at the funeral prayers of Fatimah Zahrā' ('a).[4] Likewise, because he strongly opposed 'Uthmān, the latter had him removed from his official position in the mosque of Kūfah; it has been recorded that he was whipped and had some of his teeth broken for performing the funeral prayers over Abū Dharr.[5]

Muṣḥaf by Ibn Mas'ūd

The only book of tafsīr that has been attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd is his *Muṣḥaf*. No other book has been listed as being written by him. This book consists of 111 chapters of the Qur'ān, without Sūrah *Fātiḥah*, *Falaq*, or *Nās*. He considered *Sūrah Fātiḥah* to be part of the Qur'ān, but he believed that it would be memorized by Muslims because they constantly recite it in their daily prayers. Therefore, he did not think that there was any need to record it. He also believed that *Sūrah Falaq* and *Nās* were recited by the Prophet (ṣ) in order to repulse magic.[6] Both of these opinions were his own personal understandings, which were not been accepted by the rest of the companions.

Another point about his *Muṣḥaf* is that the additional phrases

1. Qurān, 50:35.
2. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-'Aẓīm, v.4, p.232.
3. Refer to Shaykh Ṣadūq, Khiṣāl, v.2, pgs. 461-469.
4. Ibid, p.360.
5. Refer to 'Allāmah Amīnī, al-Ghadīr, v.6, p.4.
6. Refer to Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.1, p.170; Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān, v.1, pgs. 312-315.

that are found in it (and appear to be included as part of a particular verse) are considered by many scholars of Qur'ānic sciences to be in fact exegetical remarks. For instance, in his *Muṣḥaf* it says:

«كان الناس أمةً واحدةً ـ فاختلفوا ـ فبعث الله النبيين مبشرين ومنذرين...»

"Mankind were a single community; [then they became divided] then Allah sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners."[1]

The phrase 'then they became divided' is not found in other records of this verse. The most likely explanation is that it was a remark inserted by Ibn Mas'ūd himself to clarify the meaning of the verse and the reason behind the sending of prophets – because mankind became divided. Allah sent prophets in order to unify them.

He said that he read in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ):

«﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ...﴾ «أنّ عليّاً مولى المؤمنين عليه السلام»

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord [that Ali is the master of the believers]."[2] The phrase 'that Ali is the master of the believers' is an explanatory remark and not the words of the Qur'ān. This is because the verse would have been explained in this way during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and Ibn Mas'ūd wished to record the meaning of it.

Ubay ibn Ka'b

Another important commentator on the Qur'ān from the companions was Ubay ibn Ka'b. His name was Abū al-Mundhir and became a companion of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) in Medina; he was an *Anṣār*. He was one of the few Muslims able to write during the lifetime of the Prophet (ṣ); after accepting Islam he became one of the scribes who would write down the revelations that the Messenger would receive. He pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) in the second *`Aqbah*.[3] He participated in the battles of Badr, Uḥud,

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.3, p.117.
2. Ibid.
3. This is the second pledge of allegiance that the people of Medina performed, which was titled the second 'Aqbah and took place near Mina (which is now in the form of an old mosque. This event took place in the 12th year after the proclamation to prophethood. Seventy people of Medina pledged allegiance with the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). Refer to Ibn Hishām, Sīrah al-Nabawīyah, v.3, p.438.

Khandaq, and all other battles alongside the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).[1] According to traditions he was a staunch supporter of the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of Ali ('a).[2]

He was at the head of the companions in reciting the Qur'ān. Therefore, he is known as the 'master of the reciters (*sayyid al-qurā'*).' There are many traditions regarding tafsīr that have been attributed to Ubay ibn Ka'b. These traditions can be introduced in three sections:

Ubay ibn Ka'b's traditions regarding tafsīr

Traditions regarding the tafsīr of verses of the Qur'ān from him have been narrated in Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. For instance, there are traditions from him in *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī,[3] *Rūḥ al-Janān* by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī,[4] *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr,[5] and *Durr al-Manthūr* by Suyūṭī.[6]

Shaykh Ṭūsī narrated the following from Ubay ibn Ka'b regarding the verse:

﴿إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ﴾

"When the sun is wound up (*kuwwirat*)... when the seas are set afire (*sujjirat*),"[7] that the phrase '*kuwwirat*' means that its light is dismissed and that the term '*sujjirat*' means that it is transferred into fire.[8]

It is narrated from Ubay ibn Ka'b that wrongdoing means polytheism in the verse:

﴿...وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ...﴾

"...and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing..."[9],[10]

Likewise, in the explanation of the verse:

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِنَ الْمَثَانِي...﴾

1. Khayr al-Dīn Zarkulī, al-A`lam Zarkulī, v.1, p.82.
2. Refer to Ṭabarī, al-Iḥtijāj, v.1, p.97 and up; Shaykh Ṣadūq, al-Khiṣāl, v.2, p.461 and up.
3. Ṭibyān, v.1, pgs.280-282.
4. Rūḥ al-Janān wa Rawḥ al-Janān, v.10, p.218 and v.6, p.171.
5. Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm, v.4, p.507.
6. Al-Durr al-Manthūr, v.6, p.318.
7. Qurān, 81:1-6.
8. Ṭibyān, v.10, p.280.
9. Qurān, 6:82.
10. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-`Aẓīm, v.2, p.161.

"Certainly We have given you the seven oft-repeated verses,"[1] Ubay narrates from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) that he said:

«الحمد الله رب العالمين هي سبع المثاني»

" 'All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds' [meaning *Sūrah Fātiḥah*] is the 'seven oft-repeated verses."[2]

Muṣḥaf by Ubay ibn Ka'b

A *Muṣḥaf* has been narrated from Ubay which is similar in some of its characteristics[3] to the *Muṣḥaf* of Ibn Mas'ūd. This *Muṣḥaf* is comprised of 115 chapters; *Sūrah Fīl* and *Quraysh* are counted as one *Sūrahs Khal'* and *Ḥafad* are added after *Sūrah al-'Aṣr*. The Muṣḥaf starts with *Sūrah Ḥamd* and ends with *Sūrahs Falaq* and *Nās*.[4] Adding *Sūrahs Khal'* and *Ḥafad* is in opposition to the opinions of the rest of the companions and the consensus amongst the Muslims because nobody considered them to be a part of the Qur'ān. This *Muṣḥaf*, similar to that of Ibn Mas'ūd, contains statements that appear to be additions but are actually explanatory remarks and not the revealed words of the Qur'ān.

One of these verses is:

﴿...فَصِيامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيامٍ (متتابعات) فِي الْحَجِّ...﴾

"...let him fast three days [consecutively] during the Ḥajj..."[5] The term consecutively is an exegetical remark because it is obligatory to fast these days consecutively. Likewise, Ubay wrote:

﴿فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ (الى أجل مسمى) فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً...﴾

"...For the enjoyment you have had from them [until the appointed time] thereby, give them their dowries, by way of settlement..."[6] The addition of 'until the appointed time,' which is not part of the verse, is an explanation of the verse. It clearly states that such a marriage contract is temporary and has a specified time period.

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1. Qurān, 15:87.
2. Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī, Ruh al-Janān, v.6, p.171.
3. For instance the organization of many chapters, but Surah Anfāl was mentioned after Surah Yūnus, and the Tafsīr additions. .
4. Refer to Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.1, pgs.169-170; Ma'rifat, al-Tamhīd, v.1, p.323.
5. Qurān, 2:196; Zamakhsharī, Kashāf, v.1, p.121.
6. Qurān, 4:24; Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān, v.4, p.13.

The *Muṣḥafs* of Ubay ibn Ka'b and Ibn Mas'ūd do not exist today. Likewise, a book titled *Kabīrah* is attributed to Ubay ibn Ka'b in which Abū Ja'far Rāzī narrates from Ubay from it.[1]

Traditions mentioning the merits of sūrahs

Many commentators of the Qur'ān, including Thal'abī, Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī, and Zamakhsharī narrate a tradition from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) transmitted by Ubay ibn Ka'b about the merits of each chapter of the Qur'ān. There are four chains of narrations listed for the traditions about the merits of the *sūrahs* from Ubay:

Ibn Jawzī in *Mawḍū'āt*[2] mentions two of the chains of narrations. Another chain of narration is mentioned in *Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, which is an introduction to *al-Mabānī fī Naẓm al-Ma'ānī*.[3] Shaykh Ṣadūq (r) in *Thawāb al-'Ammāl* mentions another chain of narration from Ubay about the merits of *Sūrah Ḥashr*.[4]

The traditions are weak in accordance to their chains of narration and texts:

Looking at the chains of narration, Ibn Jawzī considers these traditions to have been forged.[5] In the first chain of narration Badī' or Bazī' is considered weak and according to Dār Qaṭnī they should be rejected. Likewise, Suyūṭī considers them forged according to the words of Ibn Mubārak in *al-La'ālī al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥadīth al-Mawdu'ah* and *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*.[6]

The second chain of narration is considered weak by Ibn Jawzī due to Mukhāllid or Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Waḥīd.[7] Suyūṭī criticizes the third chain of narration due to Hārūn ibn Kathīr narrating from Zayd ibn Aslam.[8] The fourth chain of narration from the book by Shaykh Ṣadūq (r) is weak due to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Waḥīd and Ali ibn Zayd. Shahīd al-Thānī in *Dirāyah* and

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.1, p.171.
2. 'Abd al-Raḥman bin Jawzī, al-Mawḍū`āt, v.1, p.239-240.
3. Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān (introduction to al-Mabānī fī Naẓm al-Ma'ānī), pgs.64-74.
4. Shaykh Ṣadūq, Thawāb al-'Ammāl, p.147.
5. 'Abd al-Raḥman bin Jawzī, al-Mawḍū'āt, v.1, pgs.239-240.
6. Al-La'alī al-Maṣnū`ah fī al-Aḥadīth al-Mawḍū'ah, v.1, p.208.
7. Al-Muwdu'at, v.1, pgs. 239-240.
8. Al-La'alī al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥadīth al-Mawḍū'ah, v.1, p.208.

Māmaqānī in *Maqyās al-Hidāyah* brings forth evidence proving that these traditions are forged.[1]

A few criticisms have been made about the texts of the traditions:[2]

1. The merits of all of the chapters of the Qur'ān that have been counted are, in and of itself, a problem.

2. Sometimes the wording is not in congruence with classical Arabic or eloquence; for instance, the merits of *Sūrahs Anfāl* and *Barā'ah* are rewards numbering the hypocrites who have read them.

3. The traditions are in opposition to the intellect and contain exaggerations that cannot be reasonably accepted. For instance, the merits of *Sūrah Aḥqāf* are:

«من قرءها كتب له عشر حسنات بكل رملة في الدنيا»

Ten good deeds are written for every pebble of sand in the world for the person who reads it."

4. Ibn Taymīyah claimed that the scholars are unanimous about these traditions being forged by stating:

«فإنّه موضوع باتفاق اهل العلم»

"It is a subject of unanimity amongst the people of knowledge."[3]

Some have imagined that Ubay himself clearly stated that these traditions are forged. This is not the case. There are many books, such as *al-Taqīd wa al-Iḍāḥ* by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and *al-Mawḍū`āt* by Ibn Jawzī which narrate a lengthy tradition from a person named Mu`amal. He narrates a tradition from another person through a Sufi Shaykh. He asked him: "Who told you such traditions?" He said:

«لم يُحدّثني أحد، ولكنّا رأينا الناس قد رغبوا عن القرآن، فوضعنا لهم هذا الحديث ليصرّفوا قلوبهم (وجوههم) إلى القرآن».

"Nobody has told me, rather I saw people moving away from the Qur'ān so I coined these traditions for them so their hearts will be devoted to the Qur'ān."[4]

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1. Al-Darāyah wa 'Ilm Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth, p.57; Maqyās al-Hidāyah, v.1, p.411.
2. Refer to Mawḍū'āt, v.1, pgs. 239-240; Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-Rāwī, p.179 where some of the criticisms have been mentioned.
3. Ibn Taymīyah, Muqaddamah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr, p.86.
4. Ibn Jawzī narrated this tradition from Mu`amal who narrated it from another person who, in one chain is called shaykh, in another chain person, who narrates

This is what Mu`amal narrated. But, Ubay has not clearly said anything which would prove that these traditions are forged. Nobody else has accused Ubay of forging these traditions, but their chains of narration are deemed unreliable.

Some points that would lend credibility the opinion that the traditions were transmitted by Ubay and strengthen the validity of the traditions are:

1. The existence of numerous chains of narration for a tradition strengthens it; even if some of the people are weak.

2. Similar traditions to those of Ubay ibn Ka'b about the merits of the chapters of the Qur'ān have been narrated by the Imams ('a) which make the possibility of them being from Ubay plausible.[1]

3. Eminent commentators of the Qur'ān, such as Thal'abī, Zamakhsharī, Ṭabarasī, and Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī have narrated traditions about the merits of chapters of the Qur'ān in their tafsīrs.

4. If the wording of a tradition has a problem in regards to classical Arabic or eloquence and is not deserving of being transmitted from the Prophet (ṣ) then the specialists in that field (for instance Zamakhsharī and Ṭabarasī) would have mentioned it; but they have not said anything of the sort.

People such as Ibn Jawzī[2] and Suyūṭī[3] who considered the traditions

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from a person in Madā'in, who narrates from Wāsiṭ, who narrates from a person from Basrah who narrates from a person from Abadan, who narrates from a group of Sufis who had a shaykh. The principle tradition has a chain of narration from Shaykh 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Muntaṣir to Zayd bin Aslam..

1. Other traditions, similar to those of Ubay have been transmitted. For instance, traditions from Imam Ṣādiq and Imam Riḍā (a) about the merits of Surah An`ām are found in Tafsīr `Ayyāshī, v.1, pgs.353-354; Tafsīr Qumī, v.1, p.180; al-Burhān, v.1, p.154; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.91, p.348 and v.92, p.275. Traditions from Imam Ali (a) about the merits of Surah Mā'idah are found in Miṣbāḥ Kafa`ī, p.439; about the merits of Surah Yūsuf are found in Tafsīr Burhān, v.2, p.242. Traditions from Imam Ṣādiq (a) about the merits of Surah Zumur are found in Thawāb al-`Ammāl, p.139; Wasā'il al-Shia, v.1, p.891; about the merits of Surah Ḥā Mim Sajdah are found in Thawāb al-`Ammāl, p.140; about the merits of Surah Taghābin are found in Shaykh Ṣadūq, Thawāb al-`Ammāl, p.146; Majma` al-Bayān, v.10, p.296. There are many other traditions which are similar to the traditions of Ubay bin Ka'b. Many of them can be found in Shaykh Ṣadūq, Thawāb al-`Ammāl, pgs.146,149,153, and 155; 'Allāmah Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, and Tafsīrs such as Al-Burhān. For further research refer to 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Ḥillī, al-Rasūl al-Muṣṭafa wa Faḍā'il al-Qurān, v.1, pgs. 359-439.

2. Al-Mawḍū`āt, v.1, p.239.

3. Tadrīb al-Rāwī, v.1, p.288.

to be forged and Shahīd al-Thānī[1] and Māmaqānī[2] who brought forth evidence proving that they are forged do not accuse Ubay of forging the traditions. In any case, criticisms have been made which caused some to finalize the discussion by using the tradition '*man balagh*'[3] in order to achieve the rewards. This means that if a person reads the chapter with the hope of reward he will be given the reward even if it becomes clear in the future that the tradition was forged.

The characteristics of tafsīrs by the companions

The tafsīrs of the companions had the following common features:

1. Tafsīr was mainly an oral tradition which was memorized and transmitted. Tafsīrs were not compiled into books at that time.[4] Only a few companions had a *Muṣḥaf*, for instance the *Muṣḥafs* of Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a), Ubay, and Ibn Mas'ūd.

2. The entire Qur'ān was not explained by these commentaries, only a small number of verses.[5]

3. Companion commentaries were simple insofar as short, clear, terms would be used, in the most eloquent way, to solve a problem or clarify an ambiguity. For instance, if one of them was asked, what the following verse means:

﴿...غَيرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ...﴾

"...without inclining to sin..,"[6] they would answer by saying do not sin but would not search the derivatives of the word or reasoning behind it.[7] In many cases they sufficed by defining the word with the smallest phrase possible.

4. No major disagreements in jurisprudential or theological issues were expressed in these commentaries.

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1. Al-Darāyah wa `Ilm Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth, p.57.
2. Maqyās al-Hidāyah, v.1, p.411.
3. The meaning of the tradition 'man balagh' is that anyone who reports the rewards of an action and then one performs that action intending upon receiving that reward Allah will give it to him. Refer to Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ḥurr 'Amulī, Wasā'il al-Shia, v.1, p.59.
4. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.97.
5. Ibid.
6. Qurān, 5:3.
7. Muahmmad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.308.

5. Staying away from tafsīr based on personal opinions; the companions did not use their own opinions while presenting tafsīr material. This simple devotion meant that some later authors felt it necessary to fabricate traditions in order to free themselves from the views expressed by the companions.[1]

6. Commentators of the Qur'ān in this period would use transmitted proofs and traditions that they heard in order to explain the verses of the Qur'ān.

7. In addition to using transmitted proofs the reliance upon Arabic definitions and poetry exists in the tafsīrs of the companions, especially that of Ibn 'Abbās.

Questions and research points

1. Why was Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) the most knowledgeable companion regarding tafsīr?

2. Does Ibn 'Abbās have a tafsīr? Explain the tafsīrs of Ibn 'Abbās.

3. Mention a few examples of Ibn 'Abbās's tafsīr.

4. Explain who Ibn Mas'ūd was and explain his *Muṣḥaf.*

5. What role did Ubay ibn Ka'b play in tafsīr and what opinions did he have regarding tafsīr?

6. Explain the discussion of the traditions regarding the merits of the chapters of the Qur'ān being forged and attributed to Ubay ibn Ka'b.

7. What characteristics do the tafsīrs of the companions have?

8. Use the books *al-Tamhīd*, v.1 (*Muṣḥaf* by Imam Ali [a]) by Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī and *Makātib Tafsīri* by Ali Akbar Babā'ī to describe the *Muṣḥaf* of Imam Ali and what the differences of this Muṣḥaf in comparison with the books of Imam Ali and the society of Imam Ali ('a).

9. Ibn 'Abbās was accused of referring to the People of the Scripture on multiple occasions. Use the books *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* by Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, and *Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr* by Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī to research this claim. Examine this accusation and use proofs to show how many times he referred to the People of the Scripture.

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1. Ibid.

4
Tafsīr During the Age of the Successors

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with the schools of tafsīr during the age of the Successors 2. Identifying the major Qur'ānic commentators amongst the Successors oand the methods they relied upon in their tafsīrs 3. Recognition of the unique characteristics of their tafsīrs.

Prelude

A Successor of the companions is a person who met a companion, believed in the Prophet (ṣ), and died as a Muslim.[1]

A group of the Successors, who met the companions and friends of the Prophet (ṣ), worked on the understanding of the Qur'ān and tafsīr. They learned the methods of tafsīr from the commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the companions. As well as transmitting traditions regarding tafsīr, some of the successors gradually introduced their opinions and *Ijtihād* to tafsīr. A number of the most important commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors were students of the Imams ('a). Each commentator of the Qur'ān amongst the companions would train a large number of Successors. Imam Ali ('a) trained Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ('a), as well as Ibn 'Abbās and taught tafsīr to Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubay ibn Ka'b. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd, and Ubay also trained many commentators of the Qur'ān. Schools of tafsīr were established in large Muslim cities of that time, for instance there was the school of Mecca, Medina, and Iraq (Kūfah and Basrah). However, since the age of the Successors of the Qur'ān coincided with the presence of Imam Sajjād, Imam Bāqir,

1. Shahīd al-Thānī, al-Darāyah fī `Ilm Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth, pgs.120,122.

and Imam Ṣādiq ('a), many Successors, especially the Successors in Medina, benefitted intellectually from the Imams ('a).

Most of the traditions regarding tafsīr from the Successors were transmitted from:

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Mujāhid ibn Jabbār, 'Akramah, Ṭāwūs ibn Kisān, 'Aṭṭā ibn Abī Rabbāḥ, Sudday Kabīr, Jābir Ju'fī, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, and Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muẓāḥim

Famous commentators From among the Successors from Mecca

One of the most well-known and respected schools of tafsīr amongst the Successors was the school of Mecca. The most distinguished faces of this school were raised by Ibn 'Abbās. About thirty commentators of the Qur'ān from this school have been mentioned; some of them being more famous than others. The famous students are:

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Mujāhid ibn Jabbār, 'Akramah (the slave of Ibn 'Abbās), 'Aṭṭā ibn Abī Rabbāḥ, and Ṭāwūs ibn Kisān Yamānī. These individuals will be briefly examined.

1. Sa'īd ibn Jubayr (d.95 Q.)

He was a student of Ibn 'Abbās in tafsīr. He lived in Mecca but was originally from Kūfah. Many traditions have been narrated from him in Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. He was martyred by Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf Thaqafī in the year 95 Q. when he was 49 years old.[1] His debates with Ḥajjāj are famous.[2] It can be understood from traditions that he was Shia and a supporter of the Prophetic Household ('a). This is the reason that scholars believe he was killed. He was a follower of Imam Zayn al-`Abidīn ('a), who praised him as well.[3]

Sunnis have also praised him and narrated what has been mentioned with minor changes.[4] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "Ḥajjāj murdered Sa'īd ibn Jubayr while there was nobody on earth who was not in need of his knowledge."

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1. Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah Biḥār, v.1, p.622.
2. Muhammad Kashī, Ikhtiyār Ma'rafah al-Rijāl, v.1, p.335.
3. Ibid.
4. Yūsuf Mazzī, Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, v.1, pgs.369-373.

His trustworthiness has been accepted unanimously by scholars including the authors of the six "Ṣaḥīḥ" ḥadīth collections of the Sunnis and the four major ḥadīth books of the Shia.[1]

He was the most knowledgeable Successor of the companions and commentator of the Qur'ān of his time. Qatādah, who is a noteworthy commentator of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors, said: "Four people were the most knowledgeable people of their time regarding various subjects: 'Aṭṭā ibn Abī Rabbāḥ in regards to religious rulings, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr in regards to tafsīr, 'Akramah in regards to history, and Ḥasan Baṣrī in regards to what is permissible and what is forbidden."[2]

He showed immense amounts of respect to his teacher Ibn 'Abbās. He said: "When I heard a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās I would kiss his head, if he gave me the permission."[3] Ibn 'Abbās would introduce him as a religious scholar. Whenever the people of Kūfah would come to Ibn 'Abbās and ask him for verdicts he would say: "Isn't the mother of the masses with you?"[4] This means: "Isn't Sa'īd ibn Jubayr amongst you for you to refer to?"

Tafsīr examples

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr commentated on the Qur'ān using various methods of tafsīr, for instance:

1. He commented on the meanings of Qur'ānic terms: It has been narrated that he explained the verse:

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

"Guide us on the straight path,"[5] by stating that the straight path means the path to paradise.[6]

2. He connected verses to specific practices:

﴿فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ﴾

It has been narrated that he explained the verse: "So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice,"[7] by stating that it means performing the

1. Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.45.
2. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.4, p.202.
3. Abū Na`īm, Ḥilīyah al-Awlīyā', v.4, p.283.
4. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.112.
5. Qurān, 1:6.
6. Abu al-Fatūḥ Rāzī, Ruh al-Janān, v.1, p.50.
7. Qurān, 108:2.

obligatory Morning prayers (*fajr*) in congregation for the Lord and sacrificing a camel in in Mina.[1]

3. He mentioned the circumstances of revelation of different verses: It has been narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr that the verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...﴾

"Indeed the faithless spend their wealth to bar from the way of Allah..,"[2] was revealed about Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb on the day of the Battle of Uḥud who paid two thousand people from Ethiopia to fight against the Prophet (ṣ).[3]

Likewise, it has been narrated that he used the Qur'ān to explain the Qur'ān and that he used the circumstances of revelation to explain the Qur'ān.

2. Mujāhid ibn Jabbār (d.104 Q.)

His name was Abū al-Ḥajjāj Makhzūmī, he came from Mecca and was a reciter and commentator of the Qur'ān. He was born in the year 2 and passed away while in prostration in Mecca in the year 104. He is one of the most trustworthy students of Ibn 'Abbās; the prominent scholars of religious sciences, especially in the fields of traditions (*ḥadīth*) and tafsīr. He relied upon him extensively.[4] Many traditions about tafsīr have been narrated from him and he narrates from both the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ('a) and Ibn 'Abbās.

Dhahabī writes: "There is a consensus among the entire nation regarding Mujāhid's superiority in tafsīr and in the reliability of his reports. He was a trustworthy person, a virtuous jurisprudent, an intellectual who transmitted many traditions; he had a great capacity for memorization and was precise."[5]

The characteristics of Mujāhid's tafsīr

His tafsīr has the following characteristics:

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1. Ṭabarasī, Majma` al-Bayān, v.10, p.549.
2. Qurān, 8:36.
3. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.3, p.334.
4. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.335.
5. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.116.

1. Widespread use of rational opinions,[1]
2. An interest in explaining metaphors and parables,[2]
3. Consideration of mystical points,
4. Mentioning the merits of the Commander of the Faithful [('a) despite the fact that many Sunnis also narrated the merits of Ali ('a)].

Tafsīr examples

1. Metaphors and parables: Mujāhid argues:

﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ﴾

"The verse 'And certainly you know those of you who violated the Sabbath, whereupon We said to them, 'Be you spurned apes,"[3] is a metaphor. It means that their hearts and souls were disfigured; not a metamorphosis. This is a parable to be placed in the section of metaphors and parables, similar to the verse:

﴿...كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا...﴾

'...is that of an ass carrying books...'[4]»[5]

2. Rational tafsīr: It has been narrated from Mujāhid regarding the explanation of the verses:

﴿وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ * إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾

"Some faces will be fresh on that day, looking at their Lord,"[6] that he said: "This means that the cheerful faces on the Day of Judgment will be awaiting rewards from their Lord,[7] not that they will see their Lord."

This opinion of Mujāhid is congruent to the opinions of the Shia, Mutazilites,[8] and some 'Asharites (for instance, Fakhr Rāzī[9]). But, the common opinion amongst the 'Asharites is that the Lord will be seen in the hereafter.

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1. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al- Mufassirūn, v.1, p.337; Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.48.
2. Ibid.
3. Qurān, 2:65.
4. Qurān, 62:5.
5. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.253.
6. Qurān, 75:22-23.
7. Jāmi' al-Bayān, v.29, p.120.
8. For instance, Zamakhsharī, Kashāf, v.4, p.662.
9. Fakhr Rāzī, Tafsīr Kabīr, v.30, p.226.

3. Tafsīr Wilā'ī: Mujāhid narrates from Salmān Farsi:

«سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يقول: انّ وصيي و خليفتي و خيرَ مَنْ اَترُكُ بعدي ينجزُ مَوْعدي و يُقضى ديني عليّ بي ابي طالب عليه السلام»

who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) state: "Verily, my successor and my caliph; the best of what I leave behind who will execute my promise and carry out my religion is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a)."[1]

Tafsīr Mujāhid

Amongst the tafsīrs —that exists today— that was not compiled together and in order from *Sūrah Baqarah* to *Sūrah Nās*. This tafsīr is published in two volumes (about 800 pages), but some verses of the Qur'ān are not explained therein. Ḥājjī Khalīfah states in *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* that it belongs to Mujāhid with chains of narration including a chain from Ibn Abī Nājiḥ and Ibn Jarīḥ.[2]

3. Ṭāwūs ibn Kisān (d.106)

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Ṭāwūs ibn Kisān Hamadānī was a famous Persian commentator on the Qur'ān amongst the Successors.[3] He was a student of Ibn 'Abbās, but studied under some fifty different companions as well.[4] The author of *Wafīyāt al-A'yān* says that he died in the year 106.[5] Traditions extolling his virtue and piety have been widely transmitted; he has been labeled the most devoted worshiper in Yemen, the person whose prayers are answered, and the person who performed the pilgrimage forty times.[6]

Ibn Shahrāshūb,[7] Shaykh Ṭūsī, and the author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* introduce him as a companion of Imam Sajjād ('a).[8] Ibn Qutaybah clearly states that he was a Shia.[9] But some others have

1. Ḥaskānī, Shawāhid al-Tanzīl, v.1, p.98.
2. Kashf al-Ẓunūn, v.1, p.458.
3. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.343.
4. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.112.
5. Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad bin Khalkān, Wafīyāt al-A`yān, v.2, p.509.
6. Refer to Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.5, pgs. 8-10.
7. Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib, v.4, p.177.
8. Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣafīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.94.
9. Ibn Qutaybah, al-Ma`ārif, p.306.

claimed that he was a Sufi or a Sunni.[1]

The position he adopted with regards to the political authority of his time demonstrates his bravery and dedication. Ibn Khalkān writes: "When Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malak entered Mecca and the Holy Sanctuary to perform the pilgrimage rites he said: 'Bring a member of the companions to me.' They told him: 'All of them have died.' He said: 'Bring me a member of the Successors.' They brought Ṭāwūs Yamānī. The instance that he saw him he took his shoes off next to his designated counter. He did not call him 'commander of the faithful' or by his kunya. He sat next to him without obtaining permission and said: 'O' Hishām! How are you doing?' Hishām became very angry at Ṭāwūs's actions and wanted to kill him. Ṭāwūs said: 'You are in the divine sanctuary; this is impossible [meaning it is impossible to kill me in the divine sanctuary].' Hishām responded: 'O' Ṭāwūs, why are you doing this?' Ṭāwūs said: 'Doing what?' Hishām's anger intensified and he said: 'You take your shoes off next to my counter, you did not officially greet me, you did not call me by my kunya[2], you sat next to me without permission and you said: O' Hishām, how are you doing.'

"Ṭāwūs said: 'I took my shoes off next to your counter because I take my shoes off five times a day in front of the Lord and he does not rebuke me nor does he become angry with me. Why did I not call you commander of the faithful? Because all of the faithful are not satisfied with your ruling over them and I was scared that if I called you this I would be lying. You asked why I did not call you by your kunya. The reason is that the Allah mentions the prophets by name in the Qur'ān. He states: 'O' David, O' John, and O' Jesus. He addresses his enemies with their kunyas:

﴿تَبَّتْ يدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ...﴾

1. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.94.
2. A kunya is a name traditionally taken by Arabs (and after Islam spread beyond the Arab world, Muslims) which takes the form of "Abu so-and-so" (for men) or "Umm so-and-so" (for women). For instance, the kunya of Allah's Messenger was Abu Qāsim. It was customary to address someone by their kunya, as opposed to their given-name, out of respect. Calling someone by their first name (as Ṭāwūs does, above) implies familiarity and would have been extremely disrespectful if the person addressed was of a higher social standing.

"Perish the hands of Abu Lahab."[1]

You said that I sat next to you, the reason is that I heard the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) say: 'Whenever you want to look at an inhabitant hell look at someone who is sitting while people around him are standing.'

"Hishām said: 'You have admonished me.' Ṭāwūs said: 'I heard the Commander of the Faithful ('a) say: 'There are snakes in hell similar to floating pillars and scorpions similar to mules. They chose whatever would be unjust towards their subordinates.' Then he got up and left."[2]

Two Tafsīr Examples

1. Esoteric tafsīr: Ṭāwūs explained the following verse:

﴿...أُولَئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾

"...They are [as if they were] called from a distant place."[3] He said: "He will call them distant from their hearts."[4]

2. Tafsīr using a more specific meaning: He stated the following in the explanation of the verse:

﴿...خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا﴾

"...for man was created weak:"[5] "What is meant is the actions of women; for nothing is more weak than the actions of women."[6]

4. 'Aṭṭā ibn Abī Rabbāḥ (d.114)

He was a prominent jurisprudent of Mecca, a special companion of Ibn 'Abbās, and a student educated in his school of tafsīr. His children, 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Abdullah, and 'Arif were companions of Imams Bāqir and Ṣādiq ('a).[7] As was mentioned in the description of Ibn 'Abbās, he was the one who visited him during the final stages of his sickness with a group of prominent people in Ṭā'if. He narrated

1. Qurān, 111:1.
2. Aḥmad bin Khalkān, Wafīyāt al-A`yān, v.2, p.510.
3. Qurān, 41:44.
4. Abū Na'īm Iṣfahānī, Ḥilīyah al-Awlīyā', v.4, p.11.
5. Qurān, 4:28.
6. Ḥilīyah al-Awlīyā', v.4, p.11.
7. Refer to: Muhammad Kashī, p.188; Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.216.

the tradition of *Imamah* and guardianship (*wilāyah*) from him.[1]

Imam Bāqir ('a) praised him in a tradition.[2] Abū Na'im listed him amongst the Successors to the companions who transmitted traditions from Imam Bāqir ('a).[3]Dhahabī writes: "'Aṭṭā was trustworthy, a jurisprudent, and a scholar. He transmitted many traditions and he had the final word regarding the verdicts given to the people of Mecca. Ibn 'Abbās would say when people of Mecca would come to him for religious knowledge:

«تجتمعون الی یا اهل مکه و عندکم عطاء؟»

'You have gathered around me, O' people of Mecca, while 'Aṭṭā is amongst you?'

"The number of traditions that 'Aṭṭā has transmitted regarding tafsīr is not the same as that of Mujāhid and Sa'īd ibn Jubayr (it seems that they had precedence), but this fact does diminish the merits of his tafsīr. It is possible that the reason why he only transmitted a few traditions regarding tafsīr is because he distanced himself from tafsīr based on personal opinion. It has been said that 'Aṭṭā was asked a question and he said: 'I don't know.' He was asked: 'Will you answer it with your own opinion?' 'Aṭṭā said:

«استحيي من الله ان يدان في الارض برأيي»

"I feel shy from Allah that I would be convicted on earth due to my opinion."[4]

Qatādah states: "Sulaymān ibn Hishām asked me: 'Is there a scholar in Mecca?' I said: 'Yes, the oldest scholar of the Arabian Peninsula.' 'Who?' he asked. I responded: "Aṭṭā ibn Abi Rabbāḥ.'

"Few traditions regarding tafsīr have been transmitted by 'Aṭṭā, but his tafsīr was given attention during his lifetime. It is amongst the tafsīrs which were orally transmitted. Ṭabarī narrates the traditions of 'Aṭṭā from a certain chain and Thal'abī uses his traditions in *Tafsīr al-Kashf* and *al-Bayān*.[5]" Goldziher writes: "The

1. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.36, p.287.
2. Ḥilīyah al-Awlīyā', pgs. 188 and 311.
3. Ibid.
4. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.123.
5. Ali al-Shawwākh Isḥāq, Mu'jam Muṣanifāt al-Qurān al-Karīm, v.2, p.163 –

traditions regarding tafsīr transmitted by ʿAṭṭā and Mujāhid are inspired by the tafsīr school of Ibn ʿAbbās which is the foundation of the oldest tafsīr writings."[1]

5. ʿAkramah (d.105)

He was a slave of Ibn ʿAbbās and a Berber from Morrocco. He transmitted traditions from Ibn ʿAbbās, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa), Ḥasan in Ali (ʿa), Abū Hurayrah, and Ibn ʿUmar.[2]

Many traditions regarding tafsīr are narrated from him by both Shia and Sunni commentators. Ibn Nadīm[3] and Ḥājjī Khalīfah[4] have also recorded that he himself composed a tafsīr.

His most important teacher was Ibn ʿAbbās. ʿAkramah was the slave of Ḥaṣīn ibn Ḥurr ʿAnbarī. When Ibn ʿAbbās was made the governor of Basrah by Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa) Ḥaṣīn gave him to Ibn ʿAbbās as a gift. Ibn ʿAbbās strived in teaching him the Qur'ān and the Sunnah; according to some narrations, he went so far as to tie him up in order to teach him the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Ibn ʿAbbās trained and taught him well, as a result of which, he became a prominent jurisprudent and the most knowledgeable person in Tafsīr and Qur'ānic sciences of his time.[5]

It has been said that he also narrated traditions from Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, Ḥasan ibn Ali (ʿa), Abī Saʿīd, and others.[6] However he was only thirteen years old when Imam Ali was martyred, making it unlikely that he directly narrated from the Imam (ʿa), although it is possible he did so through an intermediary.

He was praised extensively because of his knowledge. He is counted amongst the jurists of Mecca amongst the Successors. It has been narrated that Ibn ʿAbbās told him: "Go and issue verdicts for

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according to Muhammad Hādī Maʿrifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.365.

1. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr Islamī, p.97.
2. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.116; Ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, p.228.
3. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.36.
4. Ḥājjī Khalīfah, Kashf al-Ẓunūn, v.5, p.666.
5. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.349.
6. Ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v,7, p.235.

the people."[1]

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr was asked: "Do you consider anyone to be more knowledgeable than yourself?" He said: "'Akramah."[2]

Sallām ibn Miskīn narrated the following from Qatādah: "The most knowledgeable person in tafsīr is 'Akramah." 'Abbās ibn Maṣ'ab Marūzī said: "'Akramah was the most knowledgeable student of Ibn 'Abbās in tafsīr." 'Amr ibn Dīnār said: "Jābir ibn Yazīd advised me of an issue, which I should seek'Akramah regarding. He said: 'This 'Akramah, the slave of Ibn 'Abbās, is an ocean,[3] ask him.'" It has been narrated from Qatādah that he said: "The most knowledgeable amongst the Successors are: 'Aṭṭā, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, 'Akramah, and Ḥasan (Baṣrī)."[4]

These traditions indicate the high level of knowledge that 'Akramah possessed. But from another point of view the authoritativeness of these traditions can be called into question because of their weak chains of transmission. And since he lived during the lifetimes of some of the Imams ('a), such as Imam Ḥusayn ('a), Imam Sajjād ('a), and Imam Bāqir ('a) his knowledge could not be compared with them.

There is also the issue of 'Akramah's trustworthiness as an authority. There are differences of opinions amongst scholars of Rijāl about his reliability. Some severely deny it and others confirm it. The opinions of these two groups will be examined below.

In opposition to his reliability: He has been accused of accepting the opinions of the Khawarij in many of his traditions and of lying about his teacher Ibn 'Abbās.[5] It is written in *Tadhkirah al-Ḥiffāẓ* after relating many descriptions of 'Akramah's knowledge: "It has been reported that he agreed with the opinions of the Khawarij, this is why Mālik and Muslim rejected him."[6] Ibn Ḥajar narrates from

1. Ibid, p.228.
2. Ibid, p.229.
3. This means that he had extensive knowledge [tr.].
4. Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, v.3, p.466.
5. In a tradition, Ibn 'Umar tells his slave Nāfi': "Do not lie about me as `Ikrāmah lied about Ali bin 'Abbās." Refer to: Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Muqaddamah Sharḥ al-Bukhārī, p.425.
6. Shams al-Dīn Dhahabī, Tadhkirah al-Ḥiffāẓ, v.1, p.96.

numerous people in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* that 'Akramah leaned towards the views of the Najdah, Sufrīyaḥ, and Abadīyah, which are all sects of the Khawarij.[1] Muṣ'ab Zubayrī states that 'Akramah agreed with the opinions of the Khawarij[2] and was accused of lying about Ibn 'Abbās.[3]

Shia experts of Rijāl, for instance Kashshī,[4] Māmaqānī,[5] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs,[6] 'Allāmah Ḥillī,[7] and Muḥadathī Qumī[8] did not consider him trustworthy. Some scholars, such as 'Allāmah Ḥillī, considered him weak. The main reason that 'Akramah was not considered trustworthy or was considered weak by Shia scholars is a statement by Imam Bāqir ('a) about him. Some scholars of the science of the transmitters of traditions, such as Ayatullah Khoei, sufficed themselves on the narration from the Imam ('a) and what Kashshī stated.[9]

There are traditions in Shia sources which accuse him of being a Kharijite. Kulaynī narrates an account from Abū Basir: "I was with Imam Bāqir ('a) along with Ḥamrān. One of the Imam's slaves came in and said: 'May I be your sacrifice, 'Akramaha is dying.' Despite the fact that 'Akramah accepted the Khawarij opinions and cut off relations with the family of Imam Bāqir ('a), the Imam said: 'Wait. I will return to you.' We said: 'Alright.' The Imam ('a) quickly returned and said: 'If I saw 'Akramah before he died I would have taught him some words which would have been beneficial for him. But, when I arrived he was dead.'"

The transmitter says: "I asked the Imam ('a): 'May I be your sacrifice, What are the words that would have been beneficial for him?' He said:

«هو ـ و الله ـ ما انتم عليه فلقنوا موتاكم عند الموت شهادة ان لا اله الا الله و الاقرار بالولاية»

"They are, by Allah, that when you are visited by death one

1. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, pgs. 233-234.
2. Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, v.3, p.470.
3. Ibn Ḥajar `Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v., pgs.233-234.
4. Muḥammad Kashī, Ikhtiyār Ma`rifah al-Rijāl, Rijāl Kashī, p.188; Ikhtiyār Ma`rifah al-Rijāl, v.2, p.477.
5. Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl, v.2, p.256.
6. Ibid.
7. 'Allāmah Ḥillī, Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl, p.245.
8. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.216.
9. Mu'jam Rijāl al-Hādīth, v.12, p.177.

should recite: I bear witness that there is no God save Allah and bearing witness to the *wilāyah*."[1]

Kashshī also derived a similar tradition in which Imam Bāqir ('a) said:

«لو ادركت عكرمه عن الموت لنفعته...»

"If I had met 'Akramah when he was dying it would have been beneficial for him." This tradition is similar to another statement from the Imam. This is not in praise of 'Akramah, rather it is to his detriment.[2]

Those who consider him reliable: Some Sunnis, for instance Nisā'ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim consider him trustworthy.[3] Ibn Ḥajar clearly mentions in *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* that he was trustworthy, had a powerful memory and was a scholar of tafsīr.[4] Likewise, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal considered 'Akramah trustworthy[5] and Bukhārī relied upon him.[6] Bazzāz writes: "130 prominent figures from various cities narrated traditions from 'Akramah which shows that they were satisfied with him."[7]

Ibn 'ajar writes: "Bukhārī and the authors of the *Sunan* accepted the traditions of 'Akramah. However, Muslim only narrates one tradition from him because of what Malik had said about his reliability. Mālik did not consider him trustworthy and recommended that traditions from 'Akramah should be disregarded."[8] At the end of the discussion Ibn Ḥajar clings to opinions of scholars such as Ṭabarī, Ḥakīm, and Ibn 'Abd al-Birr who consider 'Akramah to be trustworthy.[9]

Many Successors of the companions, including Qatādah,[10]

1. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.3, p.123.
2. Rijāl Kashī, p.188.
3. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, pgs. 230-232.
4. Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, v.2, p.30.
5. Refer to Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Muqaddamah Fatḥ al-Bārī, p.428; Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, p.233.
6. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, Mīzān al-I`tidāl, v.3, p.93.
7. Refer to: Muqaddamah Fatḥ al-Bārī, p.428.
8. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, p.232.
9. Ibid, p.234.
10. For instance Qatādah who states that the most knowledgeable Successor of the companions are 'Aṭṭā, Sa`īd bin Jubayr, and `Ikrāmah. He states that `Ikrāmah is the most knowledgeable in Tafsīr. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.7, p.234.

Sufyān ibn 'Ayinah,[1] Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, 'Aṭṭā, Ṭāwūs, Sufyān Thūrī, and others either relied on 'Akramah or praised his knowledge.

Muḥaqiq Tustarī and Ayatullah Ma'rifat criticized the arguments behind him being considered weak and confirmed 'Akramah as being trustworthy. He writes: "The words in the tradition which state that 'Akramah follows the opinions of the Khawarij are the words of the transmitter, not the Imam ('a). The statement of Imam Bāqir ('a) does not imply that he was unreliable; rather it appears that the Imam was praising him. It shows that the Imam ('a) loved him because the Imam wanted to dictate something to him while he was passing away. The Imam tells his companions to dictate the same words to their people who are passing away as well.[2]

Muḥaqiq Tustarī also attacks the tradition itself. He writes: "The tradition which Kashshī argues with is not established [as reliable]; if it is established [as reliable] it would denote praise – not dispraise."[3]

Muḥaqiq Tustarī considers the source of attributing 'Akramah as a liar, (lying about Ibn 'Abbās) and that he agreed with the opinions of the Khawarij to be one matter: his verdicts which were in accordance to the Shia and in opposition to the Sunni schools of thought. He writes: "The Sunnis labeled him a disbeliever and claimed that he was a Khawarij (not that he was really one of the Khawarij)." After narrating what Kashshī wrote, he writes: "Stating that 'Akramah agreed with the Sufrīyaḥ and Khawarij and attributed it to Ibn 'Abbās and that the Sunnis state that 'Akramah lied about his teacher is because of what he narrated which was in opposition to their school of thought."

The following is written in *Mīzān al-I`tidāl*: "Fatr ibn Khalīfah states that he told 'Aṭṭā that 'Akramah said: 'The Qur'ān has been surpassed by the ruling that one can wipe the two feet [in *wudū'*].' 'Aṭṭā said: '"Akramah lied.' I heard Ibn 'Abbās state: 'Wiping the shoes, even if there are feces on it, does not create a problem.'"

Muḥaqiq Tustarī writes: "'Aṭṭā's calling him a liar is a lie itself. How would Ibn 'Abbās issue a verdict in direct opposition to Allah's words. It clearly states in the Qur'ān:

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1. Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, v.3, p.467.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.356.
3. Qāmūs al-Rijāl, v.7, p.237.

﴿وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ﴾

'...and wipe a part of your heads and your feet...'[1] How would Ibn 'Abbās state that it is sufficient to wipe over one's shoes? Is a shoe the same as a foot?"

Another example of 'Akramah's verdicts is his opinion the sufficiency of wiping one's feet. Yūnus states: "A companion of 'Akramah was with him until Wāsiṭ narrated the following for me: 'I did not see 'Akramah wash his feet in *wudū'*; he sufficed with wiping them.'" Ṭabarī narrates from 'Akramah in *Jāmi' al-Bayān* that it is not obligatory to wash the feet and that the verse was revealed regarding wiping them. These opinions and verdicts caused 'Akramah to be accused of being a Kharijite and lying about his teacher.

Muḥaqiq Tustarī criticizes another point. He writes: "How can we accept that he accepted the beliefs of the Khawarij when the Khawarij consider uprising against oppressors to be obligatory, even for women, when 'Akramah would meet with the oppressive leaders and took gifts from them. Therefore, the Sunni's disgracing of 'Akramah is due to his verdicts."

There is no doubt that 'Akramah was one of the prominent intellectual figures of his time. Kātib Waqidi writes:

«عکرمه بحرا من البحور و لیس یحتج بحدیثه و یتکلم الناس فیه»

"'Akramah is a sea of the seas of knowledge; his traditions are not needed; and people talk about him (people rebuke him)."

Muḥaqiq Tustarī writes: "If 'Akramah is a sea of knowledge why do people speak ill of him and refrain from reasoning with his traditions? The only reason for this is his special style of thought."[2]

Ayatullah Ma'rifat also rejects the accusations that have been leveled against 'Akramah and argues for his trustworthiness.[3]

1. Qurān, 5:6.
2. Ibid, pgs.237-238.
3. He writes: "The slandering that has been levied out against 'Ikrāmah can be summarized into two points: 1: lying, 2: inkling towards the Khawarij. The first point is due to a tradition narrated by the son of 'Umar who told his slave Nāfi': "Do not lie about me as 'Akrāmah lied about Ibn 'Abbās." The second slander is a misconception that arose after he traveled to North Africa where there were large numbers of Kharijites. He had a number of traditions from Ibn 'Abbās with him. It

In order to further examine this discussion the meaning of a tradition by Ibn Sa'd about 'Akramah will be presented. Ibn Sa'd, in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*,[1] narrates various traditions about 'Akramah. The following points can be derived from those traditions:

1. There is no doubt that 'Akramah attained a high level of knowledge during his lifetime. Some of the traditions denote this, for instance the tradition transmitted by Sallam ibn Miskin which states:

«كان عكرمه من اعلم الناس بالتفسير»

"'Akramah was among the most knowledgeable people in tafsīr."[2] Some of these traditions have been mentioned.

2. Traditions show that there were negative accusations leveled against 'Akramah during his lifetime. For instance, Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrates from Ayyūb, who states that 'Akramah said: "Do you not see that these are the same people who will lie about me after my death? Do they not lie about me in front of my face? Yes, they lie about me in front of my face

«فقد والله كذبوني»

"By, Allah they have lied about me."[3]

3. Traditions show that 'Akramah was impoverished. Therefore,

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is clear that these types of conclusions stem from envy which was caused by his high levels of jurisprudential knowledge and Qurānic knowledge. Ibn Ḥajar wrote about the tradition of Ibn 'Umar: "This tradition, in addition to the differnces in text and the opposite nature of its transmissions, has a weak chain of narration and cannot be accepted. The reason for this is that it was narrated by Abū Khalaf Jazzār from Yahya Bikkā. The narrations of Bikkā are rejected and cannot be accepted." Ayatullah Ma'rifat rejects the negative accusations and then argues for his trustworthiness. He writes: "There is no room left for rebuking `Ikrāmah, the trustworthy. Ibn Ḥajar deduced this in Taqrīb: 'Akrāmah is trustworthy and knowledgeable about Tafsīr. Ibn 'Umar's accusations have not been established and there are no traditions which state that he innovated anything." Refer to: al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.320; al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.358.

1. Muhammad bin Sa`d, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, v.3, pgs.317-365.
2. Ibid, p.465; many traditions in this regard have been transmitted, for instance Jābir bin Zayd states: "This is 'Akrāmah, the slave of Ibn 'Abbās. He is a sea [of knowledge] so take pleasure in him." Also refer to the tradition narrated by Ismā`īl bin Ibrāhīm, who narrated from Ayyūb; refer to: Ibid, pgs.465-466.
3. Ibid; in another tradition, Salmān bin Ḥarb narrates from Ḥammād bin Zayd, who states that a man told Ayyūb: "O' Abū Bakr, 'Akrāmah is accused." He remained silent and then said: "But me, I will not be of his accusers." Ibid, P.466.

some people, for instance 'Umar ibn Khadīr came to 'Akramah accompanied by another person and tied his turban. He suggested: "We have many turbans." 'Akramah said: "I do not take anything from people; I only accept things from my masters."[1]

4. Traditions exist where he is accused of being a Kharijite while his knowledge is praised. These traditions have been mentioned.

The following conclusions can be derived while looking at these matters with precision:

1. There are clear contradictions in the narrations of those who support 'Akramah and those who oppose him. For instance, his being a Kharijite does not match his accommodating stance towards political leaders. Likewise, the praise of many Successors, his erudition, and the praise of him by his teacher, Ibn 'Abbās, are in complete contradiction with him being a Kharijite.

2. His verdicts show that he accepted the opinions of the Shia.

3. The accusation of him being a Kharijite is undermined by the following:

A. No tafsīr opinion has been narrated from him which is in congruence with the views of the Khawarij.

B. People were envious of him and falsely accused him during his lifetime because of his knowledge and because of certain verdicts which he passed that were in congruence with Shia jurisprudence.

4. The reason he appeared conciliatory to political leaders of the time was due to his poverty.

5. The reason he was accused of lying, although the chain of narration for this tradition is weak, is because of his opinions that were close to those of the Shia.

6. The tradition narrated from Imam Bāqir ('a), which is the main evidence the scholars of Rijāl provide for deeming him weak does not denote negativity because: Firstly, the transmitter labeled him a Kharijite, not the Imam ('a), and second: the term:

«لو ادركته انفعته»

"If I met him I would have given him benefit," does not necessarily

1. Ibid; in another tradition `Imrān asked him: "Should I give you a turban?" 'Akrāmah responded: "I do not accept anything except from my masters.".

indicate a negative attitude towards him, just as the Imam ('a) explained himself.

'Akramah and the Verse of Purity

It has been narrated from 'Akramah regarding the verse of purity that the people referred to in it are only the wives of the Prophet (ṣ) and that he would challenge (*mubāhilah*) anyone [about this issue].[1] Ṭabarī also narrates this tradition with a chain of narration:

«یحیی بن واضح عن الاصبغ بن نباته عن علقمه بن قیس عن عکرمه...»

Yaḥya ibn Wāḍiḥ narrates from al-Aṣbagh ibn Nabātah, who narrates from 'Alqamah ibn Qays, who narrates from 'Akramah...[2] But this chain of narration is rejected firstly because Ibn Wāḍiḥ is weak[3] and accused of having a minute amount of knowledge and weak tact.

«ما کان یحسن شیئا»

"There is nothing good about him."[4] Secondly, the tradition in question has an omission in the chain of narration because there is a 200 year gap between Ibn Wāḍiḥ who is in the ninth level of transmitters of traditions and Aṣbagh ibn Nabatah. He could not have narrated anything from Aṣbagh, who was a companion of Imam Ali ('a).[5]

Tafsīr Examples

Various types of traditions regarding tafsīr have been narrated from 'Akramah. A few examples of these will be given:

1. Etymology: 'Akramah stated that the term *maghlūlah* in the verse:

﴿...یَدُ اللهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ...﴾

"...Allah's hand is tied up..,"[6] means stingy.[7]

It has been narrated from 'Akramah that the meaning of *rass* in the verse:

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1. Refer to: Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.6, p.603: "Whoever wants to challenge (mubāhilah) about the fact that it was revealed about the wives of the Prophet (s).".
2. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, juz':22, p.7.
3. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, v.1, pgs.5-6,81 and v.2, p.359.
4. Dhahabī, Mīzān al-I`tidāl, v.4, p.413.
5. Narrated from: Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.358.
6. Qurān: 5:64.
7. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-`Aẓīm, v.1, p.358.

﴿...أَصْحابَ الرَّسِّ...﴾

"...the inhabitants of rass..,"[1] is:

«هو بئر رسول فيها نبيهم اي القوة فيها»

"It is a well; a stable well that has a prophet; meaning strength inside."[2]

2. Specifying the subjects of verses: It has been narrated that 'Akramah said the following about the verse:

﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِى بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا...﴾

"Indeed the first house to be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah, blessed...,"[3]

«البيت و ما حوله بكه و ماوراء ذلك مكه»

« The House and its surroundings are Bakkah and whatever is beyond it is Mecca. »

Likewise, he said the following about the verse:

﴿...وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

"Who has a better call than him who summons to Allah and acts righteously and says, 'Indeed I am one of the Muslims',"[4] "Muslims here means the callers to prayer."

3. Mentioning verses that abrogate and that have been abrogated: It has been narrated from 'Akramah and some others that the verse:

﴿وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا...﴾

"And if they incline toward peace, then you [too] incline toward it..,"[5] was abrogated by the verse of the sword:

﴿قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيوْمِ الْآخِرِ﴾

"Fight those who do not have faith in Allah nor [believe] in the Last Day..."[6] [7] But, the abrogation of these two verses is disputed amongst

1. Qurān, 25:38.
2. Ṭabarasī, Majma' al-Bayān, v.4, p.170.
3. Qurān, 3:96.
4. Qurān, 41:33.
5. Qurān, 8:61.
6. Qurān, 9:29.
7. Tafsīr al-Qurān al-'Aẓīm, v.2, p.333.

the commentators of the Qur'ān.[1]

4. Tafsīr using the circumstances of revelation: It has been narrated from 'Akramah and some others that the circumstances of revelation of the verse:

﴿وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ...﴾

"Do not marry any of the women whom your fathers had married, excluding what is already past..,"[2] is about people who married their father's wives in the Age of Ignorance. This verse prohibits them from this action.[3]

The Medina School

The presence of Ali ibn Ḥusayn ('a) and Imam Bāqir ('a) in Medina allowed many of the Successors – even those living in Kūfah, Basrah, and Damascus - to become students of the Imams ('a). Some of the most notable of these included Sa'īd ibn Mussayib, Zayd ibn Aslam, Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī, and Sudday Kabīr. When we look at their lives below, special attention will be given to their relationship with the Imams of the Prophetic Household ('a).

Furthermore, a great many companions had lived in Medina. The most important of them with regards to tafsīr after Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a) was Ubay ibn Ka'b, who was famously known as Sayyid al-Qurrā'. He pledged allegiance to the Prophet (ṣ) in the second pledge of 'Uqbah and became his first scribe in Medina, also becoming well-known as a very proficient reciter of the Qur'ān. Ubay taught many of the Successors Tafsīr. The most famous commentators of the Qur'ān trained under Ubay were Abū al-Alīyah Rufay' ibn Mahrān, Zayd ibn Aslam, and Muhammad ibn Ka'b Quraẓī.[4]

1. Sa'īd ibn Mūsayyib (d.94)

An important Qur'ānic commentator amongst the Successors is Abū Muhammad Sa'īd ibn Mūsayyib who died in the year 94 at the age of 75. He is praised in books of Rijāl and is counted as a supporter of

1. Refer to: Majma' Al-Bayān, under the 61st verse of Surah Anfāl.
2. Qurān, 4:22.
3. Majma' al-Bayān, v.3, p.44.
4. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.124.

the Prophetic Household ('a). Kashshī lists him amongst the disciples of Imam Ali ibn Ḥusayn ('a) while narrating a tradition from Imam Kāẓim ('a).[1] Ayatullah Khoei also deems him to be a friend of the Prophetic Household ('a).[2]

Muḥaqiq Tustarī, the author of *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, considers the accusation that he was a Kharijite (by some Sunnis) to be caused by his refusal to pledge allegiance to both Yazīd, Ibn Zubayr, Walīd, and Sulaymān, which led them to persecute him. The Sunnis labeled anyone who refrained from pledging allegiance to the caliph of the time a Kharijite, regardless of whether they actually were.[3] Some of them have even labeled Imam Ḥusayn ('a) a Kharijite.[4]

Some Sunni scholars, such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Zarā'ah also consider him trustworthy.[5] The Sunnis and Shia state that he held a high position in knowledge. Qatādah, a famous commentator of the Qur'ān, said: "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable in issues pertaining to what is permissible and what is forbidden."[6] Ibn Khalkān holds him to be the head of the Successors and one of the seven jurists of Medina.[7] Muḥaddath Qumī writes: "Sa'īd ibn Mūsayyib was one of the seven famous jurists of Medina; rather it has been said that he was the most virtuous of them."[8]

He studied under Imam Sajjād ('a) in a number of fields and was known for having great precision in tafsīr. He said about the meaning of the following verse:

﴿...فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا﴾

"...Should you be righteous, He is indeed most forgiving toward

1. Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl, v.1, p.43.
2. Mu'jam Rijāl Hadīth, v.8, p.134.
3. The reason for this is that the Kharijites were well known as extremists who considered any Muslim who committed a sin to be outside the fold of Islam; in other words to have become an unbeliever. Therefore they were usually very vocal opponents of the Ummayid government and often took up arms against it. This position is seen as abhorrent by the majority of Sunnis, who believed that you must pledge allegiance to the Caliph even if he is a sinner and a tyrant. Therefore anyone who refused to pledge allegiance to the Caliph was accused of being a Kharijite. [Editor].
4. Qāmūs al-Rijāl, v.4, pgs. 381-382.
5. Yūsuf Mazzī, Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, v.10, pgs. 73-74.
6. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.4, p.75.
7. Wafīyāt al-A'yān, v.2, p.375.
8. Ṣāfīnah al-Bahar, v.1, p.623.

penitents."[1] "The term '*awwabīn*' means a person who sins and then repents; and then sins again and repents again. But, he never intentionally returns to sin."[2] Ayatullah Ma'rifat considers Sa'īd ibn Mussayib's explanation of this verse to be the most precise while he lists the various explanations of it.[3]

It has been narrated that he said the term '*iram*' in the following verse:

﴿إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ﴾

"[and] Iram, [the city] of the pillars,"[4] to be a name of Damascus.[5] Likewise, the following has been narrated from him about the verse:

﴿وَ السَّبِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ...﴾

"The early vanguard..,"[6] "This means people who performed prayer in both directions of prayer."[7]

2. Abū al-Aliyah Rufay' ibn Mahrān Rīyāḥī (d.90)

Rufay' ibn Mahrān Rīyāḥī was from Basrah. He lived during the Age of Ignorance and became Muslim two years after the Prophet (ṣ) died. 'Ajalī states: "He was a prominent member of the Successors who was famous in tafsīr. He was a trusted Successor of the companions. He transmitted traditions from the Commander of the Faithful Ali ('a), 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd, Ubay, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, Hudhayfah, Abū Dharr, Abū Ayyūb Anṣāri, and other prominent companions. Everyone is unanimous about his trustworthiness. Ibn Dāwūd writes: 'After the companions, nobody is more knowledgeable than Abū Aliyah in the science of recitation; after him are Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Sudday, and Thawrī in that order.'"[8]

There are many traditions in the realm of Tafsīr that Abū Ja'far Rāzī narrates from Rabī' ibn Anas, who narrates from Abū Aliyah, who narrates from Ubay. Sunnis consider this chain of narration to

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1. Qurān, 17:25.
2. Majma` al-Bayān, v.2, p.410.
3. Refer to: al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thabah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.331.
4. Qurān, 89:7.
5. Abu al-Fatūḥ Rāzī, Tafsīr Ruh al-Janān, v.10, p.283.
6. Qurān, 9:100.
7. Majma` al-Bayān, v.3, p.64.
8. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.3, pgs. 284-286, narrated by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.420. He believes that Abū Aliyah passed away in the year 93..

be correct. Likewise, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated many traditions from this chain. Ḥakīm in *Mustadrak* and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in *Musnad* also use it.[1]

3. Muhammad ibn Ka'b Quraẓī

Abū Ḥamzah Muhammad ibn Ka'b Quraẓī first lived in Kūfah and then Medina. His opinions on tafsīr are narrated in Sunni and Shia commentaries on the Qur'ān. A tafsīr has also been attributed to him.[2] He transmitted traditions from Imam Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a), Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ibn 'Abbās (all with incomplete chains), and through an intermediary from Ubay ibn Ka'b. He was famous for his trustworthiness, justice, piety, narration of many traditions and his explanation of the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān. 'Ajalī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ḥajar, and others introduce him as trustworthy, a scholar of the Qur'ān, and a righteous individual.[3]

Tafsīr Examples

Ḥajjī Khalīfah makes note of a tafsīr written by Muhammad Quraẓī. However, it does not exist today. All that exists are traditions narrated in other tafsīrs. Some examples of these commentaries are:

1. Explanation of general concepts: It has been narrated from Muhamamd ibn Ka'b about the verse:

﴿... وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ...﴾

"...and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that I may warn thereby you and whomever it may reach:"[4]

«من بلغه القرآن فكأنما رأي النبي صلى الله عليه وآله»

"Whoever the Qur'ān reaches it is as if he saw the Prophet (ṣ)."[5]

In another tradition regarding the verse:

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.125.
2. Ḥājjī Khalīfah, Kashf al-Ẓunūn, v.1, p.475; refer to Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.9, pgs. 374 and up.
3. Refer to Ibid, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.125.
4. Qurān, 6:19.
5. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.3, p.13; another tradition with the same meaning has been narrated by him.

﴿...كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ...﴾

"...Eat of its fruits when it fructifies..,"[1] it has been narrated that he said:

2. Expressing terminology: Muhammad ibn Ka'b states regarding the term *israf* in the verse:

﴿...وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾

"...but do not waste; indeed He does not like the wasteful:"[2]

«السرف ان لا يعطي في حق»

"Waste is not giving in due."[3]

3. Specifying instances: In regards to the four months mentioned in the verse:

﴿فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ...﴾

"Travel [unmolested] in the land for four months..,"[4]

«ابتداؤها يوم النحر الى العاشر من شهر ربيع الآخر»

it has been narred from Muhammad ibn Ka'b Qurazī and some others that the beginning of them is the first ten days of *Rabī' al-Akhir*. This opinion has also been narrated from Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[5]

4. Zayd ibn Aslam 'Adwī (d.134)

Abū Usāmah or Abū 'Abd Zayd ibn Aslam 'Adwī was from Medina. He was a jurisprudent and commentator of the Qur'ān.[6] Traditions regarding tafsīr have been narrated from him by Sunni and Shia scholars. He has been mentioned in the chains of narrations in Sunni books of traditions and is counted amongst the transmitters of traditions in the "Six Ṣaḥīḥ" books.[7] Likewise, he occurs in chains of traditions recorded in Shia books, for instance *Furū' al-Kāfī*, v.6, p.415 and *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.2, p.299, h.27 and v.3, p.8, h.19. Ibn Nadīm attributes a tafsīr to him.[8]

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1. Qurān, 6:141.
2. Qurān, 7:31.
3. Majma' al-Bayān, v.5, p.5.
4. Qurān, 9:2.
5. Ibid.
6. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.126.
7. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.3, p.342.
8. Al-Fihrist, p.36.

