

# Tafseer al-Quran: It's Origin Significance and Sources

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## **Abstract**

The Holy Quran is the last and final book of Allah (SWT) revealed for the guidance of all mankind to His last Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The main objective of Qur'anic revelation is to enable humanity to live as the vicegerent (خليفة) in this world and to enjoy eternal happiness in the Hereafter. The Tafseer of Holy Quran is thus the most important science not only for Muslims but for all human beings because without this science there would be no right understanding of various passages and aspects of the Holy Quran.

As reliable sources of Tafseer, al-Quran itself, Hadith & Sunnah of Prophet (SAW), Reports of the Companions (RAA), the Successors (RA), specific kinds of Isra'ilyat are recognized by the scholars of Ilm al-Tafseer.

Keeping in view the importance and necessity of Tafseer, a brief account of the original sources, the significance of Tafseer & a description of its sources is presented in this paper.

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## Meaning of Tafseer

According to Arabic philologists, there are two possible roots for the term “Tafseer”:

1. Some say that the Arabic term Tafseer (تفسير) derives from the root word FASARA (فَسَّرَ) which literally means to reveal, to explain, to expound, to elucidate, to interpret, to open, to unveil, to uncover, to make clear, to expose, to show the objective and to commentate<sup>1</sup>. An example of its linguistic usage is found in the Quran:

وَمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا<sup>2</sup>

(And no example do they bring to you but we reveal to you the truth and the best explanation).

2. Other scholars say that the word Tafseer is from the root word SAFARA (سَفَرَ) which means to expose, to unveil, to disclose and to uncover something. It also means to travel. An unveiled woman is called “Safirah” (سَافِرَةٌ). Travelling is called “Safar” for it unveils the manners of the travelers<sup>3</sup>.

Whether “Tafseer” is driven from SAFARA or FASARA, both the roots have same meanings i.e. to unveil and reveal the unknown as by travelling, the traveler also comes to know about several unknown things.

## Technical meaning of Tafseer

Some renowned Quranic scholars have defined Tafseer as a Science of the Holy Quran like:

1. Badruddin Zarkashi (d.794 A.H) has offered a short definition of the science of “Tafseer” as follows:

*“It is a science through which one knows the understanding of the Book of Allah revealed on His Prophet (ﷺ) and the elucidation of its meaning and extraction of its injunctions and wisdom”<sup>4</sup>.*

2. Abul Hayyan Andulasi (d.1053/445 A.H) defined the science of “Tafseer” in the following words:

*“Tafseer is a science which discusses the pronunciation of the Quranic words, their meanings, provisions and the connotations, laid there in”<sup>5</sup>.*

3. Jalaludeen Suyuti (d.1505/911 A.H) has defined Tafseer as:

*“Tafseer is a science which discusses revelation of the Qur’anic ayaat (verses), their background, ayaat revealed in Makkah and Medina, ayaat precise and identical, revelatory and revoked, general and particular, Conditional, concise and elaborate, related to valid and invalid, a enunciation and denunciation, order and prohibition, and the lessons and examples”<sup>6</sup>.*

4. Mustafa bin Abdullah (Known as Haji Khalifah d. 1067/1657) has defined Tafseer in the following words:

*“Tafseer is a science in which the meaning of the Qur’an is determined in the light of Arabic grammar to the extent of human capability”<sup>7</sup>.*

After these definitions, it is concluded that Tafseer is a science by which the Quran is understood, its meaning explained, and its injunctions of law and wisdom derived.

The person writing Tafseer, i.e. the exegete or commentator is called Mufassir. The first one in the hierarchy of Tafseer is Allah (SWT)

Himself while the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) whose Prophetic responsibility was to exemplify the Holy Quran was the second on the list of Mufasssireen of the Book.

The experts of Ilm-u-Tafseer also use the word “Taweel” as synonym of Tafseer while some other make a distinction between the both terms. The detail is as follows:

### **Literal meaning of Taweel**

According to the Arabic philologists, there are two possible roots for the term “Taweel”.

1. Some scholars say that the word Taweel is derived from the root “AWALA” (أول) which linguistically means to return, to revert or to retrieve<sup>8</sup>. The derived meaning of Taweel is to revert to one out of several possible meanings<sup>9</sup>.
2. Others scholars say that Taweel is derived from the root “AYALA” (إيالة) meaning to take care or to guard. Taweel thus means to place the word at their proper place and to determine their meaning<sup>10</sup>.

Ta’wil is used fourteen times in the Holy Quran with different meanings<sup>11</sup>.

### **Technical Meaning of “Taweel”**

There are two groups of the scholars of Tafseer i.e. “classical” “contemporary” who have technically defined the term ‘Taweel’.

1. According to the classical group of scholars, Taweel is synonym to the word “Tafseer”. Perhaps that was the reason why the famous commentary of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem by Ibn-e-Qutaiba (d.276 A.H) was named as “Taweel Mushkalil-Quran” (تاويل مشكل القرآن)

and that of Imam Muhammad Ibn-e-Jareer Al-Tabri (d.310A.H) was named “Jami’al bayan, an ta’weel ayah al-Quran” (جامع البيان (عن تأويل آي القرآن), while the commentary of Imam Maturidi (d.333A.H) was named as “Taweelaatul-Quran” (تأويل القرآن).

These Mufasssireen have perhaps got this view from the prayer of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) for Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه) which says: “O Allah, give him firm understanding of Deen (fiqh) and teach him Taweel (Tafseer/interpretation of the Holy Quran)”<sup>12</sup>.

These scholars also based their view point on Quranic use of these terms, for instance the word “Tafseer” in Ayat No.33 of Surat al-Furqan (No.25) and the word “Taweel” in Ayat No.7 of Surat aali-Imran (No.3) has been used in the same meaning i.e. explanation or interpretation. Mujahid stated that the Ulama (Scholars) knew that Taweel meant “Tafseer of Quran”<sup>13</sup>.

