

# An introduction to the Science of Tafseer

تفسير القرآن كالتعارف

# Introduction

## ➤ Definition Of Tafseer:

The literal meaning of Tafseer in the Arabic is to open or to explain, interpret or comment.

Technically, the science of Tafseer is a branch of knowledge in which the meaning of the Qur'an are explained and its injunction and wisdom are described openly and clearly.

# The Sources of Tafseer (تفسیر کے مآخذ)

1. The Glorious Qur'an (تفسیر القرآن بالقرآن)
2. The Hadith of Prophet ﷺ (تفسیر القرآن بالحديث)
3. The Reports from the Companion رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ (تفسیر القرآن بآثار الصحابه)
4. The Reports from the Successors (تفسیر القرآن باقوال التابعين)
5. The Arabic Language (تفسیر القرآن باللغة العربيه)
6. Deliberation and Deduction تدبّر / غور و فکر / عقل سلیم

# The Glorious Qur'aan (تفسير القرآن بالقرآن)

- The first source of the knowledge of *tafsir* is the Quran itself. Accordingly, it happens very often that a certain point which is brief and requires explanation is invariably clarified by some other verse of the Quran. For instance, in the following verse of Surat al-Fatihah, “Guide us on the straight path, the path of those on whom You have blessed...”, it is not clear here as to who are those whom Allah Almighty has blessed. But, in another verse, they have been identified very clearly where it is said:  

“So, these are the people whom Allah Almighty has blessed, being the prophets, their true followers, the martyrs (in the way of Allah) and the righteous”. (4:69)
- Therefore, when commentators explain a Quranic verse, they first check to see if a *tafsir* of the verse is already existent elsewhere in the Quran itself. If such an explanatory verse exists, they elect to adhere to it as their first choice.

# The Hadith of Prophet ﷺ (تفسير القرآن بالحديث)

The words and the deeds of the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) are called hadith, and as it has been stated earlier, Allah Almighty sent him with the Quran solely for the purpose of explaining, openly and explicitly, the correct meanings of the Quran to people.

## Example:

The Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ  
(النحل: 44)

We revealed the Qur'an to you so that you explain to the people what has been sent down to them.

# Narrations of Companions: (تفسير القرآن بأثر الصحابة)

- The noble Sahabah, or Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), had received their education directly from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).
- In addition, they were personally present on the scene when verses were revealed, and they had themselves witnessed the circumstances and backgrounds of the Quranic revelation.
- Therefore, naturally, the recorded statements of these blessed souls are far more authentic and trustworthy in explaining the Noble Quran.

# Famous Tafseer of Companions:

- ▶ Tafseer-e Ibn-e-Abbas (R.A) تفسیر ابن عباس
- ▶ Tafseer-e Ibn-e-Masood (R.A.) تفسیر ابن مسعود
- ▶ Tafseer-e- Ubaiy ibn-e-Ka'ab (R.A.) تفسیر ابی بن کعب

# Narrations of the Successors: تفسير القرآن باقوال التابعين

- After the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) come the Successors (Tabi'in). The latter learnt the *tafsir* of Quran directly from the former. Therefore, their statements too have great importance in the science of *tafsir*, although a difference of opinion among scholars exists on whether the statements of the Successors are considered decisive in *tafsir*. Their importance, nonetheless, cannot be denied. (*al-Itqan*, 2:179)

## Famous Successors :

- Hasan Basari (حضرت حسن بصری رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ)
- Ikramah (حضرت عکرمہ رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ)
- Mujahid (حضرت مجاہد رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ)



# The Arabic Language: (تفسير القرآن باللغة العربية)

- ▶ Since the Quran was revealed in the Arabic language, in order to accurately explain the Quran it is necessary to have a complete mastery over it.
- ▶ There are several verses of the Quran for which there happen to be neither any attending circumstance of revelation nor any related juristic or scholastic question. Therefore, in their explanation, neither the sayings of the Holy Prophet nor the statements of the Sahabah or Tabi'in have been transmitted. Hence, the only means through which such verses can be explained is the Arabic language, and it is on the basis of language alone that they are clarified.
- ▶ Additionally, should there be some difference in the *tafsir* of a certain verse, then also the science of linguistics is used to run a test of veracity between varying opinions.

# Deliberation and Deduction تدبّر / غور و فکر / عقل سلیم

- The last source of *tafsir* consists of deliberation and deduction. The subtleties and mysteries of the Quran are an ocean with no shore. Therefore, the more a person who has been blessed with insight into the Islamic sciences by Allah Almighty deliberates into it, the more he discovers ever-new mysteries and subtleties.
- As a result, commentators do present the outcomes of their respective deliberations as well, but the mysteries and subtleties so described are found acceptable only when they do not contradict the five sources mentioned above.

# Israelite Narrations

(اسرائیلی روایات)

# Rules Relating to Israelite Narrations

(اسرائیلی روایات)

## Israelite Narrations:

- Isra'iliyyat, are narratives that have reached us through Jewish and Christian tradition. It should be noted that early commentators used to preserve all sorts of narrations which reached them from identifiable sources. Many of these narrations were Judaica, which therefore necessitates knowledge of what they truly are..

# Rules Relating to Israelite Narrations

1. Narrations the truth of which is proved from evidences in the Quran and Sunnah.

For example,

The drowning of Pharaoh and the ascent of Sayyiduna Musa (upon him be peace) onto Mount Tur (Sinai)..

# Rules Pertaining to Israelite Narrations

2. Narrations the falsity of which is proved from evidences in the Quran and Sunnah.
  - For example, it appears in Judaic/Israelite narrations that Sayyiduna Sulayman (upon him be peace) had become (God forbid) an apostate in his later years.
  - Its refutation is clearly given in the Quran, where it is said,  
  
**“It was not Sulayman who became an infidel, but the devils did become infidels.” (2:102)**

# Rules Relating to Israelite Narrations

3. Narrations regarding which the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Shar'iah are silent. In regards to such narrations, the prophetic teaching is to observe silence and neither confirm nor falsify.
  - There is, however, a difference of opinion among scholars whether or not reporting such narrations is permissible.
  - Hafiz Ibn Kathir has given a decisive ruling that reporting them is permissible but doing so is useless because they cannot be taken to be authentic. (Muqaddamah Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

# A misconception regarding Tafseer

ولقد يسرنا القرآن للذكر فهل من مدكر  
(سورة القمر: 22)

Indeed we have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So,  
is there one to heed to the advice?