Sunnis consider him trustworthy in traditions and a prominent member of the Successors. Dhahabī writes: "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Zarā'ah, Abū Ḥātim, and Nisā'ī have considered him trustworthy. The testimony of these four authoritative figures is strong evidence of his trustworthiness and justice. The authors of the Six Authentic books have also praised him."[1]

He has been given the kunya of the *Mawlā* of 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb[2] (the *Mawlā* of `Umar has been cited in some sources).[3] The term '*Mawlā*' is indicative of various meanings, such as slave, companion, and master. Neither of these meanings are in congruence with the lifetimes of Zayd (d.136) and 'Umar (d.23). He could not have been the slave or companion of 'Umar. For this reason Shia scholars have considered such an attribution to be highly unlikely.[4]

Shaykh Ṭūsī lists him amongst the companions of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) in his book on Rijāl. Then he writes: "This is disputed."[5] Likewise, he counts him amongst the companions of Imam Sajjād ('a) and uses the term 'Shaykh' in front of his name. This shows that he sat with Imam Sajjād ('a).[6] Ayatullah Khoei also considers him to be a companion of Imam Sajjād ('a) and then writes:

«وعدّه البرقی ایضاً في اصحاب السجاد و الصادق عليهما السلام»

"Al-Barqī counted him amongst the companions of Imam Sajjād and Imam Ṣādiq ('a)."[7]

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.126.
2. Ibid.
3. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.2, p.54; refer to 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, A`yān al-Shia, v.10, p.448.
4. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, Mu`jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.7, p.335.
5. Muhamamd bin Ḥasan Ṭūsī, Rijāl al-Ṭūsī, research by Jawād Qīyūmī, p.207.
6. Ibid, p.114. He writes: "Zayd bin Aslam al-'Adwī was their companion in Medina; the companion of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the Successor of the companions who sat with him on multiple occasions (number 1130)".
7. Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥādīth, v.7, p.335; But, unfortunately, Dhahabī narrates from Bukhārī in Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.126: "Ali bin Ḥusayn (a) came to Zayd bin Aslam and sat down with him while stating that his school was wrong." This is definitely a lie and invalid because, 1. nobody considers Ali bin Ḥusayn (a) to be a transmitter of Zayd bin Aslam's traditions, 2. Imam Ali bin Ḥusayn (a) has been mentioned as his teacher in many sources, 3. The station of Imamah and Imam Sajjād's (a) intellectual station is not in congruence with this claim, 4. As a matter of age, Imam Sajjād (a) would not have been his student; rather he would have been his teacher because Imam Sajjād (a)

Dhahabī considers Zayd ibn Aslam to be a student of Ubay ibn Ka'b in Tafsīr. The only reason behind this is that both of them are from Medina. There is no other evidence that would indicate such a relationship in the traditions. Possibly, according to what has been narrated from in Shia books, Imam Ali ibn Ḥusayn ('a) could be considered as one of his teachers; but, Ubay ibn Ka'b, who passed away around the year 30, could not have been Zayd ibn Aslam's teacher. In addition to this, Abū al-Ḥajjāj Mazzī in *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, while providing biographies of the transmitters of traditions, mentions more than 30 people who Zayd transmitted traditions from. However, Ubay ibn Ka'b was not counted amongst these people.[1]

Tafsīr Examples

1. Expressing the instances and terminology: The following has been narrated by Zayd ibn Aslam regarding the term '*sāhūn*' in the verses:

﴿فَوَيلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۞ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۞ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يرَاءُونَ ۞ وَيمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ﴾

"Woe to them who pray, those who are heedless of their prayers, those who show off but deny aid."[2] "It means those who pray to be seen by others; prayer is not in their class." He was asked about who these people are and what 'but deny aid' means. He responded:

«اولئك المنافقون ظَهرت الصلوة فصلّوها و خفيت الزكاة فمنعوها»

"They are hypocrites who perform prayers in front of others and refrain from giving charity in secret."[3]

2. Terminology: The following has been narrated from him in regards to the term '"*urubā*' in the verse:

﴿عُرُباً أَتْرَابًا﴾

"loving, of a like age,"[4] that he said:

«العربه هي الحسنة الكلام»

"'*Urba* is a woman with a beautiful voice."[5]

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was martyred in 93 or 95 while Zayd passed away in 136.

1. Ali Akbar Babā'ī, Makātib Tafsīrī, v.1, p.249.
2. Qurān, 107:5-7.
3. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.6, p.400.
4. Qurān, 56:37.
5. Durr al-Manthūr, v.6, p.159.

3. Referring to history: The following has been narrated from him about the verse:

﴿قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيانَهُمْ مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ...﴾

"Those who were before them [had also] schemed. Then Allah razed their edifice from the foundations and the roof collapsed upon them from above,"[1] that he said: "The person whose roof collapsed upon him was Nimrod ibn Kanan."[2]

4. Using the circumstances of revelation: It has been narrated from him about the verse:

﴿خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً...﴾

"Take charity from their possessions,"[3] that he said: "People who repented told the Prophet (ṣ): 'Take whatever you want from our possessions.' The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) responded: 'I will not do this until the permission has been granted to me from Allah.' Then the verse: "Take charity from their possessions," was revealed and the Prophet (ṣ) took some of their possessions and left the rest for them."[4]

The Iraqi School

Some authorities have considered the Iraqi school of Tafsīr to be a include the schools of both Kūfah and Basrah,[5] introducing the commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors by only mentioning that they belonged to the Iraqi schoolwithout specifying whether they were Kufan or Basran.[6] In any case, this school will be briefly examined and then the most famous Successors in both of these schools will be introduced.

Many of the Iraqi commentators of the Qur'ān in this period followed the teachings of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd because he was a

1. Qurān, 16:26.
2. Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ṭibyān, v.6, p.374.
3. Qurān, 9:103.
4. Ṭibyān, v.5, p.292.
5. Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.54.
6. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.128; Ayatollah Ma`rifat also separately mentioned the schools in Kūfah, Basrah, and Damascus, but many of the Successors were mentioned in one place, refer to: al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, pgs. 19-317.

famous teacher and commentator of the Qur'ān in Kūfah. He was appointed to the city in order to teach the Qur'ān to people there, but was recalled by 'Uthmān in the year 31; he passed away that same year.[1] Some of the commentators of the Qur'ān in Iraq are from Kūfah and some from Basrah; Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, and Abū Ṣāliḥ Bādhān, for instance, were Successors from Basrah. A number of Successors from the Iraqi school will be detailed below:

1. Qatādah ibn Da`āmah Sadūsī (d.117)

Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Qatādah ibn Da'āmah Sadūsī lived in Basra and was a prominent scholar of his time. He had a strong memory, a large amount of information about contemporary Arabic poetry, genealogy, and etymology of Tazi.[2]

He has been praised by some Sunni scholars. Ibn Ḥajar introduces him as trustworthy and firm.[3] Yaḥya ibn Mu'īn considers him to be trustworthy and authoritative in traditions.[4] Muḥaddath Qumī considered him to be a prominent Sunni member of the Successors and a person who would say: "Ask me."[5] This remark by Qumī is supposed to cast doubt on his reliability[6], despite the fact that after he mentions a tradition - which we will deal with momentarily - he alludes to his love of the Commander of the Faithful ('a). Some Sunnis, while considering him trustworthy, claimed that he believed in determinism (*qadar*).

There are various traditions regarding his attitude towards the Prophetic Household ('a). Some traditions state that he would stand up when he heard Khālid ibn 'Abdullah Qasri, a worker of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Mālik in Basrah and Kūfah speak ill of Imam Ali ('a). He would say:

«زندیق و رب الکعبه زندیق و رب الکعبه»

1. Refer to Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.317.
2. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.136.
3. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.2, p.123.
4. Ibid, v.8, p.315.
5. Shaykh `Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.405.
6. Because Imam Ali (a) was famous for telling people to ask him, so this description implies that Qatādah thought very highly of his own level of knowledge and was conceited. [Editor].

"Disbeliever by the Lord of the Ka'bah; disbeliever by the Lord of the Ka'bah." Then he would leave the gathering.[1]

Muḥaddath Qumī considers this tradition as a proof for the love that he had for Ali ('a).[2] Some other traditions have been transmitted where Qatādah is speaking with Imam Bāqir ('a). The Imam told him:

«ويحك يا قتادة»

"Woe upon you Qatādah."

He has been criticised elsewhere for his acceptance of determinism. Ibn Sa'd states: "He was trustworthy and reliable in traditions; leaned somewhat towards determinism." Ibn Khalkān narrated from Abū 'Amr ibn `Alā: "If the discussion regarding Qatādah and determinism did not exist his words would have authority."[3] But, it cannot be forgotten that he was a famous personality in tafsīr and many other sciences during his lifetime. Abū 'Amr ibn `Alā praises him. Mu`amar writes: "I asked Abū `Umar about the verse:

﴿وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ﴾

"...and we [by ourselves] were no match for it."[4]

He did not answer. I told him: 'Qatādah states that not being a match for it means mutiqin. Abū 'Amr remained silent; I asked him what he had to say. He responded: 'Qatādah's words are sufficient for you. If there was no mention of determinism (while the Prophet said to refrain from talking about determinism) I would not equate anyone of his contemporaries with him.'"

Credible evidence regarding who his teacher was has not been presented. Ibn Ḥajar only listed people who Qatādah' transmitted traditions from. Some companions who were listed were Anas ibn Mālik, Abū Sa'īd Khuḍrī, and Abū Ṭufayl and some Successors to the companions that were mentioned were Sa'īd ibn Mussayib and 'Akramah. But, Ibn Mas'ūd was not even mentioned as one who

1. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, Rawḍah al-Kāfī, v.8, p.113; Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.19, pgs. 298-300.
2. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.405.
3. Ibn Khalkān, Wafīyāt al-A'yān, v.4, p.85.
4. Qurān, 42:13.

Qatādah narrated from.[1]

Tafsīr examples

1. Expressing instances: The following has been narrated regarding the term 'word' in the verse:

﴿...إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ...﴾

"...The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only an apostle of Allah, and His Word,"[2] that it means Allah's statement of 'Be.'[3]

2. Explaining Qur'ānic terms:

﴿مُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ﴾

It has been narrated from Qatādah and other commentators of the Qur'ān that the explanation of the term 'and as a guardian over it,'[4] where the Qur'ān has been counted as a 'guardian' over the other scriptures.[5] It is narrated from Qutādah and other commentators that the meaning of muhīn is trustworthy and wtiness.[6]

﴿...فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ...﴾

"...He who cannot afford [any of these] shall fast for three days..."[7] The principle penalty is feeding or clothing ten needy people or freeing one slave, but if one is unable to pay this penalty Allah states that he must fast for three days. Many commentators of the Qur'ān and jurists, including Qatādah, narrated:

«يجب التتابع في صوم هذه الايام الثلاثة»

"It is obligatory to perform these three days of fasts consecutively."[8]

4. Expressing the circumstances of revelation: Qatādah narrates from Anas about the verse:

﴿اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ﴾

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1. Tahdib al-Tahdhīb, v.8, pgs. 315-316.
2. Qurān, 4:171.
3. Ṭabarasī, Majma' al-Bayān, v.3, p.222.
4. Qurān, 5:47.
5. Majma' al-Bayān, v.3, p.313.
6. Ibid, pg 367.
7. Qurān, 5:89.
8. Majma' al-Bayān, v.3, p.368.

"The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split,"[1] that the people of Mecca demanded that the Prophet (ṣ) perform a miracle; show a sign of Allah's might. The moon was split in Mecca twice and the verse: "The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split," was revealed by Allah.[2]

Many traditions have been narrated from Qatādah in Shia and sunni tafsīrs, such as: *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarasī, *Tibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, *Durr al-Manthūr* by Suyūṭī, and *Jāmi' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarī. This deserves to be researched through a group effort.

2. Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī (d.128)

Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī was a commentator of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors. He was a student and companion of Imam Sajjād and Imam Bāqir ('a). Many traditions regarding tafsīr, religious rulings, and the characteristics of the Prophetic Household ('a) have been narrated from him. This shows that he was a Shia. Indeed, the only criticism that the Sunnis have of him is that he was Shia. Sufyān Thawrī writes: "Jābir is truthful in regards to traditions except that he is a Shia and rejecter (rāfidhi)."[3] He also writes: "I have not seen anyone more pious in narrating traditions than Jābir." Wakī`, who was a commentator of the Qur'ān, writes: "Doubt whatever you want, but do not doubt the veracity of Jābir."[4]

Shaykh Ṭūsī counted him amongst the companions of Imam Bāqir ('a) and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[5] Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr writes about him: "Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī was a leader in traditions and tafsīr. He learned them from Imam Bāqir ('a)."[6] Najāshī writes: "Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī, Abū 'Abdullah (it has also been said Ibn Abū Muhammad), is an Arab who was able to meet Imam Bāqir ('a) and Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He passed away during the lifetime of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) in the year 128.

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1. Qurān, 54:1.
2. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurān al-'Aẓīm, v.4, p.266.
3. Abū Ali, Muntaha al-Maqāl, p.73.
4. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.2, p.74.
5. Refer to: Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.4, pgs.17-21; al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.422.
6. Sayyid Ḥasan Sadr, Tasīs al-Shia, p.326.

He wrote a few books including a tafsīr." He then related his chain of narration to the tafsīr. Shaykh Mufīd counted him amongst the people who should not be spoken ill about; people who there is no reason to rebuke, in *Risālah 'Adadīyah*. Ibn Shahrāshūb held him to be one of the close companions of Imam Ṣādiq ('a). A tradition shows that Imam Ṣādiq had mercy upon him; it states: "Whatever he narrates from us is true." A person stated that Mufaẓẓal asked the Imam about Jābir's tafsīr. The Imam said: "Do not speak ill of that book to the people so that they do not spread ill words about it."[1]

These traditions and many others like them indicate that Jābir was a famous commentator of the Qur'ān in his lifetime, that he was later relied upon by both the Shia and Sunni scholars and that he was a trusted disciple of the Imams ('a). He wrote a tafsīr and his tafsīr opinions are authoritative because many experts have explicitly indicated his trustworthiness. Mamqani, a famous scholar of *Rijāl*, says the following regarding him: "It is understood from the collected traditions that this man was grand and had the highest amount of merits; he held a special position with Imams Bāqir and Ṣādiq ('a); he would keep their secrets and was blessed by the two Imams. He knew the secrets of the Prophetic Household ('a) with which, only the most upright people were trusted.[2] Some considered him to be a representative of Imam Bāqir ('a).[3]

In regards to knowledge, some traditions state that Imam Ṣādiq ('a) showed him the angels in the heavens and on earth.[4] Kashshī narrates from Jābir himself that Imam Bāqir ('a) transmitted 70,000 traditions for him in which he did not transmit for anyone else – and would not transmit to anyone else.[5] These traditions testify to his grandeur. However the high status he enjoyed caused some to accuse him of being an exaggerator or disbeliever.[6]

Jābir's tafsīr opinions

Jābir's tafsīr itself has not survived, but many traditions of his have

1. Refer to: Mu`jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.4, pgs.17-21.
2. 'Abdullah Māmaqānī, Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl, v.1, p.203.
3. Ibid, p.190.
4. Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.4, pgs.17-21.
5. Ibid.
6. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.2, p.41.

been narrated elsewhere. These include:

1. Enumerating which verses which have been abrogated by other verses: Jābir narrates from Imam Bāqir ('a) regarding the verse:

﴿وَاللَّاتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا﴾

"Should any of your women commit an indecent act, produce against them four witness from yourselves, and if they testify, detain them in [their] houses until death finishes them, or Allah decrees a course for them,"[1] that he said:

«منسوخة و السبيل هو الحدود»

"This verse has been abrogated and the term 'decree' means punishment."[2]

2. *Tafsīr wilāyī*: Jābir narrates from Imam Bāqir ('a) about the verse:

﴿...كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ...﴾

"...Every time they ignite the flames of war, Allah puts them out,"[3] that he said:

«كلّما اراد جبّار من الجبابرة هلكة آل محمدﷺ قصمه الله»

"Whenever one of the oppressors wanted to destroy the family of Muhammad (ṣ), Allah would crush them."[4]

3. Theological tafsīr: In a tradition that Jābir narrated from Imam Bāqir ('a) about some incorrect beliefs held by the people of Damascus regarding the divine attributes which indicate anthropomorphism, he said:

«يا جبار! ان الله تبارك و تعالي لا نظير له و لا شبيه تعالي عن صفة الواصفين و جل عن اوهام المتوهمين...ليس كمثله شي و هو السميع العليم»

"O' Jābir, Allah, the blessed, does not have any like; nothing is similar to Him. He is above the attributes that are attributed to Him; He is grander than the imaginations of those who imagine...Nothing is like Him; He is the Listener, the Knower."[5]

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1. Qurān, 4:15.
2. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, v.1, p.227.
3. Qurān, 5:64.
4. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, v.1, p.330.
5. Ibid, p.59.

Many traditions have been transmitted by him from Imam Bāqir ('a) about tafsīr. One can refer to *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī* and *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī.*

3. Sudday Kabīr (d.127)

Ismā'īl ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman Kūfī was a commentator of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors. Many traditions about tafsīr have been narrated from him in Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. He has narrated the most traditions from amongst the Successors. More than one-fourth of Ibn Mas'ūd's tafsīr is narrated through him.[1]

Sudday was a companion of Imam Sajjād ('a), Imam Bāqir ('a), and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[2] Muḥaddith Qumī writes: "Sudday was a renowned exegete whose opinions were held similar to those of Mujāhid's, Qatādah's, Kalbī's, Sha`bī's, and Muqātil's in the books of tafsīr. Ibn Ḥajar considers him to be trustworthy but a Shia."[3] Ibn 'Aṭīyah writes: "Sudday was a person who 'Āmir Sha'bī rebuked along with Abī Ṣāliḥ because Sha'bī believed these two exegetes shirked their responsibilities in regards to pondering over the traditions."[4] Suyūṭī describes his opinion regarding Sudday in the following words: "Thawrī and Sha'bah al-Ḥajjāj narrated traditions from Sudday. But, the transmitter of traditions that Sudday obtained was Asbāṭ ibn Naṣr; regarding the veracity of who, there are differing opinions. However, it must be said that Sudday's tafsīr is the best tafsīr."[5]

4. Masrūq ibn Ajda' Kūfī (d.63)

Masrūq ibn Ajda' was from Yemen. He came to Medina during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and then moved to Kūfah. He is trustworthy according to Sunnis.[6] Most Shia scholars of the transmitters of traditions, however, rebuked him.[7] Some introduced him as an adversary of the Commander of the Faithful ('a).[8]

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1. Refer to: Khuḍayrī, Tafsīr al-Tabi'īn, v.1, p.302.
2. Tasīs al-Shia, p.326.
3. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.1, p.611.
4. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.323.
5. Ibid, v.4, p.200.
6. Refer to: Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.10, p.109.
7. 'Abdullah Māmaqānī, Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl, v.3, p.211.
8. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.1, p.617.

Sha'bī writes: "I have not seen anyone strive more in obtaining knowledge than him. He was more knowledgeable than Sharīḥ in jurisprudence. That is why Sharīḥ would ask him about matters that he could not find the answer to." Ali ibn Madyānī writes: "None of the companions of Ibn Mas'ūd took precedence over him. He was a companion of Ibn Mas'ūd who taught people traditions. He was a reciter of the Qur'ān and a jurist all in one."[1] It has been narrated from Masrūq that he said the majority of his knowledge about tafsīr was taught to him from Ibn Mas'ūd. Ibn Mas'ūd's habit was to read a chapter of the Qur'ān and discuss its tafsīr with us. He would explain that chapter for the entire day.[2]

Many traditions have been narrated from Masrūq. These traditions can be found in *Majma' al-Bayān*, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, *Durr al-Manthūr*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, and the six correct books of the Sunnis.

5. 'Alqamah ibn Qays (d.61)

'Alqamah ibn Qays ibn 'Abdullah Nakhā'ī Kūfī was born during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). He is the most renowned from those who narrated from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd and was the most knowledgeable in regards to Ibn Mas'ūd's school of thought. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd praised him and considered him to be one of the six people who were able to derive rulings. He would teach people the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ṣ). 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd said: "Verses which I read and knew their explanations were also known by 'Alqamah."[3]

Sunnis consider him trustworthy and Shia praise him. Shaykh Ṭūsī considers him to be a companion of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) in his *Rijāl*. He writes: "He was one of the people who entered Madā'in along with Ali ('a). He participated in the Battle of Nahrawan with him and his sword became red from the blood of the enemies. He also participated in the Battle of Siffin."[4]

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1. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.10, pgs. 109-111.
2. Ibid.
3. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.129.
4. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.386.

6. Murrah Hamadānī Kūfī (d.76)

Abū Ismā'īl Murrah ibn Sharāḥīl Hamadānī Kūfī was a man who worshipped in abundance and was famously known as '*Murrah al-Tayyib*' or '*Murrah al-Khayr.*' The reason he was given these kunyas is because of his worship, suitability in righteous actions, piety, and asceticism. He would prostrate for extended periods of time; according to some narrations he would perform 600 components of prayer each day.[1] Although he was from Kūfah and the people of Kūfah were the Shia of Ali ('a), it has been narrated that he held enmity and spite for Ali ('a).[2]

7. 'Āmir Sha'bī (d.109)

Abū 'Amr 'Āmir ibn Sharāḥīl Sha'bī Kūfī was from Hamadān. He transmitted traditions from many companions, such as Ali ('a), Ibn 'Abbās, and Ibn Mas'ūd. It has been said that Sha'bī met with over 500 companions. He has been praised for his knowledge. He had a powerful memory and was a specialist in tafsīr, traditions, literature, and poetry.[3] But he is rebuked and spoken ill of by Shia scholars of the transmitters of traditions.[4]

8. Ḥasan Baṣrī (d.110)

Abū Sa'īd Ḥasan Yāssar Baṣrī was born in the year 21 in Medina. He had the qualities of asceticism, piety, and eloquence. He spoke well and would give advice. He transmitted traditions from many companions and Successors. Sayyid Murtaḍa writes: "He was at the peak of eloquence. His eloquence would be seen when he would give advice. His advice would be full of wisdom and would be effective. Most of the subject matter of his speeches and advice (either literally or contextually) was taken from the Commander of the Faithful ('a). He was a role-model for all public speakers because wisdom and valuable advice has been narrated from him."

He then added: "Whenever Ḥasan Baṣrī wanted to transmit a

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.131.
2. Abū Ali, Muntaha al-Maqāl, p.300.
3. Refer to: Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, v.10, p.88; al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.132.
4. Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.1, p.701.

tradition from the Commander of the Faithful during the Omayyad Dynasty, he would say that Abū Zaynab said..."[1]

Many traditions regarding tafsīr have been narrated from him. These narrations exist in both Shia and Sunni books of tafsīr. He wrote a tafsīr and had numerous opinions in theology. One of his distinguishing characteristics was that he believed in determinism. Therefore, he has been considered to be the leader of the Jabriyyah sect and some Shia scholars have considered him weak.[2]

Another aspect is the differences that Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭṭā (80-138) and ʿAmr ibn Ubayd (80-144) had with him. Due to his beliefs about determinism and other theological issues, these two people argued with him. After they participated in his lessons for some time they separated themselves from him and founded the Mutazilite sect.[3]

9. Abu Ṣāliḥ Bādhān (d.120)

Abu Ṣāliḥ Bādhān Baṣrī was able to derive his own opinions in tafsīr. Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr considered him to be student of Ibn ʿAbbās and that Muhammad ibn Sā'ib Kalbī narrated traditions from him. Shaykh Mufīd considered him to be a prominent scholar of tafsīr and trusted by the Shia.[4]

He wrote a book of tafsīr and explained the Qur'ān during his lifetime. It has been narrated that ʿĀmir Shaʿbī told him:

«تفسر القرآن وانت لا تقرء القرآن»

"You comment on the Qur'ān while you do not read the Qur'ān."[5] The reason Shaʿbī said this was because he was not Arab and did not have the ability to recite the Qur'ān as Arabs do. There was a conversation between ʿAkramah, who was mentioned earlier, and Abū Ṣāliḥ were Abū Ṣāliḥ tells him: "My master is the Commander of the Faithful. He is more knowledgeable than your master Ibn ʿAbbās."[6]

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1. Sayyid Murtaḍa, Amālī, v.1, pgs.153 and 162.
2. Shaykh ʿAbbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.405.
3. Mu`jam al-Mufassirīn, v.1, p.148.
4. Tasīs al-Shia, p.325.
5. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, v.1, p.30.
6. Shi`rānī, Fihrist Mashāhīr al-Qurrā', narrated from Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir

Other commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors

There were famous commentators of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors that have not been mentioned. Other than those of this period and a little after this period, there is a group of commentators of the Qur'ān whose opinions have been extensively narrated in tafsīrs. They hold a high position in tafsīr. These individuals will be briefly introduced below:

1. Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muẓāḥim (d. 105): This name has been mentioned extensively in Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. He narrated traditions from Ibn 'Abbās and is considered trustworthy by many scholars of the transmitters of traditions.

2. 'Aṭīyah ibn Sa'īd 'Awfī Kūfī (d.111). He narrated traditions from Ibn 'Abbās. Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr have narrated many traditions from Ibn 'Abbās through him in their tafsīrs.[1] It has been said that 'Aṭīyah's tafsīr had five parts. He said that he explained the Qur'ān in the form of tafsīr in front of Ibn 'Abbās three times and recited the Qur'ān in front of him thirty times.[2] He is deemed to be from amongst the lovers of Ali ('a). It has been written: "Ḥajjāj whipped 'Awfī one hundred times to force him to say something negative about Ali ('a), but he did not.[3]

3. Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d.150): Abū al-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān ibn Bashīr Azdī Balkhī narrated traditions from 'Aṭṭā' ibn Abī Rabbāḥ and Mujāhid. Some introduced him to be a companion of Imam Bāqir ('a), but some others considered him to be a Sunni scholar of traditions.[4] Shāfi'ī wrote the following about him: "People are astonished about his tafsīr."[5] Ibn Nadīm considered him to be Zaydi and attributed many books to him.[6] Amongst Shia scholars, the late Kulaynī narrated traditions from him in *al-Kāfī* as Shaykh Ṣadūq did in *Man Lā Yaḥḍarah al-Faqīh.*[7]

Ḥujjatī, Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.63.

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.322.
2. Aqā Bazurg Tehranī, al-Dharīyah, v.4, p.283.
3. Fihrist Mashāhir al-Qurrā', letter h.
4. Muntaha al-Maqāl, p.310.
5. Ibn Khalkān, Wafīyāt al-A'yān, v.2, p.165.
6. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist (Farsi translation), p.334.
7. Fihrist Mashāhir al-Qurrā', narrated by Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī, Seh Muqālah dar Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.65.

In any case, his name is found extensively in Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. The reason for this is that he had a lengthy tafsīr of the entire Qur'ān which is considered to be the oldest such tafsīr. Dr. 'Abdullah Shaḥātah collected many prints. For the first time Muqātil's tafsīr has been published in five volumes.

4. 'Aṭṭā ibn Sā'ib, Abū Muhammad Thaqafī Kūfī (d. 136): He is a commentator of the Qur'ān who lived for some time in Kūfah and was a Shia. He narrated traditions from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Mujāhid, and 'Akramah.

5. Abān ibn Taghlib, Abū Sa'īd Bakri Kūfī (d. 141): He was a Shia and transmitted traditions from Imam Sajjād ('a), Imam Bāqir ('a), and Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He wrote the book *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*.

6. Ali ibn Ṭalḥah Hāshimī (d. 143): He was a commentator of the Qur'ān amongst the Successors who narrated traditions through Ibn 'Abbās.

7. Muhammad ibn Sā'ib Kalbī (d. 146): He was a Shia commentator of the Qur'ān and a companion of Imam Bāqir ('a) and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).

8. Sulaymān ibn Mahrān A'mash (d. 148): He is considered a Shia commentators of the Qur'ān.

9. Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī, Thābit ibn Dīnār Abū Ṣāfīyah Kūfī (d. 150): He was a supporter of the Prophetic Household ('a) and a special companion of Imam Sajjād ('a), Imam Bāqir ('a), and Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He was also a commentator of the Qur'ān. Shia and Sunni scholars have praised him. Imam Riḍā ('a) called him the Salmān of his time. He held a very high position. Famous Shia and Sunni tafsīrs narrate from him. Najāshī states that the name of the tafsīr written by Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī is *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*[1] and Ibn Nadīm states that it is *Tafsīr Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī*.[2] The tafsīr that Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī wrote does not presently exist, but traditions from him and tafsīr opinions, the source of which is mostly the Imams ('a), are narrated in abundance. Recently, a book titled Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm has been published with research done by 'Abd al-

1. Aḥmad bin Ali Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.11.
2. Al-Fihrist, p.6.

Razzāq Ḥizr al-Dīn. About 380 traditions have been compiled in this book from amongst Shia and Sunni books of traditions and tafsīrs.

10. Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭṭā (d. 131): Abū Ḥuḍhayfah Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭṭā' Baṣrī was the founder of the Mutazilite school of thought. He wrote *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* and believed in the reappearance of the Imams. He accepted the high station of Imam Ali ('a).[1]

11. Ibn Jarīḥ (d.150): 'Abd al-Mālik ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Jarīḥ was Roman and passed away in Mecca. Ṭabarī and Thal'abī narrated traditions from him in their tafsīrs.[2] His tafsīr was printed in Egypt through the research of Ali Ḥasan 'Abd al-Ghanī.[3]

12. Sufyān Thawrī (d.161): Abū 'Abdullah Sufyān ibn Sa'īd wrote a short tafsīr. He is considered to be a famous Islamic scholar who specialized in traditions.

13. Abū Jārūd (d.150): His name was Zīyād ibn Mandhar. He was blind his entire life and the Zaydiyah Jārūdiyah sect is attributed to him. A section of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī's tafsīr is narrated from him. He was a companion of Imam Zayn al- 'Ubaydīn ('a), Imam Bāqir ('a), and Imam Ṣādiq ('a), but in his tafsīr he only transmitted traditions from Imam Bāqir ('a). This was during the period where he did not display problematic theological tendencies.[4]

In addition to the people that have been mentioned, Qays ibn Muslim (d.168) can be alluded to. He was from Kūfah and narrated from 'Aṭṭā ibn Sā'ib. Traditions about tafsīr have also been narrated by Sufyān ibn 'Aynīyah (d.198). Likewise, two other people: 'Abd al-Raḥman Rāhwārī (d.172) and Mālik ibn Anas (d.172) both wrote tafsīrs.

Characteristics of the tafsīrs written by the Successors

Taking the information that was mentioned about the Successors and their tafsīr opinions into account, the following characteristics can be listed as characteristics of this period:

1. The advent of variety and differences of opinions in tafsīr: For instance, rational tafsīrs, mystical tafsīrs, and theological tafsīrs were

1. Refer to: Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, v.2, p.356.
2. Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, Sa'd al-Sa'ūd, p.221.
3. Refer to: 'Abd al-Wahhāb Ṭāliqānī, Tārīkh Tafsīr, p.115.
4. Al-Dharīyah, v.4, p.251.

written. Mujāhid would sometimes mention rational points and sometimes mystical points[1] while people such as Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatādah would discuss theological matters such as the issue of determinalism.[2]

2. Reliance upon Ijtihād and its expansion: Opposition to the companions is seen in the tafsīrs written by the Successors. The majority of issues that were mentioned by the Successors are mentioned without chains of narration supporting it; or the chains of narration that do support it are weak and unreliable.[3]

3. Reliance upon preponderance: Since the Successors were distanced from the period of prophethood, they mostly relied upon preponderance. This is why some of them are accused of explaining the Qur'ān with their own opinions.[4]

4. Spread of *Isrā'īlīyāt*: Jewish and Christian traditions spread during this period because many people of the scriptures converted to Islam and while their previous beliefs remained in their minds; beliefs which were not in congruence with Islamic concepts (for instance, the beginning of creation and many legal punishments). As a result, they introduced *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions into their tafsīrs without any form of examination or thought. The Successors that had converted to Islam from Judaism or Christianity and were known for inserting these traditions were few in number. Examples of them are: 'Abdullah ibn Salām, Wahhāb ibn Munīyah, and Ka'b ibn al-Aḥbār.[5]

Questions and research points

1. What are the most famous schools of tafsīr amongst the Successors? What companions did they follow?

2. Name five members of the Successors who narrated the most traditions about tafsīr.

3. Who was the teacher of Sa'īd ibn Jubayr and Mujāhid? Write two characteristics of each of their tafsīrs.

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1. As was mentioned in the Tafsīr examples of Mujāhid; also refer to: Ṭabarasī, Majma' al-Bayān, v.1, p.128, under the 65th verse of Surah Baqarah.
2. 'Abdullah Maḥmūd Shaḥātah, al-Qurān wa al-Tafsīr, p.94.
3. Hādī Jāsim, al-Minhāj al-Athrī, p.53.
4. Ibid.
5. Refer to: Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.130.

4. Explain the sect, trustworthiness, and some opinions of 'Akramah.

5. What school of tafsīr did Zayd ibn Aslam 'Adawi belong to? Explain what his sect was and who his teacher was. Mention two examples of his tafsīr.

6. What school of tafsīr did the following people belong to: Sa'īd ibn Mussayib, 'Akramah, Mujāhid ibn Jabbār, Qatādah, Muhammad ibn Ka'b Qarazī, Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī, and Sudday Kabīr?

7. List the characteristics of the tafsīrs of the Successors.

8. Write a paper about the Jewish narrations which entered the tafsīrs of the Successors. Use the following books: *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb*, v.1 (by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat), *Pedjuhesh dar Isrā'īlīyāt dar Tafsīr Qur'ān* (by Dr. Dīyārī), and *al-Isrā'īlīyāt* (by Muhammad Jawād Mughnīyah)

9. List the methods of tafsīr that were prevalent in Medina (five methods are sufficient). Use the following books: *Majma' al-Bayān* (by Abū Ali Faḍl ibn Ḥasan Ṭabarasī), *Jāmi' al-Bayān* (by Muhammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, *Durr al-Manthūr* (by Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī), and *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, as well as taking benefit from the traditions transmitted by the Successors regarding tafsīr.

5
The role of the Prophetic Household ('a) in tafsīr of the Qur'ān

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with the concept of the Prophetic Household ('a) 2. The expansive nature of the Prophetic Household's ('a) knowledge, especially in tafsīr. 3. Understanding the role that the Prophetic Household ('a) played in: a. Tafsīr. b. Guiding the development of tafsīr concepts, c. Training commentators of the Qur'ān, d. Presenting practical principles in tafsīr, e. Preventing distorted opinions, such as forgery, Isrā'īlīyāt traditions, analogy, and personal opinions in tafsīr.

Etymology of Ahl al-Bayt

The term *ahl* originally meant love and compassion between two things.[1] Other meanings were then given to it, such as members of a family (wife, child and servant) or tribe.[2]

Rāghib Iṣfahānī limited the meaning of *ahl* to something which was added to it, for instance *ahl al-Rajul* means a person who has a relationship with another person due to being in his family or sharing his religion.[3]

The term *bayt* originally meant the place of return for man;[4] the place where he would spend his night. The words *baytūtah* and *bayāt* hold the same meanings. In conclusion, the term *ahl al-Bayt* would mean the members of a family and people who are affiliated with the

1. Sayyid Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī, al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qurān, v.1, p.169.
2. Ali Akbar Qurshī, Qāmūs Qurān, v.1, p.135.
3. Mufradāt, term ahl.
4. Aḥmad bin Zakarīyah, Mu`jam Maqā'yis al-Lughah.

place of peace and comfort of an individual; a person who spends the night with him in a relationship of love and compassion.

The term *ahl al-Bayt* has been mentioned as a Qur'ānic concept in the verse of purity:

﴿...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

"Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification."[1]

This verse was revealed, according to more than seventy traditions transmitted by Shia and Sunni sources,[2] about the Prophet (ṣ), Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, Fatimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn ('a). Since it was placed in between verses addressing the wives of the Prophet (ṣ) a difference of opinion arose as to whether the verse of purity only refers to the Prophetic Household (the five people mentioned) or whether it includes the wives of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).

According to the Shia opinion, the verse of purity was revealed about the five individuals; not about the wives of the Prophet (ṣ). There are many arguments in this regard:

The term *ahl al-Bayt* in Qur'ānic terminology is used for special people. When Prophet Noah considered his son to be part of his *ahl al-Bayt* Allah said:

﴿...إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ...﴾

"Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct."[3] Likewise, Lot's wife was not included in his *ahl al-Bayt*.[4]

Therefore, one of the important criterions for being a member of *ahl al-Bayt* is being a person who completely follows and surrenders to religion.

In addition to this, more than seventy traditions have been transmitted about the verse of purity stating that the instances of the verse are the five people of the cloak: the Prophet (ṣ), Ali, Fatimah,

1. Qurān, 33:33.
2. Refer to: Ali bin Jum'ah Ḥawīzī, Nūr al-Thaqalayn wa al-Burhān, Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.10, p.296; Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, Durr al-Manthūr, v.3, p.603.
3. Qurān, 11:46.
4. Qurān, 16:57.

Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn ('a). There are about forty chains of narration transmitted by Sunni sources in this regard. For instance, Suyūṭī in *Durr al-Manthūr*[1] and Ṭabarī in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*[2] each mention about 15 such traditions. Abu Sa'īd Khuḍrī narrates from the Prophet (ṣ) through various chains of narration that he said:

«نزلت هذه الآية في خمسة: فيّ و في علي و في حسن و حسين و فاطمه»؛ «إنما يريد الله»

"This verse was revealed to me about five individuals: about me, about Ali, about Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and Fatimah: 'Indeed Allah desires...'."[3]

The meaning of the Prophetic Household at the time the verse was revealed was these five people, but it was not limited to the five. Rather, according to many traditions transmitted from the Prophet (ṣ), the Prophetic Household was completely introduced numbering 12. In a tradition, Mālik ibn Anas states: "I prayed the morning prayers with the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). Afterwards, he faced us and said:

«معاشر اصحابي! من احب اهل بيتي حشر معنا و من استمسك باوصيايي من بعدي فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقي فقال اليه ابوذر الغفاري: يا رسول الله كم الائمه من بعدك؟ قال: عدد نقباء بني اسرائيل. فقال: كلّهم من اهل بيتك؟ قال ﷺ كلّهم من اهل بيتي، تسعةٌ من صلب الحسين و المهديّ منهم»

"O' companions! Whoever loves my Ahl al-Bayt will be raised with us. Whoever holds fast to my successor after me has held fast to the *'awrwah al-Wuthqa*." Abū Dhar al-Ghafārī asked him: "O' Messenger of Allah, how many Imams will come after you?" He said: "The number of Israelite tribes." He asked: "All of them will be of your Ahl al-Bayt?" He (ṣ) responded: "All of them will be from my Ahl al-Bayt; nine of them will be from the loins of Ḥusayn and the Mahdi will be amongst them."[4]

The complete names of these twelve Imams have been mentioned in other traditions.

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1. Durr al-Manthūr, v.3, pgs.603-607; 15 traditions are mentioned.
2. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.10, pgs.296-298; 16 traditions are mentioned.
3. Ibid, p.296.
4. Luṭfullah Ṣāfī Gulpāygānī, Muntakhab al-Athār, p.47.

Similar traditions have been mentioned in the six books of the Sunnis, for instance: Jābir ibn Samarah narrates that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

«إنّ هذا الامر لا ينقضي حتي يمض فيهم اثنا عشر خليفة...»

"This matter (religion) will not pass until twelve caliphs pass through it."[1]

The scope of the Prophetic Household's ('a) knowledge about the heavenly scripture

The knowledge of the Prophetic Household ('a) is taken from the knowledge of Imam Ali ('a) and the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). This divine knowledge was bequeathed to their children. The Prophetic Household ('a) are treasures of divine knowledge and the inheritors of prophetic knowledge. Knowledge that was sent to mankind by Allah was given to them. They were the most knowledgeable people with regards to the divine scripture and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).

Imam Bāqir ('a) is narrated to have said:

«نحن خزّان علم الله و نحن تراجمة وحي الله»

"We are the treasures of divine knowledge and we are the translators of divine revelation."[2]

In another tradition he said: "I swear by Allah that we are the treasures of Allah in the heavens and on earth; but not treasures of gold and silver; rather treasures of His knowledge."[3]

In conclusion, true knowledge; knowledge which is necessary for mankind and knowledge which pushes mankind in the direction of guidance is with the Imams ('a). They are the most knowledgeable people in regards to the divine scripture and the tafsīr of the Qur'ān. Imam Ḥusayn ('a) said:

«نحن الذين عندنا علم الكتاب...»

"We are the ones whom the knowledge of the Book is with."[4] The knowledge that is with the Prophetic Household is not with any other member of creation because they are from the family of divine leaders.

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1. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, v.6, pgs.3-4; Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, v.9, p.81; Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī, v.2, p.45.
2. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ḥurr 'Amulī, Wasā'il al-Shia, v.20, p.33.
3. Muhammad Ray-Shahrī, Ahl al-Bayt dar Kitāb wa Sunnat, v.1, p.253.
4. Ibid, p.281.

It has been narrated that Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«و الله أني لا علم كتاب الله من اوله الي آخره كانه في كفي فيه خبر السماء و خبر الارض و خبر ما كان و خبر ما هو كائن قال الله عزوجل: فيه تبيان كل شي»

"I swear by Allah, I am aware of Allah's book from the beginning to the end. Its knowledge is in the palm of my hand. Reports about the heavens and the earth; about the past and what must happen exist inside it. Allah has said: 'in it is a clarification of all things.'[1]"[2]

In a tradition, Ubaydah Salmānī, 'Alqamah ibn Qays, and Aswad ibn Yazīd Nakha'ī ask Imam Ali ('a): "Who should we refer to if we have a problem understanding the Qur'ān?" The Imam answered:

«سلوا عن ذلك آل محمد»

"Ask the family of Muhammad (ṣ) about it."[3]

Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«إنّا اهل البيت لم يزل الله يبعث منا من يعلم كتابه من اوله الي اخره»

"Verily, we the Prophetic Household; Allah does not raise one from amongst us who does not know the Book from the beginning to the end."[4]

'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Kathīr narrates that Imam Ṣādiq ('a) explained the verse:

﴿قَالَ الَّذِی عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ...﴾

"The one who had knowledge of the Book said..,"[5] by opening his fingers and placing them on his chest. At that time he said:

«و عندنا و الله علم الكتاب كلهُ»

"With us, by Allah, is the knowledge of the Book; in its entirety."[6]

It is clear that the meaning of the book here is its general meaning which includes all divine scriptures. Through this tradition it becomes clear that the knowledge that the Prophetic Household ('a) has about the

1. Qurān, 16:89.
2. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.1, p.229.
3. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ṣaffār Qumī, Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt, p.196.
4. Ibid, p.194.
5. Qurān, 27:40.
6. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.133; similar traditions have been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (s) and the Imams as well; refer to: Ibid, pgs.134 and 139.

Qur'ān and the explanation of the Qur'ān is superior to that of the rest of creation. Therefore, the scope of the Prophetic Household's knowledge cannot be determined. However, it is possible to point at some instances of their knowledge pertaining to divine scripture:

1. Knowledge of the unseen[1]

Accurate predictions of events that will happen in the future can be derived from the Qur'ān, as has been clearly stated by the Imams ('a). But only they have this ability. Imam Bāqir ('a) said:

«تفسير القران على سبعة اوجه منه ما كان و منه ما لم يكن بعد تعرفه الائمه عليهم السلام»

"There are seven types of tafsīr of the Qur'ān, some of them are about the past and some of them about the future. The Imams ('a) know about [all of] them."[2]

Two points are understood from this:

a. There is knowledge in the Qur'ān concerning the future.

b. Only the infallible Imams ('a) have access to this hidden knowledge.

2. The description and details of religious rulings

One of the branches of the Prophetic Household's knowledge of tafsīr is the details of religious rulings and the particular conditions that the legal verses allude to. Each Imam inherited this knowledge from his predecessors. According to a tradition these details were found in the comprehensive book written by Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a) which had been dictated to him by the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). All of the particulars of religious rulings and everything that is permissible and forbidden is mentioned therein. Presently, the book is in the possession of the final Divine Proof, the Imam of the Age ('a).[3]

3. Knowledge of the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān has two components: the apparent exoteric level and the deeper esoteric level. Some traditions mention that there are seven

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1. Some of this section took benefit from the book 'Ulūm al-Qurān written by Ayatollah Shahīd Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥakīm.
2. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.54.
3. Al-Kāfī, v.1, p.57.

levels of esotericism in each verse. The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and his infallible Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have complete awareness of the esoteric and exoteric aspects of the Qur'ān.

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd said: "The Qur'ān was revealed upon seven letters. No letter exists, unless it has an esoteric and exoteric meaning. The esoteric and exoteric meanings are found with Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib."[1] In another tradition Imam Bāqir ('a) says: "Nobody other than the executors (*awsīyā*) can claim that they know the entirety of the Qur'ān; its esoteric and exoteric meanings."[2]

Other attributes, such as 'knowledge of the hidden aspects of the Qur'ān,' 'knowledge of the greatest name,' and 'knowledge of all languages describe the extent of the knowledge possessed by the Prophetic Household's ('a).[3]

The authority of statements from the Prophetic Household ('a) in tafsīr

The Qur'ān has clear verses which state that the words of the Prophet (ṣ) in tafsīr are authoritative. For instance, the verse:

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ...﴾

"...We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them..."[4]

This verse mentions the principle duties of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). Other verses, for instance, the ninth verse of Sūrah Ḥashr also allude to this point. The words of the Prophetic Household are also authoritative through the tradition of *thaqalayn* which was narrated in multiple-secession.[5] The words of the Prophetic Household ('a) are also given authority through verses such as the verse of purity[6] and the verse of touching:

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1. "Verily, Ali bin Abi Ṭālib has the knowledge of the esoteric and exoteric meanings." Abū Na'īm Iṣfahānī, Ḥilīyah al-Awlīyā', v.1, p.65; Ali bin Ibrāhīm, Tafsīr al-Qumī, v.1, p.20.
2. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb, Uṣūl al-Kāfī, v.1, p.228; Fayḍ Kāshānī, al-Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī, v.1, p.20.
3. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.26; Uṣūl al-Kāfīv.1; Muhammad Muhammadī Ray-Shahrī, Ahl Bayt dar Kitāb wa Sunnah.
4. Qurān, 16:44.
5. Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān, v.12, p.260.
6. Qurān, 33:33.

﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ﴾

"No one touches it except the pure ones."[1]

This verse is can also be used to reason for the authoritativeness of the words of the Prophetic Household ('a) in tafsīr.[2]

The Prophetic Household's ('a) role in tafsīr of the Qur'ān

The Prophetic Household played a key and foundational role in spreading Qur'ānic culture, especially in dissimenating its tafsīr. This important role started with the responsibility that the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) had to explain the verses of the Qur'ān and train valuable commentators of the Qur'ān from amongst the companions such as Imam Ali ('a) who became the first commentator of the Qur'ān and the most knowledgeable in regards to the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Qur'ān. Ali ('a) was a special student of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) in all issues of revelation and law. He would also train commentators of the Qur'ān in such a way that he influenced the culture and knowledge of his age. No companion, no matter what intellectual or political post he held, saw himself needless of Imam Ali ('a). The most prominent commentators of the Qur'ān after Imam Ali (for instance, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ubay ibn Ka'b) confessed to the Imam's unequalled knowledge. In many cases they would say that their knowledge of tafsīr was taken from him.

Ibn 'Abbās said: "All that I have learned about tafsīr is from Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib."[3] Ibn Mas'ūd considers that all of his knowledge was affected by the spiritual and intellectual bonds that he had with Imam Ali ('a). He said: "I learned tafsīr from Ali ('a). I benefitted from him. There is no doubt that Ali ('a) is the best and most knowledgeable person after the Prophet (ṣ)."

This method continues amongst the family members of the Prophet (ṣ). The infallible Imams from the Prophetic Household ('a) struggled to spread the knowledge and the culture of the Qur'ān. It is said that even Lady Zaynab ('a) would teach women about the Qur'ān and tafsīr during her lifetime.

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1. Qurān, 56:79.
2. Refer to: Ḥusayn 'Alawī-mehr, Rawishhā wa Garāyishhā-i Tafsīrī, p.111.
3. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.96.

The Prophetic Household ('a) played foundational roles in spreading the Qur'ānic culture. The most important roles they played are:

1. Guidance and training
2. Training commentators of the Qur'ān
3. Expressing practical principles
4. Preventing deviance in tafsīr; for instance forgery, Isrā'īlīyāt principles, tafsīr based on personal opinion, analogy, and juristic discretion (*istiḥsān*).

1. Guidance and training in tafsīr

The Prophetic Household ('a), as has been mentioned in traditions, are completely aware of Qur'ānic concepts and meanings. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«انّا اهل بيت لم يزل الله يبعث منا من يعلم كتابه من اوله الى آخره»

"Verily, we the Prophetic Household; Allah does not raise one from amongst us who does not know the Book from the beginning to the end."[1]

This awareness is not a claim [that merely indicates their favored position]; rather it is a responsibility that has been placed on their shoulders. This responsibility is guiding mankind towards a correct understanding of the Qur'ān and its concepts. This guidance has to affect the souls of mankind and enable them to be able to grasp Qur'ānic concepts. Imam Bāqir ('a) said:

«فانما على الناس ان يقرؤ و القران كما أنزل فاذا احتاجوا الى تفسيره فالاهتداء بنا و الينا»

"The duty of mankind is to read the Qur'ān in accordance to what has been revealed. But, if they need an explanation of it; the responsibility of guidance towards tafsīr of the Qur'ān is upon us."[2]

The Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a) would satisfy people's hearts and guide them towards perfection through their specialized teachings and knowledge. A few examples of the Prophetic Household's ('a) role of guidance will be given:

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1. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ṣaffār Qumī, Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt, p.194.
2. Fūrāt Kufī, Tafsīr al-Fūrāt, p.258.

1. A Jewish man came to Imam Ali ('a) and asked him questions. One question was:

﴿وَيَبْقَى وجْهُ رَبِّك ذُو الجَلالِ وَالإكْرام﴾

"Where is your Lord's face?" Ali ('a) told Ibn 'Abbās:

«ايتيني بنار و حطب فاتيته بنار و حطب فاضرمها. ثم قال يا يهودي! اين يكون وجه هذه النار؟ فقال: لا اقف لها على وجه»

"Bring me kindle wood and fire." Ibn 'Abbās says: "I brought him the kindle wood and he started a fire. Then, he told the Jew: "O' Jew, where is the face of this fire?" The Jew said: "I do not see a face in it." Imam Ali ('a) said: "This is how my Lord is." Imam Ali ('a) then told Ibn 'Abbās:

قال ربي عز و جل علي هذا المثل: ﴿وَلله الْمَشْرِقُ وَ الْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللهِ...﴾

"My Lord, the sublime, states about this example: 'To Allah belong the east and the west: so whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah.'[1]»[2]

The Imam guided a Jewish man who had questions regarding some Qur'ānic concepts (the face of the Lord) by using tangible objects (fire). This is how he guided him to understand the Qur'ānic concept. Afterwards, he reasoned with the verse: "To Allah belong the east and the west: so whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah."

2. Zurārah said: "I did not want to directly ask Imam Bāqir ('a) about the concept of return (*raj'ah*). Therefore, I asked a delicate question which would entail my principle question. I asked: "May I be your sacrifice. Make me aware of someone who has been killed. Has he died?" The Imam responded: "No, death is death and murder is something else." I retorted: "A person is not killed unless he dies." The Imam ('a) said: "Zurārah, I consider the words of Allah to be truer than your words. These two have been differentiated between in the Qur'ān. In one verse it states:

﴿...أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ...﴾

'If he dies or is slain.'[3] In another verse it states:

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1. Qurān, 2:115.
2. Muhammad bin Jum'ah Ḥawīzī, Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.117.
3. Qurān, 3:144.

﴿وَلَئِنْ مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

'And if you die or are slain, you will surely be mustered toward Allah.'[1] It is not as you say. Zurārah, death is one thing and murder is another."

The Imam then recited the verse:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ...﴾

"Indeed Allah has bought from the faithful their souls and their possessions for paradise."[2]

I said: "Allah states in the Qur'ān:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ...﴾

'Every soul shall taste death.'[3] Are you of the opinion that if someone is killed they will not taste death?" The Imam answered:

ليس من قتل بالسيف كمن مات علي فراشه، انّ من قتل لابد من ان يرجع الي الدنيا حتي يذوق الموت

"The person who is killed by the sword is not like the one who dies on his carpet. The one who is killed must return to the world in order to taste death."[4]

In this tradition, the Imam ('a) introduces Zurārah to the concept of return in a very delicate manner. He makes Zurārah understand that such a belief can be deduced from the verses of the Qur'ān.

2. Training commentators of the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān is a book of guidance. It saves man from darkness and guides him towards light. Therefore, there must be scholars who can lead normal individuals towards the light of Qur'ānic guidance in regards to the Qur'ānic concepts that have been misunderstood. The Imams of the Prophetic Household ('a) trained students to understand the Qur'ān and derive religious rulings; permission was granted to derive these rulings from the Qur'ān and traditions. Ibn 'Abbās was trained by Imam Ali ('a). Imam Bāqir ('a) and Imam

1. Qurān, 3:158.
2. Qurān, 9:111.
3. Qurān, 3:185; 21:35; 29:57.
4. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, v.2, p.112.

Ṣādiq ('a) trained such students as Zurārah ibn 'Ayān, Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman, and Mu'min Ṭāq. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«انما علينا ان نقلي اليكم الاصول و عليكم ان تفرعوا»

"It is upon us to tell you the principles and it is upon you to branch them out."[1]

'Abd al-A`lā, a servant of the Sam family, told Imam Ṣādiq ('a):

عثرت فانقطع ظفري فجعلت علي اصبعي مرارة فكيف اصنع بالوضوء؟

"I stumbled and my fingernail separated [from my finger]. I put medicine on my finger. [In this state] how am I supposed to perform *wuḍū'*?

The Imam ('a) responded:

يعرف هذا و اشباهه من كتاب الله عزوجل قال الله تعالي: ﴿وما جعل عليكم في الدين من حرج﴾ امسح عليه.

"The Qur'ān introduces this, and its similarities. Allah, the sublime, states:

﴿...وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ....﴾

'He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle in the religion.'[2] Wipe over it."[3]

Infallible Imams ('a) sometimes explain the verses of the Qur'ān by relying on grammatical points. They taught their students how to derive religious rulings by relying upon general principles. Two examples will be given in this regard:

وعن زرارة قال، فقلت لأبي جعفرعليه السلام: ألاَ تخبرني مَن أين علمتَ؟ وقُلتَ: إنّ المسح ببعض الرأس وبعض الرجلين؟ فضحك، ثمّ قال عليه السلام: «يا زرارة، قال رسول اللهصلى الله عليه وآله ونزل به الكتاب من الله؛ لأنّ الله عزّو جلّ، يقول: ﴿فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ﴾، فعرفنا أنّ الوجه كُلّه ينبغي أن يُغسل، ثمّ قال: ﴿وَأَيدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ﴾، ثمّ فصل بين كلامين، فقال: ﴿وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ﴾، فعرفنا حين قال: ﴿بِرُءُوسِكُمْ﴾ أنّ المسح ببعض الرأس لمكان الباء، ثمّ وصل الرجلين بالرأس

1. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.40; in a similar tradition Imam Riḍā (a) tells Aḥmad bin Muhammad bin Abī Naṣr Bizinṭī: "It is upon us to relate the principles and it is upon you to branch them out." Ibid, p.41.
2. Qurān, 22:78.
3. Shaykh Ṭūsī, Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, v.1, p.363.

كما وصل اليدين بالوجه، فقال: ﴿وأرجُلكم الى الكعبين﴾ فعرفنا حين وصلها بالرأس إن المسح على بعضها، ثمّ فسر رسول الله ﷺ ذلك للناس فضيّعوه...»

A. Zurārah, a jurist who was trained by the Prophetic Household ('a); by Imam Bāqir ('a), wanted to know how the ruling of *wuḍū'* and its particulars is derived from the verse of *wuḍū'* (Sūrah Mā'iḍāḥ, verse 6):

Zurārah asks Imam Bāqir ('a): "Will you not inform me of how you say that one must wipe part of the head and feet?" The Imam smiled and said: "Zurārah, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said so, and the Qur'ān indicates the same. Allah the Most-High states: 'Wash your faces.' In this case it is understood that the entire face must be washed. Then, it states: 'and your hands up to the elbows.' Then, with words in between, it states: 'and wipe upon (*bi*) your heads and your feet.' It is understood because of the preposition 'upon' (*bi*) that the wiping is only performed on part of the head and not its entirety. Then, Allah used the term 'feet' in connection with the head similar to the connection between the hands and the face. In this case it is understood that wiping the foot means wiping a part of the foot; not the entire foot. The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) explained this verse for the people in this manner, but the people corrupted it.

The Imam ('a) reasoned with the generality of the term 'face' to prove that it is obligatory to wash the entire face. He then reasoned with the *bi'* mentioned before the term 'head' to prove that part of the head must be wiped because one of the meanings of the *bi'* particle is dividing into parts (*tab'īd*). Ibn Hishām mentioned this in *Mughnī*.[1] He reasoned with the connection between feet and head to prove that part of the foot must be wiped; not the entire foot.

B. Mas'adah ibn Ṣadaqah states that Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was asked whether bidding the good and forbidding the evil is obligatory upon all people. He replied in the negative and was asked for clarification. Then he ('a) said:

سمعت ابا عبدالله عليه السلام يقول و يسئل عن الامر بالمعروف، والنهى عن المنكر، أواجبٌ على الامة جميعاً فقال: لا، فقيل له: ولِمَ؟ قال: «انما هو على القويّ المطاع العالم بالمعروف و

1. Mughnī al-Labīt, p.55, bā' particle, 11th definition.

المنكر لا على الضعيف...و الدليل على ذلك كتاب الله تعالى: ﴿و لتكن منكم أمة يدعون إلى الخير و يأمرون بالمعروف و ينهون عن المنكر...﴾ فهذا خاص غير عام، كما قال الله تعالى: ﴿و من قوم موسى أمة يهدون بالحق و به يعدلون﴾ و لم يقل على امة موسى و لا على كل قومه...»

"It is obligatory for an able person who has knowledge of what is good and what is bad, not upon an weak individual...The proof for this is Allah's book where He, the Most High, states:

'There has to be a nation from among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong.'[1] This is specific; not general as Allah, the Most High, states:

'Among the people of Moses is a nation who guide [the people] by the truth and do justice thereby.'[2] God did not state 'the entire nation of Moses.'[3]

Here, the Imam ('a) reasoned with the Arabic pronoun '*min*' (from among) in the phrase 'from among you' and 'among the people of Moses' to prove that bidding the good and forbidding the evil is not obligatory on all. Rather, it is obligatory upon people who are able and aware of what is good and evil.

3. Expressing practical principles

Practical principles are principles which intellectually and practically guide people who are aware. They play a vital role in understanding religious texts.

One of the important roles that the infallible Imams ('a) played was presenting these practical principles. They would always mention them in their speeches and teachings about tafsīr. These principles play a decisive role in understanding the Qur'ān; they are keys which the commentators of the Qur'ān use to open up the doors of understanding. The meanings of the verses can be discovered through them. The most important principles are:

3_1. Tafsīr using rational and definite matters

Explaining the words of Allah using indefinitive evidences

1. Qurān, 3:104.
2. Qurān, 7:159.
3. Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.380.

causes confusion. Tafsīr Based on personal opinion is an instance of speaking about the Qur'ān without knowledge, which ultimately shall result in ascribing lies to God. In a tradition, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) narrates from his fathers, who narrate from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ): "Distance yourself from uncertainty (*ẓann*) because relying upon uncertainty is relying upon the most severe lie."[1]

Imam Bāqir ('a) prohibited this form of tafsīr. He explained this matter in his suggestions to Qatādah ibn Da 'āmah (d.117), a follower of the Iraqi school of tafsīr who related many traditions about the tafsīr of verses of the Qur'ān. Zayd Shaḥām states: "Qatādah ibn Da'amah came to Abū Ja'far, Imam Bāqir ('a). The Imam said: 'Qatādah, are you the jurist of Basrah?' He responded: 'This is what they think.' Abū Ja'far ('a) said: 'I have heard that you exposit the verses of the Qur'ān?' Qatādah responded: 'Yes.' The Imam asked him: 'Do you explain the verses with knowledge or with ignorance?' He answered: 'With knowledge.' Abū Ja'far ('a) said: 'If you explain it with knowledge than you are what you think you are. Now, I want to ask you a question.' Qatādah said: 'Ask.' The Imam ('a) asked him about the meaning of a verse and Qatādah gave him an incorrect answer. The Imam showed him his mistake and said: 'Disgraceful Qatādah! If you explain the Qur'ān in your own opinion you will be destroyed and will destroy others.'"[2]

Imam Kāẓim ('a) narrates from his fathers:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ...﴾

"It is not suitable that you say whatever you desire because Allah states: 'Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge.'"[3][4]

It is understood from this tradition that tafsīr must be in accordance to knowledge, otherwise it would destroy the commentator of the Qur'ān and others as well.

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1. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.38.
2. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, Rawḍah al-Kāfī, p.142.
3. Qurān, 17:36.
4. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ḥurr al-'Amulī, Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.17.

3_2. Keeping the theological issues (the monotheistic dimension) of the verses in mind

In some cases the Imams ('a) would make people aware of the monotheistic dimensions of the verses. In a tradition, 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd asks Imam Bāqir ('a) about divine anger in the verse:

﴿...وَ مَن يَحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوَى﴾

"And he on whom My wrath descends certainly perishes."[1] The Imam answered:

هو العقاب يا عمرو انه من زعم انّ الله عزوجل زال من شيء الي شيء فقد وصفه صفة مخلوق

"This is punishment, 'Amr. Whoever thinks that Allah withdraws from one thing to another has described him with an attribute of the creation."[2]

In another tradition it is said: "A person who thinks that something would be able to bring about a change in Allah is a disbeliever."[3]

Thusly did Imam Bāqir ('a) emphasise pure monotheism and explained the verses of the Qur'ān with this in mind.

3_3. Paying attention to the wilā'ī aspect of the verses

Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī (d.127), a follower of the Iraqi school, states: "I asked Imam Bāqir ('a) about the verse:

﴿وَلَئِن قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ...﴾

"If you are slain in the way of Allah, or die..."[4] Imam Bāqir ('a) asked: "Jābir, do you know what is meant by 'the way of Allah' in this verse?" I responded: "No, I do not know, unless I hear from you." The Imam answered: "The way of Allah is Ali ('a) and his children. The verse states that the person who is slain on the path of their guardianship is killed in the way of Allah. The person who dies under their guardianship dies in the way of Allah."[5]

Keeping the *wilā'ī* dimension in mind, not only in this tradition but in many speeches of the Imams ('a), is an overruling principle in

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1. Qurān, 20:81.
2. Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.386.
3. Shaykh 'Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.265.
4. Qurān, 3:157.
5. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, v.1, p.202.

the tafsīr and understanding of the Qur'ān. In a tradition, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) states:

«ان الله جعل ولايتنا اهل البيت قطب القران و قطب جميع الكتب، عليها يستدير محكم القران»

"Verily, Allah made our, the Prophetic Household's, guardianship the axis of the Qur'ān and all other scriptures. The clear meanings of the Qur'ān revolve around it."[1]

3_4. The eternal nature of the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān is the last heavenly scripture revealed to guide mankind. Therefore, the laws therein must last until the Day of Judgment; they must be able to guide mankind and the society in all times. This necessitates that the laws of the Qur'ān must be eternal and must be able to be applied to instances in the present and the future. For this reason, they must have been given hidden meanings. Along these lines, Imam Bāqir states in a tradition: "If a verse was revealed about a tribe and then that tribe died rendering the verse void then nothing of the Qur'ān would remain. The Qur'ān is applicable as long as the skies and earth remain."[2]

Likewise, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: "The Qur'ān has an inner meaning in which the day and night; earth and moon flow."[3]

3_5. Referring the metaphorical verses to the definitive verses

One of the correct methods of tafsīr is using the definitive verses in order to understand the metaphorical verses. The Qur'ān itself divides its verses into two kinds: the definitive verses, which are the principle and 'mother' verses, and the metaphorical verses:

﴿...مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ...﴾

"Parts of it are definitive verses, which are the mother of the Book, while others are metaphorical."[4]

The understanding of the term 'which are the mother of the Book' shows that the definitive verses should be used as reference points to clarify the meanings of the metaphorical verses.

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1. Ibid, p.5.
2. Ibid, p.11.
3. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.23, p.79.
4. Qurān, 3:7.

On one side, this principal teaches us that the Qur'ān can be explained by the Qur'ān and that there is a sort of independent understanding of the Qur'ān. If a part of the Qur'ān is not understood one can refer to other parts of the Qur'ān in order to obtain its meaning.

Imam Riḍā ('a) said:

«من ردّ متشابه القران الي محكمه هدي الي صراط المستقيم»

"One who refers the metaphorical verses of the Qur'ān to the definitive ones has been guided to the straight path."[1]

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (r), after mentioning a tradition regarding the explanation of the metaphorical verses, writes: "The tradition informs us of exactly what was mentioned: referring the metaphorical verses to the definitive verses. Any confusion that arises due to the metaphorical verses can be removed by reference to the definitive verses."[2]

Another method of understanding the metaphorical verses: The Qur'ān mentions another principle that can be used to understand the metaphorical verses. It states that the knowledge and understanding of the metaphorical verses has been given to those firmly grounded in knowledge.[3] In many traditions the Imams ('a) have been introduced as those who are firmly grounded in knowledge.

