



# Usool Al-Tafseer

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# DEFINITIONS

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# MEANING OF USOOL AL-TAFSIR

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- *Usool at-Tafseer* literally means the fundamental or basic principles of *Qur'anic* interpretation or explanation.
- In other words, it refers to the fields of knowledge necessary for a person to accurately interpret the Qur'an.
- The fields of knowledge necessary for a good *tafseer* (interpretation of the Qur'an) includes: Arabic grammar and syntax, Arabic literature and the sciences of the Qur'an (*uloom Al-Qur'an*).
- Also, for a good modern *tafseer*, knowledge of pure and social sciences might be necessary.

# GOAL OF USOOL AL-TAFSIR

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- The goal of *usool at-Tafseer* is to identify the step-by-step methods in interpreting the Qur'an.
- This prevents people from interpreting the verses of the Qur'an according to their own desires.
- Allah, the Almighty, said concerning desires:

((وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ))

*... And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah ? Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. (Qur'an 28:50)*

- Therefore, following personal desires and whims in interpreting the Qur'an will lead to misguidance.
- Also, many misguided sects emerged from Islam through misinterpretation of *Qur'anic* verses.
- Hence, having knowledge of *usool at-Tafseer* prevents one from being misguided through incorrect interpretation of the Qur'an.

# TAFSIR BY PROPHET

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# PROPHET EXPLAINED QURAN

- The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic which is the language understood by the Prophet and his *sahabah* (companions of the Prophet).
- Nevertheless, the verses of the Qur'an carried a deeper meaning beyond understanding only the meanings of the Arabic words.
- Therefore, the *sahabah* sorted for explanations of unclear verses from the Prophet.
- For example, Imam Ahmad recorded that Abdullah said:

*“when this ayah was revealed,*

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْآمَنُونَ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ

*They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice – those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided. (Qur'an 6:82)*

*It was hard on the people. They said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Who among us did not commit zulm (injustice). He said, ‘it is not what you understood from it. Did you not hear what the righteous servant (Luqman) said,*

...إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

*... Indeed, association [with Allah] is great injustice (Qur'an 31:13)*

- Although they understood the meaning of the word *zulm*, they did not understand its meaning in that verse until the Prophet explained to them.
- Allah also charged the Prophet with explaining the Qur'an when he said:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

*... And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. (Qur'an 16:44)*

- Hence, the *sahabah* used to learn the Qur'an from the Prophet along with its deep meaning. They said, 'we learnt the Qur'an, knowledge, and action all at once.'

# TAFSIR BY COMPANIONS

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# TAFSIR OF SAHABAH

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- Due to the explanations of the Qur'an by the Prophet, the *Sahabah* (companions of the Prophet) hardly differed in their *tafseer* of the Qur'an after the death of the Prophet.
- This could be, also, because the Arabic language at that time was purer than the time of the *tabi'un* (those who studied from the *Sahabah*) and onwards.
- The little difference in the companions *tafseer* are also not contradictory difference but variational differences, rather.
- Variational differences refer to explaining one idea using several different words.
- For example, Allah is called The Most Merciful, All-Knowing, All-Powerful and many other names.
- These names are all referring to Allah, although they describe different attributes of Allah.
- So if these questions are asked, 'who is The All-Powerful?', 'who is The All-Knowing?'. The answer to these questions are 'Allah'.
- Although different words are used, they all refer to Allah

- These are the differences that are common in the *tafseer* of the *sahabah*
- Also, another type of variational difference is defining an ‘*aam* (a word that has a general meaning) using a specific example or illustrations

- For example, Allah says:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرِ ۚ إِنَّكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ

*Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah . That [inheritance] is what is the great bounty. (Qur'an 35:32)*

- The one who wrongs himself, the one who is moderate and the one who is foremost in good deeds can all be described with regard to *salah* (prayer) as:
  - The one who wrongs himself refers those who delay their *salah* until the time is almost about to end.
  - The one who is moderate refers to those who pray within the allotted time.

- The foremost in good deeds are those who pray at the recommended time.
- Also, they all can be defined with respect to wealth:
  - Those who wrong themselves are those who deal in usury and refrain from paying *zakah* (i.e. an obligatory charity).
  - Those who are moderate are those who do not deal in usury and they pay *zakah*.
  - While those who are foremost in good deeds are those who, while paying *zakah*, pay more than what is required from them.
- All of the opinions are correct because they are all specific examples for defining an '*aam*.  
Note:

The specific examples do not limit the meanings of the '*aam* to only them. Rather, they are used to create an easy understanding of the '*aam*.

# TAFSIR BY TABI'UN

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# TAFSIR BY TABI'UN

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- The *tabi'un* (students of the *sahabah*) studied the *tafseer* of the Qur'an from the *sahabah*
- The *sahabah* explained to the *tabi'un* the part of the Qur'an which was not clear to them.
- Mujahid (a student of Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas [*sahabi*]) said:  
*"I read the whole Qur'an to Ibn 'Abbas stopping him at the end of every verse, asking him concerning it."* [*ibn taymiyah, muqaddimah, 32*]
- Therefore, *mufasssiroon* (scholars of *tafseer*) heavily rely on the *tafseer* of the *tabi'un* in explaining the Qur'an.

# BEST GENERATIONS

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- The *tafseer* of the generation of the *sahaba* and *tabi'un* mentioned above, as well as the *atba'u tabi'in* (those who studied from the *tabi'un*), are important because they are the best of generations.

- The Prophet said about them:

“the best of people are those of my generation, then those who will come after them, then those who will come after them...”

[Bukhari, 6429]

- Also, the Arabic Language of these generations is the pure Arabic used in the Qur'an.
- The *sahabah* also, had knowledge of the reasons behind the revelation of most of the verses.
- so they best understood the Qur'an compared to the generations after them.
- This is why the *tafseer* of the people of these generations are given authority in the science of *tafseer*.

# METHODS OF TAFSIR

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# METHOD OF TAFSIR

## 1. Tafseer of the Qur'an by Qur'an

- The meanings of some *mujmal* (a wording whose intent cannot be determined without some further clarification) are explained in others places in the Qur'an.
- Sometimes, questions are used to draw the attention of the readers to a *mujmal*.
- These questions are then answered in the subsequent statements.
- For example: نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ ۖ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَطَمَةُ ۚ كَآلًا لِّنُبْدَانَ فِي الْحَطَمَةِ

*No! He will surely be thrown into the Crusher. ۞ And what can make you know what is the Crusher? ۞ It is the fire of Allah, [eternally] fueled (Qur'an 104:4-6)*

- Sometimes, an 'aam is made in one part of the Qur'an and an *takhsees* (exception to that statement) is made in other parts.
- For example, Allah says concerning Himself:



لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

*Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted. (Qur'an 6:103)*

- Allah also says regarding the disbelievers in the Hereafter:

كَأَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ

*No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned. (Qur'an 83:15)*

- But He makes a *takhsees* for the believers in the Hereafter by describing them as:

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ ۖ [إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

*[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant, looking at their Lord. (Qur'an 75:22-23)*

- Hence, it is important, when explaining a *mujmal* from the Qur'an, to look into the Qur'an first for further clarification before visiting any other source. [Philip, usul at-tafseer, 34-36]

## 2. Tafseer of the Qur'an by the Sunnah

- As explained earlier, the Prophet explained verses and statements of the Qur'an which were *mujmal* to the *Sahabah*
- Explaining the Qur'an was one of the obligations Allah charged the Prophet with.

- Allah says:

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

*...And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. (Qur'an 16:44)*

- Thus, detailed information concerning *salah*, *zakah*, fasting, hajj and many other acts of worship came to the *Sahabah* through the *sunnah* (sayings, actions and tacit approvals) of the Prophet.
- For example, the Prophet said concerning the verse:

...غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

*... not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray. (Qur'an 1:7)*

- **الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ** are the Jews and **الضَّالِّينَ** are the Christians”

[At Tirmidhi, v5,279]

- Therefore, the explanations of the Prophet is always given precedence over those of any other individual. [Philips, usul at-tafseer,36-38]

### 3. Tafseer of the Qur'an by Aathaar

- *Aathaar* refers to the sayings of the *sahabah*.
- *Aathaar* are given authority in *tafseer* due to the following reasons;
  - The *sahabah* had the knowledge of the context in which a passage of the Qur'an was revealed
  - They understood the Arabic Language of the Qur'an better unlike later generations.
  - They were righteous in their dealings compared to later generations.
  - They learned the Qur'an in a unique way i.e. Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud said "When a man from amongst us (i.e. the *sahabah*) would learn ten verses, he would not proceed until he fully understood their meanings and acted upon them." [ibn taymiyyah, al muqaddimah, 160]
- Due to these, whenever the *sahabah*, themselves, do not find the *tafseer* of a passage in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, they use their own opinion.

- *Mufasssiroon* also give authority to *aathaar* over their opinions.
- The renowned *mufasssir*, Ibn Kathir, said “ if we were unable to find a suitable *tafseer* in the Qur’an or the *Sunnah*, we go to the opinions of the *sahabah*...” [tafseer ibn kathir,preface]
- An example of *tafseer* of the Qur’an by *aathaar* is, regarding the verse:

...وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

*...And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers. (Qur’an 5:44)*

- Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas said, “*it is a form of kufr (disbelief) less than real kufr*)”[tafseer ibn jareer, v4,p.597,12068]

Note:

- Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas, the cousin of the Prophet, is known by *Mufasssiroon* as the interpreter of the Qur’an amongst the *sahabah*. Also the Prophet had supplicated for him saying:

“O Allah, give him understanding of the religion and teach him the interpretation [of the Qur’an]” [al Bukhari, no.143]

#### 4. Tafseer of the Qur'an by Language

- The Arabic words of the Prophet's era started to take new meanings as Islam spread to other parts of the world.
- Due to this, classical meanings were discarded, and some were lost.
- At the same time, foreign words entered into Arabic Language.
- Therefore the *tafseer* of words from the Qur'an using classical meanings ( meanings of words as they were known during the Prophet's era) became necessary.
- To make this method easy, the writing of dictionaries on Qur'anic Arabic vocabularies and philology emerged during this period.
- This method sometimes creates differences of opinion when the *mufasssiroon* encounter a *mujmal* and there is no clue in the Qur'an as to which meaning of the *mujmal* is dominant.
- Such problems are usually solved using evidence from the *sunnah* to support one meaning over others.

- For example, Allah says:

...أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا...

*... or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean earth.... (Qur'an 4:43)*

- The word “*lams*” in the verse has a *haqeeqee* (literal) and *majaazee* (figurative) meaning.
  - - Literally, it means *to touch*.
  - - Figuratively, it means *sexual intercourse*.
- Therefore, the verse could either mean touching a female will require ablution or *tayammum*, or having sexual intercourse rather will require ablution or *tayammum*.
- And one of these two opinion has to be the right opinion.
- Imam Abu Haneefah said the verse is referring to sexual intercourse.
- While Imam Ash-Shafi'ee and Maalik said it referred to literally touching a woman, although with conditions.

- However, through a hadith, A'isha clarified:  
“the Prophet kissed one of his wives, then went out to pray and did not perform ablution” (abu dawud, no.179)
- Hence, this hadith clarifies the intended meaning of the word “*lams*” in the verse (i.e. it refers to sexual intercourse and not a literal touch).(Philips, 40-41)

**Note:**

- Some *mufasssiroon* consider statements of the *tabi'oon* to be the fourth method to be adopted in explaining the Qur'an.
- Ibn Taymiyyah said in his book, *muqaddimah fee usul at-tafseer*:  
“...if they (i.e. *tabi'oon*) all agree on a single issue then without doubt it is sufficient as evidence”  
(Ibn Taymiyyah, al muqaddimah, 170)
- Among the *tabi'oon*, Mujahid Ibn Jabr is most known for his vast knowledge in *tafseer* of the Qur'an.



- He said:  
“I read the whole Qur’an to Ibn ‘Abbas stopping him at the end of every verse, asking him concerning it.”
- Because of this, Imam Ash-Shafi’ee, Al-Bukhari and Ahmad depends heavily on the Mujahid’s narrations. [Ibn Taymiyyah, al muqaddimah, 32]
- Other *tabi’oon* known for their knowledge of *tafseer* are Sa’eed Ibn Jubayr, Ikrimah the freed slave of Ibn ‘Abbas, ‘Ata Ibn Abu Rabah, Hasan Al-Basri and many others.
- Ibn Taymiyyah adopts *tafseer* of the Qur’an by Language if the *tabi’oon* differ regarding an issue.
- He does this because, the opinion of a *tabi’ee* (singular for *tabi’oon*) is not authoritative when it contradicts the opinion of other *tabi’oon*.

(Ibn Taymiyyah, al muqaddimah, 170)

# METHODS BY OPINION

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# TAFSIR BIR-RIWAAYAH

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- *Tafseer bir-riwaayah* means a *tafseer* based on narrations.
- The above methods of *tafseer* are referred to as *tafseer bir-riwaayah*.
- That is, *tafseer* of the Qur'an by the Qur'an, by the *Sunnah*, by the *sahabah*, and by the Arabic Language.
- These methods are based on narrations from earlier generations about whom the Prophet praised.
- Thus, these methods of *tafseer* minimizes differences of opinion *mufasssiroon*.
- The method which could somewhat create differences of opinion is *tafseer* of the Qur'an by Language due to the changes some words had undergone. (Philips, *usul at-tafseer*, 40-41).

# TAFSIR BY OPINIONS

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- *Tafseer* based on opinion is accepted if such opinions:
  - Are based on the four methods of *tafseer* stated above.
  - Do not contradict the four methods of *tafseer* stated above.
  - Are based on the obvious meanings of the text.
  - Are not based on philosophical, scientific and sectarian ideas (Philips, *usul at-tafseer*, 43)
- Also the person who makes a *tafseer* using reason must possess essential linguistic and religious knowledge (Ibn Taymiyyah, *al muqaddimah*, 186)

# TAFSIR OF QURAN BY OPINIONS

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- The conditions regarding opinion in *tafseer* are made because the Prophet said:  
“Opinion-based argument about the Qur’an is *kufr* (disbelieve).” He repeated it three times, then said,  
“what you know of it, act upon; and what you are ignorant of, refer it to one who knows”  
(Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah, v4, pp26-28).
- Because the Qur’an is the foundation of Islam, it is important for it to remain pure and untampered with
- Hence, unsubstantiated opinion could threaten the pure nature of the Qur’an.
- In order to accurately interpret the Qur’an, knowledge of the above methods of tafseers along with other sciences of the Qur’an become necessary. Thus, the other necessary sciences of the Qur’an are discussed in subsequent slides.

# DEVIANT TAFSIRS

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# DEVIANT TAFSIRS – MU'TAZILEE

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- “And (remember) when Ibraaheem said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allaah] replied, ‘Do you not believe?’ Ibraaheem said, ‘Yes, but (I am asking You) in order that my heart may be at rest.’”
- It was claimed that Ibraaheem had a friend whom he referred to as his “heart” and, thus, the true meaning of the verse was, “Yes, but I am asking You in order that my friend may be at ease.”(2:260)
- This interpretation was considered necessary to explain away the doubt which Ibraaheem felt in his heart, as it seemed inconsistent with prophethood, according to the Rationalists.

# DEVIANT TAFSIS – SHEEAH/SHIAA

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- “Out of them come pearls and coral,” (5:22)
- They found a reference to the Prophet’s grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn.



# DEVIANT TAFSIRS – QAADIYANEE

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- “The Qaadiyanees sect, which appeared in India during the latter part of the nineteenth century, claimed that in the verse;
- *“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is Allaah’s messenger and the seal (khaatam) of the prophets,”* (33:40)
- khaatam does not mean seal, as most translate it, but ring.
- Thus, they claimed that just as the ring beautifies the finger, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the beautification of prophethood.
- Therefore, the meaning of the verse is that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the most superior of the prophets but not the last.
- They also assert that even if the word khaatam were taken to mean “**seal**,” it would be like the seal placed on an envelope sealing its contents, but not limiting them.
- These interpretations were made to validate the claim of their founder, Ghulam Ahmad, to prophethood.

# CONDITIONS OF MUFASIR

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# CONDITIONS OF MUFASSIR

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## 1. Correct Belief

- The mufassir first and foremost must possess a true belief in Islaam for his or her tafseer to be pure and free from heresy or gross errors.
- Sincerely believing in Islaam does not automatically mean that one who does so has true belief in Islaam. A true or correct belief exists only when one's conception of Islaam coincides with that of the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions.
- Ignorance of what constitutes correct belief in Islaam will almost certainly lead the mufassir into incorrect explanations.
- Such an individual will be unable to distinguish between a correct interpretation and an incorrect one.
- Consequently, he or she will have to rely on their personal judgment, which would be impaired due to their ignorance.
- Correct belief is also non-sectarian. Such a belief frees the mufassir from the damaging influence of philosophies, schools of thought (math-habs), movements, and sects.
- The mufassir does not approach the Qur'aan with preconceived ideas and notions for which he or she wishes to find support in the Qur'aan. Such an approach invariably leads to misinterpretations and sectarian explanations.

