

## ***Methodology of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in Tafsir***

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"The Holy Quran is a comprehensive code of life so there is no need that Quran been explained by an external mean." In this ideology, necessity of Hadith has been denied in a very beautiful cover of command of the Holy Quran. It is a meter of fact if any literary work is comprehensive, it does not mean that it has no need of explanation by some external means. No doubt, Quran is a very comprehensive book but it cannot be comprehend without explanation by some external means. When we start understanding the Holy Quran by some external mean, Hadith is the first, essential, primary and basic source for its understanding. Hence, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is the first exegete. The Holy Quran has articulated this fact that it is the first prophetic object of the Holy Prophet to explain the Holy Quran. It is suitable to say that Hadith is not an external mean but it is a practical shape of the Holy Quran. We will discuss in this article the methodology of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in Tafsir. Before discussing the Holy prophet's methodology in Tafsir, we will be aware of literal meanings and definition of Tafsir. We will discuss in this writing the prophetic Objectives of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W)

- Recitation of Verses of Allah (S.W.T)
- Refinement of Self
- Teaching of Book and Wisdom

It will also be discussed that Sunnah as an Explanation (BAYAN) of the Holy Quran. To explain the Bayan we will describe different Kinds of BAYAN. BAYAN with qaul (Sayings), Bayan with Amal (Practice) and Bayan with Taqir (Approval). The different kinds of Bayan of The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) will portrait the methodology of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in Tafsir.

### **1. Meaning of Tafsir**

To comprehend the meaning of Tafsir, it is important to be aware of the root of word Tafsir. The root of Tafsir is Fasn (فسر). Describing the meaning of Al Fasn, Jauhari says:

Al Fasn means to explain something.(1)

Ibn Manzur pointed out two factors while describing the meaning of Fasn, as he says:

There are two meanings of Al Fasn to explain and to unveil something.(2)

The most tremendous scholar of Quranic linguistics, Raghil Asfahani says:

الفسر: إظهار المعنى المعقول

"To express the cogence meaning" (3)

Abu Hayyan describing the meaning of Tafsir says:

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To put off the seat from the horse or camel and to uncover it's back.(4)

Moulana Muhammad Idris Kandhlawi while expressing the meaning of Tafsir, says:

The literal meaning of Tafsir is to explain and discover something.(5)

The result of the above discussion is that there are two things, which are considerable in the word Tafsir:

A To discover any veiled factor

B This factor should concern to scholastic

## 2. Definition of Tafsir

Haji Khelifa while expressing the definition of Tafsir, says:

وهو علم باحث عن معنى نظم القرآن بحسب الطاقة البشرية وبحسب ما يقتضيه القواعد العربية ومبادئه العلوم العربية وأصول الكلام وأصول الفقه والجدل وغير ذلك.

“Tafsir is field of knowledge in which the meanings of the words of the Holy Quran are been discussed according to the maximum strength of human intelligence, according to the rules of ‘Arabic grammar, basic knowledge of ‘Arabic literature, the principles of philosophy, the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and dialogues.” (6)

Abu Hayyan defines the Tafsir as under:

التفسير علم يبحث فيه عن كيفية النطق بألفاظ القرآن الكريم ومدلولاتها و أحكامها الإفرادية والتركيبية.(7)

“Tafsir is a field of knowledge in which the mode of the pronunciation of the words of the Holy Quran, their meanings, their individual and communal commands been discussed.”(7)

Moulana Muhammad Idris Kandhlawi defines Tafsir as under:

إن علم التفسير علم يبحث فيه عن معنى نظم القرآن بحسب القوانين العربية والقواعد الشرعية بقدر الطاقة البشرية .

“Tafsir is field of knowledge in which the meanings of the words of the Holy Quran are been discussed according to the maximum strength of human intelligence, according to the rules of Arabic grammar and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.”(8)

## 3. Prophetic Objectives Of Holy Prophet (S.A.W)

In the above-mentioned Quranic verse, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala (S.W.T) has conveyed the prophetic objectives of The Holy prophet (S.A.W). According to this verse and many other similar verses, Quran has described the following Prophetic intents of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W):

- Recitation of the verses of Allah (S.W.T)  
تلاوة آيات الله
- Refinement of self تزكية النفوس
- Teaching of The book and wisdom تعليم الكتاب والحكمة

Recitation of the verses of Allah (S.W.T) is the first and main objective of the prophet hood of The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and the importance of this object been has described in many of the verses In Surat al Baqarah Quran (2:151) says:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا. (9)

“A similar (favour have ye already received) In that We have sent Among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to Our Signs”.