Imam Ṣādiq ('a) says: "The Imams ('a) are those firmly grounded in knowledge and they know the meanings of the Qur'ān."[4] In another tradition the Imam said:

«الراسخون في العلم امير المؤمنين و الائمه من ولده»

"Those firmly grounded in knowledge are the Commander of the Faithful and the Imams from his lineage."[5]

Likewise, Imam Bāqir ('a) in another tradition introduces the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) as the superior member of those firmly grounded in knowledge.[6]

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1. Biḥār al-Anwār, v.92, p.377.
2. Al-Mīzān, v.3, p.68.
3. Qurān, 3:7.
4. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ṣaffār Qumī, Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt, p.223.
5. Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.316.
6. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.231.

On the one hand, the traditions warn about interpreting metaphorical verses and relying upon the personal opinions in tafsīr stating that it will cause the destruction of the commentator of the Qur'ān. On the other, it states that the reference point for understanding these metaphorical verses are the divine saints – the Qur'ān introducing those firmly grounded in knowledge as reference points to understanding the metaphorical verses being an example.

In a tradition, Imam Ali ('a) says:

«انما هلك الناس في المتشابه لانهم لم يقفوا على معناه و لم يعرفوا حقيقته فوضعوا له تأويلات من عند انفسهم بآرائهم و استغنوا بذلك عن مسألة الاوصياء»

"People are destroyed by the metaphorical [verses] because they are not aware of their meanings and do not understand their realities. They use their own opinion to explain them seeing themselves, through this action, to be needless of the Saints."[1]

3_6. Qur'ān is the criterion for understanding the realities of religion

The Prophetic Household ('a) have always introduced the Qur'ān as being the criterion for understanding the religion. They encouraged reference to the Qur'ān in all affairs. This emphasis created an important atmosphere in the scope of religion where, in addition to the method of explaining the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān, one of the main criteria for determining the authenticity of a tradition is considered to be the Qur'ān as well. Therefore, the value of the traditions of the infallibles ('a) can be determined by the Qur'ān. If they are in congruence with the Qur'ān they are accepted, whereas if they are not, they are rejected. In conclusion, the foundation of religion is the Qur'ān.

Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«ان على حق حقيقةً و علي كل صواب نوراً فما وافق كتاب الله فخذوه و ما خالف كتاب الله فدعوه»

"Verily in every truth there is a reality; a hidden reality and light.

1. Biḥār al-Anwār, v.93, p.12; Muhammad Muhammadī Ray-Shahrī, Mīzān al-Ḥikmah, v.8, p.99.

Therefore, take what is in congruence with Allah's book and reject whatever is opposed to Allah's book."[1]

It is understood from this tradition that all religious affairs which are generally injected into the Muslim culture can be coupled with the Qur'ān.

The Prophet (ṣ) spoke in Mina. He said: "O' People! I said whatever is attributed to me if it is in congruence with the Qur'ān. But, I did not say it if it is opposed to the Qur'ān."[2] Imam Ṣādiq ('a) introduced the Qur'ān as being the foundation of the religious code:

«ما من امر يختلف فيه اثنان الّا و له اصل في كتاب الله و لكن لا تبلغه العقول»

"There is not a matter in which two people dispute that does not have a principle [to use for a solution]. But, [normal] intellects do not understand them."[3]

The Prophetic Household ('a) emphasized the validity of Qur'ānic knowledge to such an extent that a condition of a contract cannot be opposed to the Qur'ān. Otherwise, it will not be accepted. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

«المسلمون عند شروطهم الا كل شرط خالف كتاب الله عزوجل فلا يجوز و ان كان شرطا يخالف كتاب الله عزوجل فهو رد الى كتاب الله»

"Muslims must obey their conditions unless they are in opposition to Allah the Most-High's Book. This is not permissible. If there is a condition in opposition to Allah, the Most-High's Book it is rejected."[4]

4. Confronting deviant opinions

One of the important methods of the Prophetic Household ('a) in presenting the correct Islamic culture and spreading Qur'ānic teachings is their refutation of deviant opinions. Some of these opinions had given rise to sects which influenced the society and had spread therein. The Imams ('a), while presenting correct principles in tafsīr and religious thought, confronted those ideas that were misguiding the people; they warned their companions and the general public about them.

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1. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.85.
2. Ibid, p.79.
3. Ibid, v.17, p.581.
4. Ibid, v.12, p.353.

The Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a) fought misinterpretations through various methods. Some of them are:

1. Warnings about the existence of misinterpretation and superstition amongst the people.

2. Expose the people who hold deviant ideologies, for instance, Ka'b al-Aḥbār.

3. Presenting correct information in opposition to the incorrect opinions, for instance, the creation of Eve from remanants of Adam ('a) in opposition to the other view.

4. Reasoning proving the invalidity of the incorrect methodologies, for instance, the clash between the Imams ('a) and analogy (*qīyās*).

5. Stressing that holding certain deviant opinions causes one to leave the fold of Islam and brings about weaknesses in the foundations of the religion. And examples of this are those traditions rebuking tafsīr based on personal opinion.

The most important misinterpretations that appeared during the lifetimes of each member of the Prophetic Household ('a) and were fought against are: the forgery of traditions, the spreading of Jewish and Christian myths, analogy (*qīyās*), juristic discretion (*istiḥsān*), and tafsīr based on personal opinion. These will be briefly explained:

4_1 Fighting against forgery of traditions

The *sunnah* of the Prophet (ṣ) and the Prophetic Household ('a) is fighting against deviance in religion. Almost from the outset, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) appears to have been concerned about the possibility of traditions being forged. He would warn people about it as a prevention tactic. For instance, he said:

«كثرت على الكذابة و ستكثر فمن كذب عليّ متعمدًا فليتبوّء مقعده من النار»

"Great in number have become those who ascribe lies to me, and their number shall increase. Therefore, the person who intentionally lies about me will have an abode full of fire [in the hereafter]."[1]

The leader of forgery was Abū Hurayrah al-Dūsī. He was only in Medina for one year and nine months after the Battle of Khaybar

1. Biḥār al-Anwār, v.2, p.225.

(which occurred in the seventh year after the Migration), but transmitted more traditions than any other companion. Ibn Hazm states: "5374 traditions have been transmitted by him in various books. Bukhārī narrated 466 traditions from him."[1] This is why Imam Ali ('a) did not think well of him. He said:

«لا احدا كذب من هذا الدوسی علی رسول الله»

"Nobody had lied more regarding the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) than this al-Dusi."[2]

This harmful activity grew because of political, theological, and economic reasons, especially within the Sunni sect. The Imams ('a) fought severely against this evil action. They taught their followers to be meticulous in accepting traditions; to not accept any tradition they heard without first checking its authenticity.

Muhammad ibn 'Isa ibn 'Ābid said: "One of our companions asked Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman: 'Abū Muhammad, why is it so difficult for you to accept a tradition? Why do you reject so many of our traditions?' He responded: 'Hishām ibn Ḥakam transmitted a tradition to me from Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He said: 'Do not accept a tradition in our name unless it is in congruence with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* or there is evidence behind it from our previous traditions. The reason for this is that Mughayr ibn Sa'īd, who is far from Allah's mercy, inserted traditions in the books of my father's companions which my father never said. Fear Allah and do not claim that we said anything in opposition to our Lord or the *Sunnah* of our Prophet Muhammad (ṣ). Wherever we say anything we say: Allah said or the Prophet (ṣ) said.'"[3]

4_2 Preventing the spread of Jewish and Christian myths

One of the problems with traditions regarding tafsīr is the existence of Jewish and Christian myths within traditions. The majority of these traditions that entered Islam were done so at the hands of Ka'b al-Aḥbār. He was from Yemen and was the

1. Shaykh Maḥmūd Abū Rīyāḥ, Aḍwā' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadīyah, p.201.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥādīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, v.1, p.360.
3. Biḥār al-Anwār, v.2, p.249, taken from Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥakīm, `Ulūm al-Qurān, p.330.

teacher of Abū Hurayrah. Abū Rīyāḥ said:

«وقد استطاع هذا اليهودي أن يدسّ من الخرافات والأوهام والأكاذيب في الدين ما امتلاتْ به كتب التفسير والحديث والتاريخ...»

"This Jew [Ka'b al-Aḥbār] was able to place many superstitions, imaginations, and lies into Islam. Islamic books of tafsīr, traditions, and history are full of his traditions."[1]

The Infallible Imams ('a) severely confronted these issues. A person said the following in front of Imam Bāqir ('a): "Ka'b al-Aḥbār said:

«إنّ الكعبة تسجد لبيت المقدس في كلّ غداة»

'The Ka'bah prostrates to Jerusalem every morning." Imam ('a) responded:

«كذبت و كذب الاحبار معك»

"You lied and al-Aḥbār lied with you," Then he said angrily:

«ما خلق الله عزوجل بقعة في الارض احب اليه منها»

"Allah has not created a place that he loves more than the Ka'bah."[2]

Likewise, there are traditions describing how the Imams dealt with some of the Jewish and Christian traditions that have been inserted into the ḥadīth literature; for instance the issue of creating Eve from Adam's ('a) third rib.[3]

4_3 Confrontation with analogy (qīyās) and juristic discretion (istiḥsān)

A major cause of deviation in the religion was the widespread usage of analogy, personal opinion, and juristic discretion in order to establish a religions ruling or interpretation of a verse. The place of this discussion is in jurisprudence. But, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) stated in a tradition that analogy is a factor which would change the Qur'ān and the Prophet's (ṣ) *Sunnah*.[4] These deviant methods were severely

1. Idwa' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadīyah, p.164.
2. Muhammad bin Ya'qūb Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.4, p.239; Biḥār al-Anwār, v.46, p.354.
3. Refer to: Tafsīr `Ayyāshī, v.1, p.215; Shaykh Ṣadūq, `Īllāl al-Sharāyi`, pgs.17-18; Fayḍ Kāshānī, Tafsīr Ṣāfī, v.1, p.383; Muhammad bin Muhammad Riḍā Mashhadī Qumī, Kinz al-Daqā'iq, v.3, p.308.
4. Refer to: Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.39: Abū 'Abdullah (a) said: "Allah curses the companions of analogy because they change the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah".

rebuked by the Prophet (ṣ) and Infallible Imams ('a).[1] The reason for this is that the foundations of the religion and the religious code stem from Allah:

﴿...إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ...﴾

"Judgment belongs only to Allah."[2]

In some cases, Allah left some matters of law up to the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a) but not to humanity as a whole.

The most serious outcome of the culture of analogy and personal opinion dominating society would be that the culture of Allah's religion and His Messenger's would not rule over the society. There would be no need to send messengers and heavenly scriptures if man were able to make up his own laws.[3]

Imam Ali ('a) warned about this matter in his lifetime. He said:

«لا تقيسوا الدين فانّ من الدين ما لا يقاس و سيأتي اقوام يقيسون فهم اعداء الدين و اول من قاس ابليس»

"Do not practice analogy in religion because there are things in religion which cannot be analogised. A group of people will come who practice analogy. They are the enemies of religion. The first person to practice analogy was Satan."[4]

In a tradition, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) rebuked this school of thought. He said that the practitioners of analogy search for knowledge through their reasoning but, analogy does not yield anything other than distance from the truth because the truth in the religion of Allah cannot be found through analogy.[5]

4_4 Prohibiting tafsīr based on personal opinion

Another way in which people were misguided and lead away from the realities of the Qur'ān was the distortion of meanings of verses and thus distorting the general public's religious knowledge. Wordly and

1. Refer to: Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥakīm, `Ulūm al-Qurān, p.315.
2. Qurān, 6:57.
3. This is the meaning of the traditions at: Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.33, a tradition narrated from Nu'mānī's Tafsīr.
4. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.18, p.27.
5. Al-Kāfī, v.1, p.57, h.14, p.228, h.1, p.24, h.5 and 6.

ambitious individuals tried to benefit by developing their own (incorrect) interpretations and tafsīr based on their personal opinion about the Qur'ān's meaning. The Prophetic Household ('a) tried to prevent the spread of this dangerous method by giving many warnings; they said that tafsīr based on personal opinion is prohibited and rebuked. Ibn 'Abbās narrates from the Prophet (ṣ):

«من قال في القران برأيه فليتبوّء مقعده من النار»

"A place of fire will be prepared for whoever states his own opinion about the Qur'ān."[1]

Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said:

من فسّر القران برأيه فاصاب لم يوجر ان اخطأ كان اثمه عليه

"Whoever explains the Qur'ān in his own opinion will not receive a reward if his explanation was correct, but would have committed a sin if his explanation is incorrect."[2]

In another tradition he states:

«من فسر برأيه آيةً من كتاب الله فقد كفر»

"Whoever explains a verse of Allah's Book in his own opinion has definitely become a disbeliever."[3]

In another tradition the Commander of the Faithful ('a) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), who narrates from Allah:

«ما آمن بي من فسّر برأيه كلامي»

"Whoever explains the Qur'ān in his own opinion does not believe in me."

Tafsīr Based On Personal Opinion

The views of some Qur'ānic scholars in regards to tafsīr based on personal opinion are:

1. The late Fayḍ Kāshānī states that tafsīr based on personal opinion can be applied to two meanings:

a) The commentator of the Qur'ān had his own opinion that was

1. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.27.
2. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, v.1, p.27.
3. Ibid, p.18; in another tradition it adds: "If he makes a mistake is becomes farther from the heavens".

in congruence with his carnal desires.

b) The commentator of the Qur'ān only took the apparent meaning of verses which have unclear, general, or omitted terms into account without taking any grammatical points, verses, or traditions into account. He explained the verse only using the apparent meaning of it.[1]

2. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī mentions two foundational points about the definition of tafsīr based on personal opinion which is used in traditions:

a) The grammatical connection between the term 'opinion' and 'his' in the traditions shows independence in the opinion. This means that the commentator of the Qur'ān did not use other verses of the Qur'ān; he only used his understanding of Arabic to independently provide his opinion.

b) A commentator of the Qur'ān, as an ordinary person, tries to understand and explain the verses of the Qur'ān. He compares the words of the Qur'ān to the words of men, when they are different from one another. The reason for this is that the words, at the same time as they are separated from each other are connected to each other as well (some verses explain others). In other words, it is a prohibition of a method of understanding; one should not explain the Qur'ān as he would the words of common individuals despite the fact that sometimes he would reach the desired meaning. Since this method is incorrect, this form of tafsīr is rebuked. The following tradition from the Prophet (ṣ) supports this definition:

«من تكلم في القران برأيه فاصاب الحق فقد اخطأ»

"A person who speaks about the Qur'ān in his own opinion has definitely made a mistake – even if he reached the correct conclusion."[2]

3. Another definition of tafsīr based on personal opinion is that one accepts the understanding of the sentence following grammatical and linguistic laws while making a mistake in applying it to certain instances. Here, he states that a certain case is an instance of the verse

1. Tafsīr Ṣāfī, v.1, pgs.22-23, fifth introduction.
2. Al-Mīzān, v.3, pgs.76-77; Nāṣir Makarem Shīrāzī, Juzwah Tafsīr bih Rāy, p.26.

out of his own opinion while in fact it is not an instance. Other opinions in this regard exist and the reader can refer to the sources for further information.[1]

Summary

The term Ahl al-Bayt ('a) applies to the people of a family who have relations with the place that a family lives. But, in Qur'ānic terminology (Qur'ān, 33:33), this term applies to the Prophet (ṣ), Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, Fatimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn ('a). More precisely, it applies to the fourteen infallibles ('a).

The knowledge of the Prophetic Household is not limited; rather they know everything that Allah has revealed. In addition to the Qur'ān, they know everything about the other Holy Scriptures as well. Some of the cases of the Prophetic Household's knowledge are: knowledge of future events, the description and details of the code of practice, and the knowledge of the esoteric and exoteric aspects of the Qur'ān.

The role that the Prophetic Household ('a) play in regards to the Qur'ān is a key and foundational role which can be described in four main areas:

1. Guidance and training: they guide people to the correct understanding of the realities in the Qur'ān.

2. Training commentators of the Qur'ān: the Prophetic Household ('a) trained scholars to understand the Qur'ān and to be able to derive religious rulings and concepts from the Qur'ān – they gave these scholars the permission of *Ijtihād*.

3. They presented practical principles: one of the important roles that the Prophetic Household ('a) played was presenting practical principles which would provide methods of understanding for the commentators of the Qur'ān. Some of these principles are: tafsīr using intellectual and definite evidence, keeping the monotheistic dimension in mind, keeping the *wilā'ī* dimension in mind, the eternal nature of the Qur'ān, referring the metaphorical verses to the definitive verses, and using the Qur'ān as the criteria for understanding reality.

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, al-Itiqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān, v.4, p.482; 'Amid Zanjānī, Mubānī wa Rawashhā Tafsīrī, p.228; Ḥusayn Alawī-Mehr, Rawashhā wa Garāyishhā Tafsīrī, p.175.

4. Confrontation with deviant opinions: for instance, their confrontation with forgery in traditions, their prevention of the implementation of Isrā`īliyāt traditions, their confrontation with analogy and juristic discretion, and their prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion.

Questions and research points

1. Describe the term Ahl al-Bayt.

2. What is the scope of the Prophetic Household's ('a) knowledge? List three cases.

3. What differences do the roles of the Prophetic Household ('a) have in guiding people and in training commentators of the Qur'ān?

4. What is meant by the practical principles presented by the Prophetic Household ('a)? List four such cases.

5. List the deviances in tafsīr that existed during the lifetimes of the Prophetic Household ('a).

6. How did the Prophetic Household ('a) confront deviant and incorrect opinions?

7. Research the knowledge that the Prophetic Household ('a) had about the Qur'ān using the following books: *Ahl al-Bayt fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Muhammad Muhammadī Ray Shahrī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, volumes 1-2 (traditions regarding the knowledge of the Prophetic Household), and *Biḥār al-Anwār*, volumes 89-90.

8. Review the traditions mentioned in the tafsīrs of Sūrah Ibrāhīm. Use the following books: *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī*, by Muhammad ibn Mas'ūd Samarqandī 'Ayyāshī, *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, by Ali ibn Jum'ah 'Arūsī Ḥawīzī, and *Kanz al-Daqā'iq*, by Muhammad ibn Muhammad Riḍā Mashhadī Qumī. Derive the principles that the Prophetic Household ('a) presented from them.

6
Tafsīr in the Third Century

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Becoming familiar with the cultural conditions of the third century. 2. Learning the distinctive qualities of tafsīr works produced in the third century, 3. Knowing the major tafsīrs and the commentators of the Qur'ān of the third century.

An age of development for tafsīr

The Islamic sciences had become highly developed by the third Islamic century due to the efforts of the Prophetic Household ('a), the companions, the Successors, and their students. Some fields such as etymology, grammar, and mysticism grew significantly during this time and the groundwork for compiling books and independent articles regarding tafsīr was laid.

The previous efforts of the infallible Imams ('a) bore fruit in this period. And a number of major tafsīr compilations were produced in this age; for instance, linguistic tafsīrs such as *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, grammatical tafsīrs such as *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, as well as mystical and traditional tafsīrs. These were the prelude to the crystallization of still more developed approaches that can be seen in the tafsīrs of the fourth century.

The Characteristics of Tafsīr in the Third Century

The following is an overview of the characteristics of tafsīr in the third century:

1. Traditions from the Imams ('a), companions, and Successors to the companions were published in collections.

2. Various intellectual fields blossomed; linguistics and literature advanced, mysticism grew rapidly and the major theological schools formed.

3. Tafsīr also became recognized as field of its own independent from the other sciences such as law and theology.

4. New and more developed approaches to tafsīr were adopted due in part to advances made in other sciences such as *ḥadīth*, grammar, etymology, and mysticism.[1]

5. Differences in specialization caused traditional tafsīr to solidify in the fourth century.[2]

Tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān of the third century

As was mentioned above, the quantity of tafsīrs and variety of approaches to writing tafsīr grew exponentially during this period. There are about 70 tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān amongst Sunni and Shia scholars of this age. Muhammad ibn AdNahway mentioned 26 of them in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*,[3] some of them will be mentioned in the tafsīr specializations of the third century. More than forty companions of the Imams ('a) wrote tafsīrs and books about the Qur'ān. The most famous of these works and their authors are:

1. Tafsīr al-Maṣābīḥ - Asfāryānī (d.201)

Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan Asfāryānī wrote *Tafsīr al-Maṣābīḥ*. This tafsīr examined the verses of the Qur'ān that were revealed about the Prophetic Household ('a). The author of *Dharī'ah* believes that the name of his tafsīr is: *Al-Maṣābīḥ fīmā nazal min al-Qur'ān fī Ahl al-Bayt ('a)*.[4]

2. Hishām ibn Muhammad Sā'ib Kalbī (d.204)

He was a Shia from Kūfah, a friend of the Prophetic Household ('a), and a close companion of Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He was blessed by the Imam. Najāshī, while praising him for his merits and knowledge,

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1. Theological discussions, especially the discussion about the divine words of Allah being eternal or created, were presented in this age. But, Tafsīr specialized in the area of theology did not start until the fourth century. Refer to: 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, p.251.
2. The information mentioned in this section has been taken from the books Taḥlīlī wa Sīyāsī Islam by Ali Akbar Ḥusaynī and Sayr Taṭwur Tafāsīr Shia wa Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān by 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī.
3. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.25-45.
4. Aqā Buzurg Tehrani, al-Dharī`ah, v.21, p.78.

lists many books that he authored.[1] Ibn Nadīm mentioned a book written by Hishām and another book written by his father, Muhammad Sā'ib. The name of his tafsīr is: *Al-Ay al-Latī Nazalāt fī Aqwām bi-A 'yānihim.*[2]

3. Tafsīr - Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman (d.208)

He was a trustworthy transmitter of traditions who held a high spiritual station in Kūfah. He was a servant of Ali ibn Yaqtīn and one of the very close companions of Imam Mūsa Kāẓim and Imam Riḍā ('a). A person asked Imam Riḍā ('a): "I am not able to meet you all the time. Who should I obtain religious knowledge from?" Imam Riḍā ('a) said:

«خذ عن يونس بن عبد الرحمن»

"Take from Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman." In addition to this, he was given permission by Imam Riḍā ('a) to issue verdicts. Thus, he was a *mujtahid.*[3]

Najāshī attributed many books to him, for instance, the books: *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Faḍl al-Qur'ān,* and *al-Imamah.*[4]

4. Tafsīr - Ibn Faḍḍāl (d.224)

Ḥasan ibn Ali Faḍḍāl Kūfī was a member of the Fathi sect who believed that 'Abdullah Aftaḥ, the son of Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq ('a), was the Imam. But, after some time he repented, and accepted the *Imamah* of Mūsa ibn Ja'far ('a). He transmitted traditions from Imam Ṣādiq ('a) and was his close companion. He was pious and was not attached to the world. He was extremely trustworthy in the transmission of traditions.[5] He wrote many books. Shaykh Ṭūsī states that he wrote a tafsīr entitled *Tafsīr*[6] and Najāshī mentions one of his books to be called *Al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh.*[7] Ibn Nadīm also mentions a book of his titled: *Al-Shawāhid min Kitāb Allah wa al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh.*[8]

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1. Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.305.
2. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.59.
3. Rijāl al-Najāshī, pgs.311-312.
4. Ibid.
5. Shaykh Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist, p.48.
6. Ibid.
7. Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.26.
8. Al-Fihrist, p.223.

His son Ali ibn Ḥasan Faḍḍāl was also Fatahi and is praised in the transmission of traditions. He also wrote a book of Tafsīr.[1]

5. Tafsīr Baṭānī (d.224)

Ḥasan ibn Ali Abu Ḥamzah Baṭānī was a transmitter of traditions and a commentator of the Qur'ān who lived in the third century. He wrote the tafsīr *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān wa al-Dalā'il.* He has been considered weak in traditions and many scholars do not accept traditions transmitted through him. One of his transmitters was the above Ḥasan ibn Ali Faḍḍāl who many people do not consider trustworthy either.[2]

There are other tafsīrs which are attributed to the companions of the Infallible Imams ('a). Some of them will be mentioned in brief:

Tafsīr of Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb (d.224). He is in the ranks of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ijmā'* and is considered trustworthy in narration. He transmitted traditions from Imam Rida ('a). Shaykh Ṭūsī and Ibn Nadīm listed a tafsīr written by him.[3] The book *Ḥurūf al-Qur'ān* is another compilation written by Ali ibn Mahzyār Dūruqī,[4] a scholar of the third century and a companion of Imam Riḍā, Imam Jawād, and Imam Hādī ('a). He is considered trustworthy. 33 books have been attributed to him, two of which are *Ḥurūf al-Qur'ān* and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān.*

Amongst the other tafsīrs is *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd Ahwāzī (end of the third century). He was a trustworthy transmitter of traditions during the lifetimes of Imam Riḍā, Imam Jawād, and Imam Hādī ('a).[5] Other Qur'ānic works of this century were *Nāsikh al-Qur'ān wa Mansūkhuh* by Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah Ash'arī (d.299 or 301). There is a possibility that this is the same book as *Tafsīr Nu'mānī.*[6] Likewise, *Al-Tafsīr wa Faḍl al-Qur'ān* by Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khālid Barqī (d.274). He was a notable traditionist and the author of many books. In the field of the Qur'ān, the books *Thawāb al-Qur'ān* and *Khalq al-Samāwāt wa al-Arḍ* are attributed to him.[7]

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1. Shaykh Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist, p.92.
2. Ibid, p.50, number 167 and footnote 2.
3. Ibid, p.47; Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.55.
4. He is different from the Ali bin Mahzyār who met Imam Zamān (a) during his occultation.
5. Aḥmad bin Ali Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.43; Shaykh Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist, p.58.
6. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī ba Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd, p.6.
7. Refer to: Shaykh Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist, p.20.

Muhammad ibn AdNahway listed 26 commentators of the third century. Amongst them are: Muhammad ibn Idrīs Shāfi'ī, the author of *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Muhammad ibn Mussanir (Abū Ali Nahwi Lughawī) who is famously known as Qatrab (d.206), the author of *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān fī al-Tafsīr* and *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala al-Mulḥidīn fī Tashabih al-Qur'ān*. Another Qur'ānic work was authored by Ibn Hammām San'ani (d.211). He wrote many books in the field of the Qur'ān. For instance, he wrote: *Nazm al-Qur'ān*, *Qawā'id al-Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah*, and *al-Ḥurūf al-Maqta'ah fi Awa'il al-Suwar*.[1] Some state that he loved Ali ('a). Shaykh Ṭūsī introduced him as a companion of Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[2] Another commentator of the Qur'ān of this period is Yazīd ibn Hārūn Salmī Wāsiṭī (d.217). He had a strong memory, was learned in traditions, and a commentator of the Qur'ān. Abū Ḥātam Sijistānī (d.250) was another person who wrote a tafsīr. Abū al-'Abbās Mubbarad can also be named; he was a grammarian and rhetorician. He was a student of Kasā'ī and wrote the book *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa A'rāb al-Qur'ān*.[3] Another commentator of the Qur'ān was Ibn Quṭaybah Dīnūrī. He will be introduced along with his tafsīr in the next section.

Tafsīr Specializations in the Third Century

One of the characteristics of the third century is the presentation of tafsīr using a variety of methods. Traditions regarding tafsīr spread to various cities and were compiled into traditional tafsīrs, which were popular amongst their general audience. Tafsīrs of other specializations were also compiled, however. One of the most fundamental reasons for this was the development of other intellectual fields of the day; for instance grammar and etymology. Grammarians from Basrah and Kūfah structured the Arabic language in the second century (eighth century a.d.).[4] Jurisprudence and traditions regarding jurisprudence were organized in this period.

1. Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.52.
2. 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, pgs.457 and 474.
3. Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.42.
4. The first dictionary was written by Khalīl bin Aḥmad (d.175) and the first book of grammar by Sībaway, the student of Khalīl. After his death, his student Akhfash completed it.

Tafsīr written with the specialization of mysticism started in this age. The most important specializations of the third century will be briefly mentioned:

1. Traditional

One of the traditional tafsīrs of this age was *al-Maṣābīḥ* by Aḥmad Asfāryānī (d.201). The traditions in it are about the Prophetic Household ('a) and their correlation to the verses of the Qur'ān. Another example was *Tafsīr Ḥibarī* by Abū 'Abdullah Ḥusayn ibn Ḥakīm Muslim Kūfī (d.286). He was a scholar of traditions and a famous Zaydi commentator of the Qur'ān. This tafsīr has 150 traditions in it. One hundred of these traditions are in regards to the Prophetic Household ('a) and the verses that were revealed about them. Thirty other traditions are about their merits. The remaining twenty traditions are about various theological, historical, and jurisprudential matters.[1]

2. Jurisprudential

This method of tafsīr is one of the oldest approaches to Qur'ānic commentary; it is a branch of traditional tafsīr, although it differs from the former insofar as it is arranged in accordance to jurisprudential subjects to which different verses refer rather than the order of the verses themselves.

About ten tafsīrs of the jurisprudential verses were written in this century. The tafsīrs *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Hishām ibn Muhammad Sā'ib Kalbī Kūfī (d.204), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn Idrīs Shāfi'ī (the founder of the Shāfi'ī sect, d.204), and *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Marūzī Khurāsānī (d.244) are examples of these.[2]

3. Literary

Tafsīrs also appeared in this century that focused on the literary aspect of the Qur'ān; including definitions, etymology, and grammar. Some of them are:

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1. This Tafsīr was printed once with the research of Sayyid Aḥmad Ashkūrī and once with the research of Sayyid Muhammad Riḍā Ḥusaynī Jalālī. For more information refer to the introduction by Ḥusayni Jalālī.
2. Refer to: Ḥusayn 'Alawī-Mehr, Rawashhā wa Garayashha Tafsīrī, p.367.

3_1 Mujāz al-Qur'ān

This tafsīr was written by Abū Ubaydah Mu'ammar ibn Muthnī (d.210). He was the first person who discussed some issues of definitions while presenting Qur'ānic discussions. The principle concern of this tafsīr is an Arabic literary analysis. When this book mentions verses of the Qur'ān, it draws attention to the metaphors and similes used, their implications and so forth. It can be said that he was the one of the first, if not the first, commentator to employ this method of tafsīr.[1]

3_2 Tafsīr Farrā

Yaḥya ibn Zīyād Aqṭa', famously known as Yaḥya al-Farrā (d.208) used a similar method to Abū Ubaydah. He wrote the book *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* in the form of *Mujāz al-Qur'ān*. It must be noted that Farrā was a scholar of Arabic grammar and this is why syntax is given precedence over other options in his tafsīr. Literary matters were given less attention in this tafsīr than in Abū Ubaydah's tafsīr, above.

This book was written so that the verses which appear in the Qur'ān deal with literary matters, such as metaphors and eloquence, would be explained. He would use Arabic poems and examples to explain the meanings of these verses. In addition to this, he would narrate traditions from the companions and the Successors.[2] Ibn Shahrāshūb would link the traditions that he narrated in *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* to the traditions that Farrā narrated. Other than the book *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, the following books have been attributed to him: *Lughāt al-Qur'ān*, *al-Waqf*, and *al-Ibtidā'*. For this reason he is counted amongst one of the most active authors in the field of Qur'ānic sciences.[3]

3_3 Tafsīr Jāhiz

Abū 'Uthmān Jāhiz (d.225) wrote a book titled *Naẓm al-Qur'ān*. Many of the discussions in this book surrounded points of Arabic literature found in the Qur'ān. He mentioned metaphors and points

1. Muhammad Rajab Al-Bīyūmī, Khaṭawāt al-Manhaj al-Bayānī, p.46; Itijahāt al-Tafsīr, v.3, p.873.
2. Ḥanafī Sharaf, I'jāz al-Qurān al-Bayānī bayn al-Naẓarīyah wa al-Taṭbīq, p.20.
3. Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, p.469.

of eloquence in detail. Jāhiz presented these discussions in a very precise manner. But, unfortunately he did not complete the tafsīr. He explained various verses from the Qur'ān while discussing the literary aspects of them.[1]

3_4 Tafsīr Ibn Quṭaybah

Ibn Quṭaybah Dīnūrī (d.276) wrote the book *Ta'wīl Muskhkil al-Qur'ān* after Jāhiz, who was a famous Sunni orator, in order to oppose those who criticized the eloquence of the Qur'ān.[2] He examined many of the metaphors in the Qur'ān.[3]

4. Mystic

Another specialization in third-century tafsīr is found in the beginnings of mystical commentaries. This started with the compilation of *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Shūshtarī. The author of this book is Abu Muhammad Sahl ibn 'Abdullah Shūshtarī who was born in the year 200 and died in the year 283. He was a prominent mystic who is said to have been blessed with spiritual powers. He resided in Basrah for many years where he passed away.

At the beginning he concentrated on the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the verses. This tafsīr mostly alludes to mystical issues. But, sometimes the apparent and literal meanings of the verses are also introduced.[4] Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah printed this tafsīr in 1329 h.sh. in Egypt in one large volume.[5]

Summary

1. It can be said that the advancement of sciences and the advancement of traditions from the Imams, companions, and Successors, advanced the compilation of tafsīr in the third century. They caused tafsīr to take on certain specializations (such as traditional, literary, and mystic) and laid the foundations for the more developed tafsīrs of the fourth century.

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1. Ḥusayn Ṣaghīr, al-Mabādī al-'Amah li-Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm, p.110.
2. Itijahāt al-Tafsīr, v.3, p.874.
3. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.511.
4. Ibid, p.541.
5. Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, p.528.

2. About 70 tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed for this century; the most important commentators were introduced in the text.

3. The most important of these tafsīrs are: *Tafsīr al-Maṣābīḥ* by Asfāryānī (d.201), *Al-Ay al-Latī Nazalat fī Aqwām bi-A'ayānihim* by Hishām ibn Muhammad Sā'ib Kalbī (d.204), as well as the tafsīrs by Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman, Ibn Faḍḍāl, Baṭānī, and other companions of the Imams ('a). Likewise, the following tafsīrs can be mentioned: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Shāfi'ī, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Qatrab, *Nazm al-Qur'ān wa Qawā'id al Qur'ān* by Ibn Hammām San'āni, and *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Abū 'Abbās Mubarrad.

4. The tafsīr specializations of this period are: Traditional tafsīr; *Tafsīr al-Maṣābīḥ* and *Tafsīr Ḥibarī* are examples of this specialization. Jurisprudential tafsīr; *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Hishām ibn Muhammad Sā'ib Kalbī and *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Shāfi'ī are examples of this specialization. Literary tafsīr; *Mujāz al-Qur'ān* by Abū Ubaydah, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Farrā, *Nazm al-Qur'ān* by Jāhiz, and *Ta'wīl Muskhkil al-Qur'ān* by Ibn Quṭaybah Dīnūrī are examples of this specialization. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* is an example of a mystic tafsīr that was written by Ibn Rāfi' Shūshtarī in this century.

Sources for further research

1. *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn* by Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī
2. *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn* by Aḥmad ibn Muhammad AdNahway
3. *Sayr Taṭawur Tafāsīr Shia* by Sayyid Muhammad Ali Ayyāzī
4. *Al-Dharī 'ah ila Taṣānif al-Shia*, v.21, by Aqā Buzurg Tehranī
5. *Rijāl al-Najāshī* by Najāshī
6. *Al-Fihrist*, by Shaykh Ṭūsī
7. *Itijahāt al-Tafsīr*, v.3, by Sulaymān Fahd Rūmī

Questions and research points

1. Write the characteristics of tafsīr in the third century.

2. Name a few famous commentators of the Qur'ān who were students of the Imams ('a) from this period.

3. Describe *Tafsīr Baṭānī* and its author.

4. What are the most important specializations of tafsīr in this century?

5. What type of tafsīr is *Tafsīr Ḥibarī*? Introduce this tafsīr.

6. What are the most important literary tafsīrs of this period? Who wrote the tafsīr *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*? Describe this tafsīr along with its author.

7. What is the most important mystical tafsīr of this age? Introduce the tafsīr and make note of the issues are dealt with inside it.

8. Use the following books to write a report about the positive and negative aspects of a mystic tafsīr: *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb*, v.2, p.526, by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Mabānī wa Rawashha Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by 'Amid Zanjānī, *Rawashha wa Garayishha Tafsīri* by Ḥusayn 'Alawi-Mehr, *Darsnāmah Rawashhā wa Garāyishhā Tafsīr Qur'ān* by Dr. Muhammad Ali Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī, *Manāhij al-Mufassirīn* by Munī` 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, and *Itijahāt al-Tafsīr fī al-'Asr al-Ḥadīth* by Sulaymān Faḥd Rūmī.

9. Present a report about the Shia tafsīrs in the third century using the books *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān Shia* by 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī and *Sayr Taṭāwur Tafāsīr Shia* by Sayyid Muhammad Ali Ayyāzī. Present a research showing if these tafsīrs and their authors are correct or not.

7
Tafsīr in the Fourth Century (1)

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Becoming familiar with the cultural and political conditions of the fourth century. 2. Learning about the most important tafsīrs compiled by Shia and Sunni scholars in this period. 3. Learning about the various specializations of tafsīr of this age. 4. Becoming familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and ideologies of the commentators of the Qur'ān in this century.

The cultural and political conditions of the fourth century

The late third century and early fourth century saw the beginning of the classical golden age of Islamic thought. Traditions from the Prophet (ṣ), Infallible Imams ('a), and companions were collected, organized, and compiled in this period. Competition between scholars was intense and significant developments took place in the field of theology. The 'Asharite, Mutazilite, and Maturīdī sects formed in this century. These theological sects became rivals of one another, and some of them considered themselves in competition to the Imamiyah sect. This is why many tafsīrs in this period specialized in theology.

The competition between scholars in this age, especially in the field of tafsīr, caused many valuable works to be produced. Amongst the Shia, the tafsīrs *Furāt Kūfī*, *'Ayyāshī*, and *Qumī* were written. Two of the four main Shia books were also written in this century. The late Kulaynī (d.328) collected traditions and wrote the book *al-Kāfī*. Shaykh Ṣadūq (d.381) wrote the book *Man la Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh* in this period. Sunnis also put forth intellectual efforts and wrote produced some of their key works in this period.

Some important factors that led to the advancement of Islamic sciences in this age are:

1. Political and social stability.

2. The Shia sect influenced all areas of the Islamic world. Many leaders of the time were Shia and valued knowledge – except in the eastern areas where the Kharazmis ruled. Examples of the Shia leaders are the Fatimids who ruled over northern Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and even parts of Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen),[1] the Hamadanids in the north between al-Nahrayn and Halab,[2] the Daylamites and the Buwayhids in Iraq and the Fars region,[3] especially when Mu'īzz al-Dawlah Daylamī (d.352) entered Baghdad in 334 and ended the Turkish rule. These governments were pro-Alid and patrons of knowledge.

3. Libraries and intellectual centers were established in this age. The Fatimids in Egypt formed a university by the name of Al-Azhār. A center called Dār al-'Ilm was established in Tripoli. During the rule of Buwayhids and Daylamites, who were mainly Shia and protected the honor of the caliphate, cities such as Nayshabur, Bukhara, Shiraz, Isfahan, Hamadan, and Tabaristan all became centers of intellectual thought.

In addition to this, the efforts of prominent scholars such as Zakarīya Rāzī (d.320), Abū Farrās Hamadānī (d.357), Ṣāḥib ibn 'Abbād (d.385), and Abū al-Faraj Iṣfahānī (d.356) helped advance knowledge in this age.

4. Alongside the establishment of intellectual centers, tools which facilitated the recording of knowledge (paper for instance) also became more widely available. This meant that the number of written materials increased and with them the ease of preserving and sharing knowledge.

5. The development of theology resulted in the formation of theological sects such as the Asharite, Mutazilite, and Maturīdī sects. These sects, in competition with one another, were driven to use the best means at their disposal to overcome their doctrinal opponents.

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1. Ali Akbar Ḥusaynī, Tārīkh Taḥlīlī wa Sīyāsī Islam, v.2, pgs.369 and 387.
2. Ibid, p.418.
3. Ibid, p.413.

Tafsīr in the fourth century

The extensive intellectual efforts and religious works, especially those in tafsīr, of the third century resulted in the solidification of a single authoritative method of tafsīr at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth centuries. This method was the traditional method.

Giving importance to traditions on one side and the increase of support for the Prophetic Household ('a) on the other side led people in a certain direction. In this age they organized the traditions that were in circulation into large compilations. Shia and Sunnis also started to write independent traditional tafsīrs. The following Shia tafsīrs were composed: *Tafsīr Qumī*, *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*, *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī*, and *Tafsīr Nu'mānī*. Ṭabarī, from amongst the Sunnis, wrote the tafsīr *Jāmi' al-Bayān* in this period as well.

Shia traditional tafsīrs

Tafsīr Qumī

Author: Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī

Death: He was alive until the year 307

Language: Arabic

Volumes: 2

Method: traditional; only used narrations

Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī was a teacher of the late Kulaynī (d.328) and lived during the lifetime of Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a).[1] He met the Imam before his death. He was the first person to bring traditions from Kūfah to Qum.

Najāshī (d.450) wrote: "Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī was trustworthy in traditions and held correct beliefs. He heard traditions from many teachers and wrote books. He became blind in the middle of his life and he wrote a tafsīr."[2] Shia scholars are unanimous regarding the trustworthiness of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm. There is also no doubt that Ali ibn Ibrāhīm wrote a tafsīr. Shaykh Ṭūsī,[3] Najāshī,[4] Ibn Nadīm,[5] and

1. The Imam's martyrdom was in the year 260.
2. Aḥmad bin Ali Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.83.
3. Al-Fihrist, p.89.
4. Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.83.
5. Al-Fihrist, p.325.

later scholars such as Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr,[1] the author of *Wasā'il al-Shia*,[2] the author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*,[3] the author of *al-Dharī'ah*,[4] and many biographers reported his tafsīr.

Likewise, the late Ṭabarasī narrates from Ali ibn Ibrāhīm's tafsīr in *Majma' al-Bayān*. Tafsīrs *Ṣāfī*, *al-Burhān*, and *Nūr al-Thaqalayn* also narrate from it.

The present tafsīr titled *Tafsīr Qumī* is printed in two volumes and comments upon the entire Qur'ān. This tafsīr is in reality, two tafsīrs:

1. Part of the tafsīr written by Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī
2. Part of the tafsīr written by Abū al-Jārūd

The late Ḥājj Aqā Bazurg writes the following about the personality of Abū al-Jārūd and his tafsīr: "*Tafsīr* Abū al-Jārūd: his name is Zīyād ibn Mundhir (d.150).[5] He was blind from birth. The Zaydi[6] Jārūdiyah[7] sect is said to have originated with him. He was a contemporary of three Imams: Ali ibn Ḥusayn, Muhammad ibn Ali, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad. He wrote his tafsīr from the traditions of Imam Bāqir ('a); this is was before he formed his own sect.[8] It seems as if it was dictated to him; this is why Ibn Nadīm attributes it to Imam Bāqir ('a). This is the first tafsīr that he mentions on page 50."[9]

Some believe that the authoritativeness of Abū al-Jārūd's tafsīr is not less than that of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm's. They do not deem it necessary to authenticate it. But, some other scholars hold that each one of these tafsīrs has an account. They state that the surviving tafsīr of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm does not have any authority because it is mixed with that of Abū al-Jārūd, who was deviant and cannot be compared to Ali ibn Ibrāhīm.

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1. Tasīs al-Shia, p.330.
2. Muhammad bin Ḥasan Ḥurr 'Amilī, Wasā'il al-Shia, v.20, p.680.
3. Mirza Muhammad Bāqir Mussawī Khānsārī, Rawḍat al-Jannāt, v.8, p.349.
4. Aqā Buzurg Tehranī, al-Dharī`ah, v.4, p.251.
5. This is about 160 years before Ali ibn Ibrāhīm passed away.
6. The Zaydis believe in the immamah of Zayd bin Ali and the majority of them believe in any sayyid who is a righteous scholar who stands up militarily (therefore, they do not believe in the immamah of Imam Bāqir or the Imams after him).
7. The Jarudiyah believe in narrative proof about Ali; that the three are disbelievers, and that anyone who rejects Ali is a disbeliever.
8. The days before he deviated because the Zaydi and Jarudiyah sects are deviant sects.
9. Al-Dharī`ah, v.4, p.251.

Merits and criticisms

This tafsīr has many merits, for instance, it is the closest tafsīr that has been compiled in the traditional method to the age of revelation; it is a treasure chest of the words of the Prophetic Household ('a). Many of the traditions found therein defend the Prophetic Household ('a). Some of the traditions have a complete chain of narration. But, despite all of these merits, there are two main criticisms. These are:

1. Some of the traditions mentioned therein do not have complete chains of narration or have weak chains of narration.

2. Traditions exist which support the erroneous notion of the Qur'ān being distorted. These criticisms have been answered; for instance the distortion of the Qur'ān being discussed is a distortion of its meaning and not its actual words.[1]

Another question regarding this tafsīr exists: Is the two volume tafsīr that exists today the same tafsīr that Ali ibn Ibrāhīm wrote? It is possible that an answer to this question can be found through examining the categories of traditions that are mentioned therein.

Categories of traditions found in Tafsīr Qumī

There are various examples of traditions found in this tafsīr. In some cases it is not clear whether the tafsīr of a verse is given by Ali ibn Ibrāhīm or an Infallible Imam ('a). Four examples of these traditions will be given:

1. The words of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm: sometimes the words of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm are mentioned along with the term قال (he said). For instance:

و قال علي بن ابراهيم في قوله: ﴿...وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ﴾

Ali ibn Ibrāhīm states about His verse: "As for those whom you invoke besides Him, they do not control so much as the husk of a date stone."[2] He says: "This is the thin covering which is on the back of the pit of a date."[3]

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1. Muqadamah Tafsīr Qumī, v.1, p.6.
2. Qurān, 35:13.
3. Ali bin Ibrāhīm, Tafsīr Qumī, v.2, p.208.

Sometimes they are also mentioned without mentioning the second قال, for instance:

قال علی بن ابراهیم في قوله: ﴿لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أَتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا...﴾

Ali ibn Ibrāhīm states about His verse: "Do not suppose those who exult in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done."[1] "This was revealed about the hypocrites who love to be praised for what they have not done."[2]

2. Sometimes he mentions the chain of narration, going beyond his father, up until the Infallible Imam ('a). For instance:

حدثني ابي عن حسان (حنان) عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام في قوله: ﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۞ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ۞ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ...﴾ قال: الولاية نزلت لامير المؤمنين عليه السلام يوم الغدير.

My father narrated to me from Ḥasan (Ḥannān), who stated that Abī 'Abdullah ('a) said the following about His verse: "This is indeed sent down by the Lord of all the worlds, brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit, upon your heart."[3] He said: "This means the guardianship that was revealed for the Commander of the Faithful ('a) on the day of Ghadīr."[4]

3. Sometimes only the phrase 'Ṣādiq ('a) said' is used. For instance:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: لما خلق الله الجنة قال لها تكلمي فقالت: ﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾.

Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: "When Allah created heaven He said to it: 'Speak to me.' Heaven said: 'Certainly, the faithful have attained salvation.'"[5][6]

4. Traditions from Abū al-Jārūd: in many cases Abū al-Jārūd narrates from Imam Bāqir ('a) about the tafsīr of a verse. A large portion of this tafsīr is comprised of the traditions narrated from Abū al-Jārūd. For instance at the beginning of Sūrah al-Bayyinah it states:

و في رواية ابي الجارود عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: البينة محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله

Amongst the traditions of Abul-Jārūd, he states that Abu Ja'far ('a) said: "Al-Bayyinah is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (ṣ)."[7]

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1. Qurān, 3:188.
2. Ali bin Ibrāhīm Qumī, Tafsīr Qumī, v.1, p.122.
3. Qurān, 26:192-194.
4. Tafsīr Qumī, v.2, p.122.
5. Qurān, 23:1.
6. Tafsīr Qumī, v.2, p.88.
7. Tafsīr Qumī, v.2, p.322.

In another instance it states:

و في رواية ابي الحارود عي ابي جعفر عليه السلام في قوله ﴿...وَ ظَنَّ دَاوُدُ...﴾ اي علم

Amongst the traditions of Abū al-Jārūd, he states that Abū Ja'far ('a) said about His verse: "Then David knew,"[1] "This means knowledge."[2]

David knew that Allah was going to test him; this is a literal explanation of the term *ẓunn* to mean knowledge.[3]

By keeping these categories in *Tafsīr Qumī* in mind, it can be said with certainty that some of this tafsīr was written by Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī. However, some other parts, for instance, the traditions of Abū al-Jārūd or the traditions that start with saying 'Ali ibn Ibrāhīm said' are not from him; rather they are attributed to other people who compiled this book at a later date.

The authoritativeness of Tafsīr Qumī

What authority does *Tafsīr Qumī*, and the traditions found therein, hold? The traditions of this tafsīr can be examined using the information that has been given. If they have a correct chain of narration they would be accepted. But, if the chain of narration has a problem it cannot be trusted unless another valid tradition or other surrounding circumstances prove its validity. An example of this is if there was a better chain of narration mentioned for the same tradition in another book of traditions, such as *al-Kāfī*.

Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī

Author: Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm Kūfī. He was a traditionist; a major figure during the minor occultation. He lived at the same time as Kulaynī.

Date: The end of the third century to the beginning of the fourth.

Language: Arabic.

Size: One volume.

Method: Traditional; only used narrations

This tafsīr is comprised of 775 traditions. Verses from Sūrah Ḥamd until Sūrah Nās are chosen and commentated on; about 530 verses are

1. Qurān, 38:24.
2. Tafsīr Qumī, v.2, p.234.
3. Rāghib Iṣfahānī, Mufradāt, p.327, term ẓunn.

explained in total. He made extensive efforts to introduce the Prophetic Household ('a) in general, and especially Imam Ali ('a). The traditions are mostly transmitted from Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq ('a) while a few traditions are narrated from Ibn 'Abbās and Zayd ibn Ali.

Ḥakīm Huskani narrated numerous traditions from *Furāt* in his *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*.[1] Likewise, traditions have been narrated from *Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm* in *Tafsīr Qumī*, *Amālī* by Ṣadūq, and other books as well.[2]

Furāt was one of the teachers of Shaykh Ṣadūq's father or possibly of one of Shaykh Ṣadūq's teachers. Some people held Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm to be a Zaydi Shia because he narrated about 30 traditions from Zayd. Futhermore, he praised Zayd excessively.[3] He also transmitted a tradition through Zayd stating that a condition of being the Imam is standing up with the sword.[4] Shaykh Ṣadūq however, emphasized: "He was an Imamiyah Shia." Since Furāt lived in a time and place where the Zaydi Shia were highly influential, it is possible that this was the reason he was accused of being Zaydi. In addition to this, he was mentioned at the beginning of a book titled *Mahdi* ('a).[5] The traditions that Furāt transmitted regarding the ascension of the Prophet (ṣ) states that the Prophet (ṣ) met all of the Imams ('a) on that night; all of them up to Imam Mahdi ('a).[6] There are also traditions narrated that prove the *Imamah* of Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[7] Shaykh Ṣadūq also narrates a tradition from Furāt which states the existence of twelve successors to the Prophet (ṣ).[8] These are pieces of evidence which negate the claim that he was a Zaydi.

The author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* mentioned the following about Furāt:

«هذا التفسير يتضمّن ما يدلّ على حسن اعتقاد مؤلّفه وجودة انتقاده ووفور علمه وحسن حاله، ومضمونه موافق للكتب المعتمدة»

1. Refer to: Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.28.
2. Ibid; Ali bin Ibrāhīm Akbar-Babā'ī, Makātib Tafsīrī, v.1, p.332.
3. Tafsīr Fūrāt al-Kufī, pgs.200, 332, and 489.
4. Ibid, p.475.
5. Ibid, p.45.
6. Ibid, pgs.74-75.
7. Ibid, pgs.108, 513, and 529.
8. Shaykh Ṣadūq, 'Ilāl al-Sharāya`, pgs.5-6.

"This tafsīr has traditions in it which prove that its author was a scholar who had correct beliefs. He had a large amount of knowledge; was an Imamiyah Shia and was trustworthy. The meanings of the traditions found therein are on a par with the traditions found in other trustworthy books."[1]

Some others have claimed that he was a Sufi. One of the people who claimed this was the father of 'Allāmah Majlisī.[2] The author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* quotes 'Allāmah Majlisī's father as saying:

«يظهر منه أنّه كان متصوّفاً، ويمكن أن يكون صوفياً»

"Sufi tendencies appeared from him; it is possible that he was a Sufi."[3] This claim is also false. The author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* answers it by saying:

«كان مراده ارتباطه بالله وفناؤه في الله وبقاؤه بالله وهذا المعنى موجود في الروايات الصحيحة»

"What he meant was his relationship with Allah; he experienced losing himself (*fanā'*) in Allah and remained with Allah; these terms exist in authentic traditions." Therefore, if someone claims that he was a Sufi it would not be in the pejorative sense of the word. Rather, it would be in the meaning that is confirmed by authentic traditions; for instance, the tradition of '*qurb al-Nawāfil*.'

He narrated many traditions from Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He also quoted statements from various companions. Many scholars confirmed him, such as 'Allāmah Majlisī. 'Allāmah said: "I have not heard praise of Furāt, but his traditions are in congruence with authentic traditions which exist in books. His great memory shows that he is a trustworthy author."[4]

Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm had over 120 teachers, the most famous of them being Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd Ahwāzī.

A new edition of his work has been printed by the Guidance Ministry in Iran through the research of Muhammad al-Kāzim. *Tafsīr Furāt* has also been translated into Farsi by a scholar from Azerbaijan named Shaykh Yūsuf Banābī. The title of this translation was:

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1. Rawḍāt al-Jannāt, v.2, p.489.
2. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.39.
3. Rawḍāt al-Jannāt.
4. Muqadamah Tafsīr Fūrāt Kufī, p.24.

"*Thamarah al-Fūwād dar Tarjumah wa Sharḥ Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī.*" The first volume of this book has been printed. It is possible that he had a love for traditions and thought that faith in *wilāyah* would increase if this book was translated into Farsi and placed at the disposal of the general public.[1]

This tafsīr, despite it being a *wilā'ī* tafsīr that strengthens the Prophetic Household ('a) and makes note of the instances they are mentioned in the Qur'ān, it has two main problems:

1. The tafsīr's traditions are not organized well. For instance, traditions that are about a verse of Sūrah Mā'iḍāh are found throughout Sūrah Baqarah and Sūrah Al-Imrān. It is possible that a verse would have five traditions mentioned about it – two of them would be under the verse and three of them would have to be found throughout the text.

2. Another problem is that the chains of narration are truncated or omitted altogether. It is possible that the transcribers of this tafsīr omitted the chains.

This tafsīr has an introduction and prelude which was written by a Shia. The reason for this is that, in the prelude, salutations are sent upon the Prophet (ṣ) and the Prophetic Household ('a) mentioning the name of Imam Mahdi ('a). Afterwards it states:

«اما بعد فهذا تفسير آيات القرآن مروى عن الائمه عليهم السلام»

"This tafsīr of the verses of the Qur'ān is taken from traditions by the Imams ('a)."

The existent version of the tafsīr was transmitted by Abū al-Khayr Miqdād ibn Ali Hijāzī Madanī, who narrated from Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman al-'Alawī al-Ḥasanī wa Ḥusaynī from Furāt. This tradition is narrated at the beginning of the book.

The categories of traditions narrated by Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm

Traditions have been narrated in various forms in this tafsīr. Sometimes the transmitters have been mentioned in the chain of narration and Furāt would transmit from his own teachers. Sometimes the chain

1. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.40.

would state 'with the previous chain of narration.' Other traditions would not mention a chain of narration; only the final transmitter would be mentioned before the Infallible ('a). Finally, in some cases one of the transmitters would be mentioned and it would be stated: "through a tradition that has a sound chain of narration." Some examples of the mentioned cases are:

1. Ḥadīth 18:

فرات قال: حدثني جعفر بن محمد الفزاري، قال حدثني محمد بن الحسين عن موسى بن القاسم عن عثمان بن عيسى عن سماعة عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام: في قوله تعالى: ﴿...وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُم...﴾ قال: اوفوا بولاية علي بن ابي طالب عليه السلام... اوف لكم بالجنّة.

Furāt states that Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Fazārī narrated from Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn, who narrated from Mūsa ibn al-Qāsim, who narrated from `Uthmān ibn `Isa, who narrated from Samā`ah who stated that Abī 'Abdullah ('a) said the following about the His verse: "Fulfill My covenant that I may fulfill your covenant,"[1] "Fulfill the covenant about the guardianship of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a) and I will fulfill the covenant of paradise for you."[2]

A complete chain of narration is recorded for this tradition.

2. The twentieth tradition states that the chain is the same as the previous tradition. This tradition is about the explanation of the verse:

﴿وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ﴾

"and bow along with those who bow."[3] The tradition states: "This was revealed about the Messenger of Allah and Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib who were the first to pray and bow."[4]

The chain of narration of this tradition is the same as the eleventh tradition.

3. Ḥadīth 82:

«حدثني عبدالله بن عباس – رضي الله عنه – انّ رسول الله دعا عليا فقال يا علي! احفظ على الباب...»

1. Qurān, 2:40.
2. Tafsīr Fūrāt Kufī, p.58.
3. Qurān, 2:43.
4. Tafsīr Fūrāt Kufī, p.59.

It has been narrated to me that 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "The Messenger of Allah called Ali and said: Ali, protect the door.'"[1]

Ibn 'Abbās is the only person mentioned between the Messenger of Allah ('a) and Furāt.

4. Ḥadīth 80:

فرات قال: حدثني الحسين بن محمد من مصعب معنعنا: عن ابن عباس - رضي الله عنه - قال كان علي بن ابي طالب عليه السلام يقول في حياة النبي: ان الله يقول في كتابه: ﴿...أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ...﴾ و الله لا ننقلب علي اعقابنا بعد اذ هدانا الله...

Furāt states that Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad ibn Maṣ`ab narrated to him through a tradition that has a clear chain of narration, from Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, who states that Ali said during the lifetime of the Prophet (ṣ): "Allah states in His book: 'If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels?'[2] By Allah, we will not turn back on our heals after Allah has guided us."[3]

In some cases other traditions have been mentioned to confirm the principle tradition which shows that other traditions with similar meanings have been transmitted.

The authoritativeness of Tafsīr Furāt

It can be said about the authority of *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*, just as was said about *Tafsīr Qumī*, that if the traditions mentioned have an authentic chain of narration they can be trusted, but if they have a chain of narration which has been cut, if they have weak chains of narration, or if they do not have a chain of narration at all, they are not authoritative. The only exception would be if there is another tradition with a similar meaning narrated in an authoritative book, for instance the Four Books. This is only in the case where the tradition ends with an Infallible ('a). The traditions that do not end in an Infallible (for instance the traditions narrated from Zayd or Ibn 'Abbās) are not authoritative.

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1. Ibid, p.97.
2. Qurān, 3:144.
3. Tafsīr Fūrāt Kufī, p.96.

Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī

Author: Muhammad ibn Mas'ūd Samarqandī (Abū al-Faḍl), famously known as 'Ayyāshī

Death: 320

Language: Arabic

Size: Two volumes

Method: Traditional; only used narrations

He was a scholar of ḥadīth from Kūfah who excelled in the transmission of traditions and tafsīr. He transmitted traditions from the year 260. Najāshī wrote:

«ثقة، صدوق، عين من عيون هذه الطائفه»

"He is trustworthy, tells the truth; one of the best scholars of this sect."[1] Ibn Nadīm states:

«العياشي من أهل سمرقند و قيل انه من بني تميم من فقهاء الشيعة الإمامية أوحد دهره و زمانه في غزارة العلم و لكتبه بنواحي خراسان شأن من الشأن»

"Al-'Ayyāshī is from Samarqand. It is said that he is from the Tamim tribe. He was one of the best Imammiyah Shia jurists of his time."[2]

Likewise, Ibn Nadīm listed about 180 books being attributed to him. Most of these books are about traditions and jurisprudence, but there are miscellaneous topics such as theology, tafsīr, and even astronomy mentioned as well. This is why some biographers stated that he was a well-rounded scholar.

He was an accomplished scholar who had many students. One of his students was Kashshī, the author of a famous *Rijāl* text. Many scholars came from his family. He was a rich man who had inherited his wealth from his father. He spent his money in the publication of books and aiding the seekers of knowledge.

It is famously known that he was a Sunni before he became Shia. Najāshī writes: "First, he was a Sunni. He chose the Shia sect during his youth."

There are two opinions regarding whether this tafsīr is authoritative or not:

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1. Rijāl al-Najāshī, p.247.
2. Al-Fihrist, p.241.

1. 'Ayyāshī converted from Sunnism to Shiaism at a young age. He lived for many years after becoming Shia and wrote numerous books. His previous writings were definitely destroyed. Personalities such as him who have been praised (by saying that he is trustworthy, truthful, and one of the best scholars of this sect) would have destroyed the books he had written prior to his conversion. In the least he would have mentioned that the book is not credible.

2. Shia and Sunni traditions cannot be mistaken for one another. The style of each of them is different. A person who is familiar with the science of traditions would be able to tell whether the traditions narrated in a book were Sunni or Shia traditions.[1] The style of the chain of narrations are very different from each other and the transmitters of traditions of the two sects are different. The Sunnis transmit traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and the companions while the Shia transmit traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and the 12 Imams. Therefore, even if part of this tafsīr was written when he was a Sunni and part of it was written when he was a Shia it would not matter because the parts would be able to be differentiated from each other.

Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī is printed in two volumes and is comprised of about 2700 traditions. The two volumes in existence is the tafsīr of Sūrah Ḥamd to Sūrah Kahf. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī praised the book in his introduction to it.[2]

«لعمری أحسن کتاب ألّف قدیما فی بابه و اوثق ما ورثناه من قدماء مشایخنا من کتب التفسیر بالمأثور و قد تلقاه علماء هذا الشأن منذ ألّف إلی یومنا هذا بالقبول من غیر أن یذکر بقدح أو یغمض فیه بطرف»

In regards to the credibility of this tafsīr, the point should be noted that most of the traditions were originally mentioned with their chains of narration but a copyist omitted the chains of narration making a summarized version, ostensibly to make the text easier to read[3] and because he did not find the author to obtain permission to transmit his traditions. This scholar thought he was practicing

1. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.65.
2. Tafsīr `Ayyāshī, Muqadamah `Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, p.3.
3. Refer to: Ayāzī, Sayr Tatawur Tafāsīr Shia, p.51.

precaution, but his actions caused much harm to the Shia. But, a book that had chains of narration which were omitted is much different than a book which was written without chains of narration in regards to credibility.

In addition to this, the traditions in *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī* are in complete congruence with the traditions found in *Tafsīr Qumī*, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, *Man la Yaḥḍruhu al-Faqīh*, and *Tahdhīb*. This gives the tafsīr merit. This matter becomes clear by referring to the footnotes of the printed version of this tafsīr because in the footnotes it refers to *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, *Tahdhīb*, etc. This gives the tafsīr credibility.[1]

This tafsīr is printed in two volumes up to Sūrah Kahf. The rest of the tafsīr does not exist and the major figures of traditional tafsīr and the scholars of *ḥadīth* only narrate from this part. Examples of these scholars are: Muḥaddath Baḥrānī in *al-Burhān*, Ḥawīzī in *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, Fayḍ al-Kāshānī in *Ṣāfī*, and 'Allāmah Majlisī in *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

There is no precise information about the remainder of the tafsīr. Some have said that it was seen in the libraries of some cities in Southern Iran, but there is not proof to this claim.[2]

The late Sayyid Ḥasan Ṣadr, the author of *Ta'sīs al-Shia*, writes: "'Ayyāshī wrote a tafsīr which is famously known as *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī* and is printed in two large volumes. Only half of the tafsīr exists today. He lived in the third century, during the era of Kulaynī."[3]

It is important to mention that some traditions are narrated in the introduction to of book which are very beneficial in the field of Qur'ānic sciences. These traditions display the opinions of the Imams ('a) in various Qur'ānic fields, such as the merits of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān being the criterion for weighing traditions of the infallibles, the categories of Qur'ānic verses, the abrogated verses and the verses which abrogate, the exoteric and esoteric meanings, the allegorical and definitive verses, the Imams being the foundation of Qur'ānic understanding, the knowledge of the Imams in tafsīr, tafsīr based on personal opinion, and the negativity of arguing about the Qur'ān.

1. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.66.
2. Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī, Muqadamah `Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, p.2.
3. Ibid.

Tafsīr Nu 'mānī

Author: Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'far, famously known as Nu'mānī

Death: 360

Language: Arabic

Size: one volume (the complete book is quoted at the beginning of the 90th volume of *Biḥār al-Anwār*)

Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Nu'mānī was a student of Kulaynī, a contemporary of Ṣafwānī, and the author of *al-Ghaybah* which was recently printed and famously known as *Ghaybat Nu'mānī*. Tafsīr Nu'mānī is a compilation of traditions transmitted from the Commander of the Faithful ('a). He divides the verses of the Qur'ān into 60 categories. He mentions an example for each category. The complete tafsīr is recorded in the 19th volume of *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Sangi print) or the 90th volume (Beirut print). Nu'mānī did not add anything of his own in it.