# CONDITIONS OF MUFASSIR

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## 2. Correct Methodology

- All honest attempts at tafseer must begin with the tafseer of the Qur'aan by Qur'aan itself. What remains unexplained must then be sought in the Sunnah.
- If the tafseer still cannot be found, the explanations of the sahaabah and their students must then be turned to.
- That which is left after the preceding steps can be found in the language of the Qur'aan. Such an approach to tafseer takes into account Allaah's role as the revealer and explainer of His revelation, the Prophet's role as the practical interpreter of Allaah's revelation, the sahaabah and their students' roles as the conveyers of Allaah's revelation and the Prophet's
- interpretation and application of it, and the role of classical Arabic as the vehicle in which the revelation and its explanation were transmitted.
- Any other approach negates one or more of these vital roles and implies either a claim of direct revelation from God or an understanding superior to that of the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions.
- A brief glance at the tafseer of those ignoring these steps will expose their claims to divine revelation cloaked in terms like "ilhaam" (inspiration) and "kashf" (illumination).

# CONDITIONS OF MUFASSIR

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## 3. Correct Knowledge

- The mufassir must have working knowledge of classical Arabic, its grammatical constructions, and its figures of speech, because this is the language of the Qur'aan.
- Any tafseer which is based solely on a translation of some of the meanings of the Qur'aan will be liable to distortion.
- As Mujaahid, the student of Ibn 'Abbaas, said, "It is not allowable for anyone who believes in Allaah and the Last Day to explain Allaah's Book if he is not knowledgeable in the Arabic language."
- The mufassir should also know the other Islaamic sciences which are connected in one way or another to the Qur'aan, such as hadeeth and fiqh.
- He should be familiar with the **science of hadeeth (usool al-hadith)** in order to make sure that explanations attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) or his companions that he uses in his tafseer are authentic.
- He should also know the fundamental principles **of fiqh (usool al-fiqh)** in order to accurately extract or deduce Islamic law from its passages.
- Without a correct understanding of these two sciences, the mufassir could not possibly escape including in his tafseer a wealth of misinformation, since the body of weak and fabricated narrations is quite vast and the schools of fiqh (Islaamic law) and their methods are many and varied.

# TAFSIR TYPES

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# TAFSIR BOOKS – BY TRANSMISSION

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- The books of tafseer have been divided into two general categories according to the emphasis of their authors in their explanations.
- The first are tafseers of those who restricted their explanations to transmitting what was explained in the Qur'aan or stated by the Prophet (PBUH), his companions, and their students, which were referred to as **tafseer bir-riwaayah** or **tafseer bil-ma'thoor** (tafseer according to transmission).
- The authors of such tafseers also avoided unfounded interpretations and unnecessary explanations and always accepted authentic narrations.
- This is not to say that such tafseers are totally free of personal judgment and opinion, for any tafseer, of necessity, must reflect the opinion of the individual who compiles it.
- But in this case, personal opinion was kept to a minimum

# TAFSIR BOOKS BY OPINION

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- On the other hand, those tafseers in which the authors often relied on their personal opinions for explanations, interpretations and deductions were called **tafseer bid-diraayah** or **tafseer bir-ra'y** (tafseer according to opinion).
- In some of these types of tafseers, narrated explanations from the Prophet (PBUH), the sahaabah, and their students (taabi'oon) are mentioned prior to personal interpretation, and the deductions or opinions are in agreement with narrated explanations, grammatical rules, and lexical meanings.
- While in others there is a partial or even total disregard for narrated explanations, grammatical rules, and word meanings.
- Tafseers of the first type are acceptable, while those based mostly or solely on unfounded opinion are considered heretical or bordering on heresy.
- Allaah and His Prophet (r) have expressly forbidden unfounded explanations of the Qur'aan. For example, it was forbidden in the verse,  
وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.” (17:36)



# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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## 1. Tafsir Bir Riwaayah - Tafseer Ibn 'Ateeyah, al-Muharrar al-Wajeez

- Abdul-Haqq ibn 'Ateeyah al-Andaloosee (1089-1146 CE/481-540 AH) was a Maalikee scholar and judge in both Spain and Morocco. Ibn 'Ateeyah's tafseer contains a summary of accurate narrations found in the earlier tafseers birriwaayah.

## 2. Tafseer Abil-Layth as-Samarqandee, Bahr al-'Uloom

- Abul-Layth ibn Ibraaheem as-Samarqandee (d. 983 CE/ 372 AH) was a fiqh scholar of the Hanafee school." His tafseer was based on hadeeths and narrations from the sahaabah, the taabi'oon, and later scholars. However, it does contain some weak narrations, and the chains of narrations for statements from the sahaabah and taabi'oon were not mentioned, nor were their opinions analyzed.

## 3. Tafseer Abee Ishaq, al-Kashf wa al-Bayaan 'an Tafseer al-Qur'aan

- Aboo Ishaq, Ahmad ibn Ibraaheem ath-Tha'labee (d. 1036 CE/427 AH), In his tafseer, the chains of narrations from the sahaabah are mentioned but condensed. However, Aboo Ishaq also mentions a vast number of Israa'eeleeya (Biblical stories) without any critical analysis of their content whatsoever. Moreover, he also included many weak and fabricated hadeeths in his tafseer due to his weak background in the science of hadeeth

# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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## 4. Tafseer Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree, Jaami' al-Bayaan fee Tafseer al-Qur'aan

- Muhammad Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree (839-923 CE/225-310 AH) was a well-known legalist, hadeeth scholar, and historian. Although originally a Shaafi'ee scholar, he reached the level of ijtihaad and became independent of the school. His tafseer is the oldest tafseer to reach us intact. It contains narrations which are analyzed in most cases. He mentioned the various recitations and their implications and he included many Biblical tales which were discussed, and the positions of unorthodox schools, such as that of the Mu'tazilees, were mentioned and refuted. All later tafseers have depended on this tafseer in one way or another.

## 5. Tafseer al-Baghawee, Ma'aalim at-Tanzeel

- Al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Baghawee (d. 1117 CE/ 510 AH) was an eminent jurist of the Shaafi'ee school and one of the foremost hadeeth scholars of his time. His tafseer was a condensed version of Tafseer ath-Tha'labee, in which the majority of weak and fabricated narrations were removed and all the chains of narrators were mentioned. He also removed various heretical concepts mentioned in ath-Tha'labee's tafseer, as well as scientific information not directly related to tafseer. Al-Baghawee briefly mentions some of the various recitations and explains grammatical constructions only where it is absolutely necessary. There are a few Israa'eeleeyaats mentioned without critical analysis and some conflicting opinions of early scholars which are also mentioned without evaluation. It is among the most reliable tafseers based on narration.

# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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## 6. Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Atheem

- Abul-Fidaa' Ismaa'eel ibn Katheer ad-Dimishqee (1300-1373 CE/699-774 AH) was a Shaafi'ee fiqh scholar and a student of Ibn Taymeeyah. He was also an eminent hadeeth scholar and a historian. His historical work, al-Bidaayah wa anNihaayah, is considered the most authentic Islaamic history book. Tafseer ibn Katheer is also considered the most authentic book of tafseer, and is second only to Tafseer at-Tabaree in popularity among scholars. The book contains an extensive preface covering the methodology of tafseer, and great emphasis has been placed upon the interpretation of Qur'aan by Qur'aan. Ibn Katheer critically analyzes all of his narrations and evaluates the conflicting statements of the sahaabah and the taabi'oon. He also warns against the dangers of Israa'eeleeyaat and other false information commonly found in tafseers. An abridged version of this tafseer, from which the inauthentic narrations has been removed, was published in four volumes in the 1980s.

## 7. Tafseer ath-Tha'labee, al-Jawaahir al-Hisaan fee Tafseer al-Qur'aan

- Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Makhloof ath-Tha'labee al-Jazaa'iree (d. 1472 CE/877 AH) was a North African Maalikee scholar well known for his piety and knowledge. His tafseer was an abridgement of Ibn 'Ateeyah's tafseer, to which he added information from other famous classical tafseers, especially that of at-Tabaree. The hadeeths mentioned were from all the well-known works, and Israa'eeleeyaat were all evaluated. Ath-Tha'labee lists some of the variant recitations and discusses some grammatical issues, but for the most part, his tafseer is a condensation and compilation of previous works with very little added from himself

# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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## 8. Tafseer Jalaalud-Deen as-Suyootee, ad-Durr al-Manthoor fee at-Tafseer bi al-Ma'thoor

- Jalaalud-Deen 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Muhammad as-Suyootee (1445-1505 CE/849-910 AH) was a great Shaafi'ee fiqh scholar, as well as the foremost hadeeth scholar of his time. At first, he wrote a four volume tafseer called Turjumaan al-Qur'aan, in which he placed over ten thousand hadeeths along with their chains of narration. When he found his students uninterested in learning chains of narration, he condensed the tafseer by deleting the chains and merely mentioned the books from which the hadeeths were taken. This tafseer was renamed ad-Durr al-Manthoor. In spite of his knowledge of the hadeeth sciences, he seems to have been only concerned with gathering the largest possible quantity of hadeeths, without discriminating between the true and the false

## 9. Tafseer ash-Shawkaanee, Fat-h al-Qadeer

Muhammad ibn 'Alee ash-Shawkaanee (d. 1839 CE 1255 AH) was a resident of San'aa, Yemen who started his quest for knowledge as a student of the Zaydees. He studied hadeeth sciences extensively and became independent of his math-hab. In his tafseer, ash-Shawkaanee has combined both methods of tafseer (by opinion and by narration). He has condensed the hadeeth chains and has mentioned the books in which each hadeeth may be found, and most opinions are attributed to their sources. Grammatical, legal, and philosophical issues are discussed and the positions of the great commentators are mentioned. This tafseer is printed in five volumes and is widely favored among orthodox scholars. A recent edition has footnotes that extensively document the hadeeths cited by the author.

# TAFSIR BY TRANSMISSION

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## 10. Tafseer Ibn ‘Abbaas, Tanweer al-Miqbaas min Tafseer Ibn ‘Abbaas

- This tafseer was compiled by Muhammad ibn Ya‘qoob al-Fayroozaabaadee (d. 1414 CE/817 AH), who was a Shaafi‘ee scholar and author of the famous Arabic dictionary, al-Qaamoos al-Muheet. The vast majority of this tafseer consists of explanatory statements attributed to the great sahaabee and mufasssir, Ibn ‘Abbaas. The author mentions the chains of narrators for each section of tafseer. Hence, this tafseer is considered as being among the tafseers birriwaayah. However, chains of narration attributed to Ibn ‘Abbaas vary in their level of authenticity, depending upon the reliability of the narrators themselves. Chains from Mu‘aawiyah ibn Saalih and Qays ibn Muslim al-Koofee are considered saheeh (highly authentic) and those from Ibn Is-haaq (the historian) are considered hasan (authentic); while those from Ismaa‘eel ibn ‘AbdurRahmaan as-Suddee al-Kabeer and ‘Abdul Maalik ibn Jurayj are doubtful. Those from ad-Dahhaak ibn Mazaahim al-Hilaalee, ‘Ateeyah al-‘Awfee, Muqaatil ibn Sulaymaan al-Azdee, and Muhammad ibn as-Saa’ib al-Kalabee, who was accused of fabricating hadeeths, are all da‘eef (unacceptable). Nearly all of the so-called “Tafseer of Ibn ‘Abbaas” is based on statements narrated in chains containing Muhammad ibn as-Saa’ib al-Kalabee. Hence, this tafseer is considered unreliable for the most part; and, despite its popularity among the masses, it is totally rejected by Muslim scholars.



# TAFSIR BY OPINIONS

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# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## TAFSEER BID-DIRAAYAH

### 1. Tafseer Fakhrud-Deen ar-Raazee, Mafaateeh al-Ghayb

- Fakhrud-Deen ibn ‘Alee ar-Raazee (1150-1210 CE/544-606 AH) was a Shaafi‘ee scholar who excelled in the grammatical sciences as well as philosophy. His tafseer is printed in eight large volumes; however, his contemporaries mentioned that Fakhrud-Deen did not complete his tafseer. It has been suggested that the work was completed by his disciple, Shams ad-Deen Ahmad ibn alKhaleel al-Khuwayyee.<sup>126</sup> Ar-Raazee’s tafseer is quite popular among scholars due to its extensive treatment of various topics from a wide range of sciences. This tafseer is noted for its concentration on the relationship between verses and chapters. However, the tafseer is, for the most part, like an encyclopedia of natural sciences. The author delves into mathematics and natural sciences and evaluates the opinions of astronomers and philosophers using their terminology. The various arguments of the Mu‘tazilah are mentioned and mildly refuted and the positions of the various fiqh math-habs are explained whenever verses containing legal issues appear. However, he always favors his school, the Shaafi‘ee math-hab on legal issues. Ar-Raazee also discussed grammatical issues, but to a much lesser extent than his discussions of natural sciences.



# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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2. Tafseer al-Qurtubee, Jaami‘ Ahkaam al-Qur’aan wa al-Mubayyin li MaaTadammana min as-Sunnah wa Aay al-Furqaan
  - Aboo ‘Abdillaah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ansaaree al-Qurtubee (d. 1273 CE/671 AH) was born in Cordoba in what is now Spain. He started his studies there and participated in jihaad against the Christians, in the course of which he was captured, but he managed to escape.<sup>128</sup> He eventually travelled to the east, settling in Egypt, where he died. He is most famous for his tafseer, but he is also noted for his book on the afterlife, at-Tathkirah bi Ahwaal al-Mawtaa wa Ahwaal al-Aakhirah and a book on zuhd, the downplaying of worldly ambitions in order to concentrate on success in the hereafter.<sup>129</sup> His tafseer starts with an introduction of some seventy pages on the virtues of the Qur’aan, the etiquettes of its recitation and the proper methodology of tafseer. The tafseer is characterized by a heavy emphasis on fiqh issues, but it is by no means limited to that. One may consider al-Qurtubee’s work in the category of attafseer bid-diraayah because fiqh by its nature involves deductions from the texts. However, he includes the hadeeths relevant to each verse, as well as explanations of the sahaabah, taabi‘oon and major scholars, although usually stripped of the isnaad. When quoting a hadeeth, he cites the book where it may be found or the author who mentioned it. After presenting the text of a verse, he will state the number of issues relating to it that he plans to discuss. He usually starts with an explanation of the vocabulary of the verse, quoting a line or two of poetry to illustrate the definition of any difficult words. He also mentions variant recitations and their reciters. In discussing fiqh issues, he mentions the major opinions along with their evidence, then evaluates them. He generally supports the Maalikee position, although not always. He also refutes deviant sects like the Shee‘ah, the Mu‘tazilah, and the Qadareeyah, but he does so with scholarly etiquette. His tafseer is considered one of the monumental works in this field, and is indispensable for the fiqh issues of the Qur’aan.

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 2. Tafseer al-Baydaawee, Anwaar at-Tanzeel wa Asraar at-Ta'weel

Naasirud-Deen, 'Abdullaah ibn 'Alee al-Baydaawee (d. 1291 CE/691 AH) was a Persian scholar of the Shaafi'ee math-hab and was appointed chief judge of Shiraz. His tafseer was an abridgement of al-Kash-shaaf by az-Zamakhsharee, with most of the Mu'tazilee philosophy deleted. However, he does occasionally get caught up in az-Zamakhsharee's explanations. He has also followed az-Zamakhsharee's practice of mentioning at the end of every chapter weak and fabricated hadeeths extolling the virtues of reading that chapter. Al-Baydaawee draws some of his material from Mafaateeh al-Ghayb of ar-Raazee and Tafseer ar-Raaghib al-Isfahaneey and includes narrations from the sahaabah and the taabi'oon. Hence, he does not leave any verse about the wonders of creation without expounding on the theories and facts of natural sciences. He also mentions Qur'aanic recitations, but does not limit himself to the authentic ones. Nevertheless, the tafseer is quite free from Israa'eeleeyaat. Its language is also very polished and elegant. Islaamic scholars throughout the ages have held this tafseer in high esteem, and many commentaries on it and annotated versions of it have been produced.

