REVIEW OF COMPILATION OF TAFSIR-AL-KABIR

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Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Umar Fakharud din Raazi has written books on various desiciplines. But he earned fame through his Tafseer Al-Kabir "Mafateeh al Ghaib" Tafseer of Quran. Imam Raazi has exhibited his genius and brilliance of knowledge in this Tafsir. Many Scholars raised objection that Imam Raazi did not complete the Tafseer during his life time. But this research proves with all kinds of evidence that Imam Raazi, although, has not mentioned the dates of beginning and completing the Tafsir, He himself completed it from Surah Al Fatiha to Surra Al nas.

The Imam-Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Umer Bin Hussain, well known as Fakhar-ud-Din Raazi, was born in Iran's City, Rey, in 25th of Ramadan 543 AH, and according to few in 544 AH. He died on Eid-ul-Fitr in Herat on Monday, 606 AH. His father was known as "Sahib-e-Tasaneef Aalam" and "Khateeb-al-Rey".Imam got education in Fiqh and logic from his father.

After father's death in 559 AH, he received education from many famous and learned scholars. Imam Raazi traveled to many places for preaching and teaching.

Khuarzam Shahi and Ghauri Sultans gave him respect and honor. They set up many "Madrasas" for him. Despite all this, Imam never accepted any official post for himself. He kept himself busy with teaching and writing. Imam Raazi was an encyclopedic writer. Imam himself once said, "By God, I feel really sorry for the time wasted during my meals, because I am unable to use that time in writing some thing useful, and I feel time runs ahead of us". This research paper explores the issue, whether Imam Raazi completed the Tafseer himself or not.

BEGINNING OF TAFSEER WRITING

The exact date as to when Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Raazi started writing his Tafsir-al-Kabir -ul-Ghaib, is not known. But when we study this magnificent Tafsir, we come to know that Imam Raazi has mentioned days and place at the end of twenty two Surahs in Tafsir -al-Kabir. Taking these dates into consideration, it is evident that Imam Raazi started writing this grand Tafseer approximately after the age

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of 45; when his faculties had matured and that he started writing Tafsir after writing many of his books, because he has quoted his books many times in his Tafsir.

Imam Raazi, first of all, wrote an exclusive Tafsir of Surah Fatiha that is separate from the other components of Tafsir. The Imam has not mentioned any date at the end of Tafsir of Surah Fatihah. Later we find that mention of date at the end of Tafsir of "Surah al-Bakarah" is also missing. But at the end of "Surah al-Imran" date of completion is mentioned as 1st of Rabbi-ul-Awwal 595 AH. (1)

Following this Surah al- Nisa, Al-Anfal, Al-Tauba, Younus, Houd, Yousuf, Ibrahim, Al-Asra'a, Al-Kahaf, Al-Saafaat, Suad, Al Zumar, Al Momin, Fasalat, Al-Shura, Zakhraf, Al-Dukhan, Al-Jaasia, Al-Ahkaf have dates mentioned at their end.

The sequence of Surahs in Tafsir

Dates mentioned at the end of certain Surahs, show that Imam did not write Tafseer of the Holy Quran in a sequence. Moreover, Imam Raazi did not take natural sequence of Surah into consideration e.g. Surah Younus was completed on Saturday Rajab 601 A.H. Likewise Surah Houd in Rajab 601 AH, Surah Yousuf on Wednesday 7 Sha'aban 601 AH, Surah Ra'ad on 18th Sha'aban 601 AH, and Surah Ibrahim on Friday towards the end of Sha'aban 601 AH. (3)

After these Surahs, Surah Anfaal was completed on Sunday 601 AH in the month of Ramadan and Surah Tauba on 14th of Ramadan 601 AH.

It becomes evident that Imam Raazi wrote Tafsir of Surahs of the later part of the Holy Quran before certain Surahs that preceded them in the Holy Quran.

Completion dates of Surahs between Surah Kahaf and Surah Saafaat have not been mentioned. Date of completion of Surah Kahaf is 17 Safar 602 AH and date of Surah Saafaat is Friday 17th Ziqa'ad. After this he started writing date of completion at the end of each Surahs.

ULAMA'S POINT OF VIEW

It is very important to investigate the view point of Ulamas of our modern times as well as of the past as to whether Imam Raazi himself wrote and completed Tafsir or not. Majority of Ulama holds the opinion that Imam Raazi did not complete the Tafsir himself, rather, his disciples completed it after his death.

Ibne Khalakan (D 681 AH) says,

"We find useful writings of various disciplines amongst which Tafsir -ul- Quran is the great, in which he has combined super natural and miraculous things and this is a great Tafsir, but he could not complete it".