These traditions were also transmitted by other people, for instance:

1. Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah Ash'arī, these traditions are attributed to him in a book called *Tafsīr*. These two books are only different in regards to the order, introduction, and conclusion. There are also one or two traditions found in one but not the other.[1]

2. The same traditions were mentioned by the late Sayyid Murtaḍa in a book entitled *al-Muḥkam wa al-Mutashābih*. The late Shaykh Ḥurr 'Amulī narrates traditions in *Wasā'il al-Shia* from *al-Muḥkam wa al-Mutashābih* written by Sayyid Murtaḍa. After research, it is clear that he meant this book, but made a mistake about the author.[2]

3. Another person who transmitted these traditions is Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī. Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī and his tafsīr have been discussed above

Therefore, each one of these three books is comprised of traditions from Imam Ali ('a) and all three are comprised of the exact same traditions. Therefore, these traditions were transmitted by four people. It was stated that Nu'mānī did not add anything of his own,

1. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.90, p.97.
2. Al-Muḥkam wa al-Mutashābih was printed separately by Sangi Print and is exactly the same as Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī.

but Sayyid Murtaḍa and Ali ibn Ibrāhīm summarized them. Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah Ash'arī wrote an introduction and a conclusion as well as adding points in the text.

These four books are actually one book attributed to Sayyid Murtaḍa (d.436), Nu'mānī (who was alive until about 340), Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī (who died after 307), and Sa'd Ash'arī (d.299 or 301). In this case, there are many years in between them and Imam Ali ('a).

There are more than four hundred verses of the Qur'ān which are explained as being 'specific; not general,' 'distorted or not,' and 'abrogated or abrogators.' Therefore, these verses have been explained. It can be said that this is not tafsīr because this tafsīr does not explain the meanings of the verse; rather it mentions points regarding Qur'ānic sciences.

The chain of narration that Nu'mānī mentions includes six transmitters of traditions including Ḥasan ibn Ali ibn Ḥamzah who is weak Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn Ya'qūb Ju'fī who is unknown. In conclusion, the chains of narration are not credible.[1]

Some of the subject matters in *Tafsīr Nu'mānī* includes: 1) abrogating verses, 2) abrogated verses, 3) definitive verses, 4) allegorical verses, 5) general verses, 6) specific verses, 7) verses that preceeded [in their revelation], 8) the verses whose revelation came at a later stage, 9) obligations, 10) the permissible, 11) *munqata' ma'ūf*, 12) *munqata' ghayr ma'ūf*, 13) verses, the text of which is specific but meaning is general, 14) verses, the text of which is general, but meaning is specific, 15) verses which have utilized the singular tense, but are indicative of the plural tense, 16) verses which have utilized the plural tense, but are indicative of the singular tense, 17) verses in which the past tense is utilized, but its meaning indicates the future, 18) verses that describe a particular event only to use it as a means to describe another, 19) verses which are in opposition to their form of revelation, 20) cases where part of a verse is in one Sūrah and the rest in another Sūrah, 21) cases where half of a verse is abrogated and the rest remains intact, 22) verses in which different sentence structure or wording has been utilized to indicate a one meaning, 23) verses in which similar wording has been

1. Some of this section was taken from the book Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān by Riḍā Ustādī.

utilized but are indicative of different things, 24) a comparison between obligations and the permissible, 25) verses whose text is specific and meaning is general possibly being a generality, 26) verses which reject the [claims of the] Jews, 27) verses which reject [the claims of the] atheists, 28) verses that respond to those who rejected the ascension (*mi'rāj*), 29) verses that respond to those who reject the return (*raj'ah*), 30), verses which respond to the claims of the Christianity, 31) verses that respond to the notion that faith and disbelief cannot become more or less intense.

Half of the subjects discussed therein, pertain to Qur'ānic sciences, while the remaining allude to other miscellaneous issues.

Summary

The fourth century was a century of significant advancement in all fields of knowledge; a century in which many books of Islamic sciences were compiled and organized. Some of the characteristics of this century are: a decrease in political and social disputes, the Shia sect increasing in influence throughout the Muslim world, especially the Fatimid dynasty in Northern Africa and the Daylamite dynasty in Iraq and Fars; the advancement of libraries and centers of intellectual thought that this stability brought about and the spread of tools of intellectualism (such as paper), and the solidification of the traditional method.

The traditional Shia tafsīrs of this century are: *Tafsīr Qumī*, which was written by Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qumī who was a trustworthy person and a teacher of Kulaynī. His tafsīr is printed in two volumes and some of the traditions therein are transmitted by Abū al-Jārūd. Taking into consideration the categories of traditions in this tafsīr (words of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm, traditions which the chain of narration are mentioned, traditions without the chain of narration, and traditions transmitted by Abū al-Jārūd) it can be said that some parts of this tafsīr were not written by the author.

The credibility of this tafsīr: The traditions can be trusted when they have a valid chain of narration. Otherwise, one must search for other surrounding circumstances and pieces of evidence.

Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī which was written by Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm Kūfī and is comprised of 775 traditions from the beginning to the end of

the Qur'ān. The traditions are mentioned haphazardly and not always in the correct place. This tafsīr has been attributed to Furāt. It was claimed that he was a Zaydi Shia, but the circumstances of his life and the content of his work make this improbable. Likewise, it was claimed that he was a Sufi but this too is unlikely.

Some of the traditions in *Tafsīr Furāt* have a chain of narration, some do not, some traditions state that they had a clear chain of narration, and some other traditions are referred to previous chains. The same thing that was mentioned regarding the credibility of *Tafsīr Qumī* can be said about *Tafsīr Furāt.*

Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī which was written by Maḥmūd ibn Mas'ūd 'Ayyāshī Samarqandī. It has been said that he was first a Sunni. He converted to Shi'ism in his youth. There is no evidence that he was a Sunni when he wrote this tafsīr, rather the evidence strongly suggests that he was not; Sunni traditions are completely different than Shia traditions from the point of view of chains of narration. This tafsīr has Shia traditions in it. This tafsīr was printed in two volumes. These include traditions commenting on the Qur'ān until Surat al-Kahf; the rest of the commentary has been lost. It has a very beneficial introduction where traditions regarding Qur'ānic sciences are mentioned.

Tafsīr Nu'mānī which was written by Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'far, famously known as Nu'mānī. He would only transmit traditions from Imam Ali ('a) and exposited approximately 400 verses. Sixty discussions of Qur'ānic sciences are mentioned in this tafsīr including: verses which abrogate or are abrogated and the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the verses. In addition to Nu'mānī, Sayyid Murtaḍa, Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah Ash'arī, and Ali ibn Ibrāhīm also wrote this tafsīr.

Questions and research points

1. Summarize the characteristics of the fourth century.

2. What was the station of the Shia in this century? List some Shia traditional tafsīrs written in this century.

3. Introduce *Tafsīr Qumī* (the name of its author, the size of the tafsīr, and the parts of it).

4. List the categories of traditions found in *Tafsīr Qumī* and explain whether or not they are credible.

5. Introduce *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī* and mention the two main criticisms of it.

6. Explain about the religion of the author of *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*.

7. Introduce *Tafsīr 'Ayyāshī*.

8. What type of tafsīr is *Tafsīr Nu'mānī*? Who wrote it? Who narrated it?

9. Use *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī* (research by Muhammad al-Kāzim), *Makātib Tafsīrī* by Ali Akbar Babā'ī, and some books of Rijāl, for instance *Mu'jam al-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei and *Qāmūs al-Rijāl* by Muhammad Taqī Tustarī to research about the sect of the author of *Furāt Kūfī*; also research about the subject matter of the traditions that are mentioned in his tafsīr.

8
Tafsīr in the Fourth Century (2)

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Becoming familiar with the cultural and political conditions of the fourth century. 2. Learning about the most important tafsīrs compiled by Shia and Sunni scholars in this period. 3. Learning about the various specializations of tafsīr of this age. 4. Becoming familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and ideologies of the commentators of the Qur'ān in this century.

Shia Tafsīrs

The Tafsīr attributed to Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a)

Author: Muhammad ibn Qāsim Astarābādī who narrates it from Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Zīyād and Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad

Death: Fourth century, about 350

Language: Arabic

Size: One volume up until the 283rd verse of Sūrah Baqarah.

Method: Traditional, only uses narrations

This book is written by Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far Daqqāq who narrated from Muhammad ibn Qāsim Astarābādī who in turn narrated from Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Zīyād and Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad Sayyār. These two would transmit traditions from Imam 'Askarī ('a) and both of them were from Astarabad. Most of the people from Astarābād were Zaydi Shia at that time. But, these two – as shown by them being in this chain – were Imamiyah Shia.[1]

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1. Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan `Askarī, introduction, p.21.

At the beginning of this tafsīr Abū Ya'qūb and Abū al-Ḥasan mention their meeting with Imam 'Askarī ('a). They sought refuge with the Imam due to the problems of the age and fear of their lives and property. It is written:

"We, with our families, came to Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī, the father of *the Qā'im* ('a)."[1]

"After that, for seven years (254-260), I became his student."

The introduction to the tafsīr under discussion mentions the following subjects: the merits of the Qur'ān, the merits of a scholar who can interpret the Qur'ān, the manners of reciting the Qur'ān, the tradition of closing the door,[2] and traditions regarding starting every action with the phrase: 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.'

Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī is a traditional tafsīr which is comprised of 379 traditions from Sūrah Fātiḥah until the 283rd verse of Sūrah Baqarah. The last verse that is:

﴿...وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ...﴾

"And do not conceal testimony; anyone who conceals it, his heart will indeed be sinful."[3] His heart being sinful is explained as having a disbelieving heart.[4]

The Authoritativeness of this Tafsīr

The credibility of this Tafsīr has been debated since the fourth century. This Tafsīr and the transmitters of traditions mentioned therein have not been mentioned in the famous books of *Rijāl*; for instance, neither it nor they have been mentioned in *Rijāl* and *Fihrist* of Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* of Kashshī, or by Najāshī. The first person to state that this Tafsīr is a forgery and that the transmitters mentioned therein were unknown and weak was Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī. After him, many others considered the book to be weak. In opposition to this

1. Ibid.
2. What is meant by this is the tradition which states that all of the doors to the Mosque must be closed except the door of Ali (a). The Prophet ordered this and all of the doors were closed except that of Ali bin Abī Ṭālib (a). Refer to: Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan `Askarī (a), p.27.
3. Qurān, 2:283.
4. Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan `Askarī (a), p.529.

trend, some Akhbaris narrated this book in their own books or emphatically stated that it is credible. Here, it is suitable to mention two groups in opposition and in support of this Tafsīr:

Opposition: Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī (d. 4th century) was the first person to speak negatively of this Tafsīr. He considered the transmitters of traditions mentioned therein to be unknown. He said: "*Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī* is a forgery."[1] Ḥājj Mirza Abū al-Ḥasan Shi'rānī, who has written annotations of Ṭabarasī's *Majma' al-Bayān*, wrote the following at the end of his Tafsīr:

«لم ينقل المصنف عن التفسير المنسوب الى العسكري عليه السلام وقال العلّامة الحلي في محمد بن قاسم الاسترآبادي انّه موضوع»

"The author did not narrate from the Tafsīr attributed to al-'Askarī ('a). 'Allāmah Ḥillī states regarding Muhammad ibn Qāsim al-Astarābādī that it is a forgery."[2]

Another person in opposition to this book is 'Allāmah Muhammad Jawād Balāghī who, while stating that it is a forgery and that the transmitters of traditions mentioned therein are weak, stated: "There are contradictions in some of the phrases of the book. It is not possible to defend it."[3]

'Allāmah Muhammad Taqī Tustarī in his valuable book *Qāmūs al-Rijāl* writes after quoting Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī about the weakness of the book: "The Tafsīr that is from Abū Ya'qūb and Abū Ḥasan is not credible. We have proven that it is a forgery in another book."[4] He thoroughly examined this Tafsīr in the book *Akhbār Dakhīlah* where he mentioned forty reasons why this tafsīr is weak and a forgery.[5]

Another person who considered this book to be a forgery was Ayatullah Khoei. He wrote the following in *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*: "The Tafsīr attributed to Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a) was transmitted by Abū Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sayyār and his friend Yūsuf ibn

1. Refer to: Aqā Buzurg Tehranī, al-Dhar`īyah, v.3, p.292; Qahbā'ī, Majma` al-Rijāl, v.6, p.25.
2. The last part of Majma` al-Bayān, annotated by the late Shi'rānī.
3. Refer to: Nūr 'Ilm Magazine, second series, 1406, number 1, p.145 (Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan `Askarī by Riḍā Ustādī).
4. Muhammad Taqī Tustarī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, v.7, p.558; The other book is Akhbār Dakhīlah.
5. Akhbār Dakhīlah, v.1, pgs.152 and 228.

Muhammad ibn Zīyād, who are both unknown. Their mere transmission from the Imam ('a) does not give them value or credibility from the Imam ('a)."[1]

After a few lines he continues: "A person who examines this tafsīr with precision will definitely conclude that it is a forgery. A learned scholar would not write such a tafsīr, let alone an infallible imam."[2]

Likewise, Ayatullah Ma'rifat, while criticizing tafsīrs which narrate from *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)*, writes: "This tafsīr is a forgery created by Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Zīyād and Abū Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sayyār who are both from Astarābād. Attributing this book to Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a) is not correct."[3]

Other scholars who considered this tafsīr to be weak are: 'Allāmah Ḥillī (7th century) in *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, Muqaddas Ardibīlī in *Jāmi' al-Rawāh*, Qahpā'ī in *Majma' al-Rijāl*, Astarābādī in *Minhāj al-Maqāl*, and Mīr Muṣṭafī Tafrīshī (11th century) in *Naqd al-Rijāl*.[4]

Support: Some important Uṣūli scholars and Akhbaris have had a positive opinion concerning *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)*. Their views cannot be dismissed. Shaykh Ṣadūq Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Bābūway, the author of *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh*, is amongst the scholars who narrate many traditions from *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)* in his books; for instance *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh* which is one of the four books of Shia tradition. He considers every tradition in *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh* to be correct and a proof (*ḥujjah*) between himself and God on the day of judgement.[5] Likewise, similar statements to those mentioned in *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)* have been recorded in *Amālī*,[6] *Tawḥīd*,[7] and *'Illal al-Sharāya'*[8] where traditions with chains of narration from Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a) exist. Ibn Shahrāshūb, the author of *Manāqib*, narrates from *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)* in a number of cases.[9]

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1. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, Mu`jam Rijāl al-Hādīth, v.12, p.147.
2. Ibid.
3. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.1, p.331.
4. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.25; 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, pgs.328-329.
5. Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh, v.2 ,p.327.
6. Amālī, pgs.105-106.
7. Tawḥīd, pgs.47, 230, and 403.
8. 'Illāl al-Sharāya', v.1, pgs.134 and 319.
9. Ibn Shahrāshūb, Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib, v.2, pgs.300, 313, and 329.

Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī, the author of *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, lists 43 sources for his tafsīr in the 16th section of his introduction. The 42nd source is: "The *Tafsīr* of our Master and Imam, Abī Muhammad al-Ḥasan ibn Ali al-'Askarī ('a)." The tone of this sentence shows that he considered this source to be credible.[1]

Shaykh Ḥurr 'Amulī, the author of *Wasā'il al-Shia*, writes: "The leader of the scholars of traditions, Ibn Babuwayh, trusted this *Tafsīr* and narrated many of its traditions in *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh* and other books. Likewise, Ṭabarasī, the author of *Iḥtijāj* and other scholars also trusted it."[2]

Another scholar who emphasized the strong value of this Tafsīr is: Abū Manṣūr Ṭabarasī, the author of *Iḥtijāj*. In his book he writes: "I will not transmit the chain of narration in most cases because either the subject matter of the tradition is accepted by a consensus, reasoning with it is in congruence to the intellect, or it is famous amongst the Sunnis and Shia."

He adds: "The only chain of narration that I will mention is from Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a) because this book is not as famous as the other books are. This is why I mentioned their chains of narration at the beginning of my book."[3]

Likewise, 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn writes: "This *tafsīr* is amongst the famous tafsīrs of the Shia and is credible according to the leader of the scholars of traditions, Shaykh Ṣadūq." He then rejected the arguments which claim that this book is weak.[4]

Aqā Buzurg Tehranī introduces *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)* as a valuable book after extensively discussing its chain of narration. He listed prominent scholars who consider this *Tafsīr* to be credible, such as: 'Allāmah Majlisī in *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Shahīd al-Thānī in *Munīyat al-Murīd*, and Muḥaqiq Karakī the permission he granted to Ṣafī al-Dīn.[5]

Keeping rhe aforementioned in mind, does the *Tafsīr* attributed to Imam 'Askarī ('a) have any value? Can it be defended? It is not easy to decipher between two groups – those who support it and

1. Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī, al-Burhān, v.1, p.77.
2. Wasā'il al-Shia, v.20, pgs.59-60.
3. Ṭabarasī, Iḥtijāj, v.1, p.14.
4. Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, A`yān al-Shia, v.2, p.41.
5. Al-Dharīy`ah, v.4, p.285.

those who criticize it – who both have reasons to support their claims. Rather, it must be said that this *Tafsīr* cannot be completely rejected while the traditions, without criticism, cannot be accepted. It is similar to many other traditional tafsīrs, for instance *Tafsīr ʿAyyāshī*, *Tafsīr Qumī*, and *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*. In any case, each one of the traditions must be examined. If a tradition does not have a problem with its subject matter or chain of narration it can be accepted; although sometimes the subject matter of a tradition is such that it would not stem from a non-infallible, such as:

«فاما من كان من الفقهاء صائنا لنفسه حافظا لدينه مخالفا لهواه مطيعا لامر مولاه فللعوام ان يقلّدوه»

"But, it is incumbent upon the laymen to follow one who is amongst the jurists; who guards himself, who protects his religion, who opposes his carnal desires; who obeys the commands of his master."

Shaykh Anṣāri, after narrating this tradition from *Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan ʿAskarī (ʿa)*, states: "The signs of truthfulness in this tradition are apparent."[1]

But there are also issues that exist in this *Tafsīr*, as are mentioned by the late Shiʿrānī and ʿAllāmah Balāghī, which indicate that the *Tafsīr* is not credible. For instance, the nervousness that is seen in relating the chains of narration where it is questioned if the children of Abū Yaʿqūb and Abū Ḥasan were with the Imam (ʿa) and learned the *Tafsīr* or they, themselves, were.

Those in opposition used three arguments to prove the weakness of this *Tafsīr*. The text above answers these three arguments. The arguments are:

1. Some of the segments of the *Tafsīr* prove that it is a fabrication.
2. Ibn Ghaḍā'irī considers it weak.
3. The transmitters of the traditions in this book were not mentioned as trustworthy in some books of *Rijāl*.

The answer to the first argument is that the entire book should not be dismissed because some parts of it have problems. In regards to the second argument it can be said that in opposition to the weakening of Ibn Ghaḍā'irī, there are some researchers who listed this *Tafsīr* to be amongst credible books (for instance Shaykh Ṣadūq).

1. Shaykh Anṣārī, Fawā'id al-Uṣūl, p.86.

There are scholars who clearly stated that *Tafsīr Imam 'Askarī ('a)* is credible, for instance: 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn and Ḥurr 'Amulī. In regards to the third argument it can be said that the term 'weak' used for the transmitters of the traditions is used as a specialized term in the science of the transmitters of traditions; not certain weakness[1] – just as the term 'correct' is used. The reason for this is that the subject matter of some traditions, such as 'one who is amongst the jurists' has so much value that it cannot be overlooked.

It is necessary to remind the reader that this *Tafsīr* has a few handwritten scripts which are mentioned in the new print (6 scripts). Likewise, this *Tafsīr* was printed twice in Iran and Beirut. Also, the Farsi translation of it was printed in India.

Sunni Tafsīrs

1. Jām`' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān

Author: Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī

Death: 310

Language: Arabic

Size: 12 volumes

Method: Traditional, sometimes mentions grammatical points

One of the famous early Sunni tafsīrs is *Tafsīr Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān* written by Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, which famously known as *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*. He was a scholar of the third and fourth centuries. He was born in 224 in Amul, Māzandarān which, at that time, was known as Ṭabarīstan; he died in Baghdad in the year 310.

He was a specialist in the fields of Qur'ānic recitation, traditions, jurisprudence, history, the Qur'ānic sciences, and tafsīr. He was a leading Sunni scholar who was an expert of his time in many fields. At the beginning, he followed Shāfi'ī jurisprudence; but later on founded his own jurisprudential sect. Ṭabarī's jurisprudential sect was followed for some time, but gradually became extinct. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a number of jurists in *al-Fihrist* who followed Ṭabarī's jurisprudence.[2]

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1. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.26.
2. Murtaḍa Mutahhari, Khadamāt Mutaqābil Islam wa Iran, p.262; this is why

Tafsīr Jāmi' al-Bayān was written at the end of the third century and became extremely famous because at that time there were not any complete tafsīrs which were compiled. In addition to explaining the entire Qur'ān, this tafsīr was an exceptional tafsīr for that time period as well. This is why this tafsīr has been labeled as the 'mother of tafsīrs' and Ṭabarī has been labeled as the 'father of tafsīr.'[1] Goldzeiher introduced it as a huge encyclopedia in tafsīr.[2]

Method and sources of Tafsīr Ṭabarī

The method of tafsīr applied by Ṭabarī was a combination between narration-based and analytical approaches. The most important sources of it were traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and the opinions of the companions and the Successors to the Companions. Other than these, the following cases can be considered as his sources:

1. Arabic grammar, especially syntax.
2. Definitions of words.
3. Poetry.
4. Different recitations.
5. Jurisprudential opinions; examination and criticism.

As was mentioned before, the most important distinguishing factor of his tafsīr was the traditions that stemmed from the Prophet (traditional method). Since he was a prominent scholar of traditions in his age, the traditions were transmitted with their chains of narration. The beginning of the traditions that were transmitted started with the term 'narrated to me' or 'narrated to us.' If the transmission was heard from one person he would state 'narrated to me' and if other people heard the tradition as well as himself he would state 'narrated to us.'[3]

He used other sources in addition to traditions as well. Therefore, his tafsīr extended further than a purely traditional tafsīr. Sometimes

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Ṭabarī was opposed to Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and why he did not consider him a jurisprudent.

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.312.
2. Goldzeiher, Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islamī, p.109.
3. The Arabic term 'thana' which is seen throughout this book is an abbreviation of 'Hādithana'.

he would even analyze the verses. Examples of other sources that were used in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* are:

Grammar: he explains the following verse as:

﴿ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ...﴾

"Then there you were, killing your folks."[1]

«وجهان: احدهما ان يكون اريد به «ثم انتم يا هؤلاء» فترك «ياء» استغناء بدلالة الكلام عليه كما قال ﴿يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا﴾ و تأويله «يا يوسف اعرض عن هذا...» الوجه الآخر ان يكون معناه ثم انتم قوم تقتلون انفسكم فيرجع الى الخبر عن انتم و اعترض بينهم و بين الخبر عنهم بهؤلاء كما تقول العرب: انا هذا اجلس»

There are two plausible grammatical explanations for the term '*ha'ulā*' being placed in the middle; either there is a vocative preposition implied or the term '*taqtulūn*' is the predicate of '*antum*' and '*ha'ulā*' is an independent sentence mentioned between a subject and predicate.

He also brings evidence from Arabic poetry.[2]

Definitions: he explains the following verses as:

﴿...وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ...﴾

"nor any ransom shall be received from it."[3]

The term '*'adl*' in the Arabic language means ransom when it has a *fatḥah* on the *'ayn*.[4]

Recitation: Ṭabarī was a specialist in the field of recitation. He wrote a 17 volume book called *al-Qarā'at wa Tanzīl al-Qur'ān*. This book was about the differences of recitation. He mentions various recitations and then expresses the recitation that he chooses using reasoning and evidence. An example is the verse:

﴿مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

"Master of the Day of Retribution."[5]

He examines the recitation of the term 'malik' or 'mālik.' The

1. Qurān, 2:85.
2. Muhammad bin Jarīr Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.369.
3. Qurān, 2:48.
4. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.268.
5. Qurān, 1:4.

Complete discussion is found in the book *al-Qarā'at*. At the end he states: "The better recitation in my opinion is the first understanding..."[1]

Poetry: He widely used Arabic poetry in order to define Qur'ānic terminology. He used poetry to aid him in his discussions about similes and figurative meanings. In the verse which mentions the term '*rā 'ina*' he states that *ra 'i* means observance in hearing a meaning and used the words of A'sha to show that he used this term in this meaning in one of his poems. He relied on the poems of A'sha in many instances.

Two other sources were used by Ṭabarī:

1. Consensus: In many cases, Ṭabarī used a consensus in order to give preference to an opinion. One of these instances is the verse:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ﴾

"When they are told, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they say, 'We are only reformers!'"[2]

He narrates a few opinions as to who these people were. Then, he says that this verse is about the hypocrites during the time of God's Messenger (p). He states that this opinion is stronger arguing for it with a consensus amongst the commentators of the Qur'ān.[3]

2. Explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān: In rare cases it is also seen that Ṭabarī uses the Qur'ān to explain another verse of the Qur'ān.

Ṭabarī's stance towards the Prophetic Household ('a)

The ways that Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān dealt with the verses that are about the Prophetic Household ('a) are not the same. Some were balanced and narrated the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a); some omitted their merits. By examining various cases in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* it becomes clear that he was of the second category.

He discussed the following verses thoroughly and mentioned many opinions:

﴿...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَ...﴾

1. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.65.
2. Qurān, 2:11.
3. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.1, p.125; Likewise, refer to Qurān, 12:90.

"Today I have perfected your religion for you."[1]

﴿يا أَيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيكَ...﴾

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you."[2]

﴿...قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَى...﴾

"Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.'"[3]

Other examples are Sūrah Kawthar and Insān (verses 7-11). But, he does not mention the connection that these verses have with the Prophetic Household ('a) by mentioning many traditions narrated through Sunni sources or he severely negates their connection. He did not give any clear opinion regarding the *imamah* of the Prophetic Household ('a).[4] In addition to this, he mentioned many opinions regarding the verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا...﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful."[5]

But, he only mentioned one tradition which states that this verse was regarding Imam Ali ('a) giving charity. But, he did not mention anything regarding the connection to him having a power of guardianship (*wilāyah*).[6] For instance, he said the following about Sūrah Kawthar: "It is said that it is an enormous amount of goodness; it is said that it is an enormous amount of goodness, wisdom, and the Qur'ān; it is said that it is the good of this world and the next; it is said that it is goodness, prophethood, and the Qur'ān; it is said that it is prophethood and Islam; and it is said that it is a fountain given to him in paradise."

He narrates all of these traditions and then gives the following reasoning for the opinion that he chose: "The best opinion with me is the one that states that it is a spring which is given to him in paradise. Allah is characterized with multiplicity due to His great

1. Qurān, 5:3.
2. Qurān, 5:67.
3. Qurān, 42:23.
4. Under the verses in this regard; for instance refer to v.14, p.311.
5. Qurān, 5:55.
6. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.4, p.82.

power. The reason that we said this is the best opinion is because of traditions narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) stating this."

But, when one looks at the tone and subject-matter of this Sūrah, especially attributing the term 'without posterity' (*abtar*) to the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), one would see that it is about the child of the Prophet (ṣ) – Fatimah Zahrā' ('a). Those who opposed the Prophet (ṣ) said that he did not have a son; that his lineage would be cut and this verse rejects that notion.

The way in which he dealt with these verses can be explained in two different ways: 1, the conditions of the time were such that he was unable to mention such issues. 2, He had a strong ideological bias and decided to omit these traditions.

The first possibility is weak because if a person sincerely had a desire to mention them he would have alluded to them briefly somewhere. Therefore, it must be concluded that he omitted the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) on ideological grounds. This same goes for Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī who narrated many weak traditions[1] but did not mention traditions about the Prophetic Household ('a) or in support of them.

Isrā'īlīyāt Traditions in Tafsīr Ṭabarī

There are *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions found in various parts of *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, for instance the traditions about the stories of prophets. The large amount of *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions that are found in this tafsīr is so much that recently an Egyptian scholar listed about 350 of them. This scholar correlated the traditions mentioned in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* with the Hebrew phrases mentioned in the Torah.[2] In some cases, Ṭabarī narrates the same meanings mentioned in traditions of the People of the Scripture.[3] In some cases, he narrates a story despite it being superstitious and in contradiction with fundamental Islamic principles.[4]

Dhahabī did not criticize Ṭabarī for narrating *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions; rather he made excuses for him. He stated that since he

1. Refer to: Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.201.
2. Amal Muhammad 'Abd al-Raḥman Rabī`, Al-Isrā`īlīyāt fī Tafsīr Ṭabarī, p.407.
3. Jāmi` al-Bayān, v.2, p.610.
4. Ibid, v.1, p.456.

mentioned the complete chain of narration of these traditions, their truthfulness is outside of his responsibility. It is our responsibility to review the traditions and their chains of narration with precision.[1] Another reason is that he was influenced by historical traditions; he expanded upon historical discussions.[2]

Ayatullah Ma'rifat criticizes these excuses. He states: "*Tafsīr Ṭabarī* needs to be seriously critiqued and thoroughly examined. It is similar to many tafsīrs which are comprised of *Isrā'īlīyāt* and forged traditions. Mentioning the chain of narration does not excuse the author or solve the problem. Spreading forged and *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions on wide-scale proportions is an unforgivable sin as Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh has mentioned."[3] Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh in *Al-Manār* seeks forgiveness for Ṭabarī after mentioning the verse where John the Baptist is prophesied to Prophet Zakarīya. He states:

«عفا الله عن ابن جرير اذ جعل هذه الرواية مماينشر»

"May Allah forgive Ibn Jarīr for he forged this tradition."[4]

A Few Points

1. He used the term *Ta'wīl* in his tafsīr many times; even in its title: *Jāmi' al Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān*. He uses this term to mean tafsīr; not the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān or anything else.

2. The introduction that Ṭabarī writes for his tafsīr is, as the tafsīr itself, lengthy. Discussions relating to the science of the Qur'ān, such as the discussion of the circumstances behind the revelation of some verses, the meanings of tribal tongues, Arabic and non-Arabic words, the seven letters (*ḥurūf*), the reason the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic, prohibiting tafsīr based on personal opinion, encouraging tafsīr, the names of the Qur'ān, the meanings of *ayah* and *Sūrah*, and rejected tafsīrs.

3. This is the first tafsīr to be translated into Farsi during the fourth century in the reign of Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ Samānī by his Arabic minister who was famously known as Minister Bal`amī.[5] This

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.224.
2. Ibid.
3. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.313.
4. Al-Manār, v.3, p.298.
5. Khadamāt Mutaqābil Islam wa Iran, p.462.

translation has been printed in seven volumes.

Tafsīr Ṭabarī has also been summarized by one of the scholars of the fourth and fifth centuries. It was printed in Egypt, in 1390, into two volumes.

Ṭabarī was also a specialist in history and his *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* is one of the most famous historical sources. *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* and *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* were both translated into Farsi in the fourth century. Admirers of Farsi literature took pride in them and state that they are valuable books written in ancient Farsi. The translation of *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* is famously known as *Tārīkh Bal'amī* and has been printed. *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* has also been recently translated into Farsi by Abū al-Qāsim Pāyandah (a famous translator of the Qur'ān). It has also been recorded that *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* has been translated into English and French as well.[1]

2. Tafsīr al-Musnad

This tafsīr was written by 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Ḥātam Muhammad ibn Idris who is famously known as Abū Ḥātam Rāzī (d.327). He was a famous scholar of traditions who collected prophetic traditions. In addition to collecting traditions, he was also a specialist in the science of the transmitters of traditions and in jurisprudence. His tafsīr is called *al-Tafsīr al-Musnad* and is written in 12 volumes. A few of these volumes (comprising of Sūrah Fātiḥah to Sūrah Al 'Imrān) have been studied and the rest of them are currently being examined in the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca.

3. Tafsīr Baḥr al-'Ulūm (Samarqandī)

The author of this tafsīr is Abū Layth Samarqandī (d.373). He was a Ḥanafī and famously known as Imam al-Huda. He was taught by Abū Ja'far Hamadānī. Samarqandī is the author of many books, for instance: *al-Nawāzul fī al-Fiqh*, *Khazānah al-Akmāl*, *Tanīyyah al-Ghāfilīn*, *Bustān al-'Arifīn*, *'Ayūn al-Masā'il wa Ta'sīs al-Naẓā'ir*, and the tafsīr which is one of his most important works.[2]

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1. Some of the information given above is taken from Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān by Riḍā Ustādī.
2. Refer to: Ibid, pgs.91-92.

This tafsīr consists of three large volumes in the handwritten print. Its most important characteristic is the usage of tafsīr traditions from the companions and the Successors to the companions; although in some cases he uses etymology and the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān.[1] He emphasized the prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion.

There are some criticisms of this tafsīr. For instance:

1. The chains of narration of the traditions used in the tafsīr are incomplete. He only mentioned a complete chain of narration in some cases. Most of the time the chains of narration are problematic.
2. *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions are narrated by him.
3. Weak individuals are found in the chains of narration.[2]
4. Varying opinions and traditions are mentioned; but they are not examined and the correct opinion is not chosen.[3]

Other tafsīrs and methods of tafsīr in the fourth century

The tafsīrs that were mentioned above were the most important traditional tafsīrs of the fourth century. But, in addition to these, there were over 60 tafsīrs compiled in this period. Muhammad ibn AdNahway listed 58 of them in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*.[4] A summary of these will now be presented.

In this century, due to the progression of grammatical and theological discussions, grammatical, etymological, theological, and jurisprudential tafsīrs were compiled in addition to traditional tafsīrs.

One tafsīr from amongst the grammatical and etymological tafsīrs is *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Abū Isḥāq Zajjāj (d.311). Grammatical discussions as well as traditions were presented in this tafsīr, but the main topic of it was etymology. Thus, it is considered to be an etymological tafsīr.[5]

A theological treatise written about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān was *al-Nakt fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān* by Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn `Isa

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1. For instance, under the 36th verse of Surah Al `Imrān.
2. Traditions of Kalbī and Asbāṭ narrating from Sudday are examples of weak transmitters.
3. Refer to: Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, pgs.235-236.
4. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.46-94.
5. Ḥusayn Ṣaghīr, Manāhij al-Tafsīr, p.108.

Rummānī (d.386). The author was strong in Arabic literature and Islamic theology; AdNahway stated that he took a combined theological and literary approach in this work. He also wrote a tafsīr called *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. It is narrated that Bayḍāwī said: "I saw his tafsīr. He was a specialist in various fields including tafsīr, jurisprudence, syntax, and theology and he was a Mutazilite."[1]

Likewise, *Bayān I'jāz al-Qur'ān* by Abū Sulaymān Aḥmad ibn Muhammad Khaṭṭābī (d.388) and *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-'Adl* were compiled. One independent chapter of the latter book is about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and was written by 'Abd al-Jabbār Mu'tazili (d.315).

Commentators of the Qur'ān of this period also wrote theological tafsīrs. *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Abū Ali Jabā'ī, Shaykh of the Mu'tazilites, is amongst these tafsīrs. He was a specialist in philosophy and theology and disagreed with Abū al-Ḥasan Ash'arī.[2] Another tafsīr of the fourth century is *Ta'wīlat al-Qur'ān* by Abū Naṣr Muhammad ibn Muhammad Maturidi (d.333). He was the founder of the Maturidi theological sect. In this tafsīr, he explained the verses of the Qur'ān and presented his jurisprudential opinions. He also relied upon Abū Ḥanīfah in his tafsīr. This tafsīr is a tafsīr of Sūrah Munāfiqūn to the end of the Qur'ān as well as the Beginning of the Qur'ān up until the end of Sūrah Baqarah. It was printed with the editing of Ibrāhīm 'Awaḍīn and Sayyid 'Awaḍīn in 1390.[3]

Likewise, *Jāmi' al-Ta'wīl li-Muḥkam al-Tanzīl 'ala Madhhab al-Mu'tazilah* by Abū Muslim Muhammad ibn Baḥr Iṣfahānī (d.322) was a tafsīr of this century.[4] Shaykh Ṭūsī (r) praised this tafsīr in *Ṭibyān*.[5] He was one of the prominent scholars of the fourth century and one of the strongest Mutazilite commentators of the Qur'ān. He was a specialist in theology, tafsīr, traditions, literature, and poetry. He also wrote the book *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*. He was ordained by the Abbāsid caliph Muqtadar to rule over Iṣfahān and the Fārs territories. His rule lasted

1. Refer to Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.87-88.
2. Ibid, p.62.
3. Ali Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, Firāq wa Madhāhib, p.233.
4. Biltājī, Darasāt al-Tafsīr, pgs.119-120.
5. Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ṭibyān, p.4 of the introduction.

until 321. Fakhr Rāzī uses this tafsīr in *Tafsīr Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*.[1]

Another tafsīr was written by Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdullah ibn Aḥmad Balkhī Ka'bī (d.319) who was a Ḥanafī jurisprudent and a Mutazilite theologian. This tafsīr was written in 12 volumes, but has been lost. Parts of it have been narrated in later tafsīrs, especially *Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* by Sharīf Raḍī (d.406).[2]

Another Methodology implemented in this century was jurisprudential tafsīr. These works were normally titled *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, for instance: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Mūsa ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman, famously known as Qaṭṭān (d.306), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim, famously known as Ibn Qurṭābī (d.355), *Sharḥ Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Aḥmad Rāzī, famously known as Jaṣāṣ (d.370), and *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by `Ibād ibn 'Abbās Ṭāliqānī (d.385).

Summary

The tafsīr attributed to Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a): This tafsīr was written by Muhammad ibn Qāsim Astarābādī who narrated from Abū Ya'qūb and Abū Ḥasan Sayyār who both narrated from Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a). This tafsīr is published in one volume up to the 283rd verse of Sūrah Baqarah. There are severe differences of opinion amongst the commentators of the Qur'ān in regards to the credibility of this tafsīr. One group, for instance Ibn Ghaḍā'irī, 'Allāmah Ḥillī, 'Allāmah Muhammad Jawād Balāghī, Muhammad Taqī Tustarī, and Ayatullah Khoei oppose this book. Another group, for instance, Shaykh Ṣadūq, Shaykh Ḥurr 'Amulī, 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, Aqā Buzurg Tehraīi, 'Allāmah Majlisī, and Shahīd al-Thānī accept this book. But, in conclusion, the traditions that have correct chains of narration and valuable subject-matter are accepted while everyting else is rejected.

Sunni traditional tafsīrs: *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* which is titled: *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān* is a lengthy tafsīr whose most important sources are traditions from the companions and the Successors. But, it is also used Arabic literature, points of recitation,

1. Refer to: `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.1, p.590; Ibn Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p.37.
2. Claude Gilliot, Encyclopedia of the Qurān, v.2, p.120.

and jurisprudential opinions. Likewise, consensus and explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān are also used. Ṭabarī's stance in regards to the Prophetic Household ('a) is not necessarily a positive one; rather in many cases his stance was to omit their merits. This tafsīr has many Isrā'īlīyāt traditions in it which is a very serious weakness. It has a beneficial introduction where various discussions in Qur'ānic sciences are mentioned, for instance: tribal tongues, Arabic and non-Arabic words, revelation upon seven letters, and the prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion.

Other Sunni tafsīrs are *Tafsīr al-Musnad* by 'Abd al-Raḥman famously known as Abī Ḥātam Rāzī and *Tafsīr Baḥr al-'Ulūm* (Samarqandī).

Tafsīrs written in other methods were also compiled in this century. *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Zajjāj was written in a grammatical method; *Tafsīr Ali ibn 'Isa Rummānī* was written in a etymological method; *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Abū Ali Jabā'ī and *Jāmi' al-Ta'wīl* by Abū Muslim Muhammad ibn Baḥr Iṣfahānī were written in a theological methods; and *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Jaṣāṣ was written in a jurisprudential method.

Questions and Research Points

1. Explain who the transmitters of *Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a)* are, how it was compiled, and how much of it was compiled.
2. What opinions and evidence exist regarding this tafsīr's credibility?
3. Explain what the sources and method of Tafsīr Ṭabarī were.
4. What was Ṭabarī's stance towards the Prophetic Household ('a)?
5. Give an explanation about the Isrā'īlīyāt traditions found in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī.*
6. Introduce *Tafsīr Baḥr al-'Ulūm* (Samarqandī) and list some of its criticisms.
7. Write the various methods used in the fourth century and give one example for each method.
8. Use the books *al-Isrā'īlīyāt fī Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* by Amal Muhammad 'Abd al-Raḥman Rabī`, *al-Minhāj al-Aṭhārī* by Huda Jāsim, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* by Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, and the collection of articles about Ṭabarī to present a research paper about the Isrā'īlīyāt and forged traditions found in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī.*

9
Tafsīr in the Fifth Century

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Becoming familiar with the political and cultural conditions of the fifth century. 2. Becoming familiar with the Shia and Sunni tafsīrs of the fifth century: a. Important Shia tafsīrs of the fifth century: *Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl* by Sayyid Raḍī, *Amālī* by Sayyid Murtaḍa, and *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī. b. *Ijtihādī* and analytical tafsīrs. c. Mystical tafsīrs of the fifth century. d. Important Sunni tafsīrs, which were mostly traditional tafsīrs: *al-Kashshāf wa al-Bayān* by Thal'abī, *al-Wāsiṭ* by Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī, and *al-Nakt wa al-`Ayūn* by Māwardī.

The spread of knowledge in the fifth century

The fifth century is looked back upon as a golden age in the history of Islam. This century saw the progression of knowledge, especially the intellectual, analytical, and argumentative fields in religion. The existence of such prominent scholars such as Shaykh Ṭūsī, Abū Ali Sīnā, and Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī proves that this was indeed a great era for the religious sciences. Jurjī Zaydān writes: "This century was a golden age in Islam. Muslim governments reached their peaks in wealth, civilization, and success. Most of the Islamic sciences matured and the most important sciences of the age were translated into Arabic."[1]

More than one hundred tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān were listed in this century. Muhammad ibn AdNahway lists about 60 people in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*[2] and 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī lists about 40 commentators of the Qur'ān in *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān Shia*.[3]

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1. Tārīkh Adab al-Lughah al-`Arabīyah, v.2, p.17.
2. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnanway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.95.
3. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, pgs.34-190.

Political and cultural characteristics

In this century there were two opposing and contradictory characteristics that existed:

1. Conflict: severe communal rioting took place between Shia and Sunnis in the fifth century, so much so that Sultan Bahā' al-Dawlah, Shaykh Mufīd (d.413), was exiled from Baghdad.[1] The Seljuk kings, who were mostly anti-Shia, came into power in this century. The first Seljuk king was Tughral Beg, when he entered Baghdad, he set the Baghdad Library, the largest library in the world at the time, on fire.

Ibn Athīr writes: "In 451, Baghdad and Karakh were set on fire. The treasures and books that Ardshīr (Shāpūr ibn Ardshīr[2]) endowed to the library were set on fire and some of them were stolen."[3]

But, thankfully, many of the 400 Shia sources were entrusted with Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.460). During that time he was busy writing *Tahdhīb* and *Istibṣār*.[4]

2. Intellectual development and the writing of important religious texts: in opposition to the first characteristic, the fifth century is considered to be an illuminated century in the history of Islam in regards to intellectual sciences. Scholars such as Abū Ali Sīnā, Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī, and `Unṣurī Balkhī lived in this century. They wrote valuable works in different intellectual fields; some of them have been considered to be the most important and most comprehensive books in their respective fields throughout Islamic history.[5]

Likewise, the biggest Shia scholars lived in this century, for instance: Sayyid Raḍī (d.406) and Shaykh Mufīd (d.413), who was one of the most prominent Shia theologians and authors. He who wrote more than 200 valuable texts. Sayyid Murtaḍa (d.436) and Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.460) are also considered prominent scholars of this era. Amongst the Sunnis, the following scholars lived in this century: Ḥakīm Nayshābūrī (d.405), the author of *Mustadrak*, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Bayhaqī (d.458), the author of *al-Sunan al-Kubra*

1. Ibn Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, v.10, p.7.
2. Abū Naṣr Shāpūr bin Ardshīr, was the Shia minster of the Bahā' al-Dawlah.
3. Ibn Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, v.10, p.7; Yāqūt Ḥamūwī, Mu`jam al-Buldān, v.2, p.342.
4. Aḥmad Amīn, Ẓuhr al-Islam, v.1, p.229.
5. Ibid.

which is famously known as *Sunan Bayhaqī*, Abū Isḥāq Nayshābūrī, famously known as Thal'abī (d.427), Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī, the author of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (d.468), and 'Abd al-Qāhir Jurjānī (d.471).

Theological sects of the fifth century

In this century, sectarian differences increased and Sunni sects, such as the Asharite, the Mu'tazilites, and the Maturidis opposed each other. In the year 408, a statement was issued by the caliph forbidding Mutazilite opinions.[1] Despite this the Mutazilite sect grew immensely in this century. Their scholars had stronger presences in comparison to other centuries. There were Mu'tazilites in the third and fourth centuries, such as Jāhiz, Abū Ali Jabā'ī, his son Abū Hāshim, and Balkhī, but tafsīrs and books in this century were published throughout the Islamic society. The presence of Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār Hamadānī (d.451), the author of *Tanzīyah al-Qur'ān `an al-Matā'in*, and Abū Bakr Bāqilānī (d.403), the author of *I`jāz al-Qur'ān*, strengthened the Mutazilite ideology in this century as well.

In addition to this, these scholars presented their arguments in an *Ijtihādī* method: intellectually, using rational arguments and benefiting from verses of the Qur'ān and traditions. This is why this century is considered to be the century of *ijitihād* and reasoning; an introduction to the growth of *Ijtihādī* tafsīrs of the sixth century.

The most prominent Shia theologians in this century were Shaykh Mufīd (d.413), Sayyid Raḍī (d.406), Sayyid Murtaḍa (d.436), and Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.460). They used rational and theological reasoning in their arguments while using verses of the Qur'ān and traditions. This was especially the case in tafsīr. They founded the *Ijtihādī* method in all Islamic fields. The Sunnis also put forth effort in this regard, but their famous tafsīrs in this century were traditional tafsīrs which relied upon the narrations of the companions and the Successors to the companions. *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, the tafsīr written by Ibn `Aṭīyah, is an exception to this because it is comprised of analysis and criticism.

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1. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, pgs.13-14.

Shia Tafsīrs

1. Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābah al-Tanzīl

Author: Abū al-Ḥasan Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn, famously known as Sayyid Raḍī

Death: 406

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Field: Theological and grammatical

Size: 1 volume

Sayyid Raḍī was the brother of Sayyid Murtaḍa, another prominent Shia theologian. His father's ancestry went back to Imam Kāzim ('a) and his mother's ancestry went back to Imam Sajjād ('a). He was one of the prominent Shia scholars, lingusists, poets, jurists, and commentators of the Qur'ān. He wrote poetry from the age of twenty and compiled Nahj al-Balāghah from the speeches, letters and sayings of Imam Ali. Many books have been attributed to him. In the field of the Qur'ān, in addition to this tafsīr, he wrote *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān `an Mujāzat wa Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*. He was loved for his knowledge during his age and held a high political and social position.

The characteristics of this tafsīr

This tafsīr, as the name suggests, examines the verses which were unclear and which raised theological questions, or the verses which were considered allegorical. The method of this tafsīr is this: first the verse is mentioned and then the tafsīr is given in the form of questions and answers. The answers given are very precise and intellectually satisfying. This book is actually the fifth volume of a ten volume work in which the remaining nine volumes have been lost. It begins with the 7th verse of Sūrah Al `Imrān and categorizes the verses into definite and allegorical. As was mentioned, not all of the verses were explained; rather it encompasses some of the important issues raised in Sūrah Al `Imrān and Sūrah Nisā'. The last verse that is explained is the 48th verse of Sūrah Nisā:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ...﴾

"Indeed Allah does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him."[1]

This tafsīr raises grammatical, theological, and jurisprudential points in an intellectual manner and uses poems as evidence. He presents his own opinion in an *Ijtihādī* and argumentative method.

Example of tafsīr: A person who asks about the meaning of the verse:

﴿...وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا...﴾

"Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him of it."[2]

He asks how could Allah be addressing everyone when he states that whoever wants the rewards of this world will be given them while many people try very hard to achieve this world but do not reach it? They do not reach their desires. There are various opinions regarding the answer of this question:

1. Allah will give a person who asks purely for this world without seeking the rewards of the next world. But, He will forbid heaven to him. The term 'reward' is used here figuratively to mean worldly benefit and pleasure.

2. The second opinion is taken from Abu Ali Jabā'ī: This means a person who fights for war-booty. Allah states: 'We will give him of it.' If a person desires the rewards of the next world while performing *jihad* and distances himself from worldly desires he will be given them. This grace is given to protect *jihad*.

3. The third opinion is taken from Abū al-Qāsim Balkhī which states that the worldly rewards meant here means seeking the world and what the hypocrites desired in the Uhud War – they were after the world.

He continues and mentions six more opinions at length.[3] Then he proves his opinion using grammatical and theological points as well as verses from the Qur'ān and traditions.

The tafsīr sources that he sporadically uses are: the tafsīrs written by Abū Muslim Baḥr Iṣfahānī, Abū Ali Jabā'ī, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Farrā, *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, and the tafsīrs of Abū Ja'far Iskāfī and Abū al-Hasan Akhash.

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1. Qurān, 4:48.
2. Qurān, 3:145.
3. Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl, pgs.258-265.

Tafsīr Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl has four characteristics which are not found in other tafsīrs of this age:

1. Its expressions are lengthy and poetic.
2. Explanation is only given for unclear and allegorical verses.
3. A diversity of different opinions are mentioned in it.
4. Various pieces of evidence (from the verses of Qur'ān, traditions, and rational arguments) are used; the discussions are presented in an *Ijtihādī* method coupled with reasoning.

One of the researchers who wrote an introduction to this tafsīr writes: "I do not know of any tafsīr similar to this one which was written before it, unless one would consider the *Amālī* by Sayyid Murtaḍa."

He adds: "Sometimes [Sayyid Raḍī] was accused of being a Zaydi, but he was an *Imamiyah* Shia. This accusation was a political accusation, just as Abū al-Faraj Iṣfahānī, Abū Ḥanīfah, and Sufyān Thawrī were considered Zaydi. What is meant by being Zaydi is that they considered the caliph of their time to be a tyrant. Similar to this is the accusation of him being a Mutazilite."[1]

2. Tasfir Shaykh Mufīd

Muhammad ibn Nu`mān, famously known as Shaykh Mufīd (d.413) was a leader in jurisprudence, traditions, and theology. He was a very strong theologian and the Sunnis have attested to his intellectual strengths and merits. He does not have an independent tafsīr, but there is a large amount of tafsīr material spread throughout his works. Aqā Ayyāzī, a contemporary Qur'ān researcher, compiled them in a book called *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd al-Mustikhrāj min Turāth al-Shaykh al-Mufīd.*

3. Amālī by Shaykh Murtaḍa

Abū al-Qāsim Ali ibn Ṭāhir ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn, famously known as Sayyid Murtaḍa and 'Ilm al-Huda (born 355, died 436) was one of the Shia leaders after Shaykh Mufīd. He was counted as a jurisprudent, theologian, and the leader of the *Imamiyah.* There is no doubt that he is considered one of the prominent commentators of

1. 'Abd Ḥusayn Ali, introduction to Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl, pgs.75-77.

the Qur'ān; just as the Sunnis have attested. His famous book in the field of the Qur'ān is called *Amālī*, but this book is not only a tafsīr. Rather, it is a transcription of some of his lessons in which he comments on the Qur'ān.

Dhahabī writes: "This tafsīr is comprised of tafsīr discussions, traditions, and grammatical points. It is a very beneficial book which testifies to the many merits of its author and to his intellectual prominence."[1] While Dhahabī is praising Sayyid Murtaḍa's enormous amount of knowledge, he introduces him as a Mutazilite and a defender of their belief system.[2]

The author of the book *Tārīkh al-Islam*, who is Sunni, wrote: "Sayyid Murtaḍa was the most famous commentator of the Qur'ān in the second Abbasid period. He was famously known as `Alam ul-Huda; 'the Banner of Guidance (d.436)'. His tafsīr, *Amālī*, is a Mutazilite tafsīr and was taken from other Mutazilite tafsīrs, such as Abū Ali Jabā'ī's tafsīr."[3] But, as was mentioned before, the accusation of Shia scholars being Mu'tazilites, in addition to being political, depicts misunderstanding of Shi'ism and its differences with the Mutazilite sect.

In any case, there are 79 sections of this book which discuss various verses of the Qur'ān. The author of this book presents various theological issues and answers the existent problems. The last verses that are discussed are:

﴿وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ۞ بِأَىِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ﴾

"When the girl buried-alive will be asked for what sin she was killed."[4] These discussions take on the form of grammatical, theological, poetic, traditional, and tafsīr discussions. This tafsīr was published in Najaf. Also, in 1403 it was published in Qum by the publishing house of Ayatullah Mar`ashī's Library.

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1. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.411.
2. Ibid, pgs.410-436; Dhahabī praises Amālī of Sayyid Murtaḍa extensively over 26 pages. At the end he rejects the claim that he was a Shia and accepts him to be a Mu'tazilite.
3. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Tārīkh al-Islam, v.4, p.419.
4. Qurān, 81:8-9.

4. Tafsīr Ṭibyān

Author: Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī famously known as Shaykh Ṭūsī

Birth and Death: 385-468

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Theological

Size: 10 volumes

One of the famous Shia tafsīrs is *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī. This tafsīr, from amongst the Shia and Sunni tafsīrs, was the first tafsīr of the entire Qur'ān which covered the tafsīr discussions in a precise, intellectual, and *Ijtihādī* manner along with presenting analysis and criticism. It was compiled in the fifth century. Its author was arguably the most important Shia scholar of his day and a student of Shaykh Mufīd. He was the most prominent jurisprudent of his time and wrote many books. The credit that is due to him for producing important books in Shia Islamic sciences is larger than that of anyone else. He wrote the best books in a number of Islamic fields which were the basis for all future endeavors in those subjects. Two of the four principle books of Shia traditions, *Tahdhīb* and *Istibṣār*, are written by him. He wrote three books; *Ikhtīyār Ma'rifat il-Rijāl* (A revised edition of *Rijāl Kashshī*), *Rijāl* and the *Fihrist*, in the field of the science of *Rijāl*. He also wrote *'Iddah al-Uṣūl* in the field of the principles of jurisprudence.

There was a ceremony in Mashhad on the thousandth anniversary of his death in which one of the scholars present introduced him by saying: "We have ten principle books in traditions, the science of the transmitters of traditions, and tafsīr; six of them were written by Shaykh Ṭūsī."[1]

The late Ṭabarasī, the author of *Majma' al-Bayān*, wrote the following about the value of this tafsīr:

«نقتبص منه ضياء الحق و يلوح عليه رواح الصدق»

"*Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī is a book which is taken from divine illumination and whose truthfulness is

1. Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.81.

apparent."[1] This tafsīr contains secrets about Qur'ānic meanings that were not mentioned before. It was compiled in an *Ijtihādī* and comprehensive method. Theological discussions were also inserted and giving it a specialization in theology. It proves Shia beliefs.[2]

Introduction to this tafsīr

This tafsīr has a short introduction which is full of valuable points. Some of the points are:

1. Motivation behind writing the tafsīr: He mentions two motives behind writing *Ṭibyān*: the non-existence of a complete, comprehensive tafsīr and the non-existence of a tafsīr which defends Shia beliefs. He writes: "I was impelled to write this book by the fact that none of our scholars, classical scholars or contemporary, have written a tafsīr on the entire Qur'ān comprised of all specializations."

2. The present Methodologys: He mentioned the most important methods of tafsīr which existed at that time. He mentioned methods such as the traditional method, the grammatical method, such as the tafsīrs of Zajjaj and Farrā, etymological method, such as the tafsīr of Mufaḍḍal ibn Salmah, the theological method, such as the tafsīr of Abū Ali Jabā'ī, the jurisprudential method, such as the tafsīr of Balkhī, as well as the lengthy tafsīrs of Ṭabarī. But, these were written by Sunnis and there are many narrations mentioned in them. Suitable tafsīrs, such as the tafsīrs of Muhammad ibn Baḥr Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī and Ali ibn `Isa Rummānī were compiled, but they were both Mu'tazilites.

3. Holding fast to the Qur'ān and the family of the Prophet (ṣ) in all periods.

4. The permissibility of explaining the Qur'ān using authentic traditions from the Imams ('a) because their words are authoritative just as the words of the Prophet (ṣ) are.

5. The prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion.

6. The prohibition of a commentator of the Qur'ān imitating another in tafsīr.

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1. Majma` al-Bayān, v.1, p.75.
2. Al-Tafsīr wa Mufassirūn by Ayatollah Ma`rifat and Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd by Ayatollah Ustādī were used in the introduction to Tafsīr Ṭibyān.

7. The philosophy behind the repetition of words, sentences, and stories in the Qur'ān.

8. The theory that the Qur'ān was revealed upon seven letters being incorrect because the Qur'ān was revealed upon one letter to one Prophet. But, there is a consensus that states that it is permissible to recite the Qur'ān in accordance to ordinary recitations.

9. The Qur'ān is able to be understood because Qur'ānic understandings are of four categories: parts of it where it is only understood by Allah, parts of it where its apparent meaning is common and all people can understand it, parts of it are unclear and are clarified by the words of the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a), and parts of it are of common language. The Qur'ān is able to be understood because it was revealed in the tribal language; in Arabic and addresses the 'people.' The Qur'ān invites people to ponder over it and the Imams ('a) ordered to weigh traditions with the Qur'ān. If the Qur'ān was not able to be understood there would be no reason to command people to weigh traditions against it. This does not mean that we do not have any need for traditions; rather holding fast to traditions in some parts of the Qur'ān is necessary.

10. The esoteric and exoteric meanings: The Qur'ān has various levels; it has esoteric and exoteric levels.

11. The verses which abrogate other verses and the verses which have been abrogated.

12. The definitive and the allegorical verses.[1]

The method of tafsīr that Shaykh applied in *Ṭibyān*, as was mentioned earlier, is the *Ijtihādī* and comprehensive method. He uses verses of the Qur'ān, traditions, etymology, Arabic grammar, and even words of the companions and the Successors as evidence for his opinions. In addition to these, he uses rational reasoning and analysis. He also examines and criticizes existing opinions. But, since Shaykh Ṭūsī lived at the same time as huge theologians, such as Shaykh Mufīd and Sayyid Murtaḍa, he specialized in theology and Shia theological points have been inserted into the tafsīr.

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1. Refer to: Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ṭibyān, v.1, pgs.3-20.

Practical Method

In the discussion of predestination and freewill under the verses where confusion in this issue exist he uses reasoning to criticize predestination. One of the motivating factors for him to write the tafsīr was to answer the confusion regarding predestination. He writes:

«والجواب عن مطاعن الملحدين فيه و انواع المبطلن كالمجبّره و المشبّهه و غيرهم و ذكر ما يختص اصحابنا من الاستدلال بمواضع كثيرة منه على صحة مذاهبهم...»

"[The purpose of this book is to] answer the criticisms of those in opposition and groups with incorrect ideologies, such as those who believe in predestination. The purpose of this book and also of the Shia scholars is to reason for the correctness of their sect."[1]

He writes about the verse:

﴿خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ...﴾

"Allah has set a seal on their hearts,"[2]

"Allah testifies that the hearts of the disbelievers will not accept truth." He continues: "'Allah has set a seal on their hearts.' This does not mean that Allah has created a barrier between them and the believers because their being blind, deaf, and mute – if this is correct – is physical. But, Allah announces that they have chosen disbelief; the acceptance of truth and faith is very difficult for them."[3]

Likewise, he writes the following about the verse:

﴿...كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

"Thus do We seal the hearts of the transgressors,"[4]

«وليس امراد بالطبع المنع من الايمان لانّ مع المنع من الايمان لا يحسن تكليف الايمان»

"Seal does not mean a barrier against faith; because if there is a barrier against faith than obligating faith would not be positive."[5]

He defended *imamah* very well. He also established the *imamah* of Imam Ali ('a) using many Qur'ānic proofs. He writes the following about the verse:

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1. Ibid, p.4.
2. Qurān, 2:7.
3. Ṭibyān, v.1, p.64.
4. Qurān, 10:74.
5. Ṭibyān, v.5, p.412.

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful,"[1] "This verse is one of the clear proofs of the *imamah* of the Commander of the Faithful immediately after the Prophet (ṣ)." Then he uses various arguments to establish that the term guardian (*walī*) means 'better' or 'rightful:' that these are the definitions that come to mind. In addition to this, he uses Arabic literature and poetry as well as other verses of the Qur'ān as reasoning. He also proves through various means that Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a) is meant by the phrase 'the faithful.' By establishing these two principles it becomes clear that Ali ('a) is the best person in humanity for *imamah* after the Prophet (ṣ).[2]

In conclusion it is necessary to mention a few points:

1. Shaykh Ṭūsī was respectful towards the caliphs and the Sunni sects as he was defending Shia beliefs. In addition to this, he extensively narrated the opinions of the companions and the Successors to the companions, just as the Sunni tafsīrs did. The reasons behind this might be because he wanted the tafsīr to be accepted, to be a rational presentation of Shi'ism, and to be conducive unity.[3]

2. This tafsīr was written at a time where the fighting between Shia and Sunnis reached extreme levels in Baghdad; members of these groups would murder each other and set each other's houses on fire. When Tughral Beg, the first Seljuk King (447), entered Baghdad he set the most important Shia library in Baghdad on fire. He even burned Shaykh Ṭūsī's books and the chair he sat on when he taught. The king destroyed Shaykh Ṭūsī's house. This is why Shaykh Ṭūsī migrated to Najaf next to the shrine of Imam Ali ('a) establishing the Islamic seminary of Najaf.[4]

3. *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* has many merits in comparison with other tafsīrs of its age. Many Sunni scholars praised it; for instance Suyūṭī writes: "He was a prominent Shia scholar who wrote a twenty-volume tafsīr

1. Qurān, 5:55.
2. Ṭibyān, v.5, p.599.
3. Ṭibyān, v.1, p.16.
4. Ibn Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, v.10, p.7.

and many other famous books."[1] AdNahway stated something similar to this in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*.[2]

It was rare to see a tafsīr in that age present contemporary discussions using rational reasoning in a comprehensive manner. But, when compared to contemporary tafsīrs (such as *al-Mīzān*) there are deficiencies with regards to explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān.

5. Ḥaqāyiq al-Tafsīr

Author: Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Salmī

Birth and death: 330-412

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Specialization: Mystic

Size: Four volumes

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Salmī was from Nayshābūr and was a Sufi Shaykh in Khurāsān. Ḥakīm Khurāsānī and Qashīrī obtained a large portion of their tafsīr material from him. He relied upon narrating mystic opinions and traditions in his tafsīr. He narrated many traditions from the Imams ('a), especially from Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq ('a). He writes the following after the verse:

﴿...وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ...﴾

"Consort with them in an honorable manner,"[3]

«قيل علّموهنّ السنن و الفرائض و قال عبدالله بن مبارك: العشرة الصحيحة ما لا تورثك الندم عاجلاً و آجلاً و قال ابوجعفر: المعاشرة بالمعروف حسن الخلق مع العيال فيما سأل»

"Consort with women in an honorable manner means that you should teach them the obligations and the *Sunnah*. 'Abdullah ibn Mubārak states: 'Living correctly with them means that one would not have regret in this world or the next.' It has been narrated from Imam Bāqir ('a) that living together in a righteous manner is showing good manners with your family when they have a request."[4]

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.8.
2. Ibid.
3. Qurān, 4:19.
4. Haqāyiq al-Tafsīr, v.2, p.143.