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 3. Tafseer an-Nasafee, Madaarik at-Tanzeel wa Haqaa'iq at-Ta'weel

- ‘Abdullaah ibn Mahmood an-Nasafee (d. 1302 CE/701 AH) was a Hanafee scholar of wide renown. He wrote numerous books on usool al-fiqh and commentaries on earlier works. His tafseer was an abridgement of alBaydeah chapter. In his discussions of the various recitations, he limits himself to the authentic seven and attributes each to its reciter. An-Nasafee debated the various legal issues connected with verses by explaining the arguments of each math-hab, refuting them and supporting the positions of his own math-hab, the Hanafee school. Discussions of grammatical issues are mostly very brief. On the whole, the tafseer is medium-sized and its style is brief and clear. aawee's tafseer in which he deleted the fabricated hadeeths on the virtues of

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 4. Tafseer al-Khaazin, Lubaab at-Ta'weel fee Ma'aani at-Tanzeel

- “Alee ibn Khaleel ash-Shayhee (1279-1340 CE/678-740 AH) was known by the nickname of “ al-Khaazin” (the warehouseman) because he used to be in charge of a book warehouse in Damascus. This Shaafi'ee scholar was born and raised in Baghdaad, but did the greater part of his studies in Damascus. He wrote a vast number of books on a variety of topics, such as the ten-volume work called Maqbool al-Manqool, in which he gathered the hadeeths found in the Musnads of ash-Shaafi'ee and Ahmad, the six major books, the Muwatta' of Maalik, and the Sunan of ad-Daaraqutnee. His tafseer is a condensed version of al-Baghawee's tafseer with additions from earlier tafseers. He mentions many Biblical tales (Israa'eeleeya) without evaluating them. Al-Khaazin also wrote extensively on the battles which took place during the Prophet's era wherever mention was made of them in the verses. His tafseer also deals with legal issues in great detail, sometimes touching on areas not related to tafseer at all. There is also great emphasis in the tafseer on spiritual lessons and advice, a reflection of al-Khaazin's Soofee leanings. The tafseer is in seven medium-sized volumes and is in wide circulation and is particularly liked by those who enjoy stories; however, the tafseer needs critical revision before being used as a reliable reference for scholars.

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 5. Tafseer Abee Hayyaan, al-Bahr al-Muheet

- Muhammad ibn Yoosuf ibn Hayyaan al-Andaloosee (1256-1344 CE/654-745 AH), more commonly known by the name Aboo Hayyaan, was a scholar in the field of recitations and poetry and was a master in the field of grammar. In his early years, he belonged to the Thaahiree school of law, but later left it for the Shaafi'ee school. He studied in schools throughout North Africa and eventually settled in Egypt. This tafseer is in eight large volumes and is widely used by scholars as an important reference work on grammatical constructions in the Qur'aan. Aboo Hayyaan mentions in detail the differences among grammarians and makes most of his tafseer from a grammatical point of view, so much so that it bears a closer resemblance to a grammar book than it does to a tafseer of the Qur'aan. However, he does develop the other areas of tafseer, such as fiqh issues, recitations, Qur'aanic eloquence, and narrations from early orthodox scholars. In numerous places, he also refutes many of az-Zamakhsharee's philosophical arguments, as well as his grammatical positions.



# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 6. Tafseer an-Naysaabooree, Gharaa'ib al-Qur'aan wa Raghaa'ib al-Furqaan

- Nithaamud-Deen ibn al-Hasan an-Naysaabooree (d.1328 CE/728 AH), nicknamed an-Nithaam al-A'raj, was born in Qum, but grew up in Nishapur, where he became a famous literary scholar, grammarian, and Qur'aan reciter. An-Naysaabooree wrote his tafseer by critically condensing ar-Raazee's tafseer, adding additional material from al-Kash-shaaf and other tafseers, as well as tafseers of the sahaabah and taabi'oon. The format used in his tafseer is quite unique among tafseers. After mentioning the verse, he mentions the various recitations, carefully attributing them to one of the ten major reciters. Then he mentions the possible places where pauses may take place and explains the resulting meanings of the verse. After that, he discusses the relationship between verses and begins the tafseer by explaining the grammatical meaning of the verses. He then mentions the fiqh issues and the opinions of the various philosophical and theological arguments, firmly defending the orthodox position of Ahl as-Sunnah. Verses concerning the wonders of creation are discussed from the viewpoint of natural sciences. Due to the author's strong Soofee leanings, he delves into the spiritual implications and his personal enlightenment at the end of each verse's tafseer. This tafseer is presently printed in the margin of one edition of Tafseer at-Tabaree and is widely read by scholars.

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

## 7. Tafseer al-Jalaalayn

- This tafseer is the product of two scholars, both of whom had the title, “Jalaalud-Deen” (Glory of the Religion): Jalaal ad-Deen as-Suyootee (1445-1505 CE), author of ad-Durr al-Manthoor, and Jalaalud-Deen al-Mahallee CE/791-864 AH). The former was discussed previously, so we will only concern ourselves with the latter. His name was Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem al-Mahallee and his birthplace was Egypt. He became a great scholar of the Shaafi‘ee mathhab and refused the post of the chief judge, preferring to teach fiqh in the local schools and engage in trade. He wrote a number of simple and concise books in various fields which became very popular. He began his tafseer starting with Soorah al-Kahf (18) and ending with Soorah an-Naas (114). He then did the tafseer of the first soorah, al-Faatihah; however, he died before completing the rest. As-Suyootee then began from Soorah al-Baqarah (2) and ended with Soorah al-Israa’ (17), which is a little less than one half of the Qur’aan. He followed alMahallee’s format. The basic meanings of the verses are explained and the most probable opinions are mentioned. Grammatical explanations are only relied on where absolutely necessary. Some reference is also made to the more famous recitations. There are very few areas where the two authors differed. One of them concerns the rooh (soul), which al-Mahallee explains in Soorah Saad (38) as a subtle body or substance that brings man to life when it is blown into him. AsSuyootee agrees with him in his own tafseer of Soorah al-Hijr (15), but in his tafseer of verse 85 of Soorah al-Israa’: as-Suyootee contradicts al-Mahallee. He wrote that this verse clearly indicates that the reality of the rooh is the exclusive knowledge of Allaah; hence, it would be better not to try to define it. In spite of this tafseer’s brevity (one volume), it is without a doubt a very valuable work and it is among the most popular tafseers.

# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 9. Tafseer Abis-Sa'ood, Irshaad al-'Aql as-Saleem ilaa Mazaayaa al-Kitaab alKareem

- Abus-Sa'ood Muhammad ibn Mustafaa al-'Imaadee (1489-1574 CE/894-982 AH) was born in a village near Constantinople and became a scholar of the Hanafee school. He taught in many Turkish Islaamic schools and was appointed judge in a number of cities, including Constantinople itself. Later, he was appointed a muftee and remained one for over thirty years.<sup>139</sup> His tafseer was based on al-Kash-shaaf and that of al-Baydaawee, except that he avoided many of their pitfalls. He did, however, fall into the trap of mentioning fabricated hadeeths concerning the merits of each soorah. The author spends a great deal of effort explaining the eloquence and miraculous construction of Qur'aanic expressions. He only mentions variant recitations where they further explain the verses. Very few Israa'eeleeyaat are mentioned and the various legal opinions on legal issues are listed only occasionally. He sometimes mentions the various grammatical meanings of verses and chooses the most appropriate after producing proof to that effect. The tafseer has been reprinted in five medium-sized volumes numerous times and is quite popular among scholars due to its clarity and beauty.



# TAFSIR BY OPINION

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## 10. Tafseer al-Aaloosee, Rooh al-Ma'aanee fee Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-Atheemwa as-Sab' al-Mathaanee

- As-Sayyid Mahmood Afandee al-Aaloosee<sup>141</sup> (1802-1853 CE/1217-1269 AH) was among the greatest Shaafi'ee scholars of 'Iraq. He was appointed muftee of Baghdaad and was very familiar with the legal positions of the various math-habs. In fact, he often followed the opinions of Aboo Haneefah on many issues. The author has compiled in his tafseer the opinions and narrations of the early scholars and the explanations of latter-day scholars with great care and honesty. All statements are attributed to their authors, and their conflicting opinions are weighed without any bias. Al-Aaloosee often times refutes the unorthodox interpretations and heretical explanations of the Mu'tazilees and the Shee'ah. He also mentions the scientific theories relating to the verses on creation and criticizes those he considers inaccurate or unlikely. Grammatical and legal issues are discussed at great length through the tafseer without bias. Al-Aaloosee severely criticizes the Israa'eeleeyaat and even ridicules them occasionally. He also mentions the variant recitations, but does not restrict himself to the authentic ones. Many quotes from classical literature are used to support his grammatical arguments, and he usually closes off his tafseer by mentioning the spiritual implications. Rooh al-Ma'aanee is a virtual tafseer encyclopedia, in which most of what has been written on tafseer has been gathered and critically presented. Despite the author's occasional overemphasis on technical areas not directly related to tafseer, his approach is always balanced and unbiased.

# TAFSIR OF MU'TAZILEES

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# TAFSIRS OF THE MU‘TAZILEES

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- The Mu‘tazilee (rationalists) scholars interpreted the Qur’aan in such a way as to support and defend their unique and unorthodox ideas which had never before been expressed by the early scholars among the sahaabah, the taabi‘oon, or their students.
- Many of their early tafseers, like those of orthodox scholars, were lost in time and we only know about them from references made to them by their contemporaries.
- Their method of tafseer is considered tafseer bid-diraayah of the worst kind. Such tafseers are noted for their total disregard for the opinions of the early mufasssirs, as well as their complete dismissal of classical lexical meanings.
- The following are brief reviews of Mu‘tazilee-oriented tafseers which have survived until today. Many of their early tafseers, like those of orthodox scholars, were lost in time and we only know about them from references made to them by their contemporaries.
- Their method of tafseer is considered tafseer bid-diraayah of the worst kind. Such tafseers are noted for their total disregard for the opinions of the early mufasssirs, as well as their complete dismissal of classical lexical meanings.
- The following are brief reviews of Mu‘tazilee-oriented tafseers which have survived until today:

# TAFSIRS OF THE MU‘TAZILEES

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## 1. Tafseer ‘Abdul-Jabbaar al-Hamdaanee, Tanzeeh al-Qur’aan ‘an alMataa‘in

- ‘Abdul-Jabbaar ibn Ahmad al-Hamdaanee (d. 1024 CE/ 415 AH), a major Mu‘tazilee scholar of his time, was appointed judge of the city of Rayy, where he lectured until he died. He authored books in usool al-fiqh and other Islaamic sciences, as well as a highly acclaimed historical work called Dalaa’il anNuboowah (Proofs of the Prophethood). His tafseer is not a complete explanation of the Qur’aan, as only the controversial and equivocal verses are interpreted in order to refute the position of Sunnee scholars. The tafseer begins with Soorah alFaatihah (1) and ends with Soorah an-Naas (114); however, many chapters and verses remain unexplained. The book is organized around certain issues whereby a problem is presented and its solution proposed.

# TAFSIRS OF THE MU‘TAZILEES

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## 2. Tafseer ash-Shareef al-Murtadaa, Gharar al-Fawaa'id wa Durar alQabaa'id

- ‘Alee ibn at-Taahir, Aboo Ahmad al-Husayn (966-1048 CE/355-439 AH) traces his ancestry back to the Shee‘ah Imaam Moosaa al-Kaathim, the son of Ja‘far as-Saadiq. He was the main scholar of the Shee‘ah in ‘Iraq and an adamant follower of the Mu‘tazilee school of thought. The book of sayings attributed to ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib, Nahj al-Balaaghah, was written either by him or by his brother, Shareef Ridaa. Shareef Murtadaa’s tafseer contains lectures which he dictated in eighty lessons, covering studies in tafseer, hadeeth, and literature. Hence, this tafseer was nicknamed “Amaalee ash-Shareef al-Murtadaa” (The Dictations of Shareef Murtadaa). The tafseer section of the book does not explain all of the Qur’aan, but instead interprets selected passages in such a way as to establish the fundamental principles of the Mu‘tazilees. The author also skillfully takes certain verses which obviously contradict some of the Mu‘tazilee fundamentals and neutralizes them with unorthodox linguistic explanations. In fact, the whole tafseer has a heavily linguistic, analytical slant.

# TAFSIRS OF THE MU‘TAZILEES

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## 3. Tafseer az-Zamakhsharee, al-Kash-shaaf ‘an Haqaa’iq at-Tanzeel

- ‘Mahmood ibn ‘Umar az-Zamakhsharee al-Khwaarazmee (1075-1144 CE/467-538 AH) was a Hanafee scholar who studied in Baghdaad and Khurasaan and wrote a number of books on Arabic literature and grammar, usool al-fiqh, hadeeth commentary, etc. Despite az-Zamakhsharee’s blatant Mu‘tazilee leanings, his tafseer is considered a literary masterpiece. His explanations of the various miraculous aspects of the Qur’aan were the most detailed and extensive written, and his discussions of the beauty of Qur’aanic rhyme, rhythm, and eloquence the most comprehensive. Az-Zamakhsharee uses his mastery of the Arabic language to interpret the Qur’aan according to Mu‘tazilee thought. Verses which conflict with his fundamentals are made allegorical and reinterpreted. His handling of legal issues is brief and unbiased, and he rarely uses Israa’eeleeyaat.

# UNIQUENESS OF QURAN

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# THE UNIQUE QURAN

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- **Qur'an** literally means reading or reciting as it is derived from the Arabic word “qara`a” which means to read. Historically the word **Qur'an** has been only used to refer to the book revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (Philips,usul at-tafseer, 85).
- Allah called the book revealed to Prophet Muhammad Qur'an, in his statement:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

*Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward. (Qur'an 17:9)*

- Allah has also called it by other names such as Furqaan (Qur'an 22:1) and Dhikr (Qur'an 15:9)
- Technically, **Qur'an** is defined as Allah's words which were revealed in Arabic in a rhythmical form to Prophet Muhammad whose recitation is an act of worship and all of its content is of miraculous nature (Philips,usul at-tafseer, 86).
- This definition distinguishes the Qur'an from a hadeeth (statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad) and hadeeth qudsee (a hadeeth in which Prophet Muhammad attributes his statements to Allah).



# UNIQUE THEME OF QURAN

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- Many books start with introduction, then the characters in the book are explained, historical events are introduced in a chronological order and end with a conclusion.
- The Qur'an does not adopt the method of the usual books. That's because it is not one of those usual books.
- It has a unique method of presenting information and a unique theme which revolve around the relationship of man and;
  - His creator
  - Himself and
  - The rest of the creation
- The historical, philosophical, scientific, social laws and many other information of the Qur'an are meant to direct man to the total submission of Allah and doing righteous deeds (i.e. treating themselves and other creatures justly as ordained by Allah).
- Thus, the theme and pattern of information presentation in the Qur'an makes it a unique book.
- Although the way arguments are presented in the Qur'an might seem disorganized to the new reader, the truth is quite the contrary

(Philips, Usul at-Tafseer, 89-93).

- The sudden change in subject, historical events, the speaker and the addressed, and repetition of the main theme over and over again will be easily understood by the reader if the following about the Qur'an is kept in mind;
  - There is no book in the world like the Qur'an
  - It has a unique literary style
  - It has a unique theme
- With these in mind, the Qur'an will not be judged by the reader using the standard patterns of usual books. And this is how the pattern of presenting information in the Qur'an becomes organized in the mind of the reader.
- Another thing that makes the Qur'an unique is that the Qur'an is a literary miracle. It's literary style amazes even the Arabs who were known to be very eloquent in their speech (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 93). Because of its literary nature, the Prophet had said:

*“All prophets were given something (i.e. a miracle) which would cause people to believe in them. The thing which I was given is none other than a revelation (i.e. the Qur'an) which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that I will have the most followers among them on the Day of Judgment.”*

*(Al-Bukhari, vol. 6, no. 504)*

# QURAN IS INIMITABLE

- Due to its miraculous nature, no human can produce something similar to it. Evidence for this claim can be found in the three different challenges presented by Allah in the Qur'an to the Arabs who were known for their eloquence and possessing great literary power.
- Allah initially challenged them to produce the whole Qur'an:

قُلْ لِّئِنْ أَجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

*Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants." (Qur'an 17:88)*

- In this verse, Allah challenges all of creation, mankind and jinn, to produce something similar to the Qur'an. And He ascertains that they will not be able to do so.
- Later, Allah challenged the disbelievers saying:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ ۖ وَادْعُوا مِنْ آسَاطِنُكُمْ مَنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*Or do they say, "He invented it"? Say, "Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful." (Qur'an 11:13)*

- After failing to meet the challenge of producing ten verses, Allah challenges them to something quite easy:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. (Qur'an 2:23)*

- The shortest surah in the Qur'an is surah al-Kawthar which is less than three lines. But the disbelievers, with all of their literary skills, were not able to produce something as short as surah al-Kawthar.
- And because the message of Prophet Muhammad deemed by the leaders of Quraysh as a social, economic and political threat, they carried out a series of actions against the Prophet and his followers in order to stop the spread of Islam. These actions lead to the death of many Muslims and disbelievers among the Quraysh including some of their elite (like Abu Jahl). They could have prevented the bloodshed had they successfully produced a surah similar to any surah in the Qur'an. Rather, all of their efforts to do so were fruitless and this is what compelled them to choose war (see any seerah book like fiqh as-seerah, the sealed nectar, etc.)
- Many have tried since then to meet this challenge but a close scrutiny of their works by experts of the Qur'an makes their work a failure. Therefore, this serves as proof to the unique nature and inimitability of the Qur'an.