2. The latter scholars of Tafseer differentiated between Tafseer and Taweel considering them as two different things:

i. Imam Raghیب Asfahani says:

*“Tafseer is more general than Taweel. Tafseer applies to Al-Quran as well as to non-heavenly books, but Taweel applies to the Heavenly Books only. Tafseer deals with words (terms) and Taweel deals with their meanings and sentences...”*<sup>14</sup>

ii. Al-Maturidi (d.333A.H) says:

“When the interpretation is based on certain knowledge this is called “Tafseer” whereas, when it is based on personal reasoning (Ijtihad), it is known as Taweel”<sup>15</sup>.

iii. Abu Talib al-Tha’labi said that:

“Tafseer was the explanation of the literal meaning of the verse. For example, the Tafseer of the following verse”:

○<sup>16</sup> إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

(Verily, Your Lord is ever watchful).

Is that Allah (سبحانه و تعالي) is aware of all that man does, but the Taweel of the same verse is that it is a warning to man not to lapse into sins or to be little the commandment of Allah<sup>17</sup>.

iv. According to Abu Nasar Al-Qushairi, Tafseer depends upon “Sama’ and Itteba’ ” i.e. following of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) while Taweel depends upon logical deductions and inferences. In other words the meaning of the Holy Quran which is apparent from the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is known as Tafseer and maintaining that meaning intact, all logical inferences, drawn by the learned scholars as regards the latent and hidden significance of it, is known as Taweel<sup>18</sup>.

v. According to the opinion of some Mufasssireen, Tafseer is used in explaining a word which carries only one meaning, whereas

Taweel is used in choosing one of the connotations of a word that possesses many connotations<sup>19</sup>.

In other words, Tafseer is used to explain the meaning or intent of a verse which has only one connotation, whereas Taweel is used when one of the possible connotations of a verse or a word is opted.

vi. Some other scholars say that:

*“Tafseer refers to the illumination of the outer meaning of Al-Quran, while Taweel is the extraction of the inner meanings and secrecies of the most gracious Lord”<sup>20</sup>.*

vii. Other scholars say that: “Tafseer is related with Riwayat (Traditional based Tafseer) while Taweel relates with Dirayat (Ijtihad based Tafseer)<sup>21</sup>.

Dr. Muhammad Hussain Al-Dhahabi prefers this opinion because it covers two main kinds of Tafseer i.e. Tafseer bil-ma, thur or Tafseer bi-l-riwayah and Tafseer bi-l-ra’y or Tafseer bi-l-dirayah or bi-l-ijtihadh<sup>22</sup>

According to Shah Abul Aziz of Delhi, three conditions are necessary for Tafseer:

Firstly, the outer or hidden meaning of the words should be clearly stipulated; secondly, due regard should be given to the context; and thirdly, it should not be against the interpretation given by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions (رضى الله عنهم). If the first condition is lacking, the interpretation will be “Taweel-e-Qareeb”. If the second or the third condition is lacking, it will be “Taweel-e-

Ba'eed". But if all the three conditions are lacking, it will be "Tahreef"<sup>23</sup>.

## The Significance of Tafseer

Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) revealed the Holy Quran as a mercy and Blessing for people, so that they may understand, contemplate and act upon it. Its passages contain advice and guidance for those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment.

The success of believers in this temporary life and in the next permanent life depends upon their understanding and compliance with the instructions of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem.

There are a number of reasons for importance of Tafseer of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem, such as:

Al-Quran Al-Majeed itself commands its reader to ponder over it, and to reflect upon its meaning as Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) says:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ۝<sup>24</sup>

([This is] Book [Al-Quran] which we have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its verses, and that men of understanding may remember).

The science of Tafseer is actually the fruit of pondering over the Quranic verses.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝<sup>25</sup>

(With clear signs and Books (we sent the messenger). And we have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad (ﷺ)) the reminder and the advice (Al-Quran), that you may explain clearly to mankind what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought).

Those who learn and understand the Holy Quran, implement its commands and avoid its prohibitions, observe its stated limits, then the Quran will stand for protecting its followers on the Day of Judgment. The last Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

"القرآنُ حجةٌ لك أو عليك" <sup>26</sup>.

(The Quran is either a proof on your behalf or against you).

But understanding the text of Holy Quran needs its explanation and clarification, the task which can be sought only with the help of its acceptable Tafseer.

Imam Jalal-ul-Deen al-Suyuti discusses the necessity of Tafseer in his famous book 'Al-Itqan' stating that it is a known fact that Allah (SWT) communicates with mankind in a way that is understandable for him. Every messenger sent by Allah, was speaking the language of his people. From the above-mentioned quotations, it is inferred that there are three basic reasons establishing the necessity of Tafseer:

1. First of all, Allah (SWT) uses the most eloquent and concise language in the Holy Quran resultingly its meaning is clear to those who are well grounded in the Arabic language, but not so clear to those who are not.
2. Secondly, the Quran itself does not always mention the background events or the context in which each particular verse was revealed, while these must be known in order for the verse to be properly understood.
3. Thirdly, some Quranic words may have multiple meanings<sup>27</sup>. which can only be elaborated and clarified by a person (Mufassir)

who is well versed with the mastery of Arabic language as well as has a vast knowledge of *Tafsir bil Masur*.

The science of Tafseer, as stated earlier, meant to explain the Holy Quran for all mankind, its in-depth understanding and to have knowledge about the will of Allah (SWT). Without its explanation, it would be difficult for them to comprehend the aim of Allah (SWT) to send it down. Iyas ibn Mu'awiyah (d.122 A.H) said:

*“The example of a person who recites the Quran and does not know its explanation is like a group of people who have a written message from their king that comes to them during the night, and they do not know what is in the message. The example of one who knows Tafseer is like a person who comes to them with a lamp and reads to them what is in the message”<sup>28</sup>.*

Saeed ibn Jubayr (d.95 A.H) said: “whoever recites the Quran and does not explain it is like an ignorant person”<sup>29</sup>.

As-suyuti said: “The science of Tafseer is the most honorable of all sciences for three reasons:

1. *“The first reason is with respect to its topic. It deals with the speech of Allah Ta'ala, which contains every kind of wisdom are virtue. It contains pronouncements about what has passed reports of what will happen and Judgment concerning what happens among the people. Its wonders never cease.*

2. *The second reason is with respect to its goal. Its goal is to lead mankind to the firm handhold of Allah Tahala, and to the true happiness, one that does not end.*
3. *The third reason is with respect to the great need for this science. Every aspect of this religion and this world, in the near or distant future, is in need of the science of the Shari'ah and knowledge of the religion and this knowledge can only be obtained through the understanding of the Book of Allah ( سبحانه و )<sup>30</sup> ”تعالى*.