He writes the following after the verse:

﴿لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...﴾

"To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth,"[1]

«بيده مفاتيح القلوب يوفق من يشاء لطاعته و خدمته بالاخلاص و يصرف من يشاء عن بابه»

"What is meant is the keys of the heart. Allah gives whoever He desires the ability to be sincere in worship and servitude; and He turns whoever He desires away from Himself."[2]

Other tafsīrs

Some of the other tafsīrs of the fifth century that have been recorded are: *al-Bustān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Abū Sa'īd 'Umman (d.447) and *Tafsīr al-Tahdhīb* by Jushamī (d.494). He was a Zaydi and his tafsīr consists of eight volumes. Likewise, *Tafsīr al-Ḥadā'iq* by Ibn Bandār Qazwīnī (d.488). This tafsīr is a lengthy tafsīr. It has been said that one volume of this tafsīr was dedicated to the 102nd verse of Sūrah Baqarah which states:

﴿وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُو الشَّيَاطِينُ...﴾

"And they followed what the devils pursued."[3]

It has also been recorded that seven volumes were dedicated to Sūrah Fātiḥah and that the entire tafsīr comprised of 300 volumes.[4]

Sunni Tafsīrs

1. Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān

Author: Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Thal'abī

Death: 427

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional and analytical

Size: Ten volumes (it was printed for the first time in 1422)

Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Thal'abī was a jurisprudent, commentator of the Qur'ān, scholar of traditions, and grammarian. Many historians and commentators of the Qur'ān have

1. Qurān, 39:63, 42:12.
2. Haqāyiq al-Tafsīr, v.1, p.203.
3. Qurān, 2:102.
4. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, pgs.79-103.

praised him. His level of knowledge was even praised by some of those with strong ideological biases against him as well. Dhahabī considers him to be of the leaders of tafsīr and Arabic literature.[1]

Ibn Khalkān writes: "He was a scholar of rare qualities in the field of tafsīr during his age. His huge tafsīr was superior to all other tafsīrs."[2] The author of *Tārīkh Nayshābūr* praises Thal'abī and calls him trustworthy and precise in narration. He narrated from Abī Ṭāhir ibn Khaẓīmah and Imam Abī Bakr ibn Mahrān al-Maqrā'ī. Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī accepted his tafsīr and praised him by saying that he was a person who narrated many traditions and had many teachers. He passed away in the year 427. May Allah have mercy upon him and give him felicity.[3]

Thal'abī states that following about his tafsīr: "In addition to what I obtained from other valuable books and strong teachers, I paid attention to fourteen dimensions when compiling this book:

«قرائات، اسباب، نزول، قصص، امثال، لغت، اعراب، تفسیر، تأویل، معارف و احکام، حکم و ارشادات، فضایل و کرامات و...»

recitation, circumstances of revelation, stories, examples, etymology, vowel signs, tafsīr, the deeper meanings, divine understandings, divine rulings, advice, merits, miracles, etc.[4]

The intellectual points in regards to this tafsīr are:

1. The method of tafsīr used is a traditional method relying primarily on narrations.

2. Grammatical and etymological points are considered; the origins of the words are brought out and analyzed.

3. The verses which mention religious rulings are look at in a jurisprudential method, for instances the verses about temporary marriage, *tayammum*, greater sins, and touching women. These issues are discussed in great detail.

4. The merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) are mentioned. Sometimes the opinions that are in congruence with the Prophetic Household ('a) are intentionally chosen over others.

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn v.1, p.238.
2. Wafīyāt al-A`yān, v.1, p.38.
3. Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirān, v.1, p.238.
4. Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān, v.1, p.16.

For instance, after the following verse:

﴿يا أَيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...﴾

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord,"[1]

He narrates the tradition that states:

«من كنت مولاه فهذا علي مولاه اللهم وال من والاه»

"For whoever I am your master, this Ali is your master. O' Allah love those who love him." He also narrated how `Umar congratulated Imam Ali ('a) as well as a number of other traditions in this regard.[2] Likewise, after the verse:

﴿...قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَينِي وَبَينَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ﴾

"Say, 'Allah suffices as a witness between me and you, and he who possesses the knowledge of the Book,'"[3]

He mentioned the various opinions regarding the instance of 'he who possesses the knowledge of the book.' Some people considered it to be 'Abdullah ibn Salām and other people considered it to be other companions. The author of the books, proves through traditions that the real instance of this verse is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a).[4] Also, under the verse:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ...﴾

"And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah,"[5]

After listing most of the various Sunni opinions, he considered the best opinion to be that the verse was regarding Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a) and the '*Laylah al-Mubīt*' where he slept in the place of the Prophet (ṣ) in order to keep him safe.[6]

Crticisms of Tafsīr Thal'abī

There are two main criticisms of this tafsīr. They are:

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1. Qurān, 5:67.
2. Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān, v.4, p.92.
3. Qurān, 13:43.
4. Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān, v.5, p.303.
5. Qurān, 2:207.
6. Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān, v.2, p.125.

1. He did not refrain from narrating *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions. He related stories which cannot be accepted and which are weak. The tafsīr has been criticised extensively for this.

2. The jurisprudential discussions under the verses of divine rulings are so detailed that they are outside of the scope of a tafsīr; rather they are more suited for books of jurisprudence.

Dhahabī's opinions about Tafsīr Thal'abī

Dhahabī mentioned a few points about Thal'abī and his tafsīr. These points are:

1. Thal'abī's trustworthiness: Dhahabī narrates from Ismā`īl Fārsī who said: "He is credible in narration and trustworthy." In addition, Thal'abī was the teacher of Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī and was praised by him.

2. Thal'abī did not critically examine what he narrated from previous tafsīrs. He narrated many traditions with the chain of Sudday Ṣaghīr narrating from Kalbī narrating from 'Abbās - which is a weak chain.[1]

3. In regards to the verses about divine rulings (for instance wills, permissible and forbidden actions, temporary marriage, and the rulings regarding *janābah*) he would mention the various jurisprudential opinions and then choose one which he believed was correct.

4. Another characteristic is that he narrated many *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions, but did not examine their authenticity. Some very strange events are narrated in them. Thal'abī has written a book about the stories of the prophets and because of this he narrated many of the traditions which contain *Isrā'īlīyāt* stories.

Assessment

After Dhahabī accuses Thal'abī of forging many traditions he narrates from Ibn Taymīyah that there are credible, weak, and forged traditions in his tafsīr. Likewise, he considers Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī to be Thal'abī's student and while admitting that there are many

1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.243; Another criticism that Dhahabī mentions about Tafsīr Tha'labi is that he narrates the traditions of Ubay bin Ka'b about the merits of the Surahs of the Qurān. The issue of the traditions about the merits of the Surahs of the Qurān was mentioned in the discussion of the commentators of the Qurān amongst the Companions.

benefits to *Tafsīr Waḥīdi* he accuses him of transmitting false narrations. Then, he counts Waḥīdi and Thal'abī as being weak in the science of traditions because they narrate forged and false traditions in their stories.

Dhahabī writes: "Thal'abī was weak in traditions. He did not have the ability to decipher between the authentic and inauthentic traditions. The reason behind this is that in his tafsīr he narrates many Shia traditions (Dhahabī considers them forged by Ali and the Prophetic Household). All scholars have refrained from narrating such traditions."[1]

Criticism of Dhahabī: It is interesting that Dhahabī speaks well of *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* despite it being full of *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions. He stated that, since Ṭabarī mentioned the chains of narration, it is upon the reader to decide whether the traditions are authentic or not. But, here, not only does he not take this stance, he states that Thal'abī does not have the ability to decipher because he narrates Shia traditions. He clearly mentions that Thal'abī does not have the intellectual strength to recognize authentic traditions from amongst non-authentic traditions.

2. Al-Wāsiṭ fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Majīd

Author: Abul-Ḥasan Ali ibn Aḥmad Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī

Death: 468

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Volumes: Four

Abul-Ḥasan Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī was a prominent Sunni commentator of the Qur'ān in his age. He lived at the same time as Thal'abī and was his student. He was a strong poet and a specialist in Arabic literature. He also learned traditions and became a scholar of traditions during his age.

He wrote three tafsīrs: *Basīṭ*, *Wāsiṭ*, and *Wajīz*. The most important tafsīr was *al-Wāsiṭ fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*. This tafsīr was written in the order of the verses of the Qur'ān. There is a short introduction to it regarding tafsīr and tafsīr based on

1. Ibid, p.244.

personal opinion. The method of this tafsīr was purely traditional although in some cases there are grammatical and etymological explanations. Sometimes he mentions etymological points and sometimes he mentions the opinions of famous commentators of the Qur'ān under the title of 'the commentators of the Qur'ān said.' But, the majority of material used in this tafsīr are the traditions narrated by the companions and the Successors to the companions. For instance, after the verse:

﴿...وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ...﴾

"As for the faithless, their patrons are the Rebels,"[1]

he states:

«قال جميع اهل اللغة الطاغوت كل ما عبد من دون الله يكون واحداً و جمعاً و مؤنثاً و مذكراً وهو في الاصل مصدر نحو الرغبوت و الرهبوت قال ابن عباس و المفسرون الطاغوت الشيطان و قيل الاصنام»

"All etymologists state that '*ṭāghūt*' means whatever someone worships beside Allah; be it singular, plural, male, or female. Principally the term is in the infinitive state. Ibn 'Abbās and commentators of the Qur'ān state that '*ṭāghūt*' means Satan; some have said it means idols."[2]

Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī, in addition to the mentioned tafsīr, has written a book in regards to Qur'ānic sciences called *al-Taḥrīf 'an al-Qur'ān al-Sharīf*. He also wrote the book *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* in order to organize the traditions written about the circumstances of the revelation of verses of the Qur'ān. This is one of the most important Sunni sources in this regard. He also wrote: *Mughāzī*, *Sharḥ al-Asmā' al-Ḥusna*, and *Sharḥ Dīwān Mutanabbi*.[3]

3. Al-Nakt wa al- 'Uyūn

Author: Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad Ḥabīb Māwardī Baṣrī

Birth and death: 364-450

Language: Arabic

1. Qurān, 2:257.
2. Al-Wāsiṭ fī Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Majīd, v.1, p.369.
3. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.128; Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.66-67.

Method: Traditional and listing opinions

Size: Six volumes

Abū al-Ḥasan Māwardī was a Sunni jurisprudent and scholar who belonged to the Shāfi'ī sect. He was born in Basrah and learned Islamic sciences there. After this he migrated to Baghdad to teach and write books. He was a specialist in fields such as jurisprudence, literature, philosophy, and politics. He was given the title *Qāḍī ul-Qadāh* - the 'judge of judges' - in 429.

He wrote a small introduction to his tafsīr in which he discussed the name of the Qur'ān, the parts of the Qur'ān, the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, the miraculousness of the Qur'ān, and the methods of tafsīr.[1]

The method of tafsīr that he used was the traditional method. He narrated traditions mainly from the companions and the Successors. He would also narrate the opinions of the commentators of the Qur'ān. In his tafsīr he would divide the verse into a few sentences. Then, after mentioning the discussions of Arabic literature and analyzing the various opinions about the verse, he would describe each sentence. For instance, he states the following about the verse:

﴿حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ...﴾

"Be watchful of your prayers,"[2] that

«في المحافظة عليها قولان أحدهما: ذكرها و الثاني تعجيلها»

"There are two opinions about the meaning of 'watchful.' The first is opinion is that it means to remember your prayers and the second is that it means to recite your prayers at the beginning of their times."[3]

4. Al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz

Author: Ibn 'Aṭīyah Andalusī

Death: 543

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional-analytical

Size: One volume

Abū Muhammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq ibn Ghālib ibn 'Aṭīyah Andalusī

1. Al-Nakat wa al-`Uyūn, v.1, pgs.13-43.
2. Qurān, 2:238.
3. Al-Nakat wa al-`Uyūn, v.1, p.307.

Maghribī Gharnāṭī (d.543) was a scholar in tafsīr, traditions, jurisprudence, and literature who lived in Egypt. He was famously known as Qāḍī al-Qāḍāh, 'the Judge of Judges'. This tafsīr is one of the most well researched tafsīr written in the traditional method. While narrating traditions he did not refrain from critiquing them and carrying out further research. He compiled the traditions using *Dirāyah*. The method applied to this tradition is a traditional method, but recitation, etymology, and who the verse addresses were also given importance. In addition to this, the tafsīr also criticizes and analyzes various material contained therein.

Ibn Khaldūn wrote about this tafsīr: "Many people have written tafsīrs and collected the works of the companions and the Successors until they reached such heights as Ṭabarī, Waqīdī, and Thal'abī. But, their narrations contain both authentic and non-authentic traditions. This is why it has been said that those tafsīrs have been written by the Jewish Muslims. This continued until the age of research. Abū Muhammad ibn `Aṭīyah criticized and examined the narrations and chose whatever was authentic."[1]

One of the main problems with Qur'ānic stories was that there were many Isrā'īlīyāt and superstitious traditions inserted into them through aḥadīth. This was seen in all of the tafsīrs of the time. It can be said that this tafsīr was the first one to completely dismiss superstitious and Isrā'īlīyāt traditions.[2]

Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, the author of *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*, compares the tafsīr of Ibn 'Aṭīyah and *Tafsīr Kashshāf*. He writes: "Ibn 'Aṭīyah's book *Tafsīr al-Wajīz* is more comprehensive and more sincere in narration; while Zamakhsharī's book is chosen more carefully and deeper."[3]

The introduction to this tafsīr covers ten of the discussions mentioned in Qur'ānic sciences. They are: The merits of the Qur'ān, The importance of tafsīr, precaution in tafsīr and the stages of commentators of the Qur'ān being led by Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a), the traditions of the

1. Ibn Khaldūn, Muqadamah Tārikh bin Khaldūn, pgs.439-440.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawb al-Qashīb, v.2, p.344.
3. Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, v.1, p.10.

'Seven Letters,' The compilation of the Qur'ān and its history, The words used in the Qur'ān and its miraculous nature, The role of the Qur'ān, The names of the Qur'ān, sūrahs, and verses, [the concept of] seeking divine refuge, and the statement 'in the name of God.'

This tafsīr was written in a traditional method, but it was coupled with examination about recitation, etymology, and making note of the Qur'ān's addressees. In many cases the phrase: 'al-Qāḍī Abū Muhammad said' is used. He benefited greatly from the Imams ('a) in his tafsīr and speaks about Imams Ali, Bāqir, Ṣādiq, Sajjād, and Kāzim ('a).

He narrates traditions from the Imams ('a) and sometimes attests to them, especially Imam Ali ('a). But, in some cases he was cautious of writing about his merits. This means that he would narrate their merits but would not chose which opinion – the opinion stating their merits or other opinions – he sided with. For instance, one can refer to:

1. In regards to the circumstances of revelation of the verse of purity[1], he states that it is about the five members of the Prophetic Household ('a) and states that the traditions show that this is the popular opinion. But, he also presents the possibility that it could include the wives of the Prophet (ṣ) as well. Then, he narrates the tradition from Umm Salmah where the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) does not consider her to be of the Prophetic Household. He finishes the discussion without clarifying what the correct view is.[2]

2. In regards to the *wilāyah* verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَ...﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah..."[3] he narrates the traditions where Imam Ali ('a) gives his ring in charity while bowing down in rukū' and also states that the Prophet (ṣ) announced that this verse was revealed in regards to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. But, he then finishes this explanation without choosing which opinion is the best opinion.[4]

1. Qurān, 33:33.
2. Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz, v.4, p.384.
3. Qurān, 5:55.
4. Ibid, v.2, pgs.208-209.

5. Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

Author: Abū al-Muẓẓafar Sam`ānī, Manṣūr ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār Tamīmī Marūzī

Birth and death: 426-489

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional; simple with a leaning towards literature

Size: Six volumes

Sam`ānī, the author of this tafsīr, was a Shāfi'ī mufti in the fifth century. He was a hardline Sunni who rabidly defended the Salaf from criticism.[1] This tafsīr presented material in a very simple format in chronological order. He would sometimes mention the various recitations that a verse would have, but his method was a traditional method in which he would narrate from the companions and the Successors. He would sometimes raise etymological points after some verses. This tafsīr, as was mentioned, was presented in simple language without any criticisms, analysis, or reasoning. For instance, the author wrote after the verse:

﴿...وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِي...﴾

"We charged Abraham and Ishmael [with its upkeep, saying], 'Purify My House for those who go around it,"[2] that: "Charged (*'ahidnā*) means ordered and the term *`ahd* in the verse means commanded. The name Ishmael (*Ismā`īl*) was originally *Isma' Il* meaning that Abraham asked for a child from Allah in order to provide sustenance for him. He would state *Isma' Il* and since Allah provided him with a son he called him Ismā`īl. 'Purify my house' means that Abraham and Ismā`īl should clear it of idols."[3]

6. Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt

Author: Abū al-Qāsim ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawazun Qashīrī Nayshābūrī

Birth and death: 376-448

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Mysticism

Size: Two volumes

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1. Tafsīr al-Qurān, v.1, p.13.
2. Qurān, 2:125.
3. Tafsīr al-Qurān, v.1, p.187.

This tafsīr is famously known as *Tafsīr Qashīrī*. Its author was a Sufi Shaykh from Khurāsān. He was also a scholar of traditions and a jurisprudent of the Shāfi'ī sect who held Asharite theological views. He studied Sufism under Abū Ali Daqqāq and benefited greatly from Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Salmī.[1] He wrote his tafsīr with mystic explanations and points. He states the following after the verse:

﴿...أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ﴾

"Purify My House for those who go around it, [for] those who make it a retreat and [for] those who bow and prostrate,"[2] that:

«الامر في الظاهر بتطهير البيت والاشارة من الآية الى تطهير البيت بصونه عن الادناس و الاوضار و تطهير القلب بحفظه عن ملاحظة الاجناس الاغيار»

"Although the apparent meaning of the command to purify is of the house; it really means the purification of the heart. Purifying the house is protecting it from dirtiness and ugliness; while purifying the heart is protecting it from anything other than Allah."[3]

All that Qashīrī wanted to do was to correlate Sufi laws and principles with the Qur'ān and to prove that Sufi laws and principles stem from the Qur'ān; that it was not influenced by foreign movements or Greek or Indian philosophies.[4] In addition to *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt* he wrote *al-Taysir fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr*, *Rijāl al-Ṭarīqah*, *Naḥw al-Qulūb* as well as other books in other fields.[5]

7. Tafsīr Abū Ali Sīnā

Abū 'Abdullah Ḥusayn ibn 'Abdullah ibn Sīnā, famously known as *Shaykh al-Ra'īs* (d.428) was the most significant philosopher and physician of the fifth century. He did not write an independent tafsīr, but mentioned tafsīr points sporadically about *Sūrahs Fātiḥah*, *Tawḥīd*, *Falaq*, *Nās*, the verse of light, the first verse of *Sūrah Dukhān*,

1. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasirin, p.126.
2. Qur'ān 2:125.
3. Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt, v.1, p.136.
4. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.550.
5. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasirīn, p.127.

and the eleventh verse of *Sūrah Fuṣilat*.[1] He explained these verses in a mystic way adding some of his own thoughts about them.

Other tafsīrs

Aḥmad ibn Muhammad Adnahway listed about sixty commentators of the Qur'ān in this century in the book *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*. The most important of them were introduced and some others are: Abū Hilāl 'Askarī[2] (Ḥasan ibn 'Abdullah) who was a famous grammarian and poet. It is famously known that he wrote a five volume tafsīr called *Tafsīr 'Askarī*. Hibbah Allah Baghdadī wrote a tafsīr and the book *Nāsikh wa Mansūkh*. 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan Hamadānī Asadābādī was a Mutazilite and wrote a tafsīr. Bayḍāwī said: "I saw his tafsīr which was sized appropriately." Other tafsīrs were written by Abū Bakr Balkhī, famously known as Rawās, which was a large tafsīr, Abū Dhar Harūwī Anṣāri, and Muhammad ibn Ali Abu Muslim Iṣfahānī (d.459), who was a grammarian, theologian, and commentator of the Qur'ān belonging to the Mutazilite sect. He wrote a twenty-volume tafsīr specializing in theology. This tafsīr was given importance to by many commentators of the Qur'ān, for instance Shaykh Ṭūsī and 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawazun, the eldest son of Qashīrī Nayshābūrī. After his father, he held a high station in mysticism. He was a precise commentator of the Qur'ān, able linguist, and a famous personality in debates and advice.[3]

Summary

1. Two opposing characteristics existed in the fifth century: A, fighting and fire-blazing. The library in Baghdad along with many intellectual legacies were stolen and then set on fire by Tughral Beg, the first Seljuk king. B, Shia scholars such as Shaykh Mufīd, Sayyid Murtaḍa, Sayyid Radi, and Shaykh Ṭūsī and Sunni scholars such as Ḥakīm Nayshābūrī, the author of *Mustadrak*, Bayhaqī, the author of *Sunan Kubra*, Thal'abī, and Waḥīdi Nayshābūrī all lived in this era.

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1. `Aqīqī Nayshābūrī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, pgs.59-60.
2. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.95-147.
3. Ibid, p.135.

2. The differences of the theological sects increased in this century. Sunni sects such as the Asharites, Mutazilites, and Matridi started to fight each other. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Abū Bakr Bāqilānī also lived in this era.

3. More than one hundred tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed from this century. Close to sixty commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn* by AdNahway and more than forty commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed in *Ṭabaqāt Muffasirān Shia* by ʿAqīqī Bakhshāyishī.

4. The most important Shia tafsīrs are: *Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* by Sayyid Radi (d.406), which is an *Ijtihādī*, intellectual, grammatical, and analytical tafsīr and was praised by Shia and Sunni scholars. This tafsīr was written specializing in theology and literature. It is unfortunate that only one out of ten parts of this tafsīr exists. Another tafsīr is *Amālī* by Sayyid Murtaḍa (d.434). Although this is not actually a tafsīr, it is comprised of explanations of verses of the Qur'ān and has been praised by Sunni and Shia scholars. The biggest Shia tafsīr of the century was *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī (d.468) which was written in an *Ijtihādī* method and had a specialization in theology. It is a ten-volume work in which Shaykh Ṭūsī defended Shia beliefs using an analytical and rational approach. He presented traditions from the Prophetic Household (ʿa) and their opinions while observing the normal discussions (grammatical discussions) that were conventional at the time. He also narrated the opinions of the companions and the Successors to the companions. Shaykh Ṭūsī presented the tafsīr and theological discussions in a comprehensive and *Ijtihādī* method while criticizing the opposing opinions.

5. The Sunni tafsīrs were mainly written in the traditional method, for instance, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf wa al-Bayān* by Thalʿabī which was recently printed in ten volumes and which rightfully mentions and defends the opinions of the Prophetic Household (ʿa). Dhahabī, due to his fanaticism, attacked Thalʿabī. Isrā'īlīyāt traditions exist in this tafsīr. *Tafsīr al-Wāsiṭ* by Abul-Ḥasan Nayshābūrī is a traditional tafsīr which sometimes mentions grammatical and etymological points. He was a student of Thalʿabī.

Another tafsīr is *al-Nakt wa al-'Uyūn* by Māwardī. This tafsīr is also a traditional tafsīr which presented most of the opinions regarding the verses. Its main characteristic is the simplicity of its composition without grammatical points or analysis. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sam`ānī was also a traditional tafsīr written in this century.

Questions and Research Points

1. Explain the two opposing conditions that existed in the fifth century.

2. Provide an explanation about the various theological sects which existed in this century and the commentators of the Qur'ān from these sects.

3. What was the name of the tafsīr that Sayyid Raḍī wrote? What station does this tafsīr have? What are its characteristics?

4. What are the most famous Shia tafsīrs of the fifth century?

5. Provide a detailed description of *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī.

6. Introduce two mystic tafsīrs of the fifth century.

7. What was the name of the tafsīr that Thal'abī wrote? What are its characteristics and criticisms?

8. What was Dhahabī's opinion about Thal'abī's tafsīr? What are the criticisms to this opinion?

9. Who wrote *Tafsīr al-Wāsiṭ* and *al-Nakt wa al-'Uyūn*? What tafsīr did Sam`ānī write? What method was used for these tafsīrs?

10. Provide an explanation about the tafsīr written by Ibn `Aṭīyah and its characteristics.

11. Use the books *Ṭibyān* (introduction), by Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qur'ān Majīd wa Muffasirān* by Riḍā Ustādī, *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* (introduction) by Ibn 'Aṭīyah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb*, v.2, by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, and *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* by Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī to examine and compare the opinions of Shaykh Ṭūsī and Ibn 'Aṭīyah which are given in the introductions to their tafsīrs.

10
Tafsīr in the Sixth Century

Objectives of this chapter: 1.Familiarity with the diversity of tafsīrs that were seen in the sixth century. 2. Familiarity with the *Ijtihādī* tafsīrs written by Shia and Sunni commentators.

The diverse tafsīrs of the sixth century

As previously mentioned, the development of rational sciences and crystallization of theology during the fifth century started the *Ijtihādī* movement amongst Muslim scholars. This created the groundwork for *Ijtihādī*, as well as diverse tafsīrs written in various methods in the sixth century. The following points are relevant in depicting the expansion of tafsīr in the sixth century:

1. Close to ninety tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed for this century. AdNahway lists about seventy of them in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*[1] and 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī lists twenty tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān [for this era].[2]

2. The tafsīrs written in this century were comprehensive and *Ijtihādī*; they were unprecedented in scope. The following tafsīrs are particularly indicative of this trend: *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarasī, *Kashshāf* by Zamakhsharī, and *Rūḥ al-Janān* by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī.

3. The diversity of tafsīrs, new methods adopted in their writing and many specializations in the field are also noteworthy. *Majma' al-Bayān* was written in the *Ijtihādī* method with a specialization in theology, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* was written using the grammatical and

1. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.148-210.
2. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn Shia, v.2, pgs.107-190.

theological methodology, *Tafsīr Kashf al-Asrār* by Maybidī was written using the mystical methodology, and *Mufradāt* by Rāghib Iṣfahānī was written from an etymological standpoint. These are the most important tafsīrs of this century.

4. The Farsi language expanded in this century and caused some of the commentators of the Qur'ān to write their tafsīrs in Farsi in order to provide Farsi speaking people access to Qur'ānic knowledge in their native tongue. *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Janān* by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī and *Kashf al-Asrār* by Maybidī (d.520) were of this nature.

Shia Tafsīrs

1. Majma' al-Bayān

Author: Abū Ali Faḍl ibn Ḥasan Ṭabarasī

Death: 548

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Theological and grammatical

Size: Ten volumes

'Allāmah Ṭabarasī, famously known as Amīn al-Islam Ṭabarasī[1] was born in 468 and died in 547. A prominent scholar of the sixth century and a famous commentator on the Qur'ān, he began writing *Majma' Al-Bayān* in 530 when he was 62 years old at the request of Muhammad ibn Yaḥya, the head of the Sayyids in Sabzavār. It took him six years to complete.

A Comparison of Majma' al-Bayān and Ṭibyān

Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān was taken from *Tafsīr Ṭibyān*. The only tafsīr of that age that he accepted was *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* of Shaykh Ṭūsī due to its comprehensiveness. However, he criticized it for not being organized and for having problems with some of the grammatical

1. Ṭabarasī is the name of a few people. The author of Makārim al-Akhlāq, Abū Naṣr Ḥasan bin Faḍl (the author of Majma' al-Bayān), the author of Mashkāh al-Anwār which was written by the son of the second Ṭabarasī, and the fourth Ṭabarasī was the author of Iḥtijāj, Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad bin Ali bin Abī Ṭālib (sixth century). There is a difference of opinion as to whether Ṭabarasī was from Ṭabarīstan or the term is an arabicized word for Tafrīsh. Refer to the research by Dr. Abū al-Qāsim Gurjī in this matter found in the introduction to Jawāma' al-Jāmi'.

discussions and some other issues raised in the tafsīr. Therefore, Ṭabarasī did not take this tafsīr to heart and he started editing and correcting it which resulted in *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān.*[1] He did not suffice with the subject-matter provided in *Tafsīr Ṭibyān*; rather he added grammatical points and sometimes circumstances of the revelation of verses. He also corrected Shaykh Ṭūsī is some areas. Therefore, *Majma' al-Bayān* is similar to *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* with more precise grammatical points, with the addition of a phlethora of poems supporting the grammatical points that were made. More importantly, *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān* separated each section and give each section a title. The etymological, circumstances of revelation, authoritativeness, recitations, and tafsīr discussions were separated from each other which was not the case in *Tafsīr Ṭibyān.*

This tafsīr was printed many times and holds a special place amongst the Sunnis as well. Sunni scholars such as Dhahabī wrote in *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*[2] and Shaykh Muhammad Shaltūt, the former mufti of Egypt, wrote in his introduction to *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān* that *Majma' al-Bayān* was one of the most valuable tafsīrs in its organization and subject-matter.

The author of this tafsīr also wrote *Tafsīr al-Kāf al-Shāf* and *Jawāma' al-Jāmi'*. After he read *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhsharī, which was full of grammatical points, he decided to write a tafsīr in that same method while defending Shia beliefs.

Introduction to Majma' Al-Bayān

The late Ṭabarasī mentioned some important discussions in the field of Qur'ānic sciences in his introduction. After opening a discourse on knowledge, with the knowledge of tafsīr in particular and the motivation that he had to write this book, he discussed seven specializations:

1. The number of the verses of the Qur'ān and their calculation by renowned commentators of the Qur'ān from Mecca, Medina, Basrah, Damascus, and Kūfah. He considers the most credible of them to be the numbers presented by the Kufan commentators of the Qur'ān which are attributed to Imam Ali ('a).

1. Majma' al-Bayān, pgs.73-74.
2. Al-Tafsīr was al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.101; Ṭabarasī, Majma` al-Bayān, p.3.

2. He introduces the famous Qur'ān reciters according to their geographical distribution. While doing this, he discusses the assertion of the Qur'ān being revealed in seven letters deems it to stem from Sunni views. He provides seven arguments for his claim.

3. He discusses the meaning of tafsīr, thinking about Qur'ānic verses, the correct method of tafsīr, the usage of traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a), the prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion, and the Qur'ān being referred to as the principal reference point.

4. The names of the Qur'ān, their meanings, and the organization of the chapters of the Qur'ān.

5. The miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, the nonexistence of distortion in the Qur'ān, and the compilation of the Qur'ān in the present format and during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ).

6. The merits of the Qur'ān and its carriers.

7. Recitation of the Qur'ān in a beautiful voice.[1]

Methodology: The method that he used, following the footsteps of *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī, was a comprehensive and *Ijtihādī* method.[2] He gave particular attention to Arabic literature and theology.

Practical method: Ṭabarasī observed organization while presenting his subject-matter. At the beginning of each *Sūrah* he would mention if it was revealed in Mecca or Medina, how many verses it has, and if there are any differences of opinions in this regard. He would then mention the merits of the *Sūrah*, the recitation, and the differences of opinion regarding the recitation of certain verses. The term '*lahjah*' used in this tafsīr means authority and an explanation of how each letter is recited. The term '*lughah*' refers to the etymology of Qur'ānic terms. Then, the '*irab*' or grammatical points of the verses are presented. The term '*al-Nuzūl*' is then used to discuss the circumstances of revelation and the term '*al-ma'na*' is used to discuss

1. Ṭabarasī, Majma' al-Bayān, v.1, pgs.73-86.
2. It is possible that, since Ṭabarasī mentioned many of the opinions of the Companions and the Successors of the companions in Majma' al-Bayān, the Sunnis would consider this to be a traditional Tafsīr. However, he did not suffice himself in this regard, rather he criticized and analyzed them as well. In addition, if the opinions of the companions and the Successors were not narrated in Ṭabarasī's age it would be considered a non-intellectual, incomplete, and weak Tafsīr.

the tafsīr of the verse and the various existing opinions. He divides each verse into a few sentences and then explains them. This tafsīr is unique with regards to the attention paid to organizing the information therein.

Ṭabarasī presents the grammatical and recitation discussions in a specialized format. He also makes note of Shia jurisprudential opinions, along with defending the theological beliefs of the Shia.

Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān has been translated by Muhammad Mufattaḥ, Aḥmad Bihishtī, Ḥusayn Nūrī, Muhammad Rāzī, and Ḍīyā' al-Dīn Najafī into Farsi in thirty volumes. These translations have been printed by numerous publication houses. Recently, Shaykh Karamī presented a translation of it that was printed by the Islamic Propagation Organization of Iran.

2. Rawḍ al-Janān wa Rūḥ al-Janān

Author: Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī

Death: Between 556-560

Language: Farsi

Method: *Ijtihādī* and comprehensive

Specialization: Theological, mystic, and grammatical

Size: a five volume set and a twenty volume set

The author, Ḥusayn ibn Ali ibn Aḥmad Khazā'ī Rāzī Nayshābūrī, famously known as Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī (a precise account of the date of this death does not exist, but it was most likely between the years of 556-560) was a scholar of the sixth century. Another name of this tafsīr is *Rūḥ al-Janān wa Raw al-Janān*. It became one of the most famous Farsi tafsīrs ever written and was well-known for its eloquent style. This tafsīr is a text used for Farsi literature. In the introduction, the author states that one of the motives for writing this tafsīr was to be a religious service to the Farsi speaking people.

This tafsīr is similar to *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī and *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān* in regards to its subject matter. However practically, it was similar to *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* in that the discussions were not separated and presented without proper organization. The author lived at the same time as Zamakhsharī and he probably used information given to him by Zamakhsharī, such as the famous tradition:

«من مات على حب ال محمد مات شهيدا»

"Whoever dies upon the love of the family of Muhammad dies the death of a martyr."

His method, similar to *Ṭibyān*, was an *Ijtihādī* method although he relates grammatical, theological, mystical, and sometimes Sufi[1] discussions as well. Likewise, he also alludes to historical, jurisprudential, and ethical discussions.

His practical method was that he would first mention the chapter. Then, he would translate the verses and discuss the recitations, number of verses, and whether the Sūrah was revealed in Mecca or Medina. Then he would define the terms and examine grammatical points. He would then benefit from mentioning other verses, traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a), and opinions of the companions and the Successors to the companions. These issues are however discussed sporadically under the verses. It became clear that this tafsīr extensively used *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī in his tafsīr.

Ustān Quds Raḍawī has printed this tafsīr in twenty volumes.

3. Fiqh al-Qur'ān

Author: Quṭb al-Dīn Sa'īd ibn 'Abdullah Rawandī

Death: 573

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional, analytical

Size: Two volumes

Sa'īd ibn Hibballah Rawandī, famously known as Quṭb Rawandī was from Rawand, Kāshān. He was a prominent Shia scholar, jurisprudent, grammarian, poet, commentator of the Qur'ān, and philosopher of his time. He wrote many books; close to sixty books have been attributed to him. The majority of his books are about jurisprudence and grammar. His most famous book is *Fiqh al-Qur'ān*, although *Asbāb Nuzūl*, *Khulāṣah al-Tafāsīr*, and *Sharḥ Ayāt al-Aḥkām* are also Qur'ānic works of his.[2] The motivating force behind his writing this book was that there was no independent book regarding Qur'ānic jurisprudence.

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1. Rūḥ al-Janān wa Rūḥ al-Janān, v.1, pgs.282 and 404.
2. Introduction to this Tafsīr, Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, v.1, p.20.

This book is organized in the organization of jurisprudential rulings starting from ritual purity (*ṭahārah*) and ending at the final subject of jurisprudence.

He used the verses and traditions of the Prophetic Household ('a) as his method of writing the tafsīr, although he also narrated traditions from the Successors and some companions. Likewise, he discussed opinions pertaining to tafsīr, but would moreso examine and analyze the traditions.

The source of the tafsīr, as is mentioned in the short introduction that he wrote, are the traditions of the previous scholars and the strong and weak opinions of the commentators of the Qur'ān. He considered analogy to be invalid and *Ijtihād* reasoning from the four Shia sources (Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, 'Aql and 'Ijmā) to be permissible in this introduction. He then discussed the authoritativeness of the four arguments and five Qur'ānic discussions: the general and the specific verses, the definitive and the allegorical verses, the unclear and the explained verses, the unconditioned and the conditioned verses, and the verses which abrogate and the verses which have been abrogated.[1] This book was printed in two volumes by the Ayatullah Mar'ashī Najafī Publication House along with research by Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, who also wrote an introduction to it.

4. Mutashābih al-Qur'ān

Author: Rashīd al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shahrāshūb Mazāndarānī

Death: 558

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*, analytical, argumentative

Size: 1 or 2 volumes

Ibn Shahrāshūb was a scholar, a specialist in Arabic literature, and a prominent figure in tafsīr and Qur'ānic sciences of the sixth century. Suyūṭī praises him in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*. He writes: "Ibn Shahrāshūb had strong opinions, a beautiful face, truthful words, a charming tongue, extraordinary knowledge, abundant humility and worship, and was always in a state of ritual purity (*ṭahārah*)."[2]

1. Fiqh al-Qurān, v.1, pgs.6-7.
2. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.37.

He wrote other books as well, for example: *Manāqib Al Abī Ṭālib*, *Mu'ālim al-'Ulamā*, and *al-Asbāb wa al-Nuzūl 'ala Madhab Al al-Rasūl*.

The author presents the allegorical verses in *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* in a contextual method revolving around the basic Islamic principles (the oneness of Allah, Allah's attributes, such as justice, positive attributes, and negative attributes, prophethood, *imamah*, and the hereafter).[1] He presents these discussions in chapters. In each chapter the verses of a certain subject are gathered and analyzed. They are explained using other verses of the Qur'ān, traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a), and opinions of the companions and the Successors. At the end of the book he presents literary points such as sentence change, metaphors, figurativeness, the meanings of the term Qur'ān. He has also added a miscellaneous chapter which discusses various assorted issues.'

In addition to the tafsīrs of this century that were mentioned, *al-Muntakhab min Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Ibn Idrīs Ḥillī (d.598), the author of the famous book *al-Sarā'ir*, was also written. This tafsīr does not explain every verse of the Qur'ān and is, in reality, a commentary on *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī which was printed in two volumes. *Tafsīr Mukhtasir al-Ṭibyān* by Ibn Kayyāl (d.597), *Tafsīr Jāmi' al-'Ulūm* by Bāqūlī Iṣfahānī, and *al-Tanwīr fī Ma'ānī al-Tafsīr* by Fattāl Nayshābūrī (d.508) were other notable tafsīrs which were prevalent in Shia intellectual circles.

Sunni Tafsīrs

1. Al-Kashshāf

Author: Jārallah Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar Zamakhsharī

Death: 538

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Literary and theological

Size: Four and six volumes

Jārallah Zamakhsharī was born in 467 at the end of the Abbāsid caliphate in Kharazum. He lived in Kharazum which is where the Kharazumiyah government (470-628) reigned. At that time this city was an important centre of knowledge and Arabic literature. After he

1. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, p.173.

studied Islamic sciences he lived for some time in Baghdad and then moved to Mecca. This is why he is famously known as Jārallah (God's neighbor). He passed away in Jurjānīyah. *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* was written at the end of his life in Mecca. Zamakhsharī also wrote other books, the most important of which are *Kashshāf* and *Asās al-Balāghah* which is about rhetoric.

The foundational outlook that Zamakhsharī had when explaining the verses of the Qur'ān was a literary one. He also presented theological discussions. He claimed that if one does not have adequate knowledge about etymology he should not enter the field of tafsīr. He wrote: "Jurists, theologians, advisors, grammarians, and linguists who are superior to all other scholars in their own field, do not have a precise and correct sense of understanding. They will not reach reality unless they specialize in two fields that are connected with the Qur'ān: Arabic rhetoric and Arabic prose."

Tafsīr al-Kashshāf was praised by many scholars. Suyūṭī writes: "A number of scholars understand the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān through their knowledge of Arabic eloquence. The author of *al-Kashshāf* was the master of this method and that is why his book is extensively read in the east and the west."[1]

The late Ṭabarasī lived at the same time as Zamakhsharī, but when he read *Kashshāf* he accepted it and decided to summarize it and add Shia opinions to it. This is why he wrote *Jawāmaā al-Jāmi'*. Many scholars used *al-Kashshāf* and even took it as their own tafsīr text, for instance Bayḍāwī and Fakhr Rāzī. In addition to this, about forty Shias and Sunnis wrote commentaries on this tafsīr which proves its importance.

Merits

This tafsīr has many merits when compared to other tafsīrs. Some of these merits are:

1. It does not have extra material.

2. It does not narrate Isrā'īlīyāt traditions; he does mention the stories of David and Solomon, but then corrects them.

3. He stresses the etymology of Arabic words.

1. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.105.

4. He presents the literary miracles of the Qur'ān in a beautiful, precise, and academic manner.

5. He presents many of the discourses in question and answer format.[1]

Sources of Kashshāf

Zamakhsharī relied upon many sources when composing *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*. The most important sources that he used in the field of Arabic literature were the works of Zajjāj (d.311) and *Tafsīr Rummānī*. The sources he used for traditions were *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. But, in regards to the tafsīr sources that he used, one sees the names of companions and the Successors to the companions a lot, for instance the tafsīrs written by Mujāhid, 'Amr ibn 'Abid Mu'tazili, Qatādah, Abū Bakr 'Aṣim Mu'tazili, Rummānī, and Sudday.

He showed respect towards the Prophetic Household ('a) and narrated many traditions stating their merits. He narrated the tradition:

«من مات على حب ال محمد مات شهيدا...»

"Whoever dies upon the love of the progeny of Muhammad dies the death of a martyr," after the 23rd verse of *Sūrah Shūra*.

He supported the Mutazilite sect while still presenting the opposing opinions of the Asharites. This is why some scholars claimed he was Shia. Ayatullah Ma'rifat states that he did not belong to any sect; rather his outlook on the Qur'ān was the outlook of an independent scholar. He states: "The outlook that Zamakhsharī has in regards to the verses of the Qur'ān is an outlook held by a schooled scholar of Arabic literature. His understanding of the verses is an understanding of a deep intellectual that does not belong to any theological sect. Zamakhsharī, as he was accused, did not look at the verses of the Qur'ān as a Mutazilite; rather he looked at the verses of the Qur'ān as an independent scholar who analyzed the verses of the Qur'ān in accordance to his Arabic taste. This is what the followers of Asharite theology solicited him for."[2]

For instance, regarding seeing Allah, as mentioned in the verse:

﴿وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ﴾

1. Introduction to al-Kashāf, v.1, p.4.
2. Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirān, v.2, p.509.

"Some faces will be fresh on that day,"[1] he uses other verses of the Qur'ān and grammatical points to show that the verse cannot denote witnessing the True Essence. It would be impossible to do that.[2]

Likewise, in discussions of Arabic eloquence it seems as if he surpassed all other commentators of the Qur'ān. He proves the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān in many verses, such as:

﴿وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ...﴾

"There is life for you in retribution."[3] He writes: "This verse is an example of eloquence and *faṣāḥah*; there is a precise however implicit subtlty in it. Two things that are opposite in nature are combined together: retribution (*qaṣāṣ*) which means murder and taking a life and life, whereas the retribution is presented as the place of life." Then he beautifully mentions rhetorical points of the verse.[4]

Zamakhsharī and the Prophetic Household ('a)

One of the reasons that this tafsīr was accepted by the Shia is the importance that the author gave to narrating the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a). For instance, under the verse of *Mubāhilah* he narrates the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) just as a Shia commentator of the Qur'ān would.[5] Furthermore, in Sūrah Insan under the verse which states:

﴿وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ...﴾

'and they fed them...' merits were narrated.[6] One of the sources of pride for Zamakhsharī in *Kashshāf* is that under the verse of Love[7] he narrates the tradition:

«من مات على حب ال محمد مات شهيدا»

"Whoever dies upon the love of the family of Muhammad dies the death of a martyr," although he narrated it from Thal'abī.[8]

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1. Qurān, 75:22.
2. Zamakhshirī, Kashāf, v.4, p.662.
3. Qurān, 2:179.
4. Kashāf, v.1, p.222.
5. Ibid, p.368.
6. Ibid, v.4, p.220.
7. Qurān, 42:23.
8. In some cases Zamakhshirī commentated on the Qurān as a Sunni would, for instance he did not say anything about the verse 5:67.

2. Mu 'ālim al-Tanzīl

Author: Abū Muhammad Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd Baghūwī

Death: 516

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional with explanation

Size: Two, four, and eight volumes

The author was a Shāfi'ī scholar, jurisprudent, scholar of traditions, and commentator of the Qur'ān. He was given the titles: 'The reviver of the Sunnah' and 'The pillar of religion.' He was also called Abū Muhammad Farrā on occasion.[1] The name of this tafsīr is *Mu'ālim al-Tanzīl fī al-Tafsīr wa al-Ta'wīl* famously known as *Tafsīr Baghūwī*. He and his tafsīr have been praised. Ibn Taymīyah considers his tafsīr to be a summary of *Tafsīr Thal'abī* with the difference that it omits forged traditions. He was asked which tafsīr from amongst *Tafsīr Zamakhshirī*, *Tafsīr Qurṭābī*, and *Tafsīr Baghūwī* was the closest to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Ibn Taymīyah responded: "*Tafsīr Baghūwī* is the best tafsīr from those that were mentioned in that it remained free from innovation and forged traditions."[2]

This tafsīr has a very short introduction where the following topics are covered: a history of tafsīr amongst the companions and the Successors, the merits of the Qur'ān, learning and teaching the Qur'ān, the merits of reciting the Qur'ān, and the prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion. He also briefly looked into the meanings of tafsīr, *Ta'wīl*, the Qur'ān being revealed in seven letters, and the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the verses.[3]

Methodology: The method that he applied was the traditional method. He narrated traditions from other tafsīrs along with their chains of narration. But, he also provided a commentary on the verses in order for them to be understood. He would also mention the opinions of the commentators of the Qur'ān about most of the verses, but he rarely used other verses of the Qur'ān to explain them. For instance, he uses the 99th verse of Sūrah Isrā' to explain the 57th verse of Sūrah Ghāfir.[4]

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1. Yūsuf 'Abd al-Raḥman Mar'ashī, Fihrist Aḥādīth Tafsīr al-Baghūwī, p.3.
2. Ibid.
3. Mu 'ālim al-Tanzīl, v.1, pgs.33-47.
4. Ibid, v.5, p.138.

Baghūwī and the Prophetic Household ('a)

He did not mention anything about Imam Ali ('a) in the verses about authority (for instance 2:207[1] and 5:3[2]). But, under the verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ...﴾

"Your guardian is only Allah,"[3] the phrase

﴿...وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا...﴾

"and the faithful" is explained as Imam Ali ('a). Then he mentions the story when the beggar came to the mosque and Imam Ali gave him his ring while in *rukū* '.[4] Also, under the verse:

﴿وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ...﴾

"And they fed them..." there is no mention of the Prophetic Household ('a). One tradition is narrated where Imam Ali ('a) divides his bread, which he borrowed money to buy, into three parts and gave one-third of the bread to one impoverished person, one orphan, and one polytheistic captive.[5] Baghūwī considers the verse of *Mubāhilah* to be about the five members of the Prophetic Household ('a). In any case, these types of narrations show that he wanted to bring Imam Ali ('a) to people's attention, but he did not care much for any of the other members of the Prophetic Household ('a).

4. Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr

Author: Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jawzī

Death: 597

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional-analytical with a specialization in Arabic literature

Size: Eight and nine volumes

The author, famously known as Ibn Jawzī, was born in 508 and died in 597. He was a Sunni scholar of the sixth century who followed the Ḥanbali sect. He was a jurisprudent, scholar of Arabic

1. Ibid, v.1, p.238.
2. Ibid, v.3, pgs.12-13.
3. Qurān, 5:55.
4. Mu `ālim al-Tanzīl, p.73.
5. Ibid, v.8, p.291.

literature, and commentator of the Qur'ān. He studied literature under Manṣur Jawaliqi. He wrote 250 books, some of which are as follows: *al-Mughnī* in the field of Qur'ānic sciences, *Tafsīr al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Tadhkirah al-Arīb fī Tafsīr al-Gharīb*, *Funūn al-Afnan fī 'Uyūn 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, and *'Umdah al-Rāsikh fī Ma'rifah al-Mansūkh wa al-Nāsikh* in the field of tafsīr.[1]

This tafsīr has a short introduction where the merits of tafsīr, the difference between tafsīr and *Ta'wīl*, the length of revelation of the Qur'ān, the first and last verses revealed, and [the concept of] seeking divine refuge are discussed.

His principle method was traditional and he relies mostly upon the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ), the companions, and the Successors to the companions. But, since he was also a scholar well-versed in the field of Arabic literature he gave grammatical and etymological discussions importance as well. The sources, other than traditional sources, that he used were: *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Farrā and Zajjāj, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān wa Mushkil al-Qur'ān* by Ibn Quṭaybah, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* by Abū 'Abīḍāḥ, and *Asmā' al-Ḥusna* by Khāṭabī.[2] Likewise, he narrated the circumstances of the revelation of the verses and would sometimes present nice jurisprudential discussions listing the opinions of various sects.[3]

One of the problems of this tafsīr is that it contains Isrā'īlīyāt traditions. Another problem is that he does not choose which traditions or opinions are stronger. Ibn Jawzī was praised by Shia scholars, for instance Ash'arī narrated from him about following Imam Ali's ('a) school of thought.[4]

Under the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ...﴾

"Those who spend in ease and adversity, and suppress their anger,"[5] he wrote: "Ibn 'Abbās states that the Arabic terms *sarrā'* and *ḍarrā'* mean ease and adversity. Then he states that the hypocrites are those

1. Zād al-Masīr, p.23 (single volume edition).
2. Ibid, p.6.
3. For instance, under the 38th verse of Surah Mā'idah, v.1, p.542 (eight volume print).
4. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.235.
5. Qurān, 3:134.

who desire to make a wager with Allah and to have a comfortable life. They do not refrain from this wager until they forget about Allah and difficulty in life does not prevent them from being stingy."[1]

5. Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Iddah al-Abrār

Author: Abū al-Faḍl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybīdī

Death: After 530

Language: Farsi

Specialization: Mystic

Size: Ten volumes

The original of this tafsīr was written by Khājah 'Abdullah Anṣāri (d.481), a famous mystic. Abū al-Faḍl Maybīdī wrote a commentary to this tafsīr. Rashīd al-Dīn Maybīdī was a Shāfi'ī scholar in jurisprudence and an Asharite in theology. His most important works are: *Arba'īn*, *al-Fuṣūl fī Aḥwāl al-Amrā' wa al-Wuzirā' wa al-Sādāh*, and *Kashf al-Asrār*. The latter book is his most famous work.

In the introduction to this tafsīr he described his motivation for writing it: "I examined the tafsīr written by Khājah 'Abdullah and found it to be close to a miracle in how it is phrased, in the subject-matter that is presented, and in the research that was put into it. But, he was extremely concise, therefore, I decided to uncover the discussions and connect the tafsīr realities to the beautiful statements that he mentioned. With Allah's help, in the beginning of the year 520 I started to write with those intentions. I called this work *Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Iddah al-Abrār*."[2]

This is the best mystic tafsīr in the Farsi language and its text is also a valuable text in Farsi literature.

Practical Method of this Commentator

The commentator of the Qur'ān tried to explain each verse in three stages.

First: Tafsīr translation and an apparent meaning of the verse.

Second: Mentioning a deeper meaning of the verse, the recitation, the circumstances of the revelation, religious rulings, traditions, and

1. Zād al-Masīr, p.224 (single volume edition).
2. Kashf al-Asrār, v.1, p.1.

opinions of the companions and the Successors.

Third: Mentioning the secrets of the verse and the mystical subtleties; the spirit of the verse.[1]

Another point is his usage of verses of the Qur'ān and traditions. In the explanation of some verses he brings four or five other verses to aid int heir comprehension. In traditions, he relies on the opinions of the companions and the Successors.

His other sources were mystical tafsīrs and the opinions of mystics such as Abū 'Abdullah Sahl Tustarī, Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, and Bāyzīd Bustānī.[2]

The way that he dealt with the Prophetic Household ('a), in the verse of Love[3] and other verses, shows his love for them. All other mystics, for instance Ibn 'Arabī, hold the station of the Prophetic Household ('a) high despite being Sunnis. This is the exact opposite of some Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān who concealed their merits. Maybīdī was a mystic; an esoteric, but chose Asharite opinions, and even Salafi or Ahl al-ḥadīth opinions when presenting theological discussion such as predestination and freewill, divine speech, and *khabarīyyah* attributes.

In regards to stories of the prophets and Isrā'īlīyāt traditions, he would narrate from the People of the Scripture (such as Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahāb ibn Munibbah) without examining their chains of narration and despite the fact that they contained weak subject matter that was in opposition to the rationale and to definitive traditions, for instance the story about Hārūt and Mārūt and the contradiction between it and the infallibility of the angels.[4]

This tafsīr was given attention by scholars of Farsi literature and people who were attracted to Farsi tafsīrs. This tafsīr was summarized into one volume in *Guẓīdah Tafsīr Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Iddah al-Abrār* by Riḍā Inzāfinidjād and *Tafsīr Adabī wa 'Irfānī-i Qur'ān-i Majīd* by Ḥabīballah Amūzigār. Muhammad Jawād Sharī'at also wrote a detailed and exhaustive index for *Kashf al-Asrār*.

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1. Ibid, p.2.
2. Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī, al-Mufassirūn Ḥayātuhum wa Minhājuhum, p.591.
3. Qurān, 42:23.
4. Kashf al-Asrar, v.1, p.295.

In the first stage, the author describes the 87th verse of Sūrah Ḥijr:
﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ...﴾

"Certainly We have given you the seven oft-repeated verses and the great Qur'ān."[1]

Then he explains the verse in the second stage: "There are five opinions about Allah's statement 'Certainly We have given you the seven oft-repeated verses'. The most famous of these opinions is that they are Sūrah Fātiḥah; the predecessor commentators held this view. The reasoning behind this opinion is the prophetic tradition: The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

«الحمد لله سبع ايات احديهنّ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم و هي السبع المثانى و هى فاتحة الكتاب و هى امّ القران...»

"All praise is to Allah for the seven verses, the first one being 'In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful;' these are the 'seven oft-repeated verses,' the 'opening of the book,' and the 'mother of the Qur'ān.'"

He continues: "Sūrah Fātiḥah is called the seven oft-repeated verses because it is recited in every prayer and every *rakat*."

Then, he mentions four other opinions in detail.[2] In the third stage he writes:

"The verse 'Certainly We have given you [the Sūrah of] the seven oft-repeated verses' is making Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) remember the seven miracles that were given to him; the miracles for which others praise him for. The first miracle was guidance and divine aid, the second was prophethood and messengership, the third was mercy, the fourth was insight, the fifth was tranquility, the sixth was love, and the seventh was proximity."[3]

He then mentioned a verse of the Qur'ān to reason for each one of these cases.

Other Tafsīrs

Adnahway lists about seventy tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān

1. Qurān, 15:87.
2. Ibid, p.337.
3. Ibid, p.345.

for the sixth century.[1] The most important tafsīrs of this list have been introduced. But, *Tafsīr Shātibī* (d.519), the author of a tafsīr, a recitor of the Qur'ān, and a famous scholar of Arabic eloquence, *al-Jawāhir* by 'Izz Ghazālī, and *Jāmi'ah al-Tafāsīr* by Rāghib Iṣfahānī are worthy of mention. Rāghib examines the principles and guidelines of tafsīr in the introduction to his tafsīr. Rāghib (d.535) was a specialist in many Qur'ānic fields, such as etymology and tafsīr.[2] His book *Mufradāt* is one of the most important etymological books of Qur'ānic terms. In addition to this, he had *Ijtihād* in etymology and thematic commentary of the Qur'ān.

Rāghib describes Qur'ānic terminology in alphabetical order in a precise and specialized manner in his book *Mufradāt.* In the introduction to this book he writes: "I realized that the most important thing that someone who wants to learn about Qur'ānic sciences is that he must know the etymological discussions behind the Qur'ānic terms."[3]

Summary

1. The points which are worthy of attention regarding the progression of tafsīr in the sixth century are that about ninety tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān have been listed. Comprehensive and *Ijtihādī* tafsīrs, which are of great value, have been written in this century, for instance: *Majma' al-Bayān*, *Kashshāf*, and *Rūḥ al-Janān.* The variety of tafsīrs and methodologies of this century is also worthy noting, for instance, the *Ijtihādī* method, theological specialization, Arabic literary specialization, mystical specialization, and Farsi works such as *Kashf al-Asrār* by Maybīdī and *Rūḥ al-Janān* by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī.

2. *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarasī (d.548) was taken from *Tafsīr Ṭibyān* with additions regarding Arabic literature and organization. This tafsīr has an introduction which discusses seven subjects, the most important of which are the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, the nonexistence of distortion in it, and its compilation

1. Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.148-210.
2. Ibid, p.168.
3. Introduction to Mufradāt, page nūn.

during the lifetime of the Prophet (ṣ). The author also wrote *Tafsīr Jawāmaʿ al-Jāmiʿ* and *al-Kāf al-Shāf.*

Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Janān wa Raw al-Janān by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī (d.560) was written in Farsi and is similar to *Tafsīr Ṭibyān.* This tafsīr was written in the *Ijtihādī* method with specializations in theology, Arabic literature, and mysticism.

3. One of the tafsīrs written in this century was *Fiqh al-Qur'ān,* which is a tafsīr of Qurānic verses pertaining to Islamic law written by Quṭb al-Dīn Rawandī. The order of this tafsīr is in congruence to the order of jurisprudential subjects starting from ritual purity (*ṭahārah*) ending with blood money (*dīyah*). His methodology was traditional, taking traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a) and analyzing them. *Mutashābah al-Qur'ān wa Mukhtalifah* by Ibn Shahrāshūb (d.588) is another analytical and theological tafsīr which only explained the allegorical verses of the Qur'ān.

4. From amongst the Sunni tafsīrs, *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī (d.538) had a specialization in Arabic literature and was in accordance to the theological views of the Mutazilites. He eloquently presented the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān in literary aspects. *Tafsīr Muʿālim al-Tanzīl* by Baghūwī (d.516) was written in a traditional method coupled with literary remarks. *Tafsīr Zād al-Masīr fī ʿIlm al-Tafsīr* was written by Ibn Jawzī (d.597), who was a scholar of Arabic literature and tafsīr and an author of many books, including *al-Mughnī, Tafsīr al-Bayān,* and *Funūn al-Afnan fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* regarding Qur'ānic sciences. This tafsīr is a traditional tafsīr, but due to the specialization that the author had in Arabic literature it has a specialization in Arabic literature.

Tafsīr Kashf al-Asrār wa ʿIddah al-Abrār by Rashīd al-Dīn Maybīdī was written in ten volumes with a specialization in mysticism. It was written in Farsi. This tafsīr is a commentary on the tafsīr written by Khājah 'Abdullah Anṣāri, a famous Islamic mystic.

5. Other Sunni Tafsīrs which were analytical and traditional and which were praised are: *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* by Ibn ʿAṭīyah (d.481). The merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) are narrated in this tafsīr.

Questions and Research Points

1. List four points regarding the cultural and tafsīr conditions of the sixth century.

2. Name two tafsīrs written in Farsi in the sixth century. Briefly introduce them.

3. While comparing *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān* to *Tafsīr Ṭibyān*, mention Ṭabarasī's practical method in writing this tafsīr.

4. Who wrote *Tafsīr Kashshāf*? Describe the characteristics and specializations of this tafsīr.

5. Introduce *Tafsīr Mu'ālim al-Tanzīl* and *Zād al-Masīr* along with their characteristics.

6. Refer to *Tafsīr Kashf al-Asrār* by Rashīd al-Dīn Maybīdī, *al-Mufassirūn Ḥayātuhum wa Minhājuhum* by Sayyid Muhammad Ali Ayyāzī, and *Tafsīr Adabī wa 'Irfānī Qur'ān Majīd* by Ḥabīballah Amūzigār and examine the verses about the Prophetic Household ('a), for instance the verse of purity (33:33), 2:207, 3:61 and the verse of *Mubāhilah*, 5:3, 5:55, and 5:67. Present a report about Maybīdī's opinion regarding the Prophetic Household ('a).

11
Tafsīr in the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Centuries

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with the tafsīrs and the commentators of the Qur'ān of the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries. 2. Recognition of the range of tafsīr types in these three centuries. 3. Familiarity with the major Sunni traditional tafsīrs from this period.

Tafsīr and the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries

These three centuries are related to each other in regards to the culture and intellectual developments that presented themselves therein, especially in tafsīr. These developments can be summarized as follows:

1. The continuation of *Ijtihādī* and analytical tafsīrs, for instance *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Qurṭābī, and *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* can be mentioned.

2. The continuation of variety in tafsīr with various specializations including: *Tafsīr Fakhr Rāzī* with a specialization in theology, *Tafsīr Qurṭābī* with a specialization in Arabic literature and jurisprudence, *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* with an *Ijtihādī* approach, and *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī with a specialization in Arabic literature. Likewise, many tafsīrs were written in the traditional method or with a specialization in mysticism, for instance: Muḥī al-Dīn `Arabī, famous as the father of Islamic mysticism (d.638) wrote a few tafsīrs, *al-I`jāz wa al-Bayān fī Kashf al-Asrār al-Qur'ān* by Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnūwī (d.673), and *Al-`Arā'is fī al-Ta'wīl* by Rūzbahān Baqlī.

3. In the seventh and eighth centuries the Sunnis reverted back to the styles of their former scholars in tafsīr and wrote tafsīrs using the traditional method.

4. Shia scholars only wrote a few tafsīrs in these three centuries. It is considered something of a low point in the history of Shia

tafsīr. The most important reasons behind this were the unfavorable political conditions (the attack of Islamic countries by the Mongols) and the Shia scholars' devoting their energies to jurisprudence and the compilation of valuable jurisprudential texts, for instance: *Tadhkirah al-Fuqūhā'*, *Qawā'id*, and *Mukhtalifah al-Shia* by 'Allāmah Ḥillī (d.647), *Sharāya'*, *Mu'tabar*, and *al-Mukhtaṣir al-Nāfi'* by Muḥaqiq Ḥillī (d.676), *Iyḍāḥ al-Fawā'id fī Sharḥ Mushkilāt al-Qawā`id* by Fakhr al-Muḥaqiqīn, the son of 'Allāmah Ḥillī (d.771), and *Durūs*, *Dhikrā*, *Bayān*, and *Lum'ah* by Muhammad ibn Makkī, famously known as Shahīd al-Awwal.[1]

5. Close to three hundred tafsīrs were written in these three centuries and they can be divided into four main categories: 1. The *Ijtihādī* tafsīrs, 2. The neo-traditional tafsīrs, 3. The progression of tafsīrs specializing in the verses of Islamic law, which were written mostly in the ninth century, and 4. mystic tafsīrs.

6. Unfavorable political conditions: The conquest of the central Islamic lands by the Mongols in the seventh century harmed Islamic culture and civilization. The Mongols attack started in 616 and lasted until 659. Lands from Transoxiana, Kharazum, Khurāsān, northern Iran, all the way to Europe were affected. Many people were killed. The single bloodiest incident was the fall of Baghdad (which was the most important Muslim center of the time). Rasūl Ja'farīyān writes: "The fall of Baghdad and the Abbasid Caliphate was one of the biggest calamities that happened in Islamic history during the middle centuries."[2]

This huge event had negative effects on the spread of Qur'ānic culture. Despite this, many tafsīrs were written.

Shia Tafsīrs

1. Nahj al-Bayān 'an Kashf Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān

Author: Muhammad ibn Ḥasan Shaybānī

Death: Was alive until 640

Language: Arabic

Method: Simple traditional

Size: Five volumes

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1. The works of Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d.670) are also famous in theology and philosophy.
2. Rasūl Ja`farīyān, Az Yūrish Mughulān ta Zawāl Turkmanān, Second Section, p.48.

Shaybani was a prominent Shia scholar of the seventh century. This tafsīr was written during the caliphate of al-Mustanṣir billah 'Abbāsi as a gift for his library in Baghdad called Khazānah Mustanṣir. The librarian was Muhammad ibn `Alqamī Shī`ī Baghdādī. This tafsīr was written in a simple traditional format using traditions to explain the verses of the Qur'ān. In some cases, especially in the last volume, the author sufficed with literal definitions, but would try his utmost to reason for the definitions with traditions from the Prophet (ṣ), Imams ('a), or opinions of the companions and Successors. This tafsīr, except in some rare cases, does not mention any issues regarding Arabic literature or recitation.

Shaybānī, while narrating traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and the Infallible Imams praises the Imams ('a). He praises Ibn 'Abbās very much and considers him to be a religious authority. He narrates from Kalbī in many places as well, but he used *Ṭibyān* more than any other book; calling Shaykh Ṭūsī 'our Shaykh.' He also relied on the works of Shaykh Mufīd, Ṭabarī, Zajjāj, Farrā, and Abū `Abid in areas of theology, traditions, and Arabic literature.[1] This is one of the tafsīrs that Muḥaddath Baḥrānī narrates from in *al-Burhān*.

The tafsīr is arranged according to the order of the verses in the Qur'ān. Many of the verses whose apparent meaning, according to the author, is known were not discussed. He wrote an introduction to the tafsīr in which the real commentators of the Qur'ān are considered to be the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a). He also discussed issues such as whether revelation was instantaneous or gradual, the number of chapters revealed in Mecca and Medina, the number of verses and words in the Qur'ān, the revelation of the Qur'ān upon Seven Letters, and the etymology of the term Qur'ān and its derivatives. He also mentioned literary discussions such as the meanings of literal and figurative, the meanings of commands and prohibitions, the definitive and the allegorical, the clear and the unclear, abrogation, general and specific, examples, who the Qur'ān addresses, revelation of the Qur'ān, repetition in stories, sentences, and words, and the philosophy behind repetition, seeking refuge, and the phrase 'in the name of Allah.'[2]

1. Nahj al-Bayān, v.1, p.8 (introduction).
2. Nahj al-Bayān, v.1 (introduction).

This tafsīr was published in five volumes owing to the research of Ḥusayn Darghāhī. He also wrote a useful introduction to the tafsīr. A summary of this book is printed in two volumes.