# MIRACLES OF QURAN

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## ▪ Accuracy in Describing Historical Event

- There are many other incidents or narrations of the Qur'an that prove its miraculous nature. Among such narrations is the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) told in the Qur'an. The ruler of Egypt during his era is referred to in the Qur'an as "al-Malik" (Qur'an 12:50), while the ruler of Egypt during the era of Prophet Musa (Moses) is referred to as "Fir'awn" (Pharaoh). Whereas in the Bible, both rulers of these different eras are referred to with the title "Pharaoh". It is known that the title "Pharaoh" was used for Egyptian rulers starting from the reign of Amenhotep IV. And before him, no ruler used that title. But Prophet Yusuf lived about a minimum of two hundred years before Amenhotep IV. Thus, it is impossible to call a ruler of Yusuf's era "Pharaoh", as the rulers of his time were non-Egyptians, while the title was reserved for Egyptian rulers. This historical fact points out the distorted nature of the Bible and affirms the miraculous nature of the Qur'an as it uses accurate words to speak about events of the past, unlike the Bible (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 98-9).

## ▪ Accuracy in Predicting the Future

- Another miraculous nature of the Qur'an can be found in how future events are accurately predicted in the Qur'an. For example, regarding the future victory of the Romans over the Persians, Allah said:

غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ۚ ۡ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ۚ ۢ فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ...

*The Byzantines have been defeated --- In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome. --- Within three to nine years... (Qur'an 30*

- This was revealed after the Romans were defeated by the Persians in 616 CE.
- The Romans later defeated the Persians in 622 CE, approximately six years after their defeat in 616 CE (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 100).
- This victory of the Romans is per what Allah had said- **a period within three to nine years-**
- Allah also mentioned the victory of Muslims over the pagans of Makkah. And that the believers and righteous will become rulers of the world (Qur'an 24:55).
- This was mentioned when the Muslims were still at war with the pagans of Makkah. But after the several wars between them, the Muslims entered Makkah victorious and continued to conquer many lands, including Syria and Persia (see any seerah book).
- The Muslims literally became the rulers of the world as Allah promised them.

- If we are to speak about all the miracles of the Qur'an the work will definitely not be a concise work on Usul Al-Tafseer.
- For this reason, the above are only few of the historical miracles of the Qur'an.
- The miracles of the Qur'an also cover scientific topics such as oceanography, geology, cosmogony, physic, embryology, etymology, hydrology and many more (see The Qur'an and Modern Science by Maurice Bucaille).

# CONTRADICTIONS FROM QURAN

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- Many have tried to find contradicting information in the Qur'an. But their efforts have proven futile.
- Allah confirms the divine origin of the Qur'an by pointing to the inability of the disbelievers to find any contradiction therein.
- Some critics tried to point out contradictions in the information provided by Allah on the creation of man. Allah has mentioned different element from which He created man. Such as clot of blood, water, dust, burned clay and others.
- There is no contradiction between the verses mentioning these elements used in creating man. Rather, they refer to the different elements used in the different stages of man's creation. As water was mixed with dust to form a clay which was used to create Adam. After that, the creation of Adam's descendants starts with the mixing of the male and female seminal fluid, then these form a clot of blood and after some period it becomes a clump of flesh (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 106-10).

This in line with the saying of Allah:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوْ جَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

*Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction. (Qur'an 4:82)*



# QURAN AS WAHY

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# QURAN AS WAHY

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- The Arabic word wahy has many meanings linguistically, which revolve around a secretive transfer of information (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 112-6).
- Islamically, wahy is defined as the process by which Allah's word is revealed to one of His prophets.
- Wahy is also used to refer to the actual word of Allah revealed to a prophet (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, 116)
- Therefore, the Qur'an is a wahy because it is the word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad

# METHOD OF WAHY

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- Allah reveals His words to His prophets in two distinct ways.
- Either through an angel, which is known as indirect revelation.
- Or by speaking directly to them, but through dreams or behind a veil, which is known as direct revelation.
- These two methods of revelation are mentioned in the following ayah:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَآئِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيُّ حَكِيمٌ﴾

*And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise. (Qur'an 42:51)*

- The Qur'an was revealed using both the direct and indirect methods of revelation

# DIRECT REVELATION

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- There is no intermediary (i.e. angel) between Allah and the prophets in this method of revelation.
- But Allah is not seen by the prophets in this method also.
- Rather, Allah communicates His words to the prophets:
  - Through visions in their dreams.
  - By speaking to them from behind a veil.
- **True Dreams**
- Regarding true dreams, the prophets receive information from Allah of future events in their dreams (Philips, usul at-tafseer, 112-6).
- Aisha had narrated concerning the true dreams of the Prophet:

*“Revelation to the Prophet first began as righteous (or true in some narrations) visions in his sleep. Whenever he saw a vision, it would occur as surely as the break of the day” (al-Bukharee, v1, no. 3)*
- Sometimes, the prophets are commanded by Allah to do an act in their true dreams.
- For example Ibraheem was commanded by Allah in his dream to sacrifice his son Ismaa’eel:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يُبَيِّئُ لِي أَنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَاقَبْتُ أَفْعَلُ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast." (Qur'an 37:102)*

- Ibraheem and Ismaa'eel knew that the dream is a command from Allah; thus, it needed to be fulfilled.
- Also, surah al-Kawthar is was revealed to the Prophet through a true dream. Anas ibn Malik narrated saying:

*"Once while Allah's messenger was among us in the masjid, he dozed off, then raised his head, smiling. I asked him, 'What amused you, o messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'A surah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited, 'In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,*

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۝ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ۝ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ۝

*Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar. -1- So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]. -2- Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off. -3- (Qur'an 108:1-3)*

- True dreams are restricted to the prophets only
- Ordinary people may also have true dreams
- As the Prophet said regarding the dreams of ordinary people:

*Dreams are of three types: the true dream, dreams about something that has happened to the man himself, and dreams in which Shaitan frightens someone... (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, v.4, no.2280)*

- But all dreams of the prophets are true.
- While some dreams of ordinary people can be a true dream, only after they occur.
- For this reason the true dream of ordinary people has to occur before it is regarded as one.

## ■ Divine Speech

- In this way, Allah speaks directly with the prophets while they are in a wakeful state.
- Although the prophets are in a wakeful state, they do not see Allah.
- They do not see Allah because He is blocked by His veil, which is a light.
- As the Prophet had answered when he was asked about seeing Allah:

*“(He is) light; how could I see Him?” (saheeh Muslim, v1, no. 348)*

- It is known that two prophets experienced this form of communication with Allah
- They are Prophet Musa and Muhammad (Philips, usul at-tafseer, p. 120)
- Allah says regarding His communication with Musa:

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَلُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*Those who denied Our signs and the meeting of the Hereafter - their deeds have become worthless. Are they recompensed except for what they used to do?(Qur'an 7:147)*

- As for Prophet Muhammad, Allah communicated with him in this form when he ascended into the heavens (during the incident commonly known as Al-Isra wa al-Mi'raaj

# INDIRECT REVELATION

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- This is the most common method of revelation.
- In this method, an angel convey a message from Allah to the prophets.
- Most part of the Qur'an was revealed in this way.
- This method of revelation also occurred in two ways in the revelation of the Qur'an:
  - It can occur in the form of a reverberating sound like the gong of a bell.
  - It can also occur as a direct communication between the Prophet and the angel.
- **Revelation in the Form of a Reverberating Sound**
- The angel remains in a spiritual state in this form of revelation.
- The Prophet is then raised to a suitable spiritual position before receiving the revelation.
- The voice of the angel in this form sounds like the loud ringing of a giant bell.
- The Prophet called this form of revelation as the most severe one (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p.121).



- The Prophet described this form by saying:

*“sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell- this is the most severe form for me- then the ringing ceases and I have understood what (the angel) said.” (saheeh al-Bukhari, v.1, p.2)*

- Also Aisha said regarding this form:

*“I have seen him (i.e. the Prophet) when revelation descended upon him on an extremely cold day, yet when it stopped his forehead would be dripping with sweat.” (saheeh al-Bukhari, v.1, p.2)*

- **Direct Communication between the Angel and the Prophet**

- This is an easier form of revelation compared to the reverberating sound form
- In this form of revelation, the angel appears to the Prophet in a human form
- The angel will say to the Prophet whatever Allah has commanded him to say (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p. 121).

- The Prophet described this form in the following narration:

*“occasionally the angel appears before me in the form of a man and speaks to me, and I grasp all that he says.” (Saheeh al-Bukhari, v.1, p.2)*

# TYPES OF WAHY

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- Wahy can be divided into three types. These are:
  - Qur'an.
  - Hadeeth Qudsee.
  - Hadeeth of the Prophet.
- As of the Qur'an we have already a lot about it in the preceding lessons.
- On the other hand, a hadeeth qudsee is the Words of Allah revealed in Arabic to the Prophet.
- The Qur'an and hadeeth qudsee are similar in the sense that they are both the words of Allah revealed in Arabic to Prophet Muhammad.
- But their difference are vast:
  - Reciting the Qur'an is a form of worship while reciting hadeeth qudsee is not originally a form of worship.
  - The Qur'an is recited in Salah but hadeeth qudsee cannot be recited in salah.

- As for the hadeeth of the Prophet, these are the statements of the whose meaning is revelation from Allah but expressed in the Prophet's words. Some hadeeths are from the Prophet's own reasoning but they are ultimately approved by Allah or corrected where he has made a mistake (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p. 122).

# DOUBTS ABOUT QURAN

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# DOUBTS ABOUT QURAN

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- Disbelievers from the Prophet's era to now have created doubts about the divine origin of the Qur'an.
- Among the most common allegation is that the Qur'an is the work of Prophet Muhammad and not the words of Allah.
- Therefore, he deceived his companions to believe it is the words of Allah.
- Some claim that he had a good intention (due to his renown moral characters) but he experiences delusions and hallucinations which produces the words of the Qur'an.
- This claim is refuted by historical evidence. He is not known historically to suffer from hallucination.
- Secondly, the amazing style and clarity of the Qur'an makes it impossible to attribute it to someone suffering from hallucination. Such people rather make unintelligible statements.
- Some disbelievers harshly claim that the Prophet deceived his companions in order to rule over them.
- But if that is true, then he would have attributed the Qur'an to Allah. The superiority of the Qur'an over poetry was established by even the disbelieving Arabs. So, he could have claimed the Qur'an to be his work and then become their ruler. On the contrary, he rejected their proposal to become their leader when the offer was made in order to stop his da'wah (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p. 123).

- And it cannot also be that the Prophet attributed the Qur'an to Allah in order to give it a divine origin while it is actually his statement.
- This is impossible because, he differentiated the Qur'an from his own statement. If he wanted divinity for his statement, he would not have differentiated it from the Qur'an.
- With all the popularity, power and wealth that the Prophet earned in his call Islam, he died with leaving much wealth behind for his family.
- He was known before his Prophethood to be a trustworthy and truthful person. And he continued to be known for these and more good qualities. The power and wealth he earned never changed him. He gave all the wealth out to those who needed them the most and died as a noble ruler, loved by all of his companions for his generosity.
- Also, there are several times when the Prophet is reprimanded for a mistake which was not known by the companions. Like in surah abasa, when he frowned at a sahabi. This mistakes being mentioned in the Qur'an is not good for him if his goal is for fame and power. So why will he mention them in the Qur'an? This shows that the Qur'an is not his words (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p. 124-5).

- Some disbelievers claim that the Prophet learned the Qur'an from Christians or Jews that he met in his lifetime.
- He did meet a monk known as Buhayrah. But he was about nine years when this happened. And the monk only mentioned that he will become a Prophet for that reason he should be sent back to Makkah and not continue his Journey to Syria else the Jews might harm him if they recognize him. So his uncle returned him to Makkah.
- He also met Waraqah ibn Nawfal after the first few verses of surah al-alaq were revealed. Waraqah who was had knowledge of the Torah and Gospels informed the Prophet that very soon he will be sent as a prophet. Waraqah died shortly after this encounter.
- How the whole Qur'an be taught to an unlettered person in only one encounter with Buhayrah and Waraqah. This claim is far from being the truth.
- As for the Jews and Christians the Prophet met in Madinah, they were obsessed with disproving his message. They asked him questions that they know he cannot answer in order to prove that he is not a Prophet. But Allah revealed answers to those questions thereby proving his genuineness to the Jews and Christians. But very few of them believed in him afterwards. The others were against him. How could they teach him the Qur'an then?



- Also, stories from the Qur'an about the people of old have been found today in many books. These books are written in different languages thereby making it impossible for anyone to think that the Prophet learnt from those books. He can barely read his own language.
- These and many discoveries prove the divine origin of the Qur'an and the message of the Prophet beyond any doubt (Philips, Usul Al-Tafseer, p. 124-5).

# REVELATION OF QURAN

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- The revelation of the Qur'an happened in two ways.
- In the first way of revelation, the Qur'an was sent down all at once in a single night.
- It was initially in al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh (the Protected Tablet) then it was sent down to a station in the lowest heaven called bayt al-izzah (the House of Power).
- This revelation occurred in one of the last ten odd nights of Ramadan called Laylah al-Qadr (the Night of Decree) (Philips, usul at-tafseer, p. 130-2).
- The following verses speak about this form of revelation:
  - Surah Al-Qadr
  - Surah al-Baqarah 185

- The second way of revelation began with the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad and lasted for twenty-three years.
- During this periods portions of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet when necessary.
- The first portion of the Qur'an revealed in this form of revelation is the first five verses of surah al-alaq.
- The first complete surah revealed was surah al-fatihah.
- Ibn Abbas holds the opinion that the last ayah revealed was verse 281 of surah al-Baqarah and the last surah was surah an-Nasr (Philips, usul at-tafseer, p. 133-4).
- This way of revelation is referred to in the following ayah:
- (surah al-israa 17:106)
- This form of revelation is known as the segmented revelation

# SEGMENTED REVELATION

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# SEGMENTED REVELATION

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## 1. Steadying the Prophet's heart

- The Prophet faced many trials from the disbelievers. He was called with the following names:
  - a liar
  - a fake Prophet
  - a mad man
  - A magician
  - A poet
- When these trials became unbearable, Allah reveals verses to comfort him (Philips, 135-36).
- Examples of such verses are:

وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُم نَصْرُنَا

*And certainly were messengers denied before you, but they were patient over [the effects of] denial, and they were harmed until  
Our victory came to them (Qur'an 6:34)*

- Allah consoles him in this verse by reminding him that other prophets also faced his challenges
- Other times Allah informs him that His help is near

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَظِيمًا

*And [that] Allah may aid you with a mighty victory.(Qur'an 48:3)*

- In other verses, Allah tells him about the failure of the plots of his enemies:

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسَّ السَّيِّئَاتُ

- *Say to those who disbelieve, "You will be overcome and gathered together to Hell, and wretched is the resting place." (Qur'an 3:12)*

- Evidence that segmented revelation is meant to keep steady the heart of the Prophet is found in the verse:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً ۖ وَحِدَةً ۚ كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ۚ

*And those who disbelieve say, "Why was the Qur'an not revealed to him all at once?" Thus [it is] that We may strengthen thereby your heart. And We have spaced it distinctly. (Qur'an 25:32)*

## 2. Gentleness with the Prophet

- The severity of some forms of revelation has already been discussed
- Allah has also said to the Prophet regarding verses of the Qur'an:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

*Indeed, We will cast upon you a heavy word. (Qur'an 73:5)*

- Allah described the greatness of the Qur'an by saying:

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

*If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought. (Qur'an 59:21)*

- If the Qur'an was revealed at once it would have definitely be a burden for the Prophet.
- It came in segments in order to lessen the burden and create enough time for him to focus on his mission (Philips, 137)

### 3. Gradation in Legislation

- Allah used segmented method to gradually reveal the important principles of Islam which was necessary at the time of its revelation.
- For this reason all the principles of Islam were not revealed at once.
- Those that were important to a particular time were revealed at that time (phiips, 137-38).



- The early surahs focused on Tawheed due to the need to correct the idolatrous beliefs of Quraysh
- The obligation of salah, sawm zakah and hajj were revealed later when they were appropriate for the Muslims.
- Aisha mentioned this gradation in legislation and concluded:

*“if the first thing to be revealed had been, ‘don’t drink liquor,’ or ‘don’t commit adultery and fornication,’ they would have said, ‘we will never give it up.’”*

*(al-Bukhari, v6, no.515)*

- It would have been impossible to legislate the laws in a gradual fashion if the Qur’an was revealed at once.

#### **4. Facilitating the Preservation of the Qur’an:**

- Many of the sahabah could not read and write
- They rather memorized the Qur’an as it was revealed.
- If all of the Qur’an was revealed at once, memorizing all at once would have been challenging for the sahabah.