In short, Tafseer of Al-Quran Al-Majeed is the most important science because “Allah has sent the Quran as a book of guidance to mankind. Man’s purpose is to worship Allah, i.e. to seek his pleasure by living the way of life Allah has invited him to adopt. He can do so within the frame work of the guidance that Allah has revealed concerning this, but he can do so only if he properly understands its meanings and implications”<sup>31</sup>.

### **Sources of Tafseer of Al-Quran Al-Majeed**

Having proficiency in the prescribed attributes, qualities and conditions for sound Tafseer<sup>32</sup>, when a scholar (Mufssir) wants to start interpreting Al-Quran Al-Majeed, he has to depend upon the following sources of Quranic exegesis which have been prescribed by scholars of Quranic Sciences\* :

## 1. Al-Quran Al-Majeed

The first and foremost source of Tafseer is Al-Quran Al-Majeed itself. This is regarded as the most authentic sources of Tafseer it explains itself. At many places in Al-Quran Al-Kareem, certain things have been mentioned briefly, but the same things are explained in detail at another place. For instance: In surah al-Fatihah Al-Quran says: "مالك يوم الدين". (Master of the Day of Judgment). Here the phrase "يوم الدين" has been left unexplained. Its explanation is, however, found in Surah Al-Infitar where Allah (SWT) Says:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ○ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ○ يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ  
لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ○<sup>33</sup>

(And what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is? Again, what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is? (It will be) the Day when no person shall have power (to do anything) for another, and the Decision, that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah).

In Surah al-Fatihah again, Al-Quran Says:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ○ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ○ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ<sup>34</sup>

(Guide us in the straight path. The path of those upon whom you have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked (your) anger upon them or of those who are astray).

Now, 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:

ومن يُطع اللهَ والرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا.<sup>35</sup>

(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).

Similarly in the first ayah of Surat-al-Ma'ida Al-Quran describes:

أَحَلَّتْ لَكُمْ بِهَيْمَةَ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُثَلَّى عَلَيْكُمْ عَيْرَ مُحَلِّي الصَّيِّدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ<sup>36</sup> ○

(Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you (in the Quran) - hunting not being permitted whiles you are in the state of ihram. Indeed Allah ordains what He intends).

The above-mentioned description cannot be fully comprehended without consulting the following Ayah (verse) of the same surah:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَفِقَةُ  
وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذُكِّيتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى  
النُّصَبِ<sup>37</sup> ○

(Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and (those animals) killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head long fall and by the goring of horns and those from which wild animals has eaten except that you (are able to) slaughter (before it death) and those which are sacrificed on stones alters).

It appears, without any doubt, from the above and so many other examples<sup>38</sup> that the verses of Al-Quran Al-Majeed explain and

interpret one another. Many verses or words in Al-Quran Al-Hakeem are explained or further classified in other verses of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem.

So, while interpreting Al-Quran Al-Hakeem, the first and foremost duty of a mufassir is to try his best in seeking other verses from Al-Quran containing the same subject. He must not ignore this source of Tafseer because “the best way is to explain the Quran is through the Quran itself. But if this does not help you, you should turn to the Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ), because the Sunnah explains and elucidates Al-Quran Al-Hakeem”<sup>39</sup>.

## 2. Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ)

The second source of Tafseer of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem is the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) because it explains and elucidates the meaning of the words and the verses of Al-Quran and also exemplify its teachings. In fact, the first Mufassir of Al-Quran is the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself and the first theoretical as well as practical Tafseer of Al-Quran is in the shape of his (ﷺ) Hadith and Sunnah. The very purpose of his mission, as Al-Quran tells us, is to “Teach the Book (Al-Quran)” and “to purify” the humanity as mentioned in a verity of ways in different places of the Holy Quran:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ  
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ٤٠ ○

(Certainly Allah has conferred a favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, who recites to them His verses, and purifies them and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, though before that they were certainly in manifest error).

Thus the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) not only recited Al-Quran to his companions (رضى الله عنهم) but also explained to them the meanings and purposes of it. Allah the Almighty says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ<sup>41</sup>

(We have revealed the reminder (Al-Quran) to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) so that you may explain to the people what has been sent down to them).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلخَائِنِينَ  
خَصِيمًا<sup>42</sup> ○

(Surely, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the Book (Al-Quran) in truth that you may judge among the people by that which Allah has shown you, so you be not a pleader for the treacherous).

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ  
يُؤْمِنُونَ<sup>43</sup> ○

(We sent down the Book (Al-Quran) to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) for the express purpose that you should make clear to them those things in which they differ, and that it should be a guide and mercy to those who believe).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the most knowledgeable of all with regards to the intended meaning of Allah (SWT) the Prophet (SAW) was the direct recipient of revelation and his own interpretation was also guided by the All Mighty Himself. The Holy Quran affirms this fact as under:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۗ ۝<sup>44</sup>

(Indeed, he does not speak out of desire but verily it is a revelation sent down to him).

Explaining the same the Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

”الا اني اوتيت القرآن ومثله معه“<sup>45</sup>.

(Know that I have been given Al-Quran and something like it [Namely the Sunnah].

Consequently, no other human interpretation can be considered as equivalent or preferable over that of the Prophet (SAW).

The Companions of the Prophet had this understanding clearly and they always turned to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in his life time for clarification whenever they were in doubt about the meaning of any passage of Al-Quran.

In fact the, Holy Prophet (ﷺ) explained to them the Quranic teaching in details by word as well as by action for example, details of Salaat, Sawm, Zakat, Hajj, Inheritance Laws and other commands relating to the general affairs to human life in the form of Shariat<sup>46</sup>.

Thus the theoretical and the practical interpretations and explanations of Al-Quran by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) are referred to as the “Tafseer of Al-Quran by Al-Sunnah”<sup>47</sup>.

Some examples of Tafseer al-Quran by Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) are presented in the following:

○<sup>48</sup> لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

(For those who have done righteous deeds in the reward of Paradise and more).

Prophet (ﷺ) explained ‘more’ to mean looking at the Face of Allah the Most High, he (ﷺ) said: When those deserving of Paradise would enter Paradise, the Blessed and the Exalted would ask:

“Do you wish me to give you anything more? They would say: Have you brightened our faces? Have you not made us enter Paradise and saved us from Fire? He (the narrator) said: He (Allah) would lift the veil, and of things given to them nothing would be dearer to them than the sight of their Lord, the Mighty and the Glorious”<sup>49</sup>.