He writes after the verse:

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ...﴾

"Indeed Safa and Marwah are among Allah's sacraments,"[1] that: "Safa is the smooth stone that Prophet Adam ('a) prayed upon and Marwah is the rough stone that Eve, the wife of Adam, prayed upon. This is why these two stones are called Safa and Marwah." Then, he reasoned for this with the words of Ibn 'Abbās, Imam Bāqir ('a), and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).[2]

2. Al-Balābul al-Qalāqul

Author: Abū al-Makārim Maḥmūd ibn Muhammad Ḥasanī Wā'iẓ

Death: Seventh century

Language: Farsi

Method: Traditional

Specialization: Theological

Size: Three volumes

Abū al-Makārim Ḥasanī Wā'iẓ was a commentator of the Qur'ān in the seventh century. He wrote other books such as: *Hidāyah al-'Ulūm fī 'Aqā'id al-Anām* in theology. The date of some of his publications in theology date 659 and 660 which show that he was a scholar in the seventh century. The reason that this tafsīr was titled *Qalāqul* is because he focused on explaining the verses which start with the word 'say' (*qul*), with some exceptions.[3] This approach to Qur'ānic commentary was not without precedent – Ibn Zuhrā (d.585) and after him Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad ibn As'ad Dawānī (d.908) wrote tafsīrs with the same name.[4] This tafsīr is based on a summarized tradition-based commentary in the order of the chapters of the Qur'ān. Translation was rendered sufficient by the author in many cases. He would mention the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) in the verses that alluded to them and would also

1. Qurān, 2:158.
2. Ibid, v.1, p.228.
3. Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṣafākhāh, v.1 (introduction of the researcher).
4. Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī, Sayr Taṭāwir Tafāsīr Shia, p.78.

mention traditions from the companions and the Successors to the companions. He would use *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, *Maṣābīḥ*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* for Sunni traditions.

This tafsīr is one of the treasures of the Farsi language because the author writes eloquently and inserts poems.

The Iḥyā Kitāb Publishing Company printed this tafsīr in 1376 with the research of Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṣafākhāh, who also wrote an introduction to it. His introduction is beneficial and necessary for understanding the tafsīr, especially the points regarding Farsi literature.

The author wrote another tafsīr in Farsi called *Daqā'iq al-Ta'wīl wa Ḥaqā'iq al-Tanzīl*. This tafsīr was printed by the Mīrāth Maktab Publishing Company in two volumes with the research of Jūyā Jahānbakhsh. The author speaks about the guardianship and caliphate of Imam Ali ('a) throughout this tafsīr. The Farsi of this tafsīr, just as the *Tafsīr Balābul*, is very classical and needs to be changed to suit the needs of the Farsi speaking people today. This tafsīr is also written in order of the chapters of the Qur'ān, but an explanation is not given for every verse. Rather, certain verses are chosen, for instance Sūrah Fātiḥah is not explained and the tafsīr starts from the fourth verse of Sūrah Baqarah. Most of the verses that start with the phrase 'O you who...' have been explained.

3. Al-Muḥīt al-'Aẓam

Author: Sayyid Ḥaydar 'Alawī Amulī

Death: 787

Language: Arabic

Method: Subject-wise commentary

Specialization: Mysticism and Sufism

Size: Two volumes

Sayyid Ḥaydar 'Alawī Ḥusaynī Amulī Mazāndarānī was a pious scholar, jurisprudent, commentator of the Qur'ān, and scholar of traditions. He was a prominent Shia scholar and Sufi. He wrote many books, such as *Jāmiī al-Asrār wa Manbā' al-Anwār* and *Sharḥī bar Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥakam Muḥī al-Dīn 'Arabī*.

The existent tafsīr is printed in two volumes. The first volume consists of an introduction to tafsīr and the motivation behind writing this tafsīr. Before the introductory subjects are mentioned he

discusses seven subjects including: *Ta'wīl* and tafsīr and the reality of *Ta'wīl*, *Ta'wīl* of the allegorical verses, and that the Prophetic Household ('a) are 'those who are firmly grounded in knowledge'. The final part covers the characteristics, purity, and infallibility of the Prophetic Household ('a) and Imam Mahdi ('a).

The first volume consists of the first of seven introductions and the second volume is up to the fifth introduction. The second introduction is about scholars, people, and the Qur'ān. The third introduction is about the divine letters and their correlation to Qur'ānic and human letters. The fourth introduction is about the divine terms and their correlation to Qur'ānic terms. The fifth introduction is about the divine verses and their correlation to Qur'ānic verses.

It has been said that this tafsīr is a tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah and part of Sūrah Baqarah. But, it is actually a subject-based tafsīr with a mystic specialization where mystic and Sufi opinions are extensively discussed.

This tafsīr was printed by the Propagation Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the research of Sayyid Muḥsin Mūsawī Tabrīzī.

4. Tafsīr Gazār (Jalā' al-Adhhān wa Jalā' al-Aḥzān)

Author: Abū al-Muḥāsin Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan Jurjānī

Death: Eighth century (was alive until 722)

Language: Farsi

Method: *Ijtihādī* relying mostly on traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a) and their merits

Specialization: Theology and Arabic literature

Size: Ten volumes

The author, Abū al-Muḥāsin Jurjānī was a Shia scholar of the eighth century. He wrote *Rayḥānah al-Adab* in which he described the qualities of a scholar, commentator of the Qur'ān, and scholar of traditions. The principle name of the tafsīr, as the author wrote in his introduction, is *Jalā' al-Adhhān wa Jalā' al-Aḥzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, but it is commonly known as *Tafsīr Gazār*.

His main motive behind writing this tafsīr was to provide Farsi-speakers with a tafsīr that was in their own language and in accordance with the Shia doctrine of that period. He also narrated traditions and merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) both to

illustrate and support his arguments in the commentary itself and to please the followers of the Prophetic Household ('a).[1]

This tafsīr was later used by Mullā Fatḥallah Kāshānī, the author of *Minhāj al-Ṣādiqin,* and the author of *Lawāmi' al-Tanzīl.*[2] The main source of *Tafsīr Gazār,* as has been proven through research and the method that the author implemented, was *Rawḍ al-Janān* by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī. In reality, this tafsīr is a summary with minor changes and additions of Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī's tafsīr, although the author does not explicitly mention this. The method of tafsīr that he used was the same method used by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī: *Ijtihādī* with a specialization in traditions, especially traditions mentioning the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a).

This tafsīr was printed in ten volumes with the research of Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Armūwī from Urūmīyah. In addition, `Azīzallah 'Aṭṭārdī wrote a one volume extensive index including sections for the chapters of the Qur'ān, stories, subjects, names, and terms. This index is titled *Miftāḥ Tafsīr Gazār.*

5. Sa'd al-Su`ūd

The author of this tafsīr, Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ṭāwūs Ḥasanī Ḥillī, famously known as Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs (d.664) was a prominent Shia scholar in the seventh century. He was a well-known ascetic and mystic and wrote a great many books.[3] He was particularly responsible for disseminating a lot of popular supplications amongst the Shia. He wrote more than 45 books, the most important of which were regarding supplications. Examples of some of his books are: *al-Iqbāl li-Ṣāliḥ al-A'māl, Misbāḥ al-Zā'ir, Asrār al-Da'wat, Lahūf 'ala Qatlī al-Ṭafūf* about the life of Abū 'Abdullah Ḥusayn ('a), *al-Ṭarā'if* in jurisprudence, and *Sa'd al-Su'ūd,* and many other books.[4]

The brother of Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs (d.673) was a Shia jurisprudent. He also wrote many books and his tafsīr, *Shawāhid al-Qur'ān,* was printed in multiple volumes.[5]

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1. Jalā' al-Adhhān, v.1 (introduction).
2. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.132.
3. Shaykh `Abbās Qumī, Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār, v.2, p.963.
4. Muhammad Ali Mudarras, Rayhānah al-Adab, v.8, p.72.
5. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei, Mu`jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, v.2, p.344.

Other Shia Tafsīrs of the Ninth Century

Mystical texts, such as the tafsīr by Shāh Ni`matullah Walī Karmānī (d.834), became widespread in this century. Likewise, jurisprudential tafsīrs also became popular. Some of these tafsīrs are:

1. *Kanz al-'Irfān* by Faḍl Miqdād Sīyūrī (d.826)

2. *al-Nihāyah fī Tafsīr Khamsmah Ayāh* by Aḥmad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Sa'īd Matūj, famously known as Ibn Matūj (d.800). He also has two other works: *Risālah Nāsikh wa Mansūkh* and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān.*

3. *'Ayūn al-Tafāsīr* by Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn al-Mawlā Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ḥasan Astarābādī (d.891). In addition to this book he wrote *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūl al-Naṣīrīyah* and a tafsīr about the verses of the Qur'ān which mention Islamic law called *Ma'ārij al-Su'ūl wa Madārij al-Ma'mūl.*

4. *Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Abū Nāṣir Shaykh Aḥmad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ḥasan Matuwwij Baḥrānī who was a scholar, mystic, poet, and schooled in Arabic literature (d.820). He also wrote *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh min al-Qur'ān.*[1]

In addition to these, other tafsīrs were written in this century as well, for instance *Tafsīr Daylamī* by Abū al-Faḍl Daylamī, the son of Bahā' al-Dīn Yūsuf Daylamī (d.800). He defended the Prophetic Household ('a) and mentioned their merits. He defended the Shia by presenting theological discussions as well.

Sunni Tafsīrs

1. Tafsīr Kabīr (Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb)

Author: Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Umar Tamīmī Bakrī Rāzī, famously known as Fakhr Rāzī

Death: 606

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī* and rational

Specialization: Theology and philosophy

Size: 32 volumes

The author has been given the title 'the pride of the religion' (*Fakhr al-Dīn*) and 'The son of the orator' (*Ibn Khāṭib*). He was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and of the Asharite sect in theology.

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1. Ibid, p.140.

Born in 544 and a polymath, he would become a renowned theologian; he was famous for his knowledge and sound advice, and scholars were keen to meet him.[1] He wrote 150 books in both Farsi and Arabic. The most important book that he wrote was *Tafsīr Kabīr* which has been printed in 23 volumes. This tafsīr was printed in Bulaq in six volumes and then in Egypt, due to the importance that Muhammad Muḥī al-Dīn gave to it, in 1933 in 23 volumes.

The author used the *Ijtihādī* method in writing this tafsīr. He also gave importance to rational discussions. This is why some people have considered this tafsīr to be a rational tafsīr.[2] This means that many theological and philosophical discussions are mentioned. But, he also argued with other verses, traditions, rational principles, and Arabic literature. He examined and criticized the various opinions that have been presented in the explanation of verses.

His practical method was that he would try his utmost to present his goals before mentioning each subject. Then, he would discuss the subjects one after another, before mentioning possible criticisms, answer ing them, and then criticizing the answers and so on. It has been said:

«یورد الشبهة نقداً و یحلّها نسیئةً»

"He sometimes raised a critique and then forgot to provide an answer."[3] He was very strong in raising criticisms and that is why he has been named the Imam of the doubters. The reason behind this was that he was deeply engaged in theological and philosophical discussions throughout his career. He wrote a commentary to Ibn Sīnā's *Ishārāt* in which he criticized many of Ibn Sīnā's opinions. Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d.672) answers many of Fakhr Rāzī's criticisms in his commentary on *Ishārāt* called *Sharḥ Ishārāt*. Likewise, Fakhr Rāzī wrote a book called *al-Muḥaṣil* which was criticized by Khājah in a book called *Naqd al-Muḥaṣil*.

It has been narrated that Fakhr Rāzī said at the end of his life:

«یالیتني لم اشتغل بعلم الکلام»

1. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.298.
2. Ḥalabī, Tafsīr Kabīr (introduction to the translation), v.1, p.36.
3. Qumī, Hidīyah al-Aḥbāb, p.229; Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.302.

"If only I did not spend so much time on theology."[1] At another time he stated that drowning oneself in purely philosophical and rational discussions is a waste of time; it would be better to benefit from the Qur'ān.[2]

There are differences of opinions about the value of this tafsīr. People who were in opposition to philosophy and theology, such as Ibn Taymīyah (d.728) stated that this tafsīr is everything except a tafsīr. In opposition to them, some people praised Fakhr Rāzī, such as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ṣafadī (d.764) who responded:

«فيه كل الشى حتى التفسير»

"Everything is in it, even tafsīr."[3]

The reason that this tafsīr was rebuked by many scholars is the lengthy discussions contained therein. Correct and incorrect opinions are mixed with tafsīr and non-tafsīr discussions. He wrote in the introduction to his tafsīr, which is also said to be his will: "Know that I have gone mad regarding knowledge and have wrote something about all issues; no matter if they were correct or incorrect; no matter if they were simple or complicated. But, I chose the theological and philosophical method...The reason (I extended the discussions) was nothing other than the expansion of the discussion and the strengthening of the mind."[4]

At the beginning of his tafsīr he also clearly mentioned the reason behind his lengthy discussions: "When I said that one can derive one thousand issues from Sūrah Fātiḥah, some people rejected this claim. Now that I have started the tafsīr I have explained Sūrah Fātiḥah in detail so that it can be considered a proof in support of this claim."[5]

The beginning of the tafsīr is written in great detail. The first volume consists of only Sūrah Fātiḥah. The tafsīr of Sūrah Baqarah reaches the seventh volume consisting of one fourth of the tafsīr. But

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1. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.223.
2. Subkī, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi`īyah, v.9, p.91, narrated from Ḥalabī, Tafsīr Kabīr (introduction to the translation), v.1, p.38.
3. Ṣafadī, al-Wāfī bil-Wāfīyāt, pgs.248-249, narrated from Ḥalabī, Tafsīr Kabīr (introduction to the translation), v.1, p.36.
4. Ibn Ḥijr `Asqalānī, Līsān al-Mīzān, v.4, p.171, narrated from Ḥalabī, Tafsīr Kabīr (introduction to the translation), v.1, p.38.
5. Tafsīr Kabīr, v.1, p.3.

the level of detail decreases as the tafsīr moves forward.

Fakhr Rāzī followed the Asharite sect in theology and defended his sects opinion of predestination in many cases in his tafsīr.[1] He even permitted some issues that can be rationally disputed and Islamic scholars reject (such as being duty-bound to perform an impossible task).[2] But, he also defended the Mutazilite opinions in some cases.[3] Goldzeiher also believes that Fakhr Rāzī accepted many Mutazilite views despite the school of theology to which he belonged being opposed to them.[4]

Fakhr Rāzī and the authorship of his Tafsīr

There are two opinions regarding whether the entire tafsīr was written by Fakhr Rāzī or whether some of his students completed it.

1. Some famous scholars such as Ibn Khalkān,[5] Ḥajjī Khalīfah,[6] Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī,[7] and Dhahabī[8] believe that he did not complete the tafsīr during his own lifetime and that his students finished it. They suggest that these students are: Shams al-Dīn Khoei and Najm al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abī al-Ḥazm Miṣrī (d.727). Some people state that he completed the tafsīr up until Sūrah Anbīyā and someone else wrote the rest of it. Some evidence that this group uses is discrepancies between the historical accounts mentioned in different verses before and after Sūrah Anbīyā.

2. On the other hand, a number of contemporary scholars hold that the entire tafsīr was written by Fakhr Rāzī. Some of these scholars are: Dr. Muḥsin 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Shaykh Khalīl Mays (The head of al-Azhār in Lebanon)[9], Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat,[10] and Ḥusayn Barakāh al-Shāmī (who researched and summarized *Tafsīr Kabīr*). The argument that they use is that there are references given

1. For instance, refer to 2:7, 6:88-90 and 111-112, and 7:43 and 178.
2. Refer to 2:6.
3. Refer to 53:31 and 38:28.
4. Encyclopedia of Islam, vo.1,754-55.
5. Wāfiyāt al-`Ayān, v.3, p.381.
6. Kashf al-Ẓunūn, v.2, p.299.
7. Al-Aṣābah fī Tamīz al-Ṣiḥābah, v.1, p.304.
8. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, pgs.299-301; Shadharāt al-Dhahab, v.2, p.21.
9. Ibid.
10. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirān fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.409.

in *Tafsīr Kabīr* and whenever the author states that he will continue a discussion at a later time in a certain place he always does. In the later chapters of the Qur'ān he refers to the previous tafsīr that he has given. This shows that he was the one who wrote it.[1]

Another argument is the congruence between the tone and presentation of material. If he was helped by another person there would not be such congruence between the material.

Sources of Tafsīr Kabīr

He narrated traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and the opinions of the companions and the Successors. He narrated literary remarks by the prominent scholars of Arabic literature, such as Asmā'ī, Abū `AbIḍāḥ, Farrā, Zajjāj, Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī, Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, and Zamakhshirī. He also gave importance to the tafsīr opinions of other commentators of the Qur'ān, such as Thal'abī, Waḥīdī Nayshābūrī, Ṭabarī, and Bāqilānī.

Characteristics of Tafsīr Kabīr

The following characteristics can be seen when reviewing this tafsīr:

1. It often digresses from commenting on Qur'ānic verses and enters other theological discussions, narrating different opinions, and criticizing them.

2. The views of philosophers and theologians are frequently mentioned in such discussions.

3. The different possible recitations of the verses are examined along with their corresponding declension (*I'rāb*).

4. Many traditions and opinions are narrated but the criticisms and reasoning taken from them are more expansive than the traditions themselves.

5. Arabic poetry is used as evidence for points of Arabic literature and even ethical points

6. The circumstances of revelation of various verses are narrated from the companions or the Successors, both with and without chains of narration.[2]

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1. Khalīl Mays, Muqadamah Tahdhīb al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, v.1, p.20.
2. Khalīl Mis, Muqadamah Tahdhīb al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, pgs.8-10.

7. The logical connection of each verse with the verses that come before and after it is clarified.

Fakhr Rāzī and the Prophetic Household ('a)

By referring to various parts of Tafsīr Kabīr and the verses which were revealed about the Prophetic Household ('a) it becomes clear that he was unprecedented amongst the Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān in narrating the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a). When he mentions the name of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib or the other Imams ('a) he does so with the utmost respect.[1] He considers sending salutations upon the Prophet and his family to be part of various supplications. He mentions under the 207th verse of Sūrah Baqarah, in the third circumstance of revelation that the verse was revealed about Ali ('a) on the night where he slept in the Prophet's bed.[2] The verse is:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يشْرِي نَفْسَهُ...﴾

"And among the people is he who sells his soul..."[3] He writes the following about his verse from Sūrah Kawthar:

﴿إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

"Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity,"[4] that: "Allah gave the Prophet (ṣ) progeny which will remain until the end of the world. The world is full of the family and progeny of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) despite the fact that so many of them have been killed. Nobody remains from the Umayyad tribe; while so many scholars such as Bāqir, Ṣādiq, Kāzim, Riḍā, and the pure soul remain."[5]

The narrations of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ('a) becoming ill and Ali ('a) giving food to the destitute, orphans, and captives are mentioned under the verses of Sūrah Insān.[6] Under the verse of *Mubāhilah* he holds that Ali was the 'self' of the Prophet (ṣ) and that the verse was revealed about the status of the Prophetic Household ('a).[7] Under the verse:

1. Tafsīr Kabīr, v.16, p.153.
2. Ibid, v.3, p.225.
3. Qurān, 2:207.
4. Qurān, 108:3.
5. Tafsīr Kabīr, v.16, p.126.
6. Ibid, v.15, p.245.
7. Ibid, v.4, p.90.

﴿يا أَيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...﴾

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord,"[1] he states in the tenth and final circumstance of revelation that this verse was revealed about the Prophet (ṣ) announcing merits of Ali ('a). He states that the Prophet (ṣ) took Imam Ali's ('a) hand and said:

«من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه اللهم وال من والاه و عاد من عاداه»

"This Ali is the master for whomever I am the master. Allah, befriend whoever befriends him and be an enemy to whoever is an enemy to him." Then, `Umar congratulated Ali ('a).[2]

The love of the Prophetic Household ('a) was described eloquently under the verse of Love.[3] The Arabic term '*qurba*' was considered to be Ali, Fatimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn ('a). Then, narrates the tradition:

«من مات على حب أل محمد مات شهيدا...»

"Whoever dies upon the love of the family of Muhammad dies the death of a martyr," from *Kashshāf.* At the end, he narrates a poem from Shāfi'ī.

ان كان رفضاً حب آل محمد فليشهد الثقلان أنى رافضى

2. Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān

Author: Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Aḥmad Anṣāri Qurṭābī

Death: 761

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Arabic literature and jurisprudence

Size: Ten or Twelve volumes (two volumes of which are an index to the tafsīr) in twenty parts

Qurṭābī is one of the most famous Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān. He followed the Mālikī sect in jurisprudence and the Asharite sect in theology. He was famous for the amount of worship

1. Qurān, 5:67.
2. Tafsīr Kabīr, v.6, p.53.
3. Qurān, 42:23.

he would perform and his asceticism; he would wear plain clothing and a simple turban amongst the people.[1]

He wrote many books, including: *al-Asna fī Sharḥ al-Asmā' Allah al-Ḥusna*, *al-Tadhakar fī Afḍāl al-Adhkār*, *al-Tadhkirah Bi-Umūr al-Akhirah*, and *Sharḥ al-Tafaṣa*. But his most important work was this tafsīr.[2] The author's main source and the basis for his tafsīr was *Tafsīr al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz*.[3]

The practical method for this tafsīr is that the verse would be presented and then a detailed discussion regarding various issues relating to the verse would be given. For instance, there are 27 issues regarding the verse:

﴿بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

"In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful." Also, there are 17 issues regarding the verse:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً...﴾

"When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth..."[4] Each issue that is raised is discussed in detail; for instance in etymological discussions all of the etymological concepts are completely defined. The issues regarding recitation are presented as if he was a specialist in the field. He also discusses literature as if he was a scholar of literature and history and Qur'ānic stories as if he was a historian. In jurisprudential matters he presents various jurisprudential opinions and then chooses between them in a method that is similar to Sunni jurisprudence. He was famous in permitting free opinions and criticism. Despite the fact that he followed Mālikī jurisprudence he sometimes accepted the Shāfi'ī opinions and criticized Abū Ḥanīfah. He would accept whatever opinion was stronger. For instance, he accepts a minor leading prayer if his recitation is correct through the verse:

﴿وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ﴾

1. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.493.
2. Jāmi` al-Aḥkām' Qurān, introduction by Muhammad Karīm Rājiḥ, v.1, p.10.
3. Ibn Khaldūn, Muqadamah Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn, p.440.
4. Qurān, 2:30.

"and bow along with those who bow."[1] But, Mālik issued a verdict in opposition to this.[2]

The method of tafsīr that he applied was the *Ijtihādī* method and he would explain the verse using various reasoning. But, he would discuss jurisprudential issues in greater detail; just as he would discuss issues of Arabic literature.

In the introduction, the author writes: "I did not mention stories of the commentators of the Qur'ān or traditions from the historians except in necessary cases. But, I mentioned religious rulings. If a verse alluded to a religious ruling I would raise various issues clarifying the point. I also mentioned the circumstances of revelation, uncommon terms, divine wisdom, and the esoteric meanings of the verses."[3]

The tafsīr has a beneficial introduction of Qur'ānic sciences. Twenty sections of this introduction are given to Qur'ānic discussions about the merits of the Qur'ān, the methods and rules pertaining to recitation, the Qur'ānic prohibition ostentation, the duties the Qur'ān's carriers, the merits of *I'rāb* and recitation, the merits of Qur'ānic tafsīr, the respect given to the Qur'ān by those who carry it, tafsīr based on personal opinion and the stages of tafsīr, the *Sunnah* being alongside the Qur'ān, the method of deeply pondering over the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, the concept of the Qur'ān being revealed in sevent letters, the Qur'ān's compilation, the order of chapters and its history, the meanings of the chapters, verses, and terms of the Qur'ān, the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, the traditions regarding the merits of the chapters, distortion, seeking refuge, and the phrase "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful."

Qurṭābī and the Prophetic Household ('a)

Qurṭābī narrated the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) intermittently; sometimes he would completely overlook them[4] and

1. Qurān, 2:43.
2. Mukhtaṣir Tafsīr Qurṭabī, v.1, p.11.
3. Muhammad Aḥmad Qurṭabī, al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām' al-Qurān, v.1, p.3; Dhahabī considers this Tafsīr to be a jurisprudential tafisr (al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.493). He might have been influenced by the name of the Tafsīr. Refer to: Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.403.
4. For instance, Sūrah Kawthar, refer to: al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām' al-Qurān, v.10, pgs.216-224.

others he would mention them. For instance he mentions their merits after the 207th verse of Sūrah Baqarah and after the verse of *Mubāhilah*, but after narrating traditions from Sunni sources about the verses of Sūrah Insān that are about the Prophetic Household ('a), he severely rejects them and does not consider them authentic.[1]

This tafsīr was summarized by Muhammad Karīm Rājiḥ in five volumes and Shaykh 'Irfān Ḥasūnah in four volumes.

3. Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl

Author: Abū al-Khayr Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Abdullah ibn `Umar Bayḍāwī Shīrāzī.

Death: 681 or 685

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Arabic literature

Size: Four volumes

The author, Qāḍī Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Abdullah ibn `Umar Bayḍāwī Shāfi'ī was famously known as Qāḍī Bayḍāwī. He followed Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and Asharite theology and was from Bayḍāwī, Shīrāz. He lived at the same time as Muḥaqiq al-Ḥillī, 'Allāmah Ḥillī and Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. It is known that he corresponded with 'Allāmah Ḥillī.[2]

This is widely considered to be one of the best Sunni tafsīrs written and has been accepted by many Sunni and Shia scholars. Eighty three commentaries have been written on it.The most famous commentaries are the commentaries written by Shaykh Zādah, Shahab Khafajī, and Qūnūwī.

This tafsīr was based upon *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by summarizing it and omitting the extra material and Isrā'īlīyāt traditions. The names of the chapters of the Qur'ān, the circumstances of revelation, the examination of traditions, and points of Arabic literature are presented in detail.

Bayḍāwī has written books in a number of different Islamic fields. His books are normally considered extremely valuable. In

1. Ibid, pgs.131-135.
2. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.234.

theology he wrote *Ṭawāli' al-Anwār wa Maṭāli' al-Inẓār* and a commentary on *Fuṣūl* by Khājah Ṭūsī. In Shāfi'ī jurisprudence he wrote *Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ* and *al-Ghāyah al-Qaṣūwī*. In etymology he wrote *Sharḥ al-Muntakhab*. In logic he wrote *Sharḥ al-Maṭāli'*. In principles of jurisprudence he wrote *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl* and *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣir Ibn Ḥājib*. In traditions he wrote *Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ*. In Mysticism he wrote *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*. In history he wrote the valuable *Niẓām al-Tawarikh* in Farsi. Other books have been attributed to him as well. The most important book that he wrote was his *Tafsīr Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*. The author wrote this tafsīr and was given the post of *Qāḍī al-Qādāt* (the judge of judges) when the news of this tafsīr reached the king.

This tafsīr was given great importance in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, as will be narrated in the twelfth chapter. More than 60 commentaries to this tafsīr were written in these centuries. This shows that this tafsīr was held in high esteem by the scholars of its age and in the centuries after it. In addition to the Sunni scholars, Shia scholars also commentated on it, for instance Shaykh Bahā'i (d.913). The reason that so many commentaries were written on this tafsīr might be due to its brevity and omission of extra material.

The Most Important Sources of Tafsīr Bayḍāwī

Kashshāf by Zamakhshirī, *Tafsīr Kabīr*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, and the tafsīr by Rāghib Iṣfahānī were the most important sources of *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī*. But, it seems as if *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* is a summary of *Kashshāf*. Ayatullah Ma'rifat states: "This tafsīr is foundationally a summary of *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī. But, it was also benefited by *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī and the tafsīr of Rāghib Iṣfahānī. Some of the opinions of the companions and the Successors are also mentioned in it."[1]

The Merits of Tafsīr Bayḍāwī

The following is a list of exceptional characteristics of *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī*:

1. The necessary tafsīr material is presented in a brief and interesting fashion.

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1. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.43.

2. The opinions of the companions and the Successors are mentioned.

3. Various recitations are given importance.

4. Points of Arabic literature are presented in a summarized form.

5. The verses of jurisprudence and some jurisprudential issues are mentioned without extending them.

6. Isrā'īlīyāt traditions are omitted.

7. Traditions which might be unauthentic are narrated in a wise way – he changes the term 'they said' to 'they narrated.'

8. Scientific discussions are presented in relation to relevant verses.[1]

Mentioning the merits and importance of a tafsīr does not mean that it does not have any criticisms. Some of the criticisms of *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* are:

1. Some of the important and foundational issues are mentioned very briefly with problems, for instance attributing forgetfulness to the prophets and stating that Satan can influence them.[2]

2. Many instances lack analysis and sufficient reasoning, for instance the acceptance of angels having wings under the first verse of Sūrah Fāṭir.[3]

4. Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl

Author: Abū al-Barakāt 'Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd Nasafī

Death: 710

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Size: Five volumes

Abū al-Barakāt Nasafī[4] was a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. He was from Idhah in Khuzestan and was a jurisprudent of his time. He wrote many books.

This tafsīr was taken from *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī and *Anwār al-Tanzīl* by Bayḍāwī.

At the beginning of each Sūrah he would mention if it was revealed in Mecca or Medina. He would also give extra importance to

1. Ibid.
2. Refer to: 'Abdullah bin 'Umar Bayḍāwī, Anwār al-Tanzīl, v.2, p.32 and v.4, p.18.
3. Ibid, v.2, p.416.
4. Nasaf is located between Jūḥūn and Samarqand.

the recitation and points of Arabic literature. He considered it necessary to recite in the seven accepted forms of recitation. He would also briefly describe the points of eloquence that are used in the Qur'ān. In the verses regarding religious rulings he would discuss jurisprudential issues and narrate the opinions of other scholars while defending the Ḥanafī sect himself.[1] Likewise, he would narrate traditions from the companions and the Successors to the companions. The commentator of the Qur'ān tried to distance himself from Isrā'īlīyāt traditions, but there are clear instances where he has still narrated them.[2]

5. Lubāb al-Ta'wīl fi Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl

Author: 'Alla' al-Dīn Ali ibn Muhammad Ibrāhīm Baghdādī, famously known as Khāzin

Death: He was alive until 725

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Size: Four volumes

The author, famously known as Khāzin, was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. He read *Tafsīr Baghūwī* (*Mu'ālim al-Tanzīl*) and recognized that it had many points but thought that it was overly long. To that effect, he summarized it, added some additional material and explained any difficult terms. He also omitted the chains of narration of the traditions concluding *Lubāb al-Ta'wīl*.[3] Since he was the librarian of the Samsāṭīyah Library he was famously known as Khāzin ('the librarian'). He carried out the research for his tafsīr and wrote it in that library.[4]

In composing his work, the author made use of the tafsīrs written by Fakhr Rāzī, Baghūwī, and Thal'abī, as well as *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Tirdidhī*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan Nisā'ī*, and *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* by Ibn Athīr Jazrī. The tafsīr included an introduction discussing the merits of the Qur'ān, its recitation of and the teaching

1. Refer to: Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.312; for instance Qurān, 16:16 and 35; 38: 21-22 and 34.
2. Ibid.
3. Muhammad bin Aḥmad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.267.
4. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, Tafsīr wa Mufassirān, v.2, p.196.

thereof, prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion, the compilation of the text and order in which its verses were revealed, the meaning of the Qur'ān being revealed upon Seven Letters, and the meanings of tafsīr, *Ta'wīl*, and seeking refuge. The method of this tafsīr, much like the commentaries that it was based upon (*Tafsīr Baghūwī* and *Tafsīr Thal'abī* in particular) is traditional; traditions from the companions and the Successors are narrated. In many cases, the reasons and philosophies behind Qur'ānic discussions are started with the phrase 'With what has been said...'

The practical method applied by the commentator of the Qur'ān was that first it was determined whether the chapter was revealed in Mecca or Medina. Then the circumstance of revelation was determined. Then the verse was explained and the opinions of the companions and the Successors are narrated. The traditions of Ibn 'Abbās are relied upon in many cases.

There is a positive attitude displayed towards discussions of the Prophetic Household ('a). Under the verse of *Mubāhilah* he writes: "It is said that 'our sons' mean al-Ḥasan and Ḥusayn; 'our women' mean Fatimah; and 'our selves' mean Ali (r) and it is said that he is upon the general body of religious people." In the explanation of the verse:

﴿...ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ...﴾

"then let us pray earnestly,"[1] he writes:

«قال ابن عباس: نتضرع في الدعا و قيل معناه نجتهد و نبالغ في الدعا و قيل: معناه نلتعن والابتهال الالتعان يقال عليه بهلة الله اي لعنة الله»

"Ibn 'Abbās says: 'Humility in supplication; it is also said to mean to strive in supplication; it is also said to earnestly curse.'"[2]

He alludes to Imam Ali ('a) feeding the destitute, orphans, and captives in Sūrah Insan.[3] In most cases he would describe the verse and then narrate the opinions about the verse. He writes after the verse:

﴿وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ...﴾

"Spend in the way of Allah, and do not cast yourselves with your

1. Qurān, 3:61.
2. Lubāb al-Ta'wīl fī Ma`ānī al-Tanzīl, v.1, p.254.
3. Ibid, v.4, p.378.

own hands into destruction,"[1] that: "'In the way of Allah' means *jihad* and, since Allah obligated *jihad* and war needs monetary backing, Allah obligated charity. What is meant by charity here is spending money in the benefit of religion, for instance, *ḥājj*, *`umrah*, keeping family ties, charity, and *jihad*."

6. Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān

Author: Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn Qumī Nayshābūrī

Death: 730

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Philosophical, mystic, and theological

Size: Ten volumes

The author, famously known as Niẓām Nayshābūrī was alive until 730 because in some historical accounts his tafsīr was completed in that year.[2] The complete name of his commentary is *Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān*. He was a scholar of various rational and textual sciences; he had memorized the Qur'ān and was a well-known reciter, was a scholar of Arabic literature and a commentator on the Qur'ān. He was originally from Qum, but moved to Nayshābūr.

There is some disagreement about whether he was Shia or Sunni. Dhahabī considers him Sunni in *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*.[3] But, some Shia scholars, for instance, Aqā Buzurg Tehranī, the author of *al-Dharī`ah* and 'Allāmah Majlisī in *Sharḥ Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh*,[4] and the author of *Rawḍāt al-Janāt*[5] bring evidence to state that he was a Shia.

The author was a scholar of many fields and wrote books on many subjects. He has a commentary on *Shāfī'īyah* in morphology which is famously known as *Sharḥ Niẓām*. He also commentated on *Tadhkirah* by Khājah Nasir al-Dīn Ṭūsī which is about astrology.[6]

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1. Qurān, 2:195.
2. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.256.
3. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.333.
4. Al-Dharī`ah, v.16, pgs.31-32.
5. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, p.250.
6. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.330.

This tafsīr is, in reality, a selection from *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī which includes most of the points mentioned in *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī. The author writes: "My book is taken from *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī which is the most comprehensive tafsīr. Most of the issues raised in *Tafsīr Kashshāf* are also mentioned."[1]

Sources of the tafsīr

In addition to the information taken from *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī and *Tafsīr Kashshāf*, the author also benefited from other books. In traditions he used *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* and *Maṣābīḥ Baghūwī*. In regards to the circumstances of revelation he used *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* and *Tafsīr* or *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* by Waḥīdī Nayshābūrī. In Etymology he used *Ṣiḥāḥ Jawharī*. In jurisprudence he used al-*Wajīz* of *Rafī'ī*. He benefited from the esoteric interpretations of verses provided by Najm al-Dīn Dāyah (a famous mystic) and sometimes he would claim that he arrived at the esoteric meaning himself. He also used *Kashshāf*, *Tafsīr Kabīr*, and *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm* by Sakākī for Arabic literature.

The author states: "I wrote the tafsīr in the same amount of time that Ali was the caliph (five years)."[2] It also worthy mention that Mullā Ṣadrā used this tafsīr as a source for his own commentary.[3]

As mentioned above, the method of this tafsīr is *Ijtihādī*. The reason for this classification is that he gave importance to both rational and textual sources of interpretation. His commentary has a specialization in philosophy which can be seen in the explanation he gives for the 42nd verse of Sūrah Zumur and the first two verses of Sūrah Infitār. It also has a specialization in mysticism and theology.

While narrating various traditions and opinions of the companions and the Successors, the author omits the traditions regarding the merits of the different chapters of the Qur'ān because of their doubtful authenticity.

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1. Gharā'ib al-Qurān, v.1, p.18.
2. Gharā'ib al-Qurān, v.10, pgs.224-226; Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, pgs.257-258.
3. Ibid.

7. Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt fi al-Tafsīr

Author: Muhammad ibn Yūsuf, famously known as Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī Gharnāṭī

Death: 745

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī* and comprehensive

Specialization: Arabic literature

Size: Ten volumes

Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī was a professor of Arabic syntax and language.[1] He traveled widely and met more than 250 teachers. He became an authoritative grammarian in Egypt and had many students. He was known as an admirer of Imam Ali ('a) and a supporter of the Prophetic Household ('a).[2] Shahīd al-Thānī narrates from him through his student Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ṣamad Baghdādī.[3]

His commentary is similar to *Tafsīr Kashshāf* in its discussions of Arabic literature; in places even criticizing the latter. The most important sources that Abū Ḥayyān used in *Tafsīr Baḥr al-Muḥīt* were: *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī, *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* by Ibn `Aṭīyah, and the tafsīr written by Ibn Naqīb.[4]

One of the most important characteristics of this tafsīr is how it employs Arabic literature to illustrate the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān. Another important characteristic is how it emphasizes and proves the relationship between different chapters of the Qur'ān. In this regard he states that the reason that people, mentioned at the end of Sūrah Jumu`ah, do not participate in and listen to the Friday sermon of the Prophet (ṣ) is because they are hypocrites. A number of Muslims also followed them and joined their business caravans. This is why Sūrah Munāfiqūn is mentioned after:

﴿...نْفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا...﴾

"...they scatter off towards it and leave you standing..."[5] [6]

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1. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.278.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, pgs.501-502.
3. Ibid; Shaykh `Abbās Qumī, al-Kunya wa al-Alqāb, v.1, p.59.
4. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, pgs.328-329.
5. Qurān, 62:11.
6. Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, v.10, p.179.

The practical method applied by the author of this tafsīr is that at the beginning of each chapter it would be stated if the chapter was revealed in Mecca or Medina. Then, the circumstances of revelation are discussed and the common recitations are mentioned. After this the opinions of the companions and the Successors are given and explained. The most detailed discussions found in this tafsīr are discussions regarding points in Arabic literature.

The author summarized *Tafsīr Baḥr al-Muḥīt* so that the tafsīr information can be easier placed in the hands of those who want it. This summary is called *al-Nahr al-Mād min al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt.* Likewise, one of the students of Abū Ḥayyān named Tāj al-Dīn Ḥanafī summarized *Tafsīr Baḥr al-Muḥīt* into *al-Durr al-Laqīt min al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt.*

8. Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm

Author: Abū al-Fidā Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr Damashqī

Death: 774

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Size: Four volumes

The author, famously known as Ibn Kathīr Damashqī died in 774. He was an authority in jurisprudence and history. His book on history called *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* is famous. He was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, although in many cases he followed the opinions of Ibn Taymīyah.

The introduction to his tafsīr was taken from *Uṣūl al-Tafsīr* by Ibn Taymīyah. Therein he says that the best approach to tafsīr is explaining verses of the Qur'ān through other verses of the Qur'ān. He reasons for this claim, but rarely implements this method in his own tafsir.

This tafsīr is one of the most famous traditional tafsīrs. But its method differs significantly from purely traditional tafsīrs (for instance, *Durr al-Manthūr*) in so far as that after mentioning the verse and the traditions the author criticizes opinions, examines meanings, and chooses, discredits, or emphasizes some traditions over others.

When citing a verse, he first explains it using simple language. If there are verses that describe the meaning he also mentions them (this is

a form of explaining the verses of the Qur'ān by using other verses that this commentator of the Qur'ān and his teacher Ibn Taymīyah support). Then he would narrate prophetic traditions and views of the companions and the Successors. He would then reason for the authenticity or inauthentic nature of the traditions or would choose a certain group of traditions to be correct. He would even discuss the veracity of the transmitters, which shows that he was familiar with the sciences of traditions and the science of rijāl. The author tried to refrain from narrating Isrā'īlīyāt traditions and other forgeries.[1]

9. Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥissān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

Author: 'Abd al-Raḥman Tha`ālabī

Death: 876

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Size Three and five volumes

This tafsīr is one of the Sunni traditional tafsīrs written by Abū Zayd 'Abd al-Raḥman Makhlūf Tha`ālabī. He traveled extensively in order to collect traditions and was one of the most famous traditionists of his time.[2]

The most important source that Tha`ālabī used was *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* by Ibn `Aṭīyah and, as he said himself, other tafsīrs such as *Tafsīr Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī. Likewise he used the traditions found in the six books of traditions used by the Sunnis and in *Tadhkirah* by Qurṭābī and *Maṣābīḥ* by Bayḍāwī.

The introduction discusses the merits of the Qur'ān, the merits of tafsīr and points of Arabic literature in the Qur'ān, the prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion, the stages of tafsīr, the terms used in the Qur'ān, the names of the Qur'ān, the meanings of Sūrah and Ayh, seeking refuge, and the phrase: "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful."

The method that he used in tafsīr was reliance upon the traditions of the companions and the Successors. He extensively

1. The majority of information used in this section and the next two sections is taken from al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fi Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2.
2. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.1, p.258.

narrated from them. But, the closer that the tafsīr comes to the end, mere explanations about the verses becomes sufficient – opinions are not given. This tafsīr does not use any reasoning. The practical method used in this tafsīr is that at the beginning the recitations are mentioned, then sometimes points of Arabic literature are mentioned, and then traditions are narrated. Traditions without chains of narration are transmitted in this tafsīr and these include a fair number of Isrā'īlīyāt traditions.

He was a hardline Sunni and displayed ideological partisanship in his theological discussions; often refraining from narrating the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a). Only under the 55th verse of Sūrah Mā'Iḍāḥ did he mention Imam Ali ('a) giving his ring.[1] He did not mention the Prophetic Household after the verse of *Mubāhilah* at all.

10. Naẓm al-Durrar fi Tanāsib al-Ayāt wa al-Suwūr

Author: Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Baqā'ī

Death: 885

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Mystic with special attention given to creating a relationship between the verses and the chapters

Size: Twenty-two volumes

Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar ibn Abū Bakr Baqā'ī was from Damascus and a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. Adnahway quotes Suyūṭī as saying: "He was the first to author works that manifested the grandeur of the Qur'ān." He wrote this tafsīr over a 14 year period.[2]

This tafsīr was written in accordance to Qur'ānic sciences, through which he indicates how some verses are connected to others. It also details discourses pertaining to the Qur'ān's organization and the coherence of its parts – all of which are matters that are dealt with in the science of eloquence. In accordance to what the introduction states, the author tried to describe the relationship that the verses have with each other after he read the book *al-Mu'ālim bil-Burhān fī Tartīb Suwūr al-Qur'ān* by Abū Ja'far Thaqafī Andalusī in which the relationships of the chapters of the Qur'ān are mentioned.

1. Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥissān, v.1, p.438.
2. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.348.

Then, he mentioned the importance of this discussion and the researchers who wrote books on this subject.[1]

The sources that this author used are: *al-Burhān* by Zarakshī, *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, and *Miftāḥ al-Bāb al-Maqfal li-Fahm al-Qur'ān al-Manzal* by Ḥarālī Maghribī. Some other sources that he used are the Tafsīr written by Ibn Naqīb Ḥanafī, *Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl* by Bayḍāwī, and *Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī.

He narrates from the text of Ḥarālī Maghribi in many places of his tafsīr and then explains it. This shows that this book played an instrumental role in *Tafsīr Naẓm al-Durrar*. He would narrate opinions of the companions and the Successors and would, in many cases, refer to mystic points.

There are very few tafsīrs similar to this one in depicting the relationships between the verses of the Qur'ān. In addition to tafsīr material, he presented a new method. For instance, in regards to the relationship between the 40th, 47th, and 48th verses of Sūrah Baqarah, which address the Israelites, he states that the repetition of the vocative is in the form of exaggeration. This is to attract attention so that fear and hope will be achieved. This is why it is stated twice "O' Israelites." Also, since they are specifically mentioned; the blessings that were given to them which were followed by prohibitions are alluded to so that they would fear disobeying these commands. Disobedience with the existence of blessings is worse. This is why sustenance is used to scare them and then it is said that nobody will reach salvation except the pious.[2]

The author treated the Prophetic Household ('a) fairly. In his introduction, he states that his tafsīr was inspired by the verses of the Qur'ān and the statements of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) about pondering over the Qur'ān.[3] In Sūrah Kawthar, while mentioning the progeny of Fatimah Zahrā' ('a), he writes that no name of those who opposed the Prophet (ṣ) remains while the children of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) are many despite the fact that many people have tried to kill them.[4]

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1. Burhān al-Dīn Baqā'ī, Naẓm al-Durrar, v.1, pgs.2-3.
2. Ibid, p.347.
3. Ibid, v.1, p.2.
4. Ibid, v.22, p.292.

The rest of the commentators of the Qur'ān and tafsīrs of these three centuries

1. The tafsīrs of Muḥī al-Dīn 'Arabī: Abū Bakr Muḥī al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn 'Abdullah Ḥātamī Ṭā'ī Andalusī, famously known as Ibn 'Arabī was born in 560 and died in 638 in Damascus. He was a prominent figure of his time. He traveled extensively to cities such as Baghdad, Rome, Mecca, and Medina. He wrote many books such as *Futūḥāt Makkīyyah*, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm al-Mūsama bil-Ijmāl wa al-Tafṣīl*, and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.[1]

There are various opinions about his beliefs. He followed Mālikī jurisprudence and had his own system of belief. He was a prominent Sufi of his time and had many followers who loved him immensely. His followers loved him so much that they called him 'the greatest Shaykh' (*Shaykh al-Akbar*) and 'the knower of Allah' (*'Arif billah*).

He exposited Qur'ānic verses in his various books. He mentions a tafsīr called *Tafsīr al-Ijmāl wa al-Tafṣīl fī Ma'rifah Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl* in some of his works such as *Futūḥāt Makīyah*. He also refers some issues to this book. He also mentions another tafsīr called *Iyjāz al-Bayān fī al-Tarjamah 'an al-Qur'ān*. Other tafsīrs which have been attributed to him are:[2] *Raḥmah min al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr wa Ishārāt al-Qur'ān* and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (two volumes).

He was very favorable to the Prophetic Household ('a) and narrated many of their merits.

His tafsīr was written with a specialty in mysticism. Although there are many positive points therein, there are also some points that have no basis in the Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, or Arabic literature. He considers Aaron (in the story of Moses), in the verse:

﴿وَأَخِي هَارُونُ...﴾

"Aaron, my brother,"[3] to be the intellect and 'entered Medina' to be the 'Medina of the body.'

He explains the verse:

﴿...وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ...﴾

1. Aḥmad bin Muhamamd Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.231.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.569.
3. Qurān, 28:34.

"This one from among his followers, and that one from his enemies,"[1] in the following way: his follower is his intellect and his enemy is his carnal desires."[2]

2. Another tafsīr is *al-'Arā'is fī al-Ta'wīl* by Rūzbahān Baqlī (d.606). He was considered to be a Sufi of his age.[3]

3. Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnūwī (d.673), a student of Ibn 'Arabī, was another commentator of the Qur'ān who was a mystic and wrote about mysticism and Sufism. For instance, one of his works is: *al-I'jāz wa al-Bayān fī Kashf Asrār al-Qur'ān* published in two large volumes.[4]

4. Abū 'Abdullah Balkhī Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Sulaymān, famously known as Ibn Naqīb was considered to be one of the leaders of his time. The majority of his life was spent on tafsīr.[5]

5. *Tabsir al-Raḥman wa Taysir al-Manān* was written by Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Mahāyimī (d.835) and published by the 'Alam al-Kutub Publishing Company in two volumes. The author was a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and a Sufi. This tafsīr is a simple tafsīr written without reasoning. It only explained the verses with a mystic outlook. Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr, Shams al-Dīn ibn Naqīb Qāḍī al-Qādāh (d.745) wrote an introduction to this tafsīr.[6]

6. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr, famously known as Ibn Qayim Jawzī (d.751) wrote a tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah called *al-Ṭibyān fī Aqsām al-Qur'ān*.[7]

7. Sa'd al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d.792), the author of *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm*, wrote a commentary on *Kashshāf* and a tafsīr called *Kashf al-Asrār* in Farsi.[8]

8. Abū al-Ḥasan Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī Astarābādī (d.810) wrote a commentary to *Kashshāf* as well as books about Arabic literature such as *Muṭāwil* and books about theology such as *Sharḥ al-Mutali'*, *Sharḥ al-Shamsīyah*, and *Sharḥ al-Muwāqif*.[9]

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1. Qurān, 28:15.
2. Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm Ibn `Arabī, v.2, pgs.220 and 229.
3. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.215.
4. Ibid, p.248.
5. Ibid, p.259.
6. Ibid, p.280.
7. Ibid, p.284.
8. Ibid, p.302.
9. Ibid, p.310.

9. Abū Ṭāhir Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī Fīrūzābādī (d.816), the author of *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt fī al-Lughah*: His tafsīrs are *Baṣā'ir Dhūwī al-Tamīz fī Laṭā'if al-Kitāb al-'Aziz, al-Darr al-'Aẓīm al-Murshid ila Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, Tanwīr al-Maqāyis 'ala Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*, and a commentary on *Kashshāf*.[1]

10. Abū al-Khayr Muhammad ibn Yūsuf Jawzī (d.833) was a recitor of the Qur'ān, had the Qur'ān memorized, and was strong in matters of Arabic literature and tafsīr. His most famous book is *al-Nashr fī al-Qarā'at al-'Ashr*.[2]

11. Another tafsīr is *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* by Abū al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ali Nayrīzī (d.605). He was a Shia jurisprudent, scholar of traditions, scholar of Arabic literature, and commentator of the Qur'ān. He was one of the prominent scholars of the seventh century. It has been said that this tafsīr was written in ten volumes. Dāwūdī listed him as a prominent scholars and author of a tafsīr in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*.[3]

12. *Al-Ṭibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by 'Abdullah Yamānī (d.614). 'Abdullah ibn Ḥamzah was a leader of the Zaydiyah sect.[4]

13. *Al-Ishārāt fī Tafsīr al-Ayāt* by Najm al-Dīn Asadī, famously known as Diyah (d.654). Some people have named this tafsīr *al-Ta'wīlāt al-Najmīyah*.[5] This tafsīr is a mystic tafsīr where the explanation of each verse is given under the title: 'points about the research of the verse.'[6] It has been printed in five volumes. It has also been narrated that Khājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī wrote *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlāṣ* and *Naqd al-Tanzīl*.[7]

14. *Tafsīr al-Taqīd al-Kabīr fī Tafsīr Kitāb Allah al-Majīd* by Aḥmad ibn Muhammad Saylī Tunisī (d.830). He used *Kashshāf, Muḥarrār al-Wajīz, Tafsīr Kabīr*, and *Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Andalusī to write his tafsīr. This tafsīr was printed in two volumes.

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1. Ibid, p.313.
2. Ibid, p.321.
3. Ibid, v.1, p.435.
4. `Umar Riḍā, Mu`jam al-Mu'ālifīn, v.6, p.50.
5. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.587.
6. `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.2, p.214.
7. Ibid, p.226.

15. *Al-Lubāb fī 'Ulūm al-Kitāb* by Abū Ḥafṣ `Umar ibn Ali ibn `Adil Damashqī Ḥanafī (d. after 880). He is famously known as Ibn 'Adil and he wrote this tafsīr in twenty volumes. This tafsīr is an organized tafsīr which has many sections. The commentator of the Qur'ān put forth much effort in religious discussions, social discussions, and literary discussions. He was also fair in his dealing with the Prophetic Household ('a).

16. *Al-Taysīr fī al-Tafsīr* by 'Abd al-`Azīz ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Abdullah 'Izz al-Dīn Damiri (d.697). The author is famously known as Dīrdīnī and was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. This tafsīr was published in two volumes in Mecca. The tafsīr is written in an organized manner and the chapters of the Qur'ān are written in poetic form. The author benefited from the books written by Ṭabarī, Thal'abī, the tafsīrs of Waḥīdī, and *Tafsīr Qashīrī.*

Summary

1. The *Ijtihādī* method continued into the seventh and eighth centuries. *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī and *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Qurṭābī support this claim. Other specializations found in this centuries were: theological, Arabic literature, and mystic.

2. Close to 300 tafsīrs were written in these three centuries. Shia tafsīrs, in comparison with other centuries, were much less common due to unfavorable intellectual and political conditions. Shia scholars' focused more on jurisprudence during these centuries. The most important books on Shia jurisprudence were written in these centuries.

3. The most important Shia tafsīrs of this age were: *Nahj al-Bayān 'an Kashf Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn Ḥasan Shaybānī and *al-Balābul al-Qalāqul* by Abū al-Makārim Maḥmūd Ḥasanī Wā'iẓ. Both of these tafsīrs were written in Farsi and in the traditional method with a specialization in theology. Likewise, the following tafsīrs were written in this age: *Al-Muḥīt al-'Aẓam* by Sayyid Ḥaydar Amulī which was written in subject-wise format, *Tafsīr Gazār* or *Jalā' al-Adhhān wa Jalā' al-Aḥzān* by Abū al-Muḥāsin Jurjānī, which was written in an *Ijtihādī* method with a specialization in theology and Arabic literature, *Tafsīr Sa'd al-Su `ūd* by Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, *Tafsīr Kanz al-'Irfān* by Fāḍil Miqdād, and *Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Abū Nāṣir ibn Matuwwij Baḥrānī.

4. The Sunni tafsīrs of these four centuries are: *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, which was written in the *Ijtihādī* method with specializations in theology and philosophy, *Tafsīr al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Qurṭābī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl* by Bayḍāwī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqāyiq al-Ta'wīl* by Nasafī, which was written in the *Ijtihādī* method, *Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān* by Nayshābūrī, which was written in the *Ijtihādī* method with specializations in philosophy and mysticism, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Abu Ḥayyān Andalusī, *Lubāb al-Ta'wīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl* by 'Alā al-Dīn Baghdādī, famously known as Khāzin, which was written in the traditional method, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥissān*, famously known as *Tafsīr Tha'ālabī*, *Naẓm al-Durrar fī Tanāsub al-Ayāt wa al-Suwūr* by Burhān al-Dīn Baqā'ī, which was written with specializations in Arabic literature and mysticism, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* and *al-Ijmāl wa al-Tafṣīl* by Muḥī al-Dīn `Arabī.

Questions and Research Points

1. What specializations and methods were used in tafsīr in these three centuries?
2. Why were so few Shia tafsīrs written in these centuries?
3. Introduce three Shia tafsīrs of the seventh and eighth centuries.
4. Present a report about Shia tafsīrs in the ninth century.
5. Introduce three important Sunni tafsīrs of these three centuries.
6. Explain the method and specializations of Tafsīr Kabīr. What are its characteristics? What sources did it use? What was Fakhr Rāzī's stance towards the Prophetic Household ('a)?
7. Who wrote *Tafsīr Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*? Why is this tafsīr important?
8. List three mystic tafsīrs with their authors.
9. Use *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-`Aẓīm*, *Gharā'ib al-Furqān* by Ḥakīm Nayshābūrī, and *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* by `Alā al-Dīn Ali ibn Muhammad Ibrāhīm Baghdādī to write a report about the Sunni opinions about Imam Zamān presented under the verses: 9:33, 61:9, 21:105, and 28:5.

12
Tafsīrs of the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Centuries

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with the cultural and political conditions of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the expansion of Akhbarism, the coming to power of the Safavid Dynasty, the spread of books about verses regarding religious rulings, and the Sunni commentaries, especially on Tafsīr Bayḍāwī. 2. Familiarity with the most important traditional tafsīrs, the practical and intellectual methods of the commentators of the Qur'ān, purely traditional tafsīrs without analysis and traditional tafsīrs with analysis.3. Familiarity with the specializations used in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, for instance the specialization in philosophy, and a summarized introduction of jurisprudential tafsīrs.

Characteristics of these three centuries

Scholars in these three centuries, especially Shia scholars, felt that tafsīr was being transformed from its original state, which relied upon the *Sunnah* and traditions of the Infallible Imams ('a). Commentators of the Qur'ān would discuss purely academic issues in regards to Arabic grammar and theology. In response to this trend towards intellectualism, scholars compiled traditions and composed traditional tafsīrs. The common points in these three centuries were:

1. Expansion of Akhbarism: Akhbarism grew in these three centuries. The majority of complete tafsīrs that were written in these centuries were purely traditional tafsīrs. Amongst the Sunnis, Suyūṭī wrote *Durr al-Manthūr* and amongst the Shias, Mullā Fatḥallah Kāshānī wrote *Tafsīr Minhāj al-Ṣādiqīn*, as well as *al-Burhān* by Baḥrānī and *Nūr al-Thaqalayn* by Ḥawīzī.

These centuries fell back to the third century of tafsīr where the main specialization was traditions.

Hardline Akhbarism amongst the Shia emerged in this age. The effects of Akhbarism were felt amongst the Shia in the eleventh century lead by Mullā Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī (d.1026 or 1031). He wrote *Fawā'id Madanīyah* at the command of his teacher Mīrzā Muhammad Astarābādī, the author of *Rijāl Kabīr Minhāj al-Maqāl*. Many people were influenced by him. Mullā Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī was the first person to clearly rebuke jurists and criticize, even ridicule, their opinions. After him, scholars such as Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī, Muḥaddath Nūri, Ḥurr 'Amulī, and 'Allāmah Majlisī, accepted this school of thought.[1]

2. An important point that is common amongst these three centuries and which strengthened the establishment of a Shia government in the Safavid Dynasty is the authoring of books regarding the verses that mention religious rulings. *Tafsir Zubdah al-Bayān fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muqaddas Ardibīlī (d.993) and *Tafsīr Shāhī* by Amīr Abū al-Fatḥ Ḥusaynī (d.976) are examples of this form of tafsīr. Scholars, such as Fāḍil Jawād Kāzim (d.1029), the author of *Masālik al-Afhām fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Astarābādī (d.1028), and Mullā Ali Tūnī (d. 11th century), all struggled in this field.

3. The desire to write commentaries grew in these three centuries, especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Muhammad ibn AdNahway mentions more than one hundred tafsīrs and commentators of the Qur'ān of these centuries in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*. About fifty of these tafsīrs are commentaries on *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and in rare cases on *Tafsīr Kashshāf*.[2] These two tafsīrs were given importance by commentators of the Qur'ān due to their brevity. The most important commentaries on *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* were written by Aḥmad ibn Rūḥallah Anṣāri Ganjawī (d.1008), Qūnūwī (d.951), in eighth volumes, Mullā Muhammad ibn al-Ghanī (d.1036), Ni`matullah Maḥmūd Nakhjūwānī (d.902), Shahāb al-Dīn Khafājī (d. after 1070), and Ibn al-Alā'ī (d.1039).

1. Ali Dawānī, Waḥīd Bahbahānī, p.90.
2. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, pgs.358-416.

Tafsīr Kashshāf and *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* were given importance to by Shia scholars as well. Shaykh Bahā'ī (d.1035) and Sultan al-`Ulama' (d.1064) wrote commentaries on *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī*.

4. Some philosophers and mystics wrote tafsīrs with specializations in philosophy and mysticism. Examples of these are: *Tasir al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Mullā Ṣadrā (d.1050), the tafsīr written by Ḥakīm Muḥaqiq Mullā Shams Gīlānī (d.1098), and the tafsīr written by Sharī`at Lāhijī.[1]

The most important tafsīrs of these centuries will now be examined:

Shia Tafsīrs

1. Minhāj al-Ṣādiqīn fī Ilzām al-Khālifīn

Author: Mullā Fatḥallah Kāshānī

Death: 988

Language: Farsi

Method: Traditional (importance given to Arabic language and jurisprudence)

Specialization: Ethical, mystic

Size: Ten volumes

The late Kāshānī was a prominent Shia scholar of his time who wrote many books.

His tafsīr is comprised of discussions in the fields of Arabic literature, jurisprudence, ethics, mysticism, history, and theology. He narrates points of Arabic literature from *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and *Kashshāf*. He benefited from *Majma' al-Bayān*, the tafsīr written by Abū al-Fatūḥ Rāzī, and *Gazār* in issues regarding history and theology. But, he put most of his effort in narrating traditions. The late 'Allāmah Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Shi'rānī edited and performed research on the text. He also wrote a detailed and valuable introduction about recitation, the Qur'ān not being distorted, the types of tafsīr, the tafsīr knowledge of the Imams ('a), clarifying Isrā'īlīyāt traditions, and the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

The author summarized his tafsīr under the title of *Khulāṣah al-Minhāj*. He also wrote another tafsīr in Arabic called *Zubdah al-Tafāsīr*.[2]

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī, Sayr Tatawir Tafāsīr Shia, p.103.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.346; Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.139.

2. Tafsīr Ṣāfī

Author: Mullā Muḥsin Muhammad ibn Murtaḍa, famously known as Fayḍ Kāshānī

Death: 1091

Date of publication: 1075

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional with analysis

Specialization: Mystic

Size: Five volumes

Fayḍ Kāshānī was a well-rounded scholar, with expertise in the fields of jurisprudence, tafsīr, traditions, philosophy, and mysticism. He studied under Muḥaddath Baḥrānī in narrative sciences and under Mullā Ṣadrā and the latter's teacher, Mīr Damād in rational sciences.

Tafsīr Ṣāfī, which is one of the most popular tafsīrs amongst the Shia, was written in a traditional method. In the introduction, the author states that commentators of the Qur'ān spend most of their time discussing Arabic literature and jurisprudence; not giving enough attention to traditions. This is why he decided to write a traditional tafsīr. But he did not suffice himself with narrating traditions; rather he would examine and criticize the traditions after narrating them under the title of 'I say.' In reality, it is a combination of transmitting traditions and *Darāyah*.

Sources of Tafsīr Ṣāfī

At the beginning he briefly explains the verses using *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* as his source. He relied upon Shia traditions from the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt taken from *Tafsīr 'Ayāshī* and *Tafsīr Qumī*.

He also benefited from Arabic literature and mysticism in his tafsīr.

This tafsīr has an introduction which is one of the best introductions written for a tafsīr. The introduction has twelve chapters which discuss issues relating to the merits of the Qur'ān, the Knowledge of the Imams ('a) about the Qur'ān, The Qur'ān being protected from distortion, and the instantaneous and gradual revelation of the Qur'ān.

The late Fayḍ Kāshānī, in addition to *Ṣāfī*, wrote two other tafsīrs called *Asfa* (summary of *Ṣāfī* in two volumes) and *Musfa* (summary of *Asfa*).[1]

Tasir example: He writes about the verse:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا...﴾

"That is how for every prophet We appointed as enemy,"[2] that: "Just as We appointed an enemy to you, O' Prophet, We also appointed enemies to the previous prophets."

After this he narrates a tradition from *Tafsīr Qumī* which narrates from Imam Ṣādiq ('a): "Allah did not raise any prophet unless he created two Satans along with him to bother him and misguide the people."[3]

3. Al-Burhān fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

Author: Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī

Death: 1107

Language: Arabic

Method: Purely traditional

Size: Eight volumes

Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī was a prominent Shia scholar of traditions and commentator of the Qur'ān of the twelfth century. Since the eleventh and twelfth centuries were the peak of Akhbarism the tafsīrs that were written in these centuries were mostly traditional. This tafsīr uses the traditional method explaining the entire Qur'ān in its present order.

His practical method in tafsīr was that at the beginning of each chapter he would mention the name of the chapter, the place it was revealed, and traditions regarding its merits. It was written in order of the chapters of the Qur'ān. After mentioning a verse he would describe the circumstances of revelation and traditions regarding it. The tafsīr consists of about 16 thousand traditions. One of the criticisms of this tafsīr is that the author did not present any opinions and did not examine the traditions or choose which

1. Introduction to Tafsīr Ṣāfī and Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.337; `Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, Ṭabaqāt Mufassirān Shia, v.3, p.224; The late Fayḍ listed about one hundred of his books.
2. Qurān, 6:112.
3. Tasir Ṣāfī, v.2, p.149.

tradition was correct (when there were contradictions);[1] he merely narrated them. Another criticism is that he would narrate from some books of doubtful authenticity which made his work to also be considered weak. In the sixteenth section to his introduction he listed his sources. Through this list it is clear that he narrated from both Shia and Sunni books of traditions.[2]

Tafsīr Burhān has a long introduction (seventeen parts) written by the author. Some of the issues that are discussed are: The merits of knowledge and learning, the merits of the Qur'ān, the tradition of the two weighty things (*thaqalayn*), prohibition of tafsīr based on personal opinion, the exoteric and esoteric meanings, the revelation of the Qur'ān, the miraculous nature of the organization of the Qur'ān, the definitive and allegorical verses, and the general and specific verses.