- Also, due to the scarcity of writing materials, writing all the Qur'an at once would have been impossible for the sahabah.
- This segmented method made memorization and writing of the Qur'an easy.
- Thus, the Qur'an was preserved from alterations even from the era of the Prophet.
- With the segmented verses, the sahabah were able to learn them and asked about their interpretations where necessary.
- This made them have a thorough understanding of the Qur'an which the following generation depended on (Philips, 139-40).

## **5. Dealing with Problems as they arose:**

- Some verses of the Qur'an came as an answer to questions the Prophet was asked about.

- For example the verse:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

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*And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say, "I will recite to you about him a report." (Qur'an 18:83)*

- This verse was an answer to a question asked by Jews to test the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (tafseer ibn Katheer, v3, p106)
- At other times, verses came to correct the Prophet's errors.
- For example

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكٰذِبِينَ

*May Allah pardon you, [O Muhammad]; why did you give them permission [to remain behind]? [You should not have] until it was evident to you who were truthful and you knew [who were] the liars. (Qur'an 9:43)*

- Treating cases as they occur had a great impact on those involved.

## 6. Indication of the Source of the Qur'an

- The unity and consistency of expression throughout the whole Qur'an proves its divine source.
- The consistency of the Qur'an is amazing despite it not being revealed at once.
- If the source was not divine, such precision could not have been possible (Philips, 142-44).
- Allah pointed to this fact by saying:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

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*Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction. (Qur'an 4:82)*

# FORMER REVELATIONS NOT SEGMENTED

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- The previous prophets were sent to a specific group of people for a specified short period unlike Prophet Muhammad
- Their message were limited to a time and not situation oriented thus revealing them at once was not problematic.
- The earlier revelations had no miraculous effect meant to attract followers compared to the Qur'an (the greatest miracle given to prophet Muhammad)
- Gradation in legislation can be realized in revelation of a prophet coming after another prophet.
- Since Prophet Muhammad was the last Prophet, his book comprised all of the essential lost message of the previous Prophets.
- Gradation in his book became necessary for him and his followers to easily memorize the lengthy message and transmit it to the world (Philips, 144-45).

# COLLECTION OF QURAN

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# THE COLLECTION OF THE QUR'AN

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## Era of the Prophet (609-632)

- During this period, the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet in segments over twenty-three years
- Its verses came to answer questions posed to the Prophet
- They also came as advice to the Prophet or sahabah

## Preservation of the Qur'an

- Initially, the Prophet tried repeating the Qur'an after Jibreel as he recites.
- The Prophet was later commanded to only listen carefully:



لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۚ ۱٦ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ ۚ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۚ ۱٧ فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ۚ

*Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an. Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation. (Qur'an 75:15-18)*

- He was able to remember what was recited to him afterwards without much effort
- He then taught his companions the Qur'an using different strategies
- Among them are:
  1. Reciting aloud in salah parts of the Qur'an. So the sahabah heard parts of the Qur'an daily.
  2. New Muslims were taught parts of the Qur'an to be used in salah. This made the learning and teaching of the Qur'an an everyday thing.

3. They were encouraged to learn and teach the Qur'an by the statement of the Prophet: *"the best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teaches it"*
4. He made to who were able to read and write to write down the verses of the Qur'an as they are revealed.
  - Through this ways, the verses of the Qur'an were memorized as well as written down.
  - Due to difference in time of acceptance of Islam and memorization ability, only few sahabah were known to have memorized the entire Qur'an
  - Although portions of the Qur'an were memorized by many.
  - The Qur'an was not collected into one book during this period (Philips, 147-48).

# RECORDING OF QURAN

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The Qur'aan was written down on anything that was available. The companions wrote the verses of the Qur'aan on:

- Date palm leaves
- Flat stones
- Tree bark
- Wood
- Dried animal skins
- Shoulder blades of sheep or camels

# ERA OF ABOO BAKR

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# THE ERA OF ABOO BAKR 632-634 CE/11-13 AH

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## The First Writing

- During the wars, known as the Riddah (apostasy), many of those who had memorized large portions of the Qur'aan were killed.
- Those Muslims who had a lot of Qur'aan in their hearts knew well the rewards which Allaah has promised those who fight for Islaam, so they would always be in the front lines of all the battles.
- 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab realized the danger of what was happening and feared that if something was not done immediately, the Qur'aan would be lost to future generations of Muslims.
- He went to Caliph Aboo Bakr and advised him to have the whole Qur'aan written down in one book in order to preserve it from being lost.
- Aboo Bakr at first refused to do so, as the Prophet (PUBH) had not told them to do it. He was afraid of bringing anything new into the religion, because the Prophet (PBUH) had warned them about changing the religion.
- He knew that the Christians had gone astray before them by changing the religion which Prophet 'Eesaa had brought after he left them, so Aboo Bakr was very much against making any changes in the religion as it had been left by Prophet Muhammad (r). However, after thinking over the situation carefully, he came to realize that 'Umar's advice was right and that it was not really a change in the religion.

# ZAYD IBN THAABIT

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# ZAYD IBN THAABIT

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## Zayd ibn Thaabit

- Caliph Aboo Bakr asked Zayd ibn Thaabit to be in charge of collecting and writing down the whole Qur'aan. Zayd refused to do it at first for the same reasons Aboo Bakr had, but after some time he also came to realize that it was right.

# ZAYD IBN THAABIT

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## Reasons why Zayd ibn Thaabit was chosen:

1. He was one of the best reciters of the Qur'aan.<sup>75</sup>
2. He was one of the few who had memorized the whole Qur'aan during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH).<sup>76</sup>
3. He was one of those whom the Prophet (r) asked to write down the Qur'aan.<sup>77</sup>
4. He was one of the few who were present when the Prophet (PBUH) recited the whole Qur'aan during the last Ramadaan of his life.



# ZAYD IBN THAABIT'S METHOD

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- Zayd began the process by collecting all of the materials on which the Qur'aan had been written.
- He then gathered around him all of those who had also memorized all of the Qur'aan or large portions of it.
- He then compared what was written down with what he and the others had memorized. If all agreed, he would then write it down on pages of leather.

# ZAYD IBN THAABIT'S METHOD

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- Just before his death, Aboo Bakr turned over the Qur'aan to 'Umar, whom he had chosen to be the second Caliph.
- 'Umar kept his copy of the Qur'aan with him until his death, ten years later, at the hand of an assassin named Aboo Lu'lu'.
- The Qur'aan was then turned over to his daughter Hafsah, who was one of the Prophet's widows.
- Hafsah kept the Qur'aan in her house in Madeenah, but she made it available to anyone who wanted to make copies from it or check the accuracy of what they had memorized.

# ERA OF UTHMAAN

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# THE ERA OF CALIPH ‘UTHMAAN

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## The Second Writing

- When new Muslims made mistakes in their recitation of the Qur’aan, it was sometimes difficult to tell whether it was really an error or whether it was one of the seven readings which had been taught by the Prophet (PBUH).
- These problems eventually became a source of confusion in the Muslim provinces outside of Arabia.
- One of the sahaabah by the name of Huthayfah ibn al-Yamaan noticed the confusion while he was in ‘Iraq, and feared that it might lead to a breakup of the Muslim nation and the changing of the Qur’aan.
- On his return to the capital, he informed Caliph ‘Uthmaan of what he had heard and seen.
- Caliph ‘Uthmaan realized the seriousness of the situation and called the major sahaabah together in order to find a solution to the problem.
- They decided to make official copies of the Qur’aan from the one compiled in Caliph Aboo Bakr’s time and limit the people to its recitation.
- ‘Uthmaan asked Hafsah for the original copy of the Qur’aan and called on Zayd ibn Thaabit to head a committee of four Qur’aanic scholars who would take on the task of making the official copies.

# THE ERA OF CALIPH 'UTHMAAN

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## The Second Writing

- A total of seven copies were made and one was sent to Makkah, another to Syria, one to Basrah, one to Koofah, one to Yemen, one to Bahrayn, and one was kept in the capital, Madeenah.
- Caliph 'Uthmaan sent an official reciter of the Qur'aan with each copy in order to clear up any problems which might later arise.
- He also ordered that all other copies of the Qur'aan be destroyed, as people had made notes on their personal copies and some copies were incomplete.
- All new copies were then made from the official copy, called Mus haf 'Uthmaan. In that way the Qur'aan was saved from any kind of change or loss.
- This process was completed in the year 646 CE, two years after 'Uthmaan became the new Caliph.

# THE ERA OF CALIPH ‘UTHMAAN

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- A verse of the Qur’aan is called an “aayah,” which literally means a sign or token by which a person or thing is known
- A chapter is referred to as a “soorah,” which literally means enclosure or wall.
- The order of the aayahs in each soorah was set by the Prophet (PBUH) himself, as is indicated in a number of hadeeths

# SEVEN MODES

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# SAB'AH AHRUF (THE SEVEN FORMS)

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- In order to take into account the various differences which existed among the Arabian dialects, Allaah revealed the Qur'aan in seven different forms. The forms matched the dialects of the following seven tribes:
- Quraysh, Huthayl, Thaqeef, Hawaazin, Kinaanah, Tameem, and Yemen.
- These various forms did not represent different Qur'aans, as Jibreel only conveyed verses from a single Qur'aan written on a protected tablet (al-Lawh al-Mahfooth) in the heavens.
- However, Jibreel was instructed to recite the verses that he brought in seven forms corresponding to the dialects of the major tribes. The various forms represented the various ways in which the same word might be said according to the various dialects.
- However, the meanings were all stated the same. The Prophet (PBUH) informed most of his companions (sahaabah) of the existence of various readings so that the variation in their readings would not create any discord or division among them.



# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEVEN FORMS

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- The revelation of the Qur'aan in seven different dialects made its recitation and memorization much easier for the various tribes. For example, the phrase,
- “‘Alayhim” (on them), was read by some as “‘alayhumoo,” and the word
- “Siraat” (path, bridge), was read by some as “siraat” and by others as “ziraat,”
- The word “mu'min” (believer) was also read as “moomin.”

# TEN FORMS OF RECIATION

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- A list of the ten scholars of Qur'aanic recitation whose methods were best preserved is as follows:
- 1. Aboo 'Amr ibn al-'Alaa (d. 771 CE/154 AH) of Basrah
- 2. Ibn Katheer (d. 738 CE/119 AH) was among the students of the sahaabah of Makkah.
- 3. Naafi' (d. 786 CE/169 AH) was originally from Isfahaan, and his recitation, as transmitted by Warsh (d. 812 CE/196 AH), was of Madeenah.
- 4. Ibn 'Aamir (d. 737 CE/118 AH) was the chief judge (qaadi) of Damascus during the reign of al-Waleed ibn 'Abdul Maalik, who, along with the other Umayyad caliphs, made that city his capital.
- 5. 'Aasim (d. 746 CE/128 AH) of Koofah was the narrator of the dominant recitation in current use. His narration, as transmitted by Hafs, is the most common method of narration used in the Muslim world today with the exception of Africa.
- 6. Hamzah (d. 773 CE/156 AH) of Koofah.
- 7. Al-Kisaa'ee (d. 805 CE/189 AH) of Koofah was one of the foremost grammarians. He played a major role in the formulation of Arabic grammar rules.
- 8. Aboo Ja'far (d. 750 CE/132 AH) of Madeenah.
- 9. Ya'qoob (d. 820 CE/204 AH) of Basrah.
- 10. Khalaf (d. 844 CE/229 AH) of Baghdaad.

# REASONS FOR REVELATION

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# REASONS FOR REVELATION

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- On occasions, certain events would occur about which the Prophet's followers were unsure, or on other occasions they might actually ask him about some matters which were unclear to them.
- In response to these and similar needs, verses were revealed to the Prophet (PBUH).
- These events represent the context in which revelation came and are referred to as “asbaab an-nuzool” (reasons for revelation).

# THE BENEFITS OF ASBAAB AN-NUZOOOL

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- The Benefits of Asbaab an-Nuzool Knowledge of the reasons for revelation is of great importance to understanding the Qur'aan, as well as many of the Islaamic laws contained in it.
- The following are some of the benefits provided by knowledge of the reasons for revelation:
  1. Asbaab an-nuzool often explain the wisdom underlying the legislation of some of the Islaamic laws. Knowledge of the wisdom behind divine laws provides scholars with general principles which enable them to work out laws for new problems which have similar causes or effects.
- Asbaab an-nuzool also show the concern of the laws for the general welfare of man in their treatment of problems. This, in turn, makes us aware of Allaah's mercy, which is a fundamental part of all divine laws.
- For example, Ibn 'Abbaas reported that Hilaal ibn Umayyah went to the Prophet (PBUH) and accused his wife (Hilaal's wife) of adultery with Shurayk ibn Sahmaa'.
- The Prophet (PBUH) said to him, "(Produce) the proof (four witnesses) or else you will receive the punishment (of eighty lashes) on your back."
- Hilaal replied, "O Messenger of Allaah, if one of us sees a man on his woman, should he leave and seek witnesses?" Allaah's Messenger again said, "(Produce) the proof or else you will receive the punishment.
- " Hilaal then said, "(I swear) By the One who sent you with the Truth that I am telling the truth. And Allaah will surely reveal something to free my back from the punishment." And Jibreel descended with the following revelation,

# THE BENEFITS OF ASBAAB AN-NUZOOOL

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- *“And for those who accuse their wives without witnesses except themselves, the testimony of one of them (can be accepted) by bearing witness (with an oath) by Allaah four times that he is telling the truth, and the fifth time that the curse of Allaah be upon him if he is telling a lie. However, it would avert punishment from (the wife) if she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allaah that he is lying, and the fifth (time) that Allaah’s wrath be upon her if he was truthful.” (24:6-9)*

# THE BENEFITS OF ASBAAB AN-NUZOOOL

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- ‘Urwah once said to his aunt ‘Aa’ishah, wife of the Prophet (PBUH), “Do you know the verse,
- *‘Verily as-Safaa and al-Marwah are among the shrines of Allaah, so there is no sin on anyone who walks between them when making hajj or ‘umrah’?*
- I do not feel that there is any sin on one who does not walk between them.”
- ‘Aa’ishah replied, “What a terrible thing you have said, O my nephew! Verily, if the (verse) meant as you interpreted it, it would have been, ‘So there is so sin on anyone who does not walk between them.’ But verily, it was revealed because the Ansaar,50 before Islaam, used to dedicate their (hajj or ‘umrah) to two idols, Isaaf and Naa’ilah, on the seashore. The people went there, then walked between asSafaa and al-Marwah, then got their heads shaved. After Islaam they didn’t like to walk between them, because of what they used to do during the Days of
- Ignorance. Hence, Allaah revealed the verse, **‘Verily as-Safaa and al-Marwah are among the shrines of Allaah...’**” In another version she added, “Then Allaah’s Messenger (PBUH) showed how the walk between them should be done.
- Thus, no one is allowed to drop the walking between them.” Although the obvious meaning of the verse indicated that the walking between Mount as-Safaa and Mount al-Marwah was merely mubaah (allowable), the reason for revelation indicates that it is waajib (compulsory).