Ibne Qazi al- Damishki says in Tabakaat al- shafiya

"Among his writings; Tafsir Kabir, that he could not complete, consists of twelve Volumes and it is called Mafateeh-ul-Ghaib". (5)

If we take this argument, then question arises, who completed Tafsir-al-Kabir, and that upto which point Imam Raazi could write the Tafsir? The scholars are of different opinions regarding this issue.

Hafiz Ibne Hajar Asqlaani says "Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Abul Hazam Makki Najam-ud-Din Makhzoomi Misri (D 727 AH), completed Tafsir -e- Kabir". (6) Haji Khaleefa writes, Sheikh Najam-ud-Din Ahmed bin Muhammad Al kamooli wrote; "That incomplete part was completed by Qazi-al-Qazaa Shahab-ud-Din bin Khaleel Damishki (D 639 AH)." (7)

According to Hafiz ibne Hajar's assertion, it seems that Tafsir -e-Kabir was completed by Sheikh Najam-ud-Din. But according to the author of Kashaf-uz-Zunoon Sheikh Najam-ud-Din could not complete it and remaining part was completed by Shahab-ud-Din Damishki. Both of them hold the same opinion that at least Imam Raazi could not complete it.

Upto which Surah, Imam Raazi could write Tafseer, is also a controversial issue. It is mentioned in the foot notes of Kashf-uz-Zunoon that Syed Murtaza quoting "Sharah Shifa" by Shahab-ud-Din says that Imam Raazi wrote the Tafsir till Surah alanmbia.(8)

Maulana Abdus Sallam Nadvi Says:

Shahab in Sharah Shifa said that Qazi Ayyaz has written that Imam wrote Tafsir till Surah al-anmbia'a, but this is not true. Imam is in habit of writing day, month and year of completion at the end of certain Surahs and such description can be found in many

Surahs after Surah al- anmbia'a e.g. at the end of Surah Momin. He mentions that "The Tafsir of this Surah ended in Herat on Saturday, 2nd Zilhaj 603. In the same month and the same year he also wrote Tafsir of Surah Haa,Miim, Shoorah, Zukhruf, Jaasia, Al Kahaf and Surah Mohammad and day, date and month of completion is mentioned, which shows that Tafsir, upto Surah Mohammad was written by Imam himself. After this Surah we don't find such details. Any way this is apparent that a major portion of this Tafsir has been written by Imam Raazi. (9)

Review of Completion of the Tafsir

After reading Tafsir -e-Kabir, we are of the view that Imam Raazi himself wrote Tafsir from Surah Fatiha to Surah al-Nas and the Tafsir Mafateeh-ul-Ghaib is written completely by Imam Raazi.

Here are few arguments from Tafseer-e-Kabeer. The Ulema who divides Tafseer-e-Kabeer into two parts says that Tafseer upto Surah Al Anbiaa'a is by Imam Raazi. The second part is by his students and Ulama- Sheikh Najam-ud-Din Ahmad bin Mohammad Al Kamooli (D 727 AH) and Qazi-ul-Qaza Shahab-ud-Din bin Khaleel Damishki (D639AH).

An argument has already been given, that day, date and year of completion is mentioned by Imam at the end of many Surah, after Surah Al Anbiaa. Number of such Surahs is eleven. After Surah al- Anmbia'a till Surah al- Fathia there are twenty seven, Surahs which clearly indicate that Imam Raazi himself is the writer of the Tafseer.

The other argument is that while writing Tafseer of certain verse in a certain Surah Imam says that it is mentioned in Tafseer of such and Surah or he says that he will explain this topic in certain Surah following next. Here are few examples of this argument.

Example 1

Surah Al- Bakara verse No. 185, Allah Almighty says,



"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran".

Imam Raazi while explaining this verse says,



"The logic behind sending the Quran to Mohammad (PBUH) has been discussed in the light of verse of Surah Al Furkan".(10)

This verse shows that Surah Al Furkan follows Surah Al- Anmbia'a and Tafseer of Sura Al Furkan has been written by the Imam. This is one of Imam's practices that he just hints at the issue discussed at some other place.

Example 2

In Surah Al Qadar Verse No. 1 Allah says:

"We have indeed revealed the (message) in the Night of Power".

While explaining this verse Imam Raazi says,

"I have discussed this issue according to this verse of Allah Almighty", and it is clear that Surah al- Qadar is amongst the last few Surahs. (11)

Example 3

In Surah al- bakara verse No. 97 Allah says,

"Who ever is an enemy to Gabriel-for he brings down the (revelation) to the heart". Explaining this verse Imam Raazi.