The author tried extensively to defend the honor of the Prophetic Household ('a). He mentioned numerous traditions about the Prophetic Household ('a) after all appropriate verses. This tafsīr describes many of the merits of the Prophetic Household and many of the rulings, ethics, and stories of the prophets that are seldomly found elsewhere.

In addition to this, one of the prominent Shia scholars of the twelfth century named Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad Ṭāhir 'Amulī wrote an introduction to this tafsīr called *Marāh al-Anwār wa Mushkāh al-Asrār*. Terminology is discussed in this introduction and is printed in one volume separate from the tafsīr.

In any case, this tafsīr is a compilation that can be used; it is a treasure chest of the words of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Tafsīr example: He narrates from *Tafsīr 'Ayāshī* which narrates form Imam Ṣādiq ('a) about the verse:

﴿فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ﴾

1. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.331.
2. He listed 43 Shia sources which, in addition to the Four Books, include Rawḍah al-Wā'iẓīn, Kitāb Salīm bin Qays, Saḥīfah al-Riḍā (a), Miṣbāḥ al-Shar`īah, Jāmi` al-Akhbār, Tuḥfah al-Ikhwān, Rabī` al-Abrār, and Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan `Askarī. Some of the Sunni sources that he mentioned are: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Sunan Tirmidhī, and Manāqib Ibn Maghāzalī. It is certain that there are some unauthentic, authentic, and mursal traditions amongst them.

"When you recite the Qur'ān, seek the protection of Allah against the outcast Satan,"[1] that Samā`ah asked how one seeks protection. Imam Ṣādiq responded:

«أستعيذ بالله السميع العليم من الشيطان الرجيم»

"Say, I seek protection with Allah, the All-Hearing, the all-Knowing from the outcast Satan."[2]

The author wrote more than 75 volumes of books. His Qur'ānic works, other than this tafsīr, are: *al-Hidāyah al-Qur'āniyah ila al-Wilāyah*, *al-Hādī wa Miṣbāḥ al-Nādī*, *Nūr al-Anwār fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, and *al-Ḥujjah fīmā Nazala fī al-Qā'im al-Ḥujjah*.

4. Nūr al-Thaqalayn

Author: 'Abd Ali ibn Jumu`ah 'Arūsī Ḥawīzī

Death: 1112

Language: Arabic

Method: Purely traditional

Size: Five volumes

Ḥawīzī was an authority in Arabic literature, poetry, jurisprudence, and traditions. He was a famous scholar of traditions in his time (eleventh and twelfth centuries). Since the late Ḥawīzī was an Akhbari and followed traditions, his tafsīr is a traditional tafsīr which was written in the order of the Qur'ān starting from Sūrah Fātiḥah until the end.

In his commentary, he merely narrated the relevant traditions and did not present any of his own opinions about them. In this regard, this tafsīr is similar to *Tafsīr al-Burhān*. The main difference between the two is that Ḥawīzī was more scrupulous about his sources and thus his material has been considered more reliable; at the beginning of each tradition he mentions the source and chain of narration leading up to the Imam ('a), *Tafsīr al-Burhān* did not do that; rather in many places it merely mentioned the chain of narration.

The sources of tafsīr that he used were the various books of Shia traditions, for instance *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, *`Illal al-Sharāya'*, *Kāfī*, *Tahdhīb*, *Majma' al-Bayān*, *Tafsīr `Ayāshī*, and *Tafsīr Qumī*.

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1. Qurān, 16:98.
2. Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī, al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān, v.4, p.483.

Choosing this method during this time period shows that traditional tafsīrs were abandoned and other methods were popular. The author writes in *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*: "Since I saw that the commentators of the Qur'ān each chose a method to explain the words of Allah, some used points of Arabic syntax, some used points of Arabic morphology, Some used points of Arabic literature, some used a theological method, and some used a combination of these methods – I wanted to clarify the verses of the Qur'ān through traditions from the Prophetic Household. [Therefore, I started writing a traditional tafsīr.]"[1]

«اما ما نقلت مما ظاهره يخالف الاجماع الطائفة المحقة فلم اقصد به بيان اعتقاد ولا عمل و انما اوردته ليعلم الناظر المطلع كيف نقل و عمّن نقل»

The Author mentioned his intention in collecting traditions as follows: "Some of the traditions that I compiled have apparent meanings that are in opposition to a consensus of scholars. My intention is not that I believe in them or act in accordance to them; rather I transmitted them so that people who are aware can become familiar with transmission and transmitters."[2]

Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn is a comprehensive book in the compilation of traditions. This is why commentators of the Qur'ān after him narrate from this book, for instance about 95 percent of the Shia traditions that are mentioned in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* are narrated from this book.[3] 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in an introduction to this tafsīr, considers this tafsīr to be the best tafsīr in regards to being a collection traditions in an organized form.[4]

5. Tafsīr Kanz al-Daqā'iq

Author: Muhammad ibn Muhammad Riḍā Mashhadī Qumī

Death: 1125

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional with analysis and opinions

Size: Ten or Fourteen volumes

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1. Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.2.
2. Ibid.
3. Riḍā Ustādī, Ashnā'ī ba Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.74.
4. Nūr al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p.2.

Mīrzā Muhammad Mashhadī Qumī was a student and follower of Fayḍ Kāshānī. In can be said that the foundations of his method in tafsīr - just as his teacher, Fayḍ Kāshānī's foundations were - are traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a). But he gave importance to other Methodologys as well. This is why he explained and narrated opinions and even benefited from the varying recitations presented by *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl* by Bayḍāwī. For traditions he used various sources including *Kāfī*, *Khiṣāl*, and *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh* while in tafsīr he used books such as *Majma' al-Bayān* and *Tafsīr Qumī*.

Rational principles, argument, points of Arabic literature, theological discussions, and, in some cases, mystic discussions are seen in this tafsīr. Sometimes forged and Isrā'īlīyāt traditions are criticized and examined.[1]

In the introduction he writes: "Before I wrote this tafsīr I wrote a commentary on *Kashshāf* and a commentary on Shaykh Bahā'ī's commentary. Then, I decided to write a tafsīr which presents the precise points and the esoteric secrets found in traditions of the Imams ('a). If I became successful in this I would give it the title: *Kanz al-Daqā'iq wa Baḥr al-Gharā'ib*."

Tafsīr Example: He writes about the verse:

﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ...﴾

"Fight them until sedition is no more,"[2] that one should fight until faithlessness is eradicated. Here, faithlessness means polytheism; which means that one should fight until there is no more polytheism. After this he narrates from *Tafsīr Qumī* which states that disbelief is meant by faithlessness.[3]

6. Zubdah al-Bayān fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān

Mullā Aḥmad ibn Muhammad, famously known as Muqaddas Ardibīlī (d.993) wrote this tafsīr. This tafsīr was written in Arabic and printed in two volumes. It is written in the order of jurisprudential

1. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.329.
2. Qurān, 8:39.
3. Kanz al-Daqā'iq, v.5, p.321.

chapters starting from spiritual purity (*ṭahārah*) and ending with discussions of physical punishments (*ḥudūd*) and blood money (*dīyah*). About four hundred verses are discussed and examined.

The explanation of each verse is given very precisely and beautifully in its own subject. The sentences of the verses are explained in detail. He benefited from tafsīrs such as *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarasī, *Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* by Fakhr Rāzī, and *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī*. This is a jurisprudential tafsīr, but it mentions points about ethics, theology, and history.

7. Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Author: Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, famously known as Mullā Ṣadrā

Death: 1050

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Philosophy and mysticism

Size: Seven volumes

Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, famously known as Ṣadr al-Muta'ālihīn, was born in 979 and died in 1050. He was one of the most prominent Islamic philosophers who changed Islamic philosophy and other Islamic sciences. He was born in Shiraz and lived there throughout his youth. Then he moved to Isfahan for a higher education. He studied under prominent scholars such as Shaykh Bahā'ī and Mīrdamād. Then he moved to Qum and began writing next to the shrine of Lady Ma`ṣūmah in a village called Kahak. This is where he wrote the valuable book *Asfār Arba`ah* about Islamic philosophy.

With the change that he brought about in philosophy he was able to combine the two philosophical trends (Peripateticism and Illuminationism) and correlate them with religious texts, verses of the Qur'ān, and traditions. Mullā Ṣadrā named his method Transcendent Philosophy (*ḥikmah al-muta`līyah*). At the end of his life he returned to his birthplace, Shiraz, and established a philosophy school and produced a number of high-level students. His most important opinions are: substantial motion (*ḥarakah al-jawharīyah*), creation of the physical world, unity of the intelligizing

subject and intelligized (*ittiḥād al-ʿaql wa al-maʿqūl*), physical hereafter with a new interpretation, disbelievers being divinely punished for eternity, and the created body and eternal soul of the human being.

He wrote over fifty books and articles. The most important of these works are: *Ḥikmat Muta'ālīyah dar Asfār Arbaʿah*, *Shawāhid al-Rabuwīyah*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, *Mabdā wa Maʿād*, and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.

Method of writing *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*: Before writing this book he wrote the book *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* as an introduction to it where he described his intellectual principles, methods, and universals of tafsīr. After writing this book he started writing the tafsīr. He did not explain the entire Qur'ān; he sporadically explained various chapters of the Qur'ān.

This tafsīr includes a tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah, Baqarah up to the 65th verse, Hādīd, Aʿla, Ayah al-Kursī, Sajdah, Ṭāriq, Abas, Ayah al-Nūr (24:35), Zilzāl, Wāqiʿah, and Jumuʿah. At the beginning of his explanation of Sūrah Sajda he writes: "After I have revealed the esoteric meanings of some of the chapters I will reveal the esoteric meanings of some of the verses. I hope that I will be able to write a comprehensive book and large tafsīr; one that the prominent scholars have not seen."[1]

Sunni Tafsīrs

1. Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bil-Ma'thūr

Author: Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī

Death: 911

Language: Arabic

Method: Purely traditional

Size: Eight volumes

Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Bakr Suyūṭī was born in 849 and died in 911. He loved reciting the Qur'ān from childhood and had memorized the entire Qur'ān before his eighth birthday. He would become a famous Sunni scholar and traditionist. A prolific author, he began writing books in 886 at the age of 37. He

1. Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm, v.6, p.6.

traveled to Damascus, Hijaz, Yemen, India, and Northern Africa in search of teachers. He was an authority in tafsīr, traditions, jurisprudence, and Arabic literature.

Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr holds a prestigious position amongst the tafsīrs of this era. This tafsīr was written in the traditional method and is comprised of traditions from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), the companions, and the Successors. The chains of narrations of the traditions mentioned in this tafsīr are omitted. From the words of Suyūṭī it seems as if there was a more detailed tafsīr which was summarized into this. He said:

«قد جمعت كتابا مسنداً فيه تفاسير النّبي ﷺ منه بضعة عضر الف حديث ما بين مرفوع و موقوف و قد تم ولله الحمد في اربع مجلدات و سميته ترجمان القرآن»

"I mentioned the chains of narration in the book which has the Prophet's (ṣ) explanations of the verses in it. That book has over 10 thousand traditions in it; in which some of them are *marfū'* and some of them *mawqūf*. With the praise of Allah it was copied in four volumes and called *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*."[1]

He writes in the introduction to the tafsīr:

«فلمّا الفت كتاب ترجمان القرآن و هو التفسير المسند عن رسول الله ﷺ و اصحابه و تم بحمدالله في مجلدات فكان ما اوردته فيه من الآثار باسانيد الكتب المخرج منها و اذا رايت قصور اكثر الهمم عن تحصيله و رغبتهم في الاقتصار على متون الاحاديث دون الاسناد و تطويله فلخصت منه هذا المختصر مقتصرا فيه على متن الاثر... و سميته الدرّ المنثور في التفسير بالمأثور...»

"Since I wrote the book *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* which is a tafsīr based upon the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) and his companions where the chains of narration are mentioned and which is published in multiple volumes, I saw that few people sought after it. Most people wanted a shorter text, especially regarding the traditions. That is why I omitted the chains of narration and summarized them. I compiled all of this and called it *Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr*."[2]

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1. Al-Itiqān, v.2, p.183.
2. Durr al-Manthūr, v.1, p.9.

This tafsīr is a tafsīr written in order of the Qur'ānic chapters starting with Sūrah Fātiḥah and ending with Sūrah Nās. As was mentioned, his method was traditional. But, he did not examine the traditions or choose which set of traditions were more authentic. He did not mention if the traditions were authentic or not. Forged and Isrā'īlīyāt traditions are found in it.

He wrote other important books in tafsīr and Qur'ānic sciences. These books are:

1. *Al-Itiqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*
2. *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*
3. *Asrār al-Ta'wīl*
4. *Al-Aklīl fī Istinbāt al-Tanzīl*
5. *Tanāsuq al-Darrār fī Tanāsub al-Ayāt wa al-Suwūr*

He states: "I started to write a comprehensive tafsīr which would make it unnecessary to refer to any other tafsīr. I mentioned the various opinions, the derivations taken from the verses, and the points of Arabic literature. I called it *Majma' al-Baḥrayn wa Matla' al-Badrayn. Al-Itiqān* is an introduction to this book."[1]

2. Rūḥ al-Bayān

Author: Shaykh Ismā`īl Ḥaqqī Barūsawī

Death: 1127

Language: Arabic

Method: Mysticism and Arabic literature

Size: Ten volumes

The author was a Turkish scholar who followed Ḥanafī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. This tafsīr contains very intricate mystic points which will be fascinating for anyone who has in interest in mysticism. The author tries to present mystic discussions in correspondence to the exoteric meanings of the verses.

The specializations of this tafsīr are mysticism and Arabic literature. But the author's practical method closely follows earlier approaches to commentary; he gives importance to the circumstances of revelation, recitation, etymology, and traditions. He also narrates the opinions of the companions and the Successors.

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1. Ibid.

The tafsīr was written in the Arabic language, but there are many instances where Farsi and Turkish poems are used for reasoning. The majority of the Farsi poems that he used were written by Ḥāfiẓ or Rūmī.

He used the tafsīrs *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt* by Qashīrī, the tafsīr written by Sahl ibn 'Abdullah Tustarī, *Mawāhib 'alay* by Mullā Fatḥallah Kāshānī, and *Ta'wīlāt* by Mullā 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī for his mystic discussions. He was influenced by Ghazālī in ethical discussions. For tafsīr material he benefited greatly from *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī. This tafsīr was summarized by Shaykh Muhammad Ali Ṣābūnī in three volumes under the title of *Tanwīr al-Adhhān min Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān*.

In addition to the tafsīr, the author wrote a book called *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, after becoming familiar with the various tafsīrs, it is necessary to state that the most common method of tafsīr in this period was traditional. But, alongside these tafsīrs, tafsīrs with specializations in philosophy (for instance the tafsīr written by Mullā Ṣadrā) and tafsīrs with specializations in Arabic literature (for instance *Tafsīr Durr al-Maṣūn fī Tafsīr Kitāb al-Maknūn* by Muhammad ibn Aḥmad Dībī Miṣrī Murshadī, who died in 1025)[1] were also written. *Tafsīr Durr al-Masun* was written with *Tafsīr Kashshāf* in mind and sometimes criticizes Zamakhsharī's opinions. He also takes points in Arabic literature from *Tafsīr al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Qurṭābī. The writing of jurisprudential tafsīrs progressed in this period and commentators of the Qur'ān wrote books titled *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. The following jurisprudential tafsīrs can be listed from this age: *Zubdah al-Bayān fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muqaddas Ardibīlī (d.993), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abū Bakr (d.911), *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Hashfatīkī Mashhadī (d.907), *Sharḥ Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Yamānī Zaydī (d.957), *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Astarābādī (d.1036), *Anwār al-Qur'ān fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad Iqḥiṣārī (d.1025),

1. Aḥmad bin Muhammad Adnahway, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn, p.412.

Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām by Muhammad Ḥusayn Mar`ashī (d.1034), and in the twelfth century *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Ismā`īl Ḥaqqī (d.1137).

Summary

1. The common points of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries are the spread of Akhbarism and the revival of traditional tafsīrs such as *al-Burhān*, *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, and *Durr al-Manthūr*. Amongst the Shia scholars, a fanatic Akhbari existed by the name of Mullā Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī. Likewise, jurisprudential tafsīrs progressed in these centuries. It was common for Sunnis to write commentaries, especially commentaries upon *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and *Kashshāf*.

2. In addition, the specializations of philosophy and mysticism were rarely seen, but existed in tafsīrs such as the one written by Mullā Ṣadrā.

3. The traditional Shia tafsīrs were: *Tafsīr Minhāj al-Ṣādiqīn* by Mullā Fatḥallah Kāshānī (d.988), which was written in Farsi in ten volumes in the traditional method with specializations in Arabic literature, mysticism, and theology. This tafsīr benefited from *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and *Kashshāf* in Arabic literature and *Majma' al-Bayān* and *Rūḥ al-Janān* in theological discussions. *Tafsīr Ṣāfī* is another traditional tafsīr written by Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī in Arabic. The author benefited from *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* in his tafsīr. *Tafsīr al-Burhān* by Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī was a purely traditional tafsīr written without any form of analysis. It is written in the order of the Qur'ān and whenever there was a tradition regarding a verse he would narrate it.

Another tafsīr which is similar to *Tafsīr al-Burhān* is *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*. This tafsīr was written by 'Abd Ali ibn Jumu`ah Ḥawīzī in a purely traditional method. The only reason that this tafsīr is more credible than *Tafsīr al-Burhān* is because of the sources that it used. Another traditional tafsīr is *Kanz al-Daqā'iq* by Muhammad ibn Muhammad Riḍā Qumī which, similar to *Tafsīr Ṣāfī*, provided a small amount of explanation and opinions. The author of this tafsīr was a student of Fayḍ Kāshānī and also benefitted from *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī*. Another traditional tafsīr of the tenth century was *Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr* by Suyūṭī who was a Sunni. This tafsīr is also a purely traditional tafsīr which also

narrates the traditions of the companions and the Successors.

4. In the eleventh century Mullā Ṣadrā wrote *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* with a specialization in philosophy. Likewise, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad Dibi wrote *Tafsīr Durr al-Masun fī Tafsīr Kitāb al-Maknūn* with a specialization in Arabic literature and a close eye on *Kashshāf.*

5. In the tenth century and proceeding centuries commentators of the Qur'ān wrote jurisprudential tafsīrs due to the progression of the jurisprudential field. An example of this type of tafsīr is *Zubdah al-Bayān fī Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muqaddas Ardibīlī (d.993). Other jurisprudential tafsīrs are: *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Astarābādī, *Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Ḥusayn Mar`ashī, and *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Ismā`īl Ḥaqqī.

6. One of the efforts that the Sunni scholars put forth in these three centuries was commentating upon previous tafsīrs such as *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī. These two tafsīrs were given attention to by the commentators of the Qur'ān due to their brevity. The most important commentaries were written by Shahāb al-Dīn Khafājī, Ibn al-`Alā'ī Ni`matullah Nakhjūwānī, and Anṣār Kunjawi.

Questions and Research Points

1. What were the common points of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries?

2. What were the most important Shia traditional tafsīrs along with their authors written in these centuries?

3. Introduce *Tafsīr Ṣāfī* and *Kanz al-Daqā'iq.* What were their merits and what criticisms do they have?

4. Introduce *Tafsīr al-Burhān* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn.* Compare them with each other.

5. Provide an explanation of *Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr.*

6. What specializations existed in tafsīrs of this era? Introduce tafsīrs that used these specializations.

7. List some of the jurisprudential tafsīrs of these centuries.

8. What was the method of tafsīr used by Sunni scholars in these centuries? Explain your answer and introduce a few tafsīrs as examples.

9. Use *Tasir Ṣāfī* by Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (introduction), *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, v.2, by Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī and present a research about the opinions that Fayḍ Kāshānī wrote about in his introduction (for instance the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān not being distorted). Examine the mystic points mentioned therein as well.

13
Tafsīrs of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with tafsīrs of the thirteenth century. 2. The reason behind the decline of tafsīr in the thirteenth century. 3. Familiarity with tafsīrs that use various methods and specializations. 4. Examination of the characteristics and changes in tafsīr of the fourteenth century. 5. The tafsīrs of the fourteenth century and familiarity with the progression of tafsīr in the contemporary era. 6. Familiarity with the characteristics and innovations in tafsīr in the contemporary era: a)The explanatory method of the contemporary era, b) tafsīrs written in order of revelation, c) tafsīrs with specializations in intellectual issues. 7. Familiarity with jurisprudential tafsīrs of the contemporary era. 8. Familiarity with the variety of tafsīrs in the contemporary era. 9. Introduction of the most important tafsīrs of the fourteenth century: a) Shia tafsīrs, b) Sunni tafsīrs.

The reason behind the decline of tasir in the thirteenth century

In the previous lesson, which examined the tafsīrs in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it became clear that many tafsīrs of these centuries were written in the traditional method. These traditions did not provide any analysis. But in the thirteenth century a decline in tafsīr was witnessed. One of the most important reasons behind this decline might have been the conflict between Akhbarism and Uṣūlism, which lead many scholars to shift their focus to *Ijtihād*, jurisprudence, and training prominent jurists such as the author of *Jawāhir* and Shaykh Anṣāri. This is why there was a decline in tafsīr in general and the compilation of complete tafsīrs in particular.

Tafsīrs of the thirteenth century

With these conditions present, tafsīrs written in various methods and

with various specializations were written by Sunni and Shia scholars. Some of the Shia tafsīrs are:

1. *al-Jawhir al-Thamīn wa al-Wajīz* by Sayyid 'Abdullah Shabbar.

2. *Al-Durr al-Nāẓim fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Muhammad Riḍā (d.1247), the son of Muhammad Amīn Hamedānī, famously known as Kawthar Alīshāh. This tafsīr was written in two volumes in Farsi with specializations in mysticism and philosophy. It was written as a subject-wise tafsīr about beliefs, religious law, Qur'ānic stories, and advice. This tafsīr has an introduction with twelve parts in which the importance of the Qur'ān and tafsīr are discussed.

3. *Baḥr al-'Irfān wa Ma'dan al-Imān* written by Shaykh Muhammad Ṣāliḥ Burghānī (d.1271). The author wrote many books about Qur'ānic sciences, especially tafsīr. Some of his books are: *Asrār al-Qur'ān* in two volumes, *Ma'dan al-Anwār wa Mushkāh al-Asrār* in one volume, *Miftāḥ al-Janān fī Ḥall Rumūz al-Qur'ān* in eight volumes, *Kanz al-'Irfān* in twenty-seven volumes, and *Tafsīr Baḥr al-'Irfān* in seventeen volumes. The first volume of this tafsīr was printed in Najaf. The method of tafsīr used by the author was purely traditional without stating how authentic the traditions were and without stating any opinion.

4. *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* is another tafsīr written in the thirteenth century by Sayyid Ḥusayn Burūjardī (d.1277). This tafsīr was written in Arabic in three volumes. The first volume consists of an introduction with fourteen parts about tafsīr. The second volume is a tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah. And the third volume is a tafsīr of Sūrah Baqarah up to the 255th verse (*Ayah al-Kursī*). This tafsīr is incomplete and was printed by the Anṣārīyan wa Ma'ārif Islamī Organization in Qum. The author also wrote a commentary to *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī* and wrote a tafsīr poem in 1300 poetic couplets which explain the verse of light and Sūrah A'la.

Sunni scholars also wrote many tafsīrs. The most important tafsīrs written by Sunni scholars in this century are as follows:

1. *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* by Alūsī Baghdādī

2. *Tafsīr al-Muẓaharī* by Qāḍī Muhammad Thinā'ullah Muẓaharī (d.1225). He was an Indian scholar who followed Ḥanafī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. He was also Sufi and he wrote his tafsīr with a

specialization in Sufism. This tafsīr consists of ten volumes.

3. *Futūḥāt al-Ilahīyah* by Sulaymān ibn `Umar `Ajilī (d.1204) was also written in the mystic method. The author was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. This tafsīr is a brief commentary upon *Jalālīn* which is written in four volumes and comments upon the entire Qur'ān.

We will now introduce in detail two Shia tafsīrs and a Sunni one from the Thirteenth Century:

Al-Wajīz (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm) famously known as Tafsīr Shabbar

Author: Sayyid 'Abdullah Shabbar

Death: 1242

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī* and traditional

Size: One volume

The author is a famous Shia scholar who wrote many books. Famously known as the second Majlisī, more than seventy different texts have been authored by him. Some of his most important works were: *A`māl al-Sunnah*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ẓallām*, and *Akhlāq Shabbar*.[1]

He also wrote three tafsīrs. One of his tafsīrs was short, the other medium length, and the third extensive. *Tafsīr al-Wajīz* or *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, famously known as *Tafsīr Shabbar*, is very brief but also incredibly useful. It is printed in one volume. This tafsīr is taken from *Tafsīr Wajīz* by Abī Jāmi' 'Amulī of the twelfth century, which was printed in three volumes.

One of the professors of Arabic literature in Cairo wrote the following about the author and his tafsīr: "The author's authority in knowledge and precision can be seen clearly in the quality of his tafsīr."[2] This tafsīr is the most famous of his works and is used more than any other book of his, including his other tafsīrs.

Al-Jawhir al-Thamīn fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-Mubīn: This is the name of another tafsīr written by the late Shabbar which is his medium-length commentary. This tafsīr has been printed in six volumes in Arabic.

1. Hāmid Ḥanafī, Introduction to Tafsīr Shabbar.
2. Ibid.

Both of these tafsīrs were written in the *Ijtihādī* method despite the fact that the majority of the information is about traditions. He would give grave importance to the traditions of the Prophetic Household ('a) while mentioning the opinions of the commentators of the Qur'ān and the words of the companions and the Successors to the companions. The author's longest and most detailed tafsīr is called *Ṣifwah al-Tafāsīr*. This tafsīr has not been published, but handwritten versions of it exist in the Iranian Parliament's library and Ayatullah Mar`ashī Najafī's library.[1]

Fatḥ al-Qadīr

Author: Muhammad ibn Ali ibn 'Abdullah Shūkānī

Death: 1250

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional

Size: Five volumes

Shūkānī was a Zaydi Shia. He was a famous Zaydi scholar of Sanaa, Yemen. Despite him being Zaydi he had strong knowledge of Sunni jurisprudence. A large amount of the information presented in his tafsīr was taken from Sunni sources such as *Tafsīr Qurṭābī* and *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* by Ibn `Aṭīyah. The text was predominantly taken from *Tafsīr Fatḥ al-Bayān* by Muhammad Ṣādiq Khān. The author's chosen method, as he mentions himself, was that of *Ijtihād* in traditions.[2] He narrated traditions and analyzed them.

The practical approach of this commentator was that he would first mention the name and the merits of the chapter. Then he would mention the recitations, the meanings of the words, the *i`rāb* of the verses, and points in Arabic literature. Then he would narrate traditions and analyze their chains of narration and their subject-matter. The author complies with the opinions of Sunnis in matters of traditions, jurisprudence, and theology. An example of this is his opinion about seeing Allah which is mentioned under the 55th verse of Sūrah Baqarah.[3]

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1. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.218.
2. Fatḥ al-Qadir, v.1, pgs.12-13.
3. Ibid, p.87.

Three books have been written about Shūkānī and his tafsīr: *Imam Shūkānī Mufassirā* by Muhammad al-Ghamārī, *Imam Shūkānī wa Iraduh lil-Qarā'at fī Tafsīr* by Aḥmad 'Abdullah al-Maqqrī, and *Fahāris Fatḥ al-Qadīr* by Abū Ḥafṣ ibn `Imrān.[1]

Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī

Author: Shahāb al-Dīn Sayyid Maḥmūd Alūsī Baghdādī

Death: 1270

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Size: Fifteen volumes

Alūsī Baghdādī was a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and Asharite theology. He became the Ḥanafī Muftī in 1242.

This tafsīr was written in the *Ijtihādī* method. Many opinions of commentators of the Qur'ān are presented. The author used the tafsīrs of Ibn `Aṭīyah, *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz* by Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, *Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī, *Tasir Bayḍāwī*, the tafsīr by Abū al-Su`ūd, the tafsīr by Ibn Kathīr, and, more than any other source, *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī.

As well as discussing theological and jurisprudential issues, Alūsī was extremely partisan in his views and influenced by Salafi ideas; he made a great deal of accusations against the Shi'a in his tafsīr.[2]

Tafsīr in the fourteenth century

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries completed each other in regards to tafsīr. A fundamental change in tafsīr and Methodologyology occurred in these centuries; one that continues to affect the modern era. The first steps of this change were taken in the fourteenth century. There are many commonalities that these two centuries have with each other, but each century has exclusive characteristics as well. These centuries are mentioned separately in order to recognize these differences.

The beginning of tafsīr in the modern era

Allah has made it obligatory on scholars to make their societies aware of Islam and present Islamic sciences in congruence with the conditions of

1. Sayyid Muhammad Ali Iyāzī, al-Mufassirūn Ḥayātuhum wa Minhājuhum, p.544.
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2; Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, Tafsīr wa Mufassirān, v.2, p.302.

the time that they live in. Contemporary Islamic scholars have presented Qur'ānic messages in accordance to the conditions of their time. This gives the Qur'ānic messages life and spirit.

The tafsīr characteristics of the contemporary age

The contemporary age, which started from the fourteenth century, has a number of special characteristics that distinguish it from the previous eras; the progression of science and industry, the decline of spirituality due to the relegation of religion in the public sphere, corrupt and worldly scholars and the occupation of Islamic lands.[1] These important political and cultural characteristics of the contemporary era affect tafsīr and all other fields of knowledge. `Iffat Sharqāwī writes about the features of tafsīr in the contemporary era: "The contemporary era presented an extraordinary change in Methodologys and discussions. These changes led to the development of various Methodologys. These are the most important characteristics of the contemporary age."[2]

Dhahabī lists the distinguishing qualities of tafsīr in the contemporary era as:

1. The emergence of a new Muslim intellectual movement.
2. Literature and social discussions encompassing subjects in tafsīr.
3. A distancing from Isrā'īlīyāt, forged, and weak traditions.[3]

Ayatullah Ma'rifat considers the following to be typical of the contemporary age as a whole:

1. The progression of knowledge and philosophy - especially science.
2. Society's more complicated needs for finding the road to salvation and interacting with religion and religious texts.
3. Changing Human material needs due to industrialization and commercialization; the quickening pace of life.
4. The role of religion, especially through the Qur'ān, to address the needs of man and the society.
5. The belief of religious authorities in that the Qur'ān can answer mankind's needs in all ages.[4]

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1. An example of this is the bloodshed that Israel commits on a daily basis against the Palestinian people and America's attacks of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003.
2. `Iffat Muhammad Sharqāwī, al-Fikr al-Dīnī fī Muwājihah al-`Aṣr, p.92.
3. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.533.
4. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, Tafsīr wa Mufassirān, v.2, p.460.

Hamīd `Ināyat wrote the following in this regard: "The contemporary style of writing tafsīr, which stems from the redisclosed desire of the Islamic world, has the purposes laid out for it by those who redisclosed their desires. Some of these purposes are: creating unity amongst the Muslims in order to fight the western occupiers, eradicate superstition from Muslims' beliefs, and correlating Islamic teachings with modern science and intellectual fields."[1]

Commonalities in tafsīrs of the contemporary era

There are common methods and outlooks that are seen amongst the commentators of the Qur'ān in the contemporary era. Some of the most important commonalities are:

1. Eradicating superstition and myths from the Qur'ān.
2. Providing a rational basis for religious principles.[2]
3. The audience for tafsīr has never been so numerous.[3]
4. Tafsīr knowledge is accessible to almost the entire planet.
5. Precedence is given in the tafsīrs to ethical, social, and economical issues that the society is facing.
6. Facilitating the understanding of Qur'ānic principles.
7. Spreading religious and social ideologies in accordance to parties of political reform.
8. Paying attention to the methods of the classical literature.[4]

Various Methodologys in the contemporary era

A great deal of enthusiasm is seen for tafsīr in the contemporary era because of growth and innovation; people want to correlate the Qur'ān with all forms of scientific and political issues. The most important tafsīr specializations in the contemporary era are the intellectual, social, political, and *Ijtihādī* specializations despite the fact that the Qur'ān, exoterically, does not mention these issues.

Ayatullah Ma'rifat divided the Methodologys of the

1. Hamīd `Ināyat, Shish Guftār Darbāray Dīn wa Jāmi`ah (Tajadud Fikr Dīnī Nazd Ahl Sunnat), p.11.
2. Dā'irah al-Ma`ārif Dīn, v.14, p.242, quoted from Dānishnāmah Jahān Islam, v.7, p.661.
3. Dā'irah al-Ma`ārif Jahān Islam Oxford, v.4, p.174, quoted from Dānishnāmah Jahān Islam, v.7, p.664.
4. Andrew Rippin, The Islamic World.

contemporary era into four categories:

1. The intellectual method which is affected by recent advancements in human knowledge.

2. The social method which is affected by the social needs of the present day.

3. The deviant political method which came about by the political branches and groups found in the Islamic world.

4. The pseudo-intellectual (or irreligious) method which stems from the inferiority that some feel when facing modern civilization. The proponents of this method try to correlate the verses of the Qur'ān with modern intellectual opinions; it is more of an imposition than a tafsīr.[1]

Dhahabī mentions four methods under the title: "The color of tafsīr in the contemporary era." These methods are:

1. The intellectual method.
2. The religious method.
3. The irreligious method.
4. The social method.[2]

The reform movement and the intellectual awakening

The intellectual awakening of the contemporary era first emerged from the constitutional movement in Iran and the efforts of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī. Asadābādī's students included prominent figures such as Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, Sayyid Quṭb, and Aḥmad Muṣṭafa Murāghī (The author of *Tafsīr al-Murāghī*), Jamāl al-Dīn Qāsimī (the author of *Tafsīr al-Qāsimī*), Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, and Shaykh Muhammad Madanī, all of whom were deeply influenced by his ideology.

Tradition and innovation in contemporary tafsīr

There are two principles upon which tafsīr in the contemporary era has been founded:

A) Referring to the opinions of the previous scholars, thus linking modern efforts to traditional understandings.

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1. Muhammad Hādī Ma`rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.445.
2. Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.533.

B) Innovative methods and new approaches not previously relied upon.

With regards to the first principle, contemporary tafsīrs would refer to the opinions of commentators of the Qur'ān, such as Ṭabarasī in *Majma' al-Bayān*, Shaykh Ṭūsī in *Ṭibyān*, Zamakhshirī in *Kashshāf*, Fakhr Rāzī in *Tafsīr Kabīr*, and Ṭabarī in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*. But they also presented new material. The contemporary era has seen many social, cultural and political changes as well as the advancement of science and technology beyond anything ever seen before. Globalization has also connected the Islamic more closely with the West and other parts of the globe. These factors have directly and indirectly generated a great deal of scholarly innovation that is seen in both the subject matter and methods of tafsīr. They have deeply affected tafsīr in the contemporary era. These innovations, which are not completely disregarded in previous tafsīrs, can be expressed in the following categories:

1. Writing tafsīrs specializing in modern literary approaches.
2. Reviving an ancient method of tafsīr: explaining verses according to the order of their revelation.
3. Subject-based tafsīrs.
4. Tafsīrs with the intellectual specialization.
5. Tafsīrs with the social specialization.

Tafsīrs using modern literature in the contemporary era

A tafsīr specializing in Arabic literature amongst the classical commentators of the Qur'ān and specialists of the Arabic language normally means a tafsīr which specializes in points of etymology and eloquence. But in the contemporary era a number of commentators have examined the literary points of the Qur'ān according a new method. Etymology and eloquence might not even be mentioned in such a tafsīr, rather the commentator looks at terms with similar meanings to those found in the verse and pays attention to the tone of the verse itself to try and understand what it means.[1] The most important characteristics of this method are the collection of similar verses, the examination of the tone that is used in them, and putting

1. Ja`far Subḥānī, al-Minhāj al-Tafsīrīyah, p.215, under the section: Kitāb al-Īmān wa al-Kufr.

them in chronological order in accordance to revelation. Here we will describe the stages of this method:

The stages of producing a modern literary tafsīr

This method has a number of stages:

1. Finding verses with similar subjects: Most of the issues discussed by the Qur'ān are addressed in many different places of the text. For example, when the term 'believer' is used one would have to refer to the chapters and verses about this term or terms similar to it in order obtain a correct understanding of what it denotes. Equally if one wanted to understand what the term 'hypocrite' means in the Qur'ān he would have to refer to Sūrah Munāfiqūn and other parts of the Qur'ān that discuss this issue. If one wanted to examine the story of Prophet Adam ('a) he would have to refer to Sūrah Baqarah, Sūrah Ḥijr, and Sūrah Kahf.

2. Arranging the verses chronologically: In this stage, the verses that are about one subject are placed next to each other and examined in accordance to the date that they were revealed (if they were revealed at the beginning of prophethood in Mecca or at the end of prophethood in Medina). One must refer to the books written about the circumstances of revelation in order to recognize which verses were revealed first and which later.

3. Paying attention to issues discussed in the Qur'ānic sciences: examining the history and circumstances of revelation, and the compilation, writing, and recitation of the Qur'ān.

4. The context of the revelation: Examining the general conditions that prevailed when verses of the Qur'ān were revealed, for instance the scientific verses which include the earth, skies, mountains, and rivers. Likewise, examining the spiritual conditions of that time and the history of the Islamic *ummah*, for instance their customs and culture.

5. Examining Qur'ānic terms: The Qur'ānic terms are examined in this stage. In addition to this, Qur'ānic terms are examined in the cases that they are found and the meanings that they imply. Every verse in which the term has been used is collected.

6. Examining the various parts of a verse: The parts of each sentence, using Arabic grammar, for instance syntax and eloquence,

are examined. But, this does not mean that only the syntax of the sentence (the accusatives, attributes, and metaphors) is covered, rather, in addition to using precision in this area, the beauty and miraculous nature of the sentence is also clarified. The modern literary approach is one of the most difficult methods of tafsīr.[1]

Commentators of the Qur'ān who used the modern literary approach

The following commentators of the Qur'ān used the contemporary method of specialization in Arabic literature in their tafsīrs:

1. Amīn Khūlī, the author of *Muḥāḍirāt fī al-Amthāl al-Qur'ānīyah*. This book is a collection of lessons which were presented in the higher levels of the al-Azhar University in Cairo.

2. Dr. `A`yishah 'Abd al-Raḥman Bint al-Shāṭī, the author of *al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm* and *al-I`jāz al-Bayāni lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. She claims to be the student of Amīn Khūlī and claims to follow his path. *Al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī* was written in two volumes, the first volume consists of Sūrahs Ḍuḥa, Inshirah, Zilzāl, Nāzi`āt, `Adīyāt, Balad, and Takāthur. The second volume consists of Sūrahs `Alaq, Qalam, `Aṣr, Layl, Fajr, Ḥamazah, and Mā`ūn.[2]

3. Dr. Muhammad Ḥusayn Ali Ṣaghīr, the author of *al-Sūrah al-Fanīyah fī al-Mithl al-Qur'ān*. This book is an eloquent tafsīr presented with analysis and examination.[3]

Tafsīr written in the chronological order of revelation

One of the changes and characteristics of the contemporary era is the compilation of tafsīrs written in the chronological order of revelation. The first tafsīr written in this order is *Muṣḥaf* by Imam Ali ('a). But, this method was forgotten immediately thereafter. The reason that it was disregarded might be the lack of evidence for the order in which verses were revealed. Nevertheless, this ancient method has been revived in the contemporary era. The most important works in this regard are:

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1. Amīn al-Khūlī, al-Tafsīr Mu`ālim Ḥayātuh wa Minhājah al-Yawm, p.44, narrated from Sulaymān Fahd Rūmī, Itijāhāt al-Tafsīr, v.3, p.897.
2. Ibid.
3. Ḥusayn Ṣaghīr, Mabādī al-`Amah li-Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm, p.113.

1. *Bayān al-Ma'ānī `ala Ḥasab Tartīb al-Nuzūl* by 'Abd al-Qadīr Mullā Ḥawīsh Al Ghāzī (a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and Asharite theology). This book was written in 1355 and comments upon the entire Qur'ān in six volumes (twelve parts). He explained the verses using analysis and traditions regarding the circumstances of revelation. His practical method was that he would first describe the literal meaning of the verse, analyze the verse, and then mention if the verse abrogated another verse or was abrogated.

2. *Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth* by Muhammad `Izzah Darūzah Nābulisī (a follower of Maliki jurisprudence and Asharite theology). The author passed away in the year 1400. The author wrote this tafsīr in the chronological order of the revelation of the verses in six volumes (twelve parts). This tafsīr covered the entire Qur'ān. The tafsīr starts with Sūrah Fātiḥah and Sūrah 'Alaq and finishes with Sūrah Naṣr. While explaining a verse he would use other verses of the Qur'ān to aid in the explanation. This method is considered to be similar to a method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. At the beginning of each chapter he would mention the merits of the chapter and list the subjects that are discussed. While describing the verses, the author would present etymological points about terminology, discuss the tone of the verse, narrate the traditions regarding the circumstances of revelation, and comment upon the verse. Social and historical issues are raised in this tafsīr. The tafsīr also has a four-part introduction which discusses issues raised in Qur'ānic sciences, such as the formation of revelation in the Qur'ān, the compilation of the Qur'ān, the writing of the Qur'ān, the recitation of the Qur'ān, and the method of understanding and commentating upon the Qur'ān. He discussed tafsīr and methods of tafsīr in the final part of his introduction.

3. *Pā bih Pā Waḥī* by Mahdī Bazārgān. This is an intellectual tafsīr written in the chronological order of revelation. This tafsīr remained incomplete. He commentated upon sixteen segments of verses in order of their revelation. After this, he discussed science.

Intellectual tafsīrs

With the progression of intellectual fields and the advancement of the epistemological perspective of positivism, many scholars tried to

introduce religion and religious texts, such as the Qur'ān, as being congruent with the contemporary era. Some commentators of the Qur'ān have become rather partisan in this regard as well. The summary of a few tafsīrs with an intellectual specialization will now be presented:

Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Author: Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī

Death: 1357

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Intellectual

Size: Thirteen volumes in 26 parts

One of the tafsīrs with an intellectual specialization, and which was written with a degree of zealotry, is Tafsīr al-Jawāhir. The author began his tafsīr with the verse:

﴿...وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ...﴾

"We have sent down the Book to you as a clarification of all things."[1] [2] He wrote a short introduction which clarifies his outlook stating that the Qur'ān invites people to various fields such as agriculture, medicine, mining, accounting, and astronomy. Therefore, he believes that more than 750 verses concern these intellectual fields while verses regarding jurisprudence do not exceed 150 in number. He considers the information that he presents to be hallowed and inspired.[3]

At the beginning of Sūrah Fātiḥah he presents intellectual material taken from Western scientists. The practical method of his tafsīr is that he would divide each chapter into parts and purposes. He then would discuss each purpose. After mentioning the verses, he would discuss etymological issues, the purpose behind the revelation of the particular verse, and present relevant scientific and scholastic information. The issues would sometimes become so lengthy that the reader would not be able to finish the section.

Ṭanṭāwī was one of the most enthusiastic proponents of intellectual tafsīr. He tirelessly sought to correlate modern scientific theories with the verses of the Qur'ān. He held that all sciences, even

1. Qur'ān, 16:89.
2. Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, v.1, p.3.
3. Ibid.

the calling of spirits, exists in the Qur'ān. He wrote: "I tried very hard to intertwine the verses of the Qur'ān with the amazing aspects of nature, industry, and contemporary science."[1]

Other intellectual tafsīrs of the Qur'ān

In addition to Ṭanṭāwī, other commentators of the Qur'ān used the intellectual method in their tafsīrs:

1. Muhammad ibn Aḥmad Iskandarānī (d.1306) tried to discuss scientific points of the Qur'ān in *Kashf al-Asrār al-Nūrīyah fīmā Yata 'alaq bil-Ajrām al-Samāwīyah wa al-Arḍīyah wa al-Ḥaywānāt wa al-Nabātāt wa al-Jawāhir al-Ma'danīyyah.*[2]

2. Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥman Kawākibī (d.1302), the author of *Ṭabāyi' al-Istibdād wa Maṣāri' al-Istib'ād*, believed that the Qur'ān contained various sciences. He tried to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān in various intellectual fields.[3]

3. Sar Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Hindī (d.1898 a.d.) tried to correlate Islamic principles with modern scientific theories in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa Huwa al-Huda wa al-Furqān*. He even established a college based on this ideology in 1875.[4]

4. 'Abd al-Mun'im Jamālī was a commentator of the Qur'ān in the fourteenth century and wrote *al-Tafsīr al-Farīd*. He decided to write a scientific tafsīr while living in England. He summarized scientific issues in four volumes. This tafsīr was printed in 1390.[5]

Jurisprudential tafsīrs of the fourteenth century

In addition to the rapid changes taking place and the new approaches to tafsīr their engendered, many jurisprudential tafsīrs were also written in the fourteenth century. The most important jurisprudential tafsīrs were:

1. *Sharḥ Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Aḥmad Zīnī (d.1304).

2. *Nayl al-Murrām min Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Abū Ṭayyib Sayyid Muhammad Ṣādiq Ḥasan Khān Bukhārī (d.1307). He was a follower of

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1. Ibid, p.2.
2. Muhammad Ḥusayn Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.365.
3. Ibid.
4. Ḥalabī, Tārīkh Nihḍathā Dīnī Islamī Mu'āṣir, p.143; Khuramshāhī, Tafāsīr Jadīd.
5. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, v.2, p.449.

Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and from India. He briefly commentated upon the verses in the order of the Qur'ān, not in the order of jurisprudential sections as was common. This tafsīr was written in Arabic, consisted of one volume, and discussed over five hundred verses. The author also wrote other books about the Qur'ān, including *Fatḥ al-Bayān fī Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* and *al-Aksīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr.*

3. *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Ḥusayn 'Umar Yamīnī (d.1380).

4. *Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Sayyid Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī (d.1386). He was a prominent Shia scholar and the grandson of the grand jurist Sayyid Muhammad Kāẓim Yazdī, the author of *'Urwah al-Wuthqā.* This jurisprudential tafsīr was written per the Shia point of view in one volume and in order of the Qur'ān's verses; not the sections of jurisprudence. The author also mentioned the opinions of the four Sunni jurisprudential sects.

5. *Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Sāys, a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. He was born in 1319 in Medina and died in 1396 in Cairo. This one volume of tafsīr was written in Arabic and is studied by seminary students of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

6. *Rawāyī al-Bayān, Tafsīr Ayāt al-Aḥkām* by Muhammad Ali Ṣābūnī. This book was written in Arabic in the year 1391 and was printed into two volumes. The author was one of the principle professors in Makkah. He commentated upon every verse concerning religious law in the order that they are found in the Qur'ān. He wrote another tafsīr in three volumes called *Ṣifwah wa al-Tafāsīr* in which he summarized *Tafsīr Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr,* and *Rūḥ al-Bayān.*

The most famous Shia tafsīrs of the fourteenth century

1. Partū'ī az Qur'ān

Author: Sayyid Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī

Death: 1399

Language: Farsi

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Intellectual, social

Size: Six volumes

The author, Sayyid Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī (d.1399) was a Shia scholar and revolutionary and the first Friday Prayer Leader in Tehran after the

victory of the Islamic Revolution. The author was imprisoned before the revolution for fighting against the Shah and wrote this tafsīr whilst incarcerated. This tafsīr was written in Farsi and includes commentary on Sūrah Fātiḥah up until a portion Sūrah Nisā' and the last thirtieth section of the Qur'ān. Since the commentator was a revolutionary, he discussed social issues in line with his goal to reform society. He also gave importance to military and revolutionary matters in the tafsīr. He mentioned issues pertaining to modern science using *Tafsīr al-Jawāhir* by Ṭanṭāwī. He also narrated from *Tafsīr al-Bayān* and *al-Manār*.

2. Al-Qur'ān wa al-'Aql

Author: Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Ḥusaynī 'Iraqī

Death: 1341

Language: Arabic

Method: Rational

Size: Three volumes

The author was a prominent Shia scholar who was famous for his piety. His knowledge was comprehensive, being well versed in both rational and religious matters. He was from Arāk and studied in Najaf. He was an authority in jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, mysticism, and tafsīr. It is said that he had encountered Imam Zaman ('a). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa al-'Aql* was written in accordance to rational thought and after pondering deeply over the verses. The author wrote this tafsīr while he was in Iraq during the uprising against British occupation, which he also participated in.

The author confessed that when he wrote this tafsīr he did not have any tafsīrs, books of traditions, or dictionaries with him. He wrote that he only had the books *Mu'ālim al-Uṣūl* and *Tafsīr Jalālīn* during the beginning stages of writing. He wrote:

«لم يكن عندي من الكتب شئ الّا معالم الاصول الذي يقْرئُه قرةُ عيني (السيد عطاء الله) عندي، لا من اللغة ولا الاخبار ولا التفاسير و ليس معى الّا عقلي»

"I did not have any book except *Mu'ālim al-Uṣūl* which was read by my dear friend (Sayyid 'Aṭṭā'allah). I did not have a dictionary, a book of traditions, tafsīr; nothing was with me except my intellect."[1]

1. Al-Qurān wa al-'Aql, v.1, p.4.

He made similar statements under the 272nd and 282nd verses of Sūrah Baqarah, the 5th verse of Sūrah Mā'Iḍāḥ, and the 149th verse of Sūrah An'ām.

Many scholars wrote introductions to this tafsīr including Ayatullah Ḥājj Shaykh Muhammad Ali Arākī. Sayyid Ḥusayn Mūsawī Kermānī and Ḥājj Shaykh 'Ali Panāh Ishtihārdī also wrote introductions to it. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī edited part of this tafsīr and wrote: "I have not seen such a tafsīr amongst tafsīrs written by Shia and Sunni authors. This tafsīr is beneficial in expelling the religious questions that are raised in our time."[1]

3. Bayān al-Sa'ādah fī Muqadamāt al-'Ibādah

The author of this tafsīr is Sultan Muhammad Gunābādī (d.1327). This tafsīr was written in four volumes in Arabic with the specializations of mysticism and philosophy. Gunābādī was a mystic Shia scholar who followed a Sufi order. He wrote many books in Farsi and Arabic, this tafsīr being one of them. In this tafsir, he gave special importance to the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a). He dsicussed etymology, circumstances of revelation, and mentioned matters concerning mysticism and philosophy.

4. Al-Alā' al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

This author of this tafsīr is 'Allāmah Muhammad Jawād Balāghī Najafī (d.1352). The author was a Shia scholar and a specialist in many fields. He was very strong in polemics and criticism. His tafsīr has a valuable introduction which discusses matters of Qur'ānic sciences. This introduction has been printed at the beginning of many tafsīrs, including *Majma' al-Bayān* and *Tafsīr Shabbar*. This tafsīr was written in the *Ijtihādī* method and printed in two volumes. It covered the verses of the Qur'ān up to the 57th verse of Sūrah Nisā'. He narrated many traditions and defended Shia beliefs. He also mentioned the weaknesses of the Torah and the Bible and criticized *Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a)*. He mentions his bibliography at the beginning of the tafsīr.

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1. Ibid, introduction.

Other Shia tafsīrs of the fourteenth century

In addition to the mentioned tafsīrs, others are also suitable of being listed, such as:

1. *Kashf al-Ḥaqāyiq 'an Nakat al-Āyāt wa al-Daqāyiq* by Mīr Muhammad Karīm (d.1322). This tafsīr was written in Turkish using the traditional method with analysis. 'Abd al-Majīd Ṣādiq Nawbarī published it in three volumes. Nawbarī also translated it into Farsi and published the translation in two volumes titled: *Qur'ān Barāye Hameh.*

2. *Lawāmi' al-Tanzīl wa Sawāṭī al-Ta'wīl* by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Raḍawī Lāhūrī (d.1324). The author was a Shia scholar from India. This tafsīr was written in Farsi and published in 30 volumes. It was written in with a specialization in theology and traditions. His son completed the last two volumes of the tafsīr.

3. *Tafsīr Kaywān* by 'Abbās Ali Kaywān Qazwīnī (d.1357). He was a Sufi Shia scholar. This tafsīr was written in Farsi in four volumes. It specialized in theology and emphasized jurisprudential discussions.

4. *Muqtanīyāt al-Darrār wa Multaqṭāt al-Thamār* by Mir Sayyid Ḥā'irī Tehranī (d.1340). This tafsīr was written in Arabic in six and twelve volumes. It specialized in social matters. The author gave importance to traditions concerning the circumstances of revelation, the merits of the chapters, and the explanations of the verses.

5. *Nafaḥāt al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm Nahāwandī (d.1370). This tafsīr was written in both Arabic and Farsi. The top of the page was written in Arabic with the Farsi translation at the bottom. It was published in four large volumes. The author wrote it using an *Ijtihādī* method where he would analyze the verses and traditions regarding the verses. He gave importance to the esoteric meanings of the verses and the relationships between the chapters.

6. *Tafsīr 'Amilī* by Ibrāhīm 'Amilī, famously known as Muwāthaq (d.1379). This tafsīr was written in Farsi in eight volumes. It specialized in social issues. The author narrated from various Shia and Sunni tafsīrs. Some of the sources for this tafsīr were: *Majma' al-Bayān, Kashshāf, Tafsīr Kabīr, Ṭibyān,* and *Bayḍāwī.* In it, the author also mentioned mystical, theological, and philosophical issues and gave importance to traditions from the Prophetic Household ('a).

7. *Khulāṣah al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Hāshim Ḥusaynī Mīrdāmādī, famously known as Najafābādī (d.1380). This tafsīr was written in Farsi in eight volumes. It specialized in social issues and was written in a simple manner.

8. *Tafsīr Ithna 'Asharī* by Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Shāh 'Abd al-'Aẓīmī (d.1384). This tafsīr was written in Farsi in fourteen volumes. It was written in the traditional method with a specialization in social issues. It has a valuable introduction regarding Qur'ānic sciences.

9. *Tafsīr Khusruwī* by Ali Riḍā Mīrzā Khusruwānī (d.1386). He was a member of the Qajar family and wrote this tafsīr in simple Farsi for the general public. This tafsīr was written in eight volumes.

10. *Muḥāḍirāt fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Sayyid Ismā'īl Ṣadr (d.1388), the brother of Shahīd Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ṣadr. This tafsīr was written in one volume and commentated upon Sūrah Fātiḥah and a few verses of Sūrah Baqarah. The method of tafsīr was explaining the Qur'ān by means of the Qur'ān itself.

11. *Tafsīr Jāmi'* by Sayyid Ibrāhīm Burājardī (alive until 1382). This tafsīr was written in Farsi in seven volumes. The author benefited from various tafsīrs and narrated from *Tafsīr 'Ayāshī*, *Tafsīr Qumī*, and *Tafsīr Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī ('a)*. He used the traditional method.

12. *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Murtaḍa Mūsawī, famously known as Mustanbiṭ Gharawī (d.1391). This tafsīr comments upon the last thirtieth section of the Qur'ān in one volume. It specializes in mysticism and philosophy.

13. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Sayyid Muṣṭafa Khumaynī (d.1397), the elder son of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in five volumes. It commentated on verses up until the 25th verse of Sūrah Baqarah. The author mentioned all of the discussions that were related to the verses. These discussions included principles of jurisprudence, grammar, etymology, astrology, jurisprudence, philosophy, mysticism, ethics, social issues, and history.

14. *Ḥujjah al-Tafāsīr wa Balāgh al-Aksīr* by Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥujjat Balāghī (d.1399). This tafsīr was written in Farsi in ten volumes. The author wrote about introductory issues in the first two volumes, such as the history of prophets and the cities of Makkah and Medina.

The most important Sunni tafsīrs of the fourteenth century

1. Fi Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān

Author: Sayyid Quṭb

Death: 1386

Language: Arabic

Method: Social and scientific

Size: Six volumes

The author, Sayyid Quṭb (d.1386) was an Egyptian intellectual and revolutionary. He was a Sunni who followed Asharite theology. This tafsīr was written in Arabic and commentated upon the entire Qur'ān. The author considers the foundation of the tafsīr to be living in the shade of the Qur'ān. In this tafsir, particular importance is given to social issues. The author also mentioned issues concerning war, changes in Islamic society, and the Qur'ānic invitation to Islamic unity due to his anti-imperialistic ideology and desire to confront the injustices of the world.

The tafsīr has a short introduction which mentions valuable Qur'ānic instructions on how to reach salvation, the problems with the contemporary age, and the negative conditions of disbelievers. The author did not mention points regarding recitation, etymology, grammar, theology, and jurisprudence. Likewise, he refrained from mentioning Isrā'īlīyāt traditions. He would clarify the environment of each chapter and the verses within followed with explanation.

2. Al-Manār (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm)

Author: Shaykh Muhammad ʿAbduh and Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā

Death: 1323 (Muhammad ʿAbduh) and 1354 (Rashīd Riḍā)

Language: Arabic

Method: Social and scientific

Size: Twelve volumes

The author of this tafsīr was originally Shaykh Muhammad ʿAbduh (d.1323), the Egyptian mufti and famous social reformer. He lived at the same time as Sayyid Jamal al-Dīn Asadābādī. He commentated from the beginning of the Qur'ān up until the 126th verse of Sūrah Nisā' and his student Rashīd Riḍā (d.1354) continued

the commentary up until the 52nd verse of Sūrah Yūsuf before he passed away. The last part of the commentary of the 52nd verse reads:

«تم تفسير الجزء الثاني عشر في العشر الاخير من المحرم سنة ١٣٥٤ وكان البدء في صفر سنة ١٣٥٣ والله نسأل توفيقنا لا تمام سائر هذا التفسير بما يرضاه و له الحمد و المنة».

"The commentary upon the twelfth thirtieth was completed in the last tenth of Muḥarram, 1354. It was started in Ṣafar of 1353. I ask Allah for the ability to complete the entire tafsīr in a manner which He would be pleased. Praise is due to Him."

This tafsīr commentated upon the Qur'ān using a new method which was suitable to the social needs of society. The author also gave importance to scientific principles. He discussed both narrative and rational issues and summarized discussions of Arabic literature. The author explained the dimension of guidance found in the Qur'ān. At the beginning of his tafsīr, he described what the needs of Muslims were.

He finished the 12th thirtieth in Muḥarram, 1354 and passed away in the same year.

Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh taught his tafsīr in the Al-Azhar University for six years. Rashīd Riḍā wrote whatever he heard his professor say and then held discussions with him. These discussions were printed in the Al-Manār Magazine. He was a great religious authority and a free-thinker who pondered over the problems that Muslims were facing. He was opposed to the foreign occupation of Muslim lands and fought relentlessly against imperialism.

The author tried to correlate religion with the contemporary world. But, the importance that he gave to modern science and modern thought caused him to write a tafsīr based on personal opinion. An example of this is that he accepts the reality of the *jinn*, but explained them as invisible microscopic entities that can never be seen.[1] Another example is that the term flocks of birds (*abābīl*) which attacked the army of Abraha was explained as a form of skin disease.

1. Al-Manār, v.3, p.96.

3. Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl

Author: Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad Qāsimī

Death: 1332

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Social

Size: Seventeen volumes

The author, Muhammad Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Sa'īd ibn Qāsim Ḥallāq, famously known as Qāsimī (d.1332) was a religious leader in Syria. He was born and died in Damascus. He was one of the leaders of the anti-imperialist movement in Damascus. Qāsimī wrote many books including *Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl* in seventeen volumes.[1] He was a student of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh.

The method of tafsīr which he used, giving importance to social issues, was by combining narrative and rational sciences as well as presenting the opinions of former and contemporary scholars. He paid special attention to science because he believed that the Qur'ān included of all fields of knowledge. He held that the Qur'ān discussed all sciences either clearly or abstractly.

The first volume of the tafsīr is an introduction which includes the principles of tafsīr and issues dealt with in the Qur'ānic sciences. He discussed the points raised in the introduction to *Tafsīr al-Manār.* The tafsīr is one of the entire Qur'ān. He normally narrated from Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn Taymīyah. Likewise, he would narrate from *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, *Kashshāf*, and *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī.

4. Tafsīr al-Murāghī

Author: Aḥmad Muṣṭafa Murāghī

Death: 1371

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Social

Size: Ten volumes

Aḥmad Muṣṭafa Murāghī (d.1371) was another student of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh. This tafsīr is divided into thirty parts and discusses contemporary social issues in great detail. He observed the

1. This Tafsīr was also printed in eight volumes, the eighth volume being an index.

principles of tafsīr and refrained from using difficult specialized terminology. Rather, he used simple language. He wrote:

«يتماز هذا العصر بميل اهله لسهولة الكلام ليفهم الغرض المراد منه حين التخاطب دون احتياج الى النقاش و صنوف التأويل... كتبته باسلوب العصر الحاضر و هذا هو نهجي في تأليف هذا التفسير»

"The people of this age desire simple language so that they can understand the meaning of what is being said without having to ponder deeply over it...I wrote in the form of the present age; this is what drove me to write this tafsīr."[1]

His introduction discusses the stages of commentators of the Qur'ān, the necessity of accepting the 'Uthmānī codex, the method of tafsīr that he used, and a bibliography. He wrote about his method of tafsīr saying: "After presenting a verse, I will explain the terminology used in the verse, the general meaning of the verse, and the circumstances of the revelation of the verse. But I have not used any specialized grammatical terminology. I also mentioned the issues suitable for the contemporary world which are in congruence with the tastes of the modern reader. This is the foundation of the tafsīr."[2]

Bibliography of Tafsīr Murāghī

The author names thirty sources in his introduction which he used for writing the tafsīr.[3] He mentioned seventeen tafsīrs including *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, *Kashshāf*, *Bayḍāwī*, *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, *Tafsīr Baghūwī*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, *Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, and *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* by Alūsī. He used the following books about etymology and Arabic grammar: *Lisān al-'Arab*, *Qāmūs al-Muḥīt* by Fīrūzābādī, and *Asās al-Balāghah* by Zamakhshirī. Some other books that he used were: *Sīrah* by Ibn Hishām, *al-Itiqān* by Suyūṭī, and the *Muqadamah* of Ibn Khaldūn.

He was a follower of Asharite theology but accepted freewill over determinism.[4]

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1. Tafsīr Murāghī, v.1, p.19.
2. Ibid, p.16.
3. Ibid, pgs.21-22.
4. Ibid, pgs.35-36 and 46.

5. Iḍwā' al-Bayān fī Iyḍāḥ' al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān

Author: Muhammad Amīn Mālikī Shaqīṭī

Death: 1393

Language: Arabic

Method: Explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān

Size: Six and ten volumes

This tafsīr is famously known as *Iḍwā' al-Bayān fī Iyḍāḥ' al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān*. The author, Muhammad Amīn ibn Muhammad Mukhtār Shaqīṭī was born in 1325 and died in 1393. He was from Mauritania and was a follower of Maliki jurisprudence. After his education he performed his ḥājj and became fond of the intellectual thoughts of Ibn Taymīyah and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. He even remained in Saudi Arabia due to this. He was ordered by King 'Abd al-'Aziz to teach tafsīr in the Prophet's Mosque. He taught tafsīr there for thirty years until he passed away in Makkah.

His most important work was *Iḍwā' al-Bayān*. He commentated up until Sūrah Mujādilah and one of his students, 'Aṭīyah Muhammad Sālim, completed it.

The method that he used in tafsīr was explaining the Qur'ān by means of the Qur'ān, in such a way that he presents a verse and then explains its meaning by using other verses. This tafsīr has a lengthy introduction which explains many issues regarding the Qur'ān. It is a useful introduction for research about the method of explaining the Qur'ān using the Qur'ān itself.

6. Tafsīr al-Qur'āni lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Author: 'Abd al-Karīm Khāṭib

Death: 1396; date of publication: 1386

Language: Arabic

Method: Explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān; *Ijtihādī*

Size: Sixteen volumes

'Abd al-Karīm Khāṭib was a contemporary Egyptian researcher of the Qur'ān. He was a Sunni and followed Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. The method that he used in this tafsīr was an *Ijtihādī* method, but written in very simple language. He relied upon the opinions of the classical scholars and prophetic traditions.

The introduction to this tafsīr includes discussions concerning the chapters revealed in Makkah and Medina, the number of verses found in the Qur'ān, the number of words and letters within it, as well as his motivation behind writing a tafsīr. His motivation was that one must ponder upon divine books and only rely upon the verses and words of the Qur'ān.[1] He also distanced himself from the modern tendency (discussed above), used to view the Qur'ān as a book of science which discusses scientific issues. He discusses the issues raised in the Qur'ān while avoiding convoluted discussions about Arabic grammar.

The tafsīr is extremely simple and brief. It only describes the verses and sometimes uses verses of the Qur'ān to prove his point. In any case, some have considered this tafsīr to be an analytical or *Ijtihādī* tafsīr whose purpose is to guide mankind.[2]

7. Al-Taḥrīr' wa al-Tanwīr

Author: Shaykh Muhammad Ṭāhir, famously known as Ibn 'Ashūr

Death: 1393; date of publication: 1380

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Social and Arabic literature

Size: Fifteen volumes in thirty parts

The author was a famous contemporary jurisprudent who followed Maliki jurisprudence and the Asharite theology. He held the post of the Maliki Mufti in Tunisia and was considered to be a social reformer of his time. He wrote many articles on this topic. He was a specialist in Arabic literature and was a member of the Arabic Literature Society in Egypt and the Arabic Intellectual Society in Damascus. He held the position of a judge for ten years.