# MAKKAN & MADEENAN

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# MAKKAN & MAFEENAN REVELATIONS

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- The various sections of the Qur'aan were generally revealed to solve the problems which existed among the Muslim communities in both Makkah and Madeenah.
- Since the problems and needs of Makkah were different from those of Madeenah, the revelations of Makkah and Madeenah have special characteristics of their own.
- It is very important that the differences between the revelations of Makkah and Madeenah be clearly understood if the Qur'aan itself is to be clearly understood.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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- Makkan revelations are defined as all verses and chapters of the Qur'aan which were brought by Jibreel to the Prophet (r) before the Hijrah (622 CE).
- This includes verses which were revealed in Taa'if, as well as those revealed in other areas outside of Makkah.
- These revelations represent the first stage of the Islaamic movement, in which its fundamentals were established.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 1. Tawheed (The Oneness of Allaah):

- When Islaam was first presented to the people of Makkah, they were in a state of disbelief. Most of them believed in Allaah, but they had put many intermediaries between themselves and Allaah. They made idols to represent these intermediaries and worshipped them instead of Allaah. Thus, the early revelations taught the people about Allaah's unity and power over all things.
- They told the people that Allaah was without parents, offspring or any partner who shared His powers. They also pointed out that idols could neither bring good nor hold back evil. They questioned the logic of worshipping things which could not even see or hear.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 2. Salaah (Formal Prayer): 2. Salaah (Formal Prayer):

- After the first verses of revelation came informing the Prophet (r) that he had been chosen for prophethood, Allaah sent Jibreel to teach him the correct method of prayer.
- This was necessary because the correct method of prayer could not be arrived at by logical reasoning. Therefore, even the Prophet (r) himself had to be taught the correct method of worshipping Allaah. Due to the great importance of salaah in nurturing a person's consciousness of his Lord, the early verses called upon the Prophet (r) and his early band of followers to make their salaah regularly.
- Since the Makkans were in the habit of worshipping idols in the belief that these home made gods would carry their prayers to Allaah for them, the early verses were also aimed at clarifying this misconception. The verses taught that both salaah and du'aa (supplication) should only be made for and to Allaah, as He is the only one who can answer them.
- Great stress was placed on salaah because of its relationship to tawheed.
- Pure salaah to Allaah represents tawheed in practice.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 3. The Unseen:

- Since there was no way that human beings could possibly come to know about the unseen world, the early verses taught them about its wonders, its mysteries, and its horrors.
- The verses described paradise and its pleasures in order to encourage the believers to continue to do good deeds.
- They also described the Hellfire and its torments in order to encourage the believers to strive to avoid evil deeds.
- Descriptions of the Fire and its inhabitants also reassured the believers that those who do wrong in this life will not escape Allaah's punishment.
- Such descriptions were also aimed at scaring the disbelievers into reconsidering their position before it became too late.
- Some of the verses also reasoned with those who could not accept the resurrection by giving them examples from nature, such as rain falling on dead earth bringing it back to life.
- Others pointed out logically that the recreation of life would be easier than its creation, although it is all the same to Allaah.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 4. Allaah's Existence:

- There were some individuals among the Makkans who were in doubt about Allaah's very existence. Thus, some of the early verses presented logical arguments proving Allaah's existence. Sometimes proofs were taken from nature and the creatures common to that society. Allaah asked the Makkans, *“Why don't they look at the camels and how they were created, and the sky and how it was raised, and the mountains and how they are firmly fixed and the earth and how it was spread out?”*
- At other times straight logic was used. Allaah asked them if they were created from nothing or if they created themselves: *“Were they created from nothing, or were they themselves the creators?”*

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 5. Challenges:

- In order to prove to the Quraysh that the Qur'aan was from Allaah and that Muhammad (PBUH) was a prophet of Allaah, some of the Makkan verses challenged the Arabs to imitate the Qur'aan.
- Many of the chapters began with individual letters like “Alif, Laam and Meem,” “Saad,” or “Noon” in order to tease the Makkans with the same letters of the alphabet with which they made their flowery speeches and poetry.
- Allaah revealed the Qur'aan with the same letters, but they just could not imitate it.
- Since the Arabs were unable to produce a chapter like even the smallest chapter of Qur'aan, the miraculous nature of the Qur'aan and its divine origin were clearly proven to the people at that time.



# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 6. The People of Old:

- The Makkan verses often mentioned historical examples of earlier civilizations, like the ‘Aad and the Thamood.
- They were mentioned in order to warn those who had rejected the message of Islaam.
- The verses spoke about the wonders of the ancient civilizations.
- They recounted the many blessing which Allaah had bestowed on the peoples of those civilizations.
- Then they told how the people disobeyed Allaah and denied His blessings, and how Allaah’s punishment caught them while they were totally unconcerned of what could become of them if they displeased Allaah.
- These examples were quite familiar to the Arabs because the ruins of such civilizations could still be seen. For example, the stone tombs of Madaa’in Saalih, associated with the Thamood, the people of Prophet Saalih, were directly on the trade route to Syria.



# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 7. Eemaan:

- Very few laws were revealed in the Makkan verses. Instead, the verses concentrated on principles which would build the eemaan (faith) of the early Muslims.
- These verses spoke of the importance of fearing Allaah and being aware of His presence and knowledge of all things.
- They were often filled with advice about being patient, perseverant, truthful and trustworthy, in order to build the moral and spiritual character of the early Muslims, who were in a minority and under great pressure from Makkan society.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 8. Short Verses:

- The Makkan soorahs usually had short verses, catchy rhymes, and a very strong rhythm.
- These qualities were meant to catch the attention of listeners who were basically opposed to the message of Islaam.
- The verses had to be short because the audience would not be willing to listen to long, drawn-out statements.
- As soon as they heard any of the Qur'aan, they would stick their fingers in their ears and turn away. Thus, the verses often had to strike home immediately.
- They often resembled the chants of the oracles and fortunetellers, but their meanings were very clear, whereas the oracles' chants were mostly obscure and vague., the boulders of the mountain warn of mourning, That you won't find any escape from.

# FEATUES OF MADEENAN REVELATIONS

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- Madeenan revelations are all those verses and chapter of the Qur'aan which were revealed after the Hijrah (the emigration to Madeenah).
- This includes verses which were revealed during the battles, as well as those revealed in Makkah and Minaa during and after the Farewell Pilgrimage.
- All of these verses are considered Madeenan because they represent the revelations of the second stage of the Islaamic movement, in which the consolidation of the Islaamic state took place.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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The following are some of the main characteristics of Madeenan verses:

## 1. Laws:

- Once Madeenah had become the new center of the Islaamic movement, the Islaamic state was born.
- The Prophet (PBUH) became ruler over the Muslims of Madeenah, as well as the Jews and the Arab idol worshippers who lived there.
- A constitution was drawn up and a system of justice was established.
- Thus, the verses during the Madeenan stage contained the many social, economic and spiritual laws which were necessary for the organization and development of an Islaamic state.
- It was during this period that the last three pillars of Islaam, zakaah, sawm and hajj, were revealed.
- Likewise, it was during this period that drinking alcohol, eating swine and gambling were all forbidden.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 2. People of the Book:

- In Madeenah, Muslims came in contact with the Jews for the first time. In order to try to shake the beliefs of the Muslims, the Jews used to ask the Prophet (PBUH) various questions about Allaah, the earlier prophets, and the unseen.
- Thus, a number of Madeenan verses represented answers to the many questions raised by the Jews. The Muslims of Madeenah also came in contact with the Christians on a larger scale. As a result of that, we find a number of Madeenan verses clarifying Christian misconceptions about Prophet Jesus and Allaah.
- They pointed out that Jesus' birth was not greater than that of Aadam, who had neither father nor mother.
- They also stressed that the miracles of Jesus, such as bringing the dead back to life, were only by Allaah's permission. Thus, Jesus was not a god nor the son of Allaah, and Allaah was not the third of three.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 3. The Munaafiqoon:

- For the first time since the beginning of the final message we find people entering Islaam yet not believing in it. In Makkah, Muslims were oppressed and attacked, so no one would enter Islaam unless he truly believed.
- On the other hand, the Muslims of Madeenah were strong and they ruled the city.
- Thus, we find some people entering Islaam in order to benefit from its strength and to oppose it from within. ‘Abdullaah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool was about to be crowned king of Madeenah when the Prophet (PBUH) arrived.
- The Prophet (PBUH) was made the ruler of Madeenah, and ibn Salool’s hopes were ruined.
- Since the Muslims were strong and he could not openly oppose them, he accepted Islaam and worked against it from within.
- He eventually became the head of the Munaafiqoon (hypocrites). Thus, the verses of the Madeenan stage warned the Muslims about the dangers of the hypocrites and taught them how to deal effectively with them.

# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 4. Jihaad:

- The right to fight against the enemy was given for the first time in Madeenah. During the Makkan period, Muslims were forbidden to fight back. This was for two basic reasons:
  - i. The Muslims were a minority and could easily have been completely wiped out.
  - ii. This was a stage where the believers' characters were being forged. One of the foremost qualities required of those who would carry the message was steadfast patience. Only those of strong faith could survive this test. The Makkan period prepared the foundation of the Islaamic movement to come. It was during the Madeenan stage that a series of battles were fought against the forces of disbelief, until finally Makkah was conquered and the whole of the Arabian peninsula came under the rule of Islaam. Thus, a number of the Madeenan verses taught Muslims the Islaamic principles of war. For example, they taught how to deal with prisoners of war and they forbade retreat during an attack except as a trick to trap the enemy. They also encouraged the Muslims to prepare themselves with the best weapons and battle gear they could find.



# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 5. Long Verses:

- The Madeenan verses tended to be longer than those of Makkah. In fact, there are a number of Madeenan verses which are longer than whole soorahs of the Makkan period.
- The longest verse of the Qur'aan is the verse on loans in the Madeenan Soorah al-Baqarah.
- The shortest soorah of the Qur'aan is the Makkan Soorah al-Kawthar, 10 which contains a total of only 11 separate words in its three short verses.
- The need to catch the attention of unwilling listeners was no longer there, because Islaam had become strong and its followers were many.
- Thus, the audience at this stage was quite willing to listen attentively to longer verses teaching the vital laws of Islam.



# FEATUES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS

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## 6. Order of the Soorahs:

- Although all of the Makkan verses were revealed during the same period, they were neither memorized nor written in the same order in which they were revealed.
- Verses from various soorahs were revealed together, and sometimes whole soorahs were revealed at once. Whenever single verses were revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) would tell his scribes to write it in the soorah to which it belonged.
- If a new soorah was revealed, he would recite the soorah in the order it was to be recorded. Once the Madeenan verses and soorahs began to be revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) would tell his companions to place them before or after certain Makkan soorahs and verses.
- Thus, when the revelation of the Qur'aan was complete, Makkan verses could be found within Madeenan soorahs and Madeenan verses within Makkan soorahs.
- The Prophet (PBUH) ordered the verses and soorahs of the Qur'aan according to Allaah's command.
- The reason for the mingling may have been that the verses were revealed according to the needs of a developing community, whereas the order for reading purposes was varied to make it clear that the Qur'aan is not a mere historical document.
- By divorcing the verses from the chronological order of their revelation, the general and universal aspects of their message are emphasized.

# DISTINCTION

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISTINCTION

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## 1. Fiqh (Islamic Law):

- The various laws of Islaam were revealed over a period of twenty-three years. Some laws cancelled earlier laws and other laws were revealed bit by bit. Thus, it is necessary to know at which point in time the various laws were revealed in order to apply them properly. The laws of the later Madeenan period sometimes took the place of earlier laws. For example, alcohol was made forbidden in gradual stages.
- **The first law** concerning alcohol was simply a warning of its dangers. Allaah said, *“And they ask you about khamr (alcohol) and maysir (gambling); tell them that they contain some benefit, but the sin is greater than the benefit.”* (2:219)
- **The second law that** was revealed warned Muslims away from salaah when they were intoxicated (drunk). Allaah said, *“Do not come to salaah when you are intoxicated, until you know what you are saying.”* (4:43)
- **The third law**, however, was a complete prohibition of even coming near any form of alcohol. Allaah said, *“Verily, khamr, maysir and azlaam (fortunetelling) are filth, as a result of Shaytaan’s work, so stay away from them.”* (5:90)

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISTINCTION

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## 2. Da‘wah:

- By understanding the order in which the verses of the Qur’aan were revealed, one can learn the best method of teaching Islaam.
- For example, the Qur’aan taught the believers not to curse or make fun of the idols of the disbelievers in order not to drive them away and in order that they not curse Allaah out of ignorance.
- Instead they were told to reason with the disbelievers and show them logically why the worship of idols was incorrect.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISTINCTION

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## 3. Seerah:

- Most of the most important events in the Prophet's life have been recorded in various verses of the Qur'aan.
- Thus, by knowing the order in which the verses were revealed, it is possible to piece together a large portion of the biography of the Prophet (PBUH).

# ABROGATED

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# NASKH: REPEAL AND REPLACEMENT OF DIVINE LAWS

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This replacement of a divine law by another divine law is referred to in Arabic Islaamic terminology as “**naskh**.” Allaah referred to the existence of this process as follows:

*“And if I place a verse in place of another verse—and Allaah knows best what He bestows from on high, step by step—they say, ‘You are just inventing it!’”*

*“Whatever verse I have abrogated or caused to be forgotten, I will bring another better than it or equal to it.”*

# CONDITIONS FOR NASKH

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For naskh to have taken place, the following three conditions must have been fulfilled:

1. The law which has been replaced has to have been a divine law. This means that the gradual prohibition of alcohol would not be classified as naskh, because each successive verse only expanded the prohibitive scope of the previous verse. The original behaviour of the people was to act as if alcohol was lawful. It was their assumption that alcohol was permissible that was gradually abolished by the three verses on this subject, not any previous statement by Allaah that liquor was permissible.
2. The proof used to replace the old law has to be a divine command which was revealed after the revelation of the old law.
3. The law which is to be replaced cannot have a specific time limit attached to it from the time of its revelation. If it has a limited time period, it simply becomes void when the time period ends, and such a process is not considered as naskh. For instance, fasting is required daily until sunset during Ramadaan. The permission to eat at night during Ramadaan or, after it is over, by day or night, doesn't involve naskh.



# IDENTIFYING NASKH

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There are only three reliable ways to identify these cases:

1. A clearly worded narration from the Prophet (r) or one of his companions (sahaabee). For example, the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said,
  - *“I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but (now) you should visit them, as surely they are reminders (of the next life).”*
  - *“And the redemption for those who have difficulty with (fasting) is the feeding of a poor person,”* was revealed, whoever wanted to stop fasting would redeem himself, until the verse after it, was revealed and replaced it:
  - *“Whoever among you who witnesses the (beginning of) the month should fast (the month).”*

# IDENTIFYING NASKH

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There are only three reliable ways to identify these cases:

2. The unanimous agreement of early Muslim scholars on both the law which was replaced and the one which replaced it. That is, their recognition of the fact that an abrogation took place and not their agreement to abrogate a divine law. An example of this can be found in a hadeeth wherein the Prophet (PBUH) said,
  - *“Whip whoever takes intoxicants (each time he is caught) and on the fourth time kill him.”*
  - The sahaabah were unanimous on the fact that the one who took intoxicants was no longer to be executed. They did not repeal the law by unanimous agreement (ijmaa‘), but the law was not applied because it was known to all of them that the Prophet (PBUH) repealed it.

# IDENTIFYING NASKH

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There are only three reliable ways to identify these cases:

3. Reliable historical knowledge of a law being put into practice during an earlier historical period, then a later law appears to clearly contradict it. For example, Shaddaad ibn Aws reported that at the time of the conquest of Makkah (8AH/630 CE), the Prophet (PBUH) said,
  - *“The cupper and the cupped<sup>30</sup> have both broken the fast.”*
  - On the other hand, Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that the Prophet (r) was cupped while fasting and while he was in ihram.
  - Naskh cannot be determined by ijtihaad (reasoning in the absence of clear evidence), nor by the opinion of a Qur’aanic commentator, nor solely by the apparent contradiction of texts.

# TYPES OF NASKH - BWTWEEN QUR'AN & QURAN

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The first is the naskh of the Qur'aan by the Qur'aan

In this type of naskh, a Qur'aanic verse containing a law is superseded by another Qur'aanic verse containing a new law.

An example can be found in the verses on immoral women. The early law was stated in the Qur'aan as;

*“And for those of your women who have illicit relations, seek four witnesses among you. If they bear witness, confine the women in houses until they die or until Allaah makes another way for them.”*

This law was abolished and replaced by the following law of lashing;

*“Lash both the fornicator and the fornicatress one hundred times each.”*

# TYPES OF NASKH - BWTWEEN QUR'AN & SUNNAH

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The second type is naskh of the Qur'aan by the Sunnah

An example of this is the verse on wills, wherein Allaah instructs the believers as follows:

*“It is prescribed for each of you to have a bequest for your parents and relatives if any of you nears death and leaves wealth.”*

This law was abolished and replaced by the following law of lashing;

This early law was replaced by the inheritance laws and repealed by the hadeeth in which the Prophet (PBUH) said,

*“Verily Allaah has given every one with a right his rightful (share in the inheritance) so there is no bequest for one who inherits.”*

# TYPES OF NASKH - BWTWEEN SUNNAH & QURAN

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The third is the naskh of the Sunnah by the Qur'aan;

The Prophet's wife 'Aa'ishah also reported that the fasting of 'Aashooraa' (the 10th of the month of Muharram) used to be compulsory until the verses of Ramadaan were revealed. After that, whoever wished to fast 'Aashooraa' did so.<sup>39</sup> When the Prophet (r) migrated to Madeenah, he found the Jews fasting on that day in commemoration of Prophet Moosaa's deliverance from Pharaoh in Egypt. The Prophet (r), under divine guidance, ordered the Muslims to do so also, but no Qur'aanic revelation was revealed concerning it. However, during the second year after the Hijrah, Allaah revealed the following verse,

*“Ramadaan is the month in which the Qur'aan was sent down...so whoever among you witnesses the (beginning of) the month should fast it.”*

# TYPES OF NASKH - BWTWEEN SUNNAH & SUNNAH

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The fourth type of naskh is that of the Sunnah by the Sunnah

This type of naskh involves the annulment of a law found only in the Sunnah of the Prophet (r) by a later law expressed in the Sunnah. An example of this type of naskh can be found in the following statement of the sahaabee Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullaah: “The latter of the Messenger of Allaah’s (r) two commands was to not make wudoo’ after (eating) things touched by fire.”<sup>41</sup> In the early period of Islaam, the Prophet (r) had commanded his followers to make wudoo’ before praying if they had eaten cooked food, but in the later period he told them that it was no longer necessary to do so.