According to the verse brought down to the heart.

Answer: "This question has been sufficiently answered in Surah al- anmbiaa and as a matter of fact Surah al- Shoara follows Surah Anmbia'a. Date of completion is missing on both the Surahs, but Al- Shoara belongs to the last part of the Quran.

Example 4

In Surah Al Hijar verse No. 16 Allah Says,

"It is we who have set out the Zodiacal signs in the heavens, and made them fair-seeming to (all) beholders;"

While explaining this verse Imam Raazi writes,

"I have explained much in Surah al- Mulk for the explanation of this verse".

Further he adds,

"Hence it need not be repeated but to the extent that is needed" (13). This example shows that, Surah Mulk belongs to the final few Surahs and its reference while explaining some other verse, proves that Tafsir of Surah al- Mulk was also written by Imam Raazi

Example 5

In Surah Al Hijar verse no. 18, Allah Almighty says,

"But any that gains a hearing by stealth, is pursued by a flaming fire, bright (to see)". In explanation of this verse, while clarifying the meanings, he says,

"I have explained its meaning while narrating the story of Bal'am bin Ba'aora in Surah al A'raf". Here in this Surah Imam Raazi has narrated the story of Bal'am Ba'aora as narrated by Hazrat Ibne Abbas and Ibn Masood. With reference example 4 & 5 Imam Raazi said,

"One shall know that there are so many minute details that I have discussed in Surah Jin and Surah Mulk". (15)

Example 6

In Surah Taha verse No.25 Allah Almighty says,

"(Moses) said; "O my Lord! Expand me my breast;"

Imam Raazi while elaborating the meaning of 'breast' says,



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"Most of the logicians mean heart by this word, and I discussed this issue while explaining the verses of Surah Shura". (16)

Imam's style of quoting reference of Tafsir of certain verse/s, at some other place, has been elaborated here with numerous examples.

Example 7

In Surah Al An'am verse no.103 Allah Almighty says,

"No vision can grasp Him, But His grasp is over all vision; He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things".

In Tafsir of this verse Imam Raazi rejecting Mu'tazila's arguments and presenting his own says,

These arguments show that Imam has not maintained the sequence of Surahs as in the Quran, because at one time he wrote Tafsir of few Surahs, and then, at other times he wrote Tafsir of different other Surahs one by one.

Moreover Imam wrote Tafsir of certain Surahs from the later half of the Quran before certain Surahs in the beginning of the Quran. With the help of references, Imam developed a logical sequence among various Surahs and thus showing that he himself has written the complete Tafseer.

There are few examples presented here in order to prove the claim that Imam Raazi himself successfully completed the Tafseer.

Example 8

In Surah al- Hajj verse no.17 Allah Says,

"Those who believe (in the Quran), Those who follow the Jewish (scriptures) and the Sabians, Christians, Magians, and polytheists, God will judge between them on the day of judgment".

Imam Raazi mentions different points and references regarding the above mentioned six religions and says,



"That I have discussed all the matters in much detail in Surah Bakara". (18)

Example 9

In Surah Zumr verse No.22 Allah says,

"Is one whose heart God has opened to Islam,"

While explaining this verse in Tafseer-al-Kabeer, Imam Raazi says,

"And the reader should know that I have discussed this verse in depth in Tafsir of Surah Al An'am". (19)

This is a key point in Imam Raazi's Tafsir -al-Kabir

Example 10

In Surah Zumr verse no.7 Allah Say,

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"If ye reject (God), Truly God hath no need of you, but He liketh not ingratitude from His servants".

In explanation to this verse Imam says,

"My father Zia-ud-Dun Umer, used to say: not to abstain from complaining is ingratitude". (20) The same thing he mentions in Tafseer of Surah Momin too.

Example 11

In Surah Zumr Verse no. 67 Allah Says,

"No just estimate have they made of God"

Explaining this verse, Imam Raazi refers to one of his books and says,



"There is a book of mine, named "Ta'asis Al Takdees" on "God" being above the normal concept of having body and occupying space, some one who is interested in knowing these issues in detail should consult this book". (21)

Example 12

In Surah al- Waqi'a verse no.18 Allah Says,



"With goblets, (Shining) beakers, and Cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains"

While clarifying the meaning he says,

"What does Ma'iin means here, In Surah Sa'faat I have said that it is used both a subject and object in the verse". (22)

Surah al- Waqi'a is amongst the last few Surah of the Quran and Imam has mentioned his father in Tafseer of few Surahs proceeding this Surah. It can never happen that some one else writing Tafseer after, Imam would mention Imam Raazi's father as his own father.