○<sup>50</sup> يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

([Remember] the Day when the Shin shall be uncovered [Day of Resurrection] and they shall be called to prostrate [to Allah], but they [hypocrites] shall not be able to prostrate).

The above mentioned verse is explained by the following Hadith: “Allah will then uncover His Shin whereupon every believer will prostrate before Him and there will remain those who used to

prostrate before Him just for showing off and for gaining good reputation. These people will try to prostrate but their backs will be rigid (firm) like one piece of a wood (and they will not be able to prostrate)<sup>51</sup>.

As narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbass (رضى الله عنه): “When the Verse: “It is those who believe (in Allah) and confuse not their belief with transgression, for them only there is security and they are the guided ones”<sup>52</sup> was revealed, it became very hard on the companions of the Prophet and they said: “Who among us has not confused his belief with (Transgression?” On that, Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “This is not meant (by the verse). Don’t you listen to Luqman’s statement: (إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ) ‘Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great transgression indeed’<sup>53</sup>.

In short, the second source for understanding the Quran after the Holy Quran itself is the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Whenever, during the lifetime of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his Companions found any verse difficult to understand, they approached the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), who, in turn, explained it to them. Some times the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explained verses of the Quran without waiting for anybody to ask him to do so. Further, there were occasions when the practice of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in a particular situation or on a particular issue was taken as interpretation of the Holy Quran. After his death, all such prophetic interpretations were faithfully transmitted by his Companions to those who followed<sup>54</sup>.

### 3. The Reports of Sahaabah (رضى الله عنهم)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> source for Tafseer is the Reports and the Sayings of the Companions (رضى الله عنهم) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Their Tafseer is of immense importance due to the following reasons:

1. Thorough knowledge of Arabic language and its idioms.
2. Full acquaintance with the customs and practices of the Arabs.
3. Knowledge of the Jewih and the Christian traditions at the time when the Quran was being revealed.
4. Deep Insight and an instinctive awareness of the meaning of the Quran, which are the diving gifted qualities.

In addition to that, they (رضى الله عنهم) lived with the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and learnt their Deen (religion) directly from him (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Many of them had not only memorized the Holy Quran but also had full knowledge of when, where and why different verses of the Quran were revealed. So they were, in fact, fully aware of everything about the Quran<sup>55</sup>.

So on the base of these reasons, whenever the first two sources are found insufficient for Tafseer of any particular verse of the Holy Quran, the sayings and the reports of Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم) are given the highest priority and preference. Ibn Katheer (d.774 A.H) has reported in this regard as follows:

“If we do not find the commentary of the Quran in the Quran itself, or in the traditions, we should turn to the sayings of the companions who knew about it the best. This is because of the fact

that they had witnessed the revelation and were aware of the conditions and the true nature of understanding right knowledge and good deeds which they possessed”<sup>56</sup>.

If there is a consensus (Ijma) of Companions (رضى الله عنهم) on the explanation of a certain verse, the commentators follow just that, and explaining it in any way, other than that, is not permissible<sup>57</sup>. By the way, if the (recorded) statement of companions (R.A) differ in the interpretation of a certain verse, then the commentators who come later examine them in the light of arguments and determine as to which interpretation or explanation can be given preference<sup>58</sup>. In order to handle this situation, there is an important corpus of rules and regulations already codified under the sciences of Usul-al-Hadith and Usul-al-Tafseer...<sup>59</sup>.

### **Prominent Commentators among the Companions**

According to Suyuti (d.911 A.H), the following ten Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم) are most prominent and well versed in the field of Tafseer<sup>60</sup>:

1. Abu Bakr (رضى الله عنه) (d.634/14 A.H).
2. Umar Ibn al-Khattab (رضى الله عنه) (d.644/24 A.H).
3. Uthman bn Affan (رضى الله عنه) (d.655/35 A.H).
4. Ali Ibn Abi Talib (رضى الله عنه) (d.660/40 A.H).
5. Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud (رضى الله عنه) (d.653/33 A.H).
6. Abdullah Ibn Abbas (رضى الله عنه) (d.687/ A.H).
7. Ubaiy Ibn Ka'b (رضى الله عنه) (d.640/20 A.H).
8. Zaid Ibn Thabith (رضى الله عنه) (d.666/45 A.H).

9. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (رضى الله عنه) (d.662/42 A.H).
10. Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr (رضى الله عنه) (d.694/75 A.H).

Besides these famous ten Companions (رضى الله عنهم) for their profound knowledge of Al-Quran, the following companions dealt in Tafseer, though comparatively less<sup>61</sup>:

1. Aa'ishah bint Abee Bakr (رضى الله عنها).
2. Anas Ibn Malik, (رضى الله عنه) (d.711/93 A.H).
3. Abu Hurayra al-Dawsi (رضى الله عنه) (d.678 or 679/58 or 59 A.H).
4. Abdullah ibn Amr (رضى الله عنه) (d.693/73 A.H).
5. Jabir ibn Abdullah (رضى الله عنه) (d.693/74 A.H).
6. And Abdullah ibn, Umar ibn al-Aas (رضى الله عنه) (d.682/63 A.H).

#### 4. The Reports of the Successors (Tabi'een)

After the Holy Quran, Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the statements of his Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم), the reports of the Successors (رحمهم الله) are considered as a valid source of Tafseer. Their reports (sayings) have great importance in this science. The reason is that they took Tafseer from the Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم) who learnt it from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). In this regard Imam Ibn Katheer says:

“ When the scholar (Mufassir) is unable to find the Tafseer of any verse in the Quran, or in the Sunnah, or in the sayings of the companions (رضى الله عنهم), then he looks to the Tafseer of the successors (Tabi'een) such as:

1. Mujahid bin Jabar al Makki (d.722/104 A.H) who had wonderful expertise in Tafseer<sup>62</sup>.
2. Saeed bin Jubayr (رحمه الله) Al-kufi (d.714/95 A.H)<sup>63</sup>.
3. Ikrama Abu Abd Allah al-Barhari (d.722/104 A.H). The freed servant of Ibn Abbas (رضى الله عنه)<sup>64</sup>.
4. Abu Muhammad, Ata, bin Abi Ribah Al-Makki al-Qarashi (d.732/ 114 A.H)<sup>65</sup>.
5. Abu saeed, Al-Hasan b. Abi al-Hasan Yasar al-Basri رحمه الله (d.728/110 A.H)<sup>66</sup>.
6. Abu A'sha Masruq b. al-Ajda, al-Hamdani al-Kufi (رحمه الله) (d 694/75 A.H)<sup>67</sup>.
7. Abu Abdur Rahman Tawus b.kaisan al-yamani al-Hiwiari al-Jandi(رحمه الله). (d.724/106 A.H)<sup>68</sup>.
8. Abdul Aliya Rafai bin Mihran al-Riyahi(رضى الله عنه) (d. 709/90 or 714/96 A.H)<sup>69</sup>.
9. Al-Rabib Anas al-Bakri, al-Basri, al-Khurasani (رحمه الله) (d. 756/139 A.H)<sup>70</sup>.
10. Abu al-Khattab Qatada bin Di'ama al-Sadusi (رحمه الله) (d.735/117 A.H)<sup>71</sup> etc.

The statement of these Imams may be mentioned and referred to for Tafseer<sup>72</sup>.

Imam, Ibn Taimeeyah explains why the Tafseer done by the best generation after the Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم) is closer to the truth than

the Tafseer by the later generations. He says that they are free from the defects found in the later generations, which are as follows:

- a. Their expositions have not been influenced by foreign ideas.
- b. They have not been affected by the political and theological disputes that marred the Tafseer of the later generations.
- c. They are for sure, the best and purest expositions of the Quran in letter and spirit.

Although there exists a difference among scholars whether or not the statements of the successors (رحمهم الله) are decisive in Tafseer<sup>73</sup>.

According to Ibn Teimeeyeh: However their expositions carry authority only when they are all in agreement. Where they differ, no one view is binding over and above another, or for that matter binding over the following generation<sup>74</sup>.

## 5. The Arabic Language

The Arabic Language is an important source for understanding the spirit of Quranic Teachings because Allah (SWT) revealed his message, the Quran, in the same language, as He says:

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ<sup>75</sup> ○

1. (In a clear Arabic Language).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ<sup>76</sup> ○

2. (We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, in order that you may gain understanding).

The righteous Companions (رضى الله عنهم) and Muslim scholars of the past have testified to the importance of learning this language;

for instance it is reported that Ubay ibn Ka'b (رضى الله عنه) said: "Learn Arabic just as you learn to memorize the Quran"<sup>77</sup>.

So, keeping in mind this importance of Arabic language, it is not appropriate for any one to declare himself as interpreter (Mufasssir) of the Quran, if he is not well versed and versatile in its Language. There are several verses of the Holy Quran in the back ground of which there happen to be just no attending circumstances of revelation, or any juristic or scholastic question and in tafseer of these kind of verses, the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), or the statements of the companions (رضى الله عنهم) and successors (رحمهم الله) are also not reported. In this situation the only means through which these verses can be explained is that of the Arabic language, and it is on the basis of language alone that they are elucidated. Besides that, should there be some difference in the Tafseer of a certain verse, then in that case too, the science of linguistics is used to run a test of veracity between every opinion<sup>78</sup>.

## **5. Deliberation and Deduction**

One of the Sources of Tafseer is "Deliberation and Deduction". The Quran consists of countless sciences and wisdoms. Hence, the person who has been blessed with insight into the sciences of Islam by Allah (SWT) and deliberations in it discovers new mysteries and subtleties. Thus commentators describe the results and the findings of their respective deliberations, but their mysteries and subtleties are acceptable only when they are not against the above mentioned five sources. So, when a Mufasssir wants to describe in a subtle point, or independent Judgment (Ijtihad) which is contrary

to the Quran, Sunnah, Consensus (Ijm'a), language, or the statements of companions and successors, or stands in conflict with another principle of Shari'ah, that will then have no credence. Some mystics had started to describe such mysteries and subtleties in their commentaries but the research scholars of Islamic ummah did not consider this trustworthy because the personal opinion of any one against the basic principles of the Quran, Sunnah and Shariah has obviously no weight<sup>79</sup>.

## 6. Tafseer of Biblic Origin (Isra'iliyyat)

The term "Isra-iliyyat"<sup>80</sup> is defined as the narratives and information of Jewish and Christian origin which had infiltrated into Islamic Community after lot of Jews and Christians accepted Islam<sup>81</sup>.

The Jews had their religious culture which originated from the scripture Torah while the Christian had their religious culture which originated from the Gospel<sup>82</sup>.

The Companions (رضى الله عنهم) were hesitant in accepting every thing from this source. They only accepted from them the details of stories and narratives as the material which did not conflict with belief and conformed to ahkam<sup>83</sup>.

The Companions (رضى الله عنهم) relied upon the Isra'iliyat very little as a source besides using the other sources, for the understanding of some topic of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem in more detail like stories of the Prophets and their people<sup>84</sup>. When the period of Successors (Tabi'un) came after 110 A.H, they took much from the People of Scripture in the field of Tafseer, because

the number of these people, who embraced Islam, was increased. From them, there was some great scholars of their traditions who provided necessary information regarding their traditions to the commentators of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem from Successors, like, Abdullah bin Salam, (d.43A.H), Ka'b al-Ahbar, (d.32 A.H), Wahab bin Munabbih (d.110 A.H) and Abdal-Malik bin abdal-Azizi ibn Juraij (d.150 or 159 A.H)<sup>85</sup>.

Those commentators who came after the Successors<sup>86</sup> heavily depended on Isra'iliyyat and described them in their commentaries as Imam Muhammad Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari (d.310 A.H) did in his Tafseer "Jami' al bayan 'an ta'wil ayah al Quran (جامع البيان عن تأويل آى القرآن)<sup>87</sup>.

In short, Isra'iliyyat were used very little for understanding of the Quran by the Companions (رضى الله عنهم) but more by the Successors (رحمهم الله) and even more by succeeding generations<sup>88</sup>. Anyhow, this source has always been considered as a secondary source of Tafseer in situations only where it did not contradict with the preceding sources.