*“Ramadaan is the month in which the Qur’aan was sent down...so whoever among you witnesses the (beginning of) the month should fast it.”*



# NASKH BY IJMAA' / QIYAAS

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- The naskh by ijmaa' (unanimous agreement of the scholars) or qiyaas (analogous deduction) cannot occur, as neither ijmaa' or qiyaas are of divine origin. Both ijmaa' and qiyaas are the result of human intellectual effort, therefore, their conclusions are subject to error.
- So even though ijmaa' and qiyaas are considered to be two of the sources of Islaamic law (fiqh), they are not considered to be a part of Sharee'ah (divine law).



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# NASKH OF VERSE & LAW

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- In the first form, not only is the law abolished and a new law put in its place, but also the verse which contained the old law is removed by divine decree from the Qur'aan itself.
- An example of this form can be found in the following statement of 'Aa'ishah:
  - *“Among the revelations was the law that suckling ten distinct times by a wet nurse made marriage to her and her relatives prohibited, as in the case of the real mother's relatives. It was then replaced by the law of five distinct sucklings which was recited among the verses of the Qur'aan until shortly before the death of Allaah's Messenger (PBUH).”*
- This type of naskh is extremely rare.

# NASKH OF VERSE ALONE NOT LAW

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- In this case, Allaah had the verse removed from the Qur'aan and its recitation stopped without replacing the law. This type of naskh is also uncommon, though not as uncommon as the first form. Among the few examples of this type is the verse on stoning the adulterers, which was reported by 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second Caliph.
- *"If the elder man and woman commit adultery, stone them absolutely."*
- This verse is not in the final form of the Qur'aan which the Prophet (PBUH) left, but the law of stoning the adulterer to death was applied by the Prophet (PBUH) himself on a number of occasions and is well recorded in hadeeth.
- It was also the practice of all the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after him.

# NASKH OF LAW NOT VERSE

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- This is the most common form of naskh, whereby a law contained in a verse is annulled by a new law in a new verse, but the old verse is left in the Qur'aan. A clear example of this form of the abrogation of the law in the following verse:
- *“For those among you who die and leave behind wives, the bequest instruction for your wives is that they be looked after (from your wealth) for a year without being expelled (from their dwellings).”*
- This verse was superseded by a later verse which stated,
- *“For those among you who die and leave behind wives, let them (the wives) stay by themselves for four months and ten days (i.e., without remarrying).”*

# THE WISDOM OF NASKH

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- There is no doubt that the replacement of some laws with others was done for good and important reasons, as none of Allaah's action are in jest or without a purpose.
- Some of these reasons He has described, and others are obvious and deducible from His actions; however, there are others unknown to us and beyond our comprehension.
- Allaah's being is unknown to us and beyond our comprehension.
- Allaah's knowledge has no limits and includes all, so man cannot reasonably hope to grasp in totality the supreme wisdom behind Allaah's actions.

# MUHKAM & MUTASHAABIH

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# THE MUHKAM (CLEAR) AND MUTASHAABIH (OBSCURE) VERSES

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- There are, of necessity, vague and obscure references to aspects of realities about which man's knowledge is limited. Some of these references may only be understood in relationship to other verses, while the reality of other references cannot be understood at all. For example, the letters of the alphabet with which
- Some of the soorahs of the Qur'aan begin have no obvious meanings in themselves. Although they were used in ancient Arabic poetry, they were never used at the beginnings of verses, and the context would always indicate the intended meanings.
- Obscure are referred to as the “**mutashaabihaat**.”
- The Qur'aan has described itself in various verses as being entirely “**muhkam**” the Arabic term **muhkam** is “perfected” or “completely formed,”
- “*Alif, Laam, Ra. A Book from the Wise and Aware (Allaah), whose verses were made **muhkam**, then explained.*” (11:1)
- “Allaah has revealed the best speech (in the form of) a **mutashaabih** book repeating (its message).” (39:23)

# THE MUHKAM (CLEAR) AND MUTASHAABIH (OBSCURE) VERSES

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- *“It is He Who revealed the Book to you; in it are **muhkamaat** verses which are the essence of the Book (umm al-kitaab) and other (verses) which are **mutashaabihaat**. As for those whose hearts are twisted, they follow the **mutashaabih**, seeking to sow discord and searching for its inner meanings, but no one knows its inner meaning except Allaah. And those firmly grounded in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it, as it is all from our Lord.’ Yet, none will realize (this) except the wise.” (3:7)*
- Hence, the **muhkam** could be defined as those verses whose meanings are clear, and the **mutashaabih** as those verses whose inner meanings are known only to Allaah.
- ‘Aa’ishah reported that once the Prophet (PBUH) recited the above mentioned verse and said,
- *“If you meet those who seek out the obscure verses (**mutashaabih**), they are the ones whom Allaah has named in the Qur’aan, so beware of them.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari; 6:70, Muslim; 4:6442)*



# EXAMPLE OF MUTASHABIH VERSES

- Allaah describes Himself in Qur'aan as **al-Baseer**, **the Seer**, and **as-Samee'**, the Hearer, among His many names and attributes.
- During the era of the Prophet (PBUH) and that of the four Righteous Caliphs after his death, the sahaabah understood the verses containing these attributes according to their obvious meanings without delving into the why and the how's.
- To them, Allaah sees and hears all things without resembling His creation in any way. However, after the era of the sahaabah, the argument was raised by some that seeing and hearing were human or animal characteristics which required particular sensory apparatuses not befitting the Lord God Almighty. He had already said in the Qur'aan that:
  - *"Nothing is like Him."* (42:11)
- As a result, a school of philosophy known as the Jahmeeyah arose, which denied Allaah's names and attributes.
- Out of this school evolved another, the Mu'tazilah, which toned down clearly heretical statements of Jahm ibn Safwaan with Greek logic and rationalist interpretations of the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah.
- Under the patronage of the early 'Abassid rulers, this school engulfed the Ummah, to the degree that its concepts became the norm, and those who opposed them were systematically persecuted.
- Allaah's names were recognized, but were made void of any meaning, and His attributes of sight and hearing were taken to mean knowledge.

# LITERARY FORM OF THE QUR'AAN

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# LITERARY FORM OF THE QUR'AAN

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- A variety of literary forms were used to bring this message home to the reader without being monotonous or seemingly repetitious.
- Many of the forms are unique to the Arabic language and its constructions, while others are very intricate and appreciable only to literary and linguistic experts.
- We will briefly explore **four** of the more basic literary forms employed throughout the Qur'aan:
  1. **Mathal** (simile, proverb, and metaphor),
  2. **Qasam** (oath)
  3. **Jadal** (debate)
  4. **Qissah** (narrative).

# 1. MATHAL

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# THE MATHAL

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- Although the term mathal is commonly translated as simile or metaphor, in the context of the Qur'aan it includes proverbs, and even ideals. Hence, the definition of a mathal according to the Islaamic sciences is a concise but impressive and moving literary passage in which an idea is expressed, regardless of its construction.
- The Mathal in the Qur'aan comes in three basic forms:
  1. Musarraḥ mathal (stated)
  2. Kaamin mathal (hidden)
  3. Mursal mathal (formless).

# The Mathal Musarrah (Stated)

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- This form, as the name implies, contains an obvious comparison and is widely used in the Qur'aan.
- Such examples may be found in the fire and water similes and metaphors used in reference to the hypocrites who feign Islaam:
- *“They are like one who kindles a fire; then when it lights up what is around him, Allaah takes away his light and leaves him in total darkness in which he cannot see (anything). They are deaf, dumb, and blind; hence, they will never return to the path. Or like a dark rain cloud, thundering and flashing lightning in the sky, (during which) they stick their fingers in their ears from the thunderclap, fearing death. But Allaah surrounds the disbelievers. The lightning almost snatches away their sight, but every time it lights up (the area) for them, they walk, and when it becomes dark, they stand still. If Allaah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and sight, for certainly Allaah is able to do all things.” (13:17)*
- The hypocrites who enter Islaam so as to benefit from it materially are like someone who lights a fire in order to benefit from its warmth and light. However, their entrance into Islaam has no enlightening effect on their hearts; likewise, Allaah removes the quality of light from the fire leaving only its quality of heat. Hence, they are in total darkness, blind, unable to see the truth.

# The Mathal Kaamin (Hidden)

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- In this form, the terms of comparison are not used.
- However, this type of mathal conveys Islaamic ideals readily acceptable to natural human instincts due to the deep and impressive meanings which they imply.
- For example, the concept of the middle road between the two extremes is beautifully expressed in many verses of the Qur'aan. In the case of spending, Allaah praises those;
- *“Who are neither extravagant nor stingy when they spend; but between that is a just stand.”* (25:67)
- And in the case of salaah, Allaah advises: *“Do not be loud voiced nor extremely soft in your salaah, but seek a path between them.”* (17:110)

# The Mathal Mursal (Formless)

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- This form covers short verses which convey lessons, many of which have become proverbs. Like the mathal kaamin, it has none of the expressions or similes; however, comparisons may be made or implied.
- The following verses clearly illustrate this type of mathal:
- *“The foul and the wholesome are not equal.”* (5:100)
- *“You think they are united, but their hearts are scattered.”* (2:249)
- Sometimes the mathal is used to encourage people to do certain righteous acts by comparing them to something which is appealing to human nature.
- *“Those who spend their wealth in Allaah’s path are like a corn seed which sprouts seven ears, each ear containing one hundred seeds. Allaah multiplies (the gifts) of whomsoever He wishes.”* (2:261)



## 2. QASAM

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# THE QASAM

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- The **oath (qasam)** in Arabic, as in English, is used to emphasize in the mind of the reader or listener the importance or truthfulness of the idea which follows it in the sentence.
- In English, the most common format is “**by God,**” wherein “by” represents the phrase “as surely as I believe in.”
- However, Arabic linguists have traditionally divided the format of the oath into three basic parts:
  1. The verb: “I swear by”
  2. The person, thing, or event **by** which the oath is taken
  3. The person, thing, or event **on** which the oath is taken.

# THE QASAM

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- The phrase, “I swear by” (**aqsimu bi**) is often reduced to the particle “by” (“**bi**”), and “**ta**” and “**wa**” are often used in place of “bi.”
- These particles are then joined to the person or thing by which the oath is taken. Hence the oath, “I swear by Allaah,” may be expressed in Arabic as, “**Aqsimu bil-laah,**” “**bi-laah,**” “**tal laah,**” or “**wal-laah.**”
- Occasionally both the verb, the particle, and the person or thing by which the oath is taken are all deleted, leaving only the person, thing, or event on which the oath is taken, prefixed with la, a particle of emphasis.
- An example of this type of deletion can be found in the verse,
- “*By the Sun and the early morn, by the moon when it follows it.*” (91:1-2)
- However, there are exactly seven places where oaths are made by Allaah.

# THE QASAM

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- Allaah, being the creator of all things may swear by whatever he wishes; however, man is not allowed to swear by anything but Allaah.
- The reason being that oaths are taken by the things which one holds in the highest of esteem and only Allaah should be revered in this manner.
- Hence, oaths by the stars, by one's father's grave or even by the Prophet (PBUH) or by the Ka'bah are all forbidden and considered shirk (associating partners with Allaah).
- *“Whoever swears by other than Allaah has associated a partner with Allaah.”* (Abu Dawud;2:3245)

# 3. JADAL

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# THE JADAL (DEBATE)

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- The desire to be convinced by logical arguments is a part of human nature. Human beings, generally speaking, like to argue and debate even about things which their limited knowledge cannot verify to be correct or incorrect. Allaah alluded to this nature in the Qur'aan, saying,
- *“Certainly, the human being is the most argumentative creature!”* (18:54)
- Consequently, Allaah ordered the Prophet (PBUH) to enter into debates with the pagans, but only in a gentle way which might move their hearts:
- *“Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good admonishment and debate with them in the best way.”* (16:125)

# EXAMPLE OF JADAL (DEBATE)

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- *“Does the human being think that he will be left without responsibility? Was he not first a mere drop of ejaculated sperm? Then he became a leech-like clot which Allaah gave form and balance? And from it He made the sexes, male and female? Is not the One who did this able to give life to the dead?” (75:36-40)*
- If one reflects on how humans are wondrously created and molded from such lowly origins, there should be no difficulty in conceiving the re-creation and resurrection of humanity. For the re-creation of a thing is always easier than its initial creation, as Allaah explicitly stated:
- *“And He is the One Who originates the creation, then He will reproduce it, and it is easier for Him.” (30:27)*

# 4. QISSAH

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# THE QISSAH (NARRATIVE)

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- The Qur'aan has, in a number of instances, employed the narrative (**qissah**) format in order to convey its message to man in an intriguing manner.
- Qur'aanic stories also served to reassure the Prophet (PBUH) and his followers that the truth would eventually win out over falsehood, and they continue to serve the same purpose for believers today.
- It should be noted, however, that while many of the most popular narratives are made up by their authors, the Qur'aanic stories are all true.
- They are not made up by Allaah to convey His message, but are in fact true historical examples of the message.
- This fact has been emphasized in the Qur'aan in numerous passages by Allaah, Who refers to Himself as the embodiment of Truth: *"I revealed the Book to you in truth."* (5:48)

# EXAMPLES OF QISSAH (NARRATIVE)

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- *“I recite to you the true story of Moosaa and Pharoaoh.” (28:3)*
- Likewise, Allaah repudiates the idea that these narratives are invented. At the end of the story of Yoosuf and his brothers, He says;
- *“In their stories there is definitely a lesson for those possessing understanding. It is no invented story but a confirmation of the previous (scripture).” (12:111)*

# CATEGORIES OF QISSAHS (NARRATIVES)

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- The qissahs in the Qur'aan may be divided into three main categories:
  1. **Narratives about the prophets:** In such narratives, Allaah explains the various methods which they used to call their people to God, the miracles which they were given, the position of their people towards them, and the end result of the struggle between belief and disbelief. Examples of this type can be found in the stories of the Prophets Nooh (Noah), Ibraaheem (Abraham), Moosaa (Moses), Haaroon (Aaron), and 'Eesaa (Jesus), may Allaah's peace and blessings be on all of them.

# CATEGORIES OF QISSAHS (NARRATIVES)

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- The qissahs in the Qur'aan may be divided into three main categories:
- 2. **Narratives concerning events and people:** Not known to be prophets, such as the stories of Taaloot (Saul) and Jaaloot (Goliath), the sons of Aadam, the People of the Cave, Thul-Qarnayn, Qaaroon (Korah), Mary, the mother of Jesus, and so on. The third category is that of events which occurred during Prophet Muhammad's (r) era. For example, the Battles of Badr and Uhud in Soorah Aal 'Imraan, the Battles of Hunayn and Tabook in Soorah at-Tawbah, the Battle of the Clans (Ahzaab) in Soorah al-Ahzaab, and the Night Journey (Israa') in Soorah al-Israa', and so on.

# CATEGORIES OF QISSAHS (NARRATIVES)

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- The qissahs in the Qur'aan may be divided into three main categories:
- 2. **Repetition of a story:** Some of the Qur'aanic stories are repeated in different sections of the Qur'aan. However, the stories are usually repeated in different ways. Sometimes, only a brief summary of a story is given, while at other times, one aspect of the story or another is related in detail. In fact, the details of stories are often mentioned only to the degree necessary for the message to be conveyed. Repetition of a story in this fashion firmly establishes its lesson in the mind of the reader. Sometimes, however, different aspects of the story have different underlying lessons. This type of repetition also reinforces the Qur'aan's miraculous nature, whereby a concept may be expressed in a variety of ways, yet the Arabs were unable to duplicate any of them.

# LANGUAGE OF QURAN

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# LANGUAGE OF THE QUR'AAN

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- The Arabic language in which the Qur'aan was conveyed has a number of words, phrases and grammatical constructions which express the various shades of meanings necessary to clarify the intent of the laws.
- some of the modes of expression are;
- 'Aamm' (general) - the 'aamm' could be defined as an expression which is completely general in whatever it refers to when used literally.<sup>52</sup> However, 'aamm' expressions may refer to specific things when they are used figuratively.
- 'Khaass' (specific) - the 'khaass', on the other hand, is used for a word which is applied to a limited number of things; for instance, if one were ordered to feed ten poor people, that expression would be khaass.