Similarly, in Surah Al Ahzab Quran says:

وَأذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِّنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَالْحِكْمَةِ. (10)

“And recite what is Rehearsed to you in your homes, of the signs of Allah and His wisdom”.

In Surah Al Qiyamah, Allah (S.W.T) advises The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) to follow the Angel Jibrail in recitation of the verses of the Holy Quran and says:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ. (11)

“But when We have Promulgated it, follow thou Its recital”.

In the same way in Surah Al Muzzammil Allah (S.W.T) gives advice to recite The Quran according to rules and manners of the recitation and describes:

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً (12).

“And recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones.”

These above- mentioned all verses expressing the importance of the recitation of The Holy Quran and also describing that we cannot even recite The Quran without Holy Prophet’s methodology of recitation, in this state can we imagine understanding the Quran without awareness of the teachings of The Holy Prophet (S.A.W)?

The second object of Prophet Hood of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is Refinement of self-تزكية النفوس. Allah (S.W.T) has sent the holy Prophet not only to recite the Holy Quran and to teach it to his Ummah but to enhance the best and outstanding moral values in the humankind.

The third object of prophet hood of the Holy Prophet is the teaching of Book and wisdom تعليم الكتاب والحكمة. Book means the Book Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala while about Hikmah, Imam Shaf’I says :

“I have heard many scholars of Quran to say that wherever Quran has used the word Hikamah with the Book of Allah, it means Sunnah of The Holy Prophet (S.A.W). (13)

The Holy prophet (S.A.W) educated his companions with the meanings and elucidation of the Book of Allah (S.W.T). Before going to deep insight of the methodology of the Holy Prophet in Tafsir, it is worth to understand that Allah (S.W.T) has distributed the prophet Hood into two kinds

- Messenger رسول
- Prophet نبي

A messenger comes with a new book and a new religion while Prophet comes to stimulate the teachings of previous book and religion. Resultantly, we can say that some prophets have come without a book but no book has been revealed without a Messenger. This historical fact pointed out that a prophet is essential with

revelation of a book so that he can explain and teach his companions the precise and actual meanings and objects the Holy Book. All the Prophets and Messengers have been chosen according the principle mentioned above.(14)

The Holy prophet (S.A.W) keeping this object in view, spent his whole life in teaching the Quran and its commentary to his companions.

#### 4. Methodology of Holy Prophet in Tafsir

The explanation of The Holy Quran attributed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is called Bayan (Explanation, Education and to teach the precise meaning of The Holy Quran). Quran has pointed out in many of the verses the importance of Bayan of The Holy Prophet (S.A.W). In two verses of Surah Al Nahal Quran says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ. (15)

“And We have sent down Unto thee (also) the messenger; That thou mayest explain clearly”.

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا

فِيهِ. (16)

“And We sent down the Book To thee for the express purpose, That thou should make clear To them those things in which They differ”.

In Surah Qiyamah Quran says:

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ. (17)

“Nay more, it is For Us to explain it And make it clear”. Quran has described the importance of Bayan from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) in all the above narrated verses.

#### Different Kinds of Bayan

The Bayan from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) can be disseminated into following different kinds:

- Bayan by Saying (قول)

Bayan by saying means that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) explained any verse from the Holy Quran by saying something. For instance according to Imam Bukhari on the day of battle of the Trench (Khandaq), the Holy Prophet said, “They prevented us from the offering the middle (the best) prayer till the sun had set. May Allah fill their graves, their houses with fire.”(18)

In this assertion the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has expressed the explanation of middle prayer (الصلوة الوسطى).

This kind of Bayan has certain types and these are:

- The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) explained a verse of Holy Quran by his saying and ordered something, forbade from something or expressed some exceptions from a command of Holy Quran.

Example of an order:

Quran commanded to its follower and said:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ. (19)

“And be steadfast in prayer”.

The Holy Prophet while explaining this verse said:

صلوا كما رأيتموني أصلي

“Offer your prayers as you perceive my prayers”.

According to Imam Bukhari Zaid Arqam said that we used to speak while in prayer until the verse was revealed:

وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ. (20)

“Then we were ordered to be quiet during prayers”.