### **The Validity of Isra'ilyat**

There are many aspects of the Quran which can be explained by referring to Isra-iliyyat, when there is common ground between the Quran and the other traditions. However, the information taken from such sources cannot be considered sound according to the standards of ilm al-hadith, unless traced back of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) himself and his companions (رضى الله عنهم)<sup>89</sup>. The Prophet

Muhammad (ﷺ) has already cautioned and admonished Muslims against this source of knowledge:

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضى الله عنه), the People of the scripture (Jews) used to recite the Torah in Hebrew and they used to explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. On this the Allah's Apostle recited the Quranic verse: "Do not believe the people of the scripture or disbelieve them, but say: we believe in Allah us" (2:136)<sup>90</sup>.

Likewise, Ibn Mas'ud (رضى الله عنه), the well-known companion is reported to have said: "Do not ask the ahl-al-kitab about anything (in tafseer), for they cannot guide you and are themselves in error"<sup>91</sup>.

### **Kinds of Isra'iliyyat and their Rules**

Hafiz ibn Katheer (d.774 A.H), who is one of the authentic Mufasssir of the Holy Quran, has mentioned the following three kinds of Isra'iliyyat:

#### **1. Approved by Shariah**

This is a narration that has confirmation from the Quran or the Sunnah. This type is completely acceptable to narrate and believe in. An example of this is the story of Musa (عليه السلام) with the Cow. This incident is the reason for naming of Surah Baqarah. This kind of narrations that exist in the Bible can therefore be completely accepted.

## **2. Rejected by Shariah**

This type of Isra'iliyyat is one that is in contradiction with the Quran, Sunnah, or any general principle of the Shariah. An Isra'iliyyat of this type cannot be used for narration whatsoever. There are narrations in the Bible, wherein some of the Prophets go drunk and committed incest. In Islam, the Prophets are the best of the society and wouldn't stoop to such levels. Therefore, such narrations are in clear contradiction of the Shariah and must be rejected.

## **3. Unspecified by the Shariah**

This is a type of Israeeliyat that has not been mentioned by an Islamic reference. For this type, we cannot accept it with full confidence, nor reject it with full confidence. Hence, it is of a neutral category. An example of this is the details found regarding the young men in the cave (اصحاب الكهف), such as their names, and the description of their dog. Such detail wasn't mentioned in the Quran or the Sunnah, so therefore, we neither deny completely, nor accept the narration completely<sup>92</sup>.

There is, however, a difference of opinion among scholars whether or not reporting such narrations is permissible. Hafiz Ibn Kathir has given the decisive word by saying that reporting these is permissible all right but doing so is useless because they cannot be taken as authentic<sup>93</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From this research article it can be concluded that:

1. The word “Tafseer” means to explain the apparent meaning and “Tawil” means to deliberate the hidden meanings of the letter, words, verses and Surah of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem.
2. Tafseer has great importance among the Islamic Sciences because of its direct relationship with the word of Allah Almighty.
3. The first commentator of Al-Quran Al-Hakeem is Muhammad (ﷺ) and the first commentary is the Hadith and the Sunnah of him (ﷺ).
4. The reliable sources of Tafseer are: Al-Quran-Al-Hakeem, Hadith and Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ), Reports of the Companions رضى الله عنهم and the Successor (رحمهم الله) and the kind of Isra’iliyat which are approved by Islamic Shariah.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> See Lisanaul-Arab, Ibn Manzur, Muhammad b.Mukarram (d.711 A.H) v.5, p.55, root فسر, Beirut, 1410/1990; Al-Burhan fi Ulum-al Quran, by. Al-zarkashi, vol 2, p. 147, Isa al-Babi al-Halbi, 1957; Al-Itqan fi ulum al-Quran, by Al-Suyuti vol.2, p. 179, Idara Shaikh uthman, Abdal\_Razzaq, Mahmiyah, Egypt, 1206 A.H.
- <sup>2</sup> Surah al-Furqan (25):33.
- <sup>3</sup> See, Al-Burhan fi Ulumi Al-Quran, Badr al-Deen, Al-Zarkashi, v.2, p.163, Dar-al-Fikar, 1408/1988, Kashaf Estelahatul-Fonoun, v.2, p.1115.
- <sup>4</sup> Al-Burhan, abid, v.1, p.33.
- <sup>5</sup> Al-Bahr-al Muheet, v.1, p.13-14, see, Al-Itqat fi ulumil-Quran, v.2, p.462.
- <sup>6</sup> Al-itqan fi ulumil Qur’an, abid p.462.
- <sup>7</sup> Kashf al-zunoon an Asami al-Kutub wa’l-Funoon, by Hajji Khalifa (d.1067A.H), chapt. Al-Tafseer, Istanbul, 1362/1943.
- <sup>8</sup> See Lisan al-Arab, Ibn Manzoor, v.13, p.33-34, A-Qamus-al-Muhaeet, v.3, p.331.
- <sup>9</sup> Al-Tafseer wa al-Mufasssirin, Dhahabi, v.1, p.16, see also Al-Tibyan fi, ulum al-Quran, by Muhammad Ali Sabuni, p.62, Maktabah al-ghazali, Damascus, 1401 A.H.
- <sup>10</sup> See Assas ul-Balagha, by Zamakhshari (d.1144/538 A.H), v.1, p.15, also see, Al-Tafseer wa al-Mufasssirin v.1, p.16.
- <sup>11</sup> For detail see: Surah Al-Imran (3):7, Surah Al-Nisaa (4):59, Surah Al-A’raf (8):53, Surah Yunus (10):39, Surah Yousaf (12):6, 21,37,44,45,100,101,Surah Al-Israa (17):35, Surah Al-Kahaf (18): 78, 82.