# AAMM (GENERAL)

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- When an 'aamm' expression is qualified or restricted by another more limited 'aamm' expression or a 'khaass' expression, the process is called **takhsees**, and the limiting expression is called the **mukhassis** of the broader category.
- the category of men is a smaller category than the category of human beings, which includes it. The category of human beings, in turn, is smaller than the category of mammals, which is smaller than the category of animals, and so on.
- *Men* is an **aamm** category, but is being limited with the categories of more **aamm** expressions like;
- Humans
- Mammals
- Animals



# EXAMPLES OF AAMM (GENERAL)

- The following **six examples** contain the most commonly used general expressions which can be found in the Qur'aan
- 1. **Kull** (all, every, or each): This word could be translated into English in a variety of ways, depending on the context. An example of this word's usage can be found in Allaah's statements in the Qur'aan: *"Every (kull) soul will taste death."* (3:185) & *"Allaah is the Creator of all (kull) things."* (39:62)
- 2. **Al** (of definiteness, not in reference to something known to the readers): Although **"al"** is normally translated as "the," in this case it translates as **"all"** or **"every."** For example, the verse: *"Allaah has made al-bay' (all trade) allowable and forbidden ar-riba (all interest)."* (2:275) & *"Cut off the hand of as-saariq was-saariqah (every male and female thief),"* (5:38)
- 3. **An-Nakirah** (the indefinite in a negative or prohibitive construction): Normally, **"a"** or **"an"** is put before the Arabic indefinite form when it is translated into English; however, in an expression containing a negation, the indefinite should be translated in such a way as to indicate its generality. For example, the literally translated verse, *"So no rafath (a vulgar word), fusooq (an obscenity), and no jidaal (an argument) during hajj"* (2:197). should read, *"So there should be no vulgarity, obscenity, or argumentation during hajj."* & *"And your Lord will not oppress a one (ahadan)."* **"a one"** would be better translated as **"anyone."** (18:49)

## EXAMPLES OF AAMM (GENERAL)

4. **Allathee (الَّذِي)** and its Arabic derivatives (the relative pronouns) when acting as subject of the sentence, in which case they would translate as “whoever.” An example of this usage can be found in the following verse condemning those who mistreat their parents: “*And whoever (allathee) said to his parents, ‘Uff to you both’.*” (46:17). “**Whoever**” in this verse is general, ‘aam’, and refers to anyone who would speak disrespectfully to his or her parents.
5. **Asmaa’ ash-shart** (subordinators which begin conditional clauses: **whoever (man مَنْ)**, **whatever (maa مَا)**, **wherever (aynamaa أَيْنَمَا)**, **whichever (ayyumaa أَيُّهَاً)**, etc.): All of these expressions convey a generality in English in virtually the same way that they do in Arabic; for example, Allaah’s statement in the Qur’aan about Safaa and Marwah, the two hills near the Ka’bah:
  - “**Whoever (man)** makes hajj or ‘umrah to the House (of Allaah, [i.e. the Ka’bah]) may circle them without any blame.” (2:18)
  - “**Whatever (maa)** good you do is known to Allaah,” (2:197)
  - “**Wherever** you may be, you should turn your faces toward it (the Ka’bah).” (2:150)

## EXAMPLES OF AAMM (GENERAL)

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6. **Ismul-jins** (a generic noun in the mudaaf [possessive] construction with a definite noun or pronoun):
- The following verses are examples of this type of generality: “*Let those who would go against his bidding (amrihi) beware.*” (24:63).
  - The generic noun amr is related to the possessive pronoun **hu**, making it general. The warning is directed at those who oppose any of the Prophet’s instructions. Likewise, the verse,
  - “Allaah advises you concerning your children (awlaadikum),” (4:11); refers to inheritance laws for all children.

# SPECIFICATION OF AAMM

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The 'aamm expression may be divided into **three main** categories in relationship to the context of the verses in which they occur and the laws or principles which were intended.

1. First, there is the '**aamm**' expression which remains **general**. This category does not have many examples because most generalities are specified in one way or another. However, an example can be found in the verse, *"And Allaah knows all (kull) things,"* (4:23) & *"Your mothers (ummahaatukum) have been made forbidden (in marriage) to you,"* (), as there are no exceptions to this law, whether they be real mothers, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, or mothers by ridaa' (suckling).
2. Second, there is the **figurative 'aam'** in which the general meaning of the expression was never intended; for example, the verse, *"Those to whom the people (an-naas) said, 'The people have gathered against you, so fear them.' "* (3:173). The first expression "the people" refers specifically to Nu'aym ibn Mas'ood and the second refers to Aboo Sufyaan and the Qurayshee army, and not the generality which the expression implies.
3. And third, there is the **specified 'aam'**, wherein the generality of the 'aam expression is qualified by one of the specifying words or phrases. For example, Allaah's command in the Qur'aan, *"Hajj to the House (the Ka'bah) is an obligation to Allaah on all people (an-naas) who are able to find a way there."* (3:97). The generality of *"all people"* is specified by the adjectival clause following it.

# EXPRESSIONS OF TAKHSEES

- **Takhsees** (specification of the general) is accomplished by specifying words or phrases found either within the general statements themselves or outside of them. The five types which occur within general statements are as follows:
  1. **Istithnaa (exception)**: In this case the general law is followed by a preposition of exception and a clause or phrase which qualifies it. A good example can be seen in the following verse: *“Verily, for those who (allatheena) wage war against Allaah and His Messenger and spread corruption in the land, the penalty is execution, crucifixion, severing opposite hands and legs, or banishment from the land. That is their disgrace in this life, and in the next life they will receive a severe punishment, except those who repent before they are caught.”* (5:33-34)
  2. **Sifah (modification)**: This type refers mainly to relative clauses introduced by the relative pronouns allathee, allatee (who, which), and their derivatives. An example of this type of specification can be found in the following verse concerning the forbidden categories of marriage: *“And your stepdaughters (rabaa’ibukum) under your care, born of your wives whom (allaatee) you have entered.”* (4:23). That is, a man’s stepdaughter by a wife with whom he had sexual intercourse is forbidden to him if he divorces his wife or if she dies. However, if he divorced her before consummating the marriage or if she died before he did so, he would be able to marry her daughter (his stepdaughter). Thus, the relative clause, “whom you have entered” specifies the general phrase, “step-daughters of your wives.”



# EXPRESSIONS OF TAKHSEES

3. **Shart (condition):** Conditional clauses function as specifiers since they state the dependence of one circumstance or set of circumstances on another. Such clauses are usually introduced by a subordinator such as “in” (if). For example, the verse, *“It is prescribed upon you that you bequeath a good portion (of your wealth) for your parents and close relations when death approaches any of you (ahadakum), if (in) you have left some wealth; an obligation on those who fear God.”* (2:180) Thus the general obligation of writing a will when death approaches is turned into an obligation only for those who possess wealth.
4. **Ghaayah (clauses of time):** Adverbial clauses of time are usually introduced by the subordinator “hattaa” (until) and accompanied by a negative. Good examples of this type of specification are Allaah’s statements concerning the rites of hajj, *“Do not shave your heads until (hattaa) your sacrificial animal has reached its appointed place (of sacrifice),”* (2:196)
5. **Badal al-ba‘d minal-kull:** (substitution of a part for the whole): This is an Arabic construction in which a form of relative clause introduced by the subordinator “whoever” (man) describes an aspect of a noun which it can take the place of. An example of this type of construction can be seen in a literal translation of the verse, *“Allaah has a right on all people (an-naas) to make hajj to the House; whoever (man) is able to find a way there.”* (3:97). In Arabic, the subordinator “**whoever**” represents a part of the phrase “all people” and is substituted in its place. Hence the verse could be translated, *“Allaah has a right on whoever is able to find a way that they make hajj to the House (Ka‘bah).”*

# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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- This pair of concepts is similar to the paired concepts, ‘aamm and khaass’.
- A major difference is that the word which is ‘aamm’ encompasses every member of the category it names, whereas the mutlaq word usually applies to any one of a multitude, but not to all.
- For instance, if I say to a servant, “Give ten dollars to every high school graduate who comes to the house,” this expression is ‘aamm’. The servant would not be in compliance with my command unless he gives ten dollars to every individual who meets those qualifications.
- On the other hand, if I told him, “Give ten dollars to a (miskeen) poor person,” this expression is mutlaq. He would be in compliance if he gave it to a single individual who is poor.
- The mutlaq may be defined as a word or phrase which expresses a non figurative idea without placing any limitations on it. It refers to one type of thing without being specific and usually occurs in the form of an indefinite noun (an nakirah) in an affirmative statement. Terms like “a slave,” “a chair,” or “a dog” would be Mutlaq.
- Whereas “a believing slave,” “a metal chair,” or “a Filipino man” would all be muqayyad, because each indefinite noun has been qualified and restricted by an adjective (sifah).

# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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- *“....the feeding or clothing of ten poor persons according to how you feed and clothe your own family or the freeing of a slave.” (5:89) (Mulaq)*
- There are no limitations as to what type of slave may be freed.
- However, the type of slave has been restricted in the following verse:
- *“And whoever kills a believer accidentally should free a believing slave and pay a deeyah (fine) to the family.” (4:92) (Muqayyad)*



# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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The **mutlaq** and **muqayyad** verses have been placed in four main categories in relation to the underlying reason (sabab) for their revelation and the agreement or disagreement of the rules (hukm) which they contain.

1. **Same sabaab and hukm:** An example is the fourth option in atoning (kaffaarah) for breaking an oath taken in Allaah's name, i.e., to fast three days. This principle is mutlaq in the Qur'aan as follows: “*“He only prohibited for you carrion and blood...”* (5:89)
  - Blood is prohibited with a **mutlaq** expression.
  - However, in verse 145 of Soorah al-An'aam, Allaah says, “*Say (O Prophet r), ‘In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat of it, unless it is carrion or blood poured forth...’*”
  - Since the **mutlaq** and the **muqayyad** both deal with prohibited foods, it is valid to say that the only type of prohibited blood is that which is poured forth. Therefore, the blood that seeps from meat while it is being cooked is not prohibited.

# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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2. **Same sabab but different hukm:** An example of this category is the case of cleaning the hands during the performance of wudoo' and tayammum. In the verse on purification,
- *“O believers, when you get up to make salaah (prayer), you should wash your faces and hands up to the elbows.”* (5:6)
  - the word “**hands**” in making wudoo' is **muqayyad**; whereas in the same verse concerning **tayammum**, it is left **mutlaq**: “Make tayammum with good (clean) earth; Wipe your faces and hands with it.” (5:6)
  - In these examples, the hukm is different in that water is used in the case of wudoo' and more body parts are cleaned; whereas dust is used only on the face and hands in the case of tayammum.
  - Hence, the **mutlaq (tayammum)** should not be interpreted according to the **muqayyad (wudu)**. In fact, authentic hadeeths describing tayammum specify the wrists as the limit.

# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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3. **Different sabab but same hukm:** The atonement (kaffaarah) of freeing a slave is a good example of this category. In the case of accidental murder, the word slave is **muqayyad**
- *“A believer may not kill another believer except by accident. And whoever kills a believer accidentally should **free a believing slave**.” (4:92) (**muqayyad**)*
  - *“Those who swear off their wives, then wish to go back on what they said, **should free a slave** before they touch each other.” (58:3) (**mutalq**)*
  - There is obviously no basis here for interpreting the **mutlaq** according to the **muqayyad**.
  - A believer’s life was taken, hence the requirement is that the freed slave be a believer; whereas in the case of breaking of oaths made by thihaar or otherwise, the freeing of any slave is sufficient.

**Thihaar** — means a divorce practiced by pre-Islaamic Arabs. The husband would swear not to touch his wife because he considered her “like his mother.” The wife was not free to look for another husband, but she was denied conjugal rights.

# MUTLAQ (ABSOLUTE) AND MUQAYYAD (QUALIFIED)

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4. **Different sabab and different hukm:** An example of this category is in the case of the **hand** in ‘wudoo’ and ‘theft’.
- In the verse on purification previously mentioned, the hand is made **muqayyad** by the phrase, “*up to the elbows,*” but in the case of theft, it is left **mutlaq**. Consider the following:
  - “*Cut off the hands of both the male and female thief.*” (5:38)
  - Here again, the **mutlaq** cannot be specified by the **muqayyad**, especially since it was reported that the Prophet (PBUH) limited the amputation of hands to the wrist and so did the Righteous Caliphs.

# MANTOOQ (STATED) AND MAFHOOM (IMPLIED) MEANINGS

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- Words and expressions may convey ideas either by their explicit constructions or by implication.
- Meaning derived from the explicit aspect of words or expressions are referred to as **mantooq**, while those derived from their implications are called **mafhoom**.

# MANTOOQ (EXPLICIT) MEANINGS

- Mantooq (explicit) meanings may be derived in five different ways, depending on the type of Arabic grammatical construction used.
- 1. **Nass (explicit):** This method of deriving the **mantooq** (explicit) meaning refers to any expression which clearly indicates an idea, leaving no room for other interpretations; for example, the following verse orders those who intend hajj tamattu‘, but are unable to slaughter an animal: *“You should fast three days during hajj and seven days when you return (home); those make a complete (kaamilah) ten (days).”* (2:196) The adjective (sifah) **“complete”** removes any doubt that ten meant approximately ten, according to figurative usage.
- 2. **Thaahir (obvious):** This term refers to the most obvious and likely meaning of a given expression which could indicate another, though less likely, meaning. An example of the **thaahir** can be found in the verse concerning sexual relations with menstruating women: *“And do not come near them (menstruating women) until they have become pure (yat-hurna)”* (2:222). **“Yat-hurna”** could mean either the end of the menstrual cycle, making wudoo’ or taking a ghusl. However, the likelihood of it meaning a ghusl is greater than the other possible meanings.



# MANTOOQ (EXPLICIT) MEANINGS

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3. **Mu'awwal (explained):** In this case, the obvious meaning of an expression is avoided due to its inappropriateness. That is, the less obvious meaning of the expression is favoured due to some factor(s) which disallow the obvious meaning. For example, Allaah commands us in our relations with parents as follows: *“Lower the wing (janaah) of humility out of mercy to them.”* (17:24) The phrase “wing of humility” is taken to mean submissiveness, obedience to parents, and good treatment of parents, due to the impossibility of human beings having wings.
4. **Iqtidaa (necessity):** Sometimes the correct meaning of an Arabic expression depends on the supposition of a deleted word or phrase. Such a method of derivation of a mantooq meaning is called “dalaalah al-iqtidaa;” that is, indication of the meaning by a necessary supposition. A classical example of this type can be found in the verse on fasting: *“Whoever among you who is sick or travelling (should fast) a (like) number of other days.”* (2:184). The phrase, “fa aftara” (“and breaks fast”), has to be supposed after “travelling,” because a traveller is only required to make up days of fasting if he or she breaks fast while travelling. Likewise, one who is sick but does not break his or her fast would have no fasts to make up.

# MANTOOQ (EXPLICIT) MEANINGS

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5. **Ishaarah (suggestion):** At other times, an expression may indicate a secondary meaning without requiring any supposition of words or phrases. This type of mantooq meaning is called “dilaalah al-ishaarah;” that is, indication of the meaning by suggestion. If one considers, for example, the verse: *“Intercourse with your wives is permitted for you during the nights of the (month of fasting...so go to them and seek what Allaah has written for you; and eat and drink until the white thread of the dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread (of the night). ”* (2:187) This indicates that it is acceptable to begin the fast in a state of janaabah, since intercourse is allowable at night up until dawn, possibly leaving no opportunity for one to regain his or her state of purity by bathing; thus, entering the morning of a fast in a state of impurity must, of necessity, be allowable.



# MAFHOOM (IMPLIED) MEANINGS

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- There are two types of mafhoom (implied) meanings in relationship to the rule contained in the mantooq (explicit) meaning of a statement:
- The mafhoom al muwaafaqah - in which the rule in the implied meaning agrees with that of the mantooq
- The mafhoom al-mukhaalafah - in which the rule in the implied meaning is the contrapositive (conditional) of the mantooq

# MAFHOOM AI-MUWAAFAQAH

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- An example of **mafهوم al-muwaafaqah** can be found in the verse prohibiting harsh words with parents, “Do not say to them ‘Uff.’ ” (17:23)
- The **mantooq** here forbids the saying of “Uff” to parents, and the **mafهوم** is that cursing them or hitting them is also forbidden.
- The validity of rules derived from the mafهوم al-muwaafaqah is unquestionably logical and, as such, it is among the fundamental principles used by all of the scholars of Islaamic law.

# MAFHOOM AI-MUKHAALAFAH

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- An example of **mafهوم al-mukhaalafah** can be found in the following verse “If a sinful person comes to you with information, get it confirmed.” (49:6)
- This verse implies that information brought by a righteous person should be accepted without the necessity of confirmation.
- Another example is contained in the verse on the punishment for one who slanders a woman by falsely accusing her of fornication or adultery: “*Lash them eighty times.*” (24:4)
- The **mafهوم** here is that they should be given no more nor less than eighty lashes.

# MAFHOOM AI-MUKHAALAFAH

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- The verse prohibiting marriage to stepdaughters, *“And your stepdaughters under your care,”* (4:23)
- The **mafhoom al-mukhaalafah** is that stepdaughters not under your care may be taken in marriage. However, this is not the case.
- The phrase “under your care” only addresses the usual situation and not a condition of prohibition. This interpretation, agreed upon between the four math-habs, is strengthened by the fact that the verse mentions two qualifications for the step-daughters.
- “And your stepdaughters under your care (born) of your wives with whom you have consummated marriage—but if you have not gone into them, then there is no sin for you (to marry their daughters after the death or divorce of the mothers)...” (4:23)
- It then goes on to explicitly state that if the second condition does not occur, the prohibition doesn’t apply. It makes no mention of this exception when the first condition is missing.

THE END



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