Example when The Holy Prophet forbade from something:

Bukhari has reported that Hadrat ‘Aiyshah said that when the last verses from Surah Baqarah were revealed, the Holy Prophet recited them before the people and then he prohibited the trade of alcoholic liquors.(21)

Example when The Holy Prophet expressed some exceptions from a command of Holy Quran:

Quran says:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْيَتَةُ وَالدَّمُ. (22)

Forbidden to you (for Food)Are: dead meet, blood)  
According Imam Ahmad b Hanbal the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) while explaining this verse made some exceptions from this command of The Holy Quran and said:

أَحَلَّتْ لَنَا مَيْتَانِ وَدَمَانِ فَأَمَّا الْمَيْتَانِ فَالْحُوتُ وَالْجَرَادُ وَأَمَّا الدَّمَانِ فَالْكَبِدُ وَالطَّحَالُ. (23)

“Two types of dead and two types of blood are lawful for us, fish and locusts, spleen and liver”.

- Holy Prophet (S.A.W) described by his saying the limitation of period if a command from Allah (S.W.T) as Quran says:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ

لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ. (24)

“It is prescribed When death approaches Any of you, if he leave any goods, that he make a bequest”.

While making the commentary on this verse, The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) mentioned by his saying (قول) the time limit of this command and said:

لَا وَصِيَّةَ لِرَاثٍ. (25)

“No will in favor of inheritor”.

- Sometime The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) abrogates his own command and said:

فهيبتكم عن لحوم الأضاحي فوق ثلاث فأمسكوا ما بدا لكم. (26)

“I forbade you to keep the meet of immolation for above three days now you can keep it according to your wish”.

- Sometimes while explaining a verse of Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet gestured with his hand. Quran describes the length of a year and said:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ. (27)

“The number of months In the sight of AllahIs twelve (in a year) So ordained by Him”.

In this verse, Quran mentioned the length of a year, which is equal to 12 months but did not express the length of a month. The companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) asked about the length of a month the holy Prophet expressed the length is 30 or 29 days by gesturing his hand.

- Written martial is also included in this kind of Bayan. When different verses of the Holy Quran gave the commands of charity (Zakat), the companions inquired about the details of charities, the Holy Prophet dictated the se commands for ‘Amr b Hazm.
- Bayan with Performance (عمل) Whole life of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is the Bayan of the Holy Quran. Each and every performance or practice made by him was the practical shape of the commands given theoretically by the Quran as Sayeda ‘Ayisha said:

كان خلقه القرآن

(His pattern was the Quran)

Imam Shaf’I says that there are two types of Bayan with Performance (عمل):

Quran gave an order and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) took this order into the practice. Quran advised the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) about preaching Islam and said:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ. (28)

“O Messenger! Proclaim The (Message) which hath been Sent to thee from thy Lord”.

The Holy prophet (S.A.W) devoted his whole life for spreading Islam.

The Holy prophet (S.A.W) explained the Holy Quran with his practice (‘Amal). We can present a tradition from Imam Bukhari as an example. Bukahri reports (29) that Bra b ‘Azib said that we prayed along with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) facing Jerusalem for sixteen or



seventeen months. Then Allah ordered him to turn his face towards Ka'ba. We started facing Ka'ba.

The second type of Bayan with Performance (عمل), according to the opinion of Imam Shaf'I, is that the Holy Prophet showed with his practice the actual form of the order of the Quran. When a person is unable to perform Salat with wudu, he can perform the Salat with Tayammum (تيمم). Quran says:

فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ  
وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ. (30)

(And ye find no water Then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, And rub therewith your face and hands.)

The companions of the Holy prophet asked him how tayammum could be performed. The Holy Prophet made the shape of tayammum with his hands. (31)

- Bayan with Approval (تقرير) Taqrir is a kind of Hadith of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). According to the scientists of Hadith, Taqrir means that any companion said something or performed something and the Holy prophet (S.A.W) approved with silence his saying or performance.

Quran says about the business that it is lawful to do and said:

وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ. (32)

“But Allah hath permitted trade”.

When the above mentioned verse of the Holy Quran was revealed, the companions of the Holy Prophet were busy in different types of business based on working partnership, sleeping partnership and by borrowing the amounts from each other's. These all types of business came in the knowledge of the Holy Prophet, and he approved many of them with his silence. There are many other examples can be quoted:

1. Imam Bukhari has reported that Ibn 'Abbas has said that Arabs used to do their trades after performing

Hajj in pre Islamic period and considers it a sin when the verse was revealed:

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ. (33)

“It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord during pilgrimage”, the Holy prophet allowed to continue this custom.(34)

2. The companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) were busy in agriculture, cultivating dates, Holy Prophet (S.A.W) advised them in this regard, they implemented this advice and the cultivation was effected. When the Holy Prophet came to know the situation, he said:

انتم أعلم بأمور دنياكم (35)

“You people better know your worldly affairs”.

### **The holy Prophet (S.A.W) Explained the Entire Quran?**

The above discussion about the methodology of the Holy Prophet in Tafsir produces a question that did the Holy Prophet explained the entire Quran or some parts of the Holy Quran has been explained by him and the other parts has been left for ummah?

Scholars and authors in Sciences of Quran have discussed this question in detail. According to Dhahabi (36) different scholars have responded this question in two ways:

- Many of the scholars like Ibn Taimiah have this opinion that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has described the explanation of entire Quran, they argue as followed:
  - Allah (S.W.T) has illustrated in the Holy Quran that it has been revealed on the Holy Prophet for the purpose that the Holy Prophet will describe it for the people, Quran says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ. (37)

“And We have have sent down Unto thee (also) the messenger; That thou mayest explain clearly”.

This Bayan contains the explanation of entire Quran.

- Secondly, they argue that according to Sayuti (38) some of the companions like ‘Uthman b ‘Affan, ‘Abdullah bn Mas’ud, ‘Abdullah bn ‘Omar (R.A) claimed that they used to learn 10 verses of the Holy Quran from the Holy Prophet. By this regular practice, they learnt whole Quran.
- Thirdly they argue that more than once, Quran has described the object its revelation is to comprehend it and think over it as Quran says:

كَتَبْنَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ (39).

(Here is a Book, which We have sent down Unto thee, full of blessings That they meditate On its signs)

This object cannot be achieved without understanding the Quran and learning it from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

- Many scholars like Sayuti have the different opinion that the Holy Prophet has not described the explanation of entire Quran rather it was not possible. The scholars having this opinion support their view with some arguments in the favor of it. these arguments are as follows:
  - It has been reported that Saydah ‘Ayisha (R.A) has said that the Holy Prophet explained only those verses, which Jibrail discovered for him. This narration means that neither all verses been discovered nor been explained by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

- The Holy Prophet did not explain the entire Quran and the wisdom in this phenomenon was that the companions of the Holy Prophet should learn the explanation of some parts of the Holy Quran and they should use their own wisdom and extract the explanations from the teachings of the Holy Quran and in the light of Sunnah.
- Holy Prophet has prayed for ‘Abdullah b ‘Abbas and said:

اللهم فقهه في الدين وعلمه التأويل

(May Allah confer him deep insight about din and learn him the meanings of The Quran).(40)

If the Holy prophet has explained the entire Quran, this prayer from the Holy Prophet becomes useless.

The substance is that any one of these opinion is not wrong or unjustified. We can say while concluding that the Holy Prophet has explained the major part of the Holy Quran, which was indispensable for the Ummah to act upon its teachings. Some other parts of the holy Quran has been left unexplained so that his Companions and the Ummah coming afterwards may solve their problems in the light of basic teachings of the Holy Quran. Based on this viewpoint, we can divide the Holy Quran into two parts:

- **Established Meanings( محكمات )** includes the followings:
  - A Ideological discussions about Iman
  - B The discussions about the Practical life of human being
  - C The narratives of proceedings of the previous Holy Prophets and their ummah
 These all have been explained by Quran itself or by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).
- **Allegorical/ Symbolic ( متشابهات )** The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has not described this part of the Holy Quran.

## 5. Conclusion

We may conclude the above discussions as follows:

- The Holy Quran is the last divine book revealed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).
- The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) been blessed with prophet hood with some specific objects.
- Recitation of verses of the Holy Quran and teaching of book and the wisdom were included in his objects of prophet hood.
- He achieved successfully all the objects. An outsized group of the experts of recitation of the Holy Quran and proficient exegetes came into existence at the time of demise of the Holy prophet (S.A.W).
- He explained the major part of the Holy Quran with the definite methodology.
- His explanation of the Quran is an eventual authority and a basic source for the descendants for understanding the Holy Quran and to act upon its teaching
- He has given the basic principles of the commentary of the Holy Quran as basic rules of commentary. Only the commentaries compiled in the light of these basic principles are acceptable.

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