This tafsīr is one of the best tafsīrs of the contemporary era. The method of his tafsīr, which was written in lesson format, was *Ijtihādī*. He refrained from narrating weak traditions or Isrā'īlīyāt such as the stories of Hārūt and Mārūt. He commentated on the Qur'ān using clear logic. The author used Qur'ānic viewpoints to present issues

1. Tafsīr al-Qurān lil-Qurān al-Karīm, v.1, p.11.
2. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Munsab, Itijāhāt al-Tafsīr, p.71.

needed by the society, giving special importance to ethical and political affairs. He answered the questions raised in the modern world by referring back to the Qur'ān. He did not forget to mention points of Arabic literature and the relationship between the verses as well as the purposes of the chapters in the Qur'ān.

The practical method that the author used was that he would first mention the name of the chapter and then its merits, its order in revelation, the purpose behind the chapter, and the subject-matter of the chapter. Then he would comment upon each verse.

The author stated that one of the most important goals of the tafsīr is to explain the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, points of Arabic literature, and the relationship between the verses of the Qur'ān.[1] He named the tafsīr *al-Taḥrīr al-Ma'na al-Sadīd wa Tanwīr al-'Aql al-Jadīd min Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-Majīd*. The name *al-Taḥrīr' wa al-Tanwīr* was taken from this. The introduction to this tafsīr has ten valuable sections on issues pertaining to Qur'ānic science. The issues dealt with are: tafsīr and *Ta'wīl*, the necessary fields that one must know for tafsīr, the correctness of tafsīr without using textual evidences and tafsīr based on personal opinion, the goals of commentators of the Qur'ān in tafsīr, circumstances of revelation, recitation, Qur'ānic stories, the name of the Qur'ān, verses and chapters and their order, the various meanings of Qur'ānic sentences, and the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

The method of tafsīr that the author used was the *Ijtihādī* method. He would prove his points by using verses, traditions, and rational analysis. He also gave special attention to etymology and points of Arabic literature.

Since science was important in his era he gave importance to it. For instance, he discussed the issue of the creation of the heavens and the earth after mentioning the verse:

﴿...ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ...﴾

"...then He turned to the heaven, and fashioned it into seven heavens, and He has knowledge of all things."[2] Then he presented a

1. Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, v.1, p.15.
2. Qurān, 2:29.

detailed discussion of the term 'then' (*thumma*) where he narrated the opinions of the companions and the Successors to the companions. He then listed various opinions leading to a combination of verses and astrological opinions. This combination lead to a discussion about whether the heavens where created first or the earth. He accepted the notion that the heavens where created first and that the earth was separated from other planets.[1]

He briefly discussed jurisprudential issues under the verses regarding Islamic law, proving the opinions that he reached through *Ijtihād*. He attempts to support Asharite ideology in theological discussions, although he sometimes presents his own views which are at variance with that school of thought. An example of this is that he does not consider the opinions of Asharite scholars to be sufficient in regards to seeing Allah; he criticizes them. But, at the end of the discussion, he considers it obligatory to believe in seeing Allah because the scholars permitted it.[2]

This tafsīr was influenced by *Tafsīr Kashshāf*, *al-Muḥarrār al-Wajīz*, *Tafsīr Kabīr*, and *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*. But, in regards to the relationships between the chapters, he was influenced by *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī and *Tafsīr Naẓm al-Darrār fī Tanāsub al-Ayāt wa al-Suwūr* by Burhān al-Dīn Baqā'ī.

8. Zahrah al-Tafāsīr

Author: Muhammad Abū Zahrah

Death: 1394

Language: Arabic

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Social

Size: Ten volumes

The author was an Islamic scholar and a Sunni commentator of the Qur'ān. He wrote more than forty books. The last verse that he commentated on was the 73rd verse of Sūrah Naml. He passed away while he was commentating on this verse. The author wrote many intellectual and social articles in his lifetime, which were widely published.

1. Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, v.1, p.385.
2. Ibid, v.7, p.415.

This tafsīr is extremely organized and each verse is mentioned under a specific title clarifying its subject-matter. Then, he uses reasoning and organized pieces of evidence to prove his points. This tafsīr presents its material in a simple language divided into categories. The author emphasizes social guidance and progression, and therefore, mentions issues needed by society.

Other Sunni tafsīrs of the fourteenth century

Some other tafsīrs written by Sunni scholars are:

1. *Tafsīr Marrāḥ Labīd* (*Tafsīr Nūwwī*) by Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Umar Nūwwī Ḥāwī (d.1316). This tafsīr has also been called *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr ka-Mu'ālim al-Tanzīl al-Mufassir 'an Wujūh Maḥāsan al-Ta'wīl*. The author was a follower of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and the Asharite theology. He was also considered a mystic. He wrote many books and passed away in Makkah. The author used *Futūḥāt Makkīyah* by Muḥī al-Dīn 'Arabī in his tafsīr. But, the tafsīr mainly comments upon the apparent meanings of the verses and relies upon linguistic principles.

2. *Al-Tafsīr al-Farīd lil-Qur'ān al-Majīd* by Muhammad 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Jamāl (d.1374). This tafsīr was written in Arabic in four volumes. The author tries to combine religion with science. Special attention was given to traditions and etymology in this tafsīr.

3. *Al-Aklīl 'ala Madārik al-Tanzīl* by Muhammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqqullah Abādī (d.1333). He was a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and the Asharite theology. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in seven volumes with a specialization in Arabic literature. In reality, it is a summarized version of *Tafsīr Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī with the addition of discussions regarding Arabic literature and the opinions of specialists in Arabic syntax. It also discusses the issue of varying recitations.

4. *Taysir al-Karīm al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān* by 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Nāṣir al-Sa'dī (d.1376). He was a Sunni; a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. This tafsīr was also written in seven volumes in Damascus. It was printed in 1365. It was written in a traditional method in extremely simple language. It also explains the meaning of the verses, the terms used therein, and the opinions of elder scholars.

14
Tafsīr in the Modern Age (Fifteenth Century)

Objectives of this chapter: 1. Familiarity with contemporary tafsīr and its characteristics. 2. Familiarity with the tafsīrs written during the modern era and the new methods applied to tafsīr therein.

Contemporary tafsīr

Contemporary tafsīr engages with cultural, political, ideological, and scientific issues and the effects that they have on our understanding of the Qur'ān. Commentators of the Qur'ān in this vein present the Qur'ānic viewpoint on current social issues and attempt to answer the problems raised in the contemporary world through tafsīr, leading to previously unrealized meanings in Qur'ānic verses being uncovered.[1]

Dr. Iffat Sharqāwī writes about contemporary tafsīr: "Contemporary tafsīr is a new method in presenting ideology; it is in congruence with modern Muslim thought and modern Muslim life. The contemporary commentator of the Qur'ān does not answer issues in a classical or ancient method; he does not delve into classical theological debates."[2]

Sayyid Ayyāzī wrote: "Contemporary tafsīr is a new method in presenting ideology where the commentator of the Qur'ān describes the Qur'ānic message in accordance to his knowledge and his assessment of the society's needs."[3]

Others consider the change in religious heritage and the new approach to culture – in accordance to the needs of the society – to be

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1. Muhamamd Hādī M'arifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.440.
2. 'Iffat Sharqāwī, al-Fikr al-Dīnī fī Mawājihah al-'Aṣr, p.432.
3. Sayyid Muhammad Ali Ayāzī, Qurān wa Tafsīr 'Aṣrī, p.29.

the most important characteristic of contemporary tafsīr.[1] For this reason, presenting Qur'ānic material in congruence with contemporary needs, in a new method, and answering modern problems are the most important characteristics of contemporary tafsīr. There is no change in the apparent formation of the tafsīr – something that is praised on its own merit – but contemporary tafsīr gives importance to clarifying the Qur'ān's stance in relation to social and cultural changes. In this case the needs of any age and the values of the Islamic society are clarified under the shadow of Qur'ānic statements.[2]

Characteristics of contemporary tafsīr

The last two centuries (fourteenth and fifteenth) that make up the modern era have many commonalities with one another. Tafsīr in the fourteenth century was influenced by the advancement of science, a decline in spirituality, the spreading of materialism, and large-scale attacks of imperialists upon Islam. Nevertheless, it also benefitted a great deal from the foundations of tafsīr laid by the classical scholars. The opinions of Dhahabī and Ayatullah Ma'rifat regarding the most important characteristics of tafsīr in the fourteenth century have already been mentioned. Those features shared between tafsīr during the last two centuries can be summarized as:

1. Answering the problems and intellectual needs of the present century.
2. Importance given to intellectual reasoning in tafsīr.
3. Importance given to guidance and spiritual training.
4. Importance given to social issues.
5. Jihad movements.
6. Emphasis given to the unification of Qur'ānic issues.
7. Emphasis given to the unification of issues pertaining to each chapter.
8. The defects of contemporary tafsīr.
9. Subject-wise tafsīr.
10. Structured tafsīr.

Each one of these characteristics is further defined as follows:

1. Ḥasan Ḥanafī, al-Turāth wa al-Tajdīd, pgs.11-13.
2. Ibid, p.70.

1. Answering contemporary problems

The main priority of contemporary tafsīr is presenting the Qur'ānic viewpoint regarding social changes and addressing contemporary issues. Many religious problems have struck the man of our age which cannot be answered by irreligious ideology or by religions other than Islam; problems regarding human rights, free-thinking, freedom of speech, women's rights, feminism, the relationship between religion and government, secularism, the rights of minorities, and international relations. If Islam is to continue to guide mankind, it must provide answers to these issues. The commentators of the Qur'ān are able to play an important role in answering these various questions by clarifying the Qur'ānic position on them and at the same time providing an intellectual and religious reference point for those who have the necessary amount of ability and faith. The Shia tafsīrs that answer contemporary problems are *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* by 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Tafsīr Nemūneh* by Makārim Shīrāzī, *al-Kāshif* by Muhammad Jawād Mughnīyah, and, to a certain extent, *Tafsīr al-Furqān* by Dr. Ṣādiqi. Sunni tafsīrs in this regard are *Tafsīr al-Munīr* by Wahabah Zaḥīlī, *Tafsīr Shi'rāwī* by Muhammad Mutawali Shi'rāwī, and *Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth* by 'Izzat Darūzah.

2. Intellectual reasoning in tafsīr

One of the most important points of tafsīr in the fifteenth century is the importance that it gives to intellectual reasoning. Islam, and especially the Qur'ān, has praised scholars and intellect. The philosophy behind people being in hell is considered to be the fact that they refrained from using their intellect, as is alluded to in the verse:

﴿...لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ﴾

"Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been among inmates of the Blaze."[1]

There are various opinions as to what intellectual reasoning in tafsīr means:

A. Intellectual reasoning: this means that religious issues are presented in accordance with intellectual and logical arguments.

1. Qurān, 67:10.

Ayatullah Jawādī Amulī writes: "What is meant by the intellect here is intellectual reasoning which is protected from fallacy, delusion, and imagination. Rather, it is an intellect which establishes the existence of the Creator of the Universe, His attributes, and His names by using its own principles and standard sciences."[1]

Presenting this form of argument answers the claims of those who state that intellectual reasoning is absent in the Qur'ān. *Tafsīr Tasnīm* by Ayatullah Jawādī, *al-Mīzān* by 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and *Nemūneh* are tafsīrs which apply such reasoning.

B. Innate intelligence: some scholars believe that Qur'ānic viewpoints are in congruence with the conclusions rational people. Ayatullah Makārim writes: "Tafsīr using intellectual reasoning means that one uses clear intellectual evidence that is accepted by all rational beings to help him understand the meanings of the terms and sentences used in the Qur'ān and traditions. An example of this can be seen in the verse:

﴿يدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيدِيهِمْ﴾

"...the hand of Allah is above their hands."[2]

Here, the intellect states that Allah's hand does not mean a body part that includes five fingers. The reason for this is that Allah does not have a body...rather, what is meant is divine power which is above all other powers."[3]

This is why many contemporary commentators of the Qur'ān reject many theological and philosophical issues (for instance, predestination). Despite the fact that they follow 'Asharite theology, even contemporary Sunni commentators of the Qur'ān, such as Shi'rāwī, Murāghī, and Wahabah Zaḥīlī reject predestination using the verses of the Qur'ān.

C. The Qur'ān does not contradict science: the Qur'ān, being a book of intellectual reasoning, means that it does not contradict science in the general sense (including all intellectual fields). Clear proofs are used in theological debates and answers to new problems in these intellectual tafsīrs are given. The clarification of issues such

1. 'Abdullah Jawādī Amulī, Tasnīm, v.1, pgs.169-170.
2. Qurān, 48:10.
3. Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, Tafsīr bih Ray, p.38.

as freedom of thought and speech, women's rights, and the hijāb are presented in this form.[1] This meaning corresponds to the theory that that intellectual and *Ijtihādī* tafsīr hold the same meaning. It states that a commentator of the Qur'ān uses various intellectual arguments and scriptural evidence to establish his claim and reject or criticize the opinions of others.

Ayatullah Ma'rifat writes: "*Ijtihādī* tafsīr relies upon intellectual reasoning more than it does scriptural evidence. The criterion for criticism and refinement is a nurtured intellect and correct reasoning."[2]

3. Importance given to guidance and spiritual training

The Qur'ān is a book of guidance:

﴿هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ﴾

"guidance to mankind."[3] It articulated the permanent path to salvation.[4] Allah's goal in sending the Qur'ān is guidance, spiritual training, and salvation for mankind. The commentator of the Qur'ān must also strive to secure this divine goal and save mankind, especially the contemporary man, from spiritual disaster and pain. This is one of the principle duties of a commentator.

In the earlier tafsīrs, importance given to guidance and spiritual training might have only been found in some of the mystically-oriented commentaries. But in the contemporary era most of the commentators of the Qur'ān give importance to this issue due to the spread of desolation and social disorder. They exert their utmost effort in order to guide society and use Qur'ānic terminology to spiritually train mankind. The following Shia tafsīrs can be mentioned along these lines: *al-Mīzān*, *Nemūneh*, *Man Hada al-Qur'ān* and its Farsi translation called *Tafsīr Hedāyat* by Sayyid Muhammad Taqī Mudarrasī, *Tafsīr Rawshan* by Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī, and *Tafsīr Asān* by Muhammad Jawād Najafī. The Sunni tafsīrs *Tafsīr al-Munīr* by Wahabah Zaḥīlī, *Tafsīr Shi'rāwī*, *Tafsīr Aysar al-Tafāsīr* by Abū Bakr Jazā'irī, and *Zahrah al-Tafāsīr* by Muhammad Abū Zahrah are worthy of being mentioned.

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1. Margot Badran, Encyclopedia of the Qurān, v.2, article about feminism. .
2. Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb, v.2, p.394.
3. Qurān, 2:185.
4. Qurān, 16:9.

4. Importance given to social issues

One of the characteristics of contemporary tafsīr which started in the fourteenth century is commentating upon the Qur'ān while keeping social needs in mind. Commentators of the Qur'ān of this time did not limit themselves to narrating material from earlier authorities based solely upon traditions, the opinions of the Companions and the Successors, and points of Arabic literature. Rather they presented discussions that were appropriate for the needs of modern society; they used Qur'ānic teachings to solve contemporary social problems and presented religion in a new form applicable to the contemporary world.

The information provided through this specialization is taken from the Qur'ān in an interesting method which brings one, especially the youth, closer to the Qur'ān. They correlate existing knowledge and social customs with the Qur'ān.

The commentator of the Qur'ān is influenced by the needs of the society which presents the possibility of other methods or customary ideologies to be condemned and only the viewpoints that are in congruence with the contemporary society to be accepted. The merits of this specialization are that the commentator of the Qur'ān distances himself from superstitions and opinions which cannot be accepted by the normal man. Instead, he mentions rational viewpoints that can be accepted by all and the scientific miracles that are found in the Qur'ān. They prove that the Qur'ān can be applied to all ages and opens the doors of salvation. The commentators of the Qur'ān are able to change the existent culture through this method.[1]

Therefore, there are three characteristics of a tafsīr which gives importance to social issues; the social specialization in tafsīr:

1. An answer to the contemporary individual and social needs (for instance, the needs of youth, families, and the government).

2. An answer to contemporary problems (for instance the Qur'ān's stance on feminism, free speech, human rights, and apostasy).

3. Importance given to the scientific aspect of the Qur'ān and correlating it with scientific principles.

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1. Ḥusayn 'Alawī Mehr, Rawashhā wa Garāyishhā Tafsīrī, p.343.

5. Jihad movements

Islamic scholars, especially commentators of the Qur'ān, have given importance to the verses of the Qur'ān which deal with jihād. The reasons behind this are the political movements of the contemporary era (for instance, the Islamic Revolution in Iran and other Islamic movements in various Islamic nations). Scholars such as 'Allāmah Muhammad Jawād Mughnīyah in *Tafsīr al-Kāshif wa al-Mubīn* correlate many of the verses regarding jihād with the fight against the Zionists and imperialists in the modern age.

6. Emphasis given to the unification of Qur'ānic issues

Some classical scholars (such as the late Ṭabarisī, the author of *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān*) claimed that the Qur'ān is a collection of segments. These segments are related to each other, providing a relationship between the chapters of the Qur'ān. It has been narrated from Ibn 'Arabi that the relationship the verses of the Qur'ān have with each other is similar to the parts of a single word which has an organized and expansive meaning.[1] Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt writes: "Everything in the Qur'ān is unified and not able to be separated. One cannot take some verses and leave others."[2]

Likewise, Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh emphasizes this point in *Tafsīr al-Manār*.[3]

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes after the verse:

﴿كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾

"...a Book, whose signs have been made definitive and then elaborated, from One [who is] all-wise, all-aware,"[4] that the concept of tawhīd, which is the cornerstone of religion, is the unifying factor of all of the chapters of the Qur'ān. The explanation of this has been given under various subjects in various chapters. All Qur'ānic teachings stem from that principle.[5]

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Sīyūṭī, al-Itiqān, v.2, p.108.
2. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, al-Islam, al-'Aqīdah al-Shar'īah, p.487.
3. Al-Manār, v.1, p.416.
4. Qurān, 11:1.
5. Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, al-Mīzān, v.10, p.135.

7. Emphasis given to the unification of issues pertaining to each chapter

The purpose of each chapter and the relationship that the verses of each chapter have with each other is another subject that is emphasized in contemporary tafsīrs. The leading works written from this perspective are *al-Mīzān*, *Nemūneh*, *al-Manār*, and *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*.

8. The defects of contemporary tafsīr

There are two main defects in contemporary tafsīrs:

1. Working only on the apparent aspect of tafsīr.
2. An overly-apologetic approach vis-a-vis modern science

Some tafsīrs, although written by modern authors, only look at the exoteric meanings of the verses. They were faced with changes in society and its needs, but only changed the form of their tafsīr; they changed the wording or sufficed with the purely traditional method of merely listing opinions (such as Qatādah, Sudday, and 'Akramah) but they did not delve into the depths of the meanings of the verses and the rational needs of the society.

The progression of science and innovation in intellectual and religious discussions caused some commentators of the Qur'ān to become extremely apologetic. They felt unable to confront new intellectual trends and ideas, and thus, tried to provide explanations of the verses by reading scientific issues into them (for instance, explaining jinn as microscopic elements or flocks [of birds] as a skin disease). They would incorrectly explain supernatural elements in the Qur'ān, such as angels and prophetic miracles, in such a way that the explanation they reached was completely incongruent with the text of the Qur'ān itself.

9. Subject-wise tafsīr

Another characteristic of contemporary tafsīr is the development of tafsīr that is arranged by subject. The famous meaning of the term tafsīr, which has been used for over fourteen centuries, is tafsīr of the verses in the order that they are found in the Qur'ān. In the past, the term subject-wise tafsīr was very rare. It seems as if the term subject-wise tafsīr is a new term which is applied to some contemporary tafsīrs. There are two viewpoints regarding the previous existence of this category of tafsīr:

1. This form of tafsīr was used very seldomly in previous tafsīrs, but examples of the contemporary movement can be found in the past.

2. Subject-wise tafsīr is a new term and searching for its historical origins is futile.

It seems as if the first opinion is correct because a subject-wise tafsīr is one which collects similar verses about one subject and then discusses them. In other words, various verses of the Qur'ān which were revealed at different times in different situations but are about a certain subject are compiled and then the Qur'ānic viewpoint about that subject is clarified.[1] This is a method that has a long history.

Defining subject-wise tafsīr in this way shows that it has a long history in the texts of previous tafsīrs. It started with the writing of tafsīrs about the verses of religious law which dates back to the second century, for instance in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn Sā'ib Kalbī (d.146).

Categories of Subject-Wise Tafsīr

There are two categories of subject-wise tafsīr:

1. Independent subject-wise tafsīr: This tafsīr only discusses one independent subject of the Qur'ān at a time, for instance it discusses the hereafter, infallibility, mankind, angels, or theology.

Some singular subject wise tafsīrs are:

A. *Nabūwat dar Qur'ān* by Makārim Shīrāzī (*Payām Qur'ān*).

B. *Imamah dar Qur'ān* by Makārim Shīrāzī (*Payām Qur'ān*).

C. *Ḥukūmat dar Qur'ān* by Makārim Shīrāzī (*Payām Qur'ān*).

D. *Akhlāq dar Qur'ān* by Ayatullah Miṣbāḥ Yazdī.

2. Interdependent subject-wise tafsīr: in this category, two related subjects, for instance, faith and righteous deeds, are examined and the verses regarding them are placed next to each other clarifying various dimensions of Qur'ānic teachings.

Some of interdependent subject-wise tafsīrs are:

-*Tawḥīd wa Shirk dar Qur'ān* by Ja'far Subḥānī

-*Jāmi'ah wa Tārīkh az Dīdgāh Qur'ān* by Miṣbāḥ Yazdī

-*Afarīnish wa Rastākhīz* by Shīnīyāmālīnū

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1. Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, Payām Qurān, v.1, p.9; Ja'far Subḥānī, Mafāhīm al-Qurān, v.1, p.11.

- *Aghāz wa Anjām Jahān* by Muḥammad Amīn Raḍawī

The most famous subject-wise tafsīrs are:

- *Payām Qur'ān*, written by Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, with co-authors, in ten volumes

- *Manshūr Jāwīd Qur'ān*, written by Ayatullah Ja'far Subḥānī in twelve volumes

- *Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī Qur'ān Majīd*, written by Ayatullah Jawādī Amulī in fourteen volumes

- *Ma'ārif Qur'ān*, written by Muhammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī in three volumes

- *Tafsīr al- Mawḍū'ī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, written by Samī' 'Aṭif al-Zayn in twelve volumes

10. Structured tasfir

It was stated that one of the characteristics of contemporary tafsīr is the importance that the commentator of the Qur'ān gives to the unified subject-matter of the Qur'ān in general and the chapters in specific, the relationship between the chapters and the verses of a chapter, the purposes of the chapters, and the categories of subject matter of each chapter. These issues are presented as theoretical and foundational in tafsīrs that are written in order of the verses of the Qur'ān. But the contemporary age has seen a new method of tafsīr being developed. This method examines a collection of verses of the Qur'ān by locating the common factor which is present between the verses and identifying the axis around which the collection of verses revolves.

This was performed on a very minor scale in previous tafsīrs, but in the contemporary age, it is presented independently as a structured tafsīr. This is not a subject-wise tafsīr where the commentator of the Qur'ān examines a certain topic in the Qur'ān, nor is it a tafsīr written in the order of the verses of the Qur'ān which starts from the beginning of the Qur'ān and finishes at the end. Dr. Maḥmūd Bustānī, a contemporary Qur'ānic researcher, named this form of tafsīr as a structured tafsīr and wrote a tafsīr in this form called *al-Minhāj al-Banā'ī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. His tafsīr was written in five volumes.

Structured tafsīr can be simply defined as looking through a chapter of the Qur'ān and deriving its goal through the usage of

certain terms. Therefore, one chapter of the Qur'ān uses terms which relate to each other in subject matter and usage.[1]

The commentator of the Qur'ān tries to find the main principle that related verses revolve around. The philosophy of many issues would be answered through this method. The organization of the Qur'ān into 114 chapters and why each chapter discusses one main subject is discussed. Sometimes one sees the same topic being discussed in another chapter but the tone varies. For instance, the question is asked as to why the Prophet ordered a particular verse to be placed in a particular chapter.

An example of this form of tafsīr is found in the examination of Sūrah Maryam. The segments of verses have a common principle: mercy (*raḥmah*):

﴿ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيا﴾

"[This is] an account of your Lord's mercy on His servant, Zechariah."[2]

﴿وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا...﴾

"...and so that We may make him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Us..."[3] – in relation to Jesus ('a).

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا...﴾

"And We gave them out of Our mercy..."[4] – in relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ نَبِيا﴾

"And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a prophet."[5] – in relation to Moses and Aaron.

﴿...إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيا﴾

"...I seek the protection of the All-beneficent from you, should you be Godwary."[6]

﴿إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا...﴾

1. Maḥmūd Bustānī, al-Minhāj al-Banā'ī fī al-Tafsīr, p.13.
2. Qurān, 19:2.
3. Qurān, 19:21.
4. Qurān, 19:50.
5. Qurān, 19:53.
6. Qurān, 19:18.

"...Indeed I have vowed a fast for the All-merciful..."[1]

﴿إِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيهِمْ آياتُ الرَّحْمَنِ﴾

"...When the signs of the All-merciful were recited to them..."[2]

﴿...جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ...﴾

"Gardens of Eden promised by the All-merciful to His servants..."[3]

﴿أَيهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيا﴾

"...whichever of them was more defiant to the All-merciful."[4]

﴿يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا﴾

"...We shall gather the Godwary toward the All-merciful, on mounts."[5]

﴿...إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا﴾

"...except for him who has taken a covenant with the All-merciful."[6]

﴿وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا...﴾

"They say, 'The All-merciful has taken a son!'"[7]

﴿أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا...﴾

"That they should ascribe a son to the All-merciful!"[8]

﴿وَمَا ينْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا﴾

"It does not behoove the All-merciful to take a son."[9]

﴿إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا﴾

"...but he comes to the All-merciful as a servant."[10]

﴿سَيجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا﴾

"...the All-merciful will endear them [to His creation]."[11]

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1. Qurān, 19:26.
2. Qurān, 19:58.
3. Qurān, 19:61.
4. Qurān, 19:69.
5. Qurān, 19:85.
6. Qurān, 19:87.
7. Qurān, 19:88.
8. Qurān, 19:91.
9. Qurān, 19:92.
10. Qurān, 19:93.
11. Qurān, 19:96.

The term 'mercy' has been used repetitively throughout the chapter for huge personalities such as Zechariah, Jesus, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron. Likewise, the term the all-merciful, which is a designated name of the Lord, has been used repetitively in this chapter.

The most famous Shia tafsīrs of the fifteenth century

1. Tafsīr al-Mīzān

Author: 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī

Death: 1402

Language: Arabic

Method: Ijtihādī and explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān

Size: Twenty volumes

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī came from a religious family who were decedents of the Prophet and famously known as Qāḍī. His family descends from Imam Ḥasan ibn Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.[1] He was a prominent Shia scholar in the contemporary era. He was a jurist, a philosopher, a mystic, and one of the most prominent commentators of the Qur'ān. In addition, he was well-versed in other fields such as mathematics, calligraphy and architecture. He wrote books in various fields, including the principles of jurisprudence, philosophy, ethics, mysticism, politics, theology, and tafsīr.[2] Without a doubt, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* is one of his most important works. This tafsīr holds a special station amongst the tafsīrs of the Islamic world. There are very few tafsīrs like it and it is a source of pride for the Shia school of thought.

Demand called for a change in tafsīr which would answer the needs of the contemporary world and mention the opinions of the previous scholars. The method of tafsīr has not changed much since the time of Ṭabarī and *Ṭibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī. In the fourteenth century, new tafsīrs such as *Al-Manār*, were different than traditional tafsīrs in how they approached the issues dealt with in the Qur'ān but they were still lacking in a number of ways. *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* used an innovative new method and was unprecedented in the strength of its reasoning. One of the most important characteristics of *Al-Mīzān*

1. Kaẓīm Wirdī, Mu'jam al-Alqāb fī Ma'rifah al-Asru al-Ansāb, narrated by Ali Awsī, Rawash 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī dar al-Mīzān, p.60.
2. Ibid; Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Tehranī Mehr Tābān.

is the method of explaining the verses of the Qur'ān by using other verses of the Qur'ān. In addition to this, he used *Ijtihād* while examining and criticizing other viewpoints, establishing his own with strong evidence.

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī wrote a book about Qur'ānic research called *Qur'ān dar Islam*. Some of his viewpoints about Qur'ānic sciences are mentioned therein.

The Translation of Tafsīr al-Mīzān

This tafsīr was translated into Farsi twice. One of the translations was a summarized translation (five volumes) translated by scholars such as Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī, Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, Gerāmī, and Muhammad Jawād Ḥujjatī. Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Mūsawī Hamadānī translated the complete version of the tafsīr. In addition to Farsi, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* has been translated into English and Urdu.

Indexes for Al-Mīzān

Many indexes have been written for this tafsīr including a subject-wise index published by Jāmi'ah Mudarasīn. Al-Mīzān has another index titled *Dalīl al-Mīzān* written by Ilīyās Kalāntarī. He wrote this index including names, examples, and subjects in three volumes. The book *al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī wa Minhājuhu fī Tafsīrihi al-Mīzān* by 'Ali Awsī aids one in finding certain subjects in Al-Mīzān.

Sources of Al-Mīzān[1]

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī used many sources, especially the viewpoints of previous commentators of the Qur'ān while presenting his admirable opinions. He used many tafsīrs, books of traditions, history books, biographies, and dictionaries. Only some of them will be mentioned.

Tafsīr sources: He used 23 tafsīrs. Some of these tafsīrs include: *Rawāyāt Mansūb bih Ibn 'Abbās, Jāmi' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarī, *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabrīsī, *Kashshāf* by Zamakhshirī, *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī, *Tafsīr Bayḍāwī, Mufradāt* by Rāghib Iṣfahānī, *Durr al-Manthūr* by Suyūṭī, *al-Burhān* by Baḥrānī, *Nūr al-Thaqalayn* by Ḥawīzī, *Rūḥ al-*

1. The majority of the information regarding Tafsīr al-Mīzān is taken from the book al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī wa Minhajuhu fī Tafsīrihi al-Mīzān by Awisi.

Ma'ānī by Alūsī, *Al-Manār* by Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, *al-Jawāhir Ṭanṭāwī*, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Qurṭābī, *Tafsīr Ṣāfī*, *Tafsīr 'Ayāshī*, *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*, and *Tafsīr Qumī*.[1]

Dictionaries: In most cases *Al-Mīzān* used *Mufradāt* by Rāghib and *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabrīsī to define Qur'ānic terms. But, he also used *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Lughah* by Jawharī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* by Fiyumi and *Qāmūs al-Muḥīt* by Fīrūzābādī.

Books of traditions: *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* uses the method of explaining the Qur'ān by means of the Qur'ān. However, this does not mean that 'Allāmah did not use traditions. The narrations found in *Al-Mīzān* are so extensive that Awisī mentions around 100 sources of traditions used by 'Allāmah. Some of these sources are: *Al-Irshād* by Shaykh Mufīd, *Iḥtijāj* by Shaykh Ṭabrīsī, the four Shia books (*Kāfī*, *Tahdhīb*, *Istibsār*, and *Man lā Yaḥḍaruhu al-Faqīh*), the books of traditions written by Shaykh Ṣadūq (*Ikmāl al-Dīn*, *I'tiqādāt*, *Amālī*, *Tawḥīd*, *Thawāb al-'Ammāl*, *Khiṣāl*, *'Illal al-Sharāya'*, *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*), the Sunni books of traditions (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Nisā'ī*, and *Sunan Bayḥaqī*), and the books of Shaykh Mufīd (*al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, *al-Irshād*, *Amālī*, *Sharḥ 'Aqā'id*, and *Ghaybah*). Likewise, he used famous books such as *Nahj al-Balāghah* and some of its commentaries, such as *Sharḥ Ibn Maytham* and *Sharḥ Ibn Abī al-Ḥādīd*, *Ṣaḥīfah Sajjādīyah*, *Ṣaḥīfah Imam Riḍā ('a)*, *Ghaybah* by Nu'mānī, *Kāmil al-Zīyārah*, *'Iddah al-Dā'ī*, *Biḥār al-Anwār* by 'Allāmah Majlisī, *Wasā'il al-Shia* by Ḥurr 'Amulī, *Wāfī* by Fayḍ Kāshānī, and tens of other books of traditions.[2]

The scriptures of holy religions: 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī used the Torah, Bible, Avesta, and index of the Bible and the Rasā'il of Pulis and Vida from the books of Burhama'i.

Historical sources: Since the Qur'ān mentions historical events and the necessary points of the science of history, 'Allāmah used more than twenty ancient and contemporary sources. Some of these sources are: *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, *Tārīkh Ya'qūbi*, *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, *Sīrah Ḥalabī*, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, *Athār al-*

1. Ali Awisi, Rawash Ṭabāṭabā'ī dar Tafsīr al-Qurān, pgs.78-102.
2. Ibid, p.116.

Bāqīyah, *Murūj al-Dhahab Mas'ūdī*, *Millal wa Niḥal* by Shahristānī, and *Tārīkh Tamadun Islam* by the French Gustav Lubon.

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in addition to the mentioned sources, benefited from other sources as well, including *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, the books of Ibn 'Arabī, *Fajr al-Islam* by Aḥmad Amīn, and a number of encyclopedias, magazines, and newspapers.[1]

The methods and specializations of Tafsīr al-Mīzān

Looking at the procedure in which the verses of the Qur'ān are explained in *al-Mīẓān* shows that 'Allāmah used a number of methods:

A) Explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān: It can be said that *al-Mīẓān* used a number of key methods and in its tafsīr but that the principle approach 'Allāmah relied upon was explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. There are many ancient and contemporary tafsīrs, such as the tafsīrs written by Ibn Taymīyah, Ibn Kathīr, Muhammad Amīn Mālikī Shanqīṭī (the author of *Iḍwā' al-Bayān*), and 'Abd al-Karīm Khāṭib (the author of *Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm*), which supported this method. But they have not enjoyed the same success as *Tafsīr al-Mīẓān*. In any case, 'Allāmah relied upon this method in many situations (for instance the general or detailed meanings of an issue, the unconditional or conditional verses, and in explaining the meanings of terminology).

Some have mentioned four cases where the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān was used in *al-Mīẓān*:

1. Using a number of verses to explain the meaning of a verse which is not clear.

2. Obtaining the meaning of the verse when there can be other acceptable meanings.

3. Using other verses to clarify the purpose of the verse.

4. Using the verses of the Qur'ān to specify the meaning of a term which is used in a number of verses, for instance supplication, answering supplications, repentance, *tawḥīd*, sustenance, worship, and *jihād*. This category is subject-wise tafsīr which will be explained later.[2]

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1. Ibid, third chapter.
2. Ali Awisi, Rawash 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī dar al-Mīzān, p.275.

B) Traditional method: 'Allāmah presents a discussion titled 'Discussion of Traditions' after explaining verses in *Al-Mīzān*. This shows the importance that he gave to traditions in explaining the Qur'ān. The outlook that he had regarding the traditions was analytical; not simply stating them without critique or analysis.

C) *Ijtihādī* method: It can be said that this tafsīr is one of the best *Ijtihādī* tafsīrs due to its reasoning in matters of the Qur'ān, traditions, intellect, and even in matters of Arabic literature.

Likewise, this tafsīr draws on key discussions pertaining to philosophy, society, science, mysticism, and theology.

Subject-wise tafsīr in Tafsīr al-Mīzān

One of the characteristics of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* is that 'Allāmah examines a number of issues by mentioning various verses. This is both a form of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān and of subject-wise tafsīr. For instance, he gathered all of the verses regarding the fall of Adam, intercession, disbelief, and faith and then came to a conclusion about them. One of the instances of subject-wise tafsīr is the Qur'ānic stories and one of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān's* most important characteristics is its subject-wise tafsīr of Qur'ānic stories. The names of 26 prophets have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* would collect the verses about each of them, for instance Moses, explain them, and then come to a conclusion about them. This characteristic is not found in previous tafsīrs.[1] This is why it is one of the best sources for research on Qur'ānic stories. In addition to this, he compares the Torah and the Bible with the Qur'ān, clarifying which parts of these earlier texts have been distorted.

Traditions in Al-Mīzān

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī clarifies the positions of traditions while using the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. If a tradition is used in explaining the Qur'ān, its meaning is in complete congruence with the verse. But, traditions that are not in complete congruence with the verse are not mentioned, explained away (if

1. Books about Qurānic stories have been written where these matters are thoroughly examined.

possible), or mentioned and then rejected if its incorrectness is clear.

For instance, there are contradictory traditions regarding the marriage of the children of Adam. One group of traditions state that they married each other. Another group states that such action would be despicable. Therefore, these traditions are contradictory to one another. However, he clarifies the role of these traditions by using the help of verses of the Qur'ān. He states that the apparent meaning of the verses show that the present generation of mankind stem from these two people (Adam and Eve). A third person did not exist. Interfamily marriage is a law that might have been permissible in one age and impermissible in another.

It is possible that one may not accept everything that 'Allāmah says, but what he states is that when there are contradictory traditions one must chose the those which are in congruence with the apparent meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān. He acted in accordance to the words of the Infallibles ('a) where they said: "Take our traditions if they are in congruence with the Qur'ān and leave them if they are in opposition with the Qur'ān."

In another example, 'Allāmah uses verses to prove that the prophets were infallible. Then he invalidates traditions which try to assert that a prophet committed a sin stating that they are in opposition to the Qur'ān.[1]

The Tone of al-Mīzān

'Allāmah, while explaining the verses of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, pays attention to the tones of the verses. Here tone (*sīyāq*) means the signs of speech which allow one to discover a meaning (either spoken signs or signs understood from surrounding circumstances).[2] One of the tools used in explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān are the tones used in its verses.

'Allāmah is an authority in stating the relationship that verses have with each other. He also categorizes the verses of the Qur'ān; though all may not agree with this. For instance, he mentions eight verses at once and then explains them over a number of pages. For instance, he states

1. Rida Ustādī, Ashnā'ī bā Tafāsīr Qurān Majīd wa Mufassirān, p.179.
2. Ali Awisi, Rawash 'Ulūm Ṭabāṭabā'ī dar al-Mīzān, p.203.

that when one reads Sūrah Hal 'Aṭā' it becomes clear that it was revealed in its complete form at one time. But, when one reads other chapters it becomes clear that they were revealed in segments.

The merits of chapters

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not mention the traditions regarding the merits of the chapters of the Qur'ān because some of them are forged and others are weak. Rather, he mentions the purposes of each chapter. He considers each chapter to be a collection of verses holding a singular purpose. With this outlook, he then explains the verses one by one. For instance, he'll state a verse and explain its given purpose.

Isrā'īlīyāt Traditions

Another point to mention about *Tafsīr al-Mīẓān* is the criticism of Isrā'īlīyāt traditions. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī criticizes Isrā'īlīyāt traditions by using the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān to clarify the meaning of the verses. He invalidates the Isrā'īlīyāt traditions through his own method.

2. Tafsīr Nemūneh

Author: Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī and coauthors

Birth: 1347

Language: Farsi

Method: *Ijtihādī*

Specialization: Social

Size: Twenty-seven volumes

Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī is one of the religious authorities of the contemporary era. He has written books in jurisprudence, theology, and tafsīr. *Tafsīr Nemūneh* was written bearing in mind the social needs of the contemporary era. The author writes in his introduction: "Every age has characteristics, needs, and demands which stem from the change of conditions and the advent of new issues in human life. Likewise, each age has its own problems and difficulties which also stem from a change in the social and cultural dimensions of human life. Successful people are those who understand these needs and demand, as well as the

problems and difficulties they entail. These issues are termed contemporary issues."[1]

The most important sources of this tafsīr, which are mentioned at the beginning of the tafsīr, are: *Majma' al-Bayān*, *al-Mīzān*, *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, *Ṣāfī*, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, *Tafsīr Kabīr*, *al-Manār*, and *Tafsīr al-Murāghī*.

Tafsīr Nemūneh gives importance to science. He lists the opinions of commentators of the Qur'ān and then uses evidence to choose an opinion. The author tries to resolve any conflict between the opinions of different scholars as much as possible. One of the merits of this tafsīr is that it mentions the following points at the beginning of each chapter: whether it was revealed in Makkah or Medina, the number of verses, the purpose of the chapter, the sections of verses, and the merits of the chapter.

His practical method in the tafsīr is that after mentioning the verse and its translation, he mentions the circumstances of revelation should there be any. Then the verse is divided into sentences and explained in congruence with the contemporary world while answering any questions that may arise. He summarizes points of Arabic literature and sometimes only mentions them in footnotes. He then mentions the opinions of previous scholars, combines them, and draws a conclusion about them. If there are traditions regarding the verse, he narrates them. Then, under the title of 'Points' he discusses issues pertaining to the society, ethics, jurisprudence, and science. He mentions these points in a method similar to a subject-wise tafsīr.

In any case, this tafsīr is one of the most famous and widely-read tafsīrs of the contemporary era. It has been printed multiple times and is used by scholars and laymen alike. It is a tafsīr written in Farsi in simple language over 27 volumes. It has been translated into twenty volumes of Arabic and titled *Tafsīr al-Amthal*. It has also been translated into Urdu. In addition to this tafsīr, the author has written a subject-wise tafsīr called *Payām Qur'ān* in ten volumes and *Akhlāq dar Qur'ān* in two volumes.

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1. Tafsīr Namūnah, v.1, p.23.

3. Min Waḥī al-Qur'ān

Author: Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh

Birth: 1354

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Social, spiritual training

Size: Eleven volumes in twenty-five parts

The author, Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallah is a Shia scholar and revolutionary of the contemporary era from Lebanon. His proactive stance regarding Israel and imperialism is well known. This tafsīr is a tafsīr of the entire Qur'ān; it discusses social issues and issues of spiritual upbringing while rarely discussing issues pertaining to Arabic literature or jurisprudence. The other specialization that is seen in this tafsīr is a specialization in theology. Many of the contemporary theological questions are raised and answered in this tafsīr. The author refrains from mentioning Isrā'īlīyāt traditions as much as possible. Another famous book that he wrote is: *al-Ḥiwār fī al-Qur'ān wa al-Islam wa Manṭiq al-Qūwwah.*

4. Al-Kāshif

Author: Muhammad Jawād Mughnīyah

Death: 1400

Language: Arabic

Specialization: social; jihād

Size: Seven volumes

The author was a prominent Lebanese scholar who studied in Najaf. After finishing his religious studies he became a religious judge in Beirut. After a few years he withdrew from the political and governmental arena and began writing. He wrote two tafsīrs. One of his tafsīrs, *al-Kāshif*, is extensive while the other, *al-Mubīn*, is summarized. *Al-Kāshif* addresses social matters and many problems of the contemporary era are dealt with in the pages of this tafsīr. The tafsīr briefly mentions matters of Arabic literature and was written in a simple format.

5. Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān wa al-Sunnah

Author: Muhammad Ṣādiq Tehranī

Birth: 1307

Language: Arabic

Method: Explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān; *Ijtihādī*
Specialization: Spiritual upbringing; social
Size: Thirty volumes

The author wrote many books on the Qur'ānic sciences. He also translated the Qur'ān into Farsi. This tafsīr is comprised of his lectures delivered to seminary students in the Islamic seminaries of Qum and Najaf.

The author said he followed 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān as much as possible. He tried to use the Qur'ān to clarify obscure ideas and then would use traditions and rational reasoning to help him make his point. He gave importance to the social and spiritual needs of the time and used the tafsīr to specialize in them. He briefly mentioned points of Arabic literature. He would examine the traditions and make sure that they were in congruence with the apparent meanings of the verses. For this reason, he refrained from using Isrā'īlīyāt, forged and weak traditions. He did not expand upon jurisprudential discussions, but he did defend Shia belief using scriptural and rational proof.

One of the most important contemporary discussions regarding tafsīr is correlating modern scientific theories with the Qur'ān. To an extent, somecommentators have become over-zealous in this pursuit. This particular author believes that the Qur'ān alludes to scientific issues on the condition that the scientific principle is certain. However, he believes that the Qur'ān does not need science and that our understanding of the Qur'ān should not be forced to fit with modern scientific theories.

He rebuked some commentators of the Qur'ān who were over-zealous in reconciling the Qur'ān with modern science. He addresses Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī when he says: "Many commentators of the Qur'ān who were in awe of the West and absorbed by contemporary sciences forgot that the Qur'ān is a book of divine knowledge and will never change. Human knowledge is in a constant state of change; it is moving in the direction of correctness from incorrectness...".[1]

1. Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān bil-Qur'ān, v.1, p.31; Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, Tafsīr wa Mufassirān, v.2, p.499.

This tafsīr has a lengthy introduction which examines such issues as: the merits of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān as a point of reference, abrogation, the Qur'ānic text being free from tampering, *tafsīr māthūr*, the esoteric and exoteric meanings, translation, and *Ta'wīl*.

The author energetically defends the merits of the Prophetic Household ('a) following the verses which were revealed about them, using the Qur'ān and traditions to defend them. For instance, he states that the verse:

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا...﴾

"Then We made heirs to the Book those whom We chose from Our servants,"[1] was revealed about the Prophetic Household. He then examined and criticized opposing views.

6. Al-Tafsīr al-Aṭhārī al-Jāmi'

Author: Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat

Birth: 1309

Language: Arabic

Method: Traditional with analysis

Size: Thirty volumes

The author of this tafsīr is a contemporary Shia scholar who was born in Karbala. He studied in the seminaries of Karbala and Najaf and began to teach religious sciences until he reached the level of *Ijtihād*. He is one of the prominent teachers of the Islamic Seminary in Qum and has written many books on various Islamic topics. His six volume book *al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* is the most extensive book written by a Shia scholar in the field of Qur'ānic sciences. He also wrote *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* in two volumes and *Shubahāt wa Rudūd* (where 1000 issues are responded to) in order to defend the Qur'ān.

He narrates Shia and Sunni traditions which provide an explanation to verses of the Qur'ān in *al-Tafsīr al-Aṭhārī al-Jami'*.[2] Since traditions explaining the Qur'ān have many problems – as the unauthentic traditions have not been separated from the authentic

1. 35:32.
2. A number of scholars in the Islamic Seminary of Qum helped the author compile the traditions.

traditions – the author attempts to decipher between the authentic and unauthentic. In the introduction he states:

«هذا الذي بين ايديكم محاوله، مبلغ الجهد لمعرفة الصحيح من الضعيف من الاخبار...»

"The book which is between your hands has exerted much effort in deciphering the authentic traditions from the weak traditions."

This tafsīr is written in thirty volumes. The first volume has been printed. This volume is an extremely valuable introduction regarding tafsīr and understanding tafsīr. It includes 17 sections about: the merits of the Qur'ān, the names of the Qur'ān, the term Qur'ān, the compilation of tafsīr, the esoteric and exoteric meanings of verses, tafsīr based on personal opinion, the language of the Qur'ān, the script of the Qur'ān, the authoritativeness of the apparent meaning of Qur'ānic verses, the tone of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān being free from alteration, the first stage of the history of tafsīr, tafsīr during the age of the companions and the Successors, the station of traditions in respect to the Qur'ān, the problems of tafsīr (forged traditions, lies, Isrā'īlīyāt traditions), circumstances of revelation, *maqṭa'ah* letters, and reviewing traditions. After the introduction, the tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah is given. The author used a traditional method with analysis. At the beginning of the verse he explained the apparent meaning and then narrated traditions, providing analysis of traditions when necessary.

Other Shia tafsīrs of the fifteenth century

In addition to what was introduced, other Shia tafsīrs written in this century are:

1. *Makhzan al-'Irfān* by Nuṣrat Amīnī famously known as Bano Isfahan (d.1403). She had reached the stage of *Ijtihād*. This tafsīr was written in Farsi in fifteen volumes. She presented the mystical and philosophical viewpoints of *Ḥikmah al-Muta'ālīyah*. The author used traditions from the Imams ('a) but did not mention points of Arabic literature or recitation.

2. *Rawān Jāvīd* by Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Tehranī (d.1406). He was a Shia scholar. This tafsīr was written in Farsi in five volumes. It was written in simple language and did not discuss points of Arabic literature, focusing instead on ethical issues. Some scholars have

introduced this tafsīr as a translation of *Tafsīr Ṣāfī*.

3. *Tafsīr Nūwīn* by Muhammad Taqī Sharī'atī (d.1407). He was an Islamic reformer. This tafsīr was written in one volume and only comments upon the last thirtieth of the Qur'ān. It was written in Farsi and specialized in social matters. The tafsīr is also comprised of intellectual reasoning in scientific areas and explanations of Arabic terminology.

4. *Tafsīr al-Jadīd* by Muhammad Ḥabīballāh Sabzawārī (d.1409). This tafsīr was written in simple Arabic in seven volumes. This tafsīr relied upon the traditions of the Prophetic Household ('a). The author wrote another tafsīr titled *Irshād al-Adhhān ila Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* in one volume.

5. *Aṭyabb al-Bayān* by Sayyid 'Abd Ḥusayn Ṭayyib Iṣfahānī (d.1411). He was a contemporary Shia scholar who wrote this tafsīr in fourteen volumes. This tafsīr was written in Farsi and in accordance to the opinions of the general public. It was written in the traditional method with a specialization in theology.

6. *Al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khoei (d.1413). The author was a Shia religious authority of the contemporary era. He was in the process writing a complete tafsīr, but was only able to write the first volume. This tafsīr includes the most important discussions in Qur'ānic sciences where Shia viewpoints are presented and opposing views are criticized in detail. Afterwards, the tafsīr of Sūrah Fātiḥah is given. The *Ijtihād* that is given in this tafsīr is unprecedented. This tafsīr has been printed tens of times in Arabic and was translated into Farsi by Muhammad Ṣādiq Najafī. The Farsi title is *Shenākht Qur'ān*.

7. *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid 'Abd al-A'lā Mūsawī Sabzawārī (d.1414). He was a contemporary religious authority. This tafsīr is incomplete. It was written in Arabic and printed in ten volumes.

8. *Anwār Darakhshān* by Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Hamadānī, famously known as Aqā Najafī (d.1417). This tafsīr was written in Farsi. It is a complete tafsīr printed in seventeen volumes. The author used an *Ijtihādī* method with specializations in mysticism and philosophy.

9. *Tafsīr Asān* by Muhammad Jawād Najafī (d.1419). He was a contemporary scholar who wrote many books regarding jurisprudence and history. The tafsīr was written in Farsi with a specialization on social issues and spirituality.

10. *Manāhij al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad Bāqir Malakī Mīyānjī (d.1419). He was a contemporary scholar from Qum. This tafsīr was written in Arabic and six volumes of it have been printed. Those that have been printed contain the commentary of the last two thirtieths and Sūrah Fātiḥah up until the 24th verse of Sūrah Nisā'. This tafsīr has specializations in social issues and theology.

11. *Al-Tafsīr li-Kitāb Allah al-Munīr* by Muhammad Karmī Hawīzī (d.1422). He was a contemporary scholar from Ahwaz.[1] This tafsīr was written in Arabic in eight volumes. It is a tafsīr of the entire Qur'ān. It uses difficult terminology and does not have a clear specialization. In a majority of cases, only the apparent meaning of the verse is given.

12. *Tafsīr Rawshan* by Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī. He is a contemporary commentator of the Qur'ān who wrote *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān*. This tafsīr was written in sixteen volumes with specializations in social issues and spirituality. He also raises ethical points.

13. *Taqrīb al-Qur'ān ila al-Adhhān* by Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusaynī Shīrāzī (d.1424). He was a contemporary Shia religious authority. He wrote many books and was extremely active in this field. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in ten volumes, specializing on social issues.

14. *Tafsīr Kawthar* by Ya'qūb Ja'farī. He is a contemporary researcher of the Qur'ān. This tafsīr was written in Farsi with a specialization in social matters. He presents valuable points in Arabic literature by using *Majma' al-Bayān*, *Ṭibyān*, *Kashshāf*, and *Tafsīr Kabīr* by Fakhr Rāzī. Seven volumes have been printed so far and it will reach, at most, ten volumes. Other books written by this author are: *Bīnish Tārīkhī Qur'ān* and *Sayrī dar 'Ulūm Qur'ān*. He also translated *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf* by Qadūrī.

15. *Tafsīr Nūr* by Muḥsin Qarā'ati Kāshānī (born 1322 q.sh.). He is a contemporary scholar who is dedicated to his work and is

1. The author passed away in 1422. He was followed in taqlīd by some people in Khuzistan.

very compassionate. This tafsīr, written in ten volumes, is presented in simple Farsi.

16. *Min Huda al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Muhammad Taqī Mudarrasī. He is a contemporary scholar and author. This tafsīr is written in Arabic in 17 volumes with a specialization in social issues. It has been translated into Farsi and published under the title of *Tafsīr Hedāyat* as well.

17. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Muhammad 'Ali Taskhīrī and Muhammad Sa'īd Nu'mānī. This tafsīr is written in Arabic in three volumes with a specialization in social issues. It also gives importance to the points of spiritual upbringing and guidance given in the Qur'ān.

18. *Tafsīr Tasnīm* by Ayatullah 'Abdullah Jawādī Amulī (born 1312 q.sh.). The author is a contemporary philosopher, religious authority and commentator of the Qur'ān. Twenty volumes of this tafsīr have been printed. It has reached the 103rd verse of Sūrah Baqarah.

19. *Al-Ghayb wa al-Shahādah* by Muhammad Ali Bāzūrī. He is a Syrian scholar. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in eight volumes with a specialization in social issues and spirituality. It also specializes in philosophy and mysticism.

20. *Al-Baṣā'ir* by Ya'sūb al-Dīn Rastagārī Juyabārī. This tafsīr was written in sixty volumes, 29 of which have been printed. The author presents rare views in the tafsīr.

21. *Tafsīr Kāshif* by Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī and 'Abd al-Karīm Bī-āzār Shīrāzī. They are two contemporary reasearchers of the Qur'ān. This tafsīr is written in Farsi with a specialization in social issues and the relationship between the chapters and verses of the Qur'ān. Seven volumes have been written so far. Their tafsīr has reached Sūrah Naḥl.

22. *Tafsīr Rāhnamā* by Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī (born 1313 q.sh.). The tafsīr was written with the aid of researchers working in the Center of Qur'ānic Culture and Knowledge. Sixteen volumes have been printed. The tafsīr was written in Farsi in a subject-wise format. It discusses various subjects and provides points about the verses.

23. *Tafsīr al-Mu'īn* by Muhammad Hawīdī Baghdādī. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in one volume. It was written in the subject-

wise style using the traditional method.

24. *Anwār al-'Irfān* by Muhammad Hawīdī Baghdādī. This tafsīr was written in Arabic in one volume. It was written in the subject-wise style using the traditional method.

25. *Al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Aziz* by a Lebanese researcher. This tafsīr was printed on small pamphlets in Arabic.

26. *Minhāj al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid ibn al-Ḥasan Raḍawī. He is a scholar from Karachi, Pakistan. The tafsīr was written in Arabic. So far, one volume has been printed.

27. *Aḥsan al-Ḥadīth* by 'Ali Akbar Qarashī (born 1347). He is a scholar from Azerbaijan. The author wrote the book *Farhang Wādjigānī Qāmūs Qur'ān* as well. This tafsīr is written in simple language in twelve volumes. It is written to be understood by the general public.

28. *Taṭhīr bā Jārī Qur'ān* by Ali Ṣafā'ī Ḥā'irī known as 'Ayn Ṣād (d.1420). Two volumes of this tafsīr have been printed. One of the volumes comments upon Sūrah Baqarah and the other comments upon Sūrahs Masad, Naṣr, Kawthar, Humazah, Fīl, and Mā'ūn. The author wrote the tafsīr with a specialization in social issues and spirituality.

29. *Tafsīr Dāneshjū* by Muhammad Ali Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī. He was helped by a number of teachers of the Islamic seminary and university professors. This tafsīr is written in Farsi in fourteen volumes. It is written at the level of university students. The practical method applied is a translation of the verse, a general outlook of the verse, the circumstances of revelation, and points stemming from the verse. It is a simple tafsīr which refrains from diverting into difficult discussions of Arabic literature. This tafsīr has a fifteen page introduction which discusses the method of tafsīr, its sources, and its merits, one of them being the fact that the tafsīr is the product of a group effort. The first volume includes commentary upon Sūrah Fātiḥah and Sūrah Baqarah.

30. *Tafsīr Jāmi' Ayāt al-Aḥkām*, a jurisprudential tafsīr by Zayn al-'Abidīn Qurbānī. He was born in Lahijan in 1312 q.sh. The author is the leader of Friday Prayers in Rasht, Iran. This tafsīr was written in twelve volumes in the order of jurisprudential subjects from ritual purity to blood money. It was written over a period of 14 years. The

author compares Shia and Sunni jurisprudence, using Sunni tafsīrs as references. He defends the Prophetic Household's ('a) school of thought when necessary. He also strives to answer contemporary problems in the course of his discussions.

The most famous Sunni tafsīrs of the fifteenth century

1. Tafsīr al-Munīr

Author: Dr. Wahabah al-Zaḥīlī

Born: 1351; date of publication: 1408
Language: Arabic
Method: *Ijtihādī*
Specialization: Social issues
Size: Sixteen volumes

The author follows the Ḥanafī school of thought and mentions the viewpoints of the previous commentators of the Qur'ān in her tafsīr, along with some new viewpoints. She wrote another book about the Qur'ān called *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥissān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*.

The introduction to this tafsīr has information about the Qur'ān in it. For instance, she discusses the names of the Qur'ān, the revelation and compilation of the Qur'ān, the chapters revealed in Makkah and Medina, the circumstances of revelation, the script of the Qur'ān, the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān being in Arabic, and translations of the Qur'ān. This tafsīr is organized and each discussion has a subtitle. Verses are even given subtitles and the points of Arabic literature are mentioned along with the circumstances of revelation, explanation, subject-wise discussion, and jurisprudential discussion of the verses. A subtitle called 'Jurisprudence of Life and Religious Law' exists where she discusses social issues and necessary religious laws. This tafsīr was written using the *Ijtihādī* method; she establishes her claims using rational and scriptural evidence.

2. Al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr

Author: Sa'īd Ḥawwī

Language: Arabic
Specialization: Social issues
Size: Sixteen volumes in 32 parts

The author wrote the tafsīr in congruence with the needs of the time. He presented three pillars to understanding religion: 1. A foundation in tafsīr, 2. A foundation in the Sunnah and jurisprudential Sunnah, 3. A foundation in the laws of reasoning and criterion for understanding verses of the Qur'ān and traditions.[1] He accepts the viewpoint that the Qur'ān mentions a single subject; the foundation of his tafsīr forms this subject – as is mentioned in the introduction. At the beginning he categorizes the verses of a chapter and then the verses themselves, explaining each segment individually.[2] He gave importance to the philosophy of religious rulings while explaining the verses as well as the circumstances of revelation, traditions, points in Arabic literature, the general understanding of the verses, important points derived from the verses, the viewpoints of the commentators of the Qur'ān, the verdicts of Sunni jurists, and the tone of the verses.

3. Tafsīr al-Shi'rāwī

Author: Muhammad Mutawalī Shi'rāwī

Death: After 1411

Language: Arabic

Specialization: Social issues

Size: Fifteen volumes

This volume is written in fifteen volumes up until the 90th verse of Sūrah Anbīyā. Muhammad Mutawalī Shi'rāwī was an Egyptian scholar who considered this tafsīr to be the product of a lifetime of studies and effort. He believed that the purpose behind the revelation of the Qur'ān was not the derivation of the laws concerning nature, but rather to provide clear principles. He believed that the secrets of existence could be found in it so that culture, civilization, and human intelligence can progress.

In this tafsīr there there are many points of Arabic literature, explanation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, and reasoning with the verses of the Qur'ān given in this tafsīr. He also mentions the relationship between the verses, the social dimensions of the verses,

1. Sa'īd Hawwī, al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr, v.1, p.9.
2. Ibid, pgs.21-28.

and the ethical points derived from them. In his short introduction, he mentions that the Qur'ān is a revelation and an eternal miracle. It can be said that the most important point that this commentator relied upon was the description of the literal meanings of the verses.

The author was an Islamic scholar and a commentator of the Qur'ān who wrote over forty books. The last verse that he explained was the 73rd verse of Sūrah Naml. The author passed away as he was explaining this verse. He wrote many intellectual and social articles during his lifetime which were printed in various magazines.

This tafsīr is extremely organized and each verse is started with a special title clarifying its subject-matter. He then reasons with various proofs establishing every point that he makes. The points that he makes are normally categorized and presented in simple language.

Other Sunni tafsīrs of the fifteenth century

In addition to the tafsīrs that were mentioned, the following two tafsīrs can be listed:

1. *Tahdhīb al-Tafsīr* by 'Abd al-Qadīr Shaybah al-Ḥamd. He is a professor in the Islamic University in Medina. This tafsīr was printed in five volumes in 1402. It specializes in social issues and spirituality and is written in simple language. The tafsīr is incomplete; it is only a tafsīr of the first seven parts (*juz'*) of the Qur'ān. It gives great importance to traditions and narrates mostly from famous Sunni books of traditions such as *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

2. *Aysar al-Tafāsīr* by Abū Bakr Jābir Jazā'irī. He is a follower of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. The author is a contemporary scholar who delivers spiritual lectures in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. This tafsīr was printed in five volumes in 1406. It specializes in spirituality and relies upon the ethical points mentioned in the Qur'ān. The method used is the traditional method. It is a brief tafsīr.

Summary

1. The reason that tafsīr was stagnant in the thirteenth century was because the scholars were busy fighting Akhbarism. The most important tafsīrs of this century are: *Tafsīr Shabbir* (*al-Jawhar al-Thamīn wa al-Wajīz*), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* by Shūkānī, and *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* by Alūsī.

2. In the contemporary era, various forms of tafsīr have been presented, for instance a contemporary method of Arabic prose and tafsīrs written in order of revelation. Intellectual and jurisprudential tafsīrs also progressed.

3. The fifteenth century is the most advanced century in tafsīr. Social tafsīrs and tafsīrs using the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān were written in it. The most important tafsīr using the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān is *Al-Mīẓān*.

4. The most important social tafsīrs by Shia authors are: *Tafsīr Nemūneh*, *Partū az Qur'ān*, *Min Waḥī al-Qur'ān*, and *al-Kāshif*. The most important social tafsīrs by Sunni authors are: *Tafsīr fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, *al-Manār*, *Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl* by Qāsimī, *Tafsīr Murāghī*, and *Tafsīr Shi'rāwī*.

5. The characteristics of contemporary tafsīr in the fifteenth century are: unified subject, subject-wise tafsīrs, and structured tafsīrs.

Questions and Research Points

1. Who wrote *Tafsīr al-Jawhar al-Thamīn* and what method was applied to it?

2. Why did tafsīr become stagnant in the thirteenth century?

3. Introduce a few mystic tafsīrs of the thirteenth century.

4. What are the common elements of contemporary tafsīrs?

5. What methods are used in contemporary tafsīr? What are the viewpoints of Ayatullah Ma'rifat and Dhahabī in this regard?

6. What are the characteristics of contemporary tafsīr?

7. Describe the stages of tafsīrs specializing in Arabic prose in the contemporary era.

8. Introduce two tafsīrs that were written in order of the revelation of the verses of the Qur'ān.

9. What are the categories of subject-wise tafsīr?

10. What are the most important subject-wise tafsīrs of the contemporary era?

11. Introduce *Tafsīr Ṭanṭāwī*; what method was applied to it and what criticism does it have?

12. List five sources for *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*.

13. What is the most important method that 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī used in *Tafsīr al-Mīẓān*?

14. List four characteristics of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*.

15. Who wrote *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa al-'Aql*? What characteristics does it have and what method was applied to it?

16. Introduce two tafsīrs which used the method of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān.

17. List four social tafsīrs along with their authors.

18. List five contemporary tafsīrs written in Farsi along with their authors.

19. What is a structured tafsīr?

20. Divide the tafsīrs written in the fourteenth century into social tafsīrs and mystic tafsīrs.

21. Use the books *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Iḍwā' al-Bayān* by Muhammad Amīn Mālikī Shaqīṭī, *Itijāhāt al-Tafsīr fī al-Qarn al-Rābi' 'Ashr* by Fahd Sulaymān Rūmī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* by Muhammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Itijāhāt al-Tafsīr fī al-'Aṣr al-Rāhin* to compare *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* with *Tafsīr Iḍwā' al-Bayān*. What strengths and weaknesses do these tafsīrs have?

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