Discussion:

I have divided Tafsir -al-Kabir into two parts and argued that the whole Tafsir was written by Imam Raazi. All the examples and arguments that have been presented earlier are sufficient to prove that the later half of the Tafseer is also written by Imam himself.

(Few more arguments are presented though they are not forceful as are presented earlier. But no doubt they are equally interesting, hence all are relevant here.)

- While studying the Tafseer there seems to be complete harmony among various terms. Further Imam's style remains the same from beginning till end of the Tafsir.
- One of the issues that remains very clear while reading whole of the Tafsir is that Imam Raazi has confided in similar sources to made them basis of his Tafseer and has adopted and maintained uniform standard in accepting different opinions.
- 3. Imam Raazi has used uniform style in accepting certain theories and beliefs, in conveying his point of view and in removing ambiguities.
- 4. He has also adopted uniform style throughout Tafseer to unmask riddles and has suggested solutions. For examples, verse no.53 in Surah Al Hajj, he has presented solution to "Ghraneek's Story". The similar style of providing

solutions to various similar issues has been presented in the same pattern later on. (23)

5. If some one wants to find out complete uniformity between the style of the two parts of the Tafsir and knows that Tafsir of second part is also written by the Imam, he should read Tafsir of verse no. 35 of Surah Al Noor.

In Tafsir -e- Kabir and also the discussion on the comparison between Ba'asira nad Baseera. (24)

One shall take Imam Raazi's inclusion of Imam Ghazali's discussion into consideration and also one shall deeply study the solutions to different problems presented philosophically by Imam Raazi.

After reading all this, one does not find any mismatch or confusion in the second half and the same is true of first half.

The one, who reads the whole of the Tafsir, finds same lucid and elaborate style from the pen of the same personality proving oneness of the whole Tafsir.

- 6. While transferring the discussion regarding various nations and groups Imam's style is quite lengthy and detailed but when the Imam answers to certain queries, it is precise and brief. We find the same style from very beginning till the end.
- 7. Imam Raazi's style of posing questions and answering them in order to raise deep philosophic and thought provoking issues is also uniform throughout the Tafsir.
- 8. In the first half Imam Raazi quoted a lot from "Zamkhshari" but did not acknowledge it, he did the same thing in the second half of his Tafseer, which shows that second part was written by none else but Imam Raazi.

Apart from the issues discussed above, Imam's method of finding out issues is also same throughout the book.

Imam Raazi completed Tafsir of last few Surah in 603 AH, while he died in 606H, so why cannot we say that he could have completed the Tafseer within three years. This seems to be enough time to do so, as we have observed that the

Imam could write Tafsir very quickly despite many hurdles and problems and he wrote.

Here are some references to prove this statement. The whole period of Imam's writing the Tafsir was problematic and distressing and he has mentioned it at various places in Tafsir -e-Kabir. At the end of Surah Younus he writes, "I completed this Tafsir in Rajab 601 AH, and I was grieved on the death of my beloved son Mohammad." (25)

He also hints at his discomfort at the end of Surah Yousuf. He was much worried because of anarchy and civil war. Despite all these troubles he did not give up and continued with his writings. He wrote Tafsir of many Surahs while he was traveling.

At the end of Surah al- Anfa'al he writes, "I finished its Tafsir in a village named Baghdan and I pray to Allah to rid us of fear, hardships and deceit of enemy".(26)

At the end of Surah Ibrahim he wrote, "Tafseer of this Surah is completed in Baghdad Desert and I pray that may Allah rid us of sufferings and sorrows". (27) It is mentioned at the end of Surah Bani Israel that its Tafseer was completed in the city of "Ghaznen", and it was time of "Zohr". (28)

Imam Raazi did not follow fixed schedule for his writing activity. There was no fixed time. So he wrote at the end of Tafsir of Surah Nahal, Tafsir of this Surah was completed on Tuesday night after "Isha". (29)

At he end of Surah Sa'afaat he wrote "The Tafsir of this Surah was completed early in the morning (chaasht), (30) and about Surah Ha'meem he say its Tafsir was completed at "Zohr". (31) That of Surah Houd, he wrote that its Tafseer was completed at night before dawn. (32)

After having presented all these facts and figures regarding Imam Raazi's Tafsir-e-Kabir this can safely be asserted that Imam Raazi wrote himself this Tafsir from Surah Fatiha till Surah An'nas.

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