- <sup>12</sup> Manahil al-Irfan fi ulum al-Quran, Zarqani, Muhammad Abdul Azeem, v.2, p.15. Halabi, n.d.
- <sup>13</sup> Al-Tibyan fi ulum al-Quran, op. cil. p.62.
- <sup>14</sup> Al-Mufradat, Imam Raghil al-Asfahani (d. A.H) see, also Al-Burhan fi ulum al-Quran, v.2, p.164, Al-Itqan suyuti, v.2, p.461, Al-Tafseer wa-al Mufasssirun, Dhahabi, v.1, p.19,20.
- <sup>15</sup> Al-Itqan, abid, v.2, p.460, see also, Al-Tafseer, wa-al Mufasssirun, v.1, p.20.
- <sup>16</sup> Surat al-Fajr (89): 14.
- <sup>17</sup> See, Al-Itqan, v.2, p.460, 461, Al-Tafseer wa-al Mufasssirun, v.1, p.20, 21.
- <sup>18</sup> See, Al-Burhan fi uloomi al-Quran, Zarkashi v.2, p.165, 66, Dar al-Fikr, Bierut, Lubnan, 148/1988.
- <sup>19</sup> See, Manahil al-Irfan fi uloomi al-Quran, Zarkani, v.2, p.5.
- <sup>20</sup> Mabathith fi ulum al-Quran, Manna al-Qattam, p.327, Muwassasah al-risalah, Beirut, 1983.
- <sup>21</sup> Al-Burhan, Zakrshi, v.2, p.165, Al-Itqan v.2, p.461.
- <sup>22</sup> See for more detail, Al-Tafseer wa-al Mufasssirun, v.1, p.22.
- <sup>23</sup> Interpretation of the Holy Quran: Tafseer and Taweel, by syed anwer ali, with reference <http://www.muslims.ws/win/quran/tafseer.com>.
- <sup>24</sup> Surah Sad (38): 29.
- <sup>25</sup> Surah An-Nahl (16):44
- <sup>26</sup> Sahih Muslim, Kitab-u-taharah (12):432.
- <sup>27</sup> Al-Itqan, v.2, p.462, 463.
- <sup>28</sup> Zad-ul-Maseer fi Ilm-e-tafseer, By:Ibn, Al-Joozi, v.1, p.4, usool-tafseer wa Qwahidh, p.27.
- <sup>29</sup> See Al- Itqan, v.2, p.465.
- <sup>30</sup> Al-Itqan, v.2, p.466.
- <sup>31</sup> Ulum-Al-Quran, By Ahmad von Denffer p.124, The Islamic foundation, U.K, 1989.
- <sup>32</sup> See Al-Itqan, v.2, p.477-479, for conditions of Musfassir .
- <sup>33</sup> Surat Al-Infitar (82): 17-19.
- <sup>34</sup> Surah Al fatiha (1):6, 7.
- <sup>35</sup> Surah An-Nisaa (4):69.
- <sup>36</sup> Surah Al-Ma'ida (5):1.
- <sup>37</sup> Abid: 3.
- <sup>38</sup> See in detail, Al-tafseer wa al-Mufasssirun, v.1, p.35-44.
- <sup>39</sup> An introduction to the principle of Tafseer By Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, ch.1, see in detail: Al-Tafseer wa-Mufasssirwn, v.1, p.37-38.
- <sup>40</sup> Al-i-Imran (3): 164.
- <sup>41</sup> Surat Al-Nahl (16):44.
- <sup>42</sup> Surat Al-Nisa (4):105.
- <sup>43</sup> Surat Al-Nahal (16):64.
- <sup>44</sup> Surat Al-Najam (53):3-4.
- <sup>45</sup> Musnid-e-Ahmad vol.4, No.131, Sunan-e-Abi Dawood, chapter no.6 from Assunnah. Zad al-Maseer, Ibn Joozi, v.2, p.116, Al-Tamheed, Ibn-Abdul-Al-Br, v.1, p.150.
- <sup>46</sup> For more details see: Al-tafseer Wa-Al-Mufasssirun, by Dahabi v.2, p.45-57.
- <sup>47</sup> For examples, see p.....of this book.

- 48 Soorah Yunus(10):26.
- 49 Saheeh Muslim number 347.
- 50 Soorah Al-Qalam (68):42.
- 51 Shaeeh Al-Bukhari vol.9, no.5328.
- 52 Soorah Al-An'am(6):82).
- 53 Surah Al-Luqman(31):13, Saheeh Bukharae v.9, no.53.
- 54 The Tarjaman Al-Quran (A critical analysis of Maulana Abu'l Kalam Azad's approach to the understanding of the Quran) By I.H.Azad Faruqi, p.6-7, vikas publishing house PVT LTD, New Delhi, 1991.
- 55 See for detail discussion: Al-Tafseer wa-al-mufasssirin, By: Dr. Muhammad Husayn Al-dhahabi, v.1, p.57-59, Usul al-tafseer wa qawa'iduhu, By: Khalid Abd al-Rahman Al-AKK, p.117, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Dar al nafa'is, Beirut, 1994/1414.
- 56 Tafseer al-Quran al-Azeem, By: Ibn Katheer, v.1, p.3, Halabi, Cairo,n.d, for more details see Muqaddimah fi usul al-tafseer, By: Ibn Taymiyyah, chapt.1, Dar al-Quran al kareem, Kuwait, 1319/1971.
- 57 Maarif al-Quran v.1, p.15.
- 58 Abid.
- 59 Abid.
- 60 Suyuti, Al-Itqan fi Uloom al-Quran v.2, p.493.
- 61 Al-tafseer wa-al-mufasssirin, v.1, p.63.
- 62 Mujahid (R) said: "I reviewed the Mushaf with Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه thrice from beginning to end asking him about each and every Ayah in it" (Tahdhib al-Tahdhib. By: Ahamd bin Hajar Al-Askalani, v.10, p.42, Haderabad Press, 1327H). Ibn Jarir narrated that Ibn Abi Mulahkah (ملیكة) said: "I saw Mujahid asking Ibn Abbas (R.A) about the Tafseer of the Quran while he was holding his tablets (papers). Ibn Abbass (R.A) would say to him, write, until Mujahid asked him about the entire Tafseer". This is why sufyan Al-thawri (R.A) said: "If the Tafseer reaches you from Mujahid, then it is sufficient for you" (Jami al-bayan an tawil ayah al-Quran, By Imam Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-Tabari v.1, p.30, Halabi, Cairo, 1398/1968, see also, Al-Muqaddimah, By: ibn Jaymiyah, p.28).
- 63 See detail about him in wafiyat al-aeeyan, v.1, p.264, 265, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, abid, v.4, p.13, 14.
- 64 Ikrima (رضى الله عنه) was a student of Ali b.Abi Talib and Abu Hurayra (رضى الله عنهما) and saeed b.jubayr (رحمه الله) (see details about his life in Tahdhib al-Tahdhib v.7, p.263-273).
- 65 Ata ibn Abi Ribah (R) was famous as a jurisprudent. Al-Imam Abu Hanifa al-Nu'man b. Thabit (R) (d 767/150 A.H) said that he was the best from amongst those he came across in the field of transmitting Traditions (see Al-Tahdhib, Ibn Hajar, v.7, p.119-203 for detail Discussion).
- 66 During the days of Hasan Al-Basri (رحمه الله) and Muhammad ibn seereen(رحمه الله) (d.728/110 A.H), Basra became a predominant center of Islamic learning (see details about his life) in Tahdhib al-Tahdhib v.2, p.263-270.
- 67 See details about him in Al-Tahdhib, v.10, p.109-111.
- 68 See detail in Al-Tahdhib v.5, p.8-10.

- <sup>69</sup> Abul, Aliya (رحمه الله), Basran by origin, heard from many sahaba رضي الله عنهم, including Ibn Abbas, Ibn Mas'oud, and Ubaiy b. ka'b رضي الله عنهم and taught many followers such as Qatada and Al-Rabi b. Anas رحمه الله (see. For more detail AL-Tahdib, v.3, p.284-285).
- <sup>70</sup> Al-Rabi b. Anas (رحمه الله) narrated from Anas b Malik (رحمه الله), Abdul, Aliya and al-Hassan al-Basri (رحمه الله).
- <sup>71</sup> Qatada (رحمه الله) among the great commentators of the Quran, was a student of Hassan al-Basri (رحمه الله), the famous ascetic. He also heard traditions from Anas b. Malik (رضي الله) and Ikrima (رحمه الله). He was a Basran of Bedouin origin and blind from birth, and his memory for traditions and genealogies was proverbial (see: Al-Tahdhib, v.8, p.351-365, wfeeat-ul-ayyan, v.2, p.179).
- <sup>72</sup> Tafseer ibn-Katheer (Muqadimah) v.1, p.21, Maktibah Dar al-Isslam, 1418/1998.
- <sup>73</sup> Al-Itqan v.2, p.473.
- <sup>74</sup> See: An Introduction to the principle of Tafseer with reference <http://www.oeg/amm..> Muqqadima fe usul-al-Tafseer by ibn Teimeeyah p.7, Al Tafseer wa al mufasssirin v.1, p.128,129.
- <sup>75</sup> Ash-shu'araa (26):195.
- <sup>76</sup> Yusuf (12):2.
- <sup>77</sup> Al-Musannaf, by Ibn Abi Shaybah, v.7, p.150.
- <sup>78</sup> See: Al-atqan v.2, p.474, usul-attafseer wa qwaid hu, b Khalid Abdul al Rahman Al Haq, p.137-147, Maarif-e-Quran, by Mufti Muhammad Shafi (Muqadimah), (urdu), v.1, p51.
- <sup>79</sup> Al-Itqan (2): 184, see: Maarif-e-Quran, v.1, p.51.
- <sup>80</sup> The main flaw that is pointed out by the scholars of Hadith regarding the narrations of Tafseer is the inclusion of al-Israiliyat in the books of Tafseer. This term is oft-repeated although the vast majority of people may not fully understand its true meaning.
- Al-Israiliyat is the plural of Israiliyah (Israeli). This term is recognized to be derived from one of the names of the Prophet Ya'qub(عليه السلام). Ibnul Jawzi has mentioned that there is no Prophet who was given two names except for Ya'qub(عليه السلام) and our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
- Ibn Kathir and others have shown that Ya'qub(عليه السلام) is in fact Israil due to the hadith reported by Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi in his Musnad that Ibn Abbas(رضي الله عنه) said that a group of Jews presented themselves to An-Nabi and he said to them, "Do you know that Israil is Ya'qub(عليه السلام)? They responded saying, By Allah, Yes we do! He said to them, O Allah! Be witness!"
- Israil is a word that is composed from the union of two separate words. Some have said that half of the word is Arabic in origin while the other half is Hebrew in origin. The first part of the word "Isra" is from the word "Isra" migration and setting upon a journey. The second half of the word "il" is a word that means Allah in Hebrew. As such it has been said that Ya'qub(عليه السلام) was given the name Israil because he migrated to his Lord.
- Others have said that the whole word is Hebrew in origin. They state that "Isra" means a slave and therefore the word means the Slave of Allah in Hebrew. In Islamic

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jurisprudence and terminology the term al-Isra'iliyat is used to describe a narration that originates from Jewish (Biblical) sources (Islamia/ The Brunet Times).

- <sup>81</sup> See Al- Isra-iliyyat wa-al-mawdu at fi Kutub al-Tafseer, By: Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Shahbah, p.94-110, Maktabat al-Sunnah,, Cairo, 1408 H.
- <sup>82</sup> Gospel Bible: One of the first four New Testament books, describing the life, death and resurrection of Juses (Je'zes) and recording his teaching (The American Heritage Dictionary, fourth edition).
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>84</sup> See for detail, Al-Tafseer wa-al-mufasssirun, v.1, p.61, 62,169-175.
- <sup>85</sup> A lot of material from Jewish origin was used in the narration by these four personalities (see, Al-Tafseer, Dhahabi, v.1, p.175, 201, Al-Isra'iliyyat wa-al mawdu at, shahbah p.94-110.
- <sup>86</sup> The age of successors starts after 110 A.H, and ends at 181 A.H, because the last successor Half Ibn Khaleefa (R.A) died in 181 A.H.
- <sup>87</sup> See, At-Tafseer, Dhahabi, v.1, p.176, 177,214,215 and Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafseer Al-Tabari.
- <sup>88</sup> Ulum al-Quran by Ahmad Von Denffer, p.135, The Islamic foundation, United Kingdom, 1989, introducing the Quran, by Dr. Hasan uddin Ahmad, p.176, Good word Books, New Delhi, India, 2004.
- <sup>89</sup> Ulum, al-Quran op.cit.
- <sup>90</sup> Al-Isra'iliyyat, Abu, Shahbah, p.94-110.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup> Tafseer Ibn Katheer (Muqaddamah) v.1, p.20, Al-Tafseer wa-al-Muafasssirun, Dhahabi v.1, p.179, 190, adwaa, Al-Bayann, by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shanqeeti, v.1,
- <sup>93</sup> Tafseer Ibn Katheer (Muqaddamah) v.1, p